

In the Periodicals

Robert Efron, in "Biology without Consciousness and Its Consequences," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* (Autumn, 1967), pp. 9-35, takes issue with supporters of behaviorism and materialism: "The most important premise of the philosophy of materialism which affects the field of biology is the 'principle of reduction,' that is, the premise that all the phenomena of life can be accounted for, described by, and deduced from the laws of physics and chemistry" (p. 10). Efron is of the opinion that the question at stake is not a matter of scientific principle but a matter of faith: "The reductionist has absolute faith that the unexplained phenomena of life and of consciousness will be reduced to the law of physics *in the future*" (p. 13). Efron obviously doubts it. Related to this issue is Herbert L. Dreyfus' "Pseudo-Studies towards Artificial Intelligence," *Theoria to Theory* (January, 1968), pp. 108-23, in which the questions are raised of the extent to which computers are successful in "pattern recognition" and "problem solving" and whether humans are "mechanical bodies." The author states: "The latest work in neurophysiology has produced convincing evidence that the digital computer is not an adequate model of the brain" (p. 123).

In the same journal, John Beattie, "Social Anthropology and Natural Theology," pp. 122-32, affirms: "It could reasonably be claimed that it is in the study of people's religious beliefs and cosmologies, and of their ritual and symbolism, that modern social anthropology has most advanced our understanding of other people's culture" (p. 125). The article is rich in summarizing the results of anthropological research bearing on primitive religion.

William O. Wallace, O.P., in "Thomism and Modern Science: Relationships Past, Present, and Future," *Thomist* (January, 1968), pp. 67-83, acknowledges that the "importance of science and technology in the modern world is generally recognized by the Christian community. The Second Vatican Council, in fact, singled them out as dominant factors in our civilization, factors that are most responsible for the changing thought patterns of the twentieth century" (p. 67). He admits the reactionary role of Thomism at the time of the scientific revolution: "In the post-Tridentine period, the teaching Church had already assumed an authoritarian air that extended to all areas of knowledge, modern science included" (p. 71). "As a consequence, the scene was set for a disastrous encounter between Thomism and modern science that has had unfortunate consequences reaching all the way to the present day" (p. 72). He continues the indictment: "[Thomists] were convinced to a man that they already possessed the whole truth about the structure of the universe, and their minds were not open to the possibility of any new knowledge coming from modern science" (p. 77). He further warns Catholic thinkers against "existentialism, phenomenology, and personalism" because in adopting such trends of thought "they divorce themselves from the hard thinking that characterizes a

scientific culture, the more divisive they become, and as a consequence the less they do to promote the integration of knowledge" (p. 81).

Hugo Meynell, in "Cybernetics, Aristotle and Natural Theology," *Heythrop Journal* (January, 1968), pp. 50-53, is able to apply the terminology of cybernetics to Thomistic philosophy: "The concern of cybernetics is with operator, operand and transform *qua* operator, operand and transform" (p. 52), and he calls God "the Prime Operator" and discusses with great sympathy the pantheistic view of God expressed by Einstein and Fred Hoyle.

Norman Malcolm, in "The Conceivability of Mechanism," *Philosophical Review* (January, 1968), defines the issue: "By 'mechanism' I am going to understand a special application of physical determinism—namely, to all organisms with neurological systems, including human beings" (p. 45). However, he admits: "The theory makes no provision for desires, aims, goals, purposes, motives, or intentions" (p. 46).

Eric L. Mascall, in a review of *Secularization Theology* by Robert L. Richard, S.J., *Thomist* (January, 1968), pp. 106-15, takes to task existentialist theology for ignoring science and commonsense experience. His denunciation is one of the strongest we have ever read: "The existentialist theology is out of harmony with what modern science tells us about man. It does indeed affirm that man finds himself projected (*geworfen*) into an alien environment, in which he feels himself anxious and alienated and estranged. All this is no doubt true, though it should perhaps be pointed out that ordinary non-neurotic people do not find the world such a place of unrelieved horror as existentialists depict it. Where, however, existentialism parts company both with science and with common experience is in its failure to recognize that man is not merely *in* the world but is, on the material side of his being, actually *part* of it. Both biological evolution and the elementary facts of nutrition make this plain" (pp. 110-11).

Zoltan Alszegehy, S.J., and Mairizio Flick, S.J., in "An Evolutionary View of Original Sin," *Theology Digest* (Autumn, 1967), pp. 197-202, declare frankly: "Evolutionism is conceived not as a mere biological hypothesis but as a 'cosmic law' that embraces the whole of the universe. Thus *all* visible beings are linked together by a genetic unity. This is a unity based on a process of becoming in which the various existing stages of perfection are considered as phases of present development. This process extends from the atom to the full development of mankind—the peak of evolution. . . . The state of original justice, strict monogenism, the way Adam's sin is said to influence all men—these are utterly strange to an upward movement of an evolution embracing all beings" (p. 197). The authors provide a reformulation of original sin to take into account evolutionary theory. The Pauline doctrine is re-examined and corrected. A similar point is made by Rev. Peter de Rosa in *Christ and Original Sin* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1967), when he asserts that "modern theologians . . . are acutely conscious that the faith must be understood against the background of the modern world-picture; that theology dies if it is not so understood; that scripture must not be used any more to 'prove' predetermined points of theology the concepts of which depended more than was realized on an outdated scientific picture" (pp. 91-92).

Writing in the same vein of reconstructing theology and Christology in such a way as to do justice to the sciences, F. E. Crowe, S.J., in "Christologies: How

Up-to-Date Is Yours?" *Theological Studies* (March, 1968), pp. 87-101, affirms: "There is nothing belonging to humanity that cannot in principle be predicated of the Christ" (p. 95). "All that the sciences in the universities tell us of man, the physics of his movements, the chemistry of his body, the neural determinants of his consciousness, the psychic and the rational, the social, political, game-playing character of man—you name it and Scholastic theology will tell you it belongs to the theology of Christ" (p. 95). "Christ's humanity is as real as ours and as human as ours" (p. 95). He reaches for a Christology that "can give us a deeper insight into the human heart of Jesus. . . . It is a humanism for our times which we cannot afford to ignore" (p. 99).

It would appear that the central issue in the confrontation between science and religion for our time is the place of the historical Jesus in the evolutionary framework of the universe in which he is included. The most eminent Protestant and Catholic theologians are ready to grapple with the problem. Karl Rahner, S.J., a leading philosophical theologian, in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. V (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), has done so in the chapter entitled "Christology within an Evolutionary View of the World," pp. 157-92.

Irving F. Laucks, in *the Churchman* (February, 1968), pp. 6-8, presents "Outlines for a Scientific Religion" as "more easily credible than some old ones."

Granville C. Henry, Jr., in "Mathematics, Phenomenology, and Language Analysis in Contemporary Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (December, 1967), pp. 337-49, has a most informative article and presents the relationship in these terms: "The study of how the tools of phenomenology and language analysis have been used for an analysis of the nature of mathematics is relevant for contemporary theology because both phenomenology and the later language analysis in their mature Husserlian or Wittgensteinian form had their origin in the study of certain problems in the foundations of mathematics" (p. 339).

Brand Blanshard, long a critic of existentialism, is at his best in "Kierkegaard on Faith," *Personalist* (Winter, 1968), pp. 5-23, where he concludes: "He indicts reason; he indicts rational ethics; he indicts love and justice of the merely human variety; he indicts with eloquent contempt the Christianity practised around him" (p. 72). For Kierkegaard, "faith has leaped so high that it has shot up beyond the earth's atmosphere to where thought and conscience can no longer breathe" (p. 22).

The possibility of life on other planets is reinforced by the brief article by Harold Morowitz, "Life in the Clouds of Venus?" *Nature* (September 16, 1967, pp. 1259-60): "While the surface conditions of Venus make the hypothesis of life there implausible, the clouds of Venus are a different story altogether" (p. 1259). Our American astronauts landing on Venus had, therefore, better land on "Cloud 9." The same issue of *Nature* contains a revealing article on "The Physics of Quasars" (pp. 1227-28), those mysterious objects whose tremendous energy calls to mind the apocalyptic catastrophes described in the mythologies of Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Well could the modern astrophysicist say to his favorite quasar, as did Keats to his Grecian Urn: "[Thou] doth tease us out of thought as doth Eternity." This article states: "They represent a local example of a cataclysmic event on a scale far greater than any previously envisaged in the evolution of galaxies. Physically, the re-

lease of energy on such a scale, possibly amounting to 10^{62} ergs, equivalent to the conversion into energy of the whole mass of a small galaxy, and the existence of very strong gravitational fields, represent conditions unthinkable in any terrestrial laboratory."

Consciousness-expanding drugs and their dangerous effects continue to be mentioned in the literature. "Hallucinations to Order" in *Nature* (October 21, 1967), states: "One of the most alarming features of the drug LSD is that it can be made in the laboratory. In other words, there is no natural physical limitation of the scale on which, in suitably bizarre circumstances, it could be supplied to the public" (p. 222). Howard S. Becker also discusses this problem in "History, Culture, and Subjective Experience: An Explanation of the Social Bases of Drug-induced Experiences," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (September, 1967, pp. 163-76), a valuable article in its profuse references to the rapidly growing literature on LSD and "the mechanisms by which an LSD-using culture arises and spreads" (p. 170).

Van Meter Ames, in "Buber and Mead," *Antioch Review* (Summer, 1967, pp. 181-91), makes a comparative study of two men who "may seem to have little in common" and finds many interesting relationships: "Mead's conception of the physical as an abstraction from the social approximates Buber's distinction between the 'I-Thou' and the 'I-it' relationship. Buber's intuitive notion of the social nature of reality was not only felt by Mead but confirmed in his study of Whitehead and Einstein" (p. 189).

Kai Nielsen, in "Wittgenstein's Fideism," *Philosophy* (July, 1967), examines the philosophy of Wittgenstein and the discussion of religious discourse: "Perhaps God-talk is not as incoherent and irrational as witch-talk; perhaps there is an intelligible concept of the reality of God, and perhaps there is a God" (p. 209). In the same journal, Vinil Haksar, "A Scientific Morality" (pp. 245-64), discusses Lady Wootton's book, *Social Science and Social Pathology* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959). Haksar states: "She not only believes that the Pragmatic System gets rid of talk of guilt, but also she thinks, or at least says, that it helps get rid of moral judgments" (p. 245). She believes that "the abolition of morality is complete" (p. 245) in Luxemburg—a supposition carefully hidden by travel posters beckoning the tourist to visit Luxemburg and Europe! Haksar remarks: "What Lady Wootton seems to neglect is that her 'scientific' aim of preventing anti-social behavior must itself be put forward as a moral aim" (p. 246).

John Hick, in "Faith and Coercion," *Philosophy* (July, 1967, pp. 272-73), makes a plea for tolerance in asserting: "Whilst nature has not left it to our choice whether we shall believe in the reality of the physical world, God (if there be one) has left it to some extent, at least, to our choice whether we shall believe in his reality" (p. 273).

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