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Christianity
and Evolution



Reflections on
Science and Religion

latter I have found the complement I sought to my own self, and to that I have surrendered.¹²

But, if I have thus surrendered myself, why should not others, all others, also do the same? I began by saying that what I am now writing is a personal confession. Deep in my mind, however, as I have proceeded, I have felt that something greater than myself was making its way into me. The passion for the world from which my faith springs; the dissatisfaction, too, which I experience at first when I am confronted by any of the ancient forms of religion – are not both these traces in my heart of the uneasiness and expectancy which characterize the religious state of the world today?

In the great river of mankind, the three currents (Eastern, human and Christian) are still at cross-purposes. Nevertheless there are sure indications which make it clear that they are coming to run together. The East seems already almost to have forgotten the original passivity of its pantheism. The cult of progress is continually opening up its cosmogonies ever more widely to the forces of spirit and emancipation. Christianity is beginning to accept man's effort. In these three branches the same spirit which made me what I am is obscurely at work.

In that case, surely the solution for which modern mankind is seeking must essentially be exactly the solution which I have come upon. I believe that this is so, and it is in this vision that my hopes are fulfilled. A general convergence of religions upon a universal Christ who fundamentally satisfies them all: that seems to me the only possible conversion of the world, and the only form in which a religion of the future can be conceived.

12. The more I think about it, the less I can see any criterion for truth other than the establishment of a growing maximum of universal coherence. Such an achievement has something *objective* about it, going beyond the effects of *temperament*. (Note by Père Teilhard.)

EPILOGUE

THE SHADOWS OF FAITH

I have finished detailing the reasons for my faith and the different forms in which it has been expressed. All I have now to do is to tell you what sort of clarity and security I find in the outlook I have accepted: and then I shall have completed the history of my faith.

From what I have just said about my conviction that there is a divine personal term to universal evolution, it might be thought that, stretching ahead of my life, a bright and serene future can be distinguished. For my part, it is assumed, death appears simply as one of those periods of sleep after which we can count on seeing the dawn of a glorious new day.

The reality is very different.

Certain though I am – and ever more certain – that I must press on in life as though Christ awaited me at the term of the universe, at the same time I feel no special assurance of the existence of Christ. Believing is not seeing. As much as anyone, I imagine, I walk in the shadows of faith.

The shadows of faith: to justify this dimness – so strangely incompatible with the sunlight of the Godhead – the doctors of the Church explain that the Lord deliberately hides himself from us in order to test our love. One would have to be irretrievably committed to mental gymnastics, one would have never to have met in one's own self or in others the agonies of doubt, not to feel the hatefulness of this solution. With your own creatures, God, standing before you, lost and in torment, clamouring for help – and when all you have to do to make them hasten to you would be to let one glance from your eye fall on them, to show them just the fringe of your garment – can I believe that you would not do so?

To my mind, this penumbra of faith is simply a particular case of the problem of evil. And I can see only one way of