

## Does Darwin's Theory of Evolution Undermine Paley's Design Argument?

### THE ARGUMENT:

Paley argued that if we find a watch we will know from its design that it had an intelligent maker. Paley argued that because we are well-designed and so is the universe that God designed us and the universe. God is the intelligent designer of all things. The questions are, Does evolution mean there has been no design? Does design really indicate the existence of a designing God? Can design be accounted for without the idea of God eg an impersonal intelligence?

Paley did not argue that everything that exists shows the signs of being designed. It is sufficient that some show such signs.

I disagree with Paley partly. A stone may not look designed but it is. It is not as clearly designed as say a watch or a sundial. But it is still designed. For example, atoms are designed like little solar systems. You can make a simple doll and it will not be as simple as an atom. The difference between something and nothing is infinite therefore it takes infinite intelligence to bring something out of nothing. Therefore there is design in the shapeless stone.

We can't design a shapeless stone from nothing. God can. The design involved then is beyond our comprehension.

Thus evolution then is doomed to failure if it is an attempt to undermine the concept of intelligent design. Evolution can only happen because of design.

Hume argued that it is wrong to conclude from design in the universe that one God is behind it all. He said there could be several gods involved.

But if we ask where the gods came from we see that they are not really gods or divine beings for they are depending on one creator. It is true that God may create beings that make the universe of their own free will but it is wrong to argue that this excludes God. Because their existence and powers depend on God, it follows that God is still the one that makes all things out of nothing and sustains and is in charge of all things. They are using his designing power to design all things. Suppose these beings exist. They may have decided to make all things through evolution. That would not undermine the need to believe in the Creator God at all. Rather it would require this belief.

Why assume that there are several designers of all things when supposing there is one would be sufficient?

Some think that Darwin's theory of evolution refuted the design argument because evolution shows signs of imperfection. This supposes that the design argument claims that the design is perfect. It does not. A thing can be designed and be imperfect. A calculator that makes  $2+2=3$  is still designed.

Perhaps there is some unknown law of nature that makes things look designed though they are not? Some think that evolution teaches just that. It is only atheistic versions of the theory that do that.

Some say that the appearance of design in living things is merely subjective. In other words, we are conditioned by our minds and our environment to think that things are designed when they may not be designed at all. If that is so, then we can't know if anything is really designed at all. That would be sceptical and foolish. We know from experience that we can tell objectively that some things are designed. You know to look at your television set that somebody made it.

Paley's Design Argument clicks with us. We see that it is easier to believe that God planned all things and designed them than to believe that we have reached the level of advancement we have reached without any guidance.

Evolution does not undermine Paley's Design Argument at all.

### THE REFUTATION:

Suppose it is true that unless there is a spiritual power that makes all things out of nothing, that power prevents all things going back into nothing. It is engaging not in once for all creation but in continuous creation. It creates right now. We know logically that nothing cannot become something. So it follows that if something exists it cannot become nothing unless it was nothing in the first place. Continuous creation is nonsense. If the power withdrew its sustaining power from creation, all things would not revert into nothing.

It is better to imagine that we came from something that always existed and were not made from nothing.

Creation by a God is absurd and is really based on mistaking something popping out of nothing for creation by an agent. If something can come from nothing, that means nothing has the ability to become something whether there is a God or not. God is irrelevant. Even God cannot make something out of nothing unless nothing is able to let it happen, unless it has the power to become something.

So those who say the design argument shows it is sensible to believe in God are not telling the whole story. If God is not the creator then God cannot be the designer. It would follow that the universe may have produced a designing force by pure luck and chance. If the universe is designed, it does not mean there is a God.

The intelligent design argument is about a theoretical God. It does not help with the relationship God - the God who is so attractive and wonderful that he should be your ultimate and sole concern. It would be cruel to ask people to give such a high place to God without proof of his love. And there is no proof.