

The Widening Breach Evolutionism in the Mirror of

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Billion of years ago, primal 'cosmic dust; arrived at a tropismatic molecular organization of the amino acid constituents of protein, providing us the biochemical components of protoplasm. Then either through sophisticated filter-passing viruses or some other mechanism, the inanimate matter went through the mysterious transformation and became animate. Through evolutionary process and after passing through several stages, this matter became bacteria—the immediate ancestor of protozoa. Thus life started.

This is how evolutionists start the long story of creation. Different evolutionary theories differ in details, in the routes and paths that this inanimate object takes but they are all based on the same general principle that this matter enjoys an unlimited autonomy in space and time. Thus for the evolutionists, the inanimate matter as 'object' exists without the pole "subject'.

This theory has been challenged from so many perspectives, 'The Widening Breach' challenges it from a cosmological standpoint. This refutation is based on the simple fact that Evolutionism suffers from a missing link and that there exists "no prerogative, cosmic principle or law by which this inanimate and subjectless hence limited___-pristine stuff could from its inception maintain over measureless time a perfect self-containment". The author asks:

The point of all this is to ask simply, why should the pair subject_—object alone, on the plane of manifested existence not be a 'pair', but be free from the tyranny' of interdependence or linkage to which all the other listed and unlisted terms without exception are subjected?

Twenty four years after the publication of his monumental *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, Whitall Perry has come up with an intricate refutation of one of the most prevailing "scientific" theories of our times—a theory which has far reaching implications. Drawing on the spiritual resources of traditional wisdom, the author takes apart the whole edifice of evolutionism, as if piece by piece, refutes it and reconstructs the traditional worldview in a clear but, at times, complex prose. The book is divided into six chapters ("The Missing Link"; "Creation ex Nihilo"; "Contours of the Primordial Tradition"; "Realism to Nominalism: The Watershed" and "The Sundoor") and contains a list of suggested reading.

Using a wide range of traditional sources, the author attempts to place the subject/object polarity in its proper frame of reference. He affirms the primordial truth that the Being of all beings is but only one Being and that polarities appear only at the manifest plane of reality. This subject/object relationship is essentially the linchpin for the whole argument against evolutionism for there can be no object without a subject. Evolutionists may claim that one pole of a duality can exist in the total and unqualified nonexistence of its corollary or counterpart but such claims can not be valid for the simple reason that in the whole of manifest universe, not a single example can be found to support this claim. On the other hand, the manifest universe is full of Subject/Object relationships which are expressed in numerous phenomena.—the regularity with which the heavenly objects move, the unerring functioning of all the laws of matter according to their properties and the inter-play of a wide range of dualities to produce logical result in the phenomenal, world.

Our world is merely one level of existence characterized by manifestation, individuation and action and the prototype for this polarity is Subject/Object. At another level, man himself is seen in the form of soul and body duality the long between the inward consciousness (the subject) and the outward body (the object) being Life. Since a total separation of subject from

object would mean immediate death, one cannot conceive of a universe (object) without a Creator (Subject). Quoting the words of the Welsh bard, Dafydd ap Gwilym (c. 1340-1400), the author puts it simply: 'A world without God is a world of nothing.'

Traditional Wisdom has always maintained that in this manifest world, the flow is from the higher to the lower and not otherwise. Evolutionists envision the process in the inverse direction, from below upwards, 'outwards to inwards, ascending from quantity towards quality, the higher evolving from the lower, The traditional view of creation has no room for any kind of mutation of the created beings. The Creator created man by a simple process: He breathed life into the 'dust' out of which Adam was formed; or in other words, He said Be and it was. At a later stage, Adam is exteriorized into man-and-woman polarization and they remained in that state as long as they obeyed God by abstaining from the fruit of the Tree. Thus cosmologically speaking, if one were to accept the claim of evolutionism then one would have to reverse the whole scheme of things: "the Gospel of St. John inverted to read: And the flesh was made Word."

"Realism to Nominalism: A Watershed", the fourth chapter of the book, is a sweeping account of the history of the emergence of the modern perspective and the problems that have arisen due to the disappearance or transformation of the traditional worldview. Focusing on the loss of the traditional perspective and providing a brief account of the emergence of 'modern' worldview, the author recounts several instances of the reversal of sacred images, mutation of the beliefs held by the ancients and the loss of the traditional reciprocal perspective of inwards/outward polarity. Even Realism meant exactly opposite to what the word connotes today: For the Schoolmen or Scholastics, the word meant that all seeming reality in our world is entirely infused by the sole ultimate Reality of the Universals or Ideas as propounded by Plato. In other words, for the Scholastics Realism was 'an assertion of the rights of the subject'; this axiom shows the primacy accorded to the subjective pole over the objective. In later times, Realism has come to signify the opposite: that matter and sense objects have a concrete reality in their own 'right'—a position that can be called 'an assertion of the rights of the object'.

The brief survey of the developments in the 'religious sphere' is followed by a short description of the philosophical currents which gave rise to the emergence of modern 'scientific' worldview: The last great Scholastic, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-74), was followed by the nominalist English Franciscan theologian William of Ockham (c1285-1349) who is like a "watershed in the separation between 'Light' and 'Darkness' in the Middle Ages" but even before him, the tendency to take the concrete fact for the final reality was apparent in persons like Roscellinus of Compiègne (c1122) who taught that the three persons of the Trinity are necessarily separate entities. Others have designated Ockham's tendency to reduce everything to the perceivable reality as Ockham's Razor: "Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity". This angle of vision, later to be called the 'Law of Parsimony' functioned as "a fissure opening onto the quantitative and exterior pole of manifestation a breach that over the centuries would unloose the whole form of scientific mentality on which the modern world is fabricated."

Once the Pandora's Box was opened, there was no shortage of theories and slowly science lost the metaphysical and cosmological foundation which had been its home for centuries. The author correctly points out that the role of philosophers in the development of materialistic worldview was merely that of 'antennas' which captured the cosmologically induced intellectual obscuration. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Rene Descartes (1596-1650), William Harvey (1578-1657) and the British physicist Robert Boyle (1627-91) all contributed to the development of a mechanistic philosophy which reduced or attempted to reduce the reality to its outward signs only. But there were always those few who pointed out the dangers in reducing the traditional cosmic worldview to a quantitative, utilitarian worldview. Quoting Jami (d. 1492), the author sums up the wrong approach of these philosophers and scientists:

"Philosophers devoid of reason find

This world a mere idea of the mind;

Tis an idea — but they fail to see

The great Idealist who looms behind," (p. 70)

* * *

If the journey from Realism to Nominalism was the watershed between the two worlds,—the one still in contact with the Traditional sources and the other on the verge of breaking all ties with the Tradition—Nominalism to Atomism: The Outer Darkness, the fifth chapter of the book, describes the path that has pushed the modern man into the full grip of a distorted perception of reality so that now he feels quite comfortable with evolutionism.

This capacity for gravitating towards the irrational seen as rational is the result of man's loss of contact with his inward center, combined with his innate sense of centrality notwithstanding. This, plus centuries of conditioning by bad philosophical systems, culminating in the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx (1818-83) and Frederick Engels (1820-95), a construction which holds that the observable world is real without any transcendent origin, a world independent of the mind of man, since 'matter by their perspective is logically and temporally prior to mind, itself being judged as nothing but an outgrowth of this matter. (p. 87)

Drawing an analogy from 'Melencolia'—an enigmatic copper engraving of Albrecht Dürere (1471-1528), the master craftsman and artist of Nuremberg, living at the threshold of transition between the Middle Ages and our present world—the author describes how Durer's painting was a representation of the thought of his times as well as a witness to the things still to come. The heliocentric system of Copernicus appeared in print in 1543, just fifteen years after the death of Durer but it took another sixty seven years for Galileo to come up with his Sidereus Nuncius (The Starry Messenger), a book which opened up the vistas of outward vastness of the physical cosmos. But it was Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) who perhaps succeeded in 'eliminating the last vestiges of a vertical perspective' by providing a mechanical explanation of the universe and by replacing "Spirits" and "celestial intelligences" with forces.

Thus the stage was set for the appearance of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) with his gravitational forces operating a 'clockwork' universe put into motion by god. He claimed in his Opticks, that "God in the beginning formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, movable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which he formed them. ""This placed the physical world on a 'scientific footing' to which but not in which God is present.

But science has failed to come up with an explanation of the ultimate workings of the universe. No matter how strongly modern man may believe, at least theoretically, that the world is no more than a speck of dust scattered through the universe, he still has a strong sense of centrality of his own space and time. This breeds the illusion that the past was somehow inferior to the present_a particular condescension is associated with this illusion and words like 'undeveloped', 'simplistic' and 'naive' are used to describe previous eras. It is this 'chronologic snobbery' that has made it easier for the 'Theory of Evolutionism to gain converts. Charles Darwin (1809-82) was merely putting into words what was already an established attitude. In the author's words:

Reaching into the unknown depths of the Outer Darkness, Darwin with his inherited background of bad European philosophy could thus materialize an amazing progression of 'upward' emanations, beguilingly flattering to a contemporary humanity now supplied with all the arguments necessary for unabashedly presuming itself superior even to Caesar and Christ by the circumstances alone of chronological succession. (p. 87)

Darwin was not alone in voicing what had become a general attitude of his age. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) filled in the moral and philosophical overtones. Still others joined to produce the corrosive mechanism through which modern man lost all concept of the Absolute. The role of Evolutionism in this process has been to provide the illusion that this' downwardness is actually a 'progress upwards' towards greater and greater mastery of the forces at work in nature and within man himself.

But the book ends on a positive note. The author feels that the world has cyclically passed beyond its materialistic peak of greatest objectification and even science is coming to recognize this change. Referring to the work of British physicist John Stewart Bell, he points out that Bell's Interconnectedness Theorem is a good point of departure. However, our present moment cyclically is described in the words of a Moroccan holy man:

From now until the end of time, all the doors
are wide open_the gates of heaven and
the gates of hell.

The book is rich in anecdotes ranging from aboriginal people of the Americas to allusions to the Balinese temples. At times the persuasive prose soars into the realm of poetic deduction of truths:

As for a diamond, a cedar, or a lion, how can one imagine there being a need or initiative to 'mutate' into something 'higher'? Do nightingales sing and eagles soar better today than did their first progenitors?

Review by: Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal