

## CURRENT THEOLOGY

### THEOLOGICAL OPINION ON THE EVOLUTION OF MAN

An assay of current theological opinion on the question of the origin of the body of the first man may well begin with a book published twelve years ago by the Reverend Ernest C. Messenger, Ph.D., *Evolution and Theology: The Problem of Man's Origin*.<sup>1</sup> The first part of this bulletin will be devoted to the reception accorded Dr. Messenger's book by the principal theological journals. But before proceeding to that task it may be well to indicate briefly just what his position was on the question of Adam's body.

First of all, Dr. Messenger holds as a dogma of faith that Adam was the common ancestor of the whole of the present human race (p. 95). There is significance in the word "present" because, he thinks, we should not leave out of count in this discussion the possibility of a race of pre-Adamites (p. 277). Secondly, Dr. Messenger believes that the formation of Eve from Adam is so certain "that it may well be *de fide*" (p. 252). It is true, he offers some very obscure considerations in an attempt to prove that this formation was in accord with general biological laws, but still he maintains that its mode was extraordinary (p. 273). With regard to the origin of Adam himself he admits, as he must, an intervention of God for the creation of Adam's soul and for his elevation to the supernatural state in both soul and body (p. 276). As to a special divine intervention in the production of Adam's body Dr. Messenger is of the opinion that there is nothing clear in Scripture, tradition, or the decisions of Church authority requiring belief in such an intervention. Still he is "inclined to think that there may well have been a divine intervention in the formation of the human body itself. We are led to this conclusion by the philosophic truth that the *human* soul can exist only in a *human* body, and such a body is specifically distinct from any other animal body. Accordingly, we think the formation of the human body may well have required a 'special divine intervention' at least to give it the last disposition necessary for the infusion of the human soul" (p. 276). Dr. Messenger supposes, of course, the instrumentality of the brute creation. God's special action would have been concerned not with inorganic matter, the slime of the earth in the literal sense, but with an individual of a species of animals whose body had evolved to a near-human form. The divine intervention would have had as its term the production of the final disposition necessary for the reception of the soul. Just what is meant by this "last disposition" is nowhere explained. Furthermore, the correctness of Dordodot's concept of instrumental cause, on which Messenger relies, may be seriously questioned.

<sup>1</sup> New York: Macmillan, 1932.

But despite his questionable philosophical doctrines, the author of *Evolution and Theology* really seems to prefer a special intervention of God for the production of Adam's body as well as for the creation of his soul.

The main reason for Dr. Messenger's hesitation in admitting some special action of God in the making of the body of Adam is what he considers to be the uncertainty of the existence of a race of pre-Adamites who became extinct at Adam's appearance on earth. He realizes that if brute nature could produce an animal body calling for animation by a human soul, it is difficult to see why only one such body could have come into existence. A body could have been prepared for Adam's spiritual soul, that is, could have been given the disposition demanding that soul, only by another human being, possibly a pre-Adamite, or by a special divine intervention. The only thing, therefore, which seems to make this act of God uncertain to Dr. Messenger's mind is the possibility that Adam's body may have originated from a pre-Adamite parent (p. 277).

Finally, he puts the question whether God made use of the partial co-operation of created secondary causes in the production of the human body. His answer is that God could have done so (*potuit*); it was becoming that God should do so (*deceuit*), inasmuch as the whole creation was made to lead up to man. But did God do so (*fecit*)? Dr. Messenger ends with this interrogation point. He inclines to the opinion that nature did co-operate in the formation of Adam's body. But he hesitates to say "yes" categorically, and that for two very prudent reasons: first, the Church may some day see fit to decide the contrary; and secondly, so many modern theologians are hostile to an affirmative solution (pp. 277-80).

The question naturally arises: Have theologians in general continued to remain hostile to the admission of some sort of evolution in regard to the first human body? We shall attempt to answer this question, first by a survey of the reviews of Dr. Messenger's book, and then by a canvass of theological opinion on the subject as contained in independent writings which have appeared in theological magazines or books approximately since the time of the publication of *Evolution and Theology*.

## I

Dr. Messenger's work was very widely reviewed by Catholic journals of theology and Scripture. In general the author was praised for the extent of his erudition and the completeness of his study, as well as for his respect for the authority of the Church and its various teaching organs. It was admitted that no such thoroughgoing discussion of the question at issue had up to that time been made by a Catholic writer either in English or in any other

language. But his methods were severely criticized by some reviewers. He was accused of a lack of objectivity in interpreting his sources and of special pleading in favor of the evolutionary hypothesis. Not being a professional theologian, Dr. Messenger took considerable risks in approaching the subject of his investigation, but as a doctor of philosophy he should have shown greater expertness in his exegesis of certain important passages and principles of St. Thomas, particularly *Contra Gentiles* III, 69, and *Summa Theologica* I, q. 91, a. 2.

We shall endeavor to present the reader with excerpts from the principal reviews of *Evolution and Theology*, selected with the purpose of showing what theologians and Scripture scholars think of the theory of evolution as applied to the body of the first man.

Père M. J. Lagrange, O.P.—for we presume that he is the author of the Bulletin in the *Revue biblique* of July, 1932, signed "L"—makes special comment on the words of Dr. Messenger: "We are inclined to think that there may well have been a divine intervention in the formation of the human body itself." Father Lagrange says:

This stipulation seems to us absolutely necessary. Indeed we should be willing to look at the facts in a concrete way. Did God infuse the human soul into a male animal very close in its make-up to *homo sapiens*, when it was eighteen or twenty years old? This would be a little too much like inverting the metamorphoses of Ovid. What would this big fellow have done with his former habits, which could only have been the habits of a brute? Did those habits dispose that body to receive a human soul and some kind of grace of innocence? It is better to suppose that the soul was granted to the embryo and at the very moment of conception. Was it with the grace of innocence? What would this boy have done with it up to the time that God led him into the Garden of Eden to work? And if Paradise was, according to Messenger, a figure of the state of grace, was it the intention of the sacred author to put so much time between the creation and the fall? What is left, finally, of the whole history of the fall? An energetic intervention of God was therefore necessary, and, all things considered, total creation is that which fits best the whole account of Genesis. But we will not insist further because the second chapter contains so many figurative elements. We must congratulate M. Messenger for his frankness, for he is convinced that evolution extends even to Adam, without excluding other human races, the pre-Adamites who would have existed before him.

Courage indeed was necessary to dare to propose an opinion which passes for liberal, and great theological dexterity to prove that it can be expressed by a Catholic without going counter either to dogma or to discipline. And let us repeat that we do not see that this opinion is against dogma or discipline provided that one insists on a special action of God even with regard to the body.

We should like to call attention to the stand taken by the venerated savant, Père Lagrange. The one thing he holds out for as essential is a special intervention of God not only in the creation of Adam's soul but also in the formation of his body. We shall see how frequently and insistently this point has been emphasized by Catholic scholars in recent years.

We have put in the first place the criticism of Père Lagrange because of his recognized authority in biblical matters. The reader will have observed that his judgment was rather unfavorable to the conclusions of Dr. Messenger's work, though not entirely so. We shall present in order all the other theological reviews which we have been able to read, first those which are unfavorable and then those which favor the ideas of *Evolution and Theology* to a greater or less degree.

J. D. Simonds, in the *Australasian Catholic Record* (X, 1933, 18), is not favorable. He writes:

Either we must conceive the human soul of Adam to have been infused into an adult organism already disposed to receive it, or else the soul was infused into the body in the embryonic stage after the necessary disposition for its reception had been arranged by Providence. The former alternative is so abhorrent to the Scholastic concept of the unity of the substantial form in man that the author emphatically repudiates it on more than one occasion. His view seems to be that some special Divine intervention was exercised to give to the embryonic body of Adam the last disposition required before animation by a human soul. As theologians generally hold that Adam was raised to the supernatural state, both in soul and body, from the first moment of his creation, it is not surprising that so many standard theologians reject the hypothesis of the animal ancestry of man. The theologian must take a much wider view of man than the specialist in anthropology, and it is not surprising if he fails to be attracted by the suggestion that the first man with his marvelous gifts of nature and grace was nourished and fostered by non-human parents, no matter how closely they may have approximated to the condition of 'near men' or 'tentative men.' In this hypothesis, the words of Sacred Scripture that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife take on a particularly sardonic meaning when applied to Adam.

Very decidedly unfavorable was the anonymous reviewer in *The Ecclesiastical Review* (LXXXVI, 1932, 648). He affirms that

Dr. Messenger's successive findings unconsciously reveal the soundness of common Catholic opinion by their repeated failure to establish anything really pertinent to the contrary. Though his theology is original rather than representative, it is forever missing contemporary evolution to capture something else instead. . . . On the question of the origin of man . . . the *bête noire* appears to be the *consensus Patrum et theologorum* to the effect that Adam's body was formed

from inert matter by the efficient causality of God alone. Rightly the author notes that this consensus does not bind *de fide*; not satisfied with that, he tries to discredit its existence. His chosen witnesses are of another mind. Of modern theologians who handle this thesis with evolutionary theories expressly in view, only five are quoted at length, but the most liberal of these brands the ascription of an evolutionary origin to Adam's body with the note *temeraria*, leaving Catholic acknowledgement of the aforesaid consensus just where it stood in Mivart's day. Somewhat the same opinion seems, indeed, to be Dr. Messenger's own conclusion on this point. He has, however, the audacity to say that, in the Biblical Commission's affirmation of a 'peculiar creation of man,' the term *homo* denotes the soul alone. Such license in interpreting the plainest term of a canonical decree is enough to indicate the value of his guidance.

A very searching review of *Evolution and Theology* was made by one of the foremost of American Scripture scholars, William H. McClellan, S.J., in *America* (April 30, 1932). Father McClellan found great fault with the doctrine of the book, as well as with the unscholarly methods of Dr. Messenger. Of the fruit of the work he writes:

Instead of effecting a meeting between normal Catholic teaching and actual evolutionary theories, Dr. Messenger presents each of these parties with a likeness of the other that is too remote to be recognized. Such is the net result of the most thorough and conscientious examination that has yet appeared in English. Evidently, then, the opposing issues at present own no common footing for the really critical points of debate. The matter remains where it was. . . . Of the first human body such an origin [evolutionary] is possible without prejudice to faith, but not to be held as positively probable until solid evidence is at hand. This is, in broad outlines, the unchanged status of the question for Catholics.

Also apparently unfavorable was F. Ceuppens, O.P., in *Angelicum* (IX, 1932, 517). He writes: "All these arguments do not prove more than this, that evolution is not impossible. They do not prove the fact. As for us, we think, *salvo meliori iudicio*, that the doctrine of the immediate formation of the body of Adam by God is more consonant with Holy Scripture." By the words "immediate formation" Father Ceuppens no doubt means that God produced Adam's body from inorganic matter, for that is the sense in which they are ordinarily used by theologians. In that case, as we shall see, he modified his stand somewhat in his published commentary on the first chapters of Genesis two years later. As a matter of fact, in that commentary he seems to allow the opinion for which Dr. Messenger is contending.

With disfavor, too, writes P. G. M. Rhodes in the *Clergy Review* (III, 1932, 171):

. . . the formation of Eve would be absolutely supernatural, and if this is the case, it would appear to lessen the probability for the action of the secondary causes in the formation of the body of Adam. For if, after all, there was to be a complete break in the evolutionary process, would it not appear more *conveniens* that it should take place in the case of Adam himself? A good deal of further consideration is due to this matter; one is inclined to think that the solution propounded is one likely to scandalize the evolutionists without quite satisfying the conservative theologians.

A more or less neutral critic, M. J. Browne, in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (XXXIX, 1932, 554-57), expresses "the highest possible praise for the method, style and scholarship of Dr. Messenger." His criticism is confined mainly to "the author's attempts to read the theory of evolution into the Fathers, a theory they admittedly had not the remotest notion of." But with regard to the author's conclusions the reviewer is entirely noncommittal.

Passing over to the several reviews which showed a more favorable attitude we shall cite first the words of Al. Janssens in *Divus Thomas*, Piacenza (XXXV, 1932, 328):

If it be permitted to express a personal opinion, I think that the interpretation [Messenger's] of biblical and patristic texts makes it evident that there is an absence of teaching, properly so called, as to the *how* of the creation of living beings and the body of Adam. The difficult point is to know whether the *formatio primae mulieris ex primo homine* can be reconciled with a rational theory of evolution. On this point the effort of M. Messenger does not seem to be satisfactory.

Favorable also was P. de Vooght, O.S.B., in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* (IV, 1932, 347). Father de Vooght has little but praise for Dr. Messenger's book, and, though not very definite and clear in expressing himself, seems to be very much in sympathy with the author's conclusions. He finds nothing to criticize in his methods. In fact, he thinks that the theologian who uses *Evolution and Theology* "will avoid those errors of interpretation, specimens of which M.M. has remarked in our authors of contemporary manuals."

Partial approval is found in the review of the noted Louvain theologian, J. Bittremieux. In *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* (IX, 1932, 309), he writes:

All his reasonings in no way prove that the theory of evolution has any greater probability than that of immediate creation. At the most they prove that it is not impossible. . . . We do not think that the application of evolution as expounded

by M. Messenger is irreconcilable with revelation. This theory, even though it has been by no means demonstrated and cannot claim for itself a probability stronger than that of immediate creation, is not in itself impossible. From this point of view the work of M. Messenger may have considerable apologetic value.

J. Gross, in *Revue des sciences religieuses* (XIII, 1933, 65), after a very lengthy discussion of Dr. Messenger's book, sometimes adversely critical but in general very sympathetic, concludes as follows:

Happily, the number of theologians is increasing who . . . take their inspiration from the principles laid down by Leo XIII and renounce resolutely and all along the line the search for scientific teaching in our Sacred Books. They have grasped the fact that 'religion and natural science are two sisters who live in different stars' and that it is to the interest of each to remain in her own domain. And so both revelation and theology, the science of revelation, once they have safeguarded the divine action which presides at the origin of beings, have nothing to pronounce either for or against evolution. They know nothing of evolutionism in as much as it is a scientific theory, and can no more oppose it than give it their support. Nevertheless, we may be permitted to think that the system of transformism is capable not only of opening up to the theologian new views of the world and of humanity but also of enabling him to form a more perfect and more elevated idea of the action and nature of God than the theories of former times.

Our survey of the reviews of Dr. Messenger's book includes, if we are not mistaken, all the principal theological magazines which gave it more than a mere passing notice. We have not cited periodicals of German language, for they did not, as far as we have been able to determine, take cognizance of the work. As the reader will have noticed, the reception given to *Evolution and Theology*, though more commonly adverse, was by no means entirely unfavorable. Opinion as to its conclusions may be said to have been divided, even though somewhat unequally. A judgement based on a census of the leading Catholic journals of theology reviewing the book would have to include the admission that there exists today a current of theological thought favorable to some sort of evolutionary explanation of the origin of Adam's body.

## II

We shall now turn to a survey of the writings and comments of theologians independently expressed during the past decade or so. Thus alone, it would seem, shall we be able to say whether or not and to what extent the theory of evolution with regard to the first man is rejected or accepted by the greater weight of theological opinion today. We have thought it well to begin with a time closely approximating the date of the publication of Dr. Messenger's

book. In that way our poll of opinion may truly be said to evaluate present-day thought. Hence we shall not go back farther than the year 1930. Statements concerning the point of our investigation will be presented in chronological order. We have tried to use all the material available up to the present, whether in published treatises or in articles appearing in theological magazines.

We may anticipate for the reader's benefit and call his attention to the great frequency with which the writers cited demand a special action of God in the production of Adam, not only for the creation of his soul but also for the formation of his body.

Franz Diekamp, a German theologian of the Thomist school, in his *Katholische Dogmatik* (6th ed., 1930, II, 89), has the following thesis: "Adam was made through the special intervention of God with regard to both body and soul, in the sense that evolution from the animal kingdom is entirely excluded." The doctrinal qualification of this thesis with respect to the soul is *sententia certa*, with respect to the body *sententia longe communior*.

P. Heinisch in his commentary on Genesis, *Das Buch Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (Bonn, 1930, p. 141), is not so positive in rejecting an evolutionary origin of Adam's body, though neither is he in favor of it. To the point he says:

Many scholars . . . have taught the evolution of the body of man from lower forms. So far as the modern theory of descent understands this process in a purely mechanist sense, it contradicts not only the Bible but also the principle that an effect must be traced back to a corresponding, equal or superior, cause. But further it is a fact that profane research has not up till now found the necessary connecting members between man and beast. Paleontology knows no ancestors of man. Diluvial man comes on the scene already a complete *homo sapiens* without transition. We know of no Tertiary forbears and paleontology does not enable us to draw a binding line from Tertiary apes to man. . . . The Biblical Commission speaks . . . of a special creation of man. Herein lies an admonition to prudence in the matter of attempts to extend the theory of descent to man.

Quoting Hoberg, Heinisch continues: "The manner and way, of course, in which the action of Genesis 2,7 took place remains a riddle for human research, revelation gives no solution, historical research comes upon man as an individual person." As is evident, Heinisch does not think that the question of the evolution of Adam's body can be settled from Holy Scripture.

The same author, writing in 1940 in his *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (p. 129 f.), still insists that the "how" of the creation of Adam is a mystery to us. But he is more definite in his attitude toward a very mitigated form of evolution. He affirms that an absolutely convincing proof for the evolution of

the human body has not yet been furnished. "But nearly all scientists accept it and the exegete must not reject it as being contrary to Holy Scripture." Heinisch cites with approval the words of S. Killermann in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (VII, 1935, col. 92): "... the Creator could have transformed an already organized body by creating in it a human soul and could have elevated it to His image." Heinisch adds: "This position would not be opposed to the decision of the Biblical Commission of June 30, 1909, which speaks of a *peculiaris creatio hominis*."<sup>2</sup> It seems fair to conclude from these words that Heinisch would postulate some special intervention of God in the production of Adam's body, even though the *materia ex qua* might have been a brute animal.

In a volume entitled *Man*, which contains the papers read at the Cambridge Catholic Summer School of 1931, there is an essay on "Evolution" by the Rev. T. E. Flynn, Ph.D., M.A. The paper is concerned with our question. After considerable discussion of both the scientific and theological arguments, the author concludes: "I cannot see how any Catholic can hold the evolution of the human body from a pre-human ancestor." In this conclusion he refers without doubt to that form of evolution which was first proposed by St. George Mivart, the preparation of the body of the first man by purely natural forces without any intervention on the part of God. Whether he refers also to more mitigated theories, which suppose some special action of God with regard to Adam's body, is not perfectly clear, but these theories, too, would seem to be included in his disapprobation.

The eighth edition of the first volume of Pohle's *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, completely revised by Michael Gierens, S.J., and published in 1931, contains this thesis: "The first man with respect to his body was created immediately by God" (p. 406). The theological note given to the thesis is *sententia satis certa*. Of Mivart's theory, according to which the body of Adam was prepared by a gradual evolution for animation by the spiritual soul which God created in it, Gierens says that it must be rejected even though it does not as yet merit a theological censure. Speaking of the decree of the Biblical Commission, he affirms that "the *formatio mulieris* signifies surely the forma-

<sup>2</sup> For the reader's convenience we give the pertinent part of the decree: "Dubium III: Utrum speciatim sensus litteralis historicus vocari in dubium possit, ubi agitur de factis in eisdem capitibus enarratis, quae christianae religionis fundamenta attingunt: uti sunt, inter cetera, rerum universarum creatio a Deo facta in initio temporis; peculiaris creatio hominis; formatio primae mulieris ex primo homine; generis humani unitas; originalis protoparentum felicitas in statu iustitiae, integritatis et immortalitatis; praeceptum a Deo homini datum ad ejus obedientiam probandam; divini praecepti, diabolo sub serpentis specie suasore, transgressio; protoparentum dejectio ab illo primaevae innocentiae statu; nec non Reparatoris futuri promissio?—*Resp.*: Negative" (*DB*, n. 2123).

tion of the body and therefore the foregoing parallel member, *peculiaris creatio hominis*, is also certainly to be understood of the body. Consequently, although a solemn decision is wanting, the Church has several times given us to understand that she does not tolerate the opposing thesis." After giving the argument for his thesis from Genesis, Gierens adds: "That God in the preparation of the 'slime of the earth' made use of the services of an angel, or that He let the first human body grow slowly to maturity by gradual evolution up to its animation by a spiritual soul, cannot indeed be disproved; but the Creator then was and still remains the sole principal cause of the formation of the human body." With regard to the argument from the Fathers, Pohle's reviser insists that no one would dare to bring forth even one text in favor of Mivart's hypothesis. Though he is not entirely clear and perhaps not wholly consistent, Father Gierens seems, however, to come to this, that we must hold and defend a special action of the Creator in the preparation of the body of Adam for the infusion of his soul.

In 1932 a remarkable little book of 58 pages was published in Germany with the *Imprimatur* of the archdiocese of Cologne: *Die biblische Urgeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung als Grundlage der alttestamentlichen Offenbarung*, by Dr. Hubert Junker, professor of theology in the School of Higher Studies of Passau. The book seems notable mainly because of the fact that even after *Providentissimus Deus* and *Spiritus Paraclitus*, as well as various responses of the Biblical Commission, a Catholic theologian should defend a theory of inspiration which it is difficult to square with the Catholic doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of all parts of Sacred Scripture. For, according to Junker, that only is asserted by God in Scripture which God and the sacred writer wish to teach, that which they wish to say *ex professo*, viz., that which pertains to salvation. "Since it is entirely outside the intention of God to amplify by means of Holy Writ the purely natural knowledge of man which stands in no relation to his salvation, therefore all assertions of that kind are to be understood not as truth-judgements intended by the inspiring Spirit but as general views and presuppositions which serve as means of presentation" (p. 17).

In accord with this general concept of inspiration, Junker has no difficulty in holding that all God wishes to *teach* in the biblical account of the origin of Adam was "not how man was formed but . . . what he was created. Its real doctrinal content concerns the essence of man and his relation to God. The form of the literary presentation is an artistic and symbolic dramatization of these truths" (p. 40). It is not at all clear that Junker admits any *peculiaris creatio hominis*. Certainly he does not affirm it explicitly. On the contrary he speaks of the making of Adam in such a way as to leave it doubtful

whether he really holds it to be as a matter of fact a special creation (p. 39 f.). To his purely symbolic interpretation of the *peculiaris creatio hominis* Junker strangely enough adjoins an admission of the historic fact of the *formatio primae mulieris ex primo homine*. In this case he confines all symbolism to the details concerning the manner of Eve's production (p. 43).

About the same time a French priest, the Abbé J. Paquier, published some popular lectures on the question *La création et l'évolution* (Paris, 1931). He is of the opinion that the words of the Biblical Commission, *peculiaris creatio hominis*, refer only to the creation of the soul of Adam. This interpretation, he says, is gaining ground among Catholics (p. 122). As proof of this assertion he cites several priest-scientists. Abbé Paquier thinks it more probable that Adam's body was formed by a brusque mutation beginning in the embryonic stage and continuing after birth. The animal thus evolved became rational because of the soul which came to inhabit, inform, and complete it (p. 131). With a certain scientific naiveté, the good Abbé ventures the hypothesis that Eve was formed from Adam as his twin. He seems to think this reasonable because "at first the two sexes would have been perhaps more or less united. Thus today in the child, notably in his face, the sex is a little bit undecided. So in the breast man and woman retain a certain distant resemblance" (p. 132).

The well known German theologian, B. Bartmann, in his *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik* (8th ed., 1932, I, 269), qualifies as *de fide* this thesis: "God created the first man, both his body and his soul." In his explanation of the proposition he says:

The particulars of the manner of the formation of the body escape our knowledge. The sudden appearance of man upon the earth thousands of years ago is to us as great a mystery as the origin of the world in general. The Church has made no pronouncement concerning the way in which these things took place, although she has recently given a warning that the whole account in Genesis is not to be interpreted as purely symbolic. . . . If the body of the first man was produced by descent from an animal, this could have happened by way of evolution according to natural law but would be explainable only by an immediate intervention of God.

In confirmation he adds a text from St. Thomas: "Inest unicuique naturale desiderium ad conservandum suum esse, quod non conservaretur si transmutaretur in alteram naturam" (*Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 63, a. 3).

A Belgian theologian, A. Dondeyne, discusses our question in an article published in *Collationes Brugenses* (XXXII, 1932, 270-78). His conclusion

is that from Scripture and tradition it is clear that God intervened in the creation of the first man's soul. Also it seems that we must admit some special care and intervention of God in the formation of Adam's body from pre-existing matter. The chief reason for this last assertion is the relation it has to the genetic unity of the human race. But revelation in no wise determines whether this presupposed matter from which God formed Adam's body was inorganic or organic, i.e., prepared as far as it could be by organic evolution.

A similar doctrine is presented by Père Auguste-Alexis Goupil, S.J., in the second volume of his *Dieu* (Paris, 1933). On page 69 of this work he sets forth this thesis: "The first ancestor of the human race was formed, even as to his body, by a special and supernatural operation of God." In explaining his thesis Père Goupil insists that "the body itself received from God in its first formation, no matter what may have been the mode of this formation, a perfection which was not demanded by the necessary antecedent action of secondary causes. And so the divine action intervened at a given moment in order that the matter might become a human body." This doctrine he holds as "common and certain; it would be temerarious to deny it."

As to the mode of the body's formation, Père Goupil allows that the *limus terrae* may have been matter which had evolved as far as animal life. "But," he says, "the evolutionary theory is only an hypothesis and its extension to the body of man is far from being established. Therefore to abandon the traditional explanation of the origin of man we must have very solid scientific reasons, which do not seem to be at hand as yet. All that one can say, reserving judgment to the Church, is that it does not seem that we ought, in the name of Catholic dogma, to shut the door absolutely against every transformist hypothesis of the formation of the first man" (p. 76).

Augustine Bea, S.J., in the second edition of his *De Pentateucho* (Rome, 1933, p. 154 f.), holds that the problem whether man's body was produced by a special intervention of God from inorganic matter or from the body of a brute animal is a question of fact on which the natural sciences are unable to pass judgment. It is only revelation which can shed light on the problem. But the narration of Genesis by no means favors even the most moderate opinion concerning the connection of the body of the first man with the animal kingdom. Father Bea is clearly opposed to all forms of evolution insofar as Adam is concerned. He points out the fact that the teaching authority of the Church has more than once reproved the proponents of mitigated transformism, and also that the theologians have been generally opposed to the theory.

F. Ceuppens, O.P., professor of Old Testament at the Angelicum in Rome, in his *De Historia Primaeva* (1934, p. 133), concludes his discussion on the creation of the first man as follows:

Our conclusion therefore is that in spite of all these declarations [of ecclesiastical authority concerning Leroy, Zahm, and others] not all evolution is to be rejected or condemned. In the formation of the body of Adam, God could have used some organic matter, already animated and living, provided that a special action of God be admitted—an action, namely, distinct from the ordinary laws of divine Providence—by which God so determined this organic, living matter that it was rendered ready for the reception of the human soul itself. Whether or not that organic, living matter was a living animal is a question that belongs not to exegesis but rather to anthropology.

In the twelfth edition of his popular *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae* (1934, II, 325), J. M. Hervé puts down as *communis et vera* the “doctrine of the Fathers and theologians that the body of the first man was formed by a *special* and *immediate* action of God from pre-existing matter, to the exclusion of all organic evolution and transformation of species.” He also considers as theologically *temeraria* the opinion of those who maintain that the body of a brute animal could have evolved to such a stage that it became apt for the reception of the rational soul. His reasons for the censure of rashness are that this opinion contradicts the obvious sense of Scripture and tradition, is practically reprobated by the Roman Congregations, is opposed to the decree of the Biblical Commission concerning those things which touch the foundations of the Christian religion, and finally by implication goes against the dogma of original sin which requires that all men be descended from one human pair (pp. 328 f.).

The first edition of the first volume of *European Civilization, Its Origin and Development*, edited by Edward Eyre (1934), contained a long and scholarly article by M. J. Gruenthaner, S.J., entitled “The World of the Old Testament and Its Historicity.” On page 511, commenting on the account of Adam’s production as given in the second chapter of Genesis, Father Gruenthaner says:

This description of the origin of man absolutely excludes the gross form of the theory of evolution which teaches that man’s body and soul developed from the lower forms of animal or plant life. A milder form of the evolution theory, which leaves the spirituality of the soul intact, endeavors to explain the origin of the human body by supposing that it was gradually evolved into its present form by successive stages from lower animal life. When in the course of this supposed evolution an individual had finally been produced, who had all or nearly all the

bodily properties of man, although without his intelligence, God is assumed to have infused a spiritual soul into this quasi-human being in consequence of which the former vital principle was expelled, and a perfect specimen of the human species resulted. But if we make this assumption, how can we explain the words of Genesis: 'and (God) breathed into his face (literally: nostrils) the breath of life, and man became a living soul' (literally: soul of life, i.e. living being) (Gen. II, 7)? Genesis unmistakably implies that man was not a living being prior to the infusion of the soul, whereas this evolutionary hypothesis proposes the contrary. It is, therefore, irreconcilable with Genesis and must be abandoned.

John Moran, S.J., in his compendious dogmatic textbook, *Alpha et Omega* (Worcester, Mass., 1935, p. 98), qualifies the thesis propounding an immediate operation of God in the formation of the bodies of Adam and Eve as "saltem certa et communis ex communi *Patrum et Theologorum sententia*." Father Moran thinks that the opposite opinion is *non tuta in fide*, and also *temeraria* inasmuch as it is asserted without solid reason against the Fathers and theologians.

Gabriel Huarte, S.J., formerly professor of dogmatic theology in the Gregorian University, published a revised edition of his *De Deo Creante* in 1935. Therein he maintains the traditional view of the theologians concerning the immediate action of God in the production of the body of Adam, and defends that view as being at least common and certain doctrine, which it would be rash to deny (p. 155).

<sup>1</sup> H. Pinard de la Boullaye, S.J., in his conferences preached at Notre Dame de Paris during the Lent of 1936, *Jésus Rédempteur*, requires a special intervention of God in the preparation of Adam's body, but allows as an hypothesis that God's action might have been one which providentially directed the genetic evolution of a single animal or one which put the final changes in an individual animal body, adapting its organs to the functions of rational life (pp. 74, 79, 102, 104, 105). Père Pinard's comments on the decree of the Biblical Commission are worthy of note:

It is clear that respect for the literal meaning [of Genesis] by no means obliges us to take all the expressions in the crudest sense: 'God moulded the slime of the earth, as it were, in His hands. . . . He breathed, as it were, from His mouth a breath of life etc.' It is no less certain that if the Biblical Commission had wished to exclude all idea of evolution it would have expressed itself more categorically (instead of *peculiaris creatio* it would have said, for example, *creatio immediata*). Nevertheless, since it requires for man a *special mode of creation*, we do not see how one could be satisfied with affirming the infusion of a rational soul into a body produced by a process of evolution in every way identical with that which, by hypothesis, would have resulted in the bodies of brute animals. The Commission maintains as a matter of fact that the first woman was formed 'from the first man.'

It thinks, therefore, that there did not exist a body which was suitable for Eve. How can we admit that it tolerates out-and-out transformism for the body of man and rejects it completely for the body of the first woman? The text of the decree . . . does not exclude every form of transformism, but it does not leave room for the most extreme forms (pp. 107 f.).

Louis Pirot, editor of the *Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible*, in the article "Genèse," published in 1936 with the co-operation of P. Cruveilhier, comes out for a strict interpretation of the decree of the Biblical Commission. In tome III, col. 603, we find this statement:

In demanding the admission of the strict historicity of the special creation of man it is evident that the Commission has excluded all transformism for his soul, and one must conclude that it is just as precise in ruling out any such hypothesis as regards the creation of man's body. The formula which it uses makes this clear. This formula excludes transformism for the human body, especially if we consider that the Commission envisaged the narratives which give the impression of a direct creation of the body and the soul of our first parents. Consequently there is no advantage in maintaining an hypothesis which is at least *extra-biblique* and which science is far from ratifying.

The words of Cruveilhier and Pirot are the more noteworthy in view of the fact that the latter in his article on Adam in tome I of the *Supplément*, written in 1928, took a more liberal view of the problem of the origin of Adam's body. In col. 94 we read:

Is all possibility of evolution for the body of man excluded by the indications we have gathered from the Bible, the common teaching of the Fathers, the theologians, and competent ecclesiastical authorities? We do not think so. God in creating Adam may well have used organic matter already animated, but we would not admit this hypothesis except in so far as it would safeguard God's *special action*, of which the Bible speaks, an action distinct from the ordinary laws of Providence and the result of which was to determine the organic and animated matter to become fit for the reception of a soul. As for knowing whether as a matter of fact things happened in this way, i.e., whether God used the body of an animal to form the body of the first man, that is a question which belongs not to exegesis but to anthropology.

As the reader will have observed, M. Pirot virtually retracted this moderately evolutionistic view in the article of 1936. But it should be noted that even in the article of 1928 he insisted on a special intervention of God for the production of the body of Adam as well as for his soul.

A doctoral dissertation on the teaching of Alexander of Hales, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas concerning the origin of Adam's

body was published by William R. Doran, S.T.D., at Mundelein, in 1936. According to this careful study, the four eminent theologians of the thirteenth century were unanimous in holding that God produced the body of the first man from inorganic matter by His own immediate operation. They all held the fact as certain, two of them, St. Albert and St. Thomas, as "pertaining to Catholic faith" (p. 67).

The late Father William J. McGarry, S.J., first editor of *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, in a popular article in *America* (LVII, 1937, 52-54), set forth the various points of Catholic doctrine which must be held touching the question of the origin of Adam. Among these is the "peculiar creation of man." When he explains what he considers to be the "common and certain doctrine" concerning the precise mode of the first man's "peculiar creation," Father McGarry maintains that the matter out of which God immediately formed Adam's body was the dust of the earth. He thinks it would be rash, theologically speaking, to deny this. This is the obvious sense of Genesis 2:7. At the same time he leaves the way open for some form of evolution as an exegetical possibility. "For the Scriptural texts on which the proposition of theology is based, even Gen. II, 7, while obviously informing us of an immediate formation of the body, do not positively, certainly and absolutely exclude intermediate stages between the dirt and the human body of Adam." But if some form of evolution remains a possibility, as far as Scripture is concerned, still it is not probable, according to Father McGarry, at least in the present state of scientific investigation. It will be noticed that Father McGarry does not explicitly insist, as do so many recent theologians, that the point of greatest importance is a special intervening act of God not only for the creation of Adam's soul but also for the formation of his body. But with his "exegetical possibility" he leaves room, it seems, for a position held by many of the theologians we are reviewing, viz., a special intervention of God to prepare for the reception of the soul of Adam matter which may possibly have been living.

The Abbé P. M. Perier, in a book entitled *Le transformisme: l'origine de l'homme et le dogme catholique* (Paris, 1938), offered to the educated laity of France an apologetic study of our problem. He favors the evolutionary origin of Adam's body and thinks it reconcilable with the teachings of revelation (pp. 232-39). God created the soul of the first man. This soul is the cause of the essential and specific mutation in a brute body which makes it a human body. M. Perier quotes as representing his own mind these words of Père R. de Sinéty: "God intervened at the beginning of the human race not only in the creation of the spiritual soul but to organize man in his total and human reality. The infusion of the human soul transformed in the full

sense of the word a pre-existing organism, which would never have arrived of itself, if left to the laws of nature alone, at the corporal type characteristic of man" (*DAFC*, IV, 1840). Thus for M. Perier God is truly the creator of the whole human being, body and soul. Divine intervention was indispensable for Adam's body also. And thereby, he thinks, the demands of the Biblical Commission are satisfied.

*L'Ami du Clergé* (LVI, 1939, 132-36) replies to the query of a correspondent concerning the teaching of the Bible on the direct creation of the body of man. The reply is similar to the opinion of M. Perier just outlined, only perhaps more conservative.

Under figures which depict in a popular way the divine action with regard to man, there is hidden a reality entirely historical and religious, which the Commission asks us to retain, that is, an immediate intervention of God in the production of the body of man. The manner in which the Scripture multiplies, as it were by design, the indications manifesting this direct intervention does not permit us to avoid this conclusion. . . . It is necessary, therefore, to admit, if we wish to respect the tenor of the sacred texts and follow the indications of the Biblical Commission, a divine intervention in the formation of the human body itself. Only, what was this divine intervention? There lies the whole mystery and there also the whole problem. The Biblical Commission is content to point it out; it does not decide it. Some think that the soul was granted to the embryo from the moment of conception. In that case the soul and body would have been produced and united in the same instant of time. Others, on the authority of the biblical account which does not demand a strictly literal interpretation down to the last details, ask how, in what manner the body owes to the earth its constitutive elements. Given the fact that there was not a creation *ex nihilo*, was the matter which God used to produce it inorganic earth or was it this earth after it had taken a living and organized form in the bodies of lower animals? . . . The Church up to the present hour has not either directly or indirectly judged it well to choose between these two tendencies. In the solution of such a delicate problem we should imitate her wisdom and prudence. So long as the special action of God in the formation of the body of the first man is affirmed, so long as this action is safeguarded in subsequent explanations, we should be satisfied and should leave to prehistory and anthropology the complete freedom to develop within the limits we have just set down.

*Verbum Domini*, the monthly commentary issuing from the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome, carried an interesting article in the number of April, 1940, by Gustav E. Closen, S.J. The significance of this article, "De Incarnatione Imaginis Dei," will not escape those who understand the authoritative position of the Biblical Institute and its conservative attitude in matters of scriptural interpretation.

First, Father Closen shows quite clearly that even though there existed scientific evidence of continuous animal evolution toward a human bodily form, the possibility of direct divine intervention could not be excluded with certainty. Secondly, the principle on which the argument for evolution rests, viz., wherever there are like organic forms they either have evolved one from the other or both have descended from a common stock, is proven to be not universally valid by the clear teaching of Scripture concerning the body of Eve. Thirdly, since all varieties of the transformist hypothesis suppose that the first man must have been of the lowest grade from the standpoint of his psychic and intellectual life, all such theories are incompatible with the certain teaching of Holy Scripture concerning the intellectual perfection of Adam.

By transformism, insofar as it regards man, Father Closen means that opinion "which thinks that the human body was *adequately prepared*<sup>3</sup> by natural evolution alone, before it was elevated by the infusion of the spiritual and immortal soul to the concrete living unity of a human being in the full sense." In the light of this definition we can understand the conclusion of the third part of the article:

Therefore the Holy Scripture in describing the first man implicitly excludes the opinion that the body of this man could have been adequately prepared in a non-intellectual being without the intervention of some divine action, which is rightly called extraordinary in as much as it at least exceeds that ordinary concurrence which exists in the usual evolution and change of organisms (p. 111).

It seems clear that such a conclusion would not be incompatible with the theory of some Catholic scientists and theologians that the body of Adam was prepared partly by organic evolution of a brute body and finally and adequately by a special intervention of God. Father Closen does not explicitly say that he admits any such hypothesis, but he seems implicitly to do so in the fourth and last part of his essay. Apart from the force of several of his expressions, it seems that only in the light of such a theory does the suggestion offered in the fourth part become understandable.

This suggestion consists of a comparison between the way in which the human nature of Christ was produced and the mode of the formation of Adam. In the case of our Lord, a long series of kings in the messianic dynasty seemed to be a preparation for the coming of Christ in the flesh. Nevertheless, at the hour of the Incarnation this series was interrupted by an extraordinary and miraculous action of God resulting in the virginal conception of Christ. It was fitting, because of the mystery of the Incarnation

<sup>3</sup>Here and in the remaining quotations from Fr. Closen's article the italics are ours.

of the Eternal Word, that the origin of His human nature should not be left entirely to secondary causes, which in themselves could perhaps have sufficed. Having laid down this evident truth concerning our Lord, Father Closen asks whether, in the case of the preternatural origin of the first man, a sufficient theological reason cannot also be assigned because of which God interrupted the course of secondary causes (p. 114). And a reason is ready at hand. It is found in the dignity of the spiritual nature of man, that nature which makes him an image of God.

That He might attest with a solemn document to the supramundane superiority of man, God did *not fully* give over to the action of natural causes the origin of the material part of this man, but by an active, authoritative, monarchical, and solemn intervention declared that the king of this world and the lord of creation (cf. Gen. I, 28), 'the image of God' (Gen. I, 26 f.), was making a solemn entry into his kingdom (p. 114).

If one asks why God accomplished the formation of the human body *not alone by the natural evolution of secondary causes*, this reply can, it seems, be given. When the Word of God became man in the generation of the Second Adam, many things were left to the natural order and its causes. . . . But by no means everything was committed to natural causes. . . . When the First Adam, prototype of the Second Adam, came into the world, in his generation also very many things doubtless were transmitted to secondary causes and their natural evolution, but not everything. Above all natural evolution of the forms or organisms and beyond the divine concurrence, usual in all the works of nature, the divine activity solemnly intervened to adapt matter to the service of spirit with which it was to be joined in substantial and personal unity. The theological reason of this extraordinary action we see in the theological analogy with the virginal conception and birth of the Second Adam, of whom the First Adam was the prototype and protoparent. We can say of the first man in accord with the theological idea of the first chapters of Genesis: 'He was conceived by the Holy Spirit from virgin matter (*ex materia virgine*), and he was made man.'

Father Charles Boyer, Dean of the School of Theology of the Gregorian University, in the third edition of his *De Deo Creante et Elevante* (Rome, 1940), defends the thesis: "The body of the first man was formed by a special and immediate action of God from pre-existing matter and not by generation from a brute animal." In giving the theological note of this thesis he says:

He is temerarious who denies the special action of God in the formation of the first human body. If, however, there is question only of the manner of explaining this action, even though all instrumentality of a brute animal be not excluded, we can refrain from giving a theological note, *salvo iudicio Ecclesiae*. But the question is to be decided not by scientific considerations alone, but also by philosophical and theological (p. 187).

It should be noted that this doctrinal qualification is less severe than that contained in Father Boyer's second edition (Rome, 1933); for the proposition which in 1940 he does not wish to qualify with a theological note, in 1933 he branded as temerarious: "but he also seems to us to be temerarious who demands other preternatural changes in the brute body for the formation of the human body [other, i.e., than the changes due to the reciprocal causality of the soul and its matter], but at the same time asserts positively that a brute body was the matter from which God formed the human body" (p. 189).

In the new edition of the late Father Lercher's *De Deo Creante*,<sup>4</sup> every form of transformism is rejected as far as the body of Adam is concerned. The reviser classifies three kinds of transformism, viz., rigid, and mitigated, the latter being subdivided into absolute and relative. The first, which holds evolution of both soul and body, is of course against the faith. The second, which was defended by St. George Mivart and Father Zahm, C.S.C., and conceives an evolution of a brute body to such a stage of perfection as to require the infusion of a soul, is rejected as "erroneous" in the technical sense of that term. The third, which differs from the second in this, that the end result of evolution is indeed a disposition for the soul but one which does not demand the soul's infusion, is rejected as being against the common doctrine of theologians.

Among the Catholic scientists holding the third kind of transformism, Lercher's reviser put Père Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., and Father Felix Rüschkamp, S.J. On what grounds this classification is made we cannot say. The article of Père Teilhard referred to contains nothing which would justify it.<sup>5</sup> The article of Father Rüschkamp, on the contrary, would lead one to believe that he does hold absolute transformism in the sense given that term by Lercher's reviser. Father Rüschkamp says in effect: "Hence there was no need for a creative intervention, a special help to transform the human body and brain."<sup>6</sup> It would seem, from the philosophical viewpoint, that if the forces of nature without any special intervention of the Creator could produce the disposition required in matter for the reception of the spiritual soul, then

<sup>4</sup> L. Lercher, S. J., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae* (ed. 3a retractata a Professoribus Pontificiae Facultatis Theologiae Canonicae; Oeniponte et Lipsiae, 1940), Vol. II, *De Deo Uno et Trino, De Deo Creante et Elevante*. The reviser's name is not given, but we are informed by a reliable source that he is Father Franz Lakner, S.J.

<sup>5</sup> *Études*, CCXXXII (1937), 5-13.

<sup>6</sup> *Stimmen der Zeit* (CXXXV, 1939, 385): "Somit erübrigte sich ein schöpferischer Eingriff, eine Nachhilfe zur Unmodellung des Menschenleibes und -hirns." Cf. *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CV (1941), 28-31, where the article of Father Rüschkamp was given publicity.

nature alone could produce an exigency for the infusion of that soul. As far as we can determine, the theory of Father Rüschkamp does not differ from that attributed by the new edition of Lercher to Mivart and Zahm, viz., absolute mitigated transformism.

Lercher's reviser insists at great length on the necessity of a strict interpretation of the words of the Biblical Commission, *peculiaris creatio hominis*. These words must be taken as referring to the formation of the body by God as well as to the creation of the soul. As to the *materia ex qua*, rather than defend a truncated and most unscientific form of evolution, which cannot easily be squared with Scripture and tradition, it is wiser and simpler to admit that God made man from matter that was not previously animated.

The last number of the Strasbourg *Revue des sciences religieuses* to reach us was that of January-April, 1940, just before the first great *Blitzkrieg*. In this issue J. Gross returns to the subject of transformism and theology. We cited him above in connection with Dr. Messenger's book. This time he reviews at length the work of M. Perier. This he criticizes for its unconscious penchant toward a certain "concordism" between Genesis and the supposed stages in the process of the production of Adam. Gross himself seems to be very fond of Junker's ideas which he appraised in his review of 1933.<sup>7</sup> He harks back to those ideas in his judgment on M. Perier:

Here again what is important is the teaching of a religious nature which the biblical narration conceals under an anthropomorphic dress. . . . Would it not be more prudent to retain from this account [Gen. 2: 7] nothing more than the doctrinal content, which seems to be concerned with the nature of man and his relation with God much more than with the physical process of his formation? (p. 191).

Withal, however, Gross seems to subscribe to some sort of special intervention with regard to Adam's body; for he approves the stand of Perier according to which it is allowable to adopt the old opinion of a miraculous formation of the first human organism or to abandon it for the evolutionary idea of a distant preparation of this organism, slow and progressive, by the forces of nature "sustained and directed by divine power" (p. 192).

Father Walter Farrell, O.P., touches lightly on our question in the first volume of his *Companion to the Summa* (p. 268).<sup>8</sup> Father Farrell seems to think that it was an open question for St. Thomas whether God produced the body of Adam immediately by direct divine formation, or mediately, that is, through lower animals to which such power had been specially given.

<sup>7</sup> "Le problème des origines dans la théologie récente." *Revue des sciences religieuses*, XIII (1933), 38-65; see above, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> First published in 1941.

Thomas, as opposed to Augustine, inclines towards the immediate production of the body of the first man by God because of the absence of any sufficient natural factors for such production. But he agrees that there is no philosophical reason militating against the gradual preparation of the material for such a body by other forces acting through powers given them by God.

In contrast to this brief comment, which evidently does not pretend to follow the text of the Angelic Doctor, a very careful and thorough study of St. Thomas' doctrine on the origin of Adam's body appeared in *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* (I, 1940, 382-95). The writer was the author of the doctoral dissertation mentioned above, William R. Doran, S.T.D. From this study it appears quite clearly that St. Thomas held explicitly that God produced the body of Adam by a special and immediate action, and that a purely mediate production without a special intervention on the part of God is contrary to the tenets of St. Thomas' philosophy and theology.

### III

In conclusion we may sum up the findings of our investigation covering, as it does, the principal theological writings on the subject during the last fourteen years. Two points appear quite clearly. The first is that many very respectable authorities among the theologians consider it allowable to hold that the matter which God used in producing Adam's body may have been living matter, even the body of a brute animal. These authorities in general do not positively maintain that God used the body of an animal, but they do not see that such a stand should be prohibited to scientists. The second conclusion, which is of great importance, is that there must have been a special intervention above and beyond the operations of nature to prepare the *materia ex qua* for the infusion of the soul. Even if that matter was an animal body, God's action did not consist merely in the creation and infusion of the soul but also in giving the ultimate preparation necessary to the matter into which the soul was infused. For many theologians, the principal reason why this special action is insisted upon is the decree of the Biblical Commission under date of June 30, 1909.

It must be noted that the insistence of theologians on this special intervention is so positive and so unanimous that it seems fair to conclude that there is no solid probability for the contrary. Hence it seems correct to say that Catholic apologists, publicists, and scientists are not at liberty to assert either in public speech or in published writings that all that is necessary for a Catholic to hold concerning the origin of man is that God created his soul. We must also admit that God intervened in the preparation of Adam's body. There is question here of a serious theological problem.

There is question, too, of the interpretation of a doctrinal decree of one of the teaching organs of the See of Peter. This decree concerns the "fundamentals of the Christian religion." To go against the morally unanimous teaching of theologians in such a weighty matter may rightly be called temerarious in the technical sense of that word.<sup>9</sup>

Granted God's special intervening action, there are theologians who maintain, as we have seen, that the problem of the nature of this action and of the material upon which God worked belongs to the province of science alone, not of theology and exegesis. There are others who contend that the solution of the problem is the function of theology and exegesis only. It seems more reasonable to hold with Father C. Boyer, whom we have quoted above, that the question is to be settled not exclusively by arguments drawn from anthropology but by philosophical and theological principles and data as well.

It may be useful to append a few philosophical considerations concerning the alteration of the matter of Adam's body and its ultimate disposition for the reception of the soul. It may be maintained in accord with the teaching of St. Thomas that this ultimate disposition is from the soul and is effected in the matter in the same instant of time in which the soul is infused.<sup>10</sup> Can it be said, therefore, that one intervening action of God is sufficient, by which the soul is created and infused and the ultimate disposition for the soul produced? In other words, can it be said that we

<sup>9</sup> The reviser of Lercher gives the note *erronea* to the opinion which denies a special intervention for the body and holds that the forces of nature alone produced a disposition in the matter of Adam's body which demanded the infusion of a soul. We have preferred a less strict censure, mindful, however, of these words of Franzelin: "Nota temeritatis, ut diximus, est inferioris gradus, quam praecedens censura erroris. Propositio *in directo suo sensu temeraria*, debet repugnare alicui doctrinae theologicae non solum probabili sed communi ita, ut eam negare fas non sit. Quia est censura inferioris gradus quam *error*, propositio *temeraria* comparata cum *erronea* erit in minus directa oppositione contra veritatem, vel opposita veritati minus stricte nexae cum doctrina fidei. Quia hoc *plus* et *minus* morali aestimatione et theologica prudentia dijudicandum est, nihil mirum quod theologi, nisi forte Ecclesia ipsa definierit gradum, fere fluctuent inter duas has censuras, et propositiones quas alii dicunt erroneas, alii appellant temerarias, atque etiam conjungere soleant utramque ita, ut dicant propositionem *esse erroneam vel saltem temerariam*. Erit itaque propositio *in suo sensu directo temeraria*, quae vel repugnat doctrinae theologicae universaliter et constanter apud pios et doctos receptae tamquam tenendae ex gravibus fundamentis auctoritatis et analogiae fidei, vel aliquid affirmat contrarium approbatis in Ecclesia institutis ac consuetudini licet in se non revelatis" (*De Divina Traditione et Scriptura*, ed. 4a, 1896, p. 145).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Quodlib.* I, q. 4, a. 6; *De Anima*, a. 9, ad 8m; *C. Gent.*, II, 89, ad 6m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 90, a. 4.

need not speak of any other special action of God in the making of Adam than that of the creation and infusion of his soul?

The only reply to this question consistent with the philosophical teachings of St. Thomas is that the action of God creating and infusing the soul is not sufficient. An alteration of the matter which became Adam's body was necessary preceding the production of the ultimate disposition and the infusion of Adam's soul.<sup>11</sup> That alteration was such as to constitute an exigency for the creation of the soul. As such it could come only from human parents or from God. Since there was no human couple to generate Adam, it follows that God must have intervened to effect the prerequisite alteration.<sup>12</sup> This would seem to be the stand we must take if we would be faithful to the principles of Scholastic philosophy as well as to the teaching of the theologians and of the Church on the *peculiaris creatio hominis*.

*St. Mary of the Lake Seminary.*

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<sup>11</sup> *De Anima*, a. 9, ad 16m; *Quodlib. I*, q. 4, a. 6, ad 2m; *Metaphys.*, V, lect. 2 (ed. Cathala, n. 767).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. I, q. 91, a. 2 c; *In II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2m. This argument of St. Thomas is presented clearly by C. Boyer, *De Deo Creante et Elevante* (ed. 3a, 1940), p. 195.