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On God

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Abstract

Theology for a Scientific Age, by A. Peacocke, SCM Press Ltd, , London, 1996.

Recently, the book named above was brought to my attention. It sets out to bring to terms science and religion(s), through a new theology. Unfortunately, though well-written, the book brings nothing new in this old issue, except for a slightly increased confusion; it maintains not a single statement of its own, but contains various reviews, more or less accurate, of various commonplaces.

Molecules, the book claims, ensembled, both by chance and by law, in an unknown way, to give rise to a complex organism (physical, biological, behavioral, social and cultural), which is the human being; this latter would be moved by intelligibility and meaning, and while the former would correspond to the scientific endeavour, the latter would belong to religion, or faith in God (or Gods); this is rather vague and superficial, the human being is animated by many other things, like, for instance, emotions, and, especially, thinking; the human being is probably the only animal who may get emotional about abstract things which we call logic. With several Gods there are problems, like always with the multiplicity, as to explaining their origin, or common substrate, as well as their mutual relations; with a unique God there are other problems, as to explaining the differences in this world, and especially the good and the evil. (I note here in passing that the author seems to emphasize a "self-limited" God, an idea which is very alike to the divine, "transcendental censorship" theory of another philosopher). All this, however, is logic, and we are thereby pretty forced to admit the self-consistency of the pure thought, which is indeed amazing. This is God. The ontological argument is *Cogito, ergo Est, i.e.* God exists, and it is pure thinking.

Science explains the things by natural causes, while religion explains them by supernatural causes; as such, there is nothing to conciliate. At the beginning, people explained, or at least referred to, in a rather primitive way, everything by God; God therefore must have been omnipotent, universal, perfect, unique, etc. However, spots on the Moon, and non-circular planetary orbits, leaving aside many others, were not pointing at all toward a perfect Godness. Science began as a quest toward God's perfection, and it continues today, and will forever, as such a quest. Science discovered that God perfection resides in more abstract things, and these are the laws of physics; motion, space and time, the principle of inertia, waves, chaos, etc, are all Plato's ideas (perfect, self-contained, eternal, immutable, etc), devoid of any material content; they apply to the natural world, to a certain extent; to this extent the world exists, and it is God; the extent to which they do not apply is their own nature, and this is again God, obviously; therefore there exists God, and only God, and the natural world is God itself as expressed by the physics laws. I say physics but

mean sciences, of course, to the extent to which these latter are in a mathematical form; because, the common substrate of the natural laws are Pythagoras' numbers, and our subjective perception of the numbers is what we call mathematics. It follows, therefore, that God is immanent, as Spinoza maintained, and it resides in all of us; and the evil is only our ignorance in this matter. The quest for God in ourselves makes life worth living, as a continuous struggle toward perfection and happiness, which ends by death. The worldly participation to the ideal forms is the destiny of the human race. All this has been revealed by pure reasoning on our natural world, *i.e.* by science. Science, therefore, discovered God, and testifies to its existence, in the terms expressed above.

Why is it so, and not otherwise, one may ask. Why, for instance, would the mankind not be definitively and permanently peaceful, omniscient and happy? The answer is that if it would be so, it would also be otherwise too, indeed. First note that this is a substantial, material position, and if it would exist as such we would need another position to explain away the former; and so on; this is an endlessly recurrent process, with no self-consistency; it also serves to prove that matter does not exist, according to the laws of physics. Secondly, it must notice that anything has a dual nature, as it may be repeated, for instance; or "there is a thing" and "there is a there is a thing"; these are the numbers, as expressing the multiplicity, duality and uniqueness. Consequently, if something is ever going to be, it is solely in the terms given above, *i.e.* God, and science, and so on. A multi-world universe in particular will surely be a scientific one, with God as the central concept.

Some of my assertions above may look hazardous at least, especially for the many. This is why I should like to give below a small sample of scientific Godness: the principle of inertia.

There exists space, there exists time, and there exists motion, the way we perceive the former two; we may agree to have a position \mathbf{r} at a certain time t , and call this particle; it moves, *i.e.* during the infinitesimal time dt the position changes by $d\mathbf{r}$, along a trajectory therefore; if the particle is free, *i.e.* nothing else happens, the space and time must only be undetermined, *i.e.* homogeneous; consequently, in the next infinitesimal lapse of time dt the position will change precisely by the same amount $d\mathbf{r}$, and so on; one writes this $\mathbf{v} = \text{const}$, or $d\mathbf{v}/dt = 0$, and say that a free particle moves with a constant velocity \mathbf{v} , *i.e.* it has inertia; this is the principle of inertia. Here we have subjective perceptions of changes (space, time, motion), as successive multiplicities of numbers, certain choices, like trajectory, mathematical conventions, like the infinitesimal quantities $d\mathbf{r}$ and dt , and their quotient the velocity \mathbf{v} , another subjective representation of a homogeneous, uniform, undetermined space and time for something which is free, *i.e.* equivalent with the former; and probably, a few other conventions of language, when we say, for instance, that time flows and position changes, etc. All the physics is built upon the principle of inertia, or in reference to it, or by using such types of reasoning at least, and it works perfectly well in the natural world, and this is nothing but God; among its various elements, the central position is occupied certainly by motion, by our perfect ability to deal mathematically, in an astoundingly workable manner, with this subjective representation.