

gether forgotten. Even Kant—as was shown in a preceding chapter—so little estimated its true value, that he considered it absurd even to hope of ever being able to solve the question: “we must, in fact, deny that man can ever gain further insight into the matter.”

But as Charles Darwin, by means of his theory of selection, has actually solved this most weighty fundamental question, he has, I repeat it, become a new Newton, the possibility of whose coming Kant considered himself justified in denying for ever. Short-sighted naturalists have, indeed, declared this comparison exaggerated and ridiculous, but have only shown how little they are capable of estimating the philosophical value of Darwinism. For the problems, as well as the means for answering them, were incomparably simpler in the case of Newton's theory of gravitation than in Darwin's theory of selection. For which reason, also, the natural truth of the former theory is at once evident to every cultivated mind, whereas thorough scientific study is necessary for the full appreciation and understanding of the theory of selection. Both, however, have rendered service of equal value, by having cast out the supernatural idea of purposeness in nature, and the miracles associated with it, from the domain of our scientific knowledge—Newton from the anorganic domain, and Darwin from the domain of organic nature.

The speculative philosophy of recent times has become more and more convinced of the necessity of retracing its steps from the Icarian cloudland of “pure speculation” to the firmer ground of the empiric knowledge of nature, and especially of comprehending the important biological advances of the last generation. Thus Wundt,