

Jan 8. 33

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

My dear Fisher.

I return your article,
which I have enjoyed reading.
As to the title, I see no
objection to "A modern view of
Darwinism". If on consideration
you do not like it, consider
"Modern developments of
Darwinism". As to the latter
part, I liked it especially.
I felt some doubts, which may
be quite without foundation, as
to what you say about really
scientific thought. Did not
Aristotle go further than you
suggest? My wife's husband,

F. Cornford, Cambridge Professor
of Greek Philosophy, has written
a small book on the subject,
which I send - please return at
your leisure. I have just read it,
and if my memory was better, I
should know for certain. On such
ancient thoughts, Cornford is a
great authority: on modern
questions, well I have
scribbled a few suggestions on
style in margin, which probably
you will scorn.

As to our old friend, free
will, we have never seen eye
to eye, and if I say anything,
I shall regret it to be ignored.
Modern research appears to me
only to show that we have not
yet dug down to the foundations
and nor thenceforward where
determinism seems to come in.

If men had perfect reasoning powers and knew what they wanted, they would always do the same thing in the same circumstance. If choice means the possibility of doing two things at any one moment, then there would be no choice, or free will in that ^{sense} ~~sense~~, in these circumstances. On such a supposition, you have pushed out determinism from the front door, & find it entering at the back. If choice comes in only because of imperfection of reasoning powers, an element of pure uncertainty in the nexus between environment and action is introduced. This leaves determinism in its original commanding position, and only introduces a variation about the mean in the results. If choice is to be creative it must not be fortuitous; but

the less prohibiting its acts, the
less choice there can be. If
there is free will in marriage,
for example, and if choice is
not tied to circumstances, the
statistics of marriage would not
necessarily be uniform. If choice
is tied to circumstances, it is
not free. The only way in which
indeterminism can come in would
be by human beings having an
limited power of altering what
we call previous events, as we
now see we ^{can} alter subsequent events.
Rather a bold supposition! But
still I can help believing in free
will. What you say is interesting
and not too long. And I liked
it all.

Yours sincerely

Demond Daville