

THE POPE AND THE TURKEYS

Why does the Pope waste his time with turkeys—with, to take two at random, Hans Küng and Stephen Hawking? One is a heretic *de facto*, if not *de jure*; the other a professed atheist/agnostic. Küng's abandonment of theological principle is well known, as is the failure of the Church's hierarchy formally to condemn him. Hawking has bodily defects over which he has triumphed in admirable fashion, and intellectual defects which he has yet failed to master. Like all atheists Hawking is a materialist; like many materialists he follows the facile course of pretending to solve the great problems *de ente et essentia* by turning his back on them, a device as old as David Hume.

Now, it may be argued, Christ died for all men and even for the turkeys among them, and the Pope has a duty even to the turkeys. But you don't save turkeys by descending to the fowl yard; you save them by, well... talking turkey to them.

The current prelates of God's Holy Church are infected with a sort of bleeding heart mentality: if we be nice to turkeys (they seem to think) the turkeys will be nice in return. But all the turkeys do is laugh at them. Christ did not die that His followers might be nice to turkeys. He died that men might be converted from their folly and brought to heaven. That requires telling them to their faces that they are wrong.

Talking of turkeys leads us to consider that anachronism, the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*.¹ A great number of its members are atheists; and the balance apparently cannot think straight. An atheist is, by definition, a man in error—Almighty God is more blunt: He calls the atheist "a fool"². And if a learned man cannot think straight, why provide him with some sort of legitimacy? Whenever the Pope comes to address the *Academy*, he is faced with a sea of beaky faces with shaking wattles. What on earth is the present benefit of the institution to the Church?

When Achille Rati, Pius XI, instituted the *Academy* in 1936, he intended it to serve the interests of the Church beneath the overarching direction of the Church's philosophy, the one philosophy on earth that answers the fundamental questions of essence and existence—St Thomas's redaction of the thought of the great pagan, Aristotle. The Church had long since adopted St Thomas's teachings as her own and, although the hierarchy has waxed and waned in its enthusiasm for his doctrine down the centuries, that philosophy was firmly established throughout the Church's universities and seminaries in the 1930s. It was inconceivable to Rati that any member of the *Academy* might ignore it, or mock it. But respect for the Church's philosophy went out the window after the Second Vatican Council when Modernist heretics were allowed to work their havoc in the Church's household.

¹ The suggestion is that it should be renamed, *The Academy of Pontificating Scientists*.

² Psalm 13

Consistent with “the spirit of Vatican II” the philosophy of St Thomas was reduced thereafter to a curiosity, eulogised on appropriate anniversaries but otherwise ignored by the vast majority of bishops and theologians.³ The nadir of its fortunes occurred in an encyclical written by a philosophically incompetent Pope who contradicted the teachings of his predecessors by denying the Church even had a philosophy, for which proposition he claimed, falsely, the teaching of Pius XII in *Humani Generis* as authority.⁴

Where has that left us now the sun has risen on the 21st century? The prelates of the Church have lost the sense of the Church’s wisdom in philosophical matters. Indeed, they seem largely unaware of its existence. Confusing wisdom with mere knowledge (and experimental knowledge at that) they accord honour to scientists whose grasp of reality is confined to the observable, each in his narrow field of expertise, each besotted with materialism and blindly accepting—because materialism incurs the parallel defect of subjectivism—the follies of every passing ideology. Modern scientists have not the slightest grasp of the universality of the truth of men like Augustine and Aquinas, or even of the great pagans, Aristotle and Plato. They are like kiddies bickering with each other around a toy box.

The proof of the folly to which the Church’s prelates have descended is to be found in the title of a conference held at the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences* late last year—“Scientific insights into the evolution of the universe and of life”. We set out in an appendix a report on this conference by the retired Professor of Genetics, Maciej Giertych, a man who has long opposed the compulsory teaching of “evolution”. A caveat should be entered, however, on what he has to say. When he speaks of “the Church” he is confusing the Catholic Church with her hierarchy and members. The Church knows the truth because she is of God: it is her hierarchy and members who are ignorant of it. This understood, his report reveals a number of matters of interest.

First, it is clear that the Church’s current hierarchy is incapable of identifying *ideology* for what it is; that is, incapable of recognising a body of thought founded not on reality, but on *someone’s idea about* reality. For of such is that sacred cow, Darwinian evolutionary theory. It is inappropriate that a body so closely associated with the Church should be permitted to treat as truth what is nothing more than ideology. Secondly, because they are (to a man) committed to that ideology, the much lauded members of the *Academy* are incapable of bringing a critical faculty to bear upon it. Thirdly (and demonstrative of the fact what we are talking about is in fact *ideology*) is the express admission in the course of the conference that acceptance of Darwinian evolutionary theory involves an act of faith. The materialist will tell you that he begins his ruminations with a fact; that he is a realist. He lies. He begins with a prejudice. Darwinianism is a belief system, and its adherents are ‘believers’!

³ Cf. *The Loss of Metaphysics* at http://www.superflumina.org/metaphysics.html#_ftnref37

⁴ The Pope was John Paul II; the encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*. Cf. the author’s paper, *The Loss of Metaphysics* at http://www.superflumina.org/metaphysics.html#_ftnref37, footnote 34.

Perhaps the most significant matter in Maciej Giertych's report is the fact that Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, has resiled from the position he took not two years ago in his book *Chance or Purpose?* in favour of Darwinianism.⁵ Here, at least, we can remark some progress.

The Church already has in Divine revelation and in her metaphysics the answers to the many issues respecting creation, and the order in which it occurred. Contrary to belief, these are not contradicted, but confirmed, by scientific discoveries.⁶ Recourse to ideology to buttress that teaching is unnecessary. The theory of "evolution", as the members of the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences* have demonstrated, is for turkeys.

Michael Baker

7th January 2009 — *St Raymond of Peñafort (Master General of the Dominican Order)*

APPENDIX

Extract from a report by retired Professor Genetics, Maciej Giertych, on his experiences with the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*.

At the turn of October and November the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) met in Rome to discuss: 'Scientific-insights into the evolution of the universe and of life'. When I heard about this session I searched out addresses of all the members of PAS (among them about one-third are Nobel prize laureates) and sent them my booklet *Teaching on evolution in European schools*, together with a cover letter explaining who I am and expressing the hope that the enclosed booklet would prove useful in connection with the session they were about to participate in. Some of the academicians sent me a short thank-you letter; however the Chancellor of the Academy, Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, wrote a cordial longer letter. I responded, asking him whether any part of the session would be open to the public and if not, whether it would be possible to obtain a personal invitation. He agreed that I could come and sit in on the session as an observer, without the right to speak. And thus I became a participant in the Oct. 31st-Nov. 4th session of the PAS. I was unable to participate in the official discussions, however I used all the intermissions for conversations with the participants and I made my booklet available in English to all who were interested.

My observations from this extraordinary experience are quite disturbing. All the academicians are scientists of the highest level and the papers presented were truly of top quality. However, unfortunately many of the academicians are atheists. The remainder are supporters of the theory of evolution but allow for the possibility of God's influence on its course. In all the discussions after the papers, the main confrontation was between atheists and theists on whether God is necessary or redundant in explaining evolutionary processes. Among the speakers and polemicists there was not a single critic of the theory of evolution.

The media were not very happy that in his speech to the PAS Pope Benedict XVI did not express support for the theory of evolution. Instead they dwelled on the kind welcome

⁵ Cf. *Cardinal Schonborn's Chance or Purpose?* at http://www.superflumina.org/schonborn_chance_purpose.html

⁶ See the author's texts, *Atheism's Great Cosmogenic Myth*, *Shaking the Darwinian Foundations*, and *Cardinal Schonborn's Chance or Purpose?* all at the website <http://www.superflumina.org/index.html>

shown by the Pope to Prof. Stephen W. Hawking and on the latter's paper. Hawking is an invalid in a wheelchair who communicates through a speech synthesizer. In his paper he analysed the development of human thought about the origins of the universe. Hawking considers questions about origins as absurd as asking about the edge of the earth, assuming it is flat, or about the southerly direction on the South Pole.

He believes that it is possible to answer questions "Why are we here?" or "Where did we come from?" within the limits of natural sciences. His agnostic conclusion became the main media message of the whole conference.

Many contributions treated processes leading to race formation as steps in evolution. However, races are genetically poorer than the populations from which they arose. Evolution requires an increase in genetic information and not the loss of it. It requires new functions and organs. None of the papers presented showed any result supporting the evolutionary postulate, yet all of them treated evolution as an unquestioned paradigm.

From the theistic side the most interesting paper was presented by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn (not a member of the academy). He summarised the statements on evolution made so far by Benedict XVI (and Cardinal Ratzinger). In the discussion that followed Schönborn forcefully defended the view of the Pope and his own that God is not to be called in only to fill gaps in the evolutionary process. He supervises the totality of the development of the World. To a direct question, whether he believes in evolution, Schönborn answered that for the theory to be proven, still much is lacking. I sat in silence. At intermissions I tried to discuss privately with the participants of the session. The conference lacked even a single paper that would be critical of the theory of evolution from the scientific point of view. Those present, primarily retirees, had never heard of scientific research that contradicted the theory of evolution. Because of the makeup of the group of PAS speakers selected for the conference, the Church also did not hear about this research.

I understand that the Church wants to know what the world of science is proposing, also what the atheists propose. However, by setting up a conference in such a way as this recent forum, the Church will never be informed about the full picture. It will hear only the voices of its critics (known on a daily basis from a multitude of sources). These critics did not receive a response against which they would have to defend themselves with scientific arguments. They received only an assurance that God has something to do with the development of the world, a position which they can easily reject as an expression of religious fundamentalism that they despise.

Unfortunately, a similar session planned for March by the Pontifical Council for Culture is also likely to be manned by atheistic and theistic supporters of evolution.

In parallel with the PAS conference on the topic of evolution there was a one day (Nov. 3rd) symposium at the Sapienza University in Rome entitled "A Scientific Critique of Evolution". I was one of the speakers at this session. The aim of the conference was to present scientific results that contradict the Darwinian theory of evolution. Two Indian bishops attended it. Unfortunately the major media did not care to notice this session. There was my interview with Vatican Radio, in which I discussed both of the sessions in which I participated, and a few notes in some niche publications.

Sincerely,

Maciej Giertych

Prof. dr. hab. Maciej Giertych • ul. Bialoboka 4 • 62-035 Kórnik • Poland