



About the author . . .

MONSIGNOR LEO S. SCHUMACHER, Dean of the Philosophy Department at Borromeo Seminary in Cleveland, has had an extremely interesting academic career.

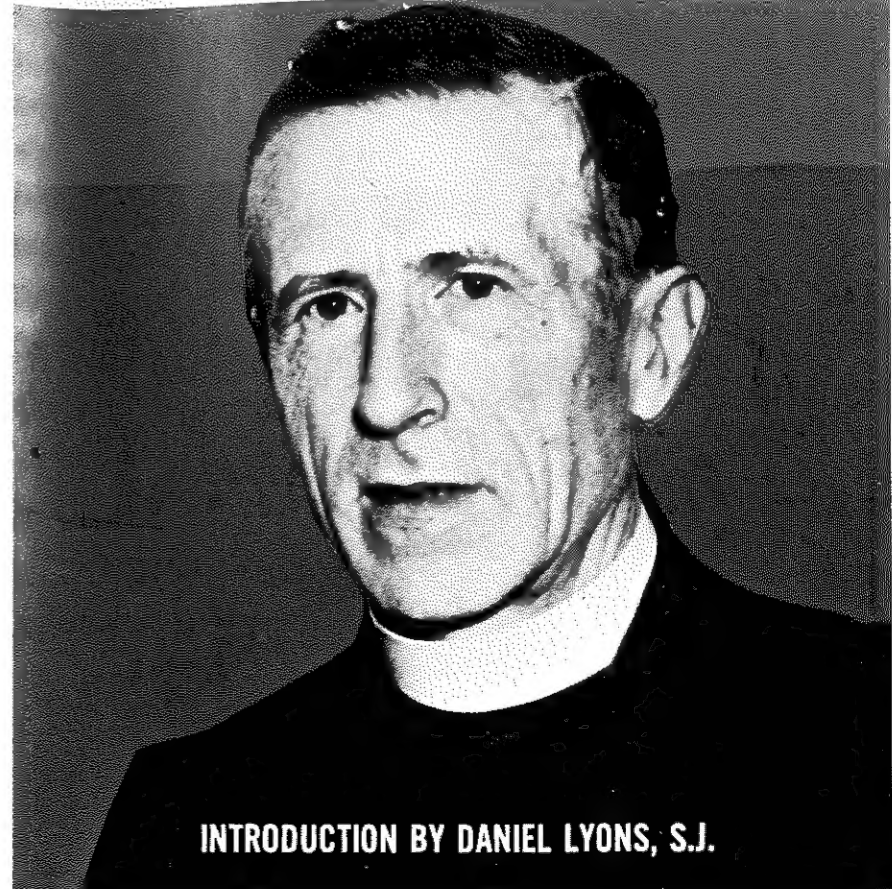
He was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1918. He first entered the

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The Truth About **TEILHARD**

BY MONSIGNOR LEO S. SCHUMACHER



INTRODUCTION BY DANIEL LYONS, S.J.

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INTRODUCTION

Teilhard de Chardin has been introduced to the American Catholic reading public as a great religious thinker, a scientific genius, and a paragon of virtue. In most books about him, the authors extol his words and deeds in terms so rhapsodic that, in comparison, medieval hagiographers with a love for pious hyperbole seem sober and restrained. So to many it comes as a shock to learn that according to the official ruling of the Catholic Church, Teilhard is not a blessing but a menace.

The hard, cold facts are these. In 1957 the Holy Office decreed that his works must be withdrawn from libraries, seminaries, and religious institutions; that they must not be sold in Catholic bookshops, and they must not be translated into other languages. During Teilhard's lifetime, Rome repeatedly refused to permit him to publish the books for which he is now so famous. In 1962 the Holy Office, with the approval of Pope John XXIII, issued a warning exhorting all diocesan bishops, superiors of religious institutes, rectors of seminaries, and presidents of universities to protect effectively the minds of all, especially the young, against the dangers in Teilhard's writings. This monitum stated that in philosophical and theological matters, his works swarmed not only with ambiguities but with serious errors that give offense to Catholic doctrine. In 1967, in answer to an inquiry, the Sacred Congregation on Doctrine (the former Holy Office) replied that this warning is still in effect.

In 1950 Pius XII in his great encyclical, "Humani Generis," definitely referred to Teilhard, among others, when he re-

proved those who "imprudently and indiscreetly hold that evolution . . . explains the origin of all things and audaciously support the monistic and pantheistic opinion that the world is in continual evolution."

Pope Paul VI, in his address marking the close of the Year of Faith, declared that the Kingdom of God begun here below is not of this world and that its proper growth cannot be confounded with the progress of civilization, science, and technology. This statement is a flat contradiction of a basic Teilhard theme.

Teilhard's reputation as a scientist has been subject to a withering attack by outstanding members of the scientific community. For example, Peter Medawar, noted English scientist and Nobel Prize winner in medicine maintains that the greater part of "The Phenomenon of Man," which some consider to be Teilhard's masterpiece, is nothing but nonsense.

But despite these serious warnings, the cult of Teilhard de Chardin exists. As a matter of fact Father George Duggan S.M. in a recent letter to *Twin Circle* underscored this danger. He wrote: "Seeing the array of books expounding Teilhardism in the average Catholic bookstore, one would never guess that this new version of the faith is a form of pantheism, and radically incompatible with the teaching of the Church. Who would suppose that the views of Teilhard — now quoted in so many circles as if they carried as much weight as those of St. Thomas did in former times — embody so many grave philosophical and theological errors that the Holy Office in 1962 thought it necessary to draw the attention of the faithful to the fact?"

"The average reader could be forgiven if he had formed the opinion that Teilhard had enriched the Church with a new and profound synthesis that reconciled the Christian view of

reality with the scientific outlook of the day; for the volume of published material that expounds this view is almost overwhelming. However, the truth or falsity of a view is not determined by counting noses (even if they be the noses of the literate). And the truth about Teilhard is very different from what one would gather from the works of his many admirers.

"The readers of *Twin Circle* have been fortunate in being able to form a well-founded judgment on the thought of Teilhard from the admirable survey by Monsignor Schumacher that is now gathered in this pamphlet. From his profound and wide-ranging study of the works of the French paleontologist-philosopher, Monsignor Schumacher has provided a devastating criticism of this new-found creed that is the fashion of the hour. He will probably be vilified for his pains and called a "conservative". And the Teilhardians, if they venture to engage in argument, will probably contend that the passages to which Monsignor Schumacher has taken exception are peripheral to Teilhard's vision of reality, or have been quoted out of context. If anyone should be tempted to think that this argument has any validity, let him read the Schumacher articles carefully. He will find that the passages in question cohere to form a well-articulated system and add up to a view of the world that can be accurately designated as a form of evolutionary pantheism.

"The readers of *Twin Circle* owe a debt of gratitude to Monsignor Schumacher for bringing to the light of day the strangely seductive errors that have bewitched so many professing Christians in our time. Had they been receiving some other journal, it is unlikely that they would have been so fortunate."

If the Teilhardian movement continues to grow in the Catholic academic milieu, it will make Catholic learning and scholarship a fit subject for mockery and ridicule in the scientific world. The time is over-ripe for the protagonists of Teil-

hard to do some intense soul-searching. They might well ponder the question: What good can come from flaunting the voice of the teaching authority of the Catholic Church?

DANIEL LYONS, S.J.
Editor, Twin Circle

SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY OFFICE ADMONITION

Several works of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, some of which were posthumously published, are being edited and are gaining a good deal of success.

Prescinding from a judgment about those points that concern the positive sciences, it is sufficiently clear that the above mentioned works abound in such ambiguities, and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine.

For this reason, the most eminent and most revered Fathers of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office exhort all Ordinaries, as well as the superiors of Religious institutes, rectors of seminaries and presidents of universities, effectively to protect the minds, particularly of the youth, against the dangers presented by the works of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin and of his followers.

Given at Rome, from the palace of the Holy Office, on the 30th day of June, 1962.

SEBASTIANUS MASALA, *Notarius*

(Reply received from Apostolic Delegation, Washington, D.C., dated October 20, 1967, to question as to whether the monitum against Teilhard's writings had been rescinded.)

"I wish to assure you that the monitum issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the writings of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin is still in effect. At no time has a distinction been made with regard to any one of his writings. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the English translation of the aforesaid monitum which was issued on June 30th, 1962 . . ."

MSGR. LORENZO ANTONETTI, *Counselor*

I.

DID TEILHARD TRY TO FOUND A NEW RELIGION?

Would you believe that a man who invented a religion of his own, which he zealously tried to propagate, is hailed today as a great Catholic thinker by a fair number of Catholic intellectuals in influential positions? Whether you believe it or not, it is a fact.

The man in question is Teilhard de Chardin. His popularity in certain Catholic sectors is amazing even in these distressed times. During his lifetime, his own religious order, the Society of Jesus, forbade him to publish any of his philosophical or religious writings. The Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office in 1962 issued a warning, approved by Pope John XXIII, that his works swarmed "with errors so serious that they offend Catholic doctrine."¹

Nevertheless a flood of eulogies of Teilhard, in the form of lectures, magazine articles and books, scholarly and otherwise, has drenched the Catholic world, and passionate charges that their idol is the victim of misinterpretation and conservative brutality have flashed like thunderbolts from the mouths of his devoted followers.

What would Teilhard himself say about the whole affair? Fortunately he has given his views on the matter. He intended to start a new religion and he revamped Catholic doctrines to suit his purpose. For the moment let us consider his intention to start a new religion and leave to future articles a

presentation of the essential characteristics and dogmas of his new creed.

Plainly stated in letter

In a letter to Léontine Zanta, Teilhard plainly states that his dominant interest and preoccupation is to establish and diffuse "a new religion (let us call it a better Christianity if you will) in which the personal God ceases to be the great neolithic proprietor of former days in order to become the soul of the world that our religious and cultural stage calls for." The Catholic religion definitely does not teach that God is the soul of the world, so it is obvious that Teilhard is not using the words "new religion" metaphorically or poetically, but literally.

His new religion was a merger of two faiths: Faith in the world and Faith in God. The latter was the Catholic Faith, but revised by him so it could be mated with his own personal theory of evolution, which was what he meant by Faith in the world. So he produced a new Faith, a new religion, which masquerades as the Catholic Faith because it uses much Catholic terminology. The words may be Catholic, but the meaning very often is not. Thus, many are deceived and go on to misinterpret Teilhard even where he is very clear in stating what he is up to.

In another letter, Teilhard wrote: "I am at times, a bit frightened when I think of the transposition to which I have to subject the common notions of creation, inspiration, miracle, original sin, resurrection, etc., within myself before I am able to accept them." To understand Catholic doctrines according to one's own whim and not according to the teaching authority of the Catholic

Church has become fashionable in certain circles. Teilhard is in attune with the times.

'Inevitable triumph'

In his essay, *The Stuff of the Universe*, he states that "one could say that a hitherto unknown form of religion . . . is gradually germinating in the heart of modern man, in the furrow opened up by the idea of evolution. . . . Far from feeling my faith perturbed by such a profound change, it is with hope overflowing that I welcome the rise of this new mystique and foresee its inevitable triumph."⁴

A former Dominican priest, who evidently thought Teilhard was a promising candidate, invited him to join the Old Catholic Sect, which left the Catholic Church at the time of Vatican Council I. Teilhard replied that he believed Catholicism was undergoing a profound reformation which involved not just its institutions and ethics but the Catholic faith itself. He could do more to bring this about if he remained in the Church, so he declined the invitation.

Certain that man needs a new faith, Teilhard wrote: ". . . the birth of a new faith for the world I believe only Christianity can carry it out . . . I am convinced of it: The religion of the future is on the point of springing forth from a new Christology stretched to the organic dimensions of our new universe."⁵ That new Christology he provided, but more of this later.

Notes

1. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, August 6, 1962, p. 526.
2. *Lettres à Léontine Zanta*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1965, p. 127.
3. Lettre du 17 décembre 1922 quoted by Philippe de la Trinité, O.C.D., *Rome et Teilhard de Chardin*, Paris, Fayard, 1964, p. 47.

4. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, Paris, Editions de Seuil, 1963, p. 406.
5. Letter to Fr. G., an ex-Dominicain quoted by Maxime Gorce, *Le Concile et Teilhard*, Neuchatel, Suisse, Messeiller, 1963, p. 197. Cf. also *Approaches*, March 1966, "The Strange Faith of Teilhard de Chardin" by Henri Rambaud.

II.

TEILHARD – THE RELIGIOUS EVOLUTIONIST

If one were to try to classify the religion which was born in the mind of Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., he might very well call it "a religion of evolution."¹ Teilhard would not object because he himself used these very words to describe it. He tailor-made all its dogmas to fit his personal theory of evolution.

What mattered most with Teilhard was evolution. Religion was only number two. He once wrote that if he were to lose his faith in Christ and in a personal God, he would continue to have faith in the world. "The world (the value, infallibility and goodness of the world) this is — definitely — the first and only thing in which I believe."² For Teilhard, the world, meaning the entire universe, is evolution: one immense action or movement. Moreover it is alive and conscious.³

If you think of the world as made up of beings like trees, dogs and men, who come into existence, strut their stuff a little while, and then pass on, you will have trouble understanding Teilhard. You think that every motion has a subject, trees grow, dogs run, and men talk, but he thought otherwise. There are no subjects, only motion. Reality is a becoming, a genesis, a coming to birth, but no babies. There are no things that undergo motion, that have any permanence or identity. The universe is a process without any beings, a stream without any water, a smiling with neither a smile nor a Cheshire cat.

A dull realist might wonder what human beings could be in such a magic world, so here is Teilhard's answer: "we are evolution."⁴ In other words, we are the highest stage evolution has reached so far, we are that moment when evolution is conscious of itself, but it is sweeping onward and upward and so we are becoming ultra-human, a superstage of evolution.

Evolution is the sun and religion is its moon. Teilhard relates to Léontine Zanta that in solving the problem of how to conceive the personality of the universe (that is what he wrote), while saving individual human personality, he was brought back to a Christian perspective, "but one grafted (as it ought to be) on a universal, evolutive perspective."⁵ In fact religion could be called evolution's child, since he makes it a phylum, by which he means that it is a constantly changing, evolving movement. Such a notion cannot be squared with the Catholic religion whose divinely revealed doctrines remain ever the same.

Religion is also the handmaid of evolution. Its purpose is to serve the latter. Teilhard held that "religion fulfills an essential and continually growing function of universal evolution."⁶ Its greatest merit is that it guarantees that evolution will have a successful outcome. If man had no hope of this, he would cease to push evolution onward and it would come to a tragic halt.

Teilhard considered his evolutionary ideology to be much more than a theory or a system. "It is a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow and which they must satisfy henceforward in order to be thinkable and true."⁷ He was as good as his word. His religious dogmas are all spun out of the fabric of evolution. "Creation," he wrote, "spirit, evil, God (and

more specifically, original sin, the Cross, the Resurrection, the Parousia, charity . . .) all these notions, once they are transposed to a "genesis" dimension, become amazingly clear and coherent."⁸

By genesis he meant evolution. Not only did he fantastically change Catholic teaching on these subjects, but he invented a whole new doctrine on Christ, because, as he put it, "it is impossible to think of Christ as the cause of evolution without at the same time having to rethink the whole of Christology."⁹ Teilhard's religion was not the Catholic religion.

Notes

1. *Science Et Christ*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1965, p. 164.
2. *Comment Je Crois*, unpublished, 1934. Cf. Emile Rideau, *The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin*, New York, Harper and Row, 1967, p. 376.
3. These notions occur repeatedly throughout Teilhard's writings. For example, *Phenomenon of Man*, Ch. 2; *Future of Man*, p. 261; *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 28-29, p. 127, etc.
4. *Le Phénomène Humain*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1955, p. 257.
5. *Lettres à L. Zanta*, p. 105.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
7. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 242.
8. Claude Cuénot, *Teilhard de Chardin*, Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1965, p. 273.
9. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 405.

III.

TEILHARD – THE MONIST

During his lifetime, Teilhard de Chardin suffered deep frustration because his Jesuit superiors would not permit him to publish his views on religious and philosophical matters. If he were alive today, his frustration would be even greater, but for a different reason. His admirers insist on misunderstanding him.

A scientist, with a messianic complex, Teilhard was convinced that he, and he alone, had a message, a vision, of vital importance to all mankind. How ironic it is that whenever he launches into his own special gospel, his admirers immediately call it poetry and refuse to take him literally and seriously.

Of course, his message is fantastic, for example, his doctrine of monism. There are not many beings in the universe, just one. "The world is not an agglomeration of juxtaposed things; . . . (it is) a great Whole."¹ And this reality is not actually a being, but a motion, i.e., evolution. The man in the street may think he encounters many individual persons and things every day, but these are only manifestations of the one, underlying reality. The man in the street himself is merely an appearance or phenomenon of it.

Evolution is a single, unique, essentially spiritual process. Teilhard wrote that "from the depths of matter to the highest peak of the spirit, there is only one evolution."² It passes through different stages (geogenesis, biogenesis, noogenesis, Christogenesis) as it advances toward its ultimate goal, the Omega point. In other words, this underlying reality is at first matter (in motion),

then life, then mind or man, and finally super-humanity, the completion of Christ whereby everything is transformed into Him.

Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, thought there was a world of universal ideas where, for example, Life itself and Man itself existed as independent beings. Teilhard gave them an existence outside our minds as stages or segments of the evolutionary process. Thus he can say that "Life is more real than lives,"⁸ that "man is nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself,"⁹ and that there is not scientifically speaking minds in nature; but there is one mind . . ."¹⁰ Evolution has reached its highest stage so far in becoming man, but it is in the process of becoming "super-humanity,"¹¹ a gigantic collective super-organism as well as a supreme consciousness."¹²

That there is but one reality and that what we call individual beings are merely facets or sparkles of it, Teilhard states in many different ways. ". . . Conscious beings are truly only the different pinpoint manifestations of a magnitude which includes them all."¹³ Also, "the dimensions of the magnitude which we call 'mind' . . . are the very same as those of the universe."¹⁴ Mind then is the very substance of the universe and individuals are like its freckles. Mind or spirit is "this fundamental element (which is what we know best in the world, because we are it itself and it is all for us. . .)"¹⁵

This same monistic conception is brought out by statements of a slightly different turn. "Something passes, something grows, through the long chain of living creatures."¹⁶ ". . . How is it that we are not more sensitive to the presence of something greater than ourselves moving forward within us and in our midst."¹⁷ Teilhard actually believed that men were

beginning "to discover in each other not merely the elements of one and the same thing, but of a single spirit in search of itself."¹⁸ He calmly avers ". . . we are not anything else scientifically than the elements of a soul which seeks itself through the cosmos,"¹⁹ and urges "Let man . . . perceive the universal reality which shines spiritually through his flesh."²⁰

Meditate on this revealing pronouncement. "My matter is not a part of the universe which I possess totally; it is the totality of the universe possessed by me partially."²¹ Now we understand what he means by "a Christian can say today to his God that he loves him, not only with his whole body and his whole soul but with the whole universe."²²

There are hundreds of statements like the above in Teilhard's writings, which if not taken literally as an expression of monism, can be nothing more than the gibberish of a lunatic.

Notes

1. *Science et Christ*, p. 41
2. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 35. *Future of Man*, p. 23.
3. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 118. *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 111.
4. *Le Phénomène de L'Homme*, p. 244. *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 220.
5. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 120.
6. *Science et Christ*, p. 196ff.
7. *Le Phénomène de L'Homme*, p. 287. *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 258.
8. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, 119.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
11. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 41. *Future of Man*, p. 25.
12. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 196. *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 177.
13. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 121. *Future of Man*, p. 92.
14. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 39.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
16. *Science et Christ*, p. 34.
17. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 197.

IV.

TEILHARD THE PANTHEIST

"Is there nothing sacred?" To assert that Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., was a pantheist is to invite such an outraged cry, and even worse, from those Catholics who fondly think of themselves as progressive. Yet the French palaeontologist or fossil expert was truly a pantheist, albeit a very confused one. Since his writings exude pantheism it is amazing how anyone who immerses himself in them can avoid detecting the fumes. Pantheists, of course, conceive the universe as the one and only reality, which is God, and reduce individual beings to the flimsy status of phases or appearances of it. They are merely phenomena, as for example the phenomenon of man.

Teilhard was quite frank about his pantheism. He wrote that he had a "soul naturally pantheistic."¹ He spoke of having faith and hope in the world or universe, of loving and serving and adoring it, just as any Christian would speak about God. His own personal problem, which he naively considered to be the basic problem of all mankind, was how to reconcile his Christian faith with his faith in the world, how to resolve the apparent conflict between "the majesty of the Universe and the primacy of God."² He wrote, in deep anguish, "I want to love Christ with all my strength in the very act of loving the universe. Can this be absurdity, blasphemy? Besides communion with God and communion with the earth, is there not also communion with God in and through the earth?"³

He flatly stated that a Faith in the World "necessarily implies an element of worship, the acceptance of something

'divine,'⁴ and that "the religious impulse of Mankind" is at present divided between "two opposed forms of worship."⁵ If they could only be united, if only it were possible to believe "at the same time and wholly in God and the World, the one through the other," he is sure that "a great flame will illumine all things" for a Faith, embracing all others, will be born.⁶ One must keep in mind that Teilhard considered the universe to be alive and conscious, a giant organism although a process, and also an evolving Spirit. He claimed we can and have to experience it as "a supreme Someone."⁷

He was confident that he had solved the problem of reconciling the religion of Christianity with the "religion of the World."⁸ He exulted that "far from opposing my profound pantheistic tendencies, "Christianity, properly understood, has never ceased . . . to guide them, to specify them and especially to confirm them . . ."⁹

What was his solution? He made God the "soul of the universe."¹⁰ Thus the universe became a divine being composed of a body and soul. God becomes incarnate in the universe which becomes his flesh. "God . . . appears to us directly as covered by the powers and by the very dimensions of the World."¹¹

Listen to his prayer. "For me, my God, all joy and all achievement, the very purpose of my being and all my love of life, all depend on this one basic vision of the union between yourself and the universe."¹² Note also this different expression of his most basic belief. "My interior life is dominated by these twin peaks: an unbounded Faith in Our Lord, as animator of the world; and a clear-eyed faith in the world . . . as animated by God."¹³ Teilhard is not a Catholic but a pantheist.

Since everything must be thought of in terms of evolution, God's incarnation in the world is also a process, in

fact God himself is "everywhere in process of formation for us."¹⁴ God himself evolves as he immerses himself in the world and, as its soul and center, moves the evolutionary process toward its summit of perfect unity, the Omega Point. "Then the organic complex will have been constituted of God and the World, the Pleroma — the mysterious reality that we cannot do better than call simply God . . ."¹⁵

This is a pantheistic doctrine, Teilhard frankly admits, but he claims it is a "legitimate" and a "superior" and a "true" form of pantheism.¹⁶ Persons do not dissolve and vanish in God (false pantheism) but become more distinct in Him. Why? Because "union differentiates."¹⁷ Union does nothing of the kind, but that does not phase Teilhard since he is bent on having his cake and eating it too. So he continues his efforts to square the circle. God is not all, but all in all. He is perfectly one, but supremely complex. "The perfection of his unity lies in this complexity."¹⁸ Though one, he is "the distinct sum of persons" and can be defined only as "a Center of centers."¹⁹ God is both one and many, but this should not puzzle us because "the one ceases to be opposed to the multiple."²⁰ Thus Teilhard's pantheism sinks in the quicksand of contradiction.

Notes

1. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, Paris, Grasset, 1965, p. 105.
2. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 158.
3. Letter of March 15, 1916. Cf. Henri de Lubac, *La Pensée Religieuse du Père Teilhard de Chardin*, France, Aubier, 1962, p. 350.
4. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1959, p. 346. Cf. *Future of Man*, New York, Harper & Rowe, 1964, p. 266.
5. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 104. *Future of Man*, p. 78.
6. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 349. *Future of Man*, p. 268-9.

7. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 275.
8. *Science et Christ*, p. 157ff.
9. *L'Energie Humaine*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1962, p. 112.
10. *Lettres à L. Zanta*, p. 127.
11. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 158.
12. *Hymn of the Universe*, New York & Evanston, Harper & Rowe, 1965, p. 36.
13. *Letters From A Traveller*, New York & Evanston, Harper & Rowe, 1962, p. 143.
14. *Hymn of the Universe*, p. 54.
15. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 403. *Future of Man*, p. 308.
16. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 103; *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 327 and p. 344.
17. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 122.
18. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 86.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 85-86.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

V.

THE CHRIST OF TEILHARD

"Who do you say that I am?" If Jesus Christ had put that question to Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., what would the answer have been? Definitely a real shocker to any Catholic, with even a minimum of proper instruction in the true faith. Teilhard had to make Christ fit into his theory of evolution, and the result is a Christology, a body of doctrines about Christ, which are quite original and quite foreign to the Catholic faith. The Christ of Teilhard is not the Christ of the Catholic religion.

Teilhard himself was conscious that there was some discrepancy. He wrote Léontine Zanta that his efforts "to panchristify the Universe" (turn it into Christ) had caused not only a broadening, but "a reversal of his views." (The views in question are ones habitually considered as Christian.) The exhilarating result was that "Christ issues from this transformation incredibly greater." And then Teilhard himself raises the question: "But is he truly still the Christ of the Gospel?"

His answer is affirmative. "One thing reassures me: it is because, in me, the growing light is accompanied with love and with the renunciation of self in the Greater than I." He has no real proof. He is loving more and renouncing himself more and that is reason enough. Never was a man more a victim of self-deception.

Once again the pantheism of Teilhard shouts from the rooftops. Christ and the Universe form a "mysterious compound" which he names the Christ-Universal. What prompted this combination title? It is simply another formulation of Teil-

hard's solution to his basic problem: how to reconcile the two religions, Faith in the Christian God and Faith in the Universe. It is done by identifying God and the Universe; in this context, Christ and the Universe. Thus we have the Christ-Universal. Teilhard goes on to say that the Christ-Universal is "the sole Reality which can today balance dogma in itself."⁸ He means it alone can harmonize the two faiths.

But then things become a little foggy. Christ is the "true soul of the World"⁴ which is his body or flesh. Listen to this prayer: "I fall on my knees, Lord, before the Universe become secretly . . . your adorable Body and your divine Blood."⁵ Christ is therefore incarnate in the entire universe. How does the historical Christ of the Gospel fit into the picture? The universal Christ "has neither meaning nor value in our eyes except as the expansion of the Christ who was born of Mary . . ."⁶ Yet why bother with Christ's human life in the past. "Why should we turn to Judea two thousand years ago?"⁷ Indeed a localized Christ who is incarnate in only a part of the universe "would seem to me a Christ smaller than the Real . . . The God of our faith would appear to me less large, less domineering, than the Universe of our experience. How then could I love him more than all things, more than the Universe?"⁸ Obviously it is the universal Christ, who is incarnate in the whole Universe, and coextensive with it, who is first in importance. Christ in his cosmic or universal nature overshadows Christ in his human nature.

Christ is above all "the God of Evolution."⁹ He is its center, its Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. He is the Omega point, the supreme summit of the evolutionary movement in which he is immersed and which he super-animates. As "God the Evolver,"¹⁰ he is the director, the

leader, the cause and mover of evolution. Christ also is evolving into a "Super-Christ."¹¹ Humanity is the highest phase so far of evolution, but evolution is beginning to change into a "Super-Humanity,"¹² which at its peak becomes the Omega point. But Christ is the Omega point, hence he must take on its super-human attributes"¹³ and become the "Super-Christ."¹⁴ That phase of evolution, or at least, the highest part of it, in which man evolves into the superhuman, Teilhard calls Christogenesis — the universe becoming fully Christ.

All the Catholic doctrines about Christ take on new and different meanings. For example, Christ redeems us, not by atoning for man's sins against God, but by pushing evolution on to its successful culmination. The Incarnation is simply the process by which Christ gradually makes the whole universe his body. "The essence of Christianity is nothing more nor less than the belief in the unification of the World in God through the Incarnation."¹⁵ Does this all sound strange and weird? Not to Teilhard for he whimsically writes that after all Christianity never claimed to be anything more than "a dream" and a "phantasmagoria."¹⁶

Notes

1. *Lettres à Léontine Zanta*, p. 128.
2. *Science et Christ*, p. 42.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
4. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 299.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
6. *Le Milieu Divin*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1957, p. 141. Cf. *The Divine Milieu*, Harper Torchbooks, p. 117.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 157. Cf. *The Divine Milieu*, p. 127.
8. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 273.
9. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 88.
10. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 271.

11. *Science et Christ*, p. 208 ff.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 196 ff.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 195 ff.
15. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 113.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

VI.

TEILHARD THE COLLECTIVIST

It has been falsely asserted that Pope Paul VI once said that Teilhard de Chardin "is an indispensable man for our times." This bogus quotation is but one more proof of Teilhard's hypnotic appeal which draws its victims into an enchanted world where they can no longer distinguish their own wishes from actual fact. Teilhard thought he felt vibrations emanating from the All, the Great Presence. (The irreverent might liken this to the hearing of voices.) But what is certain is that many today palpitate and throb with sympathetic vibrations produced by the French visionary. This is especially true of those with a collectivistic mentality, from socialistic liberals to hard core Communists, for they evidently recognize in him a soul brother.

Roger Garaudy, the leading French communist philosopher and chief spokesman for the international Communist conspiracy in its program to con the Catholic Church through dialogue, states in his book *From Anathema to Dialogue* that Teilhardism is the most significant current in Catholic thought. With gusto he quotes Teilhard at some length, including the latter's dismissal of the doctrine of original sin, and concludes with this remark from his fellow countryman: "The synthesis of the (Christian) God of the Above and the (Marxist) God of the Ahead: this is the only God whom we shall in the future be able to adore in spirit and in truth."¹

Teilhard was aware that Communism has serious drawbacks, but still he believed it was basically compatible with Christianity. So he wrote: "Take the two extremes confront-

ing us at this moment, the Marxist and the Christian. . . . Is it not incontestable . . . that each of these . . . feels a basic human sympathy for the other . . . arising out of the obscure recognition that both are going the same way, and that despite all ideological differences they will eventually, in some manner come together on the same summit? . . . (T)he divergence between them is in reality neither complete nor final. . . . Followed to their conclusion the two paths must certainly end by coming together. . . .”

Teilhard looked with some favor on all forms of modern totalitarianism. In *The Phenomenon of Man* he writes: “Monstrous as it is, is not modern totalitarianism really the distortion of something magnificent and thus quite near to the truth?”⁸ In *The Future of Man* he asserts: “. . . the modern totalitarian regimes, whatever their initial defects, are neither heresies nor biological regressions: they are in line with the essential trend of ‘cosmic’ movement.”⁹ This cosmic movement is Teilhard’s evolution. He does not consider Fascism an abomination. “Fascism represents possibly a blue-print, rather successfully done, of the world of tomorrow. It is perhaps even a necessary phase in the course of which men have to learn, with regard to execution, their human profession (*métier*) on a reduced terrain.”¹⁰

To a liberal Catholic, this is a choking matter, not to be compared to his hero’s softness toward Communism. Collectivism or totalitarianism always involves some suppression of the individual person and his rights for the sake of the group or social whole. In its worst forms, the individual is absorbed by the society, loses all independence, and is nothing more than a tool. This seems to square fairly well with Teilhard’s thought. He dogmatizes that, in the future, eugenics,

the social control of human mating and reproduction, will be indispensable. He proclaims that “. . . nothing exists or finally matters except the Whole,”¹¹ and that “It is the Whole which shall have the last word . . . in the last analysis . . . the person is for the Whole, and not the Whole for the person. But that is because at this ultimate instant, the Whole itself has become Person.”

The extremism of Teilhard’s collectivism here shines forth in his Utopia. Evolution itself is a collectivizing movement. Its culmination is a single Person! Men “are becoming a single somebody.”¹² This person, this somebody, is a super-consciousness, “a harmonized collectivity of consciousnesses.” As a molecule includes atoms, “the Man who is to be born tomorrow”¹³ includes souls or human persons who have lost their individuality. They are not individual beings. Just as a human hand cannot act nor exist independently of the man to whom it belongs, so these atom-like persons cannot perform any independent actions and therefore cannot exist independently of this huge organism or Noosphere to which they belong. These “personal elements”¹⁴ can only act as though they are perfectly one, in complete unanimity, and thus can do no more than participate in what is apparently the one, single, unique, collective action to be performed eternally by the ultimate reality “that we cannot do better than call simply God.”¹⁵ The individual person, despite Teilhard’s nonsensical assurances to the contrary, is necessarily swallowed up by this collectivity which is the Person in fact, Teilhard’s god. The ultimate in collectivism is reached.

Notes

1. Roger Garaudy, *From Anathema to Dialogue*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966, p. 54.

2. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 242. *Future of Man*, p. 191-2.
3. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 285. *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 257.
4. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 66-7. *Future of Man*, p. 46.
5. *Science et Christ*, p. 182.
6. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 66. *Future of Man*, p. 46.
7. *L'Activation de L'Energie*, p. 58.
8. *Hymn of the Universe*, p. 89.
9. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 279.
10. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 329. *Future of Man*, p. 254.
11. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 178.
12. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 403.

VII.

TEILHARD THE SECULARIST

St. Thomas Aquinas has been toppled from his throne as the universal doctor of the Catholic Church and supplanted by a new champion, Teilhard de Chardin. Thus run the rave notices blared forth by the present loud brass section of the Catholic Church. Why such a claim? Because Teilhard has reconciled modern science with religion and Christian life with worldly occupations and the pursuit of progress. Is there any truth to this? None whatsoever. The claim is not only preposterous, but downright mystifying.

The alleged conflicts, already solved except for those who fail to understand the nature of scientific knowledge and the nature of man, were handled by Teilhard in his customary way. He denied that there was any conflict and identified science with religion and Christian life with secular life. In this merger Christianity definitely gets the worst of it, for the new religion of Teilhard is a thorough-going secularism. Not only is the supernatural eliminated, but also Christian morality, and God Himself is reduced to the rank of a cosmic force and an imperfect, evolving deity somehow dependent on mankind in his striving to achieve completion.

Teilhard solves all difficulties by his method of synthesis. Opposites blend into one — a quite appropriate technique for a pantheist who believes that there is but one reality and that divine. For example, he rejects any distinction between the “physical or moral, natural or artificial, organic or collective, biological or juridical. All things are seen to be supremely physical, supremely natural, supremely organic and su-

preremely vital . . .” He dissolves all opposition between matter and spirit, between unity and multiplicity.

So we are not surprised when he states that the conflict between religion and science should be resolved “in synthesis” because “the same life animates both.”¹² In fact “religion and science are the two conjugated faces or phases of one and the same act of complete knowledge. . . .”¹³

For all practical purposes, to practice religion is simply to pursue science and other worldly occupations. How secular can one get? “Science (that is to say all forms of human activity) and religion have ever formed in my eyes one and the same thing, both being for me the pursuit of one and the same Object.”¹⁴ Research is “the highest of human functions . . . shining with the lustre of all religions.”¹⁵ A sacerdotal or priestly activity, it is a “sacred function — the source of all higher life and mysticism.”¹⁶ Adoration is cooperating with evolution so as “to bring the world to fulfillment by effort and research.”¹⁷ Notice that “the whole of the world’s industrial, aesthetic, scientific and moral endeavor serves physically to complete the Body of Christ.”¹⁸

On the flip side of the record we hear that “Christianity appears to me as the supreme motive power of human progress” and that the “. . . proper function of Christianity is to superanimate human enterprise.”¹⁹ In a word, Teilhard says that mankind should go ahead and build the universal, secular city. When it is finished it will turn out to be the God-Universal, the consummated Christ.

Teilhard replaces Christian morality with his own “morality of movement.”²⁰ There is no fundamental distinction between the physical and the moral. Morality is merely “the superior outcome of the science of mechanics and biology.”

Its function is “to build the World.”²¹ Whatever helps evolution onward to its final goal is good; whatever opposes or slows down its forward march is evil. How much this sounds like the communist standard of morality! The Teilhardian ethic is an “open morality.”²² It promises to permit and even oblige the performance of actions forbidden by “the morality of equilibrium”²³ which is Teilhard’s name for the Christian and all other moral codes. Teilhard proposes some new commandments, the first of which is “the Law of Work and Research.”²⁴

Although he uses the term, the supernatural has no place in Teilhard’s religion. God is merely a world soul and a cosmic force. “. . . Christ is the Fulfillment even of the natural evolution of beings,”²⁵ and Christogenesis, the movement by which the universe turns completely into Christ, is simply the last phase of evolution. “That the Kingdom of God arrive it is necessary that man conquer the earth”²⁶ or, in other words, “it is necessary, as an essential physical condition, that the human earth should have already attained the natural completion of its evolutionary growth.”²⁷ What Teilhard calls supernatural is not distinct from the natural. He calls the Omega Point the natural end of human evolution and then identifies it with Christ, so it is both natural and supernatural, which is an absurdity or a demotion of Christ to the natural order.

Teilhard expresses his secularism best with this advice: “Trust in the World animated by our Lord, and the World shall save you.”²⁸

Notes

1. *L’Avenir de L’Homme*, p. 120-1. Cf. *Future of Man*, p. 91.
2. *Le Phénomène Humain*, p. 316.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

4. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 270.
5. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 47.
6. Emile Rideau, *Op. cit.*, p. 455.
7. *Christologie et Evolution*, p. 12.
8. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 35. Cf. *Future of Man*, p. 23.
9. Cuénot, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11.
10. *L'Energie Humaine*, p. 132.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
14. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 378.
15. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 397. *Future of Man*, p. 305.
16. *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 51.
17. *L'Avenir de L'Homme*, p. 348. *Future of Man*, p. 268.
18. *Lettres à Léontine Zania*, p. 89.

VIII.

TEILHARD THE SCIENTIST

The word science still casts a magic spell over many people today. No matter what comes forth from the mouth of a man who can legitimately claim to be a scientist, it is swallowed in grateful gulps by mobs of unsophisticated literates, especially those who are college-bred. The oracles of ancient Greece never had it so good. Undoubtedly it is because Teilhard de Chardin is heralded as a great scientist that many have established a cult in his honor. They parrot many of his catch-phrases in blissful ignorance of what he really meant by them, and skim over his puzzling and even nonsensical statements, childishly confident that some profound and momentous meaning must lurk therein. So it is advisable to look at Teilhard's credentials as a scientist.

Although he writes as though he were an authority on physics and biology, Teilhard was neither a physicist nor a biologist. He taught elementary physics briefly but that was before the rise of quantum and relativity theory. He seems to have clung to the outmoded ether theory most of his life. He himself admitted that in the field of physics he was no more than an amateur or layman.¹ His scientific competence was limited merely to geology and paleontology and his reputation as an expert in these branches of science falls far short of the sensational. In a volume on evolution dedicated to the memory of Charles Darwin, the German Jesuits, members of Teilhard's own religious order, do not even mention his name among the four hundred authors referred to in the book.

Peter Medawar, the noted English scientist who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1960 writes that Teilhard

achieved only moderate proficiency in a branch of science that was intellectually unexacting. He points out that Teilhard had no understanding of the real weaknesses of modern evolutionary theory and that *The Phenomenon of Man*, which many consider to be Teilhard's masterpiece, is so full of nonsense and metaphysical conceits that the only way Teilhard can be exonerated from the charge of trying to deceive others is by showing that he first deceived himself and hence was in good faith.² Of the same book the American scientist and evolutionist G.G. Simpson states that it is not the work of a scientist but rather a work of piety. French scientists also, such as Maurice Vernet and Louis Bounoure, have blasted away at Teilhard's so-called scientific views which, they claim, have no scientific value at all.³

Sir Julian Huxley is often presented as a great scientist who supported Teilhard, but in his introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, Huxley praises him only for those views which happen to be also the views of Huxley, but he confesses that he, as well as many scientists, cannot follow Teilhard in his efforts to reconcile Christianity with evolution. In a word, he rejects the very heart and marrow of Teilhard's vision and his chief claim to fame.⁴

The followers of Teilhard insist that he was a great paleontologist. Unfortunately his reputation as one rests chiefly on his involvement with the Piltdown Man and the Peking Man — both of which have been proved to be fakes. The best that can be said in Teilhard's favor is that he was taken in completely — which would seem to indicate he was not so expert in paleontology. One cannot say that he was not warned, at least in regard to the Peking Man. Marcellin Boule, who was considered the world's leading authority on

fossils, and who was a friend and former professor of Teilhard, traveled to China from Paris at his request to examine the findings — which incidentally were not discovered by Teilhard. Boule declared the Peking Man was no missing link but a monkey and that Teilhard's theories were as fantastic as ingenious. Nevertheless Teilhard persisted in them. Subsequently it was proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the Peking Man was nothing but a fraud.

The Peking Man Caper is a most interesting affair. Boule predicted that the fossils of real men, who used the Peking Man and his fellow monkeys for food, would be discovered. Later on they were. Teilhard acknowledges this in an article written in 1934, but in an article written in 1937 (published in *L'Apparition de L'Homme*)⁵ he makes out that no human fossils were found, and he omits any mention of them in a lecture he gave at the Catholic University of Peking in 1942. Of course, if there were no evidence of the presence of real men, it would be reasonable to suppose that the Peking Man was not a monkey but a missing link "in whom there had been already kindled, and for a long time without doubt, the flame of thought . . ."⁶

Naturally there have been those who cannot believe that Teilhard suffered a lapse of memory, and they have written rather harsh things about his integrity. For example, the French newspaper *Le Monde et La Vie* ran an article entitled: "Teilhard Savant? Une Imposture Scientifique." For a full account of this episode one should consult the writings of the Rev. Patrick O'Connell who is quite an authority on evolution.⁷

It seems safe to say that Teilhard was not a great scientist. Indeed his scientific competence was rather modest and

limited. To make a truly objective appraisal of his doctrines, one must shake off any spell cast by the magic word, scientist, and judge them strictly on their own merits.

Notes

1. Claude Cuénot, *Teilhard de Chardin*, Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1965, p. 8.
2. P. B. Medawar, *The Art of the Soluble*, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967, p. 71ff.
3. Maurice Vernet, *La Grande Illusion de Teilhard de Chardin*, Paris, Gedalge 1964; Louis Bounoure, *Recherche d'une Doctrine de la Vie*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1964.
4. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1961, p. 19 esp.
5. *L'Apparition de L'Homme*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1956, p. 121ff.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
7. Patrick O'Connell, *Original Sin in the Light of Present-Day Science*, Roseburg, Oregon. Also, *Science of Today and the Problems of Genesis*, Radio Replies Press Society, St. Paul, 1959, and *Science d'Aujourd'hui et Les Problèmes de la Genèse*. (The last work contains material not found in the first two.)

CONCLUSION

To understand Teilhard one must realize that the ideology or vision he conceived was simply a very subjective and personal answer to the problem that obsessed his whole life, namely: how to reconcile his love of God with his first love, the love of the World—a problem which involved another: how to reconcile his religious faith with his positivistic philosophy of life.

For him the World was not merely human society; it was the entire universe, mineral, vegetable, animal and human, with the superhuman he thought would evolve, all of which he considered to be basically one and the same. His own accounts, as well as those of his friends, of his childhood passion for rocks, his grief upon discovering that iron rusted, and his lifelong quest for something solid, hard and imperishable as the true reality, all seem to betray an idolatry of matter and perhaps mental states not completely normal.

His was not a Catholic mentality. The most popular trends in the thought of the nineteenth century, belief in progress, optimism about the future of man, collectivism, secularism, scientism and especially evolutionism influenced his outlook far more than Catholic theology or philosophy. This explains to some extent his popularity today and his freedom from derisory attacks that another age would surely have visited upon him as a scientific quack. He thought he found the answer to his problem by identifying God with the universe and by twisting and distorting certain Catholic doctrines so that they would fit upon the rack of his evolutionary theory. From this emerged a pantheistic ideology, expressed with sufficient ambiguity and obscurity, so that one can find in it

what he wants and ignore what is not to his liking. This new religion of Teilhard is the answer to the prayer of those Catholics who are on fire to leave their ancestral home for the delights of the Secular City, but who still wish to give lip service to God.