

# Creation Catechesis and Evolutionary Theory: From Armistice to Constructive Conflict

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by Charles DeWolf*

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth...” So begins the Apostle’s Creed, spoken at every Christian baptism. Belief in God, maker of all things, of all that is seen and unseen, is, as it were, placed in the cradle of every Christian. Baptism in the name of the Triune God is part-and-parcel of the three “main articles” of the Christian faith: with belief in God the Father, in Christ, the Savior, and in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life.

As self-evident as the teaching of creation was from the beginning, as a foundation stone of Christianity, the matter of transmitting this belief clearly and unambiguously was, to an equal extent, *not* self-evident. The difficulties of the task were already apparent at the start of the gospel mission, for Christian belief in creation was, for pagan antiquity, anything but obvious. The idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, including the creation of matter, belief in personal divine providence, even for the material cosmos, in the human incarnation of God, in the “resurrection of the body” — all this was utterly alien to the world into which Christianity reached out and grew.

This circumstance explains why in early Christian literature the discussion of the creed’s first article is, in particular, so frequent and so thorough: theologians rightly saw in it the basis of the entire Christian faith. It is also the reason why we begin our deliberations on today’s teachings about creation in relation to evolutionary theory by looking back to their beginnings.

Here we cannot engage in a complete historical overview; for our purposes, it is enough to trace the broad lines of the catechesis. For all of the differences in situation and perspective regarding the issues, then and now, such a retrospective approach nonetheless helps us to formulate the essential questions with which belief in creation confronts the mind. The ancient Church’s attempts to respond to these complexities set the course for later theology as well, and so we shall refrain from providing a summary of subsequent doctrinal history. For us it is sufficient to allow the ancient Church’s teachings to indicate to us their most vital elements and implications. We shall therefore proceed in Part I with a short outline of the earliest catechesis on creation, continue in Part II with an overview of those of the present-day, and then in Part III formulate desiderata for future catechistical transmission of the belief in creation.

## I. From the early history of the catechesis on creation

The Book of Acts offers two impressive examples of the primitive church’s creation catechesis in her mission to the pagans: Paul’s Areopagus (17:22-31) and Lystra (14:15-17)

orations. The latter is particularly revealing for the “climate” in which the teaching was delivered.

Paul and Barnabas heal a lame man. Full of wonder, the pagan inhabitants assume that gods have appeared in human form, declare the apostles to be Zeus and Hermes, and wish to bring sacrificial offerings to them. And so they respond: “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.” There is not one word concerning specifically Christian themes! Obviously, in an overwhelmingly pagan milieu, there were no shared assumptions on which to preach Christianity. Where there is no belief in the *one* God, creator of heaven and earth, the proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God, the redeemer, can gain no foothold.

The ancient church was fully aware, that the Christian message of salvation presupposed belief in creation. Where it could assume that such was present, as in dialogue with Jews, the preaching of the gospel began directly with Jesus as the promised Messiah and Son of God. Where, on the other hand, this was not the case, mention of “the one God, who made all things” preceded mention of “His Son Jesus Christ.” In the oration at Lystra cited above, Paul refrains from speaking of Christ, as he must first lay the groundwork for God as creator.

Thus, it is not at all surprising that the teaching of the ancient church usually placed the creation catechesis – or more precisely that concerning the *personal* divine creator – at the beginning, that is, at precisely the point where it broke in upon the pagan world. The thought of such a God was so alien to antiquity and so essential to Christianity that conflict in regard to the question was unavoidable.

Olof Gigon explains it in this way: “To the ancient mind, coming-into-being is invariably ‘self-genesis’, not creation through something transcendent and pre-existent. The idea of a creator is never Greek, although approximations continually occur...What can be called ‘creator’ is reduced in Greek to that which sets in motion something already present...Thus, it is not because they lacked the assumption of a coming-into-being from nothing that the Greeks had no creator in the strict sense of the word...What much more decisively rendered the concept of creation impossible for them was their steadfast notion of the origin of things as object-related rather than personal.”

Thus, belief in a *personal* creator-deity proves to be a major point of divergence between Christianity and pagan antiquity. According to Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer, Platonists maintained, in contrast to Christians, the following view: “The world is neither created from nothing nor will it sink back into nothingness. Rather the eternally unchanging spiritual world and the eternally changing world of the senses are in constant relationship to each other, the one as model, the other as copy.”

Christian writers, on the other hand, emphasized with increasing clarity the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* in reference to both the spiritual and material worlds. Proclaiming the creator of heaven and earth involved much more than a single catechistic question among others, for here along with the belief in creation went the most essential underpinnings of the Christian vision

of God and the world. Three points in particular are highlighted in the transmission of that belief:

1. *Everything* that is not God is created, including matter.
2. All created things are by nature good, for they are willed of God.
3. The origin of all things is not to be sought in a necessary process but rather in the *freedom* of the Creator.

In commenting on Psalm 134:6 (“Whatsoever the Lord has pleased he has done, in heaven, in earth, in the sea, and in all the deeps.”), *St. Augustine* writes: “He was not forced by necessity to make what He created; rather, he made whatever He *willed* to make. It is His will that is the ground of all things that He created...God does it out of goodness; it is not that he *needs* anything of that which He made.”

That the world is willed of God and that it does not originate out of sheer necessity are likewise the presuppositions for affirming, in contrast to the Neo-Platonists, that the world does not suffer from a constitutive “being deficiency.” The notion that the world is not creation but rather proceeds from God of necessity denies His freedom and transcendence. Moreover, the finite comes to be regarded as a falling away from the infinite, becoming “an inherent and necessary limiting of the fullness of divine being, through the fundamental ‘other’, the anti-divine.” Finitude thus becomes something negative, “something that ‘is not supposed to be’.” The consequence of this, in turn, is the idea that the way to God can only be through the suspension of the finite, as to be in such a state is to be ungodly. It is only when the world is *creation* that it can have its own positive being, its essence being bestowed by God. Creatureliness is then not a deficiency, a “falling-away” from God, but is rather being as willed by God.

If the world is creation, then even that which appears to be the most remote from God – matter – is also willed and brought forth by the Creator. No point of the Christian teaching on creation encountered greater resistance, and none was defended more energetically by Christian theologians. The question of the creation of matter is the *test* of how seriously the belief in creation as a whole is taken. According to the argument advanced by Theophilus of Antioch about 180 AD: to exclude matter from divine creativity, as do Plato and his school, is to question His absoluteness.

Moreover, the idea of material as eternal is contradictory. He adds: “And what great thing is it if God made the world out of existent materials? For even a human artist, when he gets material from someone, makes of it what he pleases. But the power of God is manifested in this, that out of things that are not He makes whatever He pleases; just as the bestowal of life and motion is the prerogative of no other than God alone.”

Along with the belief that matter is divinely willed comes the recognition of the body’s goodness, as closely related to its capacity for healing and its future resurrection. *Thus, the question concerning the creation of matter is in a sense a key to the entire Christian message*, in the midst of which stands the salvation of the *entire* person, soul and body. Such is the meaning of the oft-cited formula offered by Tertullian: *caro cardo salutis* (‘On the flesh salvation hinges’). In his broadside attack on the Gnostics, Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. AD 180) returns again and again to this central point. In this “first, main item of faith,” he sees *the* article

of faith, which brings down the entire Gnostic castle of cards. The alternative is worked out with clarity and precision: There is first the Gnostic understanding of God and the world, which, on the one hand, isolates God by placing Him at an unreachable distance and views any contact with the world, especially with matter, as unworthy of his purity, and which, on the other, dialectically joins God and the world in a cycle of origin and falling-off; then there is “revelation’s humble and seemingly sober image of God,” maintaining both His transcendence and His imminence:

“If God is boundless Being, then the world cannot be a falling-off, an ‘emanation’, a diminution. The world can only be in God, and it can only exist through His freedom. In place of the Gnostic attempts to derive the creature from gradual transitions between God and the world, we find rough-and-tumble but blessed immediacy-to-the-divine. A distancing of creation is no longer possible, but an ‘explanation’ of it is likewise ruled out.

“If the world is in God, then God is not hidden from it. To be a creature is in itself a revelation of the Creator and Lord. Yet the very knowledge concerning revelation requires faith as the creature’s basic attitude. Faith, however, requires humble, trusting, freely chosen submission to the incomprehensible God.

“Gnosticism rejects this faith, preferring to seek out on its own the secrets of God...Irenaeus inexorably exposes the entire ‘wisdom’ (gnosis) of his opponents as arrogance and foolishness, convicting them of contradiction. This contradiction, making of Gnosticism the forerunner of all subsequent ‘dialectal’ thinking, is for Irenaeus resolved by means of an analogy he draws to the fundamental relationship between God and the world: as similarity within (greater) dissimilarity.”

To contend that the visible world is *fructus labis*, the fruit of a (primeval) Fall, that it is *ignorantiae prolatio*, the spawning of ignorance, is for Irenaeus “a great blasphemy,” for to claim that the powers that brought the material cosmos into existence did so unknowingly is to imply denial that the visible world was willed. A world that has come about in “total ignorance” can in no way stand as praise to its maker. It is sightless and lightless, a place of darkness, just as it has sprung blindly from emptiness (*vacuitas*) and will return to nothingness.

Irenaeus demonstrates that here are juxtaposed two fundamentally different and ultimately irreconcilable points of view: For the Gnostics, the world cannot come from God, because it is imperfect, variable, and transient. Irenaeus proceeds from exactly the opposite end of things: It is because he *believes* that the world has been created by God that he also believes that God willed the world to be as He made it: “composite, variable, and transient.” In the light of faith, reason can also seek to fathom why God wanted the world the way it is, what *oikonomia* or plan underlies it, how it is that, despite the goodness of creation, evil has come into it, and why God has made this weak and ineffective creature the recipient of His gifts, the object of His love.

Whoever accepts faith in the personal creative deity will be able to affirm “the greatest scandal in thinking,” the notion that was most unacceptable to antiquity: that God, for whom all things are possible, also created *substantia materiae* from nothing, availing himself, as Irenaeus says, of no other *substantia* than His own divine will and power. The creation of matter, he says, is “believable, acceptable, and coherent,” corresponding to

what human beings have long recognized or at least intuited: “For creation points to a creator, a work requires a master, and the order of the world reveals Him who ordered it.”

With the first article of the creed, belief in a personal God stands or falls: the God of Abraham, the God of the covenant, the God whom we are permitted to call Father: “We hold fast to this canon of truth: There is only one almighty God, who made everything from nothing (ἐκ τοῦ μη ὄντος) that it might *be*: (εἰ ποτεῖναι) ...Nothing is taken out of this ‘all’; rather, the father has made everything through His Word: the visible and the invisible, the things of the senses and things of the spirit, the temporal, in accordance with a certain plan (οἰκονομίαν) and the eternal...He has also made human beings. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

Let us attempt to draw some conclusions from this much too summary overview of the early Christian catechesis on creation:

1. The teaching does not transmit a neutral cosmological theory; it is part, a fundamental part, of the Christian message of salvation. The world in which we live is neither the result of an accident nor did it come about from a chain of coincidences. It is likewise in no way the necessary emanation of the Absolute. It exists because God willed it out of the free abundance of his goodness and therefore made it. Its origin is, again, neither coincidence nor necessity, but rather love.
2. As God’s love is the fathomless origin of creation, human reason is incapable of coming up with necessary and comprehensible grounds for the why of the cosmos. Yet though we are not given to know the origin of the world and of humankind, this does not mean that we cannot recognize that both have indeed been created. This recognition is, however, only possible when we simultaneously acknowledge our creatureliness. And this in turn means more than the simple fact of contingency, for it also includes awe and adoration (*religio*) of the Creator. It is only from such active recognition of “fecisti nos ad Te” (‘thou hast made us [to be directed] towards thee’) that the world can be deduced to be the creation of God, pointing towards its Author and proclaiming Him. Faith in creation thus likewise also contains a double *ethical demand*: that of one’s own submission to the Creator and the reverent use of the creation.
3. That the world, including the material world, has been created by God and equally so willed, is the foundation for belief in God’s providence and care, including the smallest and most inconspicuous of creatures and things. In contrast to most of the philosophical schools of antiquity, Christianity teaches not only a general providence but also, consequent to Jesus’ words, holds to God’s special care, which includes the material world. The outlook of the Sermon of the Mount (“Look at the birds of the air...Consider the lilies of the field...Therefore do not be anxious...Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.” (Matthew 6:26-32) is only possible if it is grounded in the creation faith. Moreover, this is a faith in God the Creator that is *lived*; it is the active recognition that God, because He is the Creator of all things, does not forget any of His creatures, not even the sparrow and the hairs on our head (cf. Luke 12:6 ff.). It is therefore no coincidence that the ancient Church creed concerning God’s fatherhood joins His omnipotence and His creatorship.

## II. The creation catechesis from the perspective of evolutionary theory

The painful impression that the triumphal march of evolutionary theory has forced theology and the teaching of the creation creed into an unending series of rear-guard battles has contributed substantially during the last three decades to an attempt to come up with some sort of “feudal-era truce” (*Burgfrieden*), whereby each side presides over its own turf: evolutionary theory explains the “how”; theology provides the claims concerning the “that” of creation. There are both good reasons for and positive results of this division of labor according competence. In the newer instructional materials, an effort is being made to express the differing approaches that natural science and faith take in posing the important questions. In one of the more recent works, *Katholischer Katechismus*, we find, for example:

“The *natural sciences* can tell us much about how the earth came into being and how old it is, about the universe and its riddles. Here holy scripture tells us little...It is the task of faith to ask: ‘Who is the God of our world in whom we believe, whom we thank for our lives, for whom we exist, and to whom we go...In this, the Christian *faith* does not stand in contradiction to the sciences... These explore nature without seeing it as creation; the questions it poses are limited. Thus, they are incapable of providing an exhaustive answer to the *riddles* of world.”

Exegetical research has contributed greatly to working out the distinction between scientific observation and religious language. Again we find in a religion book for vocational schools: “The compiler [of the creation accounts] does not primarily intend to say how, scientifically speaking, the world came into being; he is rather concerned with using them as a vehicle to say something about God, for the sake of human salvation.” This differentiation is helpful and necessary; it is a requirement for preventing false conflicts between science and faith.

St. Augustine, we may note, has already pointed out the distinction. In his dispute with the Manichean Felix, he responds to the claim of Mani to teach what is not found in the New Testament, namely “how and why the world was created, what the courses of the sun and moon are, and more along the same line.”

“In the gospel we do not read of the Lord saying: ‘I shall send you the Holy Spirit so that he may teach you the course of the sun and of the moon. *He wanted to make Christians, not astronomers!* For that purpose, the knowledge that men are able to learn to their advantage in school is sufficient! Though it is true that Christ says that the Holy Spirit will come in order to bring us into *total* truth, he is not speaking...of the course of the sun and of the moon! When you suggest that the teaching (about these things) belongs to the domain of truth that Christ promises will come through the Holy Spirit, then I must ask you: How many stars are there?...I contend that such matters do not belong to Christian doctrine, while you maintain that it also includes *how* the world came about and what occurs therein.

This competence-based allocation of endeavor ought, in fact, to prevent conflicts. The *truth* of faith is the truth of salvation and not scientific knowledge. Faith answers the question of meaning, science that of facts. On the basis of this division, most teaching materials for religious instruction come to a *harmonious view* of the relationship between belief in creation and evolutionary theory: “The Biblical account of creation is formulated in religious terms and, as such, can never come into conflict with scientific statements.” “With how much pain was

this insight achieved!” Alfred Läßle reminds us that in the old *Katholischer Katechismus*, the response to the 34<sup>th</sup> question (“*How* did God create man?”) was: “God made man from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life.” He argues that this misunderstands the pictorial language of the second “Yahwehist” account of creation and “evokes in young people a pseudo-problem, with disastrous consequences..., as if there were a contradiction between the creation account and biological science.” Instead, he continues, it must be shown that “the question of *how* humans came to be is not important to the Biblical writer...but rather *what* they are and *why* God made them. The how-question leads away from the religious theme and calls up an inauthentic either-or: creation or evolution?”

The result for religious instruction is therefore: “Biblical testimony should relegate the topic of the evolutionary theory to the realm of biological instruction and emphasize only those points relevant to overall worldview and the openness of the Biblical conception.”

Thus, the typical case that is made is solely for a clean separation: “The Biblical account about the creation of humankind is not intended to communicate any sort of biological knowledge.” It is claimed that it is only when the “pictorial nature” of that story is made conscious that the claims of the Bible and of biology do not contradict each other.

In order to clarify the compatibility, many instructional assistance materials offer a short summary of evolutionary theory and then assign the Biblical account its place accordingly. Teachers should, we are told, see pupils’ questions about the human origins as an opportunity: “Here a position can be taken that points to the correct understanding of the world and of mankind. They can analyze the development of human beings according to evolutionary theory and show that such do not debase the creation narratives; on the contrary, it is only then that we grasp their true meaning. They do not say how we came into being but rather to what end – as an image of God.”

After a long period of defensiveness vis-à-vis the theory of evolution, this harmonious dichotomy contributed greatly to a benign state of peace. It is therefore all too understandable that the questioning of this “castle truce” should be met with irritated reactions. The fear is expressed that new and unnecessary conflicts will arise; the unfortunate “Galileo case” is conjured up, and we are warned of the excesses of a newly growing fundamentalism.

It is, of course, true that unnecessary conflicts should be avoided; at the same time, however, necessary and perhaps healing confrontations should not be excluded. Many contemporary catechistic teaching materials convey the impression that, in fact, there are no grounds for disagreement. The emphasis with which the harmony between faith in creation and evolutionary theory is put forth sets one to pondering. What now follows then is an attempt to bring into this all too idyllic picture some unsettling and disturbing inquiries.

To put the major question simply: Within this harmonious model, is not too much being asked of the natural sciences and too little of theology?

If the issue of how the world and humankind came into being is “relegated to the realm of biological instruction,” there is danger that the natural sciences will be expected to provide answers to questions that go beyond their competence. It is striking that, with few exceptions, most teaching materials take it for granted that evolution is a long-proven fact. We read, for

example, in a Gymnasium-level textbook: “It is an indisputable scientific fact that the contemporary shape and structure of the world and of human beings developed from the simplest organisms. This development is called evolution.” The fact that this view is widespread and is constantly being propagated in popular scientific works with very wide circulation does not alter another fact: that such broad claims, encompassing all of reality, do not belong to the realm of the natural sciences but rather to that of worldview and ideology. “All natural science theories are particular and limited...Whatever goes beyond that becomes dogma, protecting itself against criticism by pointing to its own scientific orientation. No scientific theory encompasses the entirety of life and the world; none offers total interpretations, not even evolution.”

A natural scientific theory can never account for more than “partial aspects” of reality. “The assumption of ubiquitous evolution remains a metaphysical thought matrix.” Thus, in attempting to impose on science the burden of explaining *how* the world and humankind came into being, one expects too much. The plausibility of evolutionary theory as a universal explanation is based not on the stringency of individual observations but rather on philosophical-ideological assumptions. That, however, has the consequence that in questions concerning the creation faith and evolution, the discussion usually focuses not at all on scientific issues – which are necessarily partial and local – but rather on general presuppositions that, again, are of a philosophical-ideological nature.

The tendency to take it for granted that the theory of evolution has been “scientifically proven” obscures the fact that, no less than ever, it continues to be faced, in the realm of detailed research, with many unresolved problems. Karl Popper, who was himself an evolutionist, offers food for thought: “Neither Darwin nor any Darwinist has come up with an effective causal explanation for the adaptive evolution of a single organism or organ. It has simply been shown – and that in itself is quite an accomplishment – that such explanations can exist (i.e. that they are logically possible).

Popper reminds us of the “innumerable difficulties in Darwinian theory, in the face of which many a Neo-Darwinian appears to be nearly blind.” Thus, it is not appropriate to be from the beginning suspicious that theological fundamentalism is at work when reference is made to such problematic aspects. One is of the impression that the objections being raised come much less from the theological than from the scientific side of the fence.

In view of these inner-scientific debates, one must ask oneself the question, whether theology and, in fact, the proclamation of the faith itself are well-advised in regard to the creation doctrine to proceed on evolution as an *a priori* point d’appui. Such a simplistic acceptance of the theory is just as unproductive and wrong-headed as its global rejection. That means, however, that theology and catechesis cannot avoid taking part in debate, striving for a varied understanding. Likewise, one cannot help acknowledging that Darwin conceived his theory of the origin of the species through natural selection as an alternative to a (specific) creation theology. The possibility of simultaneously entertaining creation and evolution does not hide the fact that such an overall view is only possible under certain conditions, such that are by no means shared by all representatives of evolutionary theory. The American historian of science



Stanley Jaki puts it this way: “That the creator and the absolute had no place in the vision that *The Origin of the Species* proposed was the key to its overwhelming popularity.” While it is true that (as of the second edition) there is a concluding sentence that provides a (deistic) acknowledgement of the creator who “breathed the germ of all life such that surrounds us into a few forms or into a single one,” from which the rich variety of forms derives. Darwin also speaks occasionally of the “creator of matter.” None of this, however, obscures the fact that his work was conceived as “one long argument” for the proposition that the origin of the species and their variety could be *entirely* explained in terms of the mechanisms of “natural selection.”

Karl Popper sees Darwin’s “revolutionary influence on our worldview” in this: that “his theory of natural selection demonstrated that it is *in principle possible to reduce teleology to causality by explaining the presence of plan and purpose in purely physical terms.*” It is this claim that renders Darwinian theory so explosive. It explains why the theory of descent was immediately taken up and propagated by ideological materialism, why in disputes about the theory there is always a resonating passion that is seldom found in discussion of other scientific issues. This is not the place to go extensively into the question of whether in the theory of evolution are necessarily bound up the ideological consequences that were, from the beginning, drawn from it (cf. the article in this volume by T. Lenoir). We must restrict ourselves here to some indications of how the creation faith and evolutionary theory interact with each other. These are intended as nothing more than a rough sketch intended to make clear that that it is not enough to leave indiscriminately to evolutionary theory all concrete statements about the *how* of the creation and to restrict the propagation of the faith to a general “He’s-got-the-whole-world-in-His-hands” affirmation of the Creator.

We have the impression that in today’s catechesis, the expressive power of the creation faith is often underestimated and, in its function vis-à-vis the explanations of the natural sciences, *underutilized*. The creation catechesis of today need neither to hold its ground in a purely defensive effort against what seems to be the steady, land-grabbing onslaught of the natural sciences, nor to retreat into a “storm-free zone,” in which it will be exempt from further contact with the problems of evolutionary theory. The challenge today is to demonstrate, in a positive sense of initiative, the necessity of the creation faith as being a prerequisite for meaningful science and for morally responsible involvement in the world. The following considerations, however fragmentary, are intended to call attention to this challenge.

Newton was still confident that the mechanical order of material substances point back to a primal cause, non-mechanical and spiritual, that is the ground of all that is regular and orderly and therefore also of all understanding of such. Darwin’s theory, on the other hand, aimed to account for regularity and functionality in nature without reference to the will of the imparting creator. “What he showed was precisely that *in principle* every teleological explanation might one day lead back to a causal explanation or could be further explained.” Until now, as Popper admits, there has, *in fact*, not been a *single* successful case of such a causal explanation, but that has not prevented evolution theoreticians to proclaim all the more energetically what, again in principle, is possible. The major difficulty remains with explaining why it is that an

evolutionary process “that *prima facie* may appear goal-oriented, as, for example, with the human eye,” is nonetheless to be understood without teleological explanation. According to Popper, Darwin solved this problem by demonstrating that teleological explanations can be *simulated*: “Darwin showed us that the mechanism of natural selection can in principle imitate the creator's activity as well as His intent and plan, and that it can also simulate human actions that are rational, purposeful, or goal-oriented.”

What is meant here by the “simulation” of purposefulness? *Who* is “simulating” here? The mechanism of the natural selection! It works *as if* it sought to produce an eye for the purpose of seeing. It appears *as if* the process of evolution were headed on a goal-oriented course, with the sense of sight as its purpose. In reality, the purpose is only a kind of “epiphenomenon” of the selection mechanism, ineffective in the way that the soul is ineffective as understood in the body-soul theory of epiphenomenalism. Such a theory of purpose-simulation naturally runs into the same dead-end as does psycho-physical epiphenomenalism, for one can ask oneself the question for what purpose evolution has produced beings that devote their minds to the decidedly purpose-oriented enterprise of proving that there is no purpose. Has evolution truly in this case only simulated?

It is, however, also possible to understand Popper's statements concerning simulation in a different way, one which for all I know may correspond better to his interpretation of Darwin. Darwin's mechanisms of natural selection would accordingly simulate teleology in the sense that “it can in principle imitate the creator's activity, along with His purpose and His plan.” This statement can be understood completely in the sense of classic creation theology, according to which rational, purposeful, or goal-oriented activities that are constantly and everywhere observable in nature do not come about through the addition of goal-oriented actions ‘from outside’, as it were; it is rather that purposeful behavior is to be seen as “a form of participation in the cleverness of nature.”

Nature acts “quasi-rationally” and constantly “simulates” purposeful and goal-oriented behavior because its actions “can imitate the activity of the creator.” What is meant by this “imitation” is not, of course, a conscious, deliberate choosing of goals and purposes. It is rather that the working of nature is itself this imitation. Nature “simulates” purposefulness simply by following its own effectiveness. The behavior of bees is therefore not highly purpose-oriented because the bees themselves select and set purposes, but it is likewise no mere anthropomorphic projection if such appears to us admirably “rational.” Thus, we can in wonder continue to delve into and discover ever new purposeful ways of behavior, because all life, all developmental processes of nature “imitate the activity of the creator” *as such* and are likewise *as such* “rational.” That holds even for those “mechanisms” that are the objects of evolution research, for something can only be identified and recognized as a mechanism if it has a purposeful function.

Here lies the great task of contemporary creation catechesis. “The deepest source of the scientific knowledge of the universe is a most purposeful commitment to the tenet that the universe is the embodiment of design.” The creation faith also entails the “intelligibility” of reality. In his history of science studies, Stanley Jaki has constantly reminded us that science

was able to originate only in an intellectual climate in which the world was recognized as its creator, in which it was not thought of as “the treadmill of endless cycles,” not as the discarded refuse of a divine drama, not as the discharge of anonymous powers, but rather as the embodiment of the creator’s plan, originating in free and boundless love. The faith in creation is, however, not merely “the only remaining source of rationality; it is also the inexhaustible source of *trust*. We saw in the first section of this article that belief in creation always implies the element of an ethical claim as well, together with a “re-binding” (*religio*) to the creator. If the world is not simply a place into which human beings are “thrown” [*Geworfenheit*], a place of alienation and hostile “object-ivity” [*Gegenständigkeit*],\* but rather the house that the creator has prepared for his creatures, then the traces of that creator in his creation teach mankind, ever again and constantly, to trust in Him who saw that “all was good.” (Gen. 1:10).

### III. Perspectives on Future Catechesis

What place in the catechesis should the teaching of the creation assume? Should it, in accordance with the canonical order of Holy Scriptures, be at the beginning? Should the first article of the creed constitute the *point de départ*? In the long tradition of the Church this was not a question. Since the 1960s, under the influence of exegetical development, it has come to be relegated from its *theological* to its *historical* place. Alfred Läßle programmatically proposed this remodeling in 1963:

“As we should first ourselves on historical ground, on which theological reflections on the origin of creation were first possible, it appears worthy to consider whether we should begin the Biblical proclamation with, as we have done heretofore, the creation of the world or ask, from a later historical perspective, what human beings then knew about the beginning so long after it had occurred. If one begins Biblical instruction with the creation of the world, then willy-nilly the thought is encouraged that one is, in fact, experiencing just how the world really began. If, on the other hand, the story is postponed until one reaches, for example, the passages about Abraham or Moses, then it becomes much easier to demonstrate that the “accounts” about the origin of the world are, in the end, *theological reflections*, which represent, in accordance with the age of their origin and their transformation over the course of the tradition, a most interesting yardstick for Israelite thought and belief.

This second methodical possibility has the advantage of truly bringing to light the ‘Genesis of *Genesis*,’ i.e. its historical origin, its ‘niche in ancient Oriental Jewish life,’ of recognizing in the Holy Scriptures an extraordinarily strong dynamic, borne and initiated by the spirit of God. God does not overwhelm humankind with his revelation; rather he adapts himself to how high a single person or an entire people can think, to how willing they are willing to believe.”

Meanwhile, the method proposed here has been largely implemented. Much is made of the “niche in ancient Oriental Jewish life.” Thus, we see, for example, the following plan offered by the “Schweizer Schulbibel” [Swiss School-bible] for the teaching of the creation:

“The students shall:

- experience nature as creation and thereby become creatively active.
- come to know the Biblical creative narratives and the situations in which they came about.
- gain elementary scientific knowledge about the formation and development of the earth and of life.

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\* translator’s note: The German terms are those coined by Martin Heidegger.

- recognize through the juxtaposition of scientific and the Biblical narratives that the latter are not intended as scientific statements but rather describe something fundamental about the relationship of believing human beings with the world and with God.

This approach certainly has its advantages. It can aid in making us better aware that revelation is rooted in history. It can make clear that faith too has a history, in the people of God as well as in the individual, and that God makes known his revelation through that same history, step by step. Yet the method also has its limitations and dangers, to which allusion was made first and foremost in the debate about the French catechistic reference work *Pierres Vivantes* [Living Stones].

An initial limitation lies, in our view, in the overemphasis on the genesis of *Genesis*. As important and instructive as it is to determine the origins of a text, there is also the essential insight that a distinction must be drawn between *its genesis* and *its truth*. The heavy emphasis on the former thereby detracts from attention to the content of the message. It may contribute to the understanding of the two Biblical accounts of creation to reconstruct the conditions of their formation – historically and, by necessity, hypothetically. Yet it must also be shown then what the text has to say in its present, canonical form. In many catechistical teaching aids, the source theory (Yahwist and priestly writer's versions) is treated extensively; on the other hand, we rarely see discussion of why the text of Genesis is in its present canonical form and not in another.

We see a second difficulty of this method in the danger of subjecting the creation accounts to "religious-historical relativization." It is thoroughly positive and helpful to compare the Biblical text with the creation myths of the ancient Oriental world, but here again we see that when too much is asked concerning historical origins and too little about the truth toward which the text is directed, genetic considerations threaten to oust the question of validity. In almost all teaching aid materials, we find a schematic representation of the "ancient Oriental philosophy," with the heavenly sea and the columns of the earth. The strong genetic link between this ("superseded") picture of the world and the creation texts can easily arouse in the pupil's mind the idea that other elements of the same texts are also about "superseded" views. This impression can be intensified when more or less all *concrete* statements about the origin and development of the world are consigned to the realm of scientific information. We then find ourselves skirting on the edge of the conclusion that if this picture of the world is obviously wrong, the creation accounts that are bound up with it likewise reflect a "primitive" stage in the development of culture.

We see a third peril in the fact that often for statements regarding the faith that are couched in terms of creation theology, all that remains is a rather general existential significance, as though that were the quintessence of the creation faith: "I believe in God, for whom each individual human being is important." Or: "The creation account...expresses the great assurance that God will not let the world fall from his good hands."

The "consequences of the creation faith" come up much too short here. For all the necessary differences between doctrinal statements and natural science research, the former retain some essential elements that indirectly have something to say about the *how* of creation.

At the top of the list is the issue of the *absolute beginning*. It is striking here how little this aspect is emphasized in the creation catechesis. One is usually content, in accordance with the genetic approach to the sacred texts, to see in them an expression of *present-day experience*: We find, for example, in a French teaching aid: “The people of the Old Testament elucidated for themselves the secret of creation by projecting their day-to-day experience into to the remote *past*.” Similarly, in *Pierres Vivantes*: “Like so many others, the author of this creation account (Genesis 1) asks himself how the world originated. The faithful have pondered the question; one of them has composed a poem. It bespeaks a great truth: God, the one God, who has formed his people by gathering them behind Moses, is also he who brings into existence all things and all living creatures.” Or: “Long before the Israelites thought up (sic!) creation stories, they believed in one God, whom they regarded as almighty. They thus naturally believed as well that he created the world.”

That revelation has a history is undisputed; that the creation doctrine as *creatio ex nihilo* has a history is likewise so. The understanding of revelation is, however, diminished if this development is reduced to the creativity of the Jewish people. The majestic words with which the Bible begins (“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”) are not bound by historical experience, even if they are to be located in a particular historical setting. They are the words of revelation, transcending human understanding: they point the way to human reflection; they are not simply the result of it.

In many catechistic teaching materials today, it is emphasized that God’s creativity is above all a *creatio continua*, a continuous creation. We find in a new book of faith: “God encompasses all that he has made, from within, in that in every instant he holds everything that he has made in being. God is most intensely present in everything that he has made.” As welcome as is the stress on *conservatio et gubernatio* [the conservation and governing] of creatures, so little follows from this that *creation ex nihilo*, as understood as being an absolute beginning, naturally comes to be neglected. The contention of the book just mentioned is thus questionable: “‘In the beginning’ does not suggest an account of the temporal origin of the world.” That “in the beginning” does not suggest a Deistic concept of creation is clear from the standpoint of Jewish and Christian interpretation, but it is equally uncontested that implicit in the concept is the absolute beginning of things and, along with that, the creation of time.

The question of whether the creation catechesis should be at the beginning of the teaching about the faith or later (for example, after the first stages in Israel’s history) is not decisive. What *is* decisive, on the other hand, is the clear proclamation of the creation as an absolute beginning, as *creatio ex nihilo*. On this depends the credibility of the discussion concerning continuous creation (*creatio continua*) and divine providence. The early Christian creation catechesis saw this clearly. If God is not the absolute author of the universe, including in particular the material cosmos, then the proclamation of the Sermon on the Mount loses its “salt” in a very concrete sense: that God is our *Father*, who cares for each of his creatures, even the smallest. And here Christology and eschatology also come up short. In this regard, Cardinal

Ratzinger has referred to the crisis in the catechesis by delivering in Paris and Lyon a speech that has drawn much attention (and stirred up much controversy):

“The marginalization of the creation catechesis reduces the concept of God and thus also Christology. The religious finds its roots strictly in the realm of the psychological and the sociological; the material world is left by default to physics and technology. Yet it is only when all being, including matter, comes from and remains in God’s hands that He can truly be our savior and grant us life – true life. There is today a fatal tendency, wherever in the proclamation of the faith the material world comes into play, to equivocate, to fall back on the symbolic, beginning with the creation, continuing with the virgin birth of Jesus and his resurrection, the real presence in the transubstantiation of bread and wine, and then on to our own resurrection and the second coming of the Lord. It is no trivial theological tiff when the resurrection of the individual is relegated to the grave, with not only the denial of the soul but, most importantly, doubts cast on the corporality of salvation. A positive renewal of the creation faith is thus a precondition for the credibility and depth of Christology and eschatology.”

It is thus no coincidence that in some very promising new catechetical endeavors, the teaching about creation once again occupies its original place. In conclusion, three or four examples might be briefly noted. That these have in part come under attack by some official catechetical institutions is regrettable; it is therefore all the more encouraging to hear of an immensely positive echo among many of the faithful.

First, there is the impressive series “La vie spirituelle des enfants” [The spiritual life of children] by *Noëlle le Duc*, which already includes a dozen volumes. The author, a Carmelite nun and experienced teacher, has, in the best tradition of her order, developed for children between the years of four and eight a “prayer school” intended to lead to the full depth of contemplative prayer. She regards the school as an indispensable basis for her further catechetical program, one whose structure is Trinitarian and which develops in constant reference to the Marian mysteries. The first volume, “The Revelation of the Father to His Children,” begins with the question: “Listen..., do you know who God is?” The first of eight answers is: “God is the origin of all things. You discover him in the creation. The first creation account is also paraphrased.”

The journal *Religionspädagogische Praxis* [The Practice of Religious Instruction], in the care of Franz Kett and Sr. Esther Kaufmann, attempts to construct a catechesis whose orientation is emphatically that of creation theology. The approach is firmly situated in the service of the idea that the cosmos has its origins in God’s creation. From that a very clearly Biblical catechesis unfolds. In this series, we also encounter an (incidentally excellent) installment about those first creatures who nowadays often occupy the last rung, if they are mentioned at all: angels.

The *Parcours catéchétique* [Catechism Course] for primary school classes by *P. Daniel Bourgeois* grew out of the parish catechism. In its 36 chapters, “Seigneur, ouvre mes yeux” [Lord, Open my Eyes] follows the actual order of Holy Scripture and commences with the opening passage of Genesis. The presentation in the accompanying teacher’s manual shows that this approach does not hesitate to accept the aid of exegesis. Careful attention is paid to the literary peculiarities of the texts, not in order to relativize them into a religious-historical document but rather to allow the mystery of faith that is creation to come to the fore. The matter

of the text's origin, something that has held a prominent place in recent years, is not explored. The graphic presentation of the text is very impressive. The mighty words with which holy writ begins are to speak for themselves. The children are supposed to be directly addressed with the power of the words and to be led, prior to all historical and religious-historical categorization, to *theological* faith, that is, to living contact with the mystery of the creator, in order that they may "realize" (in the sense that Newman uses the word) that all things and we are ourselves are *created*.

On the basis of *theological faith* in the mystery of creation, it is then necessary and meaningful to proceed in the higher school classes to delve into historical questions regarding the origin of belief in creation, to point out similarities and differences in religious-historical parallels, and to decode the pictorial language of the Bible. At the same time, however, the ideological-philosophical question of how evolutionary theory is limited and how it nonetheless presumes to go beyond its limitations must also be confronted. In today's creation catechesis, Biblical and scientific statements are often placed in excessively close proximity to one another. A *philosophical* reflection on the limits of scientific knowledge on the one hand and, on the other, on the mystery of the human spirit, of life, and of inorganic nature is proving itself increasingly to be an indispensable intercessional authority between creation belief and evolutionary theory.

In the early church, the creation catechesis came at the beginning of the introduction into the Christian faith. Belief in God, the Father, maker of heaven and earth, is the basis of the belief in Jesus Christ, the Savior, in the Holy Spirit, who completes the works of God. Faith in creation is, however, also the foundation for a view of the world that can read the language of things. Both books, the book of scripture and the book of nature, have a single author, a single creator. The creation faith is the one key that opens both volumes and is therefore also the common source for the rational exploration and the faithful utilization of the world.

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## NOTES

H. de Lubac: *Credo, Gestalt und Lebendigkeit unseres Glaubensbekenntnisses* [The Creed: The Form and Vitality of our Confession of Faith], Einsiedeln (Johannes), 1975, esp. Chapter 2, 29-56.

Zur Exegese dieser beiden Reden [On the Exegesis of these two Discourses]: U. Wilckens: *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* [The Missionary Discourses in the Acts of the Apostles], Neukirchen (Neukirchener Verlag) 1974<sup>3</sup>.

Iranäus von Lyon: *Adversus hareses* III, 12, 13 and III, 5,3; cf. de Lubac, op. cit. (A.1), 42

O. Gigon: *Der Ursprung der griechischen Philosophie von Hesiod bis Parmenides* [The Origin of Greek Philosophy from Hesiod to Parmenides], Basel (Schwabe) 1945, 33f.

*Christlich-platonische Beziehungen vor dem Siege des Christentums* [Christian-Platonic Relations before the Triumph of Christianity], lecture at the University of Freiburg on February 22, 1983, unpublished.

Cf. G. May: *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der creatio ex nihilo* [Creation from Nothing. The Origin of the Teaching of Creatio ex Nihilo], Berlin – New York (de Gruyter) 1978.

Enarr. in Ps. 134:10 (PL 37:1745): translated [into German] by H.U. von Balthasar: *Aurelius Augustinus, Über die Psalmen* [Aurelius Augustinus, on the Psalms], Einsiedeln (Johannes) 1983<sup>2</sup>, 317; further nexts in A. Hamman: "L'enseignement sur la creation dans l'antiquité chrétienne," in: *Revue de Sc. Rel.*, 43 (1968), 1-23; 97-122; esp. 106 f.

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Endre von Ivánka: *Plato Christianus: Übernahme und Umgestaltung des Platonismus durch die Väter* [The Takeover and Transformation of Platonism by the Church Fathers], Einsiedeln (Johannes) 1964, 88.

ibid., 87.

Ad Autolycum II. 4 (PG 6, 1052 f.);

De resurrectione carnis 8.

Cf. *Adversus Haereticos* II. 1:1: “Bene igitur habet a primo et *maximo* capitulo inchoare nos, a demiurgo deo, qui fecit coelum et terram et omnia quae in eis sunt,...et ostendere, quod...sua sententia et libere fecit omnia”; cf. III, 83; IV, 20,1; 38,3; cf. G. May, op. cit. (A.6), 170 ff. [“It is proper, then, that we should begin with the first and *most important* chapter, that is, God the Creator, who made heaven and the earth, and all things therein...and to demonstrate that...He created all things of His own free will there is nothing either above Him or after Him; nor that, influenced by any one, but of His own free will”; cf. III, 8:3; IV, 20:1, 38:3; cf. G. May, op. cit. (A.6), 170 ff.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Einleitung zu Irenäus, Geduld des Reifens* [Introduction to Irenaeus, The Patience of Maturation], Einsiedeln (Johannes) 1956, 18.

ibid., 32; according to E. von Ivánka, op. cit.

*Adversus Haereticos* II, 3:2, cf. commentary by A. Rousseau in: *Sources Chrésiennes*, Vol. 293: 121-127.

ibid.

ibid., 7:1

ibid., 7:1-2

ibid., 3-4,1; 4,3-5,1.

ibid., 7: 1-2

ibid., 3:2 and in the commentary (A.15), 126 f.

H. U. v. Balthasar, op. cit. (A.13), 18.

*Adversus Haereticos* II, 10: 2-4

ibid.

ibid., II, 9:1, cf. Augustine’s beautiful text about “heaven and earth, which cry out that they are created...et vox dicentium ipsa est evidentia [and the voice with which they speak is itself evidence].” (*Confessiones* XI, 4:6)

Concerning this translation of εἰ το εἶναι, cf. the comment of A. Rousseau: *Sources Chrésiennes*, Vol. 263: 276-278.

*Adversus Haereticos* I, 22:1, cf. II, 1:1 and I, 10:1

Augustinus: *Confessiones* I, 1.1. In *De Trinitate* X, 5,7, he describes this as the radical temptation of man; “Not to be god-like through God’s grace but rather wanting to be from oneself in essence equal to Him.” (non ex illo similes illius, sed ex seipsa esse quod ille est), cf. E. von Ivánka: op. cit. (A.8), 91.

The pagan philosopher Celsus (ca. 178) says, for example that God’s providence is valid for “the whole,” not the particular (in: Origen’s *Contra Celsum* IV, 99; SC 136, 431-433).

*Grundriß des Glaubens, Katholischer Katechismus zum Unterrichtswerk Zielfelder ru* [Outline of the Faith: Catholic Catechism as an instructional work in the endeavors of religious instruction], München (Kösel), 1980, 66f.

*Impulse zur Verantwortung* [Impulses for responsibility], Vol. 1 (for the 10th and 11th schoolyears), Düsseldorf, 1972, 189. (The quotation comes from W. Trilling: *Im Anfang schuf Gott...*[In the beginning God created...], Leipzig [St. Benno], 1964, 31 f.

*Christianos autem facere volebat, non mathematicos!* For the translation of *mathematicos* as ‘astronomers’, cf. Augustine: *De diversis quaestionibus* [Concerning Various Questions].

*Contra Felicem*, I:10; PL 42:525; A. Läpple refers to this site: *Biblische Verkündigung in der Zeitenwende* [Biblical Preaching in Changing Times], Vol. 1, München (Don Bosco), 1963, 41.

A. Läpple, op. cit. (A. 33), 45.

H. U. von Balthasar; cited in Läpple above.

A. Läpple, op. cit. (A. 33), 53.

ibid., 54

ibid., 63 f.



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*Schweizer Schulbibel, Lehrerbuch* [Swiss School-bible, teacher's book], Einsiedeln – Zürich (Benzinger), 1981<sup>3</sup>, 216.18.

*Zielfelder ru 7/8*. Catholic religious instruction for 7th and 8th years students in academic and vocational schools, München, 1977, 197.

W.F. Gutmann – K. Bonik: *Kritische Evolutionstheorie. Ein Beitrag zur Überwindung alt-darwinistischer Dogmen* [Critical Evolution Theory: A Contribution to the Overcoming of Old-Darwinian Dogmas]

ibid., 157

Objektive Erkenntnisse. Ein evolutionärer Entwurf [Objective Realizations: An Evolutionary Draft], Hamburg (Hoffmann and Campe), <sup>4</sup>1984, 280.

ibid., 284, A.14.

cf., for example, the overview of the weighty counterarguments in H. Kahle: *Evolution – Irrweg moderner Wissenschaft?* [Evolution – a false path for modern science?], Bielefeld (Moderner Buch Service), 1980 (Lit.!). J. Illies: *Der Jahrhundertirrtum. Würdigung und Kritik des Darwinismus* [The Error of the Century. Evaluation and Critic of Darwinism], Frankfurt (Umschau), 1983; B. Vollmert: *Polykondensation in Natur und Technik* [Polycondensation in Nature and Technology], Karlsruhe (E. Vollmert), 1983, inter alia.

Stanley Jaki: *The Road of Science and the Ways to God: The Gifford Lectures 1974-1976*, Edinburgh (Scottish Academic Press), 1978, 286.

*Die Entstehung der Arten durch natürliche Zuchtwahl* [The Origin of the Species through Natural Selection], Stuttgart (Reclam) (= Reclam Universal-Bibliothek, Vol. 3071(10), 678.

ibid., 677.

*The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, ed. By Nora Barlow, New York, 1969, 140.

op. cit. (A. 43), 279 f.

cf. Stanley Jaki, op. cit. (A. 46), 87 and 367.

K. Popper, op. cit. (A. 43), 280.

ibid., 282.

ibid., 283 [emphasis added]

ibid., 280.

cf. J. Seifert: *Das Leib-Seele-Problem in der gegenwärtigen philosophischen Diskussion* [The Body-Soul Problem in contemporary philosophical discussion], Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft), 1979, 64-70; cf. the brilliant refutation of epiphenomenalism in H. Jonas: *Macht oder Ohnmacht der Subjektivität?* [The Power or Impotence of Subjectivity?], Frankfurt (Insel), 1981, 35-63.

Dorothee Welp: *Willensfreiheit bei Thomas von Aquin. Versuch einer Interpretation* [The Freedom of the Will in Thomas Aquinas: An Attempt at an Interpretation], Freiburg/Switzerland (University Press), 1979, 149, with reference to Thomas Aquinas: *De Veritate*, q. 24, a., 2, in c: “Bruta habent aliquam similitudinem rationis, inquantum participant quandam prudentiam naturalem...” [‘In brute animals natural judgment takes the place of particular reason’].

cf. in this regard the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of (“Limites du mécanisme” [The limits of mechanism] in E. Gilson: “D’Aristote à Darwin et retour: Essai sur quelques constantes de la biophilosophie, Paris (Vrin), 1971, 171-193: “Normalement, le mécanisme exclut le finalisme, mais le finalisme n’exclut pas le mécanisme, au contraire il l’implique nécessairement” [Normally, mechanism excludes

[German translation given in original English] (Stanley Jaki, op. cit., A. 46:293)

*Science and Creation. From eternal cycles to an oscillating universe*. Edinburgh-London (Scottish Academic Press), 1974, 357 [English in original]

ibid.

On the Jewish-Christian theory of the creation of the world for man, cf. my article “L’homme créé par Dieu: le fondement de la dignité de l’homme” [Man created by God: the foundation of human dignity.” *Gregorianum*, 65 (1984), 337-363, esp. 339-343.

op. cit. (A.33), 21f.

op. cit. (A. 39), 216.10.

Particularly crass is W. Köper’s *Schöpfung und Evolution* [Creation and Evolution], München (Kösel), 1976 (Series: Instruction models – Subject religion, school materials 22, secondary level I/II = 10.-12 schoolyear): Not

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only is Darwin's theory proclaimed as quasi-dogma; the pupils are also required to indicate themselves which statements in the Biblical account of creation are "scientifically untenable" and which are "theologically indispensable." (12)

*Schweizer Schulbibel* (A. 39), 216.19.

Botschaft des Glaubens. Ein katholischer Katechismus, Donauwörth (Ludwig Auer), 1978, 71.

cf. the article of the same title by Cardinal Ratzinger, *Salzburger Universitätsreden* [Salzburg University Addresses], 68, Salzburg – München (A. Pustet), 1980.

Bâtir une demeure de la foi en 5<sup>ème</sup>-6<sup>ème</sup> [Building a home for the faith in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> forms], Lyon (Editions Tardy), 1984, 59; cf. *Schweizer Schulbibel* (A. 39), 216.2.

*Pierres Vivantes. Recueil catholique de documents privilégiés de la foi* [Living Stones. Catholic Compilation of privileged documents of the faith], 1980, 27.

*Religion: Beispiele und Texte. Texte für thematische Schwerpunkte im Religionsunterricht der Sekundarstufe* [Texts for thematic foci in religious instruction at the secondary level], Vol. 1, Düsseldorf (Pro Schule), 1974, 20 (a particularly crass example through the ironic, in part cynical tone of the texts and the pictures.)

From: "Leseprobe aus einem noch nicht veröffentlichten Glaubensbuch" [Sample page from a yet unpublished book on the faith], by P. Oskar Simmel, S.J., in IKZ, *Communio*, 14 (1985), 275.

ibid., 275f., "La création n'est pas un acte archéologique du passé" [Creation is not a past archeological act"] it is put in Volume 35 of *Cahiers Evangile: une première approche de la Bible avec "Pierres Vivantes"* [Gospel Notebooks: an initial approach to the Bible with "Pierres Vivantes"], Paris, 1981, 23. A similar allergy to the idea of the absolute beginning is seen in the strongly harmonizing book *Pour lire la création dans l'évolution* by C. Montenat, L. Plateaux, and P. Roux, Paris (Cerf), 1984, esp. 11-13.

*Die Krise der Kateches und ihre Überwindung. Rede in Frankreich* [The Crisis of the Catechism and how to overcome it. Speech in France], Einsiedeln (Johannes), 1983, 34f.

Noëlle le Duc, *La révélation du Pere aux enfants* [The revelation of the Father to children] and *La formation des enfants a la priere* [The formation of prayer], Venasque (Les éditions Le Micocoulier), 1983.

The journal is in its tenth year of publication, Landshut (publisher of religious instruction work aids). The new major work of H. Halbfas, *Religionsunterricht in der Grundschule* [Religious instruction in elementary schools], Lehrerhandbuch 2, Düsseldorf-Zürich, 1984, attempts what a first glance seems to be a similar approach – to see the cosmos as creation in the entire richness of its symbolism. Yet in our view the otherwise interesting and amply documented work lacks the

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Three volumes, Limoges (Droguet et Ardant), appeared in 1984.

A quite successful attempt in this direction is the course by J. Lacourt for advanced secondary pupils: *Dieu, pourquoi ne pas y croire?* [God, why not believe in Him?] (Collection Au risque de croire [Collection: At the Risk of Believing]), Limoges (Droguet et Ardant), 1978. Well carried out, though the evangelical Volume 6, *Studienstufe Religion: Naturwissenschaft und Schöpfung* [Study Materials for religion: Natural science and creation], by K. Dessecker and P.H.A. Neumann, Stuttgart (Calwer), 1972, is somewhat weak in its conclusions.

It was only after the completion of this manuscript that I was able to examine the new *Katholischer Erwachsenenkatechismus* [Catholic Catechism for Adults], published by the German Bishops' Conference (publishing group "engagement," 1985). This excellent but also challenging work follows the Trinitarian structure of the Creed, whereby the creation catechesis regains its traditional and rightful place within the first article (92-140). The theory of evolution is designated as "a hypothesis" (93); the question of the absolute beginning is clearly posed (30) and the limitations of a materialistic evolutionary interpretation demonstrated (31, 93, 115). The positive development of "particular truths in the Christian creation faith" (97-100) contains implicitly critical corrections to ideological evolutionism. One can only hope that this welcome foray will prove to have an effect on school-level catechesis.