

In the Beginning

(continued)

(Text: We firmly believe and profess without qualification that there is only one true God...the one and only principle of all things - Creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal, Who, by His almighty power, from the very beginning of time has created both orders of creatures in the same way out of nothing, the spiritual or angelic world and the corporeal or visible universe. And afterwards He formed the creature man, who in a way belongs to both orders, as he is composed of spirit and body. For the devil and the other demons were created by God good according to their nature, but they made themselves evil by their own doing. As for man, his sin was at the prompting of the devil. Fourth Lateran Council, Chapter 1, On the Catholic Faith).

Textual Observations

In comparison with the ancient creedal formularies this solemn definition identifies the invisible and visible respectively with spiritual-angelic and corporal-earthly, both established originally out of nothing at the beginning of time; then at the end of God's creative work He established the human, both body and soul united in a single nature. It is not said expressly that man was established out of nothing, but the word used, *condidit*, clearly indicates that God alone formed man. Moral evil only entered the created order, invisible first and then visible, after God had completed His creative work. It occurred after angels and men had begun to exercise responsibility within their respective created orders.

Context

The definition of creation in the Fourth Lateran Council is in fact a repetition of the first article of the ancient creeds with additions constituting not a development of doctrine (for these points were already clearly understood as forming the content of the creedal formularies), but a more precise formulation in view of certain errors of the time bearing directly on the origin of the world and in a particular way on the origin and nature of man. According to St. Bonaventure¹, the ancient dogma was so stated in order to make clear the three approaches to the question of origins, thought by man at the time to be compatible with Christian faith, were in fact utterly contrary to it.

These were:

1. The eternity of the world, as proposed by many Aristotelians - thus the definition

states the world was created in the beginning of time to make clear the exact meaning of finitude.

2. The subtraction of the visible-corporal world from the power of God, and the identification of moral evil with material existence - the position of the Manichees of the middle ages: thus the insistence on creation of matter by God *ex nihilo*, and the location of the source of sin in a free choice not in conformity with the divine law.

3. The limitation of God's omnipotence by making the exercise of His power dependent on the cooperation of instruments, the position of the medieval Neo-Platonists, a position akin to that of the emanationists of old and the theistic evolutionists today - hence the phrase "God alone" to describe Who establishes and how He establishes His creation.

New Perspectives

The second and third errors, widespread at the beginning of the 13th century, did not however represent positions not dealt with by the Church in centuries past. Often enough evolution is considered a "modern" theory, in all its forms linked popularly to the name of Darwin, and a theory with which, as with science in general, the Church must come to terms. From the foregoing section of this essay it should be clear that the remote basis of evolutionary theory had been familiar to the Church from her beginning. Indeed, that beginning is inseparably tied to the first article of the Creed, so that an attack on one is inevitably an attack on the other; the old Manicheism and the old Pantheism was once again anathematized in the second and third errors proscribed by Lateran IV.

The roots of the "modern" theory of evolution, in so far as "modern" indicates a relatively novel form of a very hoary theory, are to be discovered, not in the 18th and 19th centuries, but in the 13th century with the appearance of "Latin Aristotelianism", a mode of interpreting Aristotle so as to make of Aristotelian thought an instrument for a radical repudiation of the entire Catholic faith and tradition. As St. Bonaventure saw so clearly, the denial of the dogma of creation would lead to a thoroughgoing secularism.

There is no doubt but that the rediscovery of Aristotle in the West triggered an intellectual ferment constituting a challenge to Catholic theology, not hitherto dealt with directly, and centering on the first article of the Creed, on origins, so that the conflict between Secularism and Catholicism as contrary ways of life centered intellectually on the problem of the eternity of the world versus creation in time.

According to many modern interpreters of Aristotle, but also according to many in the 13th century, including St. Bonaventure² Aristotle neither had any idea of the Christian notion of creation *ex nihilo*, nor did he ever raise the question of the origin of the world. He simply took the world for granted, as always existing, eternally imperfect, eternally perfectible. the unmoved mover who made motion possible, was not understood by Aristotle to be the maker of the world. For in such a perspective the origin of the world is

simply not a question, because a non-existent origin needs no explanation. Only when this perspective is confronted by the dogma of creation does the question rise for such a philosophy. So long as the eternity of the world is maintained, so long will this question be resolved in a non-creationist form. As brilliant as Aristotle's thought was and is, it had major defects whose consequences, when uncorrected, are seldom appreciated by those who reject the Christian doctrine of creation and its relevance to the conduct of science. Fr. Stanley Jaki in *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* has noted that Greek science was a monumental achievement of the human intellect, but was stillborn because it lacked the knowledge of creation. Modern science, he claims, really began in the 13th century with the development of a Christian philosophy based on the notion of the world as created-finite and God as the infinite Creator; and to the extent that a scientist engages fruitfully in the cultivation of his discipline he acts on, even when he consciously rejects creation, a philosophy of science and methodology only possible on the assumption that creation is true. But to the extent that a scientist works on the assumption of an eternal, radically infinite world, to that extent his work becomes progressively more fruitless because unrelated to the real world, which is a world in fact finite and temporal, not infinite and eternal.

Corrected, Aristotelian thought could and would prove useful to further development of Christian thought, as the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Venerable John Duns Scotus demonstrate. But the needed correction, as St. Bonaventure saw so clearly, was a major one touching a point crucial to the determination of the final character of Aristotelian thought: closed or open to Christian faith, and therefore of its utility for believers and as many historians of science hold, its utility for science as well.

Uncorrected, in the hands of those bent on the destruction of the Christian faith and the Catholic way of life, it became a potent instrument for undermining intellectual confidence in the first article of the Creed, because it provided in intellectual rather than in religious form an alternative to the dogma of creation (with its philosophical and scientific correlatives) as a solution to the problem of origins. This is the first, proximate root of modern evolutionary theory, a root despite its intellectual format, neither purely nor primarily intellectual and scientific, but religious, because the question of origins both thematically and historically is a religious question.

A second root of "modern" evolutionary theory in the 13th century, and of the Secularism based on it, is to be found in Joachimism and the peculiar mystique of "progress" which it popularized during the 13th century and which has not disappeared from western culture since. Originally a theology of history proposed by the unworldly Abbot Joachim to explain and justify a program of reform and renewal of the Church, it was condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council as involving notions inimical to a sound understanding of the Trinity, and of the nature of the Church. Its subsequent development showed it to be a potent catalyst of ardent revolutionary fervor.

The progression, by which in this theory history was to be explained, provided a basis for an expectation of the imminent advent of the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit and the

inauguration of a time of peace and prosperity wondrously contrasting with the misery and corruption of the present age of the clerical kingdom known as the "canonical" or institutional Church. But like so many projects of the unworldly, this one lost sight of the difference between the temporal and the eternal, the secular and the spiritual, and through its own way of explaining the end of the world eliminated the difference between created and uncreated which Latin Aristotelianism did by means of its theory of an eternal world as an explanation of the world's origin. The results were not surprising. Religious and secular progress came to be identified; the reality of the object of Christian hope (a life after death) eventually became confused with earthly progress. Unlimited human progress and perfectibility on earth promised by human science and achieved by human technology could be rationalized as the ultimate hope and inspiration of human activity. And from the marriage of progress with the theory of an eternal world came the modern notion of unending evolution towards a better and better future in this world.

Since that time a certain number of characteristics have attached themselves to this kind of thought and are of considerable interest because they tend to be present wherever evolutionary thought predominates.

1. The religious practice inspired by this kind of thought is strongly indifferent to dogma and highly syncretistic, seeking to reduce particular religions to a higher synthesis and very often giving to this synthesis a certain number of Christian trappings.³

2. Movements impregnated with this kind of thought are radically anti-clerical in a violent manner, because firstly the existence of Catholic clergy, in particular the Pope, is seen as an obstacle to religious progress and renewal, and secondly as an obstacle to intellectual and moral spontaneity. In this framework the destruction of the clerical Church is the necessary condition for progress or evolution. Indeed this kind of principled and militant anti-clericalism throughout the history of the Church has invariably been the *sine qua non* [without which nothing] for any plausible identification of the spiritual with the temporal (idolization of the present world and denial of the world to come).

3. Such movements are endowed with a very potent totalitarian instinct, sometimes described as communistic, in the medieval period very evident among some groups of Franciscan spirituals, and after their condemnation, among the so-called *fraticelli* of the middle ages and various communistic groups at the time of the Protestant reformation.

The distinctive "anti-Creationism" of the 13th century involved in particular concepts of human nature, justified by an intellectual system entailing complete independence from Revelation and Church authority, and inspired by an ideology or spirituality, totalitarian at root. Hence, from this time forward, official pronouncements of the Church dealing with the question of origins place a particular stress on two points:

* a correct notion not only of what man should do, but what man is by nature in virtue of the fact that his Creator has made him directly; and

* a correct assessment of the natural abilities of the human intellect vis-a-vis the exercise of the faith in assenting to the truths revealed by God and proclaimed authentically by the Church.

Magisterial Statements on Human Nature

Because of these factors the question of the origin of the world quickly came to center on the question of the origin and nature of man. In fact there are but two starting points for any discussion of human origins: creationistic or pantheistic, today often designated as evolutionary. As in earlier times, any departure from a creationistic standpoint invariably entailed serious christological deviations. It is interesting to note in the texts that follow, that with the exception of the origin of the body of the first male human, every characteristic feature of modern evolutionary hypothesis concerning human origins was explicitly condemned between the Fourth Lateran Council and the Council of Trent.

Innocent III

Innocent III wrote *Gaudeamus in Domino* to the Bishop of Tiberias in Palestine in 1201. Polygamy is forbidden by the natural law, and monogamy is of the very nature of marriage, he affirmed, because of the manner in which the Creator formed the first woman, Eve, from the side of the first man. The narrative in the literal sense is pertinent to the truths of salvation, just as the Biblical Commission in 1909 stated with regard to the same verse. The letter of Pope Innocent III is not a solemn definition; yet it does reflect quite clearly the consistent mind of the Church on this verse from her foundation to the present. It also says that this understanding is not dependent on philosophical or scientific analysis, but on a theological tradition stemming from Christ⁴

Council of Vienne (1311)

The ancient condemnations of Apollinarianism (in the Incarnation the divinity replaces the rational part of the soul, and thus forms a substantial unity with the body) are repeated and so formulated at Vienne as to exclude the erroneous views of the Franciscan, Peter of John Olivi. The Council declared that the one intellectual soul, qua intellectual, is the form of the Body of Christ conceived in the womb of the Virgin, just as it is in every other human being. To hold, as Olivi seems to have taught, that the soul informs the body by way of some non-intellectual power would be to open the way to a denial of the essential difference between the human body and that of the brute. The Council further insisted that the soul of Christ is individual, not the common entity dear to the medieval pantheist throughout the 13th A century and which in fact becomes the divinity in all forms of Apollinarianism.

The source of the teaching of the Council of Vienne on the human soul and its relation to the body ultimately rests on the Church's traditional understanding of the origin of

the first man's body and soul. Each was made directly by the Creator and then united by Him to form a single man, who is not God but a creature different however from any other in his special likeness to his Maker.

Fifth Lateran Council (1513)

Against the views of the Neo-Aristotelians this Council defined the immortality of each human soul, the possibility of natural demonstration thereof (details unspecified) and the direct creation of the souls of not only the first man and first woman but of each and every descendant of Adam and Eve.

This creative act is to be understood in the sense of creation *ex nihilo* [out of nothing]. The direct formation of the first human bodies by God has never been understood by the Church as a creation *ex nihilo*, because the Scriptures describe that uniquely divine action in respect to the first human bodies as on something pre-existent; for Adam the slime of the earth, for Eve a rib from Adam's side.

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent in the decree on original sin ⁵, defined the unity of the entire human family as one of descent from one man and one woman made directly by God, and that only in virtue of the descent by procreation, is one a human being. Further, in virtue of that descent, original sin is a matter of inheritance, not imitation of the sin of Adam.

No theory of polygenism is reconcilable with this belief, as both Pius XII and Paul VI clearly noted. The theory in principle is a denial of the facts (that there was but a single couple, and not multiple couples, owing its existence principally and directly to the Creator, from which couple all other human beings descend); and these facts, known as true on the authority of God, cannot be disproven.

Warnings and prohibitions against the use of Aristotle

Throughout the first half of the 13th century the popes issued a series of warnings, and in some instances prohibitions against the use of the works of Aristotle as a basic textbook of philosophy in the school of arts of the University of Paris, and against the danger of using new terminology and concepts drawn from philosophy as a means of determining and interpreting the sense of Revelation in preference to those criteria based on sacred tradition and Scripture ^{6 7}. St. Bonaventure ⁸ discusses theological method and the dangers attendant on the use of merely natural knowledge apart from a divinely appointed authority as a primary criterion for the resolution of theological questions, of which the interpretation of the divinely inspired books of the Bible is one.

These warnings are not an actual condemnation of Aristotle, nor a denial the possible utility of his philosophical, and by extension scientific knowledge within theology,

much less an attempt to control and manipulate philosophical and scientific research and reflexion. Rather they indicate that as long as the valid insights of Aristotle, or any other scholar, are not detached from a secular bias placing no limits on the freedom and prowess of man to know all naturally, that mode of speculation, particularly when applied to the origin of the world, of man, and of the Incarnation, is dangerous to faith.

There appear here the rudiments of a policy subsequently developed and applied with great consistency by the Church in questions involving not only theology, but other intellectual disciplines. Statements directly contrary to revealed truth are condemned in principle and scientific character are not judged in terms of the methodology employed; they are rated, as it were, as safe and sound, or unsafe in terms of what is known by faith to be beyond question.

Like his modern counterpart, the secular intellectual of the middle ages regarded such a position as obscurantist. But however inept the administration of such a policy by ecclesiastics might become in certain cases, the policy can be regarded as obscurantist only on the assumption that Revelation and theology have nothing to contribute to the understanding on subject matter of philosophy and science.

The Church's policy, entailing in principle a radical compatibility and mutual support between the truths of faith and the results of genuine science (in the medieval sense, this comprised philosophy, science and art) made two assumptions:

1. That truth is objectively one. Contradictories cannot simultaneously be true. Hence Revelation and reason to the extent they give distinct but authentic access to the truth, cannot be at odds. Apparent contradictions arise either from the thinker's abuse of faith or his abuse of reason.

2. Methods or procedures for the use of human intelligence in grasping the truth are multiple. On method, philosophical or scientific, is not capable of comprehending all there is to know about one object (e.g., the material world, or human nature). Because the Truth is one, these methods are coordinated one to the other and subordinated to that one science providing the most direct access to the Truth itself, the study of Revelation or theology.

Effective avoidance of the practical import of this policy, whatever the reason, postulated the denial of these two assumptions. This is exactly what occurred during the 13th and early 14th centuries.

The Two-Truth Theory

During the middle ages, those who adopted the secular stance but who also wished in some way to retain their link with Catholicism, precluded any such link and devised as a rationalization of their position, what was later termed the "two-truth" theory. To avoid choosing between flatly contradictory statements, only one of which could be true, it was

stated that what might be true theologically could simultaneously be false philosophically (or historically or scientifically), or vice-versa. Such a position could not be acknowledged as legitimate, especially for one calling himself a Catholic, for it quite obviously entails an intellectual relativism incompatible with the Catholic view of truth, and dogma in particular.

Between the theory and the mode of reasoning of Christian proponents of evolution attempting to reconcile the "fact" of evolution with the data recorded in Genesis there is a curious similarity. It is claimed that the facts of Genesis are true as theological symbols, a kind of code for transcendent religious truths, but false historically and scientifically. But it is just this claim concerning key data of Genesis that the Church has consistently denied throughout her history. They are to her not symbolically but literally true.

On this point, many evolutionists have always concurred. Consistency does not permit the compromise represented by what is today termed theistic evolution. One must choose between the dogma of creation or the all-embracing evolutionary perspective of the questions of cosmic and human origins.

Nominalism

One of the characteristic features of this 14th and 15th century movement among Catholic philosophers and theologians was a refusal to concede to universal concepts a status greater than that of a generalization (a purely mental construct). Concepts never rise above the level of mental tags and symbols, and hence of themselves can provide no sure avenue to the understanding of the extra-mental real. For example, the concept of a species (e.g, human nature as a rational animal) tells the thinker nothing absolutely certain and unchanging about human nature outside the mind

The implications of such a position for certainty and objectivity of human understanding are reducible to two:

* either such certainty concerning the reality and stability of the outer world is imposed by authority (Fideism); or

* The only certainty is that nothing is certain - reality is an unending flux. Any attempt to reason on such an assumption tends to identify the real with the objects of the senses, always in flux, since the essence of things, not distinctly and directly perceived by the senses, are but mental constructs. Access to the truth, then, in so far as truth designates the real outside the mind, is the exclusive prerogative of the "scientific method," by definition the method appropriate to the study of the sensible. Thus, any theory of science radically nominalistic will also be evolutionary, because the objects of the senses are constantly changing. Change or evolution rather than form or substance as the fundamental characteristic of the real will conversely be described in such a context as scientific and reasonable, whereas Creationism, however presented, cannot appear, *a priori*, as anything but fideistic, authoritarian and unscientific.

It is just this theory of science which Fr. Stanley Jaki claims is as unscientific as it is anti-Christian and anti-creationistic. The support which nominalism has always provided for theories of legal Positivism and arbitrary Voluntarism confirms the radically arbitrary character of any theory based on nominalistic assumptions. So it is important from a Catholic point of view to question whether evolutionary thought has ever been scientific in any but the sense of being part of a philosophical theory whose root assumptions are incompatible with what Pope Paul VI in his Creed ⁹ considers an integral part of Catholic belief, which is the human mind's ability to form universal concepts by which objective knowledge about the essences of things is derived. ¹⁰

The Galileo Case

Once the rejection in the 16th century of the authority and traditional policies of the Magisterium of the Church had become widespread, technical advances made possible by the cultivation of science were seen as a kind of marvelous confirmation of the theory of science set forth by the philosophers at odds with the Magisterium and as proof of the obscurantism and childishness of faith. The case of Galileo has become a landmark in the illustration of such a point of view.

There are many questionable aspects of the Galileo case, touching both parties in the dispute: the conduct of certain ecclesiastics, the narrowness of certain theologians and scholars (by no means all supported the final decision), the unscrupulous use made of human failings by the propagandists of secularism. Whatever the truth about the alleged failings of some ecclesiastics involved in the trial, the final decision, in so far as it involves question of doctrine and of the relations between Revelation and reason as sources of Knowledge, was consistent with tradition. Hence, it is not correct to make of the decision a kind of dilemma: either support the decision and maintain intellectual narrowness, or repudiate it and in effect capitulate to Modernism's major assumptions that truth is a coefficient of the current culture and subject to evolution.

In so far as the decision in the Galileo case touched matters of belief two points were involved:

1. The astronomical theories of Galileo touched points also mentioned in Scripture. His views, propounded as proven fact, would seem to render Scriptural references to the earth either false or meaningless: the decision to place the works of Galileo on the Index of Forbidden Books, and to forbid him to publish any more on the subject, was not a condemnation of scientific theorizing as such; it was an insistence that his particular theory be held merely as a hypothesis, until such time as the Church should have resolved the exegetical questions; to publicize the same in circumstances where it might be taken as proven fact by the uninformed would act to the detriment of their faith. One may discuss whether this was the best manner to handle the pastoral problem; but it hardly constitutes intellectual tyranny. And just as Galileo's celestial mechanics was not condemned, neither

was Aristotle's canonized.

2. The immediate concern of the Church was not the justification of astronomical theory, but the guardianship of the deposit of faith and its correct interpretation¹¹. Revelation does contain references to what seems to be the immobility of the earth. The Fathers of the Church, as St. Robert Bellarmine noted, also seem to attest to this as a fact. If the heliocentric theory is true, then as St. Robert observed, our understanding of these passages must be re-examined to discover the faulty interpretation, but it is not permissible in the meantime to say God has stated something false or engaged in pious deception. If the theory is merely possible, this is not a sufficient basis as yet for doubting the literal sense of Scripture attested by the Fathers. In passing, it may be remarked that there are even now serious scholars willing to make a case for the geocentric theory.

Despite the polemics surrounding this affair, the decision in essence illustrates, on the part of the Church, a policy in dealing with subjects, at once a matter of Revelation and of reason, already in evidence in the 13th century. Her action will appear again in subsequent centuries.

PART IV or VATICAN I

As the Fourth Lateran Council anticipated key elements in the medieval challenge to the first article of the Creed, so too the First Vatican Council performed the same service for the Church in modern times.

Texts (Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*)

1. In order to manifest his perfection through the benefits which he bestows on creatures - not to intensify his happiness nor to acquire any perfection - this one and only true God, by his goodness and "almighty power" and by a completely free decision, "from the very beginning of times has created both orders of creatures in the same way out of nothing, the spiritual or angelic world and the corporeal or visible universe. And afterwards he formed the creature man, who in a way belongs to both orders, as he is composed of spirit and body"...(Chapter 1)

2. The same holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the origin and end of all things, can be known with certainty by the natural light of reason from the things he created...and she teaches that it was nevertheless, the good pleasure of his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal decrees of his will to the human race in another and supernatural way...(Chapter 2)

3. Furthermore, the perpetual universal belief of the Catholic Church has held and now holds that there are two orders of knowledge, distinct not only in origin but also in object. They are distinct in origin, because in one we know by means of natural reason; in the other, by means of divine faith. And they are distinct in object, because

in addition to what natural reason can attain, we have proposed to us as objects of belief mysteries that are hidden in God, and which, unless divinely revealed, can never be known...(Chapter 4)

4. Moreover, the Church, which received the office of safeguarding the deposit of faith along with the apostolic duty of teaching, likewise possesses, according to the divine will, the right and duty of proscribing so-called knowledge so that none may be deceived by philosophy and vain deceit...(Chapter 4)

5. Faith and reason can never disagree; but more than that, they are even mutually advantageous. For right reason demonstrates the foundations of faith and, enlightened by the light of faith, it pursues the science of divine things; faith, on the other hand, sets reason free and guards it from errors and furnishes it with extensive knowledge. Hence, far from opposing the study of human arts and sciences, the Church helps and furthers this study in many ways. For it is neither ignorant nor scornful of the advantages for human living that result from these pursuits...And it certainly does not forbid these sciences to use their own principles and method within their own field. But while recognizing this due liberty, it is carefully on the watch to see that they do not admit errors by going contrary to divine doctrine, or step beyond their own boundaries and cause confusion by assuming authority in the domain of faith.

For the doctrine of faith as revealed by God has not been presented to men as a philosophical system to be perfected by human ingenuity; it was presented as a divine trust given to the bride of Christ to be faithfully kept and infallibly interpreted. It also follows that any meaning of the sacred dogmas that has once been declared by holy Mother Church, must always be retained; and there must never be any deviation from that meaning on the specious grounds of a more profound understanding. "Therefore, let there be growth...and all possible progress in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom whether in single individuals or in the whole body, in each man as well as in the entire Church, according to the stage or their development; but only within proper limits, that is, in the same doctrine, in the same meaning, and in the same purport." (Chapter 4)

Commentary

First Text

The first text is a repetition of the solemn definition of the Fourth Lateran Council, with an additional reference to the nature of the creative act, a free act of God's will, rooted in His goodness and omnipotence, and motivated not by a desire for gain, but one of generosity. Both as to its motive as well as to its character the creative act is distinctive of God and is the basis for condemning in the canons of the Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*, the following errors:

- * That the one God is not the Creator of all else (Chapter 1, Canon 1);
- * That the substance of God is identical with the world (Chapter 1 Canon 3)
- * That finite beings evolved from the substance of God (Chapter 1, Canon 4)
- * That through its evolution or manifestation the divine substance becomes all things, or a part of some things (Chapter 1, Canon 4);
- * That the world and everything in it, spiritual as well as material, was not produced by God *ex nihilo secundum totam suam substantiam* (i.e. in its every part). Chapter 1, Canon 4).

The first anathema excluded from Catholic belief the view (Deism) that one can subtract the world from its dependence on God, either in existence or perdurance or both, and still claim belief in God, and by implication claim that belief in God tells one nothing about the existence and nature of those subjects forming the direct object of philosophic and/or scientific study. The second, third, and fourth anathemata exclude as compatible with Catholic belief various forms of Pantheism, both the ancient form (psychological Monism) claiming that the world emanated from God or that God became a part of certain things and the more modern form (Hegelianism) claiming the world becomes God because it is the manifestation or evolution of the divine substance.

The fifth anathema cited here clearly indicates that the world, also studied by natural reason in various ways, and the natural development characteristic of the world as a whole and each of its parts, presupposes a creative action of God touching not simply, the first moment of the world's existence, but the entire work of the six days by which the species in the philosophical sense were established and the universe given an orderly, intelligible form. Any theory that claims to explain the origin of the world, or of the species, exclusively in terms of natural processes (evolution) is by that very fact opposed to Catholic belief. The essences of finite species, and the essential structure of world order are not the fruit of their own activity but a necessary prerequisite, only possible in virtue of a distinctive, divine productive action.

Second Text

The second text is a corollary of the first. Precisely because the things of this world can be recognized in their existence and essence as created through the use of the human power to know naturally, therefore God can naturally be known as the One Who is Creator. But precisely because His creation is finite, there is much more about Him, and about the designs of His will, that cannot be known naturally, but only from Revelation.

The teaching of the Church, and Revelation which it claims to declare, contains in

addition to truths knowable only by Revelation and faith, truths accessible to reason as well, and assert that it is a part of Catholic faith to profess this. The first of these truths is that the world created by God reflects in its nature and activities the perfections of its Creator, and that these most basic aspects even of the humblest material object can be recognized as such. To deny on principle that either philosophy or science cannot eventually point to such is incompatible with Catholic faith.

Third Text

This text indicates the basis for distinguishing between the orders of natural and revealed knowledge, in terms of which these two cognitive orders are correlated avoiding at once Fideism (the denial of the possibility of achieving any certitude in the use of the intellect naturally, whether philosophically or scientifically) and Rationalism (the denial of the very possibility of faith).

Fourth Text

This text makes clear the right of the Church to proscribe not merely errors concerning the content of Revelation, whether this pertains to mysteries of faith or to truths of the natural order, but to unmask those epistemological errors (*falsi nominis scientia*) parading in the guise of legitimate philosophy or science. These the faithful must not only avoid, but recognize for what they are: denials of the faith of the Church, and therefore false religion.

Fifth Text

The final text sets forth the belief of the Church concerning the relation between faith and the cultivation of the intellect:

* in principle, the cultivation of faith and reason will be mutually beneficial, because the same Creator is the source of both;

* The ecclesiastical Magisterium does not interfere with or attempt to supervise the internal development of any discipline in accordance with its proper method and nature;

* The same Magisterium is concerned that in the name of a specious academic freedom these disciplines are incorporating views which are false, because directly contrary to Revelation, or that in the cultivation of these disciplines reason should come to occupy the place of faith.

* although reason can contribute to the progressive elucidation of the deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, the primary criterion must remain the Church's unchanging and inerrant declarations whose sense may not be altered in view of the "progress of science."

Thus are anathematized two positions very much bound up in the controversy over evolution, scientific as well as philosophical: 1) that it is possible to enjoy such liberty in the use of the human intellect as to hold as true what is directly opposed to the belief of the Church (e.g. that the world is eternally evolving) and that the Church may not proscribe such a position; 2) that the progress of science constitutes grounds for interpreting the articles of faith in a way different from the traditional meaning assigned them (e.g. Polygenism in place of Monogenism, in respect to the texts of Genesis on Adam and Eve.

References

- 1 *Breviloquium*, Part II, Ch. 1,2.
- 2 II *Sent. D.* I,a,1,Q,2.
- 3 *Infra* under Council of Vienne.
- 4 T.J. Motherway, *The Creation of Eve in the Catholic Tradition* in *Theological Studies* I (1940) 97-116.
- 5 Session V, 1546.
- 6 M. Grabman, *1 divieti ecclesiastici de Aristotele sotto Innocente III e Gregorio IX*, Roma 1941.
- 7 Pope Gregory IX, *Ab Aegyptiis Argentea*,
- 8 *Collationes in Hexameron*, 19. 1228.
- 9 Introduction, n. 5.
- 10 Also G. Sermoni - R. Fondi, *Dopo Darwin, Critica all'evoluzionism*, Milan 1982, pp.104-120.
- 11 Council of Trent, Session
