

In the Periodicals

The Christian Century's series of articles on evolution includes "The Significance of Teilhard" by Ian G. Barbour, in the issue of August 30, 1967. This is the ablest discussion of Teilhard in a Protestant journal, and Barbour finds more than poetry in the great paleontologist and mystic. He finds "a new form of *natural theology* in which the directionality of evolution is evidence for the existence of God" (p. 1099) and defends Teilhard as a process philosopher and a Christian theologian. Another unexpectedly favorable evaluation of Teilhard is found in *Cross Currents* (Summer, 1967); here the well-known "No-God" theologian, Thomas J. J. Altizer, in "Catholic Theology and the Death of God" pays his profound tribute to Teilhard: "I am sustained by the fact that it is a Roman Catholic thinker, Teilhard de Chardin, who reached the most radically Christocentric theological conception of the divine life and energy, and it is also consoling to know that it is in the Roman Catholic world that theology today is most revolutionary and alive" (p. 282). In the same issue, Eugene Fontinell in "Religious Truth in a Relational and Processive World" makes a most far-reaching reconstruction of theology in the direction of the insights of William James and John Dewey and makes a strong plea for "a processive God."

John S. Dunne, C.S.C., in "The Metamorphosis of Faith," *Review of Politics* (July, 1967, pp. 291-302), gives a good analysis of the faith of Abraham celebrated by Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and the recent emphasis on "paradox" and "absurdity" in some types of current theology. This is a useful article for students of science and religion because it is precisely this stress on "the absurd" that erects the biggest obstacle to the reconciliation of the two fields.

Developments in biology and their religious overtones are stressed in several recent articles. George Gaylord Simpson, in "Biology and the Public Good," *American Scientist* (June, 1967, pp. 161-75), warns against "genetic engineering":

The excitement is premature to say the least. Just a few of the impediments are that we do not now know the actual structure of any human gene, that we do not know how to insert or replace genes in germ cells, that we do not know precisely how any gene produces such important traits as intelligence or temperament, or for that matter such simple characteristics as stature; that the genetic system is an interacting whole so that insertion of a synthetic gene if it worked at all would have unforeseen and probably disastrous results. It is this last point which suggests that genetic synthesis, if possible, would be more likely to work for the public ill than the public good. . . . Anyway, the synthetic gene, if possible at all, is so remote that we had better worry about things much more imminent [p. 174].

Dwight J. Ingle, in his editorial in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* (Summer, 1967), vindicates the alliance of knowledge and moral principles: "Knowledge can be misused; this does not excuse efforts to block inquiry and debate or to deny laymen in a democratic society the right to know. Closed

systems of belief can also be misused and ignorance is a barrier to progress. All possible causes of peoples being disadvantaged should be investigated, and hopefully the application of knowledge to their advancement will be guided by moral principles" (pp. 498-99). The advancement of knowledge has historically been the high task of the university, and this is ably defended by Kenneth E. Boulding in "The University and Tomorrow's Civilization," *Journal of Higher Education* (December, 1967, pp. 477-83): "It is the fact that in the kingdom of the mind there are no natural boundaries which have forced the university to become universal" (p. 478). He continues: "There is no such thing as American chemistry or Russian chemistry, capitalist chemistry or communist chemistry, Protestant chemistry, Catholic chemistry, or Buddhist chemistry" (p. 477). "The university, therefore, can well be regarded as a focal point of that conflict between the super-culture and the folk-culture which is one of the most striking phenomena of our age" (p. 479). By folk-culture, Boulding means the popular religious culture which is not usually as enlightened as the superculture of intellectual disciplines; yet he does admit: "The record of universities in the struggle between the super-culture and the national state has been ambiguous, to use the most charitable word possible. . . . It was not the universities that stood out against Hitler but those who were motivated by an intense Christian commitment, both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Confessional Church" (p. 481).

There has been much public discussion on issues relating to birth control and to the degree to which abortion is legally and religiously permissible. One question pressed by some religious communities has been the sanctity of human life even in its earliest stages. On this issue, Andie L. Knutson sheds much light in "When Does a Human Life Begin? Viewpoints of Public Health Professionals," *American Journal of Public Health* (December, 1967, pp. 2163-77).

The *Journal of the History of Ideas* for July-September, 1967, clarifies a little-known chapter in the history of science and religion through the article by David Kubrin, "Newton on Cyclical Cosmos" (pp. 325-46), in which he points out that "Newton and many of his English contemporaries seem, like the Stoics, to view the cosmos as going through successive cycles. The destroyed Earth of one cycle would serve as the chaos out of which the Earth of the next cycle would emerge" (p. 346).

George A. Wells, in "Goethe and Evolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (October-December, 1967, pp. 537-50), states: "Goethe believed in a Spinozistic God-Nature and thought that his own mind could come to know the mind of this deity" (p. 549). One hears accents here of the well-known Logos doctrine vindicated by the Stoics and by such Christian theologians as Paul Tillich in which human reason is assumed to be part of the Cosmic Reason or Logos of the universe in order for any knowledge, scientific or religious, to be possible.

ALFRED P. STIERNOTTE

Quinnipiac College