

To Hell with Education

(A Tongue-in-Cheek Denunciation of Scholasticism in Science)

Once, there dashed into hell a young devil, to tell
Some news he could scarcely contain.
'There's been a disaster!' he called to the Master,
'I fear all our work is in vain!'

Drawled Satan: 'Keep cool, you impetuous fool.
I find such excitement uncouth!
'But Dad,' cried the lad, 'this really is bad.
Mankind's found a Great Bag of truth!'

'I stayed hid,' he said, 'as the pieces were spread
All jigsaw-like, there on the Table.
And some, in a bit, tried the pieces to fit
As cleverly as they were able.'

'So what?' drawled Old Nick, 'Do you seriously think
Such a trifle deserves my attention?
This knowledge they've found, I'll bet you a pound,
Will never become comprehension!'

The lad was astonished. 'But Dad,' he admonished,
'This news ought to make us suspicious!
We surely decline to let Truth Divine
Mar Ignorance truly perditionous!'

'Relax!' said his Pa, 'It will not get them far.
In me you can place your reliance.'
'How so?' asked the boy, and the sage said, 'My ploy
Is to let all that truth become Science.'

'I am not satisfied,' young Nicky replied,
'This answer of yours is surprising!'
'Then listen, dear youth. For each one who loves truth
There are thousands who love organising.'

'It happens like this: at first it is bliss
To pick pieces out of the pile
And find where they fit, near the Chair where you sit
At the Table. Then, after a while

The bits you abort, by others are sought
To fit where those others are seated.
And soon, as the spaces between all those places
Are filled, so the aim is defeated.

It's like this, my son. Though it's barely begun,
The project must end in frustration.
Because, by this time, the whole "pantomime"
Is wrapped-up in Administration.

Their trouble, you see, is that though truth is free,
They don't see my hellish perversity.
By evil intent I've let them invent,
What aspirants call "university".

'This makes the poor fools establish new rules
So marvellously diabolical
That scholars for fees can pursue "Ph.D.s"
For purposes non-philosophical.

Departments are named and probably famed
For keeping their "jigsaws" intact.
With sole occupation to forge reputation
For knowledge both full and exact.

In this way they save all the truth-bits that they've
Put together by efforts intense.
But the total of which (and here is the hitch)
Can make no overall sense.

'Now you and I know that the best way to go
To restore the rate of advance
Is withdraw the stricture on keeping each 'picture'
Where placed by its first circumstance.

To move chunks around is the plan that is sound
Till they fit beyond any question.
But guardians of knowledge ensconced in each college
Can contemplate no such suggestion.

"There's no way," they'll say, "such a plan to obey
In keeping with scholarly purity.
In Disciplines tight we maintain our right
To our places, our pay and security.

It must never appear that we interfere
In areas controlled by our peers.
We say, and with pride, that we're 'not qualified'
In matters outside our own spheres."

'So these institutions, by circumlocutions,
The aim of the game they are changing.
There are gaps where no bit can possibly fit
While the puzzle resists rearranging.

In those gaps they neglect, we neatly inject,
For their aims now wholly sophistical
Our Hellish infusion of sheer illusion
And fancies entirely mystical.

They easily make the fatal mistake
Of thinking the form ineluctable
And thus we ensure, by methods secure,
That Truth is no longer constructible.

You see, then, my son, how our evil is done
No matter how mankind has toiled
Or what it has cost them, true Wisdom is lost them.
And *that's* how Man's progress is foiled.' ■

