

# Book Reviews

*THE TRANSFORMIST ILLUSION.*

By Douglas Dewar.  
(Dehoff Publications. 15s.),

Review by Martin Lings

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There can be little doubt that in the modern world more cases of loss of religious faith are to be traced to the theory of evolution as their immediate cause than to anything else. It is true, surprising though it may seem, that many people still contrive to live out their lives in a tepid and precarious combination of religion and evolutionism. But for the more logically minded, there is no option but to choose between the two, that is, between the doctrine of the fall of man and the "doctrine" of the rise of man, and to reject altogether the one not chosen. Millions of our contemporaries have chosen evolutionism on the grounds that evolution is a "scientifically proved truth", as many of them were taught it at school; and the gulf between them and religion is widened still further by the fact that the religious man, unless he happens to be a scientist, is unable to make a bridge between himself and them by producing the right *initial* argument, which must be on the scientific plane. If not a scientist, he will be shouted down and reduced to silence by all sorts of scientific jargon that he does not understand. How many of us are capable of discoursing intelligently about Inoceramus, Volutocorbis, Syringothyris, Zaphrentis and Micraster?

Douglas Dewar's *The Transformist Illusion* which, since its publication in America some years ago, has not received in England the attention it deserves, is an overwhelming condemnation of evolutionism on purely scientific grounds, and the fact that the author himself was an evolutionist in his youth, though already a severe critic of Darwin, makes him all the more qualified to meet his adversaries on their own ground. Needless to say, he is by no means the first to have written along these lines, and not the least valuable feature of his book is its richness in quotations from the staunch minority of scientists who, during the last hundred years, have persistently maintained that Darwin's theory has no scientific basis and that it runs contrary to many known facts. If for the most part their pleas for a rigorously scientific attitude towards the whole question fell on deaf ears, it was because the theory of evolution has the great "merit" of fitting in perfectly with the belief in human progress, which has been the main trend of Western thought for more than a century. To criticize evolutionism, however soundly, was about as effective as trying to stem a tidal wave. But the wave now shows some signs of having spent itself, while on the other hand Dewar's book is of such force and clarity that it might well have some success\* where others have failed.

He treats the subject from many different angles, physical, geological, palaeontological, geographical and biological, his method being always to present us with the facts and to draw a sharp line of demarcation between fact and theory—a line which

evolutionists have done all they can to blur. Particularly significant in this respect is a chapter on "Alleged Fossil Links between Man and Non-human Ancestors", which concludes: "The foregoing facts (amongst which is the fact that there exist fossils of men of modern type which are far older than those of Neanderthal man, Pekin man and other supposed "missing links") render it almost certain that man did not evolve from some lower animal. As the fossils give no help whatever to the evolution theory, it is not surprising that evolutionists, although agreed that man did so evolve, are by no means agreed as to the kind of creature from which man is descended; indeed it is scarcely an exaggeration to say in this matter: *quot homines tot sententiae*. In consequence it is not easy to classify the many different views of man's origin. The following classification is as accurate as I can make it".

He then draws up a table dividing the evolutionists into ten main classes, with many sub-divisions, according to their opinions as to what animal formed the last link in the chain of man's supposedly non-human ancestry, opinions which are all purely conjectural and mutually contradictory.

Equally instructive in its own way is the chapter which follows this, "Transformism versus the Geological Record". The geological evidence is hostile to the theory of evolution while at the same time it in no sense contradicts the religious doctrine of sudden creation for, as Dewar has pointed out in an earlier chapter, "the abruptness with which new Classes and Orders of animals make their first appearance in the rocks known to us is one of the most striking features of the geological record". Unable to turn an altogether blind eye to this, some of the more objective evolutionists have sought to save evolutionism and at the same time to avoid having recourse to a Divine Creator, by endowing nature herself with powers of sudden creation which are termed "explosive evolution" (Schindewolf) or *aromorphosis* (Severtzoff and Zeuner). Such theories have the added convenience of absolving the evolutionist from the need to produce missing links.

"Schindewolf... asserts that it is useless to look for missing links in many cases, because the supposed links never existed. The first bird hatched from a reptilian egg".

No less miraculous, however, are the gradual changes imagined to have taken place by the "non-explosive" evolutionists, and in this connection Dewar fully confirms a suspicion that some of us may have had before, the suspicion that under cover of technical terms scientists sometimes talk or write nonsense with impunity. A case in point, given in the chapter on "Some Transformations Postulated by the Doctrine of Evolution", is an account by Dr. R. Broom, an authority on the fossils of the South African mammal-like reptiles, of how he supposes the mammals to have evolved from the Ictidosaurians. In Broom's own language the account sounds quite impressive though it is more or less unintelligible to the layman. Translated by Dewar into plain English, it reads:

"Some reptile scrapped the original hinge of its lower jaw and replaced it with a new one attached to another part of the skull. Then five of the bones on each side of the lower jaw broke away from the biggest bone. The jaw bone to which the hinge was originally attached, after being set free, forced its way into the middle part of the ear, dragging with it three of the lower jaw bones, which, with the quadrate and the reptilian middle-ear bone, formed themselves into a completely new outfit. While all this was going on, the Organ of Corti, peculiar to mammals and their essential organ of hearing, developed in the

middle ear. Dr. Broom does not suggest how this organ arose, nor describe its gradual development. Nor does he say how the incipient mammals contrived to eat while the jaw was being re-hinged, or to hear while the middle and inner ears were being reconstructed!"

Broom's hypothesis is not just an exceptional freakish vagary, but a typical example of the sort of transformation that the evolutionist assumes to have been repeated again and again all along the line of any existing animal's evolution from the first "one-celled" ancestor. What is exceptional in Broom's case is that unlike most others he does at least try to explain how the supposed transformation might have occurred. Dewar comments, not without justice:

"One reason why the evolution theory was so readily accepted was the belief that, while the theory of special creation involves the miraculous, that of evolution does not. One of the aims of the present book is to demonstrate that the theory of evolution, far from dispensing with miracles, involves more than does the theory of creation".

Meantime most people are altogether ignorant of this and other equally significant facts that *The Transformist Illusion* lays bare. One result of this ignorance is the flood of books by non-scientists about the history of mankind, books for adults and books for children, which take evolution altogether for granted, as a truth that no reasonable man would call in question, and which pour out, year after year, doing untold harm; and not the least harmful of these books are those by believers on the brink of unbelief, some of them religious dignitaries, who seek to stabilize their own and others' tottering faith by a reinterpretation of religion in conformity with "the light of modern scientific knowledge".

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\* The same might be said of a still more recent refutation of evolutionism by the French biologist, Professor Louis Bounoure, which appeared in two installments under the title *Evolutionnisme et Progres Humain* in the monthly review *Le Monde et la Vie* (October 1963 and March 1964).