

EVOLUTION AND THE DUTCH CATECHISM A Scientific Appraisal

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The Dutch Catechism is supposed to be for the *adults* of our modern world. A sign of genuine adulthood is not to accept ideas with infantile gullibility; to look for reasons that may warrant what is proposed to our belief; to distinguish factual truths from overlabored opinions; working theories from sheer hypotheses; scientific findings from wishful thinking.

Unfortunately the authors of this "New Catechism" have in several passages failed to show this sign of a well-pondered and critically balanced *adult* mentality. In saying this we do not mean to decry the fascinating presentation of our faith which in the greater part of the said work is apparently achieved. It is a pity though that here and there "*not a few nor unimportant*" theological "*ambiguities*"¹ are found which may endanger the orthodoxy of Christian doctrine.

But I do not intend here to dwell on that matter which has been already clearly settled by the official "Declaration" of the Cardinals' Commission appointed by Pope Paul VI to examine the dubious parts of the "New Catechism".² My intension is to pinpoint simply a scientific question which obviously lies beyond the scope of the aforesaid "Declaration", since it does not affect — at least directly and immediately — the dogmatic teachings of the Church. I am referring to the theory of

¹ A.A.S., 30 Nov. 1968

² Cf. *Ecclēsia*, Madrid, Num. 1,420, pp. 15-19; Num. 1,457, pp. 17-20.

³ "*A New Catechism - Catholic Faith for Adults*", Herder, 1967, pp. 9-10.

"the evolution of the world" which is unquestionably upheld in the Dutch Catechism.² Frankly speaking I believe that in a serious work like this, intended for the adult world, it was a grievous mistake to affirm emphatically as a scientific truth what is merely a highly debatable hypothesis, WITHOUT ANY SINGLE AUTHENTIC, POSITIVE PROOF.⁴

I am indeed aware that nowadays evolution is *almost* universally accepted as an incontestable fact.⁵ And yet it is undeniable "that scientific theories are not carried by a show of hands, but by the facts themselves."⁶ And the *facts* in this case cannot be afforded by comparative anatomy, genetics, embryology or geographical distribution: until now, data from these sciences may well be interpreted either in favor or against evolution.

The foremost evolutionist Sir Julian Huxley himself admits: among the countless arguments advanced to prove evolution "fossils provide the basic documents and the direct evidence."⁷ And Carl O. Dunbar, Yale geologist and outstanding evolutionary authority avows: "fossils provide THE ONLY HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE that life has evolved from simpler to more complex forms".⁸ Without the fossils of intermediate forms or "links", Darwin himself in the 10th chapter of *The Origin of Species* avers that his whole theory would collapse.⁹

Even the Dutch Catechism seems to agree with this view. The only proof alleged to support its bold assertion on "the evolution of the

⁴ Dr Juan Bonelli, Ing. Geógrafo, *Otra vez la Teoría de la Evolución*: ap. ROCA VIVA, Madrid, Dic. 1969, pp. 70-71.

⁵ cf. *La Evolución*, B.A.C. Madrid, 1966; Vittorio Marozzi, *L'evoluzione oggi*, Ed. Massimo, Milano, 1966.

⁶ Vincent J. O'Brien, C.M., B.Sc., H. Dip. Ed., "*New Ideas: The Facts, The Myths*:" ap. THE WANDERER, ST. Paul, Minn., U.S.A. March 20, 1969.

⁷ *Evolution in Action*, Penguin series, 1958, p. 58.

⁸ *Historical Geology*, New York: Wiley, 2nd Ed., 1961, p. 47.

⁹ cf. Rev. Patrick O'Connell, B.D., "*Science of Today and the Problems of Genesis*." Christian Book Club of America, Hawthorne, Calif: 90250; 2nd. Ed., 1969, pp. 37-42; also, "*Original Sin in the light of present-day Science*" Roseburg, Oregon, 1969, p. 10.

world" are "the skulls and bones that have been found", namely, "the Neanderthal man", the "hominids walking upright", and "the Australopithecus". Unfortunately these specific samples cannot withstand the trial of scientific research. In the course of more than a century, fossils have been discovered sufficient to make many complete skeletons of the *Neanderthal Man* from the head to the toes. "Each of the various bones and joints are of greater size and strength than those of modern man, and each of them has the peculiarities that belong to the human as against the animal skeleton. The Neanderthal Man is now acknowledged to be a perfect *homo sapiens* and has been written off by prominent evolutionists"¹⁰. The "hominids that walked erect" are similarly a myth of which no genuine fossils have ever been found (the *Java Man* or *Pithecanthropus Erectus* — ape-man that walked erect — was simply a fraud — made from the skull of a gibbon — as its own "inventor" Dr. Dubois admitted more than once before his death)¹¹. Other mythical "hominids" referred to by evolutionists *did not walk erect*.¹² And finally, the *Australopithecine* fossils, according to such authorities as Sir Julian Huxley, Sir S. Zuckerman, Romer of America, and Boule and Vallois of France, belonged to mere *animals* which show no similarity to man.¹³

And such are *all* the supposed "facts" from Paleontology that are offered as an "evidence" for evolution. They have been proved either a forgery (as the *Pittdown Man*,¹⁴ the *Pekin Man* or *Sinanthropus*,¹⁵ and the *Java Man*), or quite dubious and controversial (as the *Dryopithecus*, *Bramepithecus*, *Ramapithecus*, etc. and the *Zinjanthropus* of Dr. Leakey whose claim, *according to himself*, need not be taken seriously).¹⁶

¹⁰ O'Connell, "Science...", *op. cit.* pp. 90-93; "Original Sin...", *o.c.* pp. 13; 48.

¹¹ O'Connell, "Science...", *o.c.*, pp. 139-142; "Original Sin..." *o.c.* pp. 14; 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

¹³ O'Connell, "Science...", *o.c.* pp. 143-147; "Original Sin...", *o.c.*, pp. 17; 48.

¹⁴ cf. J.S. Weiner, "The Pittdown Forgery", London, 1955; Francis Vere of Pittdown, "The Pittdown Fantasy", London, 1955.

¹⁵ O'Connell, "Science...", *o.c.*, pp. 108-138.

¹⁶ O'Connell, "Original Sin...", *o.c.*, pp. 13-14.

The charts of *The Fossil Record*, compiled by some 120 reputable scientists and published in 1967 by the Geological Society and the Paleontological Association of America give the fossil record for plants and animals divided into about 2,500 taxa (or groups). In these most reliable charts "each type of animal or plant is shown to have a separate and distinct history from all the others. Many large groups appear suddenly."¹⁷ As Dr. H. Nilson, professor of Botany at the University of Lund, Sweden remarked in 1954: "This all stands in as crass a contradiction to the evolutionary interpretation as could possibly be imagined. There is not even a caricature of evolution."¹⁸ We may understand thus why Professor Louis Bounoure, National Director of Scientific Research of France, who was taught and accepted evolution in his youth, now agrees with the opinion of his scientific colleague, Jean Rostand, who describes evolution as "a fairy-tale for adults;"¹⁹ and why Professor Kerkut of Southampton University castigated his students as the worst "opinion-swallowers" for not knowing and pondering the serious objections standing against evolution.²⁰

An ever growing number of top-class scientists and qualified scholars with a doctoral degree in geology, biology, anthropology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, entomology, hydrology, mathematics, engineering, archeology, genetics, and many other areas of modern science are presently questioning either the unwarranted "fact" of evolution, or at least the validity of all the arguments propounded to sustain it.²¹ The science writer Aime Michel, after interviewing such specialists as Professor Mrs. Andree Tetry, famous world authority on evolution, Professor Rene Chauvin and other noted French biologists, and after studying 600 pages of biological data collected by Michael Cuenot, a biologist of international fame, concluded that "the classical theory of evolution in its strict sense belongs to the past" and "almost all French specialists hold today strong mental reservations as to the validity of

¹⁷ O'Brien. *New Ideas: ...*, o.c.,

¹⁸ *Synthetische Artbildung*, 1954

¹⁹ cf. *Le Monde et la Vie*, October, 1963

²⁰ *Implications of Evolution*, Pergamon Press, 1965.

²¹ Henry M. Morris, "The Twilight of Evolution". Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1969, pp. 85-93.

natural selection;"²² and although many have not yet rejected the supposed "fact" of evolution, the best mechanism they can suggest to explain the genetic changes is "THE GOOD JUDGMENT of the organism itself"(!).²³ A recent book of G.A. Kerkut, a recognized scientist, without rejecting completely evolution, demolishes its arguments and insists that it is not a "proved fact"; and thus Dr. John T. Bonner is compelled to say: "We have all been telling our students for years not to accept any statement on its face value but to examine the evidence, and, therefore it is rather a shock to discover that we have failed to follow our own sound advice."²⁴

Dr. W. R. Thompson, for many years Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control at Ottawa, Canada and a world-renowned entomologist, openly declared: "Evolutionary speculation . . . is only too often at best merely a dressing up of comparative anatomy in edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species* published in the Darwinian Centennial Year he makes a devastating indictment and complete refutation of all the alleged "evidences" of Darwinian evolution, and of the scientific honesty of evolutionists. Dr. Thompson significantly observes: "There is a great divergence of opinion among biologists, not only about the causes of evolution but even about the actual process. This divergence exists because THE EVIDENCE IS UNSATISFACTORY AND DOES NOT PERMIT ANY CERTAIN CONCLUSION. It is therefore *right and proper* to draw the attention of the non-scientific public to the disagreements about evolution."²⁵ (emphasis, ours). To fail in doing this, he says, "is *abnormal and undesirable* in science."²⁷

And this is precisely our objection raised from the scientific level against the Dutch Catechism which apodictically asserts: "*The life in my body comes from the beast*"(!). If it would have simply suggested the *possibility* of evolution as a *theory* (even utterly irreconcilable, at

²² cf. *Science Digest*, Vol. 51, January 1961 p. 61.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 63

²⁴ cf. *American Scientist*, Vol. 49, June 1961, p. 240

²⁵ cf. *Studia Entomologica*, Vol. 3, December 1960, p. 498.

²⁶ Introduction to *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (New York, Everyman's Library, E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1956)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

that, with the universally valid *entropy* principle, the second law of thermodynamics);²⁸ or had it proposed as the most commonly accepted (although scientifically questionable) *answer*, and let it pass. But to make unreservedly the above affirmation in the name of science when it is scientifically undemonstrable, and to sell it to the non-scientific public in a "Catechism for adults" is certainly wrong and abnormal, to say the least. Adults are not to be spoonfed with myths and nice lucubrations coated with a varnish of scientific gimmick and acrobaticism!

The Dutch Catechism becomes thus liable of being indicted from the very grounds of natural sciences. And still more. Although Catholic faith has no serious objection against the *theory* of evolution applied to the origin of human body (provided a *special divine intervention* in that origin is admitted, and the immediate creation of each human soul is professed);²⁹ and although it is lawful for scientists and theologians to discuss with gravity, moderation and restraint this problem in some way closely related with the sources of divine revelation;³⁰ still Pius XII in 1950 unmistakably forbade to teach as an *hypothesis* of evolution;³¹ and this prohibition retains in our days its binding force, since during the last 20 years nothing new has been discovered to favor the *theory*: nay, it is actually losing ground more and more in scientific circles. Hence, on this respect the Dutch Catechism has *also* failed to abide, as all Catholics should, with the standing directives of the Church Magisterium.

²⁸ Prof. John C. Whitcomb, Jr., and Henry M. Morris, "The Genesis Flood", The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1969, pp. 224-227; Henry M. Morris, "The Twilight..." o.c., pp. 33-36.

²⁹ Pius XII, Encycl. "HUMANI GENERIS", 12 Aug. 1950: cf. Denz.-Schon., n. 3896; cf. O'Connell, "The Science..." o.c., pp. 159-167; Card. Ernesto Ruffini, Member of the Biblical Commission, *The Theory of Evolution Judged by Reason and Faith*, New York, 1959.

³⁰ cf. Denz.-Schon., loc. cit.

³¹ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.