

in many directions; not only Metaphysics but also Psychology, Sociology, and—we may go further and say—not only all philosophical but also much of the best scientific thought. This truth can be broadly stated in these words: Nowhere in the world of facts and phenomena do we meet with things in their isolation; the phenomenal world is a connected whole, a continuum, in time and space, and to deal with single isolated or independent facts or phenomena leads away from an understanding of their true nature and a comprehension of their reality. It is indeed a remarkable fact that the very process which, in the regions of science, has produced so much knowledge, led to so many discoveries and predictions, and been followed by so many useful applications—the process of mathematical abstraction and definition—should, at the same time, have led us away from a real comprehension of the nature of things into an artificial world of our own creation. Thus it has come about that the greatest step taken in modern times within the natural sciences themselves has consisted in studying the objects of nature, not in isolation, but in their surroundings, and the processes of nature not independently but in their sequence in time. The whole vocabulary of modern natural science, such as “habitat,” “environment,” “evolution,” and “solidarity,” mark this change in thought; in fact, hand in hand with the increase of precision characteristic of the mathematical treatment, there has marched the opposite process of annulling conventional definitions and of breaking down traditional landmarks.

I have had occasion to point out how the science of