



THE SIX DAYS
of CREATION

Thomas Mary Sennott

Book Store Introduction

I don't know any better Introduction to this second edition of *The Six Days of Creation* than to repeat the remarkable review of the first edition of this work, which Frank Morris did for *The Wanderer* in the summer of 1985.

“This is not merely a good book; it is a remarkable one. It is remarkable in a number of ways – the vast data on evolutionary claims and their answer, the ingenious format of a dialogue between fictional defenders of a variety of positions, the deftness of handling such a format, and the fidelity to logic to which Br. Thomas Mary holds his spokes-persons. It is undoubtedly the first major Catholic effort of recent years to force evolutionists into an honest confrontation concerning their claims. I am tempted to say that Brother has put the evolutionists into the dock; but more in keeping with his format he has forced them to the round table. The verdict or the outcome is left to the readers, and truly so because of the scrupulous fairness and completeness of this confrontation. As one who has long found evolutionist claims unsatisfying, I find my own conclusions most gratifying. With this work in hand no one need be abashed by evolutionists' boldness and dogmatism.

The 11 “meetings” are each tied by theme to the six days of creation described in *Genesis*. The unbeliever, a Jewish secular humanist, is too liberal to object to this arrangement, hastening to distance himself either in favor or against God, citing Carl Sagan for the courage and open-mindedness of such a position. Fr. Robert A. Staats, a liberal Catholic, hastens to comfort him with quotations from Fr. Bruce Vawter and others of Modernist orientation to the effect that even the Church itself is no longer dogmatic enough to speak of an agnostic approach to Scripture and the origin of things. In this manner a great deal of actual dialogue is incorporated into the imaginary – and deliciously so, I might add.

It is left to Mrs. Maria Stepan, a conservative Catholic historian, a Rev. De Verne Swezey, a Protestant university chaplain and a creationist, to defend any reality and literalness regarding the *Genesis* account. I must say they do a wonderful job, not because of any lack of objectivity, but because their creator, Br. Thomas Mary, is so well informed and incisive of thought. If Dr. Schonfield and Fr. Staats come off looking somewhat wimpish, it is not, I assure you, that Br. Thomas Mary has purposely made them so, but because he has been so honest about their type. It is genuine and not fictional Modernist argumentation that leaves Fr. Staats defending an almost completely un-literal Scripture, in which venerable Catholic teaching is so diluted as to be of little or no annoyance to either a Dr. Schonfield or a Carl Sagan.

If it is art to hold the mirror up to nature, then Modernist Catholics are going to have to turn out looking more like agnostics than true believers. Blame the mirror, not the holder of the mirror, who is merely pursuing his vocation to present such reflection.

I was delighted to read Mrs. Stepan's demolition of the faddist humanist arguments for animal consciousness based on so-called language experience (recently popularized in the case of Koko, the kitten-loving gorilla). I had from pure logic and my own small knowledge of Thomistic psychology presented much the same argumentation to my high schoolers against the conclusion that brutes can be taught to communicate even very simply, by sign language.

You should take from this review that I consider Br. Thomas Mary's book a delightful treasure. I think if you read it you will agree."

Frank Morriss

Second Edition

THE SIX DAYS of CREATION

by

Thomas Mary Sennott

THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION
First Edition

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For
Mary
Conceived
Without Sin

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"In his extremely personal rendering of the biblical story, for motives of composition and economy of space Michaelangelo sometimes changes, or rather inverts, the chronological order of the episodes of Genesis. In fact the Holy Scriptures place the separation of the earth from the waters together with the creation of the plants on the third Day, and narrate that the Sun, Moon and Stars were created on the fourth. Whereas here the latter stage precedes the former and also takes in the creation of the plants, symbolized in the tuft of green leaves that appears in the bottom left hand corner of the fresco

In the paintings Michaelangelo tries to express symbolically two difficult attributes of Divinity, eternity and infinity. The difficult metaphysical idea of eternity is conceived by the imagination as an everlasting moment, and therefore eternally youthful, and as an endless flow of time. A visual equivalent of this twin conception is present in the figure of God as a being with a young vigorous body and the head of an old man."

D. Redig de Campos, *Capella Sistina*

Cover Design and photography by Brother Bartholomew, O.S.B.

Preface to the First (1984) Edition

We have just completed the 150th anniversary of our Redemption, which was declared a Holy Year by Pope John Paul II. Very few Catholics seem to realize that the theory of the evolution of man, even so-called "theistic evolution," at least in its current scientific form, is implicitly a denial of the doctrine of the Redemption. As Wallace Johnson has so convincingly pointed out: "No Adam and Eve [a basic teaching of the theory, as we shall see], no original sin; no original sin, no Redemption." Also no original sin, no Immaculate Conception, which is why I have dedicated this little work to Our Lady under that beautiful title.

Evolution is much more than a scientific theory; it has social, philosophical and religious implications as well. Pope St. Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi Gregis*, says that religious evolutionism, the false notion that the dogmas of the faith evolve, is the basis of the still wide-spread heresy of Modernism. It is because liberal Catholic Scripture scholars feel that they have to accept the theory of the evolution of man, that they reject the historicity of the biblical story of Adam and Eve, and consequently are compelled to throw doubt on the defined doctrine of original sin.

I am writing primarily for a Catholic audience, and my main purpose is to offer some kind of a rebuttal to the continuous barrage of secular humanism with its central dogma of evolutionism, especially as set forth in popular television series like the *Ascent of Man* by Jacob Bronowski, and *Cosmos* by Carl Sagan.

Secondarily, I would like to clear up some Catholic misconceptions regarding the largely Protestant creationist movement. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* said that Catholics cannot accept the theory of the evolution of man as a proven scientific fact, but should weigh carefully the pros and cons. So in principle, at least, Pope Pius would support the ongoing legal battle of the creationists to obtain equal time with evolutionists in the public schools, a struggle which I believe merits the support of every Catholic.

To explore these and other questions, I have imagined a dialogue in a college setting between four fictional speakers: a secular humanist, a liberal Catholic, a conservative Catholic (my own position, though I dislike the label), and a Protestant creationist. I have tried, I hope successfully, to present each position as fairly as possible, despite my own personal bias.

Easter, 1984
St. Benedict Center

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Preface to the Second (1996) Edition

As far as I can make out there has been no change in the twelve years from 1984 to 1996 in either the secular humanist or the Catholic theistic evolutionist positions. But many things have happened in both Catholic and Protestant creationism that should be noted. In 1988 Fr. Peter M. Fehlner, F.F.I. published his essay, *In the Beginning*,¹ which I think is the best philosophical and theological treatment of evolutionism to date. I have cited from this remarkable paper frequently in the course of this second edition. In 1991 the Catholic layman Gerard Keene, who has succeeded the late Wallace Johnson, as the leading defender of creationism in Australia, published his *Creation Rediscovered*² with an important Foreword by the Catholic scientist, Maciej Giertych, a professor of genetics in Poland. The last paragraph of this Forward has been frequently quoted: "A whole age of scientific endeavor was wasted searching for a phantom. It is time we stopped and looked at the facts. Natural sciences failed to supply any evidence for evolution. Christian philosophy tried to accommodate this unproven postulate of materialist philosophies. Much time and intellectual effort went in vain leading only to negative moral consequences."

Happily many Catholics have now become interested in the creation/evolution controversy. In 1994 Fr. David Becker founded Morning Star, the first "Catholic Origins Society" in this country, which publishes an excellent journal called *The Watchmaker*.³ The new American society joins its older European counterpart, *Circle Scientifique et Historique (CESHE)* based in Belgium, which publishes *Science et Foi*. The secretary of this organization is Peter Wilders, an Englishman, who lives in Monaco.⁴ The English branch of this society publishes another excellent little paper entitled *Daylight: Creation Science for Catholics*, edited by Anthony L.G. Nevard.⁵ But probably the main reason for updating *The Six Days of Creation* is the revolutionary breakthrough in a branch of geology called sedimentology by Guy Berthault, a Catholic and a member of *CESHE*, as is Maciej Giertych. Berthault in a series of convincing experiments in the hydraulics laboratory at the University of Colorado, has completely refuted the so-called uniformitarian model of the geological column, and has solidly established the catastrophic model, thus supporting the historicity of the biblical account of the Noachian Deluge. While the Flood will not enter into our discussion of the *Six Days of Creation*, it is extremely important in determining the age of the world, which of course we will discuss.

Yet another very important development in Flood geology has taken place with the appearance of the "Hydroplate Theory" of the Protestant creationist, Walt Brown, which we also discuss in due course.

When the first edition of *The Six Days of Creation* appeared Protestant creationists were engaged in legal battles with the humanists against the exclusive teaching of the evolutionist model of origins in the public schools. The humanists, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, were joined in this fight by some Catholic bishops, and some Catholic

priests, such as Fr. Bruce Vawter, C.M., took the witness stand to testify against the creationists, contributing substantially to their final defeat in the courts. But all the polls tell us that the majority of the American people are opposed to the exclusive teaching of evolutionism in the public schools. This has become apparent at the local school board level where books that teach the evolutionary model of origins exclusively, have been banned from the classrooms. Textbook publishers, with an eye to their profits, are now reluctant to publish such books, thus enraging the humanist establishment.

Rather than continue the fight for equal time, many creationists, including Catholics such as Father Fehlner, are now arguing that the subject of origins should not be taught in the public schools at all, because it is by its very nature a religious topic. To allow the exclusive teaching of the evolutionary model amounts in effect to establishing a state religion, the religion of secular humanism. This *de facto* establishment is against our country's Constitution.

But the main reason for a second edition of *The Six Days of Creation* is still a defense of the faith, in particular of the doctrine of original sin. It is worth repeating, very few Catholics seem to realize that the theory of the evolution of man, even so-called "theistic evolution," at least in its current scientific form, is implicitly a denial of the doctrine of original sin and therefore of the necessity of the Redemption. As Wallace Johnson has so convincingly pointed out: "No Adam and Eve [a basic teaching of the theory as we shall see], no original sin; no original sin, no Redemption." Also no original sin, no Immaculate Conception, which is why I have dedicated this little work to Our Lady under that beautiful title.

*St. Benedict Center
Easter, 1996*

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THE FIRST DAY

The Origin of Matter and Energy

THE FIRST MEETING

- A) The Existence of God
- B) The Origin of Religion

THE SPEAKERS

Dr. Edward Smalley *Dean of the Divinity School at Cabot University,
the Moderator.*

Dr. Arthur Schonfield *Professor of Mathematics at Cabot University,
a secular Humanist.*

Fr. Robert A. Staatz *Professor of Theology at Cheverus College,
a liberal Catholic.*

Mrs. Maria Stepan *Professor of History at Cheverus College,
a conservative Catholic.*

Rev. De Verne Swezey *Protestant Chaplain at Cabot University,
a creationist.*

Scene: A lecture hall at Cabot University, a prestigious secular university. The capacity audience is made up of students and faculty from Cabot, and from nearby Cheverus, a large Catholic College.

Dean Smalley

Good evening, and welcome to Cabot University. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Edward Smalley, and I am the Dean of the Divinity School here at Cabot. Originally Dr. Schonfield and Rev. Swezey had intended these meetings to be a series of debates entitled *Evolution or Creation?* with Dr. Schonfield presenting the evolutionist and Rev. Swezey the creationist positions. But the topic aroused such intense interest, that it was suggested that the debate be enlarged to include Catholic participation. Accordingly, Fr. Staatz, who, as you from Cheverus know, is very outspoken in his liberal views, and Mrs. Stepan, who is considered very conservative, were invited to participate, and both agreed enthusiastically. I was invited to moderate the discussions and I also accepted

enthusiastically, since it is the first time ever, at least to my knowledge, that these four divergent viewpoints have been brought together.

We have held a few preliminary meetings to work out the details, and it was decided to use the term "dialogue" rather than debate, and to enlarge the subject matter to include what Carl Sagan calls the "ultimate questions" - the existence of God, the origin of religion, the origin of life, the origin of man, the existence of the soul, and so on. Rev. Swezey suggested, and we all concurred, that the dialogue be given a biblical format and entitled *The Six Days of Creation*. We decided to hold at least one meeting on each of the "days" of creation, and to alternate each week between Cabot and Cheverus. We also agreed for the sake of simplicity and clarity to keep the same order of speaking throughout; namely: I will introduce the topic for each session; Dr. Schonfield will present the secular humanist position; Fr. Staatz the liberal or progressive Catholic position; Mrs. Stepan the conservative, or some would say the orthodox, Catholic position; Rev. Swezey the fundamentalist or creationist position; and finally I will conclude the meeting with a brief summary.

The first day of Genesis deals with the origin of "light," or as we have chosen to phrase it, *The Origin of Matter and Energy*. But we decided to use this first meeting to get acquainted with our four speakers and with our somewhat unusual format. The two topics we have chosen for tonight's discussion are the existence of God and the origin of religion, topics which are basic to our dialogue and will permeate all succeeding meetings.

It was suggested that I begin each meeting with a reading of the Scriptural account of the day under discussion. Fr. Staatz urged that for the sake of unity, we all use the same version of the Bible and suggested the Revised Standard Version, which has a Catholic edition. This Protestant version of the Bible is a revision of the famous King James Version, and in the so-called "Catholic edition," the seven books considered apocryphal by Protestants, but deuterocanonical by Catholics, have been added, otherwise the text is substantially the same in both Protestant and Catholic editions. Mrs. Stepan, our conservative Catholic, agreed to this version for the sake of unity, but expressed a reservation I should mention. She said that any translation or revision of the Bible necessarily involves a certain interpretation, and any interpretation, which did not reflect the constant teaching of the Church, she considered unacceptable. However, she found nothing objectionable in the RSVS account of the six days, so without further ado, let me read the Scriptural account of the first day of creation:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning one day (Gen 1:1-5).

Dr. Arthur Schonfield

I should say at the outset that, although I am of Jewish origin, I consider myself an agnostic in matters of religion. So accordingly, I will be presenting the humanist or as my religious friends prefer to call it, the secular humanist position, during the course of these meetings. One of the best-known spokesmen for humanism is the astronomer, Carl Sagan, the host of the very popular television series *Cosmos*, which I am sure many of you watched. The opening line told it all. "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be." However, I prefer to begin with one of Sagan's best-selling books entitled *Broca's Brain* - but before I go on, let me explain this intriguing title.

The book begins with Sagan strolling through the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris, where he wanders into a room containing a collection of human brains in glass jars. This collection, we learn, was begun by Paul Broca, the founder of the science of neurology, the study of the human brain. Sagan takes down one of the jars from the shelf; it is marked *P. Broca* - Broca had evidently left his own brain to the collection. Then holding Broca's brain in his hands, like Hamlet holding Yorick's skull ("Alas, poor Yorick"), Sagan begins a soliloquy on the meaning of life and death. He wonders if somehow Broca might still be in there, preserved some way in the configuration of the neurons. He asks, "where do we go when we die?" So Sagan is using this clever literary device to ask the ultimate questions about the meaning of life and death. But first he has to establish his authority, which is the authority of science, to give those answers. He does this mainly by a long rebuttal of Immanuel Velikovsky whose pseudo-scientific theories were very popular in the sixties and early seventies. Then in the last section of the book entitled *The Ultimate Questions*, we finally get down to business. Sagan says that two of the ultimate questions are the existence of God, and the origin of religion.

Sagan, who has a wonderful sense of humor, unfortunately somewhat of a rarity among scientists, begins with this witty comment about theologians in general, and Thomas Aquinas in particular:

"Many statements about God are confidently made by theologians that today at least sound specious. Thomas Aquinas claimed to prove that God cannot make another God, or commit suicide, or make a man without a soul, or even make a triangle whose interior angles do not equal 180 degrees. But Bolyai and Lobachevsky were able to accomplish this last feat (on a curved surface) in the nineteenth century, and they were not even approximately gods. It is a curious concept this, of an omnipotent God, with a long list of things he is forbidden to do by the fiat of theologians." ¹

Sagan then goes on to reject Aquinas' so-called "proofs" from reason for the existence of God, because, he says, they are based on the supposed absurdity of an infinite regression of causes. This notion was derived from Aristotelian physics which, of course, has little or no relevance today. Sagan then gives an example of a legitimate infinite regression, the Oscillating Universe, which we will take up on the second day of creation, when we discuss the origin of the universe.

"It is often considered that at least the origin of the universe requires a God - indeed, an Aristotelian idea. This is a point worth looking at in a little more detail. First of all, it is

perfectly possible that the universe is infinitely old and therefore requires no Creator. This is consistent with the existing knowledge, which permits an oscillating universe in which events since the Big Bang are merely the latest incarnation in an infinite series of creations and destructions of the universe. But secondly, let us consider the idea of a universe created somehow from nothing by God. The question naturally arises - and many ten-year olds spontaneously think of it before being discouraged by their elders - Where does God come from? If we answer that God is infinitely old or present simultaneously in all epochs, we have solved nothing, except perhaps verbally. We have merely postponed by one step coming to grips with the problem. A universe that is infinitely old and a God that is infinitely old, are I think, equally deep mysteries. It is not readily apparent why any one should be considered more reliably established than the other. Spinoza might have said that the two possibilities are not really different ideas at all." ²

Let me go on to our second topic, another of Carl Sagan's "ultimate questions," the origin of religion. Sagan begins with a fascinating, true story about one William Wolcott who had apparently died during an operation. Wolcott later said that he seemed to see himself looking back on his wasted body and ascending toward a great light, in the midst of which he could dimly make out a great god-like figure. When a heart machine was rushed to the operating room, Wolcott recovered and later claimed to have caught a glimpse of heaven.

"Such incidents are quite common and have happened to all kinds of people, believers and non-believers alike. Ernest Hemingway claimed to have had such an experience during World War I. They are now called 'perithanatic' or 'near-death' experiences, and most probably have occurred throughout the course of human history. Such stories of people returning from the dead and claiming to have 'caught a glimpse of heaven,' could well be the source of belief in a life after death. But if these perithanatic experiences have indeed occurred throughout human history, they must be founded on a common human experience. Many scientists now believe that this common experience is our own birth.

"This speculation is based on the experiments of the Czech psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof. Dr. Grof discovered that by using LSD, he could induce many of his patients to re-experience, not just remember, their own births. Dr. Grof found that these 'perinatal' or 'around-birth' experiences, could be broken down into at least three stages. Stage 1 is the peaceful existence of the fetus in the womb, the so-called 'oceanic experience,' where the child is, as it were, at one with the universe. Freud considered this 'oceanic experience' the ultimate source of all religious belief. In Stage 2 the birth pains of the mother begin, and the peaceful universe of the womb is transformed into one of suffering and pain. Stage 3 is the actual birth, when the child emerges from the dark universe of the womb into a world of light and is lifted up by a strange god-like figure, the doctor or the nurse.

"These ideas may cast some light on the origin and nature of religion. Most Western religions long for a life after death; Eastern religions for a relief from an extended cycle of deaths and rebirths. But both promise a heaven or satori, an idyllic reunion of the individual and the universe, a return to Stage 1...Might not the Western fascination with punishment and redemption be a poignant attempt to make sense out of perinatal Stage 2? Is it not better

to be punished for something - no matter how implausible, such as original sin - than for nothing? And Stage 3 looks very much like a common experience, shared by all human beings, implanted into our earliest memories and occasionally retrieved in such religious epiphanies as the near-death experience. It is tempting to try to understand other puzzling religious motifs in these terms.

"In utero we know virtually nothing. In Stage 2 the fetus gains experience of what might well be called in later life evil - and then is forced to leave the uterus. This is entrancingly close to eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and then experiencing the "expulsion" from Eden. In Michaelangelo's famous painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, is the finger of God an obstetrical finger? Why is baptism, especially total immersion baptism, widely considered a symbolic rebirth? Is holy water a metaphor for amniotic fluid? Is not the entire concept of baptism and the "born again" experience an explicit acknowledgment of the connection between birth and mystical religiosity?" ³

Sagan concludes by asking, why are so many people of religious conviction afraid to submit that conviction to a reasonable examination? He suggests that this fear is based largely on the fear of death, a fear which both believers and unbelievers share in common. Religion is seen as offering the one hope that death might not be final, that somehow we might survive, while science is seen as depriving us of that one last hope. But such an irrational fear should not cause us to reject a reasonable discussion of such a common human problem. Here is Sagan's final statement on the greatest of the "ultimate questions," the existence of God:

"...An atheist is someone who is certain that God does not exist. Someone who has compelling evidence against the existence of God. I know of no such compelling evidence. Because God can be relegated to remote times and places and to ultimate causes, we should have to know a great deal more about the universe than we do now to be sure that no such God exists. To be certain of the existence of God and to be certain of the nonexistence of God seem to me to be the confident extremes in a subject so riddled with doubt and uncertainty as to inspire very little confidence indeed. A wide range of intermediate positions seems admissible, and considering the enormous emotional energies with which the subject is invested, a questing, courageous, and wide open mind seems to be the essential tool for narrowing the range of collective ignorance on the existence of God." ⁴

This is of course, what we are trying to do here.

Fr. Robert A. Staats

I am afraid that Dr. Schonfield might feel a little intimidated tonight since we have him outnumbered three to one - three believers to one non-believer. So to put him at his ease, I would like to read a few paragraphs from an intervention or speech delivered during the Second Vatican Council by Archbishop Marty of Rheims. It has the amusing title *Atheism Is People*. Archbishop Marty begins with a quote from the well-loved Pope John XXIII:

"One must never confuse error and the person who errs...The person who errs is always and above all a human being, and he retains in every case his dignity as a human person; and must always be regarded and treated in accordance with that lofty dignity.' [Archbishop Marty continues:]

"The atheist in the world today - I am speaking of the conscious atheist who reflects on his position - appears as a humanist who wishes to save man and his transcendence but within the boundaries of this terrestrial universe. Whether he is a positivist, or a Marxist, or imbued with existentialism, or devoted to psychoanalysis, the atheist is not a man who denies God systematically. What he refuses is faith in God insofar as such faith seems to him an illusion which diminishes man. What he puts forward positively is what he would like to think of as a message of salvation, an ethic and a spirituality which are more successful at delivering man from the servitudes which oppress him than with the older ethic drawn from a religious inspiration. In a country like France, Christians and atheists are in daily contact; Marxism is simply one component in a broadly diffused atheism. But dialogue on the essential questions between Christians and atheists only rarely begins. Those who have attempted it, whether priests or laymen, know how difficult such a dialogue is, and how great the demands it makes on both sides." ⁵

At our preliminary meetings all the speakers agreed to use easily available and popular books, in order to encourage student participation in our dialogue. So I was pleased to hear Dr. Schonfield using the popular Carl Sagan to present the humanist position. In the so-called liberal or progressive Catholic position, a very popular writer is the Vincentian, Bruce Vawter, the author of *A Path Through Genesis*, which is considered a classic in its field. This book first appeared back in 1956, but is still extremely relevant today. Fr. Vawter was very much ahead of his time, and is still in the forefront of the progressive movement in the Church. He is currently teaching at De Paul University in Chicago, and his name appeared recently at the head of a list of over two hundred priests and nuns from the Chicago area, protesting statements made by Pope John Paul II, during his recent visit to this country. Let me read a few excerpts from this excellent statement:

"We wish to state our regret at the narrow vision of the Church proposed by Pope John Paul II during his recent pastoral visit. The Catholic Church in America is one of rich diversity, of pluralism in not only ethnic heritage, but also in critical opinion. There had developed in our Church a spirit of tolerance for public discussion of reasoned dissent on many issues, such as priestly celibacy, birth control, homosexuality, divorce and the ordination of women. We do not regard this diversity as a threat to truth, but rather the authentic means to discover a fuller truth. We find the vision of a monolithic Church incompatible with the best of our experience and also with the inspiring vision of human rights and dignity of persons enunciated by the Pope in his speeches to non-Catholics. But we think that a Church which is not willing to apply the message of human rights first of all to itself is not a credible bearer of it to the rest of humanity. We admire Pope John Paul's ability to communicate pastoral concern, but we regret the closed model of hierarchical authority that he also communicated. This closed model betrays the ideal of religious liberty, not only for the American experience, but also for the rich diversity of the Catholic tradition.

We ask that Pope John Paul will be open to dialogue with critical Catholic thought on these important issues." ⁶

In January of 1982 while contesting a state law in Arkansas requiring equal time in the public schools for the teaching of creationism, the American Civil Liberties Union, representing, among others, the Catholic Bishop of Little Rock, called Bruce Vawter to the stand as an expert witness on the book of Genesis. His testimonial was influential in defeating the fundamentalist cause.

I was very interested to hear Carl Sagan's presentation of some of the latest scientific speculations on the origin of religion. But rather than comment on them directly, I would like to turn to an older theory concerning the origin and evolution of religion. It is called the *Religionsgeschichte*, which means in German, the history or evolution of religions, and it began around the middle of the nineteenth century. One of the many variations of this theory maintains that men first worshipped the forces of nature, animism; and that this evolved into the worship of many gods, polytheism; then out of this multitude of gods, the various nations chose one national god, henotheism; finally there evolved monotheism, the idea of one supreme God, the Creator of the universe.

In 1876 Julius Wellhausen, a liberal Protestant, proposed a theory on the origin of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, based on the ideas of the *Religionsgeschichte*. It had been thought that Moses who was supposed to have lived around 1500 B.C., was the author of the Pentateuch, but by careful literary analysis, Wellhausen discovered that the Pentateuch was actually a composite of four different documents. Then by means of the *Religionsgeschichte* Wellhausen determined the state of religious development in each of these documents, and was thus able to assign them approximate dates, all long after the time of Moses. Wellhausen called this theory the Documentary Theory, or J E D P for short. The oldest document which he called J because of its author's preference for the name of God, Yahweh or Javeh in German, was written around 900 B.C., the time of Solomon. The next document which he called E, because of its author's preference for the name of God, Elohim, was written around 800 B.C., the time of the schism of Jeroboam. Then around 600 B.C., the time of king Josiah, came D, the Deuteronomist document; and about 500 B.C., during the Babylonian Captivity, P, the Priestly document appeared. Finally after the Captivity, in approximately 400 B.C., a redactor or editor put the Pentateuch into the form we have today.

These four authors, according to Wellhausen, reflect the evolution of religion as proposed by the *Religionsgeschichte*. In J and E we find henotheism, one national god, and in D and P we discover monotheism, one God, the Creator of the world. Now, whatever we might think of the *Religionsgeschichte*, the great majority of Catholic biblical scholars today accept its literary analysis, the four sources. However, the only one of these sources we will be directly concerned with in our study of the Hexameron, the six days of creation, is P, the Priestly Author, who wrote his account of the creation of the world during the Babylonian Captivity. This will be crucial to our understanding of the Hexameron.

Studies like the Documentary Theory of Wellhausen are now called "source criticism." Another method of studying the Bible called by the Germans *Formgeschichte*, form criticism, will also be important for our discussion.

In 1876, the same year that Wellhausen published his study of the Pentateuch, George Smith, an English epigrapher, published his translation of a Babylonian creation myth which began *Enuma elish*, "When on high." This story written in cuneiform script on seven clay tablets, had recently been discovered in the ruins of Assurbanipal's library at Niniveh. Wellhausen had claimed that the Priestly Author had written to encourage a six day work week and a sabbath day's rest. But in 1895 Herman Gunkel, another liberal Protestant, a former pupil of Wellhausen, added that the Priestly Author had purified the *Enuma elish* of its gross polytheism. So the literary form of the Hexameron, according to Gunkel, was the myth, which means of course, that instead of looking for historical truth in our story, we should be looking for religious truth. Here is Bruce Vawter's comment in *A Path Through Genesis*:

"The author of Genesis was undoubtedly acquainted with the creation myths of the polytheistic religions of Egypt and Babylon; there are enough indications in Genesis to suggest that the author was consciously opposing his account to the Babylonian story. According to the myth, matter had already existed at the beginning of time in the person of the first gods, from whom were fashioned the earth and the heavens, and who gave birth to other gods. The world became the battleground of rival deities, and out of their struggle, as a kind of by-product, living creatures were formed, and finally man to be the slave of the gods." ⁷

The Hexameron, then, is primarily a poem or hymn to the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and secondarily a polemic against the *Enuma elish* myth. If this interpretation is properly understood, it can immediately be seen that it would be impossible to make a concord or harmony between the scientific account of the origin of the universe and the Hexameron. Bruce Vawter gives an example of one such well-meaning attempt by Raymond Murray in his *Man's Unknown Ancestors*:

"Most educated Catholics take the word *yom* (Day) of the first chapter of Genesis to mean a certain undefined period of time, an interpretation which incidentally fits very well with the evidence of historical geology concerning the sequence of different forms of plant and animal life and the length of time, perhaps millions of years, often estimated to be necessary for this development to have taken place...'

[Vawter continues] "This sally into bad science and bad interpretation surely does not represent the belief of most educated Catholics...On what grounds is the author of Genesis presumed to have anticipated the discovery of the geological ages (which in any case are four, not six)? He would have needed divine revelation, which he did not have; and to what purpose would God reveal such an inconsequential thing?

"The creation story of Genesis neither affirms nor denies our scientific knowledge of the universe; it disregards it. The author used his story to teach us that there is one

transcendent God who is Creator of all things...Positive science knows nothing of this, just as he knows nothing of positive science." ⁸

If the concordist interpretation of the Hexameron is no longer tenable, we would know *a fortiori* that the fundamentalist or strictly literal interpretation is also obsolete. Two recent discoveries have conspired to make these methods of Scriptural exegesis out-dated: the theory of evolution as applied to both the origin of the universe and the origin of man, and the discovery of the ancient literatures of the Near East:

..."But now unexpected witnesses have emerged from the shadows where they were thought to have been buried forever." These witnesses were the fossil remains which proved the tremendous age of the world and the newly discovered literatures of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, far older than Moses. Israel was a newcomer among the nations of men, and its traditions could not be very old...Traditions can be preserved with astounding accuracy of detail even over centuries, as the Pentateuch makes clear, but who could imagine a tradition kept intact for hundreds of thousands, a half million or more years. For the life of man upon earth, we now know, is no less than this...Any interpretation of Scripture that contradicts a known fact of science we may be very sure is not true interpretation. This principle was established fifteen hundred years ago by St. Augustine, who in his *De Genesi ad Litteram* ["On the Literal Meaning of Genesis"] attacked the problem of Genesis in the light of the knowledge of his age. We can do no better than imitate his spirit.

"'Fundamentalism' or 'literalism' has never had a home in the Catholic Church. It is regrettable, however, that some Catholics have felt that the fundamentalists are 'on our side' in their reverence for the letter of God's word amid a world that has largely gone over to unbelief. Fundamentalism is not born of respect for the Bible. It is born of contempt for man's God-given intellect. It has failed the most elementary task of religion, which is the rational service of God." ⁹

In conclusion let me repeat a line from Archbishop Marty concerning our dialogue which will be critical for us during the coming weeks. "Those who have attempted it, whether priests or laymen, know how difficult such a dialogue is, and how great the demands it makes on both sides."

Mrs. Maria Stepan

I would like to say at the beginning, that while I agree with the excerpt which Fr. Staats read from Archbishop Marty's intervention during Vatican II, *Atheism Is People*, I thought it incomplete. Let me read a fuller treatment of just what the term "dialogue" should mean to Catholics, because I think that it is very important that we lay all our cards on the table at the very beginning, lest there be any misunderstanding on the part of our non-Catholic friends. This is from Pope Paul VI's wonderful encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, which appeared in 1964:

"Before speaking, it is necessary to listen, not only to a man's voice, but to his heart. A man must first be understood, and where he merits it, agreed with. In the very act of trying to make ourselves pastors, fathers, and teachers of men, we must make ourselves their

brothers. The spirit of dialogue is friendship and, even more, service. All this we must remember and strive to put into practice according to the example and commandment Christ left us.

But the danger remains. The Apostle's art is a risky one. The desire to come together as brothers must not lead us to a watering-down or subtracting from the truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our faith. In our apostolate we cannot make vague compromises about principles of faith and action on which our profession of Christianity is based.

"An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs is, fundamentally, a kind of skepticism about the power and content of the Word of God which we desire to preach." ¹⁰

Let me go on now to Carl Sagan who, if you remember, began his treatment of the existence of God with a humorous jibe at St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas, he claimed, said that God could not make a triangle whose interior angles were less than 180 degrees, and that this feat had been accomplished by Bolyai and Lobachevsky, hardly gods, in the nineteenth century by drawing a triangle on a curved surface. Now Sagan does not tell us where he got this alleged statement of St. Thomas, but as far as I can make out, he is referring to the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which St. Thomas wrote at the request of his friend St. Raymond of Pennafort to assist him in his efforts in converting the Moslems and Jews. Let us see just what St. Thomas actually said:

"God cannot make one and the same thing to be and not to be. He cannot make a thing lacking in any of its essential constituents, while a thing itself remains: for instance, a man without a soul. Since the principles of some sciences, as logic, geometry, and arithmetic, rest on formal, or abstract constituents on which the essence of a thing depends, it follows that God cannot make anything contrary to these principles, as that genus should not predicable of species, or that lines drawn from the center of a circle to the circumference should not be equal." ¹¹

There is no mention of God being unable to make a triangle whose interior angles are less than 180 degrees. The example that St. Thomas does actually give is that God cannot make a circle in which the lines drawn from the center to the circumference would not be equal. The standard definition of a circle is: a closed plane curve, all points of which are equidistant from a point within called the center - the same definition as St. Thomas'. If the radii of a circle were of unequal lengths it would not be a circle. God cannot make something that is both a circle and not a circle at the same time, or a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. This is known as the principle of contradiction, and is one of the basic principles which makes rational thought, including science, possible.

The standard definition of a triangle, on the other hand, is a polygon having three sides. A figure would not be a triangle if it had four sides. So again God cannot make something that is both a triangle and not a triangle at the same time, or as Paracelsus so colorfully put it, "God can make an ass with three tails, but not a triangle with four sides."

The statement that the sum of the angle of a triangle equals 180 degrees is not part of the definition of a triangle, but rather what is called a "postulate" derived from that definition. So Sagan has not only substituted a triangle for a circle in St. Thomas, but also a postulate for a definition!

After this somewhat questionable start, Sagan went on to St. Thomas' famous five proofs for the existence of God. He said they were based mainly on the supposed absurdity of an infinite regression of causes, a notion derived from Aristotelian physics, which he said, is irrelevant today. Again let us turn to St. Thomas and see just what he actually said. In his *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas asks Whether God Exists? and then proposes some of the still current objections to the existence of God, even more convincingly, it seems to me, than many of our contemporary humanists, and then proceeds to refute them.

"On the contrary: It is said in the Person of God: I am Who am (Exod 3:4).

"I answer that the existence of God can be proved in five ways. The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion ...Whatever is put in motion is put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go to infinity, because there would be no first mover, and consequently no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first movers; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God. "¹²

St. Thomas is not just arguing from Aristotelian physics, but from common sense as well. He thinks of motion primarily in terms of change, and as we look around us that we see that everything in the world is in a constant state of change. Nothing is permanent, unchangeable, or immovable. Indeed, Sheldon Glashow in his "Grand Unified Theory" claims that even the most stable of all the subatomic particles, the protons, the very core of matter, are in the process of breaking down. Thus we are led logically to the consideration of a changeless, permanent, unmoved Being, the First or Prime Mover, the source of all motion.

Let me go on to our second topic for tonight, the origin of religion. Fr. Staatz discussed the so-called *Religionsgeschichte*, the history of the origin and evolution of religions, which maintains that religion is of natural rather than supernatural origin. One of its many variations maintains that men first worshipped the forces of nature, animism; then personalized those various forces, polytheism; then they chose one particular god for their own national god, henotheism; and finally they worshipped the one and only God, monotheism. Fr. Staatz said that the Documentary Theory of Wellhausen was based on the *Religionsgeschichte*, and the evolution of religion was reflected in the four documents J E D P which make up the Pentateuch. Let me read a few comments on this theory by Msgr. John Steinmueller from his excellent, *A Companion to Scripture Studies*:

"The basic thesis of the critics, that in the science of religion monotheism is the ultimate result and culmination of progressive evolution among peoples, cannot be sustained. The learned anthropologist, Rev. W. Schmidt, S.V.D., has proved conclusively that the outstanding mark of the religion of primitive peoples is its fundamental monotheism (i.e., their belief in one Supreme Being). Professor Langdon has defended the thesis that the early Sumerians were originally monotheists, and Lagrange did the same for the early Semites. The internationally known biblical scholar, Professor Johann Goetsberger of Munich is thus correct when he writes: "The prevailing Pentateuchal theories in particular instances are still unconsciously or consciously influenced by preconceived notions of religious and historic evolution, which by no means can be regarded as permanent scientific conclusions." ¹³

Thus the so-called "scientific" *Religionsgeschichte* seems to me to be a better model for the devolution, rather than the evolution of religion. Religion is of supernatural origin, that is, revealed by God. So religion began as monotheism, but unfortunately among some people devolved into henotheism, polytheism and animism.

Fr. Vawter also said that there can never be a conflict between a proven scientific fact and a proper interpretation of Scripture. I would add - there can never be a conflict between a proven scientific fact, and a proper interpretation of Scripture as proposed by the Church. The Church has always been opposed to the principle of *sola Scriptura*, "Scripture alone," or private interpretation of the Bible. The Church has been appointed by God to be the official interpreter of the Bible and she does this through Tradition, the teachings of the Fathers and Doctors, and through what is called the Magisterium.

A good example of the Magisterium is the work of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. This Commission was founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1902 to combat the errors of liberal Protestantism which were then seeping into the Church, where they became known as Modernism. The Biblical Commission is a group of Cardinals assisted by consultants, expert biblical scholars, which hands down decisions on biblical problems after they have been approved by the Holy Father. These decisions even after they have been approved by the Pope, are not infallible, so theoretically they could be in error and later revoked, but not if they are simply a reflection of the constant Tradition of the Church.

In 1906 the Biblical Commission condemned the Documentary Theory of Wellhausen. Then in 1907 Pope St. Pius X in a *Motu proprio*, that is, on his own motion, raised the authority of these decisions to the same level enjoyed by the decisions of the Holy Office in matters of doctrine. He said that they should be considered "binding in conscience" on all Catholics. This is, of course, true of all the teachings of the Magisterium, since a Catholic is always expected to "think with the mind of the Church."

Fr. Vawter seems to be quite a bit behind the times despite his "progressive" label, apparently a common characteristic of American biblical scholarship, and not only with regard to the Documentary Theory. Certainly no Catholic would consider the Jerusalem Bible a conservative document, yet even its editors, the Dominican Fathers of the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem have abandoned the theory. Here is Msgr. Steinmueller quoting from

the Dominican Fathers and from W.E. Albright, the famous Protestant biblical archaeologist:

"The Jerusalem Bible, while admitting final written forms, denies the validity of the system for its textual origin. The Documentary Theory in its classical form is...in the melting pot. Continued effort to give it further precision has served only to show that the task is impossible...The attempts to satisfy these data by a theory of assembled 'documents' scissored, reshuffled, and recombined by some mechanical process of literary compilation must be abandoned.' [And here is W.E. Albright in *Christianity Today*:]

"It is quite impossible to cut the Pentateuch into a patchwork of J E P with any hope of increasing knowledge...That the Pentateuchal law is substantially Mosaic in origin and the patriarchal and Mosaic historical traditions are astonishingly early and dependable seems, in my opinion, certain." ¹⁴

In 1909 the Biblical Commission condemned the Mythical Theory of Herman Gunkel, which claimed that the Hexameron was merely a purified version of the *Enuma elish* myth. Let me read a few excerpts from the encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII, in which he discusses the question of history versus myth in the book of Genesis:

"The first eleven chapters of Genesis, although they do not properly conform to the rules of historical composition used by the great Greek and Latin historians or by the historians of our time do nevertheless pertain to history in a true sense to be further studied and determined by exegetes;...the same chapters contain in simple and metaphorical language adapted to the mentality of a people of low culture, the principle truths fundamental for our eternal salvation and a popular description of the origin of the human race and the chosen people. For the rest, if the ancient hagiographers have taken anything from popular narratives (and this may be conceded) we must not forget that they did so with the help of divine inspiration which preserved them from error in selecting and appraising those documents.

"In any case, whatever of popular narratives have found place in the Sacred Scriptures, must in no way be considered on a par with myths or other such things; these are more the product of an exuberant imagination than of that striving for truth and simplicity which is so apparent in the Sacred books." ¹⁵

Finally let me conclude by repeating Pope Paul VI's warning on the dangers of dialogue: "An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs is, fundamentally, a kind of skepticism about the power and content of the Word of God which we desire to preach."

Rev. De Verne Swezey

Dean Smalley mentioned in his introduction that these meetings were originally intended to be a debate between myself and Dr. Schonfield entitled *Evolution or Creation?* When it was suggested that the debate be enlarged to include Catholic participation, I was at

first somewhat reluctant, but later realized that it would be a good opportunity to present the real aims of the creationist movement to an audience which included Catholics. I think that the unfortunate opposition of some Catholic bishops to State laws granting equal time for the teaching of creationism in the public schools, which by the way is something that the majority of Americans want, is a result of a misunderstanding concerning the real goals of the creationist movement.

One of the founders of the creationist movement is Dr. Henry Morris, a professional scientist and the Director of the Institute for Creation Research in San Diego, California. Dr. Morris is the author of a book entitled *Scientific Creationism*, which is published in two separate editions. One edition, called the Public School Edition, contains no reference to the Bible and could be used in our public schools today on an equal-time basis to provide a viable scientific alternative to evolutionism. The other edition, called the General Edition, is intended for use in Christian schools. The first part of the text is exactly the same as the Public School Edition and then it has a final section on the Bible. I will be using both parts of this edition in my presentations. Let me begin by reading from the public school section where Dr. Morris sets forth the aims of the creationist movement.

"...It is clear that neither evolution nor creation is, in the proper sense, either a scientific theory or a scientific hypothesis. Though people speak of the 'theory of evolution' or the 'theory of creation,' such terminology is imprecise. This is because neither can be tested. A valid scientific hypothesis must be capable of being formulated experimentally, such that the experimental results either confirm or reject its validity...A more proper approach is to think in terms of two scientific models, the evolution model and the creation model. A 'model' is a conceptual framework, an orderly system of thought, within which one tries to correlate observable data, even to predict data. When alternative models exist, they can be compared as to their respective capacities for correlating such data. When, as in this case, neither can be proved, the decision between the two cannot be solely objective. Normally, in such a case, the model with the smallest number of unresolved contradictory data, would be accepted as the most probably correct.

"In public schools, both evolution and creation should be taught as equally as possible, since there are children of taxpayers representing both viewpoints in the classes. If people wish only evolution to be taught, they should establish private schools for that purpose."¹⁶

Scientific Creationism first appeared in 1974 when there was high hope that creationists would win the right to equal time with the evolutionists in public schools. But after state laws in Arkansas and Louisiana mandating equal time, were struck down by the courts, the creationists were forced to change their tactics. Since the majority of the American people still do not want their children taught the evolutionary model of origins exclusively, the battle is now being fought at the local school board level. Many school boards refuse to purchase text books that teach evolutionism exclusively. The publishers of text books, leery of their profits, are now hesitant to handle such books. This has enraged the Humanist Establishment. One of its leading spokesmen, Stephen Jay Gould, has written:

"No arm of the industry is as cowardly and conservative as the publishers of public school texts - markets of millions are not easily ignored." ¹⁷

One of the planks in the creationist platform which is often misunderstood, is that evolutionism is itself a religion Dr. Morris explains just what is meant by the term "religion" in this context:

"We are using the term 'religion' in a very broad sense, as including any concept of ethics, values, or ultimate meanings. Evolution is, in fact, a religious belief in this sense, and so is atheism. In fact, this is one very cogent reason why creationists object to the exclusive teaching of evolution in the schools, since in effect this amounts to indoctrinating young people in a particular religion with its own system of ethics and values and ultimate meanings...

"...That evolution is fundamentally religious, is recognized officially by the American Humanist Association:

"Humanism is the belief that man shapes his own destiny. It is a constructive philosophy, a non-theistic religion, a way of life...The American Humanist Association is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, incorporated in the early 1940's in Illinois for educational and religious purposes.' *

[Dr. Morris continues:] "Many prominent evolutionists such as Julien Huxley, H.J. Muller, Hudson Hoagland, and others, are listed as members of the association. One of the founders is listed as John Dewey, the man more responsible than any other single individual for our modern philosophy of public education." ¹⁸

Let us compare the creation model and the evolution model, on one of the topics for this evening, the existence of God:

"...The creation model seems to be the better model, on this point at least. The only objection that could be lodged against it here is that it postulates a supernatural Creator, and the evolutionist often counters with the query: 'But, then, who made God?' [As we just heard Carl Sagan do.] But such a question of course begs the question. If the evolutionist prefers not to believe in God, he must either postulate matter coming into existence out of nothing or else matter having always existed in some primitive form. In either case, matter itself becomes its own Cause, and the creationist may well ask: 'but then, who made Matter?'

"In either case, therefore, one must simply believe - either in an eternal, omnipotent Matter or else an eternal, omnipotent, Creator God. The individual may decide which he considers more reasonable, but he should recognize this is not completely a scientific decision either way." ¹⁹

Let me go on to Fr. Vawter's presentation of the Documentary Theory of Julius Wellhausen. I am always a little surprised and amused to hear so-called "progressive" Catholics set forth as the latest thing, old liberal Protestant theories dating from the turn of

the century, which even most liberal Protestants have long abandoned. The reason for the demise of many of these rationalist theories has been the rise of biblical archaeology.

Currently the most exciting discoveries in biblical archaeology are being made at Ebla in Syria. At this ancient site thousands of clay tablets covered with cuneiform writing have been discovered. They have been dated at around 2400 B.C., or about a thousand years before the time of Moses.

The so-called *Religionsgeschichte*, the history or evolution of religions, claims that Moses was incapable of writing the Mosaic law code around 1500 B.C., because the high ethical monotheism of the code did not evolve until about 600 B.C., the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Let me read a few excerpts from a recent book on the Ebla discoveries, entitled *Ebla Tablets: Secrets of a Forgotten City*, by Clifford Wilson, a Protestant who is a distinguished biblical archaeologist:

"There is elaborate discussion of case law, with varying conditions recognized for what at first might seem to be the same crime. In the case of a complaint involving sexual relations, if the girl was able to prove that she was a virgin and that the act was forced on her, the penalty against the man was death. Otherwise he would pay a fine that varied according to the circumstances...

"The Ebla laws dealing with sex offenses are remarkably close to those found in Deuteronomy 22:22-30. In that passage there is a distinction made according to whether the girl was a virgin and cried for help, or was a willing participant in the act. This is very close to the law at Ebla." ²⁰

These recent discoveries at Ebla have also made the Mythical Theory of Herman Gunkel completely untenable. Gunkel had claimed that the Hexameron was merely a purified version of a Babylonian creation myth, the *Enuma elish*, because its religious doctrine, creation out of nothing, was supposed to be a late development in the history of the Jews. This means, of course, that the literary form of the Hexameron was not history as had always been thought, but rather myth, and therefore it contained no historical truth. Now a new creation story has been discovered at Ebla which is earlier than Moses, and also earlier than the *Enuma elish*. This story says that God created the world out of nothing:

"A New Creation Tablet

"Professor Pettinato [the epigrapher working on the tablets], said that the record appeared to be remarkably like that found in the first verses of Genesis. - "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."...He said that the creation tablet was closer to Genesis Chapter 1 than any thing yet discovered. It said that there was a time when there was no heaven, and Lugal ('the great one') formed it out of nothing; there was no earth and Lugal made it; there was no light, and he made it." ²¹

Dr. Wilson maintains that, rather than the Hexameron being a purified form of the *Enuma elish* myth as Gunkel claimed, it is more likely that this myth is a corrupted form of the Hexameron.

"Differences from the Biblical Record

"Typical of the differences is the way in which the heavens and the earth were supposed to have been created. In the Babylonian account the god Marduk cuts the goddess Tiamat in two before he proceeds to use her mutilated body in the work of creation. The Bible record is very different from these fantastic and grotesque ideas. There we read of God who is all powerful, the One who created the worlds by the word of his power.

"According to the Babylonian version, after Marduk was successful the rebel gods feared that he would make them his servants forever. They appealed to him for leniency and gave him homage. They recognized that 'his command shall be prominent above and below.' Eventually Marduk agreed to punish only their leader. So the god Kingu, who had incited the goddess Tiamat to revolt, was bound and the total crime was laid upon him. The punishment included the letting of his blood-he had to cut his throat. Marduk then created man from Kingu's blood. Thus it was that man, as the offspring of Kingu (made from clay mixed with his blood) could only be evil. He was to be subject to every whim of the gods, a servile creature quite unlike the noble being whom God created, as we read in Genesis...

"The more we study the Bible record the more we are impressed that here we have the original, and that at best, the Babylonian story is a distortion and corruption of the original." ²²

So much for my comments on the presentations of Dr. Schonfield and Fr. Staatz. Let me conclude now by turning to the Bible. If you remember, I explained that the final section of *Scientific Creationism* was not intended to be used in the public schools but only in Christian schools. We heard Fr. Vawter claim that it is not God's usual procedure to make direct revelations to man, and therefore he would not have revealed the story of the creation of the world to Adam, who then handed it down to his descendants. But this is a completely gratuitous assertion, and the Bible is full of such direct revelation on the part of God:

"In accord with the common practice of ancient times, records and narratives were written down on tables of stone, and then handed down from family to family, perhaps finally, to be placed in a library or public storehouse of some sort. It seems most reasonable to believe that the original records of Genesis were written down by eyewitnesses handed down through the line of patriarchs from Adam through Noah and Abraham and finally to Moses...

"There are really two creation accounts, the second (Gen 2:4-3:24 written by Adam from his viewpoint; the first (Gen 1:1-23) could not have been written by any man at all and must have been written by God Himself, either with His own "finger," as He did also the ten commandments (Ex 3:18), or else by direct supernatural revelation...In a very direct and peculiar way, this constitutes the Creator's personal narrative of heaven and earth. It would

be well not to try to explain away its historicity by calling it merely a literary device of some kind. Rather men should bow before its Author in believing obedience, acknowledging that He has clearly spoken in words that are easy to be understood, concerning those things which man could never discover for himself." ²³

In conclusion let me say that we heard Fr. Staatz claim that two discoveries have conspired to make the literal, historical interpretation of the Hexameron obsolete - the theory of the evolution of man and the discovery of the ancient literature of the Near East. I have just demonstrated that the discovery of this literature, the Ebla tablets, for example, have confirmed rather than denied that interpretation, and we will again come to the same conclusion, when we consider the theory of the evolution of man, when we come to discuss the sixth day of creation, which deals with the origin of man.

Dean Smalley

I have been asked to conclude our meetings by giving a brief summary of the presentations of our four speakers. It was feared that by the time Rev. Swezey completed his presentation some of our students might have forgotten what Dr. Schonfield had to say. But since I am the Dean of the Divinity School here at Cabot, and a liberal Protestant, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to remain completely objective in a discussion such as this. So I will try to limit myself to summaries, rather than interpretations or commentaries.

Our topics for this meeting on the first day of creation, were the existence of God and the origin of religion.

Dr. Schonfield read the astronomer Carl Sagan's presentation of the humanist position regarding God's existence, which is, of course, that there is no compelling evidence for that existence, and therefore religion is of purely natural origin.

Fr. Staatz concentrated mainly on an older scientific theory of the origin and evolution of religion, the *Religionsgeschichte*, which was the basis of the Documentary Theory of Wellhausen and the Mythical Theory of Gunkel. These theories, he said, have demonstrated that the Hexameron is not an historical, but rather a fictional account of the origin of the world, though of course written for a religious purpose. He claimed that the theory of evolution as applied to the universe and man, and the discovery of the ancient literatures of the Near East, have made both the fundamentalist and concordist interpretations of the Hexameron obsolete.

Both Mrs. Stepan and Rev. Swezey reacted strongly to Dr. Schonfield's statements concerning the existence of God. Mrs. Stepan presented one of Aquinas' arguments from reason for the existence of God, and Rev. Swezey gave the creationist position that both the eternity of God or the eternity of Matter (the only other alternative), must be taken on faith, since neither can be tested scientifically.

Mrs. Stepan and Rev. Swezey also criticized the *Religionsgeschichte*, Mrs Stepan claiming that the theory was in conflict with the findings of cultural anthropology, and Rev. Swezey maintaining that it was refuted by recent discoveries in biblical archaeology.

Mrs Stepan concluded with the Catholic claim that the Church is the official interpreter of the Bible, which it exercises through its Tradition and Magisterium, while Rev. Swezey held fast to the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura*, or private interpretation of the Bible.

This concludes the discussion for this evening. Our next meeting will be held at Cheverus College, when we will continue with the first day of creation.

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- 21 Wilson, *Op. cit.*, p.4.
- 22 Wilson, pp.51-53.
- 23 Morris, pp.205,206.
