U N S O L V E D P R O B L E M S O F E V O L U T I O N - 2

***Order out of Chaos*.** An argument used by Richard Dawkins (quoted by M.Behe in *Darwin's Black Box*)to show that order can be generated from random processes in mutation-selection is that there could be a set of wheels, say nineteen of them, each with the twenty-six letters of the alphabet on its rim. These are repeatedly set spinning, and stopped. Each time they are stopped, and one wheel has a letter in place for the required message, it is fixed in place. Then the rest of the wheels are set spinning again. Each time an appropriate letter appears in this way, the wheel is fixed as before, until all of the wheels are fixed in place with 19-letter message.

If this result had happened by chance alone, its probability would be only one chance in 26 to the power of 19, which is in the order of 1 in ten to the power of 28, an almost inconceivably low probability. But by this means, the chances are made to appear much higher. However, the great weakness of this idea is that the essential selective function, which identifies and holds the correct answers, cannot be performed by a random process. It can only be performed by an intelligent agent who can discriminate between favourable and unfavourable results, and who has the final result in mind. This is anything but chance, and from a scientific point of view, the intervention of this agent is as alien to the Darwinian position as Divine intervention itself. Here again, Dawkins attacks creationists in a way which requires their own ideas of intelligent selection and direction, and his arguments are clear reflection of the kind of thinking by which evolution is supported.

Evolution and Probability. The same subject is worth exploring in more detail because questions of probability are of central importance here. Until recent times, the changes and transformations required by evolution could be accepted as possible, however improbable. However, the rise of molecular biology has made it possible to quantify the probabilities involved in the formation of organs or protein molecules by random forces. It appears that the smallest kind of protein structure that could be said to be alive requires a combination of 400 amino acid molecules. If this protein molecule were to be produced by random combinations, the chances of this happening would be one in 400 factorial, the number of different ways of combining any 400 objects. (see *Evolution from Space* by Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, pp.20-22). Four hundred factorial (ie. the product of all whole numbers from 400 down to 1), is equal to 6 times 10 to the power of 868. Of all these combinations, only one can be the right one. Even if these rearrangements were made at a rate of a million per second, the time needed to make them all would still be at least 10 to the power of 800 times the age of the universe since the Big Bang.

It should be noted that this is not a matter of very low probability, but of impossibility, because mathematicians place the transition from improbability to impossibility where the chances are 1 in 10 to the power of 50, this being vastly more probable than a chance of 1 in 10 the power of 868. Another problem here is that we do not want just one protein molecule, but millions of them, and not scattered over the universe, but concentrated in one locality.

Besides the basic unit of protein, it is now also possible to quantify the essential group of enzymes necessary for the functioning of a living cell, and the chances of its formation by random collisions. Here the mathematics becomes, if possible, even more off-scale than before. This structure requires 2000 different enzymes, each one of which has to perform a different function in the cell. The random formation of any one of these enzymes from the 20 amino acids has, according to Hoyle and Wickramasinghe, a probability of 1 in 10 to the power of 20, which is still within the theoretical bounds of possibility. However, the probability of the whole system of two thousand forming by chance is only 1 in 10 to the power of twenty itself raised to the power of 2000, that is, 10 to the power of forty thousand, a figure with forty thousand noughts after the 1.

This, as Hoyle expresses it, would not be possible even if the whole universe consisted of organic soup. (No new location for this molecular miracle has been suggested since Darwin's "warm little pond," and we may well wonder what little pond could exist continuously for billions of years without getting flushed out by floods, dried out by droughts, filled with volcanic ash, and any number of other natural events). We do not have the option of smaller and simpler vital systems than the cell, because it is the smallest unit of self-replicating life. The cell has been shown to be an example of a system of "irreducible complexity," which is a way of saying that it must be complete or nothing; if one component in twenty was missing, the result would not be 19/20ths of a cell or system, but no system at all, one which could by no means replicate itself.

Hoyle and Wickramasinghe point out that at one time it was felt to be necessary to agree that very improbable advantageous changes could have happened, but only because that was before there was any quantitative analysis of the organic molecules of living things. Now that we have such knowledge the real improbabilities are so low as to merge with physical impossibility.

A common response of evolutionists to such facts as these is to say that there is no reason why these wildly improbable combinations should take place all at once. For example, in *The Blind Watchmaker* Richard Dawkins claims that the formation of the eye by random changes is by no means so improbable if the process of its formation took place through a series of intermediate stages. One can easily show that the probability of any one of these intermediates is far higher than that of the formation of the eye all at once. It is indeed true that complex changes can be broken down into smaller and more probable ones, but this does not mean that we can now assume that the whole process is any more probable. Suppose the probability of a certain change is 1 in 10 to the power of 20, and suppose it can be broken down into 20 intermediate stages, each of which has a probability of 1 in 10. If they each have a chance of 1 in 10, is not the probability of the whole series of changes 1 in 10 as well? Unfortunately for this kind of argument, no.

This is because these chance intermediaries are of no use unless they all happen in the right order; they are necessarily linked. Thus the probability of the second one, taken together with the first is not 1 in 10, but 1 in 10^2 or 1 in 100; that of the third, taken together with the first two, is 1 in 10^3, or 1 in 1000; by the time we reach the twentieth event, taken together with the previous 19, then, the chances are now back down to one in 10 to the power of twenty. Whether a complex structure is produced all at once, then, or through a series of stages, the probability or improbability of the final result cannot alter. Gradualism solves no problems in this realm.

Other Quantitative Factors in Evolution. If in fact new orders, families and genera had evolved from the still-existing invertebrates, fish, and reptiles, there would be every reason to expect yet other new species to have evolved from them by now. If

evolution was a law, the species which have existed for hundreds of millions of years will have had time to give rise to successive waves of new life-forms, not just one in each case. The real world is so different from this that it looks as though evolutionary changes were in fact unique and unrepeatable, if they happened at all. This paradox is to time what Blyth's problem is to space. Just as species do not evolve so as to expand into territories which were hostile to them, so neither do they continue to throw off new evolutionary branches with the passage of time. But if evolution was a real law, this could not be the case.

If all the major different forms of life regularly threw off new evolutionary forms, even if at intervals as long as 100 million years, new varieties of families and genera would be increasing in number by a geometric progression. Though species may become extinct, the larger categories like families and orders do not. If, then each order which comes into existence regularly gives rise to others, then one order will soon mean two, and then those two will mean four, and those four eight, and so on.

Compared with this schema, the actual condition of the living world is as stable as one would expect it to be if it were specially created. If evolution ever happened, it would consist of unique events in the early history of every variety of life, followed by millions of years of uniformity. There is no way that a true natural law could be to so large an extent absent from the things it supposedly applies to, and be so exceedingly irregular.

Ever-Rising Entropy. The subject of probability connects naturally with that of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, according to which entropy, the total amount of disorder, invariably rises in all physical systems. This is the fundamental law of physical science. So central is it, that it is one part of classical physics which has come through unchanged into quantum and relativity physics, and what has been written about it cannot get out of date. Consequently, if generative evolution took place, it would have to be despite the fact that there are always greater losses of ordered matter than any new order can compensate for, and an irreversible dissipation of available energy.

The combustion of sugars in the body and of hydrocarbon fuels in machines are typical examples of this. In such cases, the asymmetry between oxygen and more complex molecules is broken down to leave carbon dioxide and water. The universality of this law gives rise to A.S.Eddington's expression "time's arrow," because it is the mechanism which makes the passage of time irreversible. It has no analogue in the dimensions of space. When the arrow points to increasing disorder it is pointing to the future, and when pointing to increasing order, to the past.

A natural reaction to this idea is that its application to physical and chemical processes could not extend to the living world, where there are continual new generations of plant and animal life arising from seed to maturity. As each new living being is an instance of highly-developed order, entropy in this realm must be *falling,* not rising. But this is only in appearance. When we look at the amount of food, warmth and light required for the growth of a plant or animal, it will be found that

the amount of molecular order broken down in the nutrients consumed and in the sources of energy absorbed is always greater than the amount of order realized in its own structure.

States of physical disorder or symmetry are always more probable than states of order or asymmetry, because there are many more ways in which they can happen. An example of this, using very small numbers for clarity would be two separate groups of three objects, each of which can be arranged in 3 factorial or 6 different ways. The total number of permutations possible between these two groups would then be 6^2 or 36. But if the two groups are mixed up in a single group of six from the start, they could be arranged in 6 factorial or 720 ways, which is 20 times greater than when the two groups were separate. Because physical systems always tend toward an overall rise in disorder, then, they also tend to the most probable condition. This is what defines the physical background to the probabilities calculated for the random production of proteins and enzyme groups. We naturally assumed that nature itself neither impels nor impedes the combinations we are considering. In reality, however, the Entropy law means that the physical world is positively hostile to the production of new order by natural forces alone, and the most probable state is the least ordered.

This fact does not affect permutative evolution, though, because it does not involve new-formed order but a redistribution of the parts of an existing order. Each species can be regarded as a repository of order in the form of a group of genes, some of which may be manifested in preference to others. Thus the changes brought about in a

species by environmental pressures do not require them to change in ways that would reverse the rise of entropy. Similarly, the life-history of each new living being, which is sometimes seen as a prototype of evolution, conforms to the same entropic order. It too is an elaboration of a pre-existing order, unlike generative evolution, which requires the spontaneous rise of new order. Conversely, the new order or reduced entropy that generative evolution implies has no basis in any existing structure, but must arise by chance, if at all. For this reason, it conflicts with the fundamental law that total entropy invariably rises.

The idea that order and form could arise spontaneously would, if believed by scientists, take away the motive for scientific investigation. If rocks spontaneously took on the forms of fossils or ancient artefacts, there would be no point in looking for the causes of such things. This question can be illustrated by the old belief that insect life and moulds were spontaneously generated by decaying organic material, which was proved unscientific by Pasteur's experiments in which he proved that nothing ever germinated from organic soups which were first boiled and then sealed in. Thus the idea of "spontaneous generation" was disposed of, along with the belief that things could happen without causes. However, despite the finality of Pasteur's experiment, evolutionists continue to support a very similar belief, that life can come out of nothing, or living order out of lifeless disorder.

The Entropy law points backwards in time to a state at which order was at a maximum, and at which there was no random element. The

creationist implications of this are fairly obvious. According to Eddington, the past cannot contain an infinite series of states with increasing order, but rather that it goes back to "a limit at which it becomes perfect," and "There is no doubt that the scheme of physics . . . postulates a date at which the entities of the universe were created in a state of high organization which they have been squandering ever since." (*The Nature of the Physical World*, p.84) What we have here would in effect be a law of generative evolution which worked in the opposite sense to that of Darwinian evolution. Thus the production of new order in nature in spontaneous ways does not deserve to be thought of as a scientific idea, but is merely a projection of a popular belief in progress.

The Relation of Mind to Nature. If human beings had been produced by generative evolution from organic molecules through a long series of random changes, it must follow that everything about us, including our reasoning faculty, would be of essentially the same biochemical nature. Our intelligence, which we believe to be capable of reaching necessary and universal truths would thus be a product of contingent, particular and ephemeral events. Worse still, there would be no reason to believe that what we now take for reason will not eventually be turned into something quite different by future re-arrangements in our biochemical makeup. And yet every scientific argument put forward in support of evolution over the past hundred and

fifty years takes the form of a rational deduction from selected facts. This use of reason excludes itself, by leaving no room for truth as an objective universal, with its necessary implication that what is true for one person must be true for all.

On the contrary, the True would be reduced to what various individuals and groups of individuals wanted to call "true," because of the effects of their various body chemistries. Professor Dawkins' belief that evolution is true could arise only from the predominance in him of one gene over another, while my belief that it is untrue must result from an opposing arrangement of the same things. Our choice among ideas and beliefs would thus be brought down to the same level as our preferences among wines and cheeses. The fact that no one on either side of the issue believes any such thing where their own ideas are at stake only shows the absurdities to which generative evolution would commit us, as its clearest conclusion is as unacceptable to its supporters as to its opponents.

Thus generative evolution not only takes away the grounds for trusting any proofs offered for it, it also undermines the fundamental realities which form the context of the theory. We speak glibly of the Universe, Nature, Natural Laws, e.g. Entropy - and Evolution, as though we were speaking of the Sun or the Moon, whereas in reality these major ideas are as much beyond the grasp of either the senses or the imagination as is God. This is not an accident, because realities of this order are known primarily through intellectual reflection, which is to say, they are only as objective as rational thought is. But what is this objectivity of mind? Our individual reasoning powers are at best incomplete in many ways. Firstly, the lengths of time during which they are effectively objective may vary a great deal, even when not subject to outside interruptions. Secondly, even when our own

reason is quite correct, the range of things it can reach is, as a rule, much more limited than we would want it to be, and the need for sleep and rest constantly interrupts it.

For all that, the intelligence can only measure up to its criteria if every instance of its activity is also an instance of an objective Reason which pervades everything. In the last analysis, this must be nothing less than the eternal *Logos* according to which the material universe was formed. Our individual reason would be our instance of the *Logos,* the true pattern and cause all things, as in the prologue to St.John's Gospel. This conception is far from being a mystical or metaphysical option. Nothing less than this will do if our trust in the operations of reason is to be justified. If reason and intellect are our individual participation in something which precedes and causes natural phenomena, it would indeed have the right to be what we instinctively take it for. But if the relation between the intelligence and phenomena is reversed, so that our intelligence is a product of the latter, it could not deserve priority over any of the natural phenomena it is supposed to be judging, or over irrational beliefs.

Either the claims of reason are a delusion, then, or reason is part of an eternal reality for which evolution could have no meaning. The same observations are applicable to the other higher values, such as moral right and wrong, and aesthetics. There is no evolutionary explanation for the sense of moral good or of the beautiful. If these things are to have the objective status we mostly believe they must have, they must be instances of the same eternal and pre-cosmic reality as that to

which reason and truth belong. Contrary to this, evolution makes our moral sense a product of natural inclinations - the very things that moral judgement must stand outside of, if it is to have any meaning. As C.S.Lewis puts it, on any naturalistic basis," ' I ought' is of the same nature as ' I itch. ' "*(Miracles,* p.40)

If it were supposed that morality derived from an urge to self-preservation by means of conformity, its most likely origin would be in the rules obeyed by animals which graze in herds or hunt in packs, but this is as far as ever from what real morality means as a mode of objective truth. The essence of moral principle is that it is *not* a tool of self-interest. In reality, however, Darwinists nearly always subscribe to

moral values which could have no meaning on the basis of their theory. Even the idea that it is morally right to devote one's time to the pursuit of truth in the natural sciences has no foundation if one believes that what we are results only from a competitive struggle for food and territory. Scientists are usually oblivious of such problems because most of them feel free to see the mind as nothing in relation to the universe; their thinking is focused on externals so habitually that the ability to think about *what* is doing the thinking is suppressed, and so it is hardly ever noticed that there would be neither universe nor science without the activity of minds.

The Origin of the Soul. Closely connected with the problem that generative evolution would make objective or universal truth impossible,

is the implication that evolution must be able to produce souls as well as bodies. As long as we have only vague ideas as to what the soul is, that may not seem to be a problem. Common sense habitually descends to what one might call a "bones and meat" idea of personal identity, as though we were simply so much organic material which happens to be able to reason from time to time. Such a being might be pictured as having a soul like an attendant ghost, and perhaps organic bodies just naturally give rise to some such effect, rather as solid objects cast shadows.

However, things are very different when we have an appropriate idea of the soul. One of its properties is that it contains and sustains a representation of the universe from its unique point of view. This idea of representation emerges from the way in which physical objects become known to us. Things as we know them differ in some important ways from what we understand their physical originals to be. For example, our representations of the outside world are not observable from that world; things in the world are necessarily separated from one another, like fire in one place and water in another, whereas in our minds they are fused in one experience without interaction, which could not happen in the external natural order.

This idea that our mental representations of physical things do not obey physical laws is acknowledged by Aquinas :

> “. . . a sign of this (exemption from natural conditions) is that in the intellect things even of a contrary nature cease to be contraries. Thus white and black are not contraries in the intellect, since they do not exclude one another; rather they are co-implicative, since by grasping the one we understand the other." (SCG. II, Ch.55,[7]) The same thing applies to the example of fire and water just referred to.

Similarly, things in the world have spatial bulk, that is, they occupy public space, but in our minds they do not. Our knowledge of them is of course spatial in form, but not substantially. Therefore the inside of this room as experienced by me does not exclude or obstruct the same room as experienced by anyone else present. In short, the world as present in the soul is a reality in a different category from that of the physical world. Our representation of the world also includes such things as its evolutionary history, if we consider that to be real, and from this it follows that the process of evolution must give rise to millions of representations of itself. (ie. the consciousnesses of millions of human beings who have a knowledge of evolution).

Even if these millions of representations were physical, not mental, like the images formed in cameras or sounds in sound recordings, evolution could still not begin to provide a mechanism whereby any such thing could result from it. But when, for the reasons given, these millions or billions of representations are not even in the same (physical) category as their originals, the effect is many times more prohibitive. And yet, if we are products of evolution, it must give rise to endless mental simulacra of itself, or no one could know there was such a thing as evolution, or even a world at all. The contradiction involved in this is like supposing that a theatre must be constructed by a play performed in it, where the physical changes of evolution were the actors, and our minds were the theatre. On this basis, it is possible to see the full enormity of what evolutionists are claiming when they claim that evolution has produced us.

Before leaving the subject of the soul in relation to evolution, it is sometimes argued by those who wish to combine religious beliefs with Darwinism that God could have inserted or infused a soul into man's anthropoid ancestors. One problem this raises is that it assumes that the soul is in the body, in the same way as the kernel of a nut is in its shell, rather as though the body were the primary and independent reality. However, the soul is in the body only as much as three-dimensional space is in this room, when, more truly, it is the room which is in this space.

The second problem comes from the way in which it clashes with the idea of the soul as the "Form of the body." Our supposed anthropoid ancestor no doubt had soul and consciousness, even though not of the rational and self-aware kind. Thus his ape-soul was the form of his ape-body. This must mean that no new soul could be given without simultaneously expelling the original soul and violently transforming the body to make it answer to its new Form. Such an event would in reality mean the annihilation of one being and the creation of another one in his place, a change which could never be part of an evolution, being more radical than the creation of Eve out of Adam's rib. A soul which *could* be infused into a given individual could not be in any way essential to his or her personality, therefore. This would be the impersonal kind of soul which, according to some Oriental religions, reincarnates in an endless series of different bodies, having no intrinsic relation to any of them. That completely excludes the Christian idea that the soul is the form (either Platonic or Aristotelian) of the body.

Possibly, one variant on this position remains, namely, that it is the rational and self-aware principle, or intellectual part of the soul, which is not of one substance with the rest of the soul. The soul's functions would then be confined to those of sense-data, emotion, imagination, and the expression of the personality. There

would in effect be two souls in each person, one personal and mortal, the other impersonal and immortal. Some such idea was taught by Averroes, but our tradition has rejected it. This idea has also a Platonic connection, because in one of Plato's creation myths, the rational part of the soul is created by God, while the creation of its non-rational parts is delegated to the lesser divinities. But this is something even Platonists do not take literally. In short, the soul as we understand it demands creation, and so cannot result from generative evolution.

The Argument from Design. One of the most interesting results of recent scientific advances is the new scope which they allow to the argument from Design, as given by Payley. Even without this development, it would still have been true to say that the Design argument had never really been refuted, for all the dismissive noises made by evolutionists. In Payley's version of this argument, a lost watch found by chance could still reveal a system of means intelligently adapted to one end, even if the finders knew nothing about how it was made. It would be impossible to believe that such a thing came into existence by chance, and that it was not designed by an intelligent being. In the same way, all the parts of the bodies of living creatures function as so many means to the same end, the life and wellbeing of the animal in question. Even the Darwinian idea of natural selection cannot really eliminate design, because it boils down to an assertion that purposive developments in nature are probable enough to happen all by themselves. As I have tried to show, what is now known about the true improbabilities involved in this does not leave room for such a belief.

More recently, Professor E.H.Andrews has tried to improve on Payley's use of the argument by the supposition that we happen not

upon a watch, but a stainless steel pin. The amount of information which constitutes the pin is very small compared with the amount that would constitute a watch, and infinitesimal in comparison with that of the simplest living organism. Despite this, we are just as unwilling to admit that the pin was formed by chance as to admit that the watch was.

We could take this a stage further and assume that it was a very bad pin, without either a sharp or blunt end, but just a very thin cylinder of metal. In this case, all the information that constituted it could be written in full on a finger nail, compared with which the information for a tiny organism would fill the equivalent of a set of encyclopedias. Besides this, the piece of metal has now no manifest use or purpose. Even so, we remain as certain as ever that this object must be a product of intelligent design. Consequently, any denial of design to living organisms could only result from extreme - and irrational - prejudice.

The Design argument was well known before Payley, and it was criticized by Hume on two grounds, both of which have been obviated by some of the latest discoveries about the working of organisms. The first objection is that man-made mechanisms and organisms are too dissimilar for us to have the right to judge them by the same criteria. The implication of this is that the Design argument depends on an over-stretched analogy between the working of a machine and that of an organism. However, we do not have to interpret it in this way. Instead, the Design argument could apply in the first place to organisms, while its application to such things as watches need only be an illustrative device, serving to help the

imagination with this idea.

If any doubt remains on this score, the latest biochemical discoveries show that the smallest parts of organisms are in effect molecular *machines,* so that there is no longer a hard distinction between organisms and machines. According *to* Michael Behe (*Darwin's Black Box, pp.218-219)* it will soon be possible to close the ring on this argument by making a clock out of purely biochemical parts, because there are some kinds of regulatory cells in the body that do in any case keep time, as in heart tissues.

Secondly, Hume argues that if organisms in this world are products of design, then this fact must be an instance of a rule, namely, that organisms are produced by design in other worlds as well. In other words, if all the organisms in our experience are products of design, it could only be by induction that we could then say that they were always designed. Here again, Hume is forcing a theory into a place where it is not necessary. We *could* be reasoning inductively, but equally we could be arguing that Design is in fact the best explanation for any organism, regardless of the number of instances there are of them. This objection has also been disposed of empirically by the fact that modern biochemistry "routinely designs biochemical systems," so that design is now an observed fact.

Finally, there is Darwin's attack on Design, for which his idea of Natural Selection was primarily intended. How effective that is can be seen from what I mentioned in connection with evolution and probability. Natural selection or, better, mutation-selection, appears thus as a belief that things necessary for the functioning of organisms just

assemble themselves, as though "time's arrow" pointed in the direction opposite to its actual one. Natural selection requires long lengths of time during which its products continue to exist in all stages of incompleteness before realizing their end, whereas living things are full of what molecular biologists call "systems of irreducible complexity." Like machines, such systems will only function at all if every single part is in place. Such things cannot by definition evolve in a closed system which contains nothing else but structures of this kind.

Man-made machines are only seen to evolve because their new developments are conceived in human minds which transcend them, and from thence invade the machines from a different mode of being. The evolution of one machine into another can therefore only happen through the intervention of this transcendental factor, which is to say that it is in reality *creation*, and therefore ruled out for the purposes of science.

This leaves us with a conclusion which for most people could always have spoken for itself, namely that living beings are proof of a Creator who designed and made them, as where Saint Paul says of God that: "Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." (Rom.1, v.20)

How Evolution Destroys Tradition. Despite the direct reference to creation in the above text, the idea of generative evolution as a model of all reality has been infiltrating official traditional thought, notably Catholic theology, for many years now. Those responsible are so steeped in the idea of reality as process that they do not sense anything strange about a supposedly spiritual message which implies that man is really just a more sophisticated kind of animal.

Closely allied to this is a radical change in what is believed to be the nature of knowledge. Formerly, knowledge was thought to comprise firstly metaphysical and theological knowledge, while scientific knowledge was only a subordinate part of this realm, because it was tied to things in the world of sense. But since the Second World War, this order of priorities has been overturned, such that scientific knowledge has been set up as the paradigm of *all* knowledge, while intellective knowledge is ignored, if not denied outright. (see James Larson, *The Quintessential Evolutionist*)(1)

> This means that man would effectively have no intellect, since he is now assumed to be capable of knowing only what could be evidenced by the trial-and-error processes of scientific experiment. To say that even this is knowledge is to over-rate it, however, because Karl Popper demonstrated as long ago as 1959 that scientific laws are not ultimately provable, in his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* This fact still has not penetrated the minds of those who want to believe in physical science and deny metaphysics, and is not likely to do so. If they were right, what we could be said to "know" would consist only of varying degrees of probability concerning objects of sensation, which really means it could not be different from opinion.
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> When this idea of knowledge is used to redefine the knowledge on which faith is founded, there is no longer anything there which has an absolute and final nature, and therefore nothing to oppose the forces of constant change. Every doctrine would only be "true" insofar as this meant "adequate for the purposes of a certain time." There would be no eternal element in it, just as there would be no intellect

(1) *Christian Order,* February 2009.

in man himself, in which case the continual evolution of all doctrines would not only be legitimate, but necessary. Thus doctrinal evolution and the scientific conception of knowledge support one another completely.

The soul as an entity in its own right and the intellect are rejected because there is no way in which the physical sciences could demonstrate them, and they are of course the only basis of any idea of knowledge outside the range of evolution. The idea of truth as a result of scientific experiment, when taken into a revealed religion, makes a radical change to the meaning of revelation. Traditionally, the term “revelation” referred to the intelligible content of what was revealed, but in the absence of intellect and eternal truths, revelation comes to mean only the inter-personal activities between God, God’s representatives, and mankind in general. These relational activities would be all and everything, while their content could never be more than a provisional stage leading to the next round of activity or “dialogue.” Hence the idea of “salvation history” instead of revealed doctrine.

In this way, truth, revelation, and religion are all confounded with a never-ending series of inter-subjective functions, in the absence of truth as traditionally understood. Instead, truth would merge with the power and influence of those in control of society. This is not exactly the same as the definition of truth as “the will of the people,” but it is obviously closely related to it. It would rather be the will of a controlling minority responding to the semi-articulate will of mankind in general. When taken to completion, this means the

complete elimination of tradition in everything but externals. The will thus assumes the central position because it is the only thing that can realistically replace the intellect, this being the will of society and of those who have influence over it.

This connects precisely with what was affirmed by Plato, where he compared the opinions of the multitude, which the sophists manipulated with verbal trickery, to a “great beast”:

“It is as if a man were acquiring the knowledge and humours and desires of a great strong beast which he had in his keeping . . . by what things it is made savage or gentle . . . and after mastering this knowledge by living with the creature and by lapse of time, should call it *wisdom* . . .” (Rep. VI, 493a-c, Paul Shorey tr.)

There is every reason to equate this Great Beast with that of the Apocalypse, even though they are examined from very different points of view, as I have argued elsewhere. (2) Whatever pleases this beast is thus defined as good, and whatever angers it, as evil. Such is the driving force behind everything which is referred to as “evolution” in the wider sense of the word. It reduces knowledge to nothing by making it a mere reflection of force, and reduces the person to nothing at the same time, since there could only be a person or objective knower if he were not part of the evolving process.

This wider conception of evolution was devised before Darwin’s time by Auguste Comte, when he divided the history of human thought into the theological-fictive period, followed by the metaphysical-abstract, leading finally to the “positive” or scientific. No successor to this third stage was envisaged, as

(2) see *The Order of the Ages*, Ch.18

though we were supposed to assume that it would last for ever. Such is the conception which has for some time been affecting the values of theology, and not surprisingly there are many priests today who take it for granted that the only standard of knowledge is the scientific one, giving no thought to what that would make of their own position if it were true.

It is in no way accidental that this delusion should have taken root in Christian ground, firstly because it was in the Christian world that natural science was first created, and because of the manner in which Christian revelation has a form which is focused on things that have appeared in the external world. That simply follows from the conditions of the Incarnation, and it did not cause any confusions until modern times when the sense of metaphysical reality atrophied and even educated people began to believe that it was Christian to believe that sense experience had a greater certainty than any of the intellectual kind.

The delusion in such thinking has been made abundantly clear by Frithjof Schuon in many places, as where he says that:

"If everything in pure intelligence could be delusion, everything in phenomena could also be so, with still less improbability, for phenomena are made for intelligence and not the reverse; . . .(see *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom* Ch.3, p.38).

Similarly, he says: ". . . in the one case a given wisdom is labeled 'natural' although it transcends essentially all that is 'nature', whilst in the other case certain given factors are brought into the 'supernatural', although they in no way belong outside the realm of phenomena." (ibid. Ch.3, p.41)

In the latter case, it is more a matter of natural things becoming supernatural by association or adoption, as it were. However legitimate this may be in its origin, it contained the seeds of the confusion that infects ideas of the supernatural

today. The above observations are in any case typical productions of the intellectual faculty which evolutionistic thinking is designed to exclude, whether it resides in the thought of atheists or whether in the thought of those who profess a religious allegiance.

Religious advocates of cultural evolutionism assume that the dissolution of tradition, intellect and personality caused by belief in their doctrine must be willed by God, as they think of God as the Supreme Agent of the evolutionary process. That is what follows from a complete ignorance of the traditional conception of time, with its progressive removal of all the conditions of life from their true origin. The idea of universal evolution conveniently obliterates the distinction between those who are saved and those who are not, in keeping with the prevailing politics of social leveling, which should be called the politics of rising entropy. Here is the Scriptural “strong delusion”, which could deceive, if possible, even the elect.