

THE RISE OF THE NEW SCIENTIFIC PRIESTHOOD

IS SCIENCE A SEARCH FOR TRUTH?

Science is often described as a "search for truth." It is not uncommon for scientists to believe that by slow degrees their research is converging on the "truth" about the physical world. For instance, physicist "Steven Weinberg ... says things like 'scientists like myself ... think the task of science is to bring us closer and closer to objective truth' (*New York Times Review of Books*, 45, no. 15, 1998)" (DeWitt, 2004, p. 309). According to conventional wisdom, this was not the case in ages gone by (Lomas, 2004, p. 15):

"Before the Royal Society [was founded in the 1600s and] changed our worldview ... philosophers thought that a statement was real knowledge if enough people maintained a strong belief in it."

Other scientists and philosophers have claimed even more strongly that, "Science is a kind of religion in its devotion to truth ..." (Sarton, 1955, p. 12). **Louis Pasteur, the eminent bacteriologist and chemist of the 1800s, was an avid proponent of the concept of science as a truth-finding religion.** To him, laboratories were the *temples* through which mankind would be elevated to its highest potential (Dubos, 1960, p. 146):

"Take interest, I beseech you, in those **sacred institutions** which we designate under the expressive name of laboratories. Demand that they be multiplied and adorned; they are the temples of wealth and of the future. **There it is that humanity grows, becomes stronger and better**"

Pasteur was referring not to a literal growth in personal stature, or to the growth in population of the human race. The growth which results in men becoming better is a spiritual growth. **Pasteur believed that science could accomplish what only the Spirit of God can do in man's heart.** In his last public statement on science, Pasteur again revealed his faith in science to fulfill spiritual goals. He remarked to students at the Sorbonne in 1892 on the occasion of his seventieth birthday jubilee (Dubos, 1960, p. 148):

"Young men, have faith in those powerful and safe methods, of which we do not yet know all the secrets. ... Live in the serene peace of laboratories and libraries. ..."

With science as a kind of substitute religion, it would be expected that science can reveal truth just as religions claim to do, and just as Christianity does. Another reason for the belief that science can reveal truth is ignorance about the sinful state of the human heart. Jeremiah 17:9 describes the human heart -- man's innermost spiritual being -- as "desperately wicked" and "deceitful above all things." But man naturally believes his heart is morally good.

Starting with this false premise, it is possible to conclude that, "[T]ruth and beauty are foci: twin ends toward which the human spirit inclines" (Murray, 2003, p. xx). In flat disagreement, Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 state, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." **Apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, man is not a truth seeker but a lie seeker.** This means that scientific work in a venue devoid of at least a cultural

acceptance of biblical principles eventually is bound to reach false conclusions about virtually every topic, including origins (evolution), physics (the cosmos began in a big bang), chemistry (life began by chemical evolution), the value of human life (abortion), and valid applications of medical technology (euthanasia).

Though not a Christian, Pasteur made extremely beneficial discoveries about pasteurization, the "germ theory," communicable diseases, and the chirality of most biological molecules. But he made these discoveries in a cultural venue in which even most non-Christians accepted many basic biblical norms. **As a culture departs from biblical truth, the lie-seeking tendency of man leads to an ever-increasing roster of false theories and conclusions. These are passed off as truth.**

Departure from biblical truth allows a false confidence in science as the best way of finding truth, if not the only way. Philosopher of science **George Sarton (1955, p. 19)** believed that,

"The great value of science lies in its very objectivity and choicelessness. ... Therefore, science is the best basis of international peace. ... **As opposed to politicians and theologians ... men of science are always willing to be corrected.**"

According to Sarton, non-scientists may be petty and prejudiced, but scientists are not subject to these foibles, so they are uniquely receptive to correction. The atheist Carl Sagan used to make the same claim. But scientists are human and are no more open to correction than anyone else.

Unlike Sarton, more than a few serious historians and philosophers of science recognize that science cannot really find truth. Neurobiologist and Nobel laureate **Sir John Eccles (1984, p. 80)** has pointed out that:

"**We need to discredit the belief held by many scientists that science will ultimately deliver the final truth about everything.** Science doesn't deliver the truth; what it provides are hypotheses that attempt to get nearer to truth. But scientists must never claim to know more than that. The scientific concepts that we have are always going to be changed as science progresses."

As good as this statement is, Eccles leaves us with the impression that at least science has a *tendency* to approach truth as it "progresses." But even this conclusion is not accurate. Philosopher of science and historian **Richard DeWitt (2004, p. 29)** has challenged the very idea that science somehow naturally "progresses":

"[O]ne cannot view science itself, nor the history and philosophy of science, as a simple story about science generating an ever larger collection of true beliefs and true theories."

Science is presented in the textbooks as a totally objective process in which the scientific method is followed without regard to personal biases. Physicist and science historian **Robert Lomas (2004, p. 203)** has challenged this fictitious scenario:

"It is a harsh reality of [the] scientific method that no matter how many times a model has worked in the past, if it

fails once it is wrong and should be discarded or changed. I must add here that this is a counsel of perfection and does not always happen. **Scientists, being only human, hate discarding old, comfortable and familiar theories."**

Science progresses -- as it has since the Reformation of the 1500s -- as long as a culture does not stray too far from biblical principles, but **eliminating the biblical base from a culture leaves man with only his own lie-seeking heart for guidance.** Then the scientific method is disregarded altogether. **Thomas Kuhn (1970, pp. 77-78)** has expressed this idea not in biblical terms, but in the language of the philosophy of science:

"[W]hat scientists never do when confronted by even severe and prolonged anomalies [is that] they do not renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis. They do not, that is, treat anomalies as counter-instances, though in the vocabulary of philosophy of science that is what they are. ... **They will devise numerous articulations and ad hoc modifications of their theory in order to eliminate any apparent conflict."**

In other words, if a theory is false, the data will contradict the theory, putting scientists who believe the theory "into crisis." According to Kuhn, scientists *never* abandon such a theory in order to seek truth. Scientists instead try to save a false theory by devising special "ad hoc" explanations to give the theory the appearance of truth. This has happened with evolutionary theory countless times. This refusal of scientists to abandon false theories is why the establishment will never admit that evolution has been shown false. *This refusal to abandon false theories also means that science is not a search for truth.*

Kuhn's statement might appear to be rather academic and abstract, but history shows that it is true. Science historian **Stanley Jaki (1985, pp. 44-45)** has summed up the historical evidence:

"History, or the history of science, [has had] a rather sad lesson. Sad indeed is the history of science insofar as it shows -- to recall a phrase of [physicist and science historian Pierre] Duhem -- **the repeated apostasies of the human mind, the repeated yielding to pleasing but obvious fallacies taken for basic frameworks of explanation.** Such a fallacy was at work when Newtonian physics was taken for the proposition that everything is machine; another is at work when relativistic physics is taken for the claim that everything is relative; still another is at work when quantum mechanics is taken for a denial of reality" [emphasis added].

The unwillingness of scientists to abandon false theories means that **as time passes without a return to biblical principles, false theories accumulate.** Our culture believes a greater number of false scientific theories than it did a century ago. **Scientific insight was clearer in the 1600s immediately after the Reformation.** That is why historians of science such as **Anthony (1961, p. 9)** consider the 1600s the greatest century for science in the last 2000 years, saying that, "[S]ince the rise of Christianity, there is no landmark in history that is worthy to be compared with [the 1600s]."

Physicist and science historian **James Jeans (1951, p. 160)** had a similar view of the 1600s: "Here and there, in the

history of human thought and action, we find periods to which the epithet 'great' may properly be applied ... **in the domain of science [such a period is] the seventeenth century, the 'century of genius' ..."**

The seventeenth century was the century of Newton, Leibniz, Huygens, and Boyle and many others of like caliber -- all "Renaissance men" operating on a level of scholarship that would make most modern scholars look anemic by comparison. Yet we believe we are philosophically farther advanced because we have more technology and a greater abundance of material possessions. **Our higher standard of living masks our developing philosophical bankruptcy.** Thus does the deceitfulness of our hearts prevent us from apprehending the lessons of history.

THE RISE OF THE NEW SCIENTIFIC PRIESTHOOD

With the substitution of a scientific "religion" for the biblical one, a new authority must be found to occupy the place once held by biblical authority. **The "search for truth" presumed to be inherent in scientific thought is a product of the human mind, so the new authority becomes the human mind itself.** But not all human minds are equal in the authority they may wield. Some are "more equal" than others. Generally, those in academia assume the authority to speak for the masses. As **Bailey (1994, p. 370)** explains, dissenting opinions are suppressed by academic "authorities":

"It is a matter of deep regret that **many academics, some of them genuinely fine scholars, are prepared to use unworthy methods to suppress opinions that challenge their beliefs in any radical way.** Instead of answering the arguments they ridicule those who put them forward and try to create an atmosphere in which it will be impossible for them to be taken seriously. ...

"By behaving this way, historians and archaeologists, throw doubt on their own beliefs, for it is generally true that the more scholars are certain of their own position, the more politely they argue: They turn to insult when they are unsure of themselves, their cause and their careers. This is understandable enough. An academic can derive no pleasure from admitting that much of what he has spent his life teaching is based on a fallacy. **Unfortunately, this kind of approach tends to perpetuate rigidity beyond a single generation of researchers.** What young newcomer to the field, with a career to make, wants to earn a reputation for belonging to a lunatic fringe?"

This "rigidity" becomes the dogma of a kind of scientific "priesthood."

Much like the priestly class of old, this new priesthood reserves all authority to itself for judging which ideas are "scientific" and which are not. Those ideas deemed unscientific are fit only for private contemplation and must be excluded from public discourse. As an example, the scientific establishment -- the new priesthood -- has labeled evolution as science. Creation is therefore non-science and may be believed privately but must be kept out of public venues.

Describing the scientific establishment as a kind of priesthood may appear extreme, but **George Sarton (1955, pp. 16-17)** notes *with approval* that this is exactly how the Establishment now operates:

"Truth can be determined only by the judgment of experts. ... Everything is decided by very small groups of men, in fact, by single experts whose results are carefully checked, however, by a few others. **The people have nothing to say but simply to accept the decisions handed out to them.** Scientific activities are controlled by universities, academies and scientific societies, but such control is as far removed from popular control as it possibly could be".

If Sarton's description of affairs is hard to believe, ask yourself: Why does evolution continue to be taught dogmatically as the only possible origins scenario **despite the fact that Gallup polls since the early 1980s have shown that nearly half the American public believes there was a creation no more than 10,000 years ago (Ross, 2004, pp. 34-35)?** When a small body of authorities can successfully impose its opinion on the masses, then we have a scientific priesthood in fact if not in name. This new priesthood holds sway over public policy precisely as did the priests of antiquity.

The origins arena is not the only venue in which the new priesthood exercises its power. The transformation of the conservationist movement of the early 1960s into the eco-paganism of today is another area where the priesthood rules. **Lal (1998, pp. 108, 110)** describes the radical environmental movement in terms similar to those we have seen above for the new "religion" of science:

"The environmental movement (at least in its 'deep' version) is now a secular religion in many parts of the West. ... **The religious nature of the movement is further supported by its failure ever to admit that its predictions have been wrong,** and to continue making the same assertions based on its world view despite evidence to the contrary."

The predictions of this new priesthood are that the earth's ecology will collapse bringing global famine and death. This pessimism has been standard ecological fare since the 1960s. A simple check of publications more than a few years old reveals unfulfilled predictions such as the following (**Ehrlich, 1968, p. 87**):

"[I]f our current rape of the watersheds, our population growth, and our water use trends continue, in 1984 the United States will quite literally be dying of thirst."

The date for fulfillment of this prediction and others like it is long past, but pessimistic ecological forecasting has not ceased. If anything, dire predictions have become more strident, as cursory viewing of the nightly network news will show. **The "priesthood," rather than seeing God's hand in preserving and sustaining His earth (Isa. 45:18), insists that the masses must accept the "fact" that the earth is perpetually on the brink of ecological disaster.**

ORIGIN OF THE NEW SCIENTIFIC PRIESTHOOD

Even as the Reformation was in progress, the stage was being set for the eventual emergence of the scientific

priesthood that would seek to displace biblical authority. The world's most prestigious scientific society, the Royal Society of London, was founded in the early 1660s. The Royal Society's publications include ongoing journals such as the *Philosophical Transactions*, with articles available on the Internet. The election of a scientist to membership in the Royal Society as a Fellow is one of the highest honors the world of science can bestow. **Yet the founding of this Society involved an odd requirement.** Sir Robert Moray, one of the founders of the Royal Society, wrote in 1678 (**Lomas, 2004, pp. 68-69**):

"I had the opportunity of being acquainted with divers worthy persons, inquisitive into natural philosophy, and other parts of human learning; particularly into what hath been called New Philosophy or Experimental Philosophy. We did by agreements, divers of us, meet weekly in London on a certain day and hour, **under a certain penalty** [the nature of which follows].

"... Our business was (**precluding matters of theology and state affairs**) to discourse and consider Philosophical Enquiries ..."

Lomas (2004, p. 69) explains this prohibition: "The words 'under a certain penalty' is the same wording used on the summons to many modern Freemasonic lodges. **There was only one organisation in existence at that time which forbade the discussion of religion and politics at its meetings ... and that organisation was Freemasonry."**

Lomas concludes that Freemasonic principles shaped the policies of the fledgling Royal Society: "The more I looked at the circumstances of the formation of Freemasonry the more it seemed to be that it and its philosophy of studying the hidden mysteries of nature and science had played a major part in moulding the attitudes of the men who made up the Royal Society" (**Lomas, 2004, p. 164**).

The Masonic principles that shaped the founding policies of the Royal Society were primarily **the prohibitions against any mention of religion, which in the 1600s meant the Christian religion (Lomas, 2004, p. 185):**

"Freemasonic lodges encouraged the study of experimental science while at the same time **forbidding any distracting discussion of religions [sic] or politics.** ... John Wallis [one of the founders of the Royal Society] ... wrote that **the first meetings of the men who were to go on to found the Royal Society met under Masonic conditions (i.e., the discussion of religion and politics was forbidden at those meetings)."**

Lomas (2004, pp. 217, 226-227) concludes that the Royal Society set a new standard for science because of the philosophy it borrowed from Freemasonry:

"To survive at the forefront of modern science for nearly three hundred fifty years is no small achievement and to do so the Royal Society had to be special. ...

"An application of the fraternal bonds of Freemasonry, and the use of Freemasonic ideas, is not enough to explain the success of the Royal Society. It lists among its members some of the most important scientists of the last few

hundred years. ... It is certainly not anything modern Freemasonry can match. Freemasonry today is mainly ignored by the professional classes and young scientists. The Royal Society, however, is still a major force in science. ...

"What made it into such a fantastically successful organisation? It borrowed a philosophy from early Free masonry and turned it into a force which changed the very nature of the world."

What was this philosophy borrowed from Freemasonry? It was the "penalty" or prohibition which Lomas so frequently mentions, not to allow considerations of religion into scientific discourse. As long as the culture as a whole was Christianized to the extent of "swamping out" this tendency, the effect of this prohibition was masked; but when the culture at large began to agree with this prohibition, the Establishment was able to promote evolution and like theories under the rubric of "avoiding God in scientific discourse."

So as to leave no doubt of his conclusions, **Lomas (2004, p. 297)** reiterates: "The Royal Society is the child of Freemasonry ... It was founded by an astute, politically motivated Freemason. ... **Sir Robert Moray took the structure and philosophy of Scottish Freemasonry and used it to build a totally new type of organisation.**"

It may be objected that Freemasonry mentions God in certain rituals, maintains a Bible in the lodge setting, and harbors other vestiges of Christianity, but as Lomas makes clear, **if there is an explicit Freemasonic attitude toward God, it is the belief that human reasoning must ascend to the throne of God Himself** -- a attitude reminiscent of Satan's claim in Genesis 3:5 to Adam and Eve, "Ye shall be as gods." **Lomas (2004, p. 321)** recalls that in his own initiation into the Third Degree,

"I was given a summary of the previous degrees by the Master. He used these words to sum up the Second Degree: 'You were led in the Second Degree to contemplate the intellectual faculties and to trace them through the paths of nature and science even to the throne of God Himself. ...'

"This antient [sic] ritual sums up the inspiration which drove Sir Robert Moray to create the Royal Society. ... [It] was these principles which inspired Sir Robert Moray to found the Royal Society."

To the extent that Lomas' analysis is correct, it provides an explanation for the genesis of the Establishment's steadfast resistance toward the scientific claims of creationist science. It also explains the increasing exclusion of God from discussion of the scientific ethics of abortion, euthanasia, and stem cell research.

With the Royal Society leading the way, by the early 1800s "many purely scientific societies were being formed such as the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Geological Society and the Astronomical Society" (**Lomas, 2004, p. 280**). **These newer associations emulated the Royal Society by eliminating God from scientific discourse.** In view of this fact, there can be little question as to why the scientific establishment so readily embraced evolution in the mid-1800s, and why the new priesthood promotes evolution as the new origins dogma.

The rigid ideological stance of the new priesthood has caused a public disaffection with science. Because the human mind is not a suitable substitute for divine authority, a general restlessness and questioning of all authority now pervades our culture. With all authority perceived as invalid, there is a cultural focus on personal gratification combined with a spiritual search by millions for new authorities and new faiths. The media mistakenly describe this restless searching as a healthy sign of "spiritual awareness" among the young. Historian **Jacques Barzun (2000, pp. xx-xxi)** correctly perceives that **the West is slipping into decadence -- a pervasive pessimism combined with a search for personal meaning in cultic faiths:**

"[H]ow does the historian know when Decadence sets in? By the open confessions of malaise, by the search in all directions for a new faith or faiths. Dozens of cults have latterly arisen in the Christian West: Buddhism, Islam, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Dr. Moon's Unification Church, and a large collection of others, some dedicated to group suicide. **To secular minds, the old ideals look outworn or hopeless** and practical aims are made into creeds sustained by violent acts: **fighting nuclear power, global warming, and abortion; saving from use the environment with its fauna and flora ("Bring back the wolf!"); ... and proclaiming disaffection from science and technology.**"

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

A View of the Past. In radical contrast to the modern disenchantment and even fear of science and mathematics, **the early 1800s were a time in which the public adored science.** Working class people attended scientific lectures after laboring at the factory. God was honored by lecturers such as the Christian physicist Michael Faraday. Faraday "took great delight" in lecturing to children (**Kendall, 1939, p. 82**), and "was to be seen at his best as a lecturer in the famous Christmas Lectures for children" (**Williams, 1971, p. 344**). Common people read works of science for recreation and enjoyment (**Blake, 1837**). **Jones (1839, p. iii)** was a "companion for the parlour," not primarily a school text.

A View of the Present. The modern disillusionment with science is making the task of teaching evolution increasingly difficult. The magnitude of the difficulty is indicated by the Gallup polls mentioned above that show a significant portion of the American public continuing to believe that the earth is "young."

A View of the Future. The emergence of the ancient Greek priesthood was brought about by the Pythagoreans. **The Pythagoreans claimed that through numbers -- mathematics -- all truth could be revealed. Modern science likewise believes that mathematical computer models reveal all truth.** It is on the basis of such models that the evolution of the cosmos is allegedly demonstrated. For instance, astronomer **Donald Goldsmith (1985, p. 253)** has placed his faith in these models, concluding that the models reveal the "power of the human mind" to discern stellar core temperatures

and other stellar properties "despite the fact that we can see only the *surfaces* of stars" and which **we will therefore never be able to observe.**

Also like the modern Establishment, the Pythagoreans suppressed the opinions of those with whom they disagreed. The result was to "destroy science" (Quigley, 1961, pp. 39-40). We are seeing a replay of this process in the modern scientific world. This process took centuries to play out in the past -- but for us the future is rapidly becoming the present.

How should we respond to the emergence of this "future"? We should carefully look for the actual physical data supporting scientific claims. We should not confuse interpretations of data with actual data. Any claim not backed up by physical data should be questioned. Any claim not matching biblical truth should be rejected. **Therefore we must know what the Scripture says.**

In addition to these caveats, there is a broad perspective that follows from the fact that science is not inherently a truth-finding activity. **Since science isn't inherently an approach to truth, not every theory is necessarily "truer" than the last.** Instead, newer theories tend to be "truer" only in times of adherence to biblical principles, but tend away from truth in times of departure from the Bible. With this perspective, we can analyze conventional assessments of the "progress" of science such as the following (DeWitt, 2004, p. 305):

"[W]ithin the Aristotelian worldview, the universe was viewed as like an organism, with parts functioning together to achieve natural goals and purposes. Within the Newtonian worldview, the universe was viewed as like a machine, with parts pushing and pulling and interacting with other parts, much like the way the parts of a machine interact.

... [T]he universe suggested by recent developments [in science since 1900] may be a universe that does not lend itself to being summarized by any convenient metaphor. ... [I]t seems likely that our children and grandchildren will develop a view of the universe that is substantially different from our own."

Newtonian physics was a genuine advance from Aristotelian concepts of the universe. The conventional perspective which DeWitt describes is that "the universe suggested by recent developments" is a further *value-free* progression from Newtonian concepts. These newer concepts are supposedly "truer" than the older Newtonian concepts because, according to the conventional perspective, science is somehow approaching truth.

But the advance from Aristotelian to Newtonian physics occurred in a time of respect for biblical principles in the West. The shift away from Newtonian concepts since 1900 has coincided with an increasing rejection of biblical principles. Since human judgments, including those of science, are never really value-free, it is appropriate to question whether these two "paradigm shifts" will continue to be viewed as equally valid in the long view of history. In any event, **newer theories should not be accepted as "truer" or more valid than older theories simply because they are more recent.** Instead, paradigm shifts should be viewed in their spiritual/cultural context and then evaluated accordingly.

References. Bolded emphases in quotations have been added and are not in the original sources.

- Anthony, H. 1961. *Sir Isaac Newton*. Collier, New York.
- Bailey, J. 1994. *Sailing to Paradise: The Discovery of the Americas by 7000 B.C.* Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Barzun, J. 2000. *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present*. HarperCollins, New York.
- Blake, J. 1837. *Conversations on Natural Philosophy*. Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, Boston.
- DeWitt, R. 2004. *Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science*. Blackwell, Malden, Mass.
- Dubos, R. 1960. *Pasteur and Modern Science*. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y.
- Eccles, J. 1984. Science can't explain 'Who am I? Why am I here?' *U.S. News and World Report*. 52(41):80.
- Ehrlich, P. 1968. *The Population Bomb*. Ballantine, New York.
- Goldsmith, D. 1985. *The Evolving Universe*. Benjamin Cummings, Menlo Park, Calif.
- Jaki, S. 1985. On whose side is history. *National Review*. 37(15):41-47.
- Jeans, J. 1951. *The Growth of Physical Science*. Cambridge University, Cambridge, England.
- Jones, T. 1839. *Conversations on Chemistry*. John Grigg, Philadelphia.
- Kendall, J. 1939. *Young Chemists and Great Discoveries*. Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, N.Y. Reprinted 1969.
- Kuhn, T. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago.
- Lal, D. 1998. *Unintended Consequences: The Impact of Factor Endowments, Culture, and Politics on Long-Run Economic Performance*. MIT, Cambridge, Mass.
- Lomas, R. 2004. *Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science*. Barnes and Noble, New York.
- Murray, C. 2003. *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*. HarperCollins, New York.
- Quigley, C. 1961. *The Evolution of Civilizations: An Introduction to Historical Analysis*. Liberty Fund, Indianapolis. Reprinted 1979.
- Ross, H. 2004. *A Matter of Days*. NavPress, Colorado Springs.
- Sarton, G. 1955. Introductory essay. In J. Needham, editor. *Science, Religion and Reality*. George Braziller, New York.
- Williams, L. 1971. *Michael Faraday*. Simon and Schuster, New York.