

## CHAPTER 6

### THE ORIGIN OF MAN. THE UNITY OF ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

#### Summary

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#### I

##### A

**The Teaching of the Church.** *The Origin of the Human Soul.* The Church teaches that:

- (1) God directly created the soul of Adam.
- (2) God directly creates every human soul.
- (3) The human soul is spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

The Church has condemned the doctrine that our souls, like our bodies, are derived from our parents,<sup>2</sup> or that they existed before they were united to our bodies.<sup>3</sup>

*The Origin of the Human Body.* The Church requires us to believe in the “special creation” of Adam, i.e., she requires us to believe that Adam came into being through no merely natural process but through some special intervention on the part of God. As we have seen, God created the soul of Adam, as He creates every human soul, immediately out of nothing (*direct creation*). But in forming the body of Adam, He made use of material already existing (*indirect creation*). The Biblical Commission says also it must be held that God by a special act formed the body of Eve from the body of Adam.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, as we shall see below in further detail, if evolution has occurred, it can only mean evolution of the *body*, not of the *soul*.

*The Unity of Origin of the Human Species.* The Church teaches that the present human species is descended from Adam and Eve.<sup>5</sup>

##### B

**The Teaching of Scripture.** The Church is true to Scripture in claiming unique character for the creation of Adam and Eve. The narrative of Genesis represents God as creating all living things, except man, through some virtue which He had communicated to matter: “*Let the earth put forth vegetation ... and fruit trees. ... Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth. ... Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth*” (Gen 1:11, 20, 24). But when the sacred writer comes to the creation of man, he is moved by the Holy Spirit to choose a different form of words: “Then God said ‘*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth*’” (Gen 1:26, 27); and in the further account which he gives in the following chapter, he says, “then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen 2:7). Of the creation

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<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the spirituality of the human soul is implied in the definition pronounced by the Council of Vienne (A.D. 1311-1312) and confirmed by the Fifth Council of Lateran (A.D. 1512-1517): see DS 900, 1440.

<sup>2</sup> DS 1007

<sup>3</sup> DS 456

<sup>4</sup> Decree of 1909: DS 3514

<sup>5</sup> See below, p.\*.

of Eve, he says that the Lord God, having cast Adam into a deep sleep, took from him a rib which He built into a woman (Gen 2:21-22).

REMARKS. (1) THE DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS OF MAN, MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. All creatures, even the very lowest, are a reflection of their Maker. He has made them existing substances, and therefore in some degree like Himself who is the Divine Substance, perfect and self-existing. But to man He has given a further and higher resemblance to Himself. He has made man like to Himself: (a) in his soul, which is a simple and immortal spiritual substance, thus reflecting the Infinite Spirit and His divine simplicity and eternity; (b) in the soul's faculties, intelligence and will, those powers to seek the Truth and to love what is spiritually Good; and (c) as a fitting complement to those great gifts, He has robed man in the mantle of His own Kingship, making him lord of the world. And this royal dignity is not restricted to the soul of man: his body, because of its service in aiding him to acquire and manifest knowledge and goodness, is destined by God for union with the soul in eternal life. The Scripture narrative brings out all this in sharp relief, and reason approves, for no one can dispute the pre-eminence and uniqueness of man among created things. - In the light of the Incarnation, we can discern a further way in which man is made in the image of God: St Paul says, "Adam was a type of the One who was to come."<sup>6</sup> God became man, and so every human person is made *in the image of God Incarnate*, for Jesus Christ, a member of our human race, is our elder Brother,<sup>7</sup> like unto us, and we unto Him.

Appreciating the dignity of man made in the image of God, we can appreciate the heinousness of the sin of murder (deliberate killing of an innocent) in any form: homicide, abortion, infanticide, or euthanasia. Human life is a sacred gift from God. No one may take his own life or that of another. From conception until death, innocent human life deserves respect and the protection of law. "The prohibition of murder does not cancel the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defence is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good."<sup>8</sup> However, sacred though life is, it is not the *supreme* good. We are not bound to do *everything* to save our life or that of another: in serious illness, one is not bound to accept expensive and burdensome treatments;<sup>9</sup> in grave need, one may risk one's life to help others, or even make the supreme sacrifice. The Church honours the martyrs because they sacrificed their lives rather than give up greater and higher goods: the Faith, and union with God. The good of human life is ordained unto eternal life.

(2) THE EXACT METHOD OF CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN. The Church's Magisterium does not bind us to the immediate and obvious literal sense. The description of God as *breathing on* a human image of clay, or as *building up* or *closing up* a woman from a part of Adam's body, need not be taken according to a slavishly literal interpretation. It expresses in vivid and popular form the truth that the Divine Omnipotence acted in some special way on a portion of matter to make it a fitting receptacle for the soul of Adam, and that it multiplied, in a manner utterly mysterious, some part of Adam's body to make the body of Eve. We may illustrate, perhaps obscurely, from the multiplication of a single living cell which ultimately becomes a complete human body. The body of Eve was not built up by the mere addition of extraneous matter. This is clear from the words spoken by Adam when God brought her to him: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

(3) THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF THE TEXT. Since Eve was derived from Adam, it follows that he is the fountain-head of the whole human race. He is thus a type, i.e., a prophetic image, of Christ, as Eve is a type of the Church. Our physical life we trace to Adam; our spiritual life we trace to Christ. Eve was the spouse of Adam; the Church is the spouse of Christ. Through Adam and Eve, we were born into the family of man; through Christ and His Church, we were born into the family of God. The Fathers compare the sleeping Adam to the dead Christ on the Cross, and the origin of Eve to the origin of the Church: as Eve came from the side of Adam, so did the Church come from the side of Christ. They regard the flow of blood and water that gushed forth at the thrust of the soldier's spear as representing the final payment made by Christ for the setting up of His Church, and as expressing the cleansing and nourishing power of her Sacraments. Thus the words of Genesis have not only a

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<sup>6</sup> Rom 5:14. "Type" here means pre-figuring image.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rom 8:29.

<sup>8</sup> CCC 2321

<sup>9</sup> cf. CCC 2278.

literal but a typological or spiritual meaning as well. (It is not legitimate to hold that the words of Genesis should be interpreted *only* in a spiritual sense).

## C

**Atheistic evolutionists and the origin of the human soul.** Atheistic or agnostic evolutionists say that man has derived his principle of life, his soul, from animals. This would raise beasts to the level of man, or lower man to the level of beasts. In the first alternative, beasts would be like children with brains seriously injured; they would possess rationality but be unable to manifest it, and it would be the sin of murder to kill them. In the second alternative, man would not have a spiritual soul. He would not be responsible to God for his actions; he would live and behave like a savage creature of the jungle, acknowledging no other man's right to life or property. His one governing principle would be, 'might is right and woe to the weak.' The absurdity of such repellent views is exposed by their consequences.

In *Apologetics*, we proved from reason that man has a spiritual soul (Chapter 2), and that consequently he is able to understand the great truths and commands of Natural Religion (Ch. 3). His spiritual soul sets him apart from the other animals. The chasm between him and them is a chasm that cannot be bridged. Human ingenuity has never succeeded, and never will succeed, in getting the cleverest animal to grasp general ideas and to hold a rational conversation with us by signs. We hear now and then of "inventive animals" which are said to deliberate and choose means for the attainment of an end. It is stated, e.g., that an untrained chimpanzee fitted one stick into the hollow of another in order to get a banana which was out of reach of either stick by itself. But this proves nothing. Wonderful things are also done by very young children while still unable to reason, which shows that no process of reasoning is required. Adults also while fumbling without plan or purpose have often chanced on a useful discovery. The main argument, however, against the "inventive animals" has already been given, namely, that they cannot be taught to speak to us by signs or symbols; they never reach the level of education to which deaf and dumb children can be brought. Animal communication consists only in signifying a present feeling, passion or desire, while men are able to transmit ideas and concepts relating to the past, present or future. No one animal could ever communicate to another animal the story of its life. An animal is totally immersed in its environment, while man can transcend his situation.<sup>10</sup>

Darwin, who reduced man to the level of beasts, was depressed by the implications of his theory of evolution. He said, "With me the horrid doubt always arises, whether the convictions of man's mind which has been developed from the mind of lower animals are of any value or at all trustworthy".<sup>11</sup> Therefore, according to him, if we are nothing but improved beasts, we are not sure of any of our convictions, not sure of our responsibility for our actions, not sure even that the theory of evolution is true! He should have gone a little further and said that a hypothesis issuing in such conclusions is self-destructive and should be abandoned. His words betray a vague suspicion that truth and science are unattainable to our senses and can be reached only through the exercise of some higher power in us. Darwinism, in its atheistic form, has had a most pernicious influence on morals.

## D

**Theistic evolutionists and the origin of the human body.** Theistic evolutionists hold that the first man was evolved, or rather, his body developed, from some ape-like creature. As yet, the Church has not ruled this out as contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

**Objections and difficulties connected with evolution of the human body.** The arguments against the general theory of evolution apply also to man's alleged descent from ape-like creatures. They are given in Ch. 5. Against the evolution of man's body in particular, we may begin by setting out the dishonesty and desperation that have been at work in attempts to prove it.

*The 'missing link'.* Darwinism gave rise to the search for the 'missing link': not one link, however, but very many would be necessary to link the ape to man—and to date not a single one has been found. The fossil record shows gaps and discontinuities. The attempts to find links between man and other primates have failed. Two of the best-known 'discoveries' promoted as 'evidence' of man's evolution were later exposed as frauds: the famous "Piltdown man" of 1912-15, and "Nebraska man" of 1922. Piltdown man was cited in text-books and articles for forty years as evidence of man's descent from apes.<sup>12</sup> The skull was of a modern man, the jaw that of a recent ape, and the teeth had been filed down to make them look like human teeth. Nebraska 'man' was a tooth, the tooth of a peccary, an extinct wild pig. From one tooth, however, scientists managed to draw an entire man with distinctive features! Since then, other 'missing links', "Neanderthal man", the "Australopithecines",

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. p.\*\*.

<sup>11</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, D. Appleton and Co., N.Y. 1898, Vol. I, p.316, cf. p.313.

<sup>12</sup> Ph. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, Regnery Gateway, Washington D.C. 1991, pp.5, 6, 80

“Java man” and “Peking man”, once all presented as wonderful scientific discoveries, have all had to be discarded or re-classified in the light of prolonged scrutiny. “Java man”, found in 1891, is now recognised to be a gibbon, and its discoverer Eugene Dubois admitted forty years later that he had withheld parts of other thigh bones of gibbons found in the same area. “Peking man” is now considered by many experts to be the remains of apes. “Ramapithecus” was cited from 1961 to 1977 as an ape-like ancestor of man. The ‘ancestor’ consisted of a mere handful of teeth and jaw fragments, and not even a portion of the skull. It is now agreed to be from an ape.<sup>13</sup>

*Popular presentation and intellectual honesty.* The series of neat drawings that so commonly appear in textbooks showing an ape slowly move upright and modify his shape and features until *Homo sapiens* (rational man) appears, is *nothing but a series of imaginary drawings*, since the so-called ‘missing links’ are still missing! Such drawings in books, and similar displays in museums, have had a powerful impact on the public imagination, but are simply dishonest as a depiction of known history. Even the very phrase ‘missing link’ implies that we *know* of the link, only that we cannot find it. A theory may quite reasonably direct our investigations, so that we search for confirming evidence, but until the evidence is found, scientists must speak of their *theory* of evolution, not of the *fact*. A detective does not speak of a man under investigation as “the criminal”, but as “the suspect”. When the suspect is arrested, he becomes “the accused”; when he is held and tried, he is “the defendant”, uncertain of the outcome, but he is not “the convicted criminal” until the evidence has been presented and affirmative judgement has been given. Likewise, evolution remains a theory of scientific investigators, a hypothesis directing their research, but they cannot call a theory a proven fact until the indisputable evidence, as opposed to imaginary drawings, is produced. “The important claim of Darwinism is not that relationships exist, but that those relationships were produced by a naturalistic process in which parent species were gradually transformed into quite different descendant forms through long branches (or even thick bushes) of transitional intermediates, without intervention by any Creator or other non-naturalistic mechanism. If Darwinism so defined is false then we do not have any important scientific information about how life arrived at its present complexity and diversity, and we cannot turn ignorance into information by calling it evolution.”<sup>14</sup>

*Scientists are not agreed on evolution.* Disbelief in evolution is not unscientific. Some prominent scientists of the past and present who have openly stated their opposition to it on scientific grounds are: Prof. Louis Bounoure, Director of Research at the National Centre of Scientific Research, France; Sir Ernst Chain, Nobel Prize winner along with Fleming and Florey for penicillin; Prof. Albert Fleishman, Zoology and Comparative Anatomy, Earlangen University, Germany; Sir Ambrose Fleming, physicist, inventor of the thermionic valve; Dr Paul Lemoine, President of the Geological Society of France, an editor of the French Encyclopaedia; Prof. Heribert Nilsson, Swedish geneticist, Lund University; Prof. W.R. Thompson of Canada, Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control; Roberto Fondi, Professor of Paleontology, University of Siena, Italy.

*Behind any theory about the origin of species: the origin of life itself.* Atheistic evolution requires that all the necessary elements of life were there at the beginning of time. Still, given all the necessary chemical compounds, this does not explain how life began: scientists employing the full power of their intelligence and techniques cannot produce even the simplest forms of life. How then could unguided, mindless matter have done so? To suppose that lifeless matter achieved life by itself is to suppose as great a miracle as any. English scientist and science fiction writer Sir Fred Hoyle says, “A junkyard contains all the bits and pieces of a Boeing 747, dismembered and in disarray. A whirlwind happens to blow through the yard. What is the chance that after its passage a fully assembled 747, ready to fly, will be found standing there? So small as to be negligible, even if a tornado were to blow through enough junkyards to fill the whole Universe.”<sup>15</sup>

Dr Michael Denton expresses it thus: “The intuitive feeling that pure chance could never have achieved the degree of complexity and ingenuity so ubiquitous in nature has been a continuing source of scepticism ever since the publication of *The Origin of Species*; and throughout the past century there has always existed a significant minority of first-rate biologists who have never been able to bring themselves to accept the validity of Darwinian claims... Perhaps in no other area of modern biology is the challenge posed by the extreme complexity and ingenuity of biological adaptations more apparent than in the fascinating new molecular world of the cell. ... To grasp the reality of life as it has been revealed by molecular biology, we must magnify a cell a thousand million times until it is twenty kilometres in diameter and resembles a giant airship large enough to cover a great city like London or New York. What we would then see would be an object of unparalleled complexity and adaptive design. On the surface of the cell we would see millions of openings, like the port holes of a vast space ship, opening and closing to allow a continual stream of materials to flow in and out. If we were to enter one of these openings we would find ourselves in a world of supreme technology and bewildering complexity. We would see endless highly organized corridors and conduits branching in every direction away from the perimeter of the cell, some leading to the central memory bank in the nucleus and others to assembly

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<sup>13</sup> Walt Brown, *In the Beginning*, Center for Scientific Creation, Phoenix, U.S.A. 1995, pp.11, 50

<sup>14</sup> Johnson, p.89

<sup>15</sup> *The Intelligent Universe*, Michael Joseph, London 1983, p.19

plants and processing units. We would see that nearly every feature of our own advanced machines had its analogue in the cell: artificial languages and their decoding systems, memory banks for information storage and retrieval, elegant control systems regulating the automated assembly of parts and components, error fail-safe and proof-reading devices utilized for quality control, assembly processes involving the principle of prefabrication and modular construction. In fact, so deep would be the feeling of *déjà-vu*, so persuasive the analogy, that much of the terminology we would use to describe this fascinating molecular reality would be borrowed from the world of late twentieth-century technology. What we would be witnessing would be an object resembling an immense automated factory, a factory larger than a city and carrying out almost as many unique functions as all the manufacturing activities of man on earth. However, it would be a factory which would have one capacity not equalled in any of our own most advanced machines, for it would be capable of replicating its entire structure within a matter of a few hours. To witness such an act at a magnification of one thousand million times would be an awe-inspiring spectacle... Is it really credible that random processes could have constructed a reality, the smallest element of which—a functional protein or gene—is complex beyond our own creative capacities, a reality which is the very antithesis of chance, which excels in every sense anything produced by the intelligence of man?"<sup>16</sup> Belief in atheistic evolution requires far more faith than belief in God.

**The alternative to evolution.** Evolutionists say: "Admitting that we have not succeeded as yet in explaining away the differences between man and the ape, we maintain that the similarities cannot be accounted for *physically* except on the hypothesis of evolution—which we must hold, because there is no rival in the field." Their opponents can reply: "The *assumption* of evolutionists that the origin of man can, and must, be traced to *physical* causes may have to be rejected as quite unsound. Scientists may in course of time come to the conclusion that no physical cause can be assigned for the origin of man, and that it is a mystery as inscrutable as the origin of matter or the origin of life. But perhaps it is not altogether fanciful to conceive that, while recognising the mystery of man's origin, they may ultimately succeed in demonstrating that the precise formation of man's body—his brain and nervous system, the organs of sense and all the organs, together with the mechanism of bone and muscle—is not merely in exact harmony with his requirements as a rational animal, but is the *only* possible formation it could have received to make it fit in with the laws of nature. If it is ever given to us to understand the whole scheme of creation, we may find that all the diversified forms of animate and inanimate matter, and all the laws that govern them, fit together, minister to one another, and constitute a unity as perfect and harmonious as the deductions of mathematical science. Thus there would be a scientific reason for stating that God made man as he is, as a necessary consequence of the laws which He Himself had imposed on the world—and the transition to the correct doctrine that 'God made the world for man's use and benefit' would be easy. Some scientists have remarked that it looks as if the world had been prepared for man's coming."

As musical compositions, though independently written, will show a resemblance because of their conformity with the same laws of harmony, so too man and the other animals *must be somewhat alike* because of their adaptation to the same system of physical and chemical laws. But similarities, of themselves, do not mean that one came from the other, or that both came from a common ancestor. They do, however, argue for a common Designer.

The evolutionists whose words are paraphrased above speak of evolution as a *hypothesis*. That is the designation which the scrupulous investigator employs. It is only the presumptuous who represent it as a scientifically established truth.

## E

### **The attitude of the Church on evolution of the human body.**

(1) The teaching of the Church on the origin of the human body has been given above, I. A. Following her ordinary practice, she takes the words of Holy Scripture (Gen 1 & 2) in their obvious sense, until the necessity arises of seeking a different interpretation. In the case before us, the necessity would arise only if it were proved on strict historical evidence that Adam was born of a lower animal—which is surely a ludicrous supposition, since there could be no historical evidence without contemporary human witnesses. But though the proof is inconceivable, the *theory* of the evolutionary origin of his body does not, in itself, involve an absolute impossibility, and, so far, has not been publicly and explicitly condemned by the Church. Pope John Paul II distinguished between

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<sup>16</sup> *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Burnett Books, G.B.; Adler & Adler, U.S.A., 1985, pp.327-8-9, 342

the possibility of the evolution of man's *body*, and the impossibility of evolution of the *soul*.<sup>17</sup> He referred to Pope Pius XII, who in 1950 directed, "the teaching of the Church leaves the doctrine of evolution an open question, as long as it confines its speculations to the development, from other living matter already in existence, of the human *body*. (That *souls* are immediately created by God is a view which the Catholic faith imposes on us). In the present state of the scientific and theological disciplines, this question may be legitimately canvassed by research, and by discussion between experts in both fields. At the same time, the reasons for and against either view must be weighed and adjudged with all seriousness, fairness, and restraint; and all must be ready to accept the judgement of the Church, as being entrusted by Christ with the office of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures authentically and of guarding the dogmas of the faith. There are some, however, who take rash advantage of this liberty of debate, by treating the subject as if the whole matter were closed—as if the discoveries hitherto made, and the arguments based on them, were sufficiently certain to prove, beyond doubt, the development of the human body from other living matter already in existence. They forget, too, that there are certain references to the subject in the sources of divine revelation, which call for the greatest caution and prudence in discussing it."<sup>18</sup> Pope John Paul II summarised his predecessor thus: "Pius XII added two methodological conditions: that this opinion should not be adopted as though it were a certain and proven doctrine, and as though one could totally prescind from [i.e., ignore] Revelation with regard to the questions it raises."<sup>19</sup>

(2) The Church does not interfere with the investigations of Catholic biologists, who, as loyal members of hers, are always ready to accept her guidance and decisions. She allows them to conjecture, observe and experiment as they please. Since all truth is from God, she welcomes every truth they may incidentally discover, even in pursuit of a theory such as the evolution of the human body. She blesses their work, and imposes no restriction on them except the restriction imposed by physical science itself, namely, that they are not to confound guesses and probabilities with conclusive demonstration.

We need not delay over the fantastic idea that God might at some time or other give a private revelation affirming or denying the evolutionary origin of the body of Adam. He gives private revelations to encourage devotion, but the Church does not draw upon them to settle disputes about the faith. (On Private Revelations, see p.\*\*\*).

## II

**The unity of origin of the human species.** THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH. The Church teaches that the present human species is descended from Adam and Eve. Such, indeed, is the obvious sense of Sacred Scripture: before the creation of Adam, "there was no man to till the ground";<sup>20</sup> Eve is "the mother of all the living".<sup>21</sup> St Paul speaks of "the first man Adam" in contrast with Jesus, the new Adam.<sup>22</sup> He says, "sin came into the world through one man".<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the doctrines of Original Sin and the Redemption require us to believe that we are all sprung from Adam: we sinned in Adam, because he was our parent; and, because we inherited his sin, we had need of Redemption. Seven times in Romans 5:12-19, St Paul speaks of Adam as "one man". The Council of Trent's solemn decree on Original Sin begins by speaking of the sin of "the first man Adam".<sup>24</sup>

Belief in the descent of all men from one man Adam is called 'monogenism'. It is upheld in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>25</sup> 'Polygenism' (belief in several original ancestors) is contrary to the teaching of the Church. Pius XII declared, "Christ's faithful cannot embrace a theory which involves the existence, after Adam's time, of some earthly race of men, truly so called, who were not descended from him as the ancestor of all men, or else supposes that Adam was the name given to a multiplicity of original ancestors."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 1996

<sup>18</sup> *Humani Generis*, 1950: DS 3896

<sup>19</sup> Message to Pont. Acad. of Sciences, 1996

<sup>20</sup> Gen 2:5

<sup>21</sup> Gen 3:20

<sup>22</sup> 1 Cor 15:45, 47. Cf. 1 Tim 2:13; Lk 3:38; Acts 17:26.

<sup>23</sup> Rom 5:12

<sup>24</sup> DS 1511

<sup>25</sup> CCC 360, 374, 375, 376, 379, 390, 391, 404

<sup>26</sup> *Humani Generis*, 1950: DS 3897, reference given in footnote to CCC 390.

WHAT SCIENTISTS SAY. (1) Scientists have not proved the multiple origin of the existing human species. The vague conjectures in which a few of them indulge need not be considered. (2) The fact that all men all over the world, even the least civilised, have the gift of speech and the power to grasp intellectual and moral truths, tends to show that we are all members of the same family, and is, therefore, fully consistent with the doctrine revealed to us that we are descended from a single pair of ancestors. This argument, which is confirmed by world-wide similarities in ancient traditions and folklore, is not affected by differences of race and language. Though there is no certainty yet as to how the different races originated, all races are true to a common type, despite their definite varieties and considerable differences. The human races are all capable of breeding with one another. Difference in language is due chiefly to geographical separation. As the study of philology and linguistics advances, the kinship is gradually being established between all languages, even between those which at one time were thought to be totally unrelated. The more recent researches into human genetic structure would very much favour the common origin of the human race.

Note. A *species* is a group which has something in common with other groups, but is distinguished from them by something which it alone can possess. Mankind is a species. Man is defined as a rational animal. The word “animal” tells us what he has in common with other living creatures; the word “rational” tells us what is exclusively his. From this definition of species, it is clear that no species shades off into another: e.g., there cannot be such things as “three-quarters-brute, one-quarter-man”, “half-brute, half-man”, “one-quarter-brute, three-quarters-man”. If a creature is a brute, it is not a man; if it is a man, it is not a brute.

*Difficulty*: “If Adam and Eve had only Cain and Abel, where did everyone else come from?” *Reply*: The account in Genesis does not purport to list all their children by name, but makes it clear that there were others: Gen 4:17 mentions that Cain had a wife. Gen 4:25 mentions the birth of Seth, another son of Adam and Eve. 4:26 mentions Seth’s son, Enosh. Finally, 5:4 says, “Adam ... had other sons and daughters.”

**The antiquity of the human species.** The age of the human race is a question on which the Church has never given any decision, and may be left to the investigation of scientists. The different manuscripts of Genesis vary as to the time-span from Adam to Christ: the Hebrew Massoretic text gives c. 4,117 years; Samaritan, c. 4,418; Septuagint, c. 5,613. The old Roman Martyrology at December 25th gives the figure of 5,199 years. The Fathers vary with numbers up to 6,000.<sup>27</sup>

It is now generally admitted that the Bible teaches nothing definite on the matter. It was probably not the Divine Will to transmit to us any exact information on a matter that has no bearing on faith or morals.

The years from Adam to Christ fall into two periods: (1) from Adam to Moses, and (2) from Moses to Christ. The latter period, as we know from secular as well as sacred sources, can be fixed as 1,500 years in round numbers. The length of the earlier period however remains uncertain. Formerly it was computed as approximately 2,500 years, which added to 1,500 would give a total of 4000 B.C., but the computation is open to question. It correctly assumed a period of about 200 years to have elapsed from the death of Joseph, son of Jacob, to the appointment of Moses as leader of the Hebrew race, but was probably astray in allowing no more than 2,300 years for the patriarchs from Adam to Joseph. The Bible (Gen. 5, 11, and later chapters) appears to give a complete genealogy of the patriarchs with the age of each at the birth of his son, the next in the line. Thus, Adam at the age of 130 begets Seth; Seth at the age of 105 years begets Enosh; and so on down to Joseph, son of Jacob. By adding these figures together, a total of 2,300 (approximately) was obtained—but the calculation was based on two questionable assumptions: (1) that the ages of the patriarchs are correctly given in existing texts of the Bible, (2) that the line of patriarchs is complete, so that there are no gaps in the list. The possibility of gaps is suggested by what we read in some parts of the Old Testament: a man described in one passage as ‘the son’ of another is referred to later on as merely a remote descendant. This method of description is found in the New Testament also: Our Lord is spoken of as the ‘Son of David,’ although David preceded Him by a thousand years.

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<sup>27</sup> *Sacrae Theologiae Summa* by a team of Spanish Jesuits, vol. II, tract. II, par. 555, p.666, B.A.C., Madrid 1952