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'Das Ethische' and 'das Nicht-Ethische' in Albert Schweitzer's thought: The Problem of Weltanschauung confronted with 'das biologische Denken'

Abstract

In my paper, I concentrate on Albert Schweitzer's reflections on ethics, which include a discussion about evolutionary biology and biological thinking. On the one hand, Schweitzer is fully aware of the revolutionary relevance of Darwin's theories and develops his conception of nature by seriously considering those scientific achievements. In doing so, he confronts Darwin's and Huxley's attempts to identify the ethical dimension of humanity from an evolutionary point of view. On the other, he criticizes Spencer's and Nietzsche's popularization and misunderstanding of Darwinism. According to Schweitzer, their appropriation of Darwin's theories fails to make sense of human morality.