

A WORLD GONE BACKWARDS

There is a regression—a progression in reverse—of thinking in the way men regard reality today from the thinking which obtained 500 years ago. Here is a list of the steps, looking backwards.

Feminism,

whose thesis, grounded in the assertion of a simple equality between men and women, insists that women have ever been oppressed by men, and must struggle to redress this injustice, is one of the corollaries of—

Marxism (Dialectical materialism),

whose thesis of struggle between the classes of men is derived from the explanation found in the philosophy of—

Hegel

who argued that reality cannot be understood save as a perpetual struggle between contraries (thesis ; antithesis = synthesis) ; which view derived ultimately from the thought of—

Descartes

whose inversion of the right understanding of reality (not *do follows be*, but *be follows do*) resulted in the twin philosophical evils of subjectivism and materialism. This error in the philosophical order flowed from the theological error of—

Luther

rejecting God's authority in favour of *his own* authority. This error led millions to abandon the one true faith, the faith established by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity become man, Jesus Christ. This error involved, inchoately, rejection of belief in God's very existence, namely atheism.



Martin Luther

Note the change in attitude towards reality that developed. Having abandoned the realisation that God, its Creator and Conservor, is reality's over-arching Orderer, and (what follows) that creation as a realm of peace flowing from that order (for peace is *the tranquillity of order*) men began to conceive of reality as a sort of battlefield of forces forever in strife.

Having rejected the Orderer, men began to refuse to acknowledge the existence of the order in the universe, save as something accidental, a lucky effect of the interaction of things. This defect of understanding is to be seen also in Darwin's theory of evolution with its paradigm of 'the survival of the fittest'. It underlies the current obsession with 'climate change', a subject we will address later in the year.

Luther's act was disordered and it brought disorder in its train. The harm he produced in the theological realm was reflected in the harm done by King Henry VIII in the temporal realm of England and its tributaries. Henry's tyranny, his theft of Church lands and the lands of the monasteries and their dependents to fund his excesses and reward the renegades who had supported him ; his confiscation of the commons, the lands on which any man had been free to graze his flocks ; and in innumerable other acts of pillage like his desecration of the tomb of St Thomas a'Becket, he destroyed the order that had kept the kingdom of which he was but a passing servant in substantial peace for a thousand years. In the twenty first century the fruits of his evil actions are all around us.

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God made man and woman to complement each other. Feminism treats the relationship between them as one of conflict. The result is harmful to women first. But, because the natural focus of women is *persons*, it brings its harm to all other members of the human race, to men and to children of both sexes. This manifests itself in the evils of contraception and of abortion, the killing of the innocent unborn.

The saints testify to just how much the devil hates God's creatures, but especially the creature God made in His own image and likeness, man. St John Chrysostom writes—

No one can feel such implacable hatred for his worst enemies as the Evil One feels for the human race. (On the Priesthood, 6.13)

St Augustine says—

If the devil could do everything he wanted, there would not remain a single living human being on the earth. (in Patrologia Latina XXXVII, 1246)

And St Bonaventure—

The cruelty of the devil is such that he would devour us at any moment if the divine power did not protect us. (Diaeta salutis, VII, cap I)

In the raft of evils that have afflicted the human race since Luther's rebellion we see, in its intricacy, the work of the devil as he strives to destroy, or to bring to hell, each member of the human race.

Nature has laws that bind each of the various categories of being. You will recall us covering the four different categories of things in earlier lessons—

minerals plants animals men—
respectively, non-living (one category) and living (three categories).

You will recall how the divisions among the living appear. Living things are *automotive*—they move themselves to their acts—in three ways :

<i>Plants</i>	<i>Animals (brutes)</i>	<i>Men</i>
As to <i>execution</i> only	As to <i>execution</i> and <i>form</i>	As to <i>execution, form</i> and <i>end</i>

There are natural laws that bind *all creatures* whether living or non-living, like the law of gravity. There are laws that bind *living things* only, like the need for light—almost no living thing that can do without light. It is a law of their existence that plants must be rooted in soil and have access to moisture and nourishment. Animals must have scope to exercise their power of grasping the forms of particular things which we call sense knowledge and its corollary, the power to move themselves from place to place. And men, as well as needing to comply with all these laws, must comply with one more law that nature imposes on them as concomitant to their endowment with intellect and will, the law of morals.

A dog does not steal if it takes a leg of lamb from an unattended dining room table. But if a tramp should break in from the road and take the food, what he does is stealing. For man is bound by a law which does not constrain a brute animal, a law summarised in the ten commandments to be found in the Old Testament.

In our first lesson for the year we showed the representation of a light aeroplane flying at the limit of its ability in a 60° turn. If a pilot tries to increase the banking angle further, the plane will fall out of the sky as the seaplane fell out of the sky in Perth, Western Australia, on 26th January. No pilot can ignore the demands of the natural law of aerodynamics if he is to survive. The law of morals is no less demanding. If a man breaches that part of the natural law by rejecting God's authority, by taking his name in vain, by lying or stealing his neighbour's goods, by murdering, by committing adultery, he suffers no less a penalty.

This is why the Church refers to such a failure as a mortal sin, *mortal* because it kills the life of grace in the man's soul. A plane crash can kill the body. A mortal sin is much worse. It kills the soul.
