
Exploded Explanations -- by G. K. Chesterton.

"My own belief rests on certain philosophical and spiritual arguments which are not in the least affected by whether the divine destiny of man was given to an animal with an ancestry of apes; for the simple reason that, being a philosophical believer in miracles, I am bound to admit that God might have chosen to give it to a creature with an ancestry of oysters.

"Nor is it affected, for instance, by the modern dispute about the structure of matter; a dispute that may be fatal to the materialist, but does not at all affect the mystic.

"It makes no difference to me, in that sense, whether the Atom is what all the great scientists lately said it was - a little round thing like a billiard ball - or whether it is, as the new scientists are saying, a most complicated structure fitted up with electricity like an American hotel.

"As a matter of mere sentiment and association I rather prefer billiard balls to electric fittings. There are so many degrees of comfort in the electric fittings; as, for instance, in the electric chair.

"It is rather a symbol; for those now teaching us of this electric structure are also teaching that the universe itself is doomed to death. But that again does not affect me; it was rather the old orthodox religious idea that it is doomed to death.

"It may be asked why those who think with me bother to argue about Evolution or Materialism at all. The answer is that we do not attack true science, nor even false science, but only false logic.

"The Materialist is trying to escape from the false logical position in which he has quite wantonly placed himself. He forgets what he himself said; he denies what he himself promised. Thus Mr. H. G. Wells, in debate with Mr. Belloc, was content to say that Natural Selection, or a certain sort of evolution, does really happen, and anyone can see it. But the claim was not that this happened; it was that this explained everything else that happened.

"It was that this told us the whole story of why the camel has a hump or the rhinoceros has a horn.

"Anybody can see that swift animals will escape when slow animals will be overtaken. What the Darwinian said was that by this process he could explain every feature of an elephant and an eagle. And he cannot.

"So long as he cannot the old and obvious question about design remains. Anybody can see that when there is only grass a cow might feed where a tiger might starve. The question is: can this process alone turn a tiger into a cow?

"It is the same with the false logic about the Atom. It does not matter to us whether it is simple or complex; but it did matter to the materialist to prove that it was simple. He chose to come forward, offering to prove that there was nothing but matter; from the fact that its first form is so simple that it might be a blind accident of bubbles or round lumps.

"When it is found to be in fact an elaborate apparatus with a mathematical design, what breaks down is not matter; but it is his offer to explain everything by matter. For an elaborate design does not explain itself; and by its very nature raises the old problem of a designer." (From the Chicago Herald and Examiner.)