

Creationism or Evolutionism: an Optimistic View of Evolutionism by Teilhard de Chardin

- J.C. Paul Rohan

(This is a continuation of the article published in the previous 'living faith' issue under the same title)

Abstract:

When analyzing a reality, it is inevitable that one inquires about its origin. The question of origin is inherent in any comprehensive inquiry into the nature of realities. Up to the scholastic time, not only in religious beliefs but also for scientists and philosophers, *creatio ex nihilo* was an accepted sound and convincing theory to explain the origin of all things. It refers to creation of the entire universe out of nothing: not out of anything pre-existing. Thus creationism supplied a straightforward answer and explanation to the origin of realities.

With the development of science, biblical and religious concept of the God as a creator was replaced by the theory of evolution in the modern era. The rationalistic, mechanistic and atheistic trends and the theory of evolution claimed that everything evolved from matter, even life and consciousness. This gave birth to the fiery debate whether creation or evolution is the valid theory to explain the origin of realities.

There are however those who subscribe to the *raison d'être* for both creationism and evolutionism. Such thinkers were able to reconcile science and religion, faith and reason and did not recognize any contradiction between creationism and evolutionism. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Roman Catholic priest of the Society of Jesus, both a geologist and a paleontologist, is one among those who held this view. He was able to present evolution as not contradicting a creator God, but saw in creationism and evolutionism the same fact of the origin of realities. He was thus able to develop a view which was commensurate with evolutionism which the religious community considered atheistic and heretic. This article therefore analyses this optimistic and wholistic view of evolution developed by Teilhard de Chardin by rationalizing the arguments presented by him for evolutionism versus creationism with an attempt to reconcile the two.

Key Words: *Creatio ex nihilo*; Darwinism; Big Bang; Hominization; Biosphere; Noosphere; Consciousness; Omega; Teleological; Christogenesis; Anthropogenesis;

4. An Optimistic View of Evolutionism by Teilhard de Chardin

Teilhard tried to reconcile Christian theology, especially the *creatio ex nihilo* by God with the theory of evolution. In his writings it is clear that he interprets and views the theory of evolution as a movement towards complexity and consciousness and of a creature endowed with the ability to think. For him humankind was moving towards a union of matter and life. This approach has been the basis of a new model of interaction between science and religion. The study of this interaction is necessary for a careful investigation of evolution theories. In this way, Teilhard presented a Christian, wholistic and integral view of organism and an integral view of nature against all kinds of material, dualistic and mechanistic views.

4.1 Teilhard's 'Sitz im Leben'

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born on the 1st of May 1881 in the province of Auvergne in France. He was from a pious Catholic family and at the time of his graduation, he decided to become a priest and entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1899. He shared the faith of his time in the value of objectivity. He was attracted to the writings of Henri Bergson, especially "*Creative Evolution*" and "*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*." He specialized in geology and biology. In 1905, Teilhard was sent for his teaching internship at the Jesuit college of St. Francis in Cairo, Egypt, where his naturalist inclinations were developed by researching the fossils of Egypt's past. He was ordained a priest in 1911. He continued his studies in paleontology and gained an expertise in the geology until the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

He was to serve in the French army for a span of four and a half years. Throughout his service as a soldier, he felt that there was a purpose and a direction to life which is hidden and mysterious. He even in the midst of human tragedy discovered the reality of life and world which was revealed amidst the heat of battles.

After his service in the army Teilhard returned to Paris and continued his studies in the phosphorite fossils of the Lower Eocene period in France and received a doctorate in geology from the University of Sorbonne. In 1920, Teilhard had secured a post in geology at the Institute Catholique and was lecturing as an active promoter of evolutionary thought. An opportunity for fieldwork in China was given to him and on the 1st of April 1923, Teilhard set sail for China.

Teilhard returned to Paris in September 1924 and resumed teaching at the Institute Catholique. The Roman Catholic Church under Pope Pius XI since 1922 became more conservative than before. Teilhard's revolutionary ideas about creation and evolution, his insightful ideas about Homo faber, hominization, biosphere and noosphere had so disturbed the conservative French bishops that they reported him to Vatican officials who in turn put pressure on the Jesuits to silence him.¹

As a result in 1925 Teilhard left France and undertook a significant expedition north of Peking to further his research on the 'Peking Man'. Meanwhile as an effort to make clear his views in a manner acceptable to his superiors, Teilhard wrote the book *The Divine Milieu*, which is a mystical treatise which articulated his vision of the hominization. Since there was a new opposition to his ideas from the Church leaders of France in June 1928, the assistant Superior General of the Jesuits communicated to Teilhard to end all of his theological work and asked him to confine himself to scientific work only. In this harsh atmosphere, Teilhard was forced to return to China in November 1928 and remained for the next eleven years; however, these years were very rich in geological expeditions for Teilhard.

While remaining in China, Teilhard made many expeditions in Africa and America which made him a recognized geologist of the earth's terrain.² During these years he was able to contribute immensely in the interpretation of 'Peking Man' at Chou-kou-tien and author *The Spirit of the Earth, The Vision of the Past, Building the Earth, The Phenomenon of Man* and *The Future of Man*. With the end of World War II, Teilhard received permission to return to France and he engaged in a variety of academic activities including the publication of numerous articles and reworking *The Phenomenon of Man*.

In July 1948, Teilhard was invited to Rome to discuss the controversies of his thought. After several meetings with his superiors, Teilhard realized that his ideas relating science and theology would never be accepted during his lifetime. In October 1948, he left

¹ John Grim and Mary Evelyn, (1984), "Teilhard de Chardin: A Short Biography," in Arthur Fabel ed., *Teilhard Studies*, New York: American Teilhard Association, 8.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

for the United States of America and during the next two years traveled extensively in England, Africa and the United States. In December 1951, he accepted a research position with the Wenner-Gren foundation in New York.

While in New York, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin died on Easter Sunday, 10th of April 1955. The cultural and ecclesiastical milieu of his time where there was no healthy outlook of science and theology, made Teilhard's ideas to be put to test by fire by the Church and religious authorities. The new approach to science and theology came too late in the Church and Teilhard's ideas were accepted posthumously. His books which were indexed during his life time were later released and received the acceptance and admiration. Teilhard's optimistic view of evolution can be put succinctly as follows: "There is a communion with God, and a communion with earth, and a communion with God through earth."³

4.2 Teilhard and Evolution

Darwinism was misinterpreted in the religious and philosophical circles as a denial of religion or belief in God. "Materialists eagerly adopted the concept of evolution, developed it in purely mechanistic lines and made it the basis of their whole interpretation of the universe. For them everything that exists including the human intellect is the result of evolution and is continually evolving."⁴ However, in the early 20th century Henri Bergson expounded a philosophical theory called 'Creative Evolution' which presented evolution theory in a way acceptable to the religious and philosophical circles reconciling creationism and evolutionism. The theory is based on the distinction between matter and a life force (*élan vital*) where the life force penetrated the matter and has given rise to living beings. The life force here can be explained as soul in line with the medieval and traditional concept.

Teilhard takes Darwinism and Bergson's *élan vital* positively for his proposals of the optimistic evolution. Anything that we recognize as existing now must have been there in the beginning, at least in a minimal form. "In the world nothing could ever burst forth across the different thresholds successively traversed by evolution (however critical they be) which has not already existed in an obscure and primordial way."⁵ The materials we now have on earth had their origin somewhere in the universe. Initially it was all gas (hydrogen) helium and other complex atoms. Empedocles and Anaxagoras postulated a principle for order and creation long ago that the realities and organisms emerged from atoms to different individual species.⁶ Evolution shows a world in which nothing remains the same from one moment to another. The universe is dynamic from within and without.⁷

The evolution Teilhard sets forth is one "grand orthogenesis of everything living towards a higher degree of spontaneity."⁸ According to evolution life means a progress towards perfection and in this process 'man' is the most advanced and latest arrival. Teilhard's concern was to establish that such an evolution did not happen merely by chance. The significance of evolution lies in its direction which affirms that evolution is teleological. Ever since the universe was formed, according to Teilhard, it has displayed a unidirectional trend. That means there is teleology present right through the long time-scale of the present universe.⁹

³ Teilhard de Chardin, (1968), *Writings in Time of War*, 14.

⁴ Joseph V. Kopp, (1964), *Teilhard de Chardin Explained*, Cork: The Mercier Press, 14.

⁵ Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 71.

⁶ Anthony Hanson, ed., (1970), *Teilhard Reassessed*, 87.

⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, (1973), *Man's Place in Nature*, London: The Human Zoological Group, 8.

⁸ Idem., (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 151.

⁹ Bernard Towers, (1966), *Teilhard de Chardin*, London: Lutterworth Press, 32.

4.3 Evolution and the ‘The Phenomenon of Man’

The evolution theories threatened the Christian concept of man who is unique, transcendental and spiritual and created as the climax of creatures in the image and likeness of God. Teilhard’s attempted to eliminate such misconception; his unceasing quest was to find answer to the questions ‘Where does the human being come from?’, ‘What is the human being’s place and significance in the universe?’ and ‘Where does the human being go?’ For him the entire universe is seen to be in a continuous process of development and man is in the middle of it all. The expression ‘the phenomenon of man’ points to the empirical fact of the appearance in the universe of the power of reflection and thought.

If one can briefly look back the evolution story, for enormous periods in the history of the universe, the earth lacked any real manifestation of life. Then after another enormous period organic matter appeared as some unreflective life forms. Later the complex organisms like animals evolved. Finally, in a relatively recently epoch, spontaneity and consciousness appeared on earth, in the zone of life that had become human, the property of isolating and individualizing themselves in their own right. Man knows that he knows and can therefore reflect, abstract, combine and foresee.¹⁰ As Teilhard would say, “*L’animal sait, l’homme sait qu’il sait*” (And animal knows but man knows that he knows).¹¹

As Teilhard has said at the end of his foreword to *The Phenomena of Man* “man is seen ‘not as a static centre of the world...’ but as the axis and leading shoot of evolution.”¹² The continued evolution of man is not any more along anatomical lines, but by way of the mind or spirit. Consciousness, then, is inbuilt in this organism. This key concept of Teilhard unfolds two issues; that throughout evolution, there has been a tendency for matter to become increasingly complex in organization; and that with the increase in material complexity, there is a corresponding rise in the consciousness of the matter (or organism). Man is the flower of evolution who is expected from the first and slowly and methodically prepared for billions of years. Therefore it is he alone who gives meaning to the earlier stages of evolution. “He alone gives significance to every stone, every plant, every animal, indeed to the whole universe.”¹³

4.4 Biosphere and Noosphere

Teilhard initiated his scientific investigation of evolution at the Biosphere level. Biosphere was intended as a whole evolving object. The theory of the Biosphere is concerned with the environment and nature. Man’s capacity for self-consciousness, his intellect and the production of cultures have added a new layer to earth’s surface which Teilhard calls the ‘Noosphere’. Man is unique in nature. With man commences a new super-organic mode of evolution which is the evolution of culture. Culture is tremendously potent instrument for adaptation to environment. According to him it is the noosphere or the thinking layer, forms the unique environment of man making him off from all other animals which have only biosphere. It is man who turned the biosphere of the world into the new order of the noosphere. “He is the peak towards which all biological efforts on this earth have been aiming and without which the biosphere would have remained a headless, a mere torso.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Teilhard de Chardin, (1974), *Let Me Explain*. London: William Collins Sons, 34.

¹¹ Bernard Delfgaauw, (1961), *Evolution*, 42.

¹² Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 36.

¹³ Joseph V. Kopp, (1964), *Teilhard de Chardin Explained*, 41.

¹⁴ Idem., (1964), *Teilhard de Chardin Explained*, 40.

His theory of the noosphere is related to the mind and consciousness while both are united in every organism.¹⁵ This union leads the organism towards further development which science refers to as evolution, and Teilhard calls ‘moving upwards or towards’. The presence of a general moving towards is not only for human beings but for all organisms. The apparent crisis brought by the evolutionary theories is now resolved in this general picture of moving towards. To facilitate the moving towards of the organism there is the necessity of care for the habitat and it is here that the merging of all the organisms in the Omega point and the final transcendental union of biosphere and noosphere will take place.

4.5 Bringing Religion into Evolution or Christianizing Evolution

Creation, Teilhard says, does not mean the production of a world fully made in some primordial moment, but is an action in which God brings things into existence through the process of union which is called evolution. Evolution, therefore, makes it possible the emergent of the new, which Bergson highlighted in his creative evolution. As a Christian, a Roman Catholic priest and as a devoted Jesuit the evolution that Teilhard sees is undoubtedly a creative evolution, an evolution which does its own evolving, however, has its utter dependence on the Creator. The evolving cosmos is testimony to God’s greatness as the creator and designer.

Teilhard connects (God) theology with (Man) anthropology and (Universe) cosmology. Theology can no longer proceed as though God were “structurally detached from his work.”¹⁶ The theory of creative evolution makes it clear that one cannot think of God apart from the universe.¹⁷ God is the alpha, Omega, the ongoing and the end of creation. Teilhard postulates God as the Omega point. Evolution has a certain direction. If it is moving towards the increase of complexity to consciousness, there must be a goal. The teleological progression is inevitable in evolution. It must have a goal and this goal is God in Christ, the Omega point.¹⁸ God is the motive force which makes evolution work and in some sense the point which evolution will ultimately arrive at. It is God’s creative action and the “cosmic influence of Christ.”¹⁹

As a Christian and theologian Teilhard says that from the very beginning all matter contained a primitive germ of life which can be called consciousness or teleology.²⁰ In Julian Huxley’s phrase, “Man is nothing else than evolution becoming conscious of itself.”²¹ This implies God’s existence and God’s activity as creator, but not in the form of *creatio ex nihilo* of the book of Genesis.

Consciousness is not something strange to matter. It is one of its fundamental properties. The process of moving towards complexity is an internal predisposition of matter which is inherent in matter as energy. In matter a dual energy is operative: tangential energy and radial energy. Tangential energy is a natural flow from simple to complexity and from less probable to more probable.²² Radial energy is another form of natural energy, which leads to interiorize the complex state achieved, that is, from man to the becoming of self-reflective man.

¹⁵ According to Teilhard, the union of biosphere and noosphere forms panpsychism and panvitalism. H. JONAS, (2001), *The Phenomenon of Life*, 25.

¹⁶ Anthony Hanson, ed., (1970), *Teilhard Reassessed*, 42.

¹⁷ Bernard Delfgaauw, (1961), *Evolution*, 34.

¹⁸ Julian Huxley, (1953), *Evolution in Action*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 149.

¹⁹ Anthony Hanson, ed., (1970), *Teilhard Reassessed*, 50.

²⁰ Bernard Delfgaauw, (1961), *Evolution*, 65.

²¹ Julian Huxley, (1953), *Evolution in Action*, 47.

²² Henri de Lubac, (1968), *Teilhard Explained*, 44; also Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 140.

4.5.1 Christifying Evolution

Teilhard was a Roman Catholic priest who was convinced in his vocation to be a priest of Christ who came to redeem the whole world. His scientific studies convinced him that evolution is “a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow, and which they must satisfy henceforward if they are to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow.”²³ At the same time he takes a leap by seeking to *Christify* evolution. He was convinced that as a Christian one must love God and the creatures.

In a universe conceived of as evolving, Teilhard sees Christ as the evolutive (cosmic) Christ. For if everything has been created in Christ and if the universal Christ means that Christ exerts a physical influence on all things, then to maintain this total influence he must be conceived of as exerting himself in some manner over the evolution of the world.²⁴ In this sense Christ becomes the Omega point where everything culminates.²⁵

In the New Testament of the Bible St. Paul asserts that the Christ is the *pleroma*, the fullness or completeness of God’s revelation. (Romans 8:22) Teilhard calls this as Christogenesis where everything will be consummated in Christ who is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, of all creatures; at the same time, he also says that there is anthropogenesis, that is, mankind proceeding to higher forms of psychosocial existence where man becomes the apex and climax of all realities. Both are in a process of evolution: Christogenesis and anthropogenesis, Christic and human. The two are seen as grounded in two evolutions, spiritual and material, which interpenetrate and reinforce one another. “Just as there is no conflict between my foot and me, there is no conflict but rather the closest possible unification between Christ and the world, between Christ’s love and the world’s growth.”²⁶

This shows Teilhard’s quest to adapt Christianity to the contemporary evolutionary thought. In this way he wanted to Christify evolution. It is to show how to view Christ and the future of man in the background of evolution. *Christifying* evolution is an effort to see the splendor of an evolving universe, and to elaborate the idea of the cosmic Christ, or the universal Christ, which later becomes the doctrine of the evolutive Christ. In this regard, Teilhard loves to cite: *In ipso condita sunt universa... Omnia in ipso constant.* (In Him things were made... In Him all things hold together).²⁷ This is the theory which Teilhard described variously as creative evolution, creative transformation and creative union.²⁸

4.6 Evolution and the ‘The Future of Man’²⁹

In his concept of man, Teilhard sets a greater part for the concept of the future of man. According to him man is the recent product of the evolution. There is still room for the evolution in man. There are greater developments in store. Teilhard recognized that “man emerges like an arrow from the biosphere, that he still has a long way to go, that evolution did not finish with the noosphere, but has only just been initiated and that man today is only the embryo of what he will eventually become.”³⁰ In other words man will become still more

²³ Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 219.

²⁴ Henri de Lubac, (1968), *Teilhard Explained*, 17.

²⁵ Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 294.

²⁶ Idem., (1968), *Writings in the Time of War*, 19.

²⁷ Ibid., 15; also Idem., (1966), *Appearance of Man*, tr., René Hague, London: William Collins Sons, 215.

²⁸ Idem., (1968), *Writings in the Time of War*, 152.

²⁹ *The Future of Man* is another important work of Teilhard to bring out his views about the future of evolution where the culmination of all creatures with Omega would take place.

³⁰ Joseph V. Kopp, (1964), *Teilhard de Chardin Explained*, 46.

intensely man. Teilhard calls this upward progression as 'hominization'. Man is now a single interbreeding species expanding on the finite spherical surface of the planet and still showing signs of biological immaturity. In his view, evolution represents the essence of the cosmos and passes through mankind's entire history from its appearance to the full unfolding of the noosphere, that is, the sphere of collective consciousness until the omega is attained. Man's future must culminate not in the impersonal, but in the super-personal which is the omega point.³¹

Teilhard speaks of the divine milieu which surrounds the whole universe and it is the center of the universe as well. Each element of the universe, whatever it may be, subsists on God, the Omega who draws all of them towards it. "It follows that all created things, everyone of them, cannot be looked at in their nature and action, without the same reality being found in their innermost being - like sunlight in the fragments of a broken mirror - one beneath its multiplicity, unattainable beneath its proximity and spiritual beneath its materiality."³²

Unification of man with the Omega is the completion of the evolution of man and all the evolutionary processes. At this point man will enjoy a super-life and man will become a super-individual at which mankind will attain the level of God.³³ Man is "the arrow pointing the way to the final unification of the world in terms of life, the last born through evolution, the freshest and the most subtle of all the successive layers of life."³⁴

Teilhard sees two types of unification that will result from the further evolutionary processes. First, a unification of all human cultures into a single world culture which is manifested externally. The second, a movement towards psychical concentration will occur, so that the noosphere will become involved in a Hyperpersonal consciousness which is the Omega point. Here evolution will reach the terminal phase of convergent integration. Teilhard says that there emerge in the human history new forms of social organizations which involve the unification of all things. Science thus prepares the way for such consummation and unification of the human beings.³⁵ The world is moving towards a society infused by mutual love, an organized society in which men can live as ultra-human beings.³⁶ As Teilhard would affirm, "I am convinced that an honest interpretation of the new achievements of scientific thought justifiably leads not to a materialistic but to a spiritualistic interpretation of evolution, the world we know is not developing by chance, but is structurally controlled by a personal Center of universal convergence."³⁷ This transition is viewed essentially as a biological evolution leading to a conscious transformation of man's biology, psyche and genetics.

5. Conclusion

Teilhard through his optimistic outlook to evolution combated dualistic, mechanistic notions of life and a reductionist view of nature and life in general. Generally the evolutionist conclusion offered a nihilistic implication because man loses his real essence whose rationality is subjected to mere chance and seen as accidental through the evolutionary process. But he affirmed a purposiveness or teleology to organism; when a teleological

³¹ Joseph V. Kopp, (1964), *Teilhard de Chardin Explained*, 52.

³² Teilhard de Chardin, (1960), *The Divine Milieu*, New York: Harper and Row Publications, 114.

³³ This super-life is different from the superman state which Nietzsche prophesised.

³⁴ I. Frolov, (1982), *Global Problems and the Future of Mankind*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 210.

³⁵ Teilhard de Chardin, (1965), *Science and Christ*, tr., René Hague, London: William Collins Sons, 80.

³⁶ Anthony Hanson, ed., (1970), *Teilhard Reassessed*, 17.

³⁷ Henri de Lubac, (1968), *Teilhard Explained*, 42.

direction is added to evolutionary process, the evolutionary process can become as sheer adventure.³⁸ Teilhard achieved this through his optimistic views.

He constructed his philosophical biology on the foundations of an integral philosophy of organism and a philosophy of nature. The conclusions of evolution theories powerfully confirm the anti Platonism of the modern mind. The modern mind is said to be anti-Platonic: for Plato the real world already exists and the real realities are already there. This shadow world is the representation of the already existing realities. But the evolution theories based on the modern physics and organic theories would suggest that the real world has to be still achieved, from these temporary and imperfect realities. Scientific cosmology suggests the non-eternity of the earth and the first representatives in the chains of generation were not the representatives of the existing patterns as Plato thought, but are representing the process of becoming.³⁹ Teilhard agreed with Darwinism to a certain extent at least in order to eliminate the dualism of matter and mind in organism. Later on he developed his own evaluations about evolutionism especially that of Darwin through his proposals of biosphere and noosphere.

Teilhard wanted to comprehend the material and spiritual world in terms of his thesis regarding the direct proportional relation between material complexity and consciousness (life). As Teilhard himself recognized, his Christian vision influenced his philosophical interpretation of the natural history of the world. In one sense, while remaining scientific, *The Phenomenon of Man* belongs to Christian philosophy. Implicitly or explicitly, the whole of Teilhard's work is inspired by faith. This influence of Christianity that makes him reject Plato's and Plotinus's notion of a material universe that has fallen from the divine harmony, and accept the contrary fundamental idea of a history in time, extending to the totality of things which is capable of rejoining its origin, God the alpha and the omega.⁴⁰

Teilhard had an optimistic view of evolutionism when he affirmed that everything including man and all other realities are evolving towards the Omega where there would be a sublime consummation. This movement for him is absolutely spiritual. All the realities are endowed with an energy which is spiritual and conscious. Since all organic and inorganic are to be united as one, Teilhard surpasses the danger of dualism. At the same time he employed a critical and phenomenological description of evolutionism by Christifying and including Christogenesis and anthropogenesis to evolution.

When analysing these views one can see in Teilhard an application of a religious view point to science and evolution theories since he had a strong religious foundation as a Roman Catholic and as a Jesuit. He gave a message, that a new theology or religious view point must develop to evaluate the concepts of historicity, evolution, responsibility and the engagement of human spirit for the safeguard of nature and life. This is a call for a collaboration of science and theology where organism and its environment are viewed from an integral perspective which would help develop a dialogical attitude.

The mechanistic and evolutionistic explanations of the modern era overturned the classical theories of cause and effect. Creationism asserted that cause and effect exist and the origin and the resulting existence do not differ essentially. That means the cause and effect are in the same order and the effect must be in conformity to the cause. Such classical concept of cause affirmed that the cause must be perfect, necessary and infinite. The cause was expected to possess the things as much as and not less than the effects coming from it.⁴¹ But with the arrival of mechanical and later evolution theories, one could observe a reversal taking place in the explanation with regard to the classical concept of the cause. If the

³⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, (1959), *The Phenomenon of Man*, 220.

³⁹ H. Jonas, (2001), *The Phenomenon of Life*, 42.

⁴⁰ Emile Rideau, (1967), *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought*, tr., René Hague, London: William Collins Sons, 48.

⁴¹ Plotinus affirmed the classical concept of cause as higher and effect as the lower.

transition from inorganic to organic is accepted, then how can this dynamics without any element of teleology or purposiveness ‘evolve’ those higher forms without their being in any sense ‘involved’ in the initial stage.⁴² The effects which are resulting from the evolution become more perfect and ideal rather than the cause.

Teilhard addressed this issue and affirmed that the effects coming out of evolution are better than their causes because of the achievement of consciousness and self-reflection in the organisms especially in man. Further the inbuilt teleology induces the evolutionary process become more perfect, ideal and noble. At the same time God as alpha and omega of all the realities a divine milieu is established which is explained by religions as divinization. Teilhard added another aspect to this which he calls hominization, that is, it was man who through his consciousness and self-realization has given the other creatures a meaning and identity. This agrees well with the creationist view that man is the climax, apex and epitome of all creations. According to Teilhard, the arrival of man in this universe was well prepared. Creationism also asserts that man was created at last after the creation of everything else, thus preparing everything for man’s arrival and existence. In his view man rises towards a ‘super-life’ and ‘super-individuality’ that is to God, with the help of love. It is love that integrates all personal consciousness at Omega. This love is not only for man, but also for all other earthly beings, because all of them are to be united to Omega.

Teilhard is one among the few thinkers who sought to integrate science and religion and to reconstruct the Christian doctrines from the perspectives of science and faith by reconciling Christian theology with the theory of evolution. He saw in evolution a progress towards complexity and achieving consciousness. For him humankind is moving towards the unity of matter and life. This approach is the basis of a new model of interaction between science and theology. He wanted the Church to be open to the world, to the realities and to the new trends that are offered by science and academic tenets. Teilhard was not “willing to keep his theology and his paleontology in separate compartments; he was determined to be both a scientist and a theologian.”⁴³ His Christian faith convinced him that faith and reason cannot conflict. This explains the deep affinity between the two, it is then, the conflict between science and religion will be overcome and their synthesis will occur. Thus Teilhard displayed a scientific approach with a theologian’s faith. By presenting these viewpoints one can see in them an application of a religious perspective to science and evolution theories since both are identified as having the same goal with diverse methods. Teilhard created a new theology to evaluate the concepts of human history, evolution, responsibility and the engagement of human spirit for the safeguard of nature and life.

⁴² Jonas, (2001), *The Phenomenon of Life*, 43

⁴³ Anthony Hanson, ed., (1970), *Teilhard Reassessed*, 64.