

京大過去問 1983年 第2問

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Broadly speaking, attempts to answer fundamental questions dealing with the creation of the universe and the creation of life have, throughout recorded history, been of two kinds — the physical and the metaphysical.

The metaphysical approaches have assumed the existence of a supreme, and usually divine, creator whose ends and means have been either revealed to, or otherwise perceived by, selected individuals in an extra-sensory manner (e.g., mystical experiences, dreams, etc.).

(1)Those who have not had the benefit of such direct experiences have either accepted or rejected the 'evidence' of those who have as a matter of personal preference — acceptance, of course, being an act of faith rather than of reason. The chief disadvantage of this method, from a practical point of view, is that divinely revealed information must be accepted as absolutely true, that is, true for all time despite any evidence that may crop up to conflict with it. This dilemma has given rise to theology*, which may be described as the art of fitting new evidence into old explanations.

(2)Science, on the other hand, has no dogmatic beliefs of this kind, scientific knowledge being self-correcting. Any fresh evidence that may appear either discredits or helps to confirm existing theories: if evidence builds up against a theory it is discarded and a better one sought in its place.