In the Periodicals

Theologians are becoming more concerned with relating their world views to modern science and process philosophy. A case in point is John B. Cobb, Jr., in his book, *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), which is reviewed in *Religion in Life* ([Spring 1970], pp. 129–31) by Vernard Eller. The latter states: "For Cobb, the passion that motivates his whole book is to come up with an understanding of God that will jibe with the modern scientific world view which, he is convinced, has rendered earlier concepts of God incredible." (p. 129). Indeed, "Cobb wants to come at God through electronic analogies, defining him in terms of 'energy-Events'" (p. 129). More cautious is Julian Hartt, *Theology and the Church in the University,* reviewed by Harold Bosley in the same journal (p. 140). Nevertheless, encounter with the modern world is required: "Theology, to Dr. Hartt, is not the lazy reigning Queen of the Sciences; she is the vigorous leader of men in search of reliable judgments in all areas of endeavor—art, science, and social studies. The chapel is a symbol of all this on the campus" (p. 140).

The whole issue of "Moral Theology and Genetics" is discussed by Father Charles E. Curran, president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, in *Cross Currents* ([Winter 1970], pp. 64–82). The learned author admits: "The growth and progress of modern civilization in all areas, not just in science and technology, have made contemporary theology more aware of historical growth and change. Changes in politics, science, economics and sociology cannot remain unreflected in approaches to moral theology" (p. 68). The changes which are of profound interest to the writer have to do with the progressive eugenics proposed by the late H. J. Muller, and others, and the implications of the recent synthesis of a gene and possibility of manufacturing genes controlling desired characteristics. "Eugenics is simply described as good breeding" (p. 65), and the whole article is concerned with the ethical and theological implications of this possibility. The views of scientist Muller and theologian Paul Ramsey are contrasted, and Father Curran foresees problems but courageously states: "However, these problems are not sufficient reason to stop all experimentation and work toward acquiring a greater power over man's heredity and genes" (p. 80).

The same general issue is dealt with in Robert L. Schueler, "Ecology—the New Religion" (*America,* March 21, 1970, pp. 292–95): "To the ecologist and the ecological activist there is an almost religious sense of urgency about the population problem and the need to control it" (p. 292). The article is summarized in this inclusive statement: "This umbrella science—capstone, ecologists say, of the natural science arch—pools biology, sociology, technology, even Christian humanism to further the total quality of the environment we live in" (p. 292).

Full documentation on the "celibacy question" which agitates the Roman Church, especially under the advanced leadership of Dutch bishops, will be found in "The Celibate Backlash" (*Herder Correspondence* [May 1970], pp. 137–48). Profuse quotations from Belgian, Swiss, German, Spanish, and

Canadian sources are informative on the state of the debate on this unresolved question.

The increasingly flexible attitude of liberal theology in confronting atheism is described by Jan M. Lochman, "Gospel for Atheists" (*Theology Today* [October 1969], pp. 299–311), for he states that "the history of the encounters of the church with atheism is a history encrusted with prejudices and caricatures. It is replete with fixed battle lines and battle cries and marked by a mutual 'demonizing' of the other side" (p. 300). He asks the pertinent question: "Isn't atheism also a thorn in the flesh of a sleeping Christendom, a question to the church, a questioning of us, an inquiry into how we are Christians, an inquiry into just what we have done with the gospel?" (p. 308). Lochman concludes on an optimistic note: "The church is not just backward-looking and reactionary. There is the 'other face of Christendom'—a humanitarian, socially concerned, even a revolutionary heritage of Christendom. . . . The indiscriminate judgment on religion and the church has been revised, especially by the young Marxists" (p. 311).

Discussions of the many-faceted spirituality of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin may still be found in many journals. A portion of Teilhard's *How I Believe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) is reproduced as "The Confluence of Religions" (*Theology Today* [April 1970], pp. 63–70) with the familiar accents of the great Jesuit scientist on evolution, and with his contrast between religions of the East and of the West. Aware that to the East "matter is dead weight and illusion" (p. 64), Teilhard affirms the cosmos known by science: "For *in no other type of cosmos,* and *in no other place,* can any being, *no matter how divine he be,* carry out the function of universal consolidation and universal animation which Christian dogma attributes to Christ" (p. 68).

Professor Sidney Fox, in "In the Beginning . . . Life Assembled Itself" (*New Scientist,* February 27, 1969, pp. 450–452), states frankly: "My intention in this article is to explain that the alleged creation of order from disorder presents no paradoxes and that, given the conditions of the primitive Earth, the emergence of life was inevitable" (p. 450). The article is specially valuable in rejecting both the reductionist and vitalist theories as to the nature of life.

In an article on "The Heavens in Literature" (*New Scientist,* February 6, 1969, p. 301), J. G. Crowther reviews A. J. Meadows, *The High Firmament: A Survey of Astronomy in English Literature* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1969) and repeats the familiar story of the Newtonian model replacing the medieval Aristotelian universe as this new theory was reflected in poetry. And Meadows quotes from Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872), where Reade makes predictions which make present anticipations of trips to the moon pale into insignificance: "Disease will be extirpated; the causes of disease will be removed; immortality will be invented. And then, the earth being small, mankind will migrate into space, and will cross the airless saharas which separate planet from planet and sun from sun. The earth will become a Holy Land which will be visited by pilgrims from all the quarters of the universe. Finally, men will become master forces of nature; they will become themselves architects of systems, manufacturers of worlds." A noble task in which men both of science and of religion in the future may collaborate!

The issue of prayer in the schools, which has agitated this nation, finds an echo in an editorial in *New Scientist* (March 20, 1969): "Children should not

be brought up in Britain to be totally ignorant of the Christian religion. But prayers and hymn-singing, enforced by teacher's authority, have no part in a young child's education. They go against the trend of present-day educated thought with its stress on open-minded exploration rather than dogmatic authoritarianism and against the equally healthy trend in religious apology, away from scholastic pedantry and towards a greater emphasis on personal experience and experiment. In the area of religious belief as in science, it is essential that children be made aware of the various shades of confidence one can place in various theories and supposed facts" (p. 614).

Richard M. Chadbourne states in "The Humanities: A Foreign Language" (*Colorado Quarterly* [Winter 1970], pp. 255–68): "I do not share the view of those who claim that there is a critical division today between the so-called 'two cultures,' scientific and humanistic. There are many ways of being human and humane, and the humanities have no monopoly on them. The scientist's pursuit of truth, as Whitehead, Cassirer, Bronowski and others have shown, is a humanizing influence of the first order. The real enemy of the humanities is not the scientist but the mindless technician as I have defined him, in whatever field he may be found operating; and he is as likely to be found today teaching poetry or philosophy as in the chemistry lab or the sociology seminar. The truth is that science, as Bronowski has demonstrated in *Science and Human Values, The Identity of Man,* and other books of his . . . has many curious affinities with the creative imagination of art and literature. The most notable is that both search for order underlying the chaotic flux of phenomena, for hidden relationships and harmonies, for unity and likeness in variety" (p. 262). He concludes by emphasizing that "the sciences and the humanities complement rather than oppose each other" (p. 264).

William Peirce Randel, in "Huxley in America" (*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* April 13, 1970, pp. 73–99), recalls the visit of the great defender of Darwin to America for seven weeks in 1876: "Everywhere he went he received public attention, more than he liked, and on his visit to the Centennial Exhibition, he became one of the attractions himself. At the exhibit of Bell's pioneering telephone he was reported to have dropped the receiver in astonishment: 'My God, it talks!' " (p. 73). "He did not breathe fire even upon the religious bigots who thought he was a devil in human form. Instead, he elaborated whenever he spoke, upon the generosity shown him by the American people" (p. 93). "American scientists had a vested interest in Huxley's visit in a very real sense: if during his tour Huxley could rouse public interest in scientific research and hypotheses, all scientists, especially those who taught science, would benefit" (p. 74). "A good many individual clergymen and laymen considered him a dangerous infidel who posed a serious threat to all that was good, true, and beautiful" (p. 74). The author concludes: "No man of his stature belongs entirely to one nation but to the realm of *mind.* Perhaps his greatest service in spending seven weeks in the United States, was to give to some Americans, those committed to the advancement of knowledge, a sense that they were not, as they had often been made to feel, second-class citizens in that realm without boundaries" (p. 99).

William A. Christian, in "Religious Valuations of Scientific Truths" (*American Philosophical Quarterly* [April 1969], pp. 144–50), makes many interesting affirmations: "A scientific proposition has, or ought to have, religious import for someone if, from some religious doctrine he accepts, there follows

a positive valuation of knowing its truth" (p. 144). "A positive religious valuation of a scientific proposition is a judgment that knowing its truth contributes to a religious satisfaction" (p. 144). The logical analysis by Professor Christian and his treatment of the issues, which make room for non-Christian religions as well as for religious naturalism, is well worth reading.

Richard Taylor, in "How to Bury the Mind-Body Problem" (*American Philosophical Quarterly* [April 1969], pp. 136–43), begins with the forthright statement: "The mind-body problem, in all its variants, is a philosophical fabrication resting on no genuine data at all" (p. 136). The author contrasts "mentalism and materialism" (p. 138) and ends by asking: "Does matter think?" (p. 143) and seems to reply affirmatively: "No one can say, a priori, what the highly organized material systems of one's body are or are not capable of. . . . We see around us all the time specimens of thinking matter, that is, material beings which deliberate, imagine, plan and so on. For men do in fact these things" (p. 143).

David Michael Levin, in "Reasons and Religious Belief" (*Inquiry* [Winter 1969], pp. 371–93), argues that there are "some philosophically plausible grounds for acknowledging a sense with its own distinctive criteria, according to which religious belief *can* be reasonable" (p. 371). He continues: "Those philosophers who have repudiated the claims of religious belief to any reasonableness whatsoever are justified in pointing out an important sense in which religious belief is not reasonable; but also they are guilty of building their refutation on two tacit and crucial fallacies: the *fallacy of reductionism* and the *fallacy of universalization*" (p. 371). He further states: "After all, reason ought not and perhaps cannot be altogether alien to religious belief" (p. 372). Certainly, Brand Blanshard and Paul Tillich, who have stressed reason in religion, would agree with Levin.

The same question is continued by Arthur B. Cody in "What Difference It Makes" (*Inquiry* [Winter 1969], pp. 394–405), in which the author gives the following interesting twist as to "man's belief in God": "One consequence has to do with the vision of the world, *seeing* the world *as* God's creation, what men are expected to achieve and demons are not" (p. 344). Since the readers of this journal are not demons, it may be hoped they will eventually see the world as God's creation.

Keith Gunderson, in "Cybernetics and the Mind-Body Problem" (*Inquiry* [Winter 1969], pp. 405–19), gives a comparative study of minds and machines in an attempt to shed new light on the problem of whether machines can think.

Anthony Flew in *Inquiry* ([Winter 1969], pp. 469–73) reviews *The Religious Significance of Atheism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) and concludes by meeting MacIntyre's thesis "that theism itself requires and presupposes both a word vocabulary which can be understood independently of theistic beliefs and moral positions which can be justified independently of theistic beliefs" (p. 472).

Gerald A. McCool, S.J., in "The New World of Christian Philosophy" (*Science et Esprit* [January–April 1970], pp. 77–98), discusses the rejection of a rigid Thomism by many Catholic philosophers and theologians and states frankly: "In contemporary America the role and function of philosophical instruction in Catholic institutions of higher education is a subject of debate. As a result Christian philosophy is dead, if it is understood as the name of a

definite curriculum designed for Catholic students clerical or lay" (p. 81). He further informs us: "We are confronted with differences as wide as those among a Hegelianism whose God is the Absolute, an American naturalism which must be stretched to allow us to say that he exists, and the more or less positivistic form of the philosophy of language which make it difficult for a theologian like Paul van Buren to say much that is significant about God at all" (pp. 87–88). Among modern-day theologians who are restructuring their world view, the author mentions Leslie Dewart, Eugène Fontinell, Georges Morel, and Catholic Whiteheadians. Note particularly: "Eugene Fontinell approaches the problem of reformulation from the viewpoint of American naturalism. . . . His basic metaphysics is that of Dewey. The real world is the contextual, processive flow of nature" (p. 90).

Problems of population control and limitation are reflected in many journals. Eugene Rabinowitch in an editorial, "Responsibility of Scientists in Our Age," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (November 1969), states: "Evolution—biological evolution and social evolution alike—has proceeded, until now, as if it had an aim, so that one is easily misled into using teleological terms when discussing it. But in fact, it has been entirely causal, and not teleological. From now on, it must become purposeful. It must be rationally directed toward certain minimum aims, without the achievement of which the human species will lose its viability on earth" (p. 2).

Joseph J. Spengler, in "Population Problem: In Search of a Solution" (*Science,* [December 5, 1969], pp. 1234–38), writes: "Little account is taken of the fact that man lives in a universe of penalties and rewards and tends to a passive course of action free of penalty and productive of reward" (p. 1235). The author discusses the problem of excessive reproduction in underdeveloped countries.

D. F. Fleming, in "Can the Extinction of Man Be Avoided?" (*Queens Quarterly* [Autumn 1969], pp. 440–53), calls attention to explosive forces: "The ever greater ability of sovereign states to destroy each other, the constant escalation of the technological revolution, and a relentless population explosion" (p. 441). "It is not my purpose to make your flesh creep with the inexorable rising shadow of planetary doom" (p. 449), he says, but concludes more optimistically: "We can give many future generations a chance to inherit a fairly stable world" (p. 453).

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