

The Seton Hall Match

An imaginary debate held at Seton Hall University between Fr. Stanley Jaki and Orestes Brownson on the subject of evolutionism

They are of the world: therefore of the world they speak, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us. He that is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (I John:5,6)

In the August-September, 1993 issue of *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, there is an article by Fr. Stanley L. Jaki, O.S.B. entitled, "Genesis 1: A cosmogenesis?" All Father Jaki's numerous articles and books always list his impressive credentials: "Distinguished Professor at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J. With Doctorates in theology and physics, for the past thirty years he has specialized in the history and philosophy of science. The author of thirty books and over eighty articles, he served as Gifford Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and as Freemantle Lecturer at Balliol College, Oxford. Father Jaki is an honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Science and the recipient of the Templeton Prize for 1987." A Catholic should immediately be alerted by such credentials. Why is the academic world so anxious to heap honors on this man? It is certainly not because he is defending the faith against the pretensions of evolutionism. Father Jaki on the contrary writes: "Cosmologists had to be preceded by cavemen and cave men by a long sequence of humans and hominids, who in turn are but the latest ripple in the long evolutionary wave of life." ¹

Father Jaki is being so honored because he is what is called a "theistic evolutionist," the most prominent one in the Church today, a position formerly occupied by Fr. Teilhard de Chardin. When Teilhard returned to France from China after World War II and under a cloud, precisely because of his theistic evolutionism, the academic world also tried to ply him with honors. But the Jesuits and Rome forbade him to accept them; however times have changed, and today the Benedictines are probably flattered by Father Jaki's worldly successes, and Rome has made him an honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Science.

In this article Father Jaki writes:

Finally, one should muster plain common sense and no small courage to separate oneself, when necessary from the popular bandwagon. Theologians and exegetes are part of that wider academic world which, if and when it praises them, may merely implement the words of the Gospel: "Woe to you when all speak well of you!" ²

If anything is a "popular bandwagon" in the Church today, it is theistic evolutionism, and

Father Jaki does not seem to realize that the words, "Woe to you when all speak well of you," apply especially to him.

Father Jaki is listed as "Distinguished Professor at Seton Hall University," a place well known to the great Catholic apologist of the last century, Orestes Brownson. Seton Hall University was founded in 1856 by James L. Roosevelt Bayley, the first bishop of Newark, who named it for his aunt, Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native born American saint. Bishop Bayley was a great friend and admirer of Orestes Brownson, and it was he who dubbed him *Ursa Major*, "Great Bear," a nickname that stuck to him for life. Commenting on this name Archbishop Robert Dwyer writes:

And for once the point of episcopal wit was not altogether wide of the mark. Big and bearish he was, towering over his contemporaries both in physical and intellectual stature, disposing of their trivialities with vast sweeping gestures and settling their hash with Johnsonian downrightness. His eyes burned below their bushy crags, calculated to strike terror in the hearts of friend and foe alike.

Even now, almost a century and a quarter since he trumpeted over the roofs of the world his conversion to the Catholic Church, we are just a little timid of his ghost, as though the Big Bear might suddenly rear up and maul us to death. Which is undoubtedly as good a reason as any why America's greatest convert is sedulously ignored.³

Brownson lectured frequently at Seton Hall on, believe it or not, the pretensions of evolutionism. This was in the 1870s, and Brownson was a man away ahead of his times. Unfortunately these lectures have not survived, but Brownson also wrote at this time in his marvelous *Review*, numerous articles on the same subject. These have been conveniently gathered together by his son Henry, in Volume IX of his twenty volume edition of *The Works of Orestes Brownson*. I would like in this paper to set up an imaginary match between Brownson and Father Jaki on the subject of evolutionism, Big Bear versus this darling of the academic world. This slightly uneven match, to put it mildly, reminds me of an amusing story. In the early days of St. Benedict Center we were told that there was a meeting of the deans at Harvard University, to discuss what to do about Father Feeney, who was making numerous conversions to the Catholic faith from among the student body. One of the deans suggested: "How about arranging a debate with 'Red' Kellogg (the Anglican chaplain)?" Another dean is said to have replied, "That would be like sending St. Mark's Prep (a local snob school) against the Notre Dame varsity." Sending Father Jaki against Big Bear is somewhat similar, but he has it coming to him. He is what Dietrich von Hildebrand has aptly called, a "Trojan Horse in the City of God," placed there by the secular academic world, where he can do more harm to the faith of Catholics from the inside, than say, the likes of Carl Sagan, from without.

Let me begin the match by letting Brownson do a little humorous (especially to anyone from Boston) "pauline" boasting. Brownson is reviewing the *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, by John William Draper, a Professor at the University of New York, which is still used by anti-Catholic writers today:

Well, gentlemen, what truth of science do you allege the church prohibits, opposes, or

contradicts in her teaching? We do not ask what theory, hypothesis, conjecture, or guess of so-called scientists she refuses to accept; but what fact or truth that you yourselves dare pretend is scientifically certain and unquestionable, that conflicts with her teaching, or which she anathematizes. Think, gentlemen, examine your own minds and precise your own thoughts. Can you name one? Suffer us to tell you that you cannot. We take no pride in the fact, but we belonged to your party before we became a Christian, and we find, in reading your works, nothing, no thought, no theory, no hypothesis, or conjecture even, bearing on the conflict you speak of, that we were not familiar with before any of you were heard of, and before some of you, it may be, were born. You are none of you original thinkers; you are notorious plagiarists. Our own youth was fed with the literature from which you pilfer, and our young mind was nourished with the absurd and blasphemous theories and speculations which you are putting forth at present as something new, original and profound - as science even, - but which had become an old story with us long before you reproduced them. We know, minus a few details or variations of phrase, all you can say in favor of your pretended science, and all you can maintain against the church. Were we not trained in Boston, "the Hub of the Universe", at a time when it was really the focus of all sorts of modern ideas, good, bad, and indifferent? What have any of you to teach one who participated in the Boston intellectual movement from 1830 to 1844? We Bostonians were a generation ahead of you. We have the right to speak with confidence, and we tell you beforehand that you have no truth the church denies, and you have disproved or demonstrated the falsity of no doctrine the church teaches.⁴

Father Jaki begins his article:

Legion is the number of exegetes and theologians who in modern scientific times wanted to appear more newsworthy [than Genesis] by showing that there is an agreement, a concordance, between the majestic diction of Genesis 1 and the science of the day.

The latest frenzy along these lines was sparked by the news, disclosed at the Spring 1992 meeting of the American Physical Society, that irregularities were discovered in the 2.7^0 K cosmic background radiation through a satellite in charge of COBE, or >COsmic Background Experiment. The discovery merely filled in an already impressive evidence about the so-called Big Bang theory of cosmic development.

The term Big Bang may mistakenly suggest that it is about the absolute origin or beginning of things. Rather, it is merely about the fact that science can trace cosmic processes back in the past and that the farther back into the past those processes, are traced the more crowded upon one another they are found to be. Does this mean that Moses, or whoever wrote Genesis 1, received an early revelation about the 2.7^0 K COSMIC background radiation or about Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism?

However, really serious questions arise if one gives a scientific twist to "Let there be light", then consistency demands that the same be done through the rest of Genesis 1.⁵

Father Jaki not only rejects the Scriptural account of the origin of the world, he also has some very strange ideas on its end.

"[A Catholic] is not bound by his Roman Catholic faith to endorse the single expansion model. Professor Hawking merely hatched a new fallacy about the Catholic Church by claiming that she "seized on the big bang model and in 1951 officially pronounced it to be in accordance with the Bible." What a Roman Catholic or any intelligent Christian should find most satisfying about the slowing down of the universe, both in its single expanding and in the oscillating case, is that it can be cast into specific quantitative terms."⁶

An oscillating universe contracts into a Big Crunch destroying all life, and then expands in another Big Bang. There is no way a Catholic can accept this theory. There would have to be a new creation of man, a new Incarnation, etc., all of which are theologically impossible. There is very little that science can tell us about the beginning or the end of the universe. The universe will not end in a Heat Death, nor in a Big Crunch, nor in the gradual running down of a series of oscillations. Scripture tells us that the universe will not end by natural causes, but rather as it began, by miracle, by God's direct intervention in history; and not in billions of years, but possibly, as Jesus plainly warns us in the Gospel, in our own life time. St. Peter writes:

But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness? Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat? (II Peter 3:10-12)

Father Jaki rejects the Genesis creation account of six days of twenty four hours, because it would have to be done by way of miracle. The Franciscan Father, Peter Fehlner, comments on this objection:

The importance of this distinction can be illustrated with the popular objection to the creation of the heavenly bodies in a single day of 24 hours. It is claimed in the objection that the formation of these bodies would have postulated a duration of enormous length since such is the time required for the light from these bodies to reach the earth at present, and the light was observed by the first man on his appearance (according to Genesis). The objection, however, begs the question. It assumes as certain what in fact the proponents of evolutionary theory should prove, that the processes now observed in the transmission of light from the heavenly bodies to earth - and the duration needed to traverse the distance between them - are the same by which they were made to shine initially. Where the Creator is the principal Cause, there is no reason why He cannot do this without the aid of natural processes and with or without the duration pleasing Him and appropriate to His ends (24 hours as Genesis tells us).⁷

Brownson's attitude toward the historicity of the book of Genesis is quite different from that of Father Jaki:

Sir John's theory cannot be entertained; for it is condemned by a higher authority than any that can be possibly alleged in its support. There is and can be no higher authority on the

question than that of Genesis, which we cannot suffer to be disputed.

It is alleged that science is science, and therefore certain and indisputable, and, consequently that, whatever conflicts with it is manifestly false? We reply, that nothing that conflicts with Genesis or Christian tradition, is or can be science.⁸

Concerning the age of the world, Brownson reflects consistently the mind of the Church on this matter:

“We reply still further, that the church, we believe, has never given any authoritative decision of the question of chronology, and it rests with learned and scientific men. It is a question of science and erudition, not a question of faith, at least so far as we have been taught. For ourselves, we are content to receive the chronology of the Septuagint; but we do not regard the age of the world as very important to be known, for time began with its creation. Before it was created, there was no time to be reckoned. The important thing to be recognized is the fact itself of creation, that "God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth." Created we say, not evolved, generated, or projected them. He who admits the fact of the creation of all things from nothing by the sole energy of the divine Word, admits what is essential, whether he counts a few centuries more or less since the world began. And that such is the mind of the church we infer from the fact, that she leaves the chronological question undetermined.”⁹

I don't understand how people like Alan Guth for example, can talk about the first few seconds of the universe, and still deny creation. Let me cite an article entitled "The World According to Guth" by science reporter Dennis Overbye, which appeared in the June 1983 issue of *Discovery*:

“...More radical theorists are ready to create the universe out of nothing. Their inspiration comes from quantum theory, in which the uncertainty principle predicts that random fluctuations in empty space can produce real particles; theorists suspect that, in the yet-to-be-discovered theory of quantum gravity, space-time itself can arise from random fluctuations in a primordial nothingness. This requires the universe itself to be, in some sense, nothing...”

“Guth finds this idea intriguing. In his theory as the universe inflates with a nearly constant energy density, its total energy (from which the stars and galaxies are eventually made) increases. The universe, concludes Guth, got its mass-energy for free. ‘It is tempting,’ he says, ‘to imagine creating the universe from literally nothing. Such ideas are speculation squared, but on some level they are probably right.’...”

“Coleman and Guth were in a Harvard lecture hall one afternoon as a young Tuft's professor, Russian emigré Alex Vilenkin, presented his version of genesis. According to him, the universe as a young bubble had tunneled like a metaphysical mole from somewhere else to arrive in space and time. That someplace else was ‘nothing.’ Afterward the three physicists sat in the hall and had a conversation that Lewis Carroll might have enjoyed, about nothing. ‘What is nothing?’ asked Coleman, pressing his fingers together in front of his face. ‘Nothing,’ said Vilenkin, ‘is no space, no time.’ Coleman pondered that for a while. ‘There is an epoch without time; it is eternity,’ he said finally. ‘So we make a quantum leap from eternity into time.’”¹⁰

I don't know what you would call this, but it certainly is not science. And we are asked to give up our belief in Genesis in exchange for this nonsense! Brownson is especially insightful into this denial of creation:

“The fundamental error of this age is the denial of creation, and theologically expressed, is, with the vulgar, atheism, and with the cultivated, pantheism. Atheism is the denial of unity, and pantheism the denial of plurality or diversity, and both alike deny creation, and seek to explain the universe by the principle of self-generation or self-development. What is really denied is God THE CREATOR.”¹¹

God has left us an infallible teacher to interpret Genesis properly: Tradition: the Fathers and Doctors, and the Magisterium of the Church. But Father Jaki rejects the Fathers and Doctors, on the grounds that they were concordists, that is they tried to harmonize the science of their day with Holy Scripture. Father Jaki continues:

“Thomas Aquinas did not get out of this concordist trap by saying with Augustine that all was created instantaneously. He still took the sequence of things in Genesis 1 for a logical or natural sequence. This meant that Genesis 1 was taken to be concordant with nature and natural philosophy. That Aquinas was indeed guilty of concordism is admitted in the latest French translation of his complete works.

“Just as much of Patristic exegesis of Genesis 1 was a cavorting in metaphorical poetry, much of Scholastic exegesis was an exercise in at times mind-boggling hair-splitting. This was all the more tragic because both the Fathers and the Scholastics offered in the context of their exegesis of Genesis 1 a series of important statements: God is absolutely transcendent; God is absolutely free to create; God is in no need of pre-existing matter; God creates everything out of nothing; God created only once; God created a fully consistent realm of matter; God created for his own glory; God created man in his own image and as his own steward in the world; and, finally, just as God worked six days and rested on the seventh, so man too should work, but rest on the seventh day. All these statements could only be threatened in a concordist context. For concordism is a radical misunderstanding and as such it can only bring discredit to very sound philosophical and theological doctrines set forth, or intimated in Genesis 1.”¹²

This is an exercise in the so-called "two-truth" theory, beloved of the Modernists. Here is Father Fehlner discussing this error:

“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 this 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.”¹³

Brownson, on the other hand, in his interpretation of Genesis, carefully follows the guidance of the Fathers and Doctors, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas:

“Gentilism had lost sight of God the Creator, and confounded creation with generation, emanation, or formation. Why the gentiles were led into this error would be an interesting chapter in the history of the wanderings of the human mind; but we have no space at present for the inquiry. It is enough for our present purpose, to establish the fact that the gentiles did fall into it. The conception of creation is found in none of the heathen mythologies, learned or unlearned, of which we have any knowledge; and that they do not recognize a creative God, may be inferred from the fact that in them all, so far as known, were worshipped under obscure symbols, the generative forces or functions of nature. In no gentile philosophy, not even in Plato or Aristotle, do you find any conception of God the Creator...In no form of heathenism that existed before the Christian era have we found any conception of creation. The conception or tradition of creation was retained only by the patriarchs and the synagogue, and has been restored to the converted gentiles by the Christian church alone.

“St. Augustine, and after him the great medieval doctors - especially the greatest of them all, the Angel of the Schools - labored assiduously, and up to a certain point successfully, to amend the least debased gentile philosophy so as to make it harmonize with Christian theology, and tradition. They took from gentile philosophy the elements it had retained from Christian tradition, and formed a really Christian philosophy, which still subsists in union with theology.”¹⁴

Brownson rejects out of hand, Father Jaki's claim that it is impossible to harmonize the teachings of real science and the book of Genesis:

“There is no philosophy or science, if God and his creative act are excluded or ignored, because there is no cosmos left, and neither a subject to know nor an object to be known.

“Mr. Spencer misapprehends the relations of religion and science, and consequently the conditions of their reconciliation. He says they are the two opposite poles of one and the same globe. This is a mistake. Religion and science are indeed parts of one whole; but religion, while it includes science, supplements it by the analogical knowledge called faith. The truths of faith and science are always in dialectic harmony, and between the Christian faith and real science there is no quarrel, and can be none; for religion only supplies the defect of science, and puts the

mind in possession of the solution of the problem of man and the universe, not attainable by science.

“There is a quarrel only when the scientists, in the name of science deny or impugn the supplementary truths of revelation, and which are at least as certain as any scientific truths or facts are or can be; or when they reject the great principles of reason itself, which are the basis of all science.

“Let scientists confine themselves, as we have said, to the study and classification of facts, or the development and application to them of the undoubted principles of intuitive reason, and not attempt to go beyond their province or the proper field of scientific investigation, and there will be no quarrel between them and the theologians. The quarrel arises when men like Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, and others, profoundly ignorant both of philosophy and theology, or the teachings of revelation, ignoring them, despising them, or regarding them with sovereign contempt, put forward baseless theories and hypotheses incompatible with the truths alike of reason and faith; and it will continue till they learn that an unproved and unprovable theory or hypothesis is not science, nor a scientific explanation of the facts either of the soul or of the cosmos, and is quite insufficient to warrant a denial of the belief of the great bulk of mankind from the first man down to our own day. Then there may be peace between the theologians and the scientists, but not till then.”¹⁵

The Magisterium of the Church has issued many invaluable guides for the study of Genesis, such as the decisions of the Biblical Commission under Pope Saint Pius X, and the encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII, all of which are studiously ignored by Father Jaki. Brownson is just the opposite:

“...The Holy See has required the traditionalists to maintain that the existence of God, the immateriality of the soul, and the liberty of man can be proved with certainty by reason. We have always found the definitions of the church the best guide in the study of philosophy, and that we can never run athwart her teaching without finding ourselves at odds with reason and truth. We are always sure that when our theology is unsound our philosophy will be bad.”¹⁶

Because he followed Tradition and the Magisterium, Brownson's rebuttal of Darwin's origin of the species by natural selection, sounds surprisingly modern, and more scientific than the writings of many alleged scientists:

“...as we have shown in our review of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, no new species is obtained from crossing. That all individuals were created in the beginning, nobody contends, for that would deny generation. But can any species generate individuals, that is not itself individualized? The mule is the product of two living individuals of different species, and partakes through generation of the nature of both, but does not constitute or originate a hybrid species. The development or explication of genera and species, as the horse, the ass, the dog, the cow, already individualized, nobody denies. The individual hybrid was created from the beginning in the two species which have generated it, just as all men were created from the beginning in the one human species and were individualized in Adam, who was at once both the species and an individual man, as we are taught by the mystery of original sin, the Incarnation,

and Redemption. Hence we are obliged as Catholics to hold the unity of the human race or species, and the oneness of the origin of all men.

“There can be no evolution of life where there are no life-germs to be evolved. God can create new species if he chooses, and the Duke of Argyll maintains that he does; but not even God can evolve new life-forms or new species except from germs in which the life or species is already contained in principle, because it would apply a contradiction in terms. It would be creation, not evolution. No forms of life, at any rate, can be evolved by natural laws, nor even by a miracle, from inorganic matter, unless it contains them in principle, *causaliter*, or in germ; and if it does contain them, it is not inorganic, but organic. As for spontaneous generation, there is no known law by which it is possible, and as yet no well authenticated fact of the sort has been discovered. As far as science has penetrated, all living organisms are founded by an organite or central cell, which must either be immediately created or generated by a parent organism. To hold otherwise would, it seems to us, to be false in science, and, at least, an error against faith, and contrary to the Scriptures.”¹⁷

And again in another article Brownson writes:

“So far as there are any known facts or certain principles in the case, species are immutable, and their only development is in the explication of individuals. So far as our scientists have any knowledge on the subject, there is no progress of species. Individuals may find a more or less favorable medium, and vary from one another, but the specific type remains always the same as long as it remains at all, and is reproduced essentially unaltered in each new generation. It is even doubtful if abnormal types are ever really transmitted by natural generation. Cardinal Wiseman inclines to believe they are, at least to some extent. We doubt it, and explain the facts which seem to favor it, by the continued presence and activity of the causes which first originated them. There are monstrous births, but they are not perpetuated. The cardinal mentions a family with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, and we have ourselves known at least one six-fingered and six-toed individual, but, if perpetuated through three generations, as the cardinal asserts, there did not arise from the family a distinct variety in the human species; and, in the case that came under our own observation, neither the parents of the man nor his children had more than the normal number of fingers and toes. In any case, after two or three generations, if reproductive, the abnormal individuals revert to the original type. The breed may be crossed, but not permanently improved by crossing. The crossing, as every herdsman or shepherd knows, must be kept up, or the hybrid after a few generations, eliminates the weaker and reverts to the stronger of the original types.”¹⁸

If you substituted DNA for Brownson's "germ," the above would sound like a treatise in modern genetics. Here is Professor Maciej Giertych, a geneticist, of the Polish Academy of Sciences', Institute of Dendrology:

“My primary objection as a geneticist was to the claim that the formation of races, or microevolution as it is often referred to, is a small scale example of macroevolution - the origin of species. Race formation is of course very well documented. All it requires is isolation of a part of a population. After a few generations due to natural selection and genetic drift the isolated population will irreversibly lose some genes, and thus, as long as the isolation continues, in

some features it will be different from the population it arose from. In fact we do this ourselves all the time when breeding, substituting natural with artificial selection and creating artificial barriers to generative mixing outside the domesticated conditions. The important thing to remember here is that a race is genetically impoverished relative to the whole population. It has fewer alleles (forms of genes). Some of them are arranged into special, interesting, rare combinations. This is particularly achieved by guided recombination of selected forms in breeding work. But these selected forms are less variable (less polymorphic). Thus what is referred to as microevolution represents natural or artificial reduction of the gene pool. You will not get evolution that way. Evolution means construction of new genes. It means increase in the amount of genetic information and not a reduction of it.

“The evolutionary value of new races or selected forms should be demonstrable by natural selection. However if allowed to mix with the general breeding population new races will disappear. The select genes they have will disperse again, the domesticated forms will go wild. There is no evidence for evolution here...

“No. Genetics has no proofs for evolution. It has trouble explaining it. The closer one looks at the evidence for evolution the less one finds of substance. In fact the theory keeps on postulating evidence, and failing to find it, moves on to other postulates (fossil missing-links, natural selection of improved forms, positive mutations, molecular phylogenetic sequences, etc.). This is not science.

“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. It is time those working in the humanities were told the truth.”¹⁹

When Charles Darwin made his famous trip on the Beagle, he was horrified by what he considered the beastliness of the Indians, especially those of Tierra del Fuego. In his drawings he pictured them as much more animal looking, than later nineteenth century photographs actually showed them.²⁰ Later when he proposed his descent of man from the ape, he postulated that this was how primeval man looked. Brownson indignantly rejected this hypothesis that primeval man was a savage:

“The theory of progress on which Sir John relies, is inadmissible; for it asserts effects without causes, that nothing can make itself something, or, what is the same thing, that the stream can rise higher than its fountain, the effect surpass the cause, that man in and of himself can make himself more than he is. All growth is by accretion and assimilation from without. The germ of the oak containing the law of its development, is in the acorn; but, without air, light, heat, and moisture derived from without, the acorn will not germinate and grow into the oak. The law is universal. The human body grows and attains its maturity only under proper external conditions, and by assimilating its appropriate food. The soul can grow and advance only by assimilating spiritual instruction and moral truth, nor elevate itself to a higher condition without assimilating a grace from a source above itself. So, if man had begun in the savage state, he could never by his own indigenious and unassisted efforts have risen above it. He could have got

out of it only by the supernatural assistance of his Maker, which amounts to the same thing that Christian tradition asserts, and which the mythologies of all nations bear witness to, in ascribing the origin of their laws and civilization to the gods.

“The theory is unhistorical. There is no record on instance of a savage tribe becoming by its own spontaneous and unassisted efforts a civilized people. All the historical authorities known to us agree in this; and we, who have been reading history all our life, have not been able to find an instance of the kind. Theorists who assert it, do not pretend that they have any strictly historical authority for it. It is not, they will own, a strictly historical fact, but an induction.

If the primeval man was a savage, how has he become civilized, if the race is not progressive? The question reveals the true spirit of our modern scientists. They imagine a theory, then imagine another, equally baseless, to prove it. They prove that man began in the savage state, by the theory of progress; and the theory of progress, by the theory that man was originally a savage, and, consequently, could not become civilized if not progressive. Save in those physical sciences, where a crucial test is practicable, what is called modern science, or science in an absolute manner, and opposed to Christian tradition, is really nothing but hypothesis piled on hypothesis. It is gravely called science, so far as we can discover, only for the reason that it is not science. Yet we are gravely asked to give up our faith on its authority.”²¹

As a corollary to their claim that the first men were not civilized but savages, the evolutionists also claim that religion originated in fetishism, then gradually progressed to polytheism, and finally to monotheism Brownson writes:

“Monotheism is older than polytheism, for polytheism, as the author himself seems to hold, grows out of pantheism, and pantheism evidently grows out of theism, out of the loss or perversion of the idea of creation, or of the relation between the creator and the creature, or cause and effect, and is and can be found only among a people who have once believed in one God, creator of heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible. Moreover, the earliest forms of the heathen superstitions are, so far as historical evidence goes, the least gross, the least corrupt. The religion of the early Romans was pure in comparison with what it subsequently became, especially after the Etruscan domination or influence. The Homeric poems show a religion less corrupt than that defended by Aristophanes. The earliest of the Vedas, or sacred books of the Hindus, are free from the grosser superstitions of the latest, and were written, the author very justly thinks, before these grosser forms were introduced. This is very remarkable, if we are to assume that the grossest forms of superstition are the earliest!

But we have with the Greeks, Egyptians, Indians, no books that are of earlier date than the books of Moses, at least none that can be proved to have been written earlier; and in the books of Moses, in whatever light or character we take them, there is shown a religion older than any of the heathen mythologies, and absolutely free from every form of superstition, what is called the patriarchal religion, and which is substantially the Jewish and Christian religion. The earliest notions we have of idolatries and superstitions are taken from these books, the oldest extant, at least none older are known. If these books are regarded as historical documents, then what we Christians hold to be the true religion of man, and, for a long series of years, from the creation to Nimrod, the mighty hunter or conqueror, was the only religion known; and your fetishisms, polytheisms, pantheisms, idolatries, and superstitions, which you note among

the heathen, instead of being the religion of the infancy of the race, are, comparatively speaking, only recent innovations. If their authenticity as historical documents be denied, they still, since their antiquity is undeniable, prove the patriarchal religion obtained at an earlier date than it can be proved that any of the heathen mythologies existed. It is certain, then, that the patriarchal, we may say, the Christian religion, is the earliest known religion of the race, and therefore that fetishisms, as contended by the positivists and the professor after them, cannot be asserted to have been the religion of the human race in the earliest stage of its existence, nor the germ from which all the various religions or superstitions of the world have been developed. “²²

You will see from the following paragraphs, why Brownson's friend, the Catholic poet and playwright, George Miles, called him the "logical sledgehammer":

‘But from the point of view of morals, or tried by a rigidly ethical standard, such scientists as Darwin, Sir Charles Lyell, Sir John Lubbock, Taine, Büchner, Professor Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and others of the same genus, who publish opinions, theories, hypotheses, which are at best only plausible conjectures, under the imposing name of science, and which unsettle men's minds bewilder the half-learned, mislead the ignorant, undermine the very base of society, and assail the whole moral order of the universe, are fearfully guilty, and a thousand times more dangerous to society and greater criminals even than your most noted thieves, robbers, burglars, swindlers, murderers, or midnight assassins. Instead of being held in honor, feted, and lauded as the great men of their age and country, and held up as the benefactors of their race, they richly deserve that public opinion should brand them with infamy as the enemies of God and man, of religion and society, of truth and justice, of science and civilization. They are such men as, if we followed the injunction of St. John, the apostle of love, we should refuse to receive into our houses, or even to bid good-day: ‘If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you’ (II John 10).

“We are thus severe against these men, not because we are narrow-minded and bigoted, not because we have an over-weening confidence in our own opinions or hold them the measure of the true and the good, nor because we dislike science, or dread its light; but because they do not give us science, but their own opinions and speculations, which they can neither know nor prove to be true, and which we know cannot be true, unless the religion of Christ is false, God is not, and heaven and earth a lie. We condemn them, because the truth condemns them; because instead of shedding light on the glorious works of the Creator, they shed darkness over them, and obscure their fair face with the thick smoke that ascends at their bidding from the bottomless pit of their ignorance and presumption. Their science is an illusion with which Satan mocks them, deludes and destroys souls for whom Christ has died, and it comes under the endless ‘genealogies’ and ‘vain philosophy,’ against which St. Paul so solemnly warns us. It is high time that they be stript of their prestige, and be treated with the contempt they deserve for their impudent pretension, and be held in the horror which all men should have for the enemies of truth, and whose labors only tend to the extinction of civilization, the abasement of intelligence, to fix the affections on the earth, to blunt the sense of moral obligation, and to make society what we see it every day becoming. They are Satan's most efficient ministers.”²³

Father Jaki's summary of his case against the historicity of Genesis 1, is highlighted by the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* in large bold type: "Genesis 1 should not be defended under

any circumstances as a cosmogenesis, with any reference, indirect as it may be, to science. Its genuinely biblical meaning can, however, be fully defended by that reason where by, as Genesis 1 tells us, man is created in the image of Almighty God." ²⁴ So we cannot go to Genesis to learn how the world was made; we must go rather to the nonsense of Alan Guth, *et alia*, to find this out!

Here is Father Fehlner's summary of the case against theistic evolutionism from the Magisterium of the Church, mainly from the decisions of the Biblical Commission, and from the encyclical *Humani Generis*:

“It is little wonder, then, that attempts by Catholics (G. Mivart, Leroy, J.A. Zahn) in the closing years of the 19th century to reconcile evolution, especially of the human body from the beast, with Catholic faith, met with disfavor, and that some of those author's works were proscribed by Church authorities. From the circumstances it is clear enough that the evolutionary theory envisioned was Darwinian, judged to be inseparable from pantheistic and rationalistic modes of thought.

“These decisions by themselves provide no general answer to the query: whether it is possible to construct and defend on scientific grounds an evolutionary theory of origins. The later response of the Biblical Commission (1909) as to whether a Catholic is permitted to doubt the literal-historical sense of the facts narrated in the first three chapters of Genesis is of great relevance. The decree of the Commission, summarizing the tradition attested by the Fathers, makes the following list of affirmations:

- * the creation of the entire world at the beginning of time;
- * the special creation of man and the formation of the first woman from the first man;
- * the unity of the human race;
- * the initial happiness of our first parents in the state of justice, integrity and immortality;
- * the testing of Adam and Eve through a positive precept;
- * the temptation and transgression under the influence of the devil;
- * promise of a Redeemer. (a)

“Such an answer is perfectly coherent with the solemn definition of the first article of the Creed. Nor is it less coherent that such a listing should be made on authority, for the only adequate proof of these facts is the historical witness of a competent observer - in this case only the Creator. The sense of the narrative must be taken historically at these points; not to do so would be the equivalent of denying the traditional notion of creation as expounded by the Church from her beginning. (b)...

“*Humani Generis* (1950)...In any case those theories known as ‘theistic evolution’ which attempt to explain the origin of the human body of Adam and Eve in terms of a purely natural process, and which more often than not, when extended in fully logical fashion, have defended the possibility of Polygenism and of a notion of God involving Himself in the process of creation as a subject of change, have met with the consistent disfavor of the Church; in the best known

case, that of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, public reprimand (c) preceded numerous prohibitions to pursue such lines of thought or publish these.”²⁵

The theistic evolutionists of Brownson's day, like St. George Mivart, did not have the arrogance of Father Jaki, who casually brushes aside the Fathers and Doctors, but they tried rather to find support in them for their theory, chiefly in the writings of St. Augustine and St. Gregory of Nyssa. But Brownson was not fooled by this ploy:

“Both the *Catholic World* and St. George Mivart commit the mistake of supposing a Catholic is free to hold any opinion that he finds emitted by some father or theologian, or authorized by the principle some father has asserted, although an isolated opinion, never accepted by the church, for which no *consensus theologorum* can be pleaded, and which has no *ratio theologica* to support it. Both seem to proceed on the supposition, that no error in science is repugnant to Catholic faith, unless it is opposed to what has been explicitly declared to be *de fide*. This is a mistake. Nothing is defined till it is controverted; and Pope St. Leo Magnus, in one of his letters, states, if we remember rightly, that the Arians were culpable heretics before the condemnation of Arianism by the Council of Nicea, as well as afterwards. Both also seem to hold that scientists are not responsible to the church for errors which do not directly impugn the revealed truth. This again is a mistake, and smacks of Gallicanism. The field of science is within the papal jurisdiction, as well as the field of revelation. It is well that it is so, for the enemies of the church are now waging war against her for her extermination under the mask of science, which they pretend is independent of her authority.

“The writer in the *Catholic World* has aimed to separate the ‘kernel of truth,’ or rather, what a Catholic may hold, which he supposes to be contained in Darwin's theory of natural selection, and the more general theory of Evolution, from the mass of error in which it is enveloped; but he seems to us to be not completely successful, and to have retained some of the elements, indeed, the seminal principles of the errors of both theories. He has, probably, been misled by his confidence in St. George Mivart, who, as a scientist himself, very naturally, sought to interpret the theologians in a sense as favorable to dominant scientific theories as possible. But we think the writer's aim questionable. The theories in question may contain some truth, as does every error into which the human mind can fall, for all error consists in misapprehension, misapplication, or perversions of truth; but, as theories, both are false, irredeemably false, and are to be as unqualifiedly condemned as any erroneous theories ever broached. We, in our efforts to conciliate the professional scientists, are likely to be successful only in weakening the cause of truth, of obscuring the very truth we would have them adopt. If we are Catholics let us be Catholics, and be careful to make no compromises, and seek no alien alliances. The spirit of the age is at enmity with God, and must be fought, not coaxed. No concord between Christ and Belial is possible.”²⁶

No concord between Christ and theistic evolution is possible! I hope that St. Elizabeth Ann Seton liked this "Seton Hall Match." In his *Mother Seton: An American Woman*, written long before she was canonized, Father Leonard Feeney wrote:

"When asked what counsel she would give them [her Sisters] as the last from her lips, she exclaimed: 'Be Children of the Church. Be children of the Church.'"²⁷

This wonderful advice applies to all of us, and I am sure Mother Seton would agree that it was faithfully followed by Orestes Brownson, but completely ignored by Father Jaki.

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