

Evolution –

Material or Spiritual?

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Introduction

When this article first appeared in 1951, the work of biophysicist Pierre Lecomte du Noüy was internationally known, and his theory of evolution was regarded as revolutionary. His book 'Human Destiny'* had been published in 1947, but he did not live to see the full measure of its success, for he died the same year. Since then, interest in his work has waned, as public attention has been drawn to new theories of evolution. Yet as late as 1970, a volume of collected essays on evolution was compiled to honor his work. 'Evolution in Perspective: Commentaries in Honor of Pierre Lecomte du Noüy'** presents the reflections of over 25 scientists, philosophers and theologians on evolution in general and du Noüy's views in particular. Du Noüy focused the larger issues of evolution, most of which remain a question for scientists and philosophers today.

New light on evolution research. This is not to say the world's concept of evolution has not evolved. The past 40 years have brought many revolutionary advances in the theory of evolution. Most notably, the genetic code, which Gregor Mendel sought a century ago, was finally deciphered through the discovery of the DNA molecule and its information coding system. Completely new branches of science – such as systems theory (e.g. Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Ervin Laszlo), cybernetics (Norbert Wiener), modern physics (e.g. Ilya Prigogine and David Bohm), the study of synergistic systems and information theory, as well as revolutionary concepts in biology itself (e.g. Rupert Sheldrake) – have brought new impetus to evolution research, opening new directions not possible on the old Darwinian, mechanistic model. With these developments, I feel that there is more support than ever for du Noüy's insights into the subject, as well as for the conclusions I drew from his work.

Evolution: a question of survival. Though highly controversial, new perspectives on the evolutionary process go beyond the exclusively

* Because of the number of references to *Human Destiny*, I shall give only the page number in parentheses. These pages refer to the Mentor Books paperback edition, published by The New American Library, New York and Toronto; jointly with The New English Library Limited, London, 1947.

** George N. Shuster, Ralph E. Thorson, editors, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1970, 282 pages.

material and mechanistic views, exploring the dynamics of evolutionary change from higher dimensions than just the physical or biological. Echoing du Noüy, today's thinkers ask: What brings forth creation? What produces increasingly higher levels of complexity and order in spite of material laws of disorder? In world consciousness, evolution becomes a question not merely of progress but even of survival. Unless mankind continues to evolve, it cannot surmount the problems its particular specialization creates.

Synthesis theory. The present theories of evolution can be grouped into two schools. First, the old mechanistic approach persists – though in changed form – as synthesis theory. This neo-Darwinian concept explains evolution through the mechanisms of chance mutations, which are nurtured by material conditions and selected by the survival of the fittest. The only innovation beyond Darwin is that synthesis theory describes evolution on the molecular level in light of recent DNA research. This mechanistic, materialistic school claims a wide following.

A systems approach to evolution. But there is another school, namely, a systems approach to evolution. This approach to evolution builds on the concept of the universe as an information-structure, which restructures itself continually to bring out higher degrees of order and system. Order, not chaos, is the primal state – that towards which all things tend. What we call chaos is but a transitional phase to new levels of order.

New support for a Christianly scientific concept of evolution. Whereas the mechanistic, materialistic approach remains opposed to a Christianly scientific concept of evolution, the systems approach lends much support. It is not uncommon for these theories to delineate stages of evolution which parallel the seven days of creation in the Bible. Such stages accentuate not so much the emergence of specific life-forms but rather the unfolding order of reality which brings forth evolution and drives its development. It asks: What kind of universe makes evolution possible? An information-systems view of the universe provides a much more likely home for evolution to occur in than a view of the universe governed by entropy – by primal and ultimate disorder. Rather than outdating either du Noüy's work or my own approach based on spiritually scientific reasoning, a systems approach to evolution gives new impetus to the conclusions presented 30 to 40 years ago.

Chance and probability: an open question. True, some of the specific points du Noüy used to support his thesis now need revision. For

example, in his first point, du Noüy argued that the materialistic concept of evolution, based entirely on chance, would by its own statistical calculations render the emergence of order virtually impossible. Since then, scientists have argued that the conditions necessary for life-forms to appear could have emerged after the big bang (total chaos), rendering the chance of life more probable than it once seemed. Yet this begs the question, putting the issue back but not resolving it. What governed the change of conditions from hostile to hospitable – from total randomness and chaos to increasing order?

Order in spite of chaos and because of an immaterial ordering principle. More and more, scientists not of the mechanistic school pursue the concept of an immaterial, self-operative information-principle – an omnipresent natural law or system which produces always greater order and structure in the universe. Because Christian Science, which provides the basis for my research into the subject, presents a concept of God that is impersonal not anthropomorphic, spiritual not material, universal not sectarian, the concept of such an information-principle is not foreign but touches the meaning of what I understand to be *divine*.

Telefinalistic power in being. Another point of du Noüy's which must be recast in the light of more recent theories is his description of a telefinalistic power, which accounts for the harmony and goal-directedness emerging throughout the course of evolution (see point 7, page 10 in this article). Since the immaterial, divine information-principle has the power to organize and restructure itself without limit, and since this principle pervades every level, each phase of evolution reflects a certain goal-directedness. Each step builds on the preceding and prepares the way for what is yet to come. Thus the harmony and purposeful development towards higher levels of order which appear in evolution are derived from the whole information-structure. They are not a property of any aspect in isolation. Describing the whole-structure and its workings, Christian Science terms this self-directing power the optimizing factor in being, or simply *Love*.

Evolution: the operation of universal, eternal values. Considering these developments, I believe that du Noüy's work has not been superseded but simply transformed by the new theories of evolution. As never before, modern scientific research goes beyond collecting empirical data and strives to discern universal values. The mechanistic view is simply too narrow. Today man has the power to influence the course of evolution.

Yet to do this constructively, we need to understand the ordering principle of being and then to direct the future evolution of man towards values that are consistent with the universal, divine information-structure.

These universal values unfold to human consciousness through order and system, which enable mankind to understand them. The biblical record of creation, in its spiritually scientific interpretation, gives the prototype of this divinely ordered unfoldment. It states the universal law of divine creation – a law which underlies all evolution.

Zürich, Spring 1986

Max Kappeler

Evolution – Material or Spiritual?

In his book ‘Human Destiny’, Pierre Lecomte du Noüy put forward a revolutionary theory regarding the evolution of life – a theory which resulted from his life-long research in the field of natural science. True, many leading scientists do not share his views, believing that he has left the pathway of established scientific methods. But who is to judge? Does the prevailing concept of science exhaust the meaning of science? Does modern science explain reality itself or only a narrow human and material concept of reality? It may well be that a work such as du Noüy’s can be justly criticized only by future generations – generations that have expanded their understanding of science and its methods. In any case, it is often the heretic who is the pioneer of progress, not only in religion but also in science.

In this article, I shall try to summarize du Noüy’s theory of evolution, keeping as close as possible to his reasoning and terminology. I shall then show its implications for developing an understanding of ultimate spiritual reality.

1. Du Noüy’s theory

Du Noüy explained evolution through seven distinct stages.

1. *The birth of life*

The immaterial cause of life. All evolutionary research begins with the question: What is causation? Every event has a cause. In fact, every event has a whole series of causes, for the immediate cause is the result of a long series of antecedent causes. If we trace this line of causation further and further back, we pass from material to immaterial causes, until we finally arrive at the concept of a *First Cause* (p. 18) – a dimension of causation which transcends the material but at the same time has an impact on it. Du Noüy described this First Cause as “an Idea, a Will, a supreme Intelligence” (p. 75).

Chance and probability do not explain the birth of life. Materialists and

mechanists deny a First Cause or divine will, choosing instead to explain the course of evolution through chance and probability. At present, the laws of natural science rest on the assumption of chance – on the hypothesis of an absolute disorder at the base of existence. For many scientists, though not for Einstein or du Noüy, the calculus of probability provides the fundamental basis of modern science.

Yet in its attempt to explain the appearance of material life-forms, the calculus of probability fails. Chance can give no explanation of the primal *creative activity*, which lies at the root of evolution. Some scientists calculate that, according to probabilities, even under the most favorable circumstances, it would have taken 10^{243} (1 followed by 243 zeros) billion years to form a single molecule of the simplest living organism; whereas, according to recent estimates, life appeared on the earth after only about one billion years since its origin. The difference between 1 and 10^{243} is so enormous that we cannot possibly rely on the law of chance, if we are to account scientifically for the birth of life.

What is “anti-chance”? Scientists have therefore been forced to postulate an “anti-chance” (p. 38) force as the creative origin responsible for the “sudden” (p. 61) and “immediate” (p. 54) appearance of life on earth. Yet what is anti-chance but the acknowledgement of an *intelligent, active power*, a non-material, i.e. non-random force that moves over the universe to bring forth order? This “anti-chance” is assumed to have overruled the calculus of probability, since, according to natural science, we should have to wait 10^{243} billion years for the formation of the tiniest living organism.

2. *The evolution of life towards more complex forms*

Two opposite tendencies: disorder and order. Organic matter and inorganic matter both consist of the same atoms; the difference between them is merely one of dissymmetry – order. The direction of evolution in the inorganic world is towards an “equilibrium where all the dissymmetries existing today will be flattened out, where all motion will have stopped, where total obscurity and absolute cold will reign. Such will be the end of the world – theoretically” (p. 40). This is what natural science teaches with the second law of thermo-dynamics, one of the most fundamental laws governing the evolution of inorganic matter.

But at the same time we are aware of another kind of evolution, that of organic matter, which flatly contradicts the honored second law of

thermo-dynamics. Rather than moving towards total chaos, the trend of biological evolution is in the opposite direction, namely, towards an increase, not a decrease, in “dissymmetries” (p. 34) – i.e. towards ever more complex forms. While the evolution of the inorganic world is irreversibly retrogressive, the evolution of organic matter is “*irreversibly progressive*” (p. 66), and shows an ever-increasing *diversification*, *classification*, and *individualization* of all life-forms. It is constantly following an ascending pathway of development, as if towards a high and definite goal. This evolution “begins with amorphous living matter and amorphous beings and ends in thinking Man, endowed with a conscience” (p. 66).

Natural laws of order. With this reasoning, du Noüy showed that the evolution of material beings absolutely contradicts the laws of inert matter – a fact which material science cannot explain. The phenomenon of the evolution of life must therefore be attributed to the operation of laws which entirely transcend the laws of material science.

This is not to say that evolution is supernatural or an act of intervention by a super-human being. Rather it is to indicate that ‘natural’ includes much more than ‘material’. The failure of material explanations to account for evolution points us towards the consideration of spiritual laws, laws which transcend matter but nonetheless have their impact on the course of development in the material realm.

3. Freedom

Evolution brings increased freedom from material restraints. “The criterion of evolution is LIBERTY” (p. 68). According to du Noüy, progress in evolution has always come about, not through adaptation to environment, which is bondage, but through an increase in freedom: “freedom of movement, liberation from the chains imposed by a strict dependence on the environment, liberation from the menace of destruction by other species, and last of all, liberation of conscience” (p. 72). Dependence on matter fosters corporeality and brings insecurity; freedom from matter widens the possibilities for development and provides a vital stimulus to further evolution.

Freedom to think. The highest form of freedom is enjoyed by man, because he can think. This freedom appears simultaneously with man and the human brain, and from this point a definite change in the evolution of life is apparent. Though still animal in corporeal structure, man has now

gained – from an unknown source – the faculty of thinking. This *incorporeal* element is what distinguishes him from the animals. His thoughts now tend to evolve in an opposite direction to his animal instincts. By freeing himself from organic life, he raises himself to the point where he can discern his true *identity* as man – not animal. A new phase of evolution thus begins – namely, the development of moral and spiritual values. No materially scientific explanation can be given for the freedom which is responsible for the highest form of organic evolution – man and the human brain.

Freedom to challenge instinct and material conditioning. The psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, M.D., in his book ‘The Road Less Traveled’, re-echoes du Noüy’s point. On the premise that real mental growth requires spiritual growth, Peck describes the direction of human growth away from what we call natural behavior. He gives an example: “The tendency to avoid challenge is so omnipresent in human beings that it can properly be considered a characteristic of human nature. But calling it natural does not mean it is essential or beneficial or unchangeable behavior . . . All self-discipline might be defined as teaching ourselves to do the unnatural. Another characteristic of human nature – perhaps the one that makes us most human – is our capacity to do the unnatural, to transcend and hence transform our own nature” (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1978, p. 53).

4. *The birth of moral and spiritual ideas*

A new law: the good. With the advent of man and the human brain, evolution continues no longer on the physiological, corporeal plane, but on the moral and spiritual plane. Man can now choose between animal, ancestral instincts and spirituality; he can ask whether an act is “good” or “better” (p. 82); he has aesthetic sentiments, and he “revolts” against the “natural” law of death (p. 79). On such a basis human dignity is born. Man “*must no longer obey Nature*. He must criticize and control his desires which were previously the only Law” (p. 82). By disobeying his animal instincts, he *obeys God*.

Discovering man’s relation to God. In this way a new discontinuity in nature has appeared. Man has given up his relation to his ancestral, animal evolution and has found a new relation, man’s “*relation to God*”, which he must obey. It is as though God “had abdicated a part of his omnipotence in favor of his creature” (p. 87). From now on “it is the

individual alone who counts and no longer the species" (p. 87). Each individual has an equal opportunity to assert himself as a factor in moral and spiritual evolution.

Man is governed by ideas. Also with this point of development, we see that the quality of thought governs man. "No one," wrote du Noüy, "can deny the fact that mankind is governed by forces derived from ideas" (p. 91). The dominating factor in evolution is now "abstract ideas, moral ideas, spiritual *ideas* and their *harmonious coordination*" (p. 90). These ideas are available to each one, because "the light is within us" (p. 112). Natural science can give no rational explanation for the emergence at this point of an immaterial principle, guiding and governing mankind and lifting it above the purely physiological or anatomical plane. A moral and *spiritual power* now governs the evolution of mankind, and this in direct contrast to the principle governing the evolution of inorganic matter.

5. *Spontaneous, individual development*

Independent, spontaneous development. Moral and spiritual ideas are not evolved by transmission. They develop spontaneously and independently of each other in different parts of the terrestrial globe at the same time (see p. 94). This phenomenon is inexplicable by ordinary scientific methods. Moreover, it shows the great significance of these ideas and of their unknown source, which impels us to see them as absolute values. Whenever an age is ready for a progressive step, the new inspiration acts spontaneously and *simultaneously* (p. 75) wherever there is receptivity. This nullifies the law of causality – or, shall we say, forces us to expand our concept of causality beyond the material.

The individual challenge to surpass ourselves. As new ideas become available individually, each one of us can enjoy a new sense of life, an understanding wholly foreign to the organic concept of life and to heredity. This leads to a higher conscience, which "demands a complete mastery over the flesh" (p. 109). In this connection, du Noüy quoted Bergson as saying: "An intelligent being carries within him the where-withal to surpass himself" (p. 111). On the basis of this ability, a new and higher type of man can constantly be born, free from inherited characteristics. Viewed in this light, creation is always "instantaneous" (p. 141), just as from the divine point of view, which knows no time-factor, evolution may well be regarded as taking place "instantaneously".

6. *The transformation of man into an active, responsible individual*

Man's transformation according to an ideal. The ability of the individual to use moral and spiritual ideas is directed towards an ideal, involving "the realization of a morally perfect being, completely liberated from human passions – egotism, greed, lust for power – hereditary chains, and physiological bondage" (p. 157). "This transformation of man into an active, responsible individual is the new event which, more than any other, characterizes man" (p. 158).

Man's unique challenge: to win dominion over himself. Whereas man's primary concern up to now has been to gain dominion over the universe, he now begins to realize that he must also learn to have dominion over himself. He is faced with a fight not only against his animal instincts (which he has not created), but also, and much more, against "habits created by man as a consequence of tradition itself and of the diseases of his own mind" (p. 101). He has to resolve the conflicts engendered by human reason and its inventions. Here the higher concept of man must fight against the lower (see p. 100). In the measure that the higher is victorious, man acquires *human dignity* (see p. 79). This new stage is a challenge to human science itself, posing the question of whether science and religion cannot at last be reconciled.

7. *A telefinalistic plan of evolution*

A higher purpose driving evolution towards fulfilment. None of the important stages in the evolution of life, from atom up to conscious man, can as yet be explained by natural science. On the other hand, the fact of evolution and its ordered sequence of unfoldment cannot be denied. This leads us to the concept that evolution may well be governed by a *telefinalistic power* – that is, by the design of an intelligence which transcends the human and which moves all things directly or indirectly towards a goal of its conceiving. The presence of this intelligent, purposeful plan directs evolution from the outset, for its existence guarantees that no power can prevent its eventual fulfilment.

The evolution of the spirit. In view of this underlying spiritual plan of creation, du Noüy wrote: "Everything takes place as though there were a hierarchy of order and as though the harmony of the great general scheme were hardly troubled by the momentary perturbations on an inferior plane" (p. 184). Du Noüy further stated: "The second philosophical

consequence of telefinalism is the dissociation of the body and the spirit. This dissociation is no longer considered as an act of faith, but as a scientific fact since, even though the body can still adapt itself, it is no longer the body but the spirit which evolves" (p. 161).

Summary of du Noüy's theory

There are seven fundamental and inescapable facets of evolution which cannot be explained by natural science but which nevertheless form the backbone of man's past, present and future evolution. These seven aspects include:

1. "the beginning of life,"
2. "the evolution of life toward more and more complex forms,"
3. "the actual result of this long process, namely, man and the human brain,"
4. "the birth of thought, and of moral and spiritual ideas,"
5. "the spontaneous and independent development of these ideas in different parts of the terrestrial globe" (p. 156),
6. the "transformation of man into an active, responsible individual" (p. 158),
7. the existence of a telefinality, a plan, goal and purpose drawing evolution forward (p. 65).

These stages of evolution have unfolded "in a direction *forbidden* to inert matter and leading to ever greater dissymmetries, ever more improbable states" (p. 68). Since these stages cannot be explained by science, we are compelled "to admit the idea of a transcendent intervention, which the scientist may as well call God as anti-chance" (p. 98). Rather than ignoring these blatant anomalies in the model of material science, we can grow in our understanding of evolution – and reality – by revising our model, expanding it to include dimensions that transcend the material. How?

2. The implications of du Noüy's theory

Reason and revelation

Du Noüy recognized two different methods for the comprehension of reality: 1. revelation, and 2. strictly rational and scientific reasoning.

“Two different paths may eventually lead to the comprehension of man. The first, revelation, is a direct road, but is closed to a great many people and independent of rational thought. Those who can make use of it are fortunate. The second, on the contrary, is strictly rational and scientific. It leads us to consider man as one of the elements of the whole, the universe” (p. 15).

The spiritual law of creation. Whereas the sciences and philosophy give ample illustrations of the method of reason, the opening chapter of ‘Genesis’ in the Bible gives an example of the method of revelation. There, creation develops through *seven stages* (seven days). These stages represent through biblical symbolism the step-by-step unfoldment of the nature of God, reality. The writers of ‘Genesis’ had no intention of explaining material evolution according to natural science. Neither did they wish to present something supernatural, as if material creation appeared through one-time acts of God.

Instead, the biblical account of creation is the mythological symbolization of an eternal, divine law of creation – a spiritual law, which unfolds through a definite order. Though it uses the symbols of its age, the Bible presents a timeless pattern of development. The question arises: Is there any correspondence between du Noüy’s findings and Bible revelation? Most certainly. The similarity is marked and unmistakable.

The spiritual nature of reality. The seven factors of evolution – those factors which have no explanation within the scope of material science – lead us to a higher, more spiritual understanding of the universe, such as the Bible gives in its record of creation. Du Noüy courageously attributed the presence of these factors to God, not to the mysterious concept of “anti-chance”. So, too, the nature of God is precisely what the Bible-writers state through the seven days of creation. What do these seven stages tell us about the nature of reality?

Through seven fundamental tones, as du Noüy gives them, reality expresses itself:

1. as the First Cause, the divine will and intelligence, from which proceeds all creative activity,
2. through the order of evolution, bringing diversification and irreversible progress,
3. as incorporeal identity, which establishes freedom and liberty,
4. as the government of ideas and their harmonious coordination,

which demands obedience to man's relation to God and reveals spiritual power,

5. through spontaneity and individuality, simultaneity and instantaneity,
6. as the divine ideal, revealing man's dominion and dignity, which brings victory over lower qualities,
7. as the divinely telefinalistic plan, which guides all things towards fulfilment.

Correlation with the sevenfold nature of God. Any reader familiar with the seven days of creation in 'Genesis' in their symbolic expression of fundamental spiritual values will have no difficulty discerning their marked correspondence with these seven points.* Furthermore, those who are familiar with the sevenfold definition of God as "Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love" (S&H 465:10) – a definition of God which was revealed to Mary Baker Eddy in progressive stages – cannot fail to discern a similar correlation between the order of these seven synonyms for God and the order of evolution as du Noüy described it.**

Revelation and reason complement each other. Du Noüy's work illustrates the fundamental facts of being, but unlike the Bible, it uses the language and concepts from the world of science to do it. What the Bible presented through revelation, du Noüy re-echoed several thousand years later as a law of evolution and spiritual unfoldment. The Bible interprets the order of evolution through divine revelation and therefore relies wholly on the leadings of cultured spiritual consciousness. Du Noüy's method, on the other hand, by proving the inadequacy of the most fundamental laws of natural science for interpreting the evolution from matter to man, showed that there must be other laws, more powerful and more intelligent than the laws of inanimate matter.

These two methods complement each other. The Bible's method; that of revelation, works from a level higher than human reason to reveal the order and structure of reality. Du Noüy's method uses human reason to demonstrate the insufficiency of human reason and its material methods

* For a further discussion of the spiritual values represented by the days of creation, see: Max Kappeler, *Compendium for the Study of Christian Science*, No. 2, *The Seven Days of Creation*, Kappeler Institute Publishing (KIP), Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A.

** On these subjects, see by Max Kappeler, *The Seven Synonyms for God – An analysis of the concept of God in the Christian Science textbook*, KIP, 361 pages; also by Max Kappeler, *Compendium for the Study of Christian Science*, Nos. 4-10, c. 30 pages each.

to explain reality. Together, these methods point us towards a recognition and understanding of God, not as a superhuman or anthropomorphic being, not as an amorphous mystical presence, but as the universal, spiritual Principle of being, the nature of which can be discerned through spiritual understanding and divinely scientific consciousness.

In spite of itself, human reason conforms to revelation. Are we then saying that the seven factors of being, appearing through the course of evolution, arise as a necessity of natural science? No – quite the reverse. Because the stages of evolution which du Noüy identified run contrary to material laws, we have to take seriously the presence of a higher law – a law of spiritual factors or spiritual ideas. Through such investigation, reason and revelation are reconciled, not because human reasoning itself coincides with revelation, but because human reasoning is step by step forced to acknowledge a higher, spiritual sense of law. The more human reason tries to explain everything materially, the more it discovers the limits of such explanations and is forced to go beyond material concepts in order to find answers. Rather than opposing each other, true religion and true science converge as two different paths which lead us, one way or another, to understanding true being.

Material vs. spiritual evolution

With evolution, matter is no longer primary. In the past, theories of evolution were based on the assumption that matter is primary, real and possesses propagating power. Du Noüy challenged this traditional view. He abandoned the notion that intelligence resides in matter, evolves through matter, or is governed by laws of matter. His concept of a telefinalistic, creative intelligence describes a reality which exists outside and independent of matter. To explain the relationship, he says that “physio-chemical laws are controlled and dominated by more general laws, different from those of inorganic matter and unknown to us” (p. 173).

Not the human body but the spirit evolves. He does not hesitate to say frankly and bluntly that matter is only a human concept. Consequently he often states that, with man, it is no longer the human body which is on the cutting edge of evolution, but the spirit. Neither individual problems nor the problems of the world can be solved by evolving better bodies.

Instead, what we need is a higher understanding of Truth and reality. We need progress in spiritual growth, not in material forms.

The old dualism: spirit vs. matter. What then is Spirit – the origin and aim of spiritual growth – and what is its relationship to matter? Cartesian philosophy (René Descartes, 17th century) conceived of spirit and matter as two diametrically opposite realities, with God as a separate third reality, unknown and unknowable to man. Ever since, philosophy has tried to break down this duality, or indeed, three-way division of reality.

Matter is a human concept. Modern theoretical physics resolves the old concept of substance-matter into a mental concept, which we in everyday life call ‘matter’. Lincoln Barnett wrote in ‘The Universe and Dr. Einstein’: “Philosophers and scientists arrived at the startling conclusion that since every object is simply the sum of its qualities, and since qualities exist only in the mind, the whole objective universe of matter and energy, atoms and stars, does not exist except as a construction of the consciousness, an edifice of conventional symbols shaped by the senses of man.”* Matter is a mental concept, not a self-existent substance or reality.

The biologist L. Charles Birch stated that matter and mind are not two things but two ways of looking at the same thing.** Tielhard de Chardin came to a similar conclusion when he declared that matter and spirit are two aspects of a single cosmic substance. Over a century ago, Mary Baker Eddy wrote: “What the human mind terms matter and spirit indicates states and stages of consciousness” (S&H 573:10).

The one Spirit, not seen as such. This resolves the spirit-matter dualism. But what about the dualism which separates spirit-matter – now seen as one thing, namely, states and stages of consciousness – and Spirit, God? Is God one reality and the human-material world another? This is the question which evolution resolves. Because matter and spirit are but states and stages of consciousness, they represent different standpoints for viewing one reality – God, Spirit. Mary Baker Eddy further wrote: “Nothing is real and eternal, – nothing is Spirit, – but God and His idea” (S&H 71:1). She did not say, however, that the real and eternal – that Spirit, God and its idea – are seen as such by mortals. Material consciousness sees the one Spirit as a material world. Mental-spirit consciousness

* Mentor Books, The New American Library of World Literature, New York, 1948, p. 19.

** *Nature and God*, SCM Press Ltd., 1965, p. 68.

sees the one Spirit as a world of mentalities and personalities – of embodied spirits. When we approach reality with a limited form of consciousness, we still view the one reality, God, Spirit, but we perceive it in a limited way – according to the peculiar limiting boundaries of our consciousness.

Evolution: taking off limits. Evolution is the process of taking off these limits, so that the one reality is more and more seen as such. Charles Birch states: “creation is the lifting of restraints on matter” (ibid., p. 102). Taking off limitations – limitations imposed by material and mental stages of consciousness – is the crux of du Noüy’s argument. With each step in the evolution of life up to man, du Noüy showed that new forms appeared, not because of laws of matter, but from a higher law, the law of reality itself, which works contrary to the accepted laws of material science. As material restraints were removed, evolution progressed. Therefore evolution appears, not because of matter, but in spite of it.

Not more complex matter, but less materiality. This analysis of evolution transforms our understanding of it. According to the categories of material consciousness, evolution appears to be a step-by-step development of material creation leading from atoms up to man. However, from a consciousness structured according to spiritual values, the same phenomenon of evolution appears as an ordered, sevenfold unfoldment of the nature of reality, which brings progress by causing the material limits and misconceptions to yield. Matter is not becoming more complex through evolution, but actually less material – less governed by the accepted material laws.

Evolution has a spiritual origin. The impulse driving this evolution away from matter cannot come from matter but from Spirit, reality, which works in spite of matter. Evolution has a spiritual, not a material, origin and is sustained by a divinely creative activity. This divine power has its impact on human and material consciousness, breaking through confining and destructive limitations and impelling us to go forward in the line of spiritual growth.

The big sweep of evolution: the evolution of consciousness. What we call material evolution represents only the first two steps of the larger evolutionary process which du Noüy described (see p. 89). With the third step, the focus shifts to the evolution of consciousness to higher and more advanced forms – to structures of consciousness which are less and less bound by material beliefs and more and more reflect the structure of

reality. Why should we characterize evolution by its first steps alone?

To describe a development, we must compare the beginning with the end. The beginning of evolution, as we have seen, is not material chaos but the creative activity of an intelligent, information-structured reality: God. The steps of evolution lead away from material conditioning to the perception of higher spiritual values and the need to pattern a life which is governed by these values of reality. The end of evolution is the oneness of creation with the divine purpose, the divine origin. Why then call this process material?

Ideas appearing, beliefs disappearing. We can summarize the spiritual concept of evolution by distinguishing two fundamental processes, the first of which causes the second to occur. First, evolution expresses the power of divine law to manifest itself through ideas and spiritual values, which unfold to human consciousness through order and system. Second, evolution represents – as a result of the divine activity – the gradual disappearing of material limitations, until finally the material concept yields to the spiritual and is resolved. The final disappearance of material limits is the point of complete spiritualization. This is not a physical state – not a question of having a body or not having a body – but entirely a question of the quality, form and structure of consciousness.

Only spiritual evolution meets mankind's present need. For practical reasons as well as theoretical, we should expand our concept from merely material evolution to spiritual evolution. Why? Only spiritual evolution meets the life-death question of mankind today, namely: How can we grow, individually and collectively, to accept new structures of consciousness – higher structures which resolve the crises produced by material reason, greed and ambition? Material concepts of evolution offer no solution to this question. Spiritual evolution does. Spiritual evolution shows that what unfolds with each stage of development is Spirit and its ideas – the unfolding nature of reality, revealing the structure of divine being.

Crisis: the challenge to evolve in consciousness. Herein lies the answer to the crises produced by the present world consciousness, as well as to individual problems. If what we call material evolution is actually material regression – the falling away of man's enslavement to matter – then crises tell us that it is time for us to expand our concepts by surrendering cherished material beliefs. As we do this, new possibilities appear. Consciousness expands to assert its independence over

materially conditioned behavior. Material conditioning dooms us to death and destruction – to acting out primitive, instinctual motivations that would destroy civilization, progress, and individual happiness.

Consciousness governed by reality. Contrary to material conditioning, spiritual evolution shows that we can step by step lay down a life governed by primitive instincts and so come closer to spiritual reality. The issue of spiritual evolution is consciousness. Through spiritual evolution, consciousness grows beyond humanly or materially imposed limitations, so that it approximates more closely a consciousness governed by Truth, reality as such. The law of this evolution resides in Spirit, not matter. To Spirit, then, we should turn our best energies and scientific, reasoning abilities, if we want to understand evolution and the direction in which it now leads.

Divine translation

The evolution of Spirit is not mysterious. How does Spirit bring forth evolution? An understanding of Spirit's divine activity not only explains evolution but also shows the full implications of how Spirit frees us from matter – how spiritual consciousness frees us from material consciousness. For example, it explains how Spirit heals the body and therefore why spiritual healing is possible. The process is not mysterious. It is not the effect of a mysterious supernatural power or religious sentiment but operates entirely through spiritually scientific consciousness.

The two translations. 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' by Mary Baker Eddy (pp. 115-116) explains the two sides of evolution through: 1. the "scientific translation of immortal Mind" and 2. the "scientific translation of mortal mind". A thorough explanation of these two translations is not necessary here, but its meaning can be indicated briefly – enough to show how it explains the divine power impelling evolution.*

The first translation, *the scientific translation of immortal Mind*, shows

* For those interested, I have dealt with this subject more extensively in the following books: *Introduction to the Science of Christian Science*, Kappeler Institute Publishing (KIP), Wilmington, Delaware, 1978, pp. 41-49; *The Minor Prophets in the Light of Christian Science*, KIP, 1962, pp. 19-26; and *I and II Kings*, KIP, forthcoming.

that divine Principle, God, constantly manifests itself through infinite, individual ideas. God has the power of self-expression, by which the infinite Principle becomes specific and operates through specific ideas. The second translation, *the scientific translation of mortal mind*, shows how the translating power of divine ideas causes material beliefs to disappear. First, material beliefs yield to moral values, which in turn yield to purely spiritual ideas. Step by step, matter – material consciousness – is translated out of itself and back into Spirit, the divine origin. The limited gives way to the unlimited, and the apparent duality of Spirit and human-material consciousness is resolved. Through divine translation, consciousness is restructured according to divine foundations. Divinely structured consciousness sees not Spirit and matter but only Spirit – Spirit as the real and eternal, the One, All and Only.

The three degrees: physical, moral, spiritual. The translation of material consciousness out of itself and back into Spirit, as the “scientific translation of mortal mind” explains, takes place through three stages or three degrees: 1. the physical, 2. the moral, and 3. the spiritual. Here again, there is a marked correlation with du Noüy’s theory. According to the second law of thermo-dynamics, inorganic matter tends towards a point of absolute stagnation, darkness and cold – *total chaos and disorder*. This state describes the first degree, the physical and material concept as such.

Yet there is development in the opposite direction, which goes contrary to this law, namely, the evolution of life. With man, evolution brings the development of *moral qualities*, as mankind begins to subordinate material, instinctual, brute conditioning to higher ideals. This is the stage described by the second degree, moral and transitional qualities, which lead mankind higher.

Du Noüy emphasized, however, that we cannot stop with this stage. Morality (second degree) cannot successfully overcome brutish instincts inherited from the past (first degree). Only spiritual consciousness, based on Truth and reality – the third degree, *spiritual understanding* – can carry evolution to its goal of perfection and conscious unity with the divine origin. Morality per se cannot achieve this. Du Noüy conceived of the moral concept as the “forerunner of the spiritual idea” (p. 107), which “paves the way to spirituality” (p. 175). But the power ensuring the ordered unfoldment of evolution resides in the spiritual idea itself – in the understanding of reality (third degree).

The universal law of spiritual development. As Mary Baker Eddy stated in the third degree, reality unfolds through seven stages of spiritual consciousness, which lead to perfection: “wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness” (S&H 116:2). These seven qualities correspond once again to the spiritual interpretation of the seven days of creation and to the order of the seven synonyms for God as given in answer to the question: “What is God?” (S&H 465:8-10). They depict a universal law of unfoldment, of spiritual development and growth. This law reflects the nature and structure of reality, because it is impelled by reality. It shows the ordered way by which reality breaks on consciousness and leads it higher.

The ordered evolution which this law produces can appear as the evolution from atoms to man, or it can appear as the ordered spiritual growth which occurs in each individual’s life. No matter how we experience its effect, the law is the same – universal, omnipresent and omniactive.

One divine power at work, bringing forth evolution. Viewed as a whole, namely, as one divine activity, the “two translations” explain the process of evolution, showing how Spirit brings forth development on the human and material plane – not because of matter but in spite of it. First, the translations trace all development back to the divine Principle of being, which is the power behind the spiritual order of unfoldment. Second, they show that nothing can withstand this divine impulse. Material consciousness, step by step, is forced to relinquish its claim of dominion and power, until it yields entirely. As material consciousness falls away, the spiritual idea becomes more and more evident, until the last vestige of the material concept vanishes and the spiritual idea alone reigns in consciousness.

How fully du Noüy understood the essential meaning and activity of the two translations to bring forth higher, spiritual achievement may be shown through his own words: “Everything takes place as if the descent of the material universe toward an inert chaos and toward annihilation were compensated by the simultaneous ascent of an imponderable universe, that of the spirit, whose harmony and perfection would rise from the ashes of the inorganic world” (p. 173).

Healing cannot be separated from spiritual evolution. All healing involves evolution. Mary Baker Eddy stated unequivocally: “Spiritual

evolution alone is worthy of the exercise of divine power” (S&H 135:9). Healing never means improving matter but rather giving up material concepts. On the basis of divine translation, healing causes matter to yield. The effect looks like an improved human existence and a more harmonious material condition, when in fact there is simply less materiality to generate disorder and darkness. The great purpose of healing, therefore, is not to build up a better human or material life but rather to demonstrate less materiality by evolving spiritually. All problems are solved by spiritual growth. Without it, there is no true healing.

Jesus: a prototype of the man to come. The practical possibility of spiritual evolution is what Jesus brought to mankind. As du Noüy observed, Jesus was not a superhuman type of man, neither was he an aberration from the natural course of spiritual evolution. Rather he represented evolution fulfilled through conscious unity with God, the Father and divine Principle of man. Jesus was a prototype for man, albeit “a million years in advance of evolution” (p. 87), but nonetheless an exemplar of what everyone can and will finally be.

The limits which bind us come not from reality. What separates us from the consciousness which Jesus exemplified is our own narrow, restricted model of consciousness – our map of reality, not reality itself. Only our attachment to material beliefs and collective human conditioning makes us believe that his standpoint is not possible for all. Paul wrote to the Galatians: “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal. 5:7). The more we give up attachments to limiting beliefs, the more we realize that the manhood which Jesus represented is a universal and present possibility, not a miraculous phenomenon unique to Jesus.

The two translations work simultaneously. In short, the two translations explain: 1. the manifestation of divine Mind as its own perfect and eternal idea, which expresses specific and individual ideas of this Mind (descending), and 2. the dissolution of material beliefs and illusions through the impulse of ideas, so that finally spiritual reality unfolds its own nature to human consciousness, leading it to understand God, the divine origin (ascending). These two aspects go on simultaneously, describing the eternal operation of God throughout the universe. Jesus expressed this twofold divine activity when he said: “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go

to the Father” (John 16:28), and also: “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13).

The emanation of divine self-containment. The appearance of higher forms of consciousness in the world – the breakthrough of ideas on the universe – is called creation. However, in the light of the two translations, the process is not actually the creation of something new. Rather it is the revelation and ordered unfoldment of the fundamental nature of God. We experience this as seven stages of development, but from the standpoint of spiritual consciousness, it is the manifestation of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love. In her exegesis of the days of creation, Mary Baker Eddy wrote: “Nothing can be novel to eternal Mind, the author of all things, who from all eternity knoweth His own ideas” (S&H 519:1). Therefore “spiritual creation [is] the outgrowth, the emanation, of His infinite self-containment and immortal wisdom” (S&H 519:4).

The spiritual law of evolution

Revelation and reason coincide. Through revelation, the writers of ‘Genesis’ presented creation as a sevenfold creative activity. Using scientific reason, du Noüy discerned seven fundamental stages of evolution. Working from both revelation and scientific reason, Mary Baker Eddy identified the origin of these processes in the sevenfold nature of God. The main point is that both revelation and scientific reason converge, first, to indicate the same seven fundamental factors of being, and second, to show how these factors unfold through the same order of development.

Spiritual laws innate in being. The implications of this are tremendous. First, *we did not create evolution.* It happened independent of human thought, long before there were humans to think about it. Therefore the order of evolution is not humanly contrived. In spite of matter and independent of human consciousness, the immaterial, spiritual law of creation is at work, manifesting itself on every level to bring forth higher order. The order, which we today understand to be the Word-order stating God’s eternal nature, inheres in reality. It is not something we thought up – not something Mary Baker Eddy or the Bible writers

contrived. It touches the core of what reality itself is. Whatever is truly creative follows this order, not because of what we think or try to figure out, but because of what reality itself is.

Second, because the divine law of creation operates through a definite and unmistakable order, *we can understand both creation and the nature of reality* which brought it forth. Within itself, reality is differentiated and ordered, therefore it can be understood. Something that has no order makes no sense. If reality were not ordered, we could never understand it, for without order there is no understanding.

Third, the order of reality unfolds through an order of spiritual ideas. *True evolution is the unfoldment of ideas*, divine qualities and attributes. Ideas are timeless and spaceless. Hence the spiritual evolution of ideas goes on throughout all time – on the smallest scale as well as on the greatest. All creation is subject to the same divine law of evolution. As ideas progressively unfold, material disorder regresses and falls away. The higher supersedes the lower, causing the limited concepts to disappear. The higher spiritual order translates itself to every level of consciousness and experience, which the lower cannot resist. Evolution happens, neither because of matter nor because of human thinking, but in spite of them and because of divine law.

Finally, through the spiritual law of evolution, we realize that we are not living in two realities, governed by two evolutionary processes. Reality is one and has but one evolution, that of Spirit. *All evolution is the evolution of Spirit, never of matter*. Knowing this, we can be awake to Spirit's order of unfoldment and consciously go with it. We gain a divine basis for resolving whatever tends in the opposite direction — towards disorder and decay. Through understanding the spiritual laws innate in being, we can pattern our lives in harmony with reality.

What attitude should we have in the face of Spirit's law of evolution? Paul wrote to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12,13). Our role is to work with reality, to discover the true laws of evolution and to follow them. All reality works with us to bring forth reality's own nature. Because of the nature of reality, evolution happened; because of this same lawful nature, evolution continues, leading us and all mankind forward.

