

Personality and the Addictions

'Be your own man' is a phrase which is usually applied to the seeking of independence in the sense of striking out on one's own, avoiding the role of subjection, being self-reliant. Of course that idea is fundamentally good. We should not be mere ivy clinging to the walls of life, tumbling down if supports are withdrawn.

But there is a higher form in which we should be our own, that is interiorly, and few enough people achieve that. Self-control in its various forms is not an outstanding feature. To look out over our society, it would almost seem as if no one exercises any self-control. People appear to be yielding totally to their desires, some of which are legitimate. But the point is that it is only a happy accident if they are legitimate, for in most cases they would be given into whether they were good, or bad. Desires, impulses are not resisted; they are just allowed to bear us away. Most people are distressingly like the ship that is at the mercy of the elements. If they

possess in themselves the quality of self-restraint, they certainly do not operate it.

And yet a person in that poor category may well be cutting a big figure in life. How many persons who are acclaimed great by reason of notable performance or high position, are quite unrestrained in their personal lives and characters? Very often, when one digs, will something seriously wrong be found in the background of the great. Look in particular at the acknowledged geniuses for special exemplification of this.

But I do not want this consideration of mine to turn itself into a general inspection of the shortcomings of humanity, but to give it a particular application to what would be regarded as the petty vices, although indeed these can carry one afar, even to disaster.

I am going to deal with the addictions, in particular drinking, smoking, drugs, etc. The *et cetera* could lead us into difficult territory, so I content myself with the named classifications. Excuse the fact that I switch around from one to another of them.

Those things have gone clean out of control in every sense. Governments have come to regard them as being a menace both to health and public order. After having viewed them benignly for a long time as legitimate yieldings and having utilised them for revenue purposes, those governments are now inveighing against them, publishing medical testimony in regard to their harmfulness, and prohibiting the advertising of them. But I think it can be said that those intimidatory measures are having about the same effect as that of a broom which King Canute used to keep back the rising tide. I explain to those not acquainted with the incident that the king in question was completely sane and was employing the broom to point a moral.

I am caused to wonder as to the extent to which people mitigate their consumption of drink or tobacco as the result of those warnings. No doubt the occasional beginner moved and still has sufficient mastery to put on the brakes. Certainly the bulk do not diminish their use of the commodities. It would seem as if they have passed the point where they have control. These are certainly not their own man.

The fact has to be faced to that at a particular stage in the use of those things an addiction has been created. A sort of necessity for them exists. To stop requires a degree of resolution which the majority does not possess. They prefer to bear the various disadvantages – that is the present one of considerable expense and the future possible one of hurt to health – rather to suffer the discomfort of battling with the addiction. Those people have to a limited extent ceased to be in charge of themselves. In extreme cases they are reconciled to that state of servitude which is really worse than that of the slave whose hampered condition may be external only. He may be a free man in his soul.

But the addict is not free. His thinking is conditioned by his need. His ordinary way of life has become dependent on it. If he cannot have it at the usual intervals, he becomes upset to the point of inability to carry on.

At this someone will say: 'Yes, but that would likewise apply to one's food. It has to come to us at regular intervals and we cannot go on without it.'

That is true. But there is the difference that food is a natural requirement whereas those other things are not. The desire for them is artificial. It was implanted by the using of those powerful drugs which at a certain stage inserted themselves into the normal functioning of

the body in such a way that they rank with the natural cravings and have to be satisfied.

Furthermore – and this is radical – food does not require increasing quantities as one goes along, possibly the reverse. But the drugs do and this is their special danger. Progressively they cease to produce the stimulation which has become necessary and therefore the dose has to be steadily increased. The degree of addiction grows.

Again, someone may object that one does not indulge in eating, drinking and smoking mainly because they are cravings; that we derive much pleasure from them. That is so, but I repeat what I have already said: Normal eating is a natural good. Those other things are artificial. You have given them a place in your nervous system which originally and naturally they did not have, but which now is assertive. If you do not satisfy the craving, it hurts you exceedingly. It is a relief and a pleasure to give into it. But surely it represents false policy to create that troublesome situation which would be in much the same category as deliberately causing pain which you then alleviate with opiates. The departure of that pain is a sheer luxury, but would any one for the sake of that luxury be insane enough to create that pain in the first instance?

To do those things deliberately would be like the taking into your house of a tiger as a tiny cub which you know is going to get out of hand when it grows up. But there is this big difference between the tiger and the drug that if you are lucky enough to see initial signs of the tiger's unruliness, you can have him packed off to the zoo. But in the case of the addiction you cannot tear it out of your breast.

So far I have been referring to the cases where it has been possible to keep the use of those things within

bounds, but it is not so easy and not too common. There are persons who are definitely moderate, but even in that case the question arises: why place oneself under that small degree of compulsion and danger? In the case of most people there is a tendency towards excess which goes on strengthening till finally it takes possession. They are always thinking about a drink or a smoke. They are spending money on it which is vitally needed for other purposes, for instance for their families. Unquestionably they have taken on themselves a slavery. Medical testimony supplies innumerable cases where apparently controlled drinkers went into violent delirium tremens when their customary supply was cut off.

Then there are the cases of complete lack of control where fine people have drunk away their lives and incidentally ruined the lives of others. In my own time I have known a very great number of persons of eminent capacity, spiritual and otherwise who have made a total shipwreck of themselves. In some of them it has really been a question of sanctity being thwarted. It represented a tragedy for the world that they original started on the habit.

Of course the invariable reaction to that is the confident declaration: 'That is not going to happen to me.' No one embarking on drink or on the lesser evil ever dreams that it will get out of hand on him. He will not let it! But examine into the number of those who could put it aside if they liked and you will find they are comparatively few. Excess tends to force itself in. Nerve habits are inclined to grow.

To those who think they are safely handling one of those habits I address the following: At a recent meeting of some medical association a report declared that women can successfully play with tippling until about the age of forty-seven when they become addicts. That is a general

and a startling statement. It establishes a distinction between drinking by women and drinking by men at which Women's Lib would protest, but which probably represents a compliment. The more delicate a person's nervous system, the less safe it is to touch drugs. Moreover, as many men have delicate nervous systems, may we not presume that they also would find themselves entrapped at some age?

The special argument which is used to bolster up drinking is that it helps social encounter; in other words that people cannot enjoy each other's company except they are gingered up by drink. That would represent a sorrowful situation if it were true. And I suppose it is true that persons who have become accustomed to social drinking cannot enjoy themselves without the drink. There is no one so mournful, so much on edge as the man who wants a drink and does not get it.

Of course fun can seem fast and furious as long as the drink is flowing. In those circumstances people imagine themselves to be witty and brilliant, but tape-recordings of such outpourings have proved that they are not elevated and can merit to be called drivel.

Then what about the aftermath of those merry gatherings where too much would ordinarily be taken? Well, the carnage on the roads is being largely blamed on the stimulated drivers. But even if all do manage to get home safely, there is the definite problem that such stimulation dies down and is followed by a reaction. Somehow all that false exhilaration has to be paid for – perhaps in ill-temper and serious bickering.

I make this further commentary on that allegation that drink is necessary to make the social wheels go round. The teams of CIE busses which are often engaged by the

Legion for outings have said that the legionaries are the only people who can have really jolly days without having to stop at every pub along the road.

Akin to that delusion as to alcohol making one brilliant is another one: 'I think better when I smoke.' No doubt – because in the absence of that smoke the addict cannot think at all. Moreover, if one reasons it out, is there not some degree of attention being given to the smoking and then a lessening of stress to one's thinking? If every now and then you are impelled to stop for a smoke, it shows that something alien to concentration is at work in your mind.

Another of the more serious misinterpretations which serve towards inducing people to drink and smoke is that it is a mark of manhood to do so; that the manly man does it. You are a sissy if you don't! This can have imperative force on weaker characters. No, on all. For if a thing is repeated sufficiently by those whom we look up to, it is natural to be governed by it. In this way has the young man come to adopt drinking and smoking, and the world is the worse for it.

But there is more to it than that. If the boy drinks and smokes to imitate men, women are now indulging in order to imitate the male sex. This sort of imitation is unworthy of them and amounts only to slavishness. The fact that it is weakness they are imitating makes matters worse.

I have said that when the habit has formed itself, it is more than difficult to unseat it. However, a nurse once told me that she was a committed smoker up to the time when she first saw the lungs of an extreme smoker. Evidently she had dainty ideas about her own body, interior as well as exterior, for the sight of the filthy yellow lungs was a shock to her and she never smoked again.

But one is left to judge that the warnings which the Health Services of the different nations are issuing are not being heeded; there are no reports of a crisis in the drink and tobacco trades. The most recent medical advice proceeding from the highest level of government authority declares that it is an error to suppose that smoking menaces only the lungs; that it is a hurt to the whole physical machine and probably plays a prejudicial part in every ailment, and so it is a curse on the community.

Cases, many of them, jump into my mind where addicts were faced with the medically delivered choice: 'Stop or die,' and they chose the latter. The present torment of craving was worse than the distant likelihood of dying.

One man, by the way a naturally high-minded one, was in the agonies of craving for drink. The only readily available supply was what was intended for his dying daughter who was being kept alive by repeated teaspoonfuls. He seized the total supply with the explanation: 'My necessities are greater than hers.' This was an act of which he would have been incapable if he were a free man.

I could specify for you hundreds, nay thousands of cases like that one where good and nice people have been driven by drink to perpetrate outrageous acts quite foreign to their character.

Apart from those grievous cases, I do say that to take drink even moderately could be an unnecessary hazard to your fulfilment as a person in as much as it is an intervention from outside, which at best can only exercise a mellow deceptiveness, and at worst can turn a decent person into a demon.

I give you an example of the former; that is the mellowing: A friend told me that his mother, a very lovable and abstemious person, always took a half glass

of whisky before leaving home for Confession every Saturday afternoon. She said it gave her perfect contrition. It enabled her to weep over her sins. But you will see that those tears came out of the bottle.

It is rather painful to watch the drinking man. He seems to be unable to do anything without a preliminary drink. Indeed everything is made the excuse for one. How can he contend that his will has free play? If we were engaged in some sensitive, important work we would not wish to have someone beside us jogging our elbow. But to the extent that we are subject to a craving we have, not beside us but in us, a disturbing force. It is not a case of merely jogging our elbow but of interfering with our personality. We are no longer free men. We have introduced inside us an intruder which is always claiming attention, which insists on its own rights, and which struggles for dominion over us. We are not in control of our own house.

This brings us to something of uttermost importance. There is a medical word which I find hard to pronounce but I must try. It is schizophrenia. Its true meaning is that of a mental state where ideas and actions become dissociated from each other. But its fashionable use is to denote a split personality, almost equivalent to another person entering in at times and taking over in us – a sort of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde business. Here I have to refer you to the powerful novel of that title by Robert Louis Stevenson. Appropriately enough, the switch from one personality to another in that book was produced by drugs, and the change was from a benign, cultivated doctor to a criminal maniac, a human devil. Of course that is only a story but a certain amount of it is applicable to what we are talking about.

Personality stands for the ruling principle in us, and as such for a consistency, a capacity for concentration, an unswerving vision. But these things do not harmonise with even a moderate degree of addiction which breaks in frequently and demands to be served. And Holy Writ itself says that we cannot serve two masters.

Thereby has not that addict interfered with his personality? And in such case has he not done himself what can be described as central-damage.

There is yet another aspect which applies to the moderate and controlled individual. It is that there is in those habits a certain offence against delicacy? Could one imagine St Teresa of Avila, just to mention one of the saints, or Edel Quinn, puffing away at cigarettes? Still less could we conceive the same in respect of Our Blessed Lady.

Those are women. But could we think of St Francis of Assisi or St Bernard in the role of the alleged moderate drinker or smoker? You will agree that the notion is incongruous. It just strikes a wrong note in the harmony of holiness. I am not saying that a moderate drinker or smoker cannot achieve sanctity. I suppose that we could find such in the ranks of the saints. But I do say that the two ideas require some little adjusting with each other.

For sanctity is a matter of a single-minded approach. Can the person, who is beset by cravings which he has brought on himself and which he is unable to resist, possess that single-mindedness? It is an interesting question. Of course it could be correctly argued that to fight for sanctity against a disability – however caused – which has become a natural infirmity is a source of merit. But again that only boils down to the essential in this discussion: Why subject ourselves to something which

so easily can become an infirmity and which may form an obstacle to sanctity? For sanctity requires the doing of violence to oneself in many ways. In other words do not embark on those particular forms of amusement. Or if you have already embarked but are able to emancipate yourself, do so without hesitation.

Here the argument may be presented that the system requires some moderate stimulation and that in the days before tea and coffee were available, the corresponding beverages were wine and weak beer. They were even prescribed in the rules of religious orders. But that took care of them and kept them in their place. Nowadays the tea and coffee fulfil that purpose of moderate stimulation.

I am not looking on this matter from the angle of its being virtuous to give up drinking and smoking. Of course it would be a very brave act to break away from those habits out of pure self-sacrifice and not merely to save health and money. It is no act of virtue to abstain if one has no desire for those things.

But there is a fundamental reason. Why stir up the evil which is boiling deep down in every child of Adam and Eve just like the fiery fury which seethes under the earth's crust and which erupts frequently as volcano or earthquake. No one would wilfully set about producing that effect in nature. Why do it in the human order by awakening urges which are so ready to rage? Yet the use of drugs basically does that very thing. They tend towards weakening the barrier which all right education has built up in us to curb the elemental evil that is in us. It is a real case of playing with fire, and we should not even at a distance warm ourselves at that fire.

The Mormons

Today there is a crisis of faith. In it many children of the Church have shown themselves to be disloyal. They seem to be anxious to find fault. They are tilting against the only source of certainty in the world. It seems incredible in these days of literacy that such people have not read history and learned from it what happens the moment one forsakes the Rock of Peter. A steady drift, equivalent to that of an avalanche, sets in. It cannot be stopped and it goes to every extreme of fantasy and folly. And the final end is chaos, the abandonment of everything that could reasonably be called faith.

I am going to give you an example of this. It is the case of the Mormons, or as they prefer to call themselves: The Latter Day Saints. As a preliminary I give you the general religious set-up in America, the framework in which the Mormons were born. After the revolution, the country took a dive into irreligion. The nation was founded on dissent, and therefore, the decision was to have no recognised Church. Yet in the hearts of men the need for religion was felt. Many set up as prophets and proceeded

to preach to the people, all of them claiming to base their revelations on the Bible and to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Incredible were the products. Preachers rode around on horseback announcing all their sensations. These were called circuit-riders. But the idea in the mind of each one was the setting up of a conventicle or a temple of some kind.

All those outpourings had a common feature. They announced the end of the world as being very near; it was imperative to make immediate preparation for it. They described Hell as if they were looking in through a window at it. They all claimed to be directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and many of them went much further even than this. They poured out revelations which they claimed had been given to them. The people flocked to hear them and manifestations of an uncanny sort took place.

In order to show what was at stake, and at the same time try to prove how necessary it is for us to hold tight to the Church, I am going to give a few examples of that revivalist stuff.

Jemima Wilkinson claimed to be Christ and simply poured out her revelations to the crowd who followed her around. One of her specialties was that she would never die. However, she did and this shook her movement.

Isaac Bullard wore nothing but his own hair and a bearskin girdle. His teaching was a species of Communism, all goods held in common and free love.

Anna Lee called herself the Reincarnated Christ. She founded the Shakers. The special characteristic of these was their dervish dancing, and their talking in what they called divers tongues – which when analysed proved to be nothing but gibberish.

Joseph Dylks boldly proclaimed himself to be God. His slogan was: 'I am God and there is no other. In me the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are met. All who put their trust in me shall never taste death.' Crowds grovelled before him, and his shouts and snorts terrified them and positively shook the roof of his tabernacle. The ordinary people of Ohio finally rebelled against this abomination and rode him out of the country on a pole.

William Miller, who founded the Seventh Day Adventists indulged in false prophecies of the coming of Our Lord. He foretold this as to take place in 1843 and then in 1845. This cost him a lot of credit but did not prevent his movement extending widely.

Robert Matthias strode around New York brandishing a sword and a seven-foot ruler and shouting that he had come to redeem the world.

Abel Sargent talked with angels, mouthed revelations, toured the state with his twelve women apostles pretending to raise the dead. He preached that when one became holy, one could live without food. Some of his disciples tried this and died – which ruined the sect.

The characteristics of all these lunacy creeds were much the same. I give some aspects. Remember that all these people were claiming to be filled with the Holy Spirit and that their actions were a consequence of his holy presence. Now listen: Hundreds fell to the earth senseless. Elegantly dressed women lay in the mud beside ragged trappers. Some were seized by jerks, their heads and limbs snapped back and forward, their bodies grotesquely distorted. Those who caught the barks would fall on all fours growling and snapping like camp dogs fighting over garbage. Looking at the convulsed limbs and apparently lifeless bodies strewn around them, these preachers would

cry out that the gods were among the people. But how they could see the operations of God in all that uncouth performance is a mystery. Those revivalist conversions were notoriously short-lived and the reactions from them were drastic. One very prominent person returning to the scene of one of those manifestations after three months, issued his judgment as to what he saw: He found everybody sad, frigid, carnal, contentious, and of the opinion that religion was a mere delusion.

The established sects, such as the Baptists and the Methodists, shared largely in the foregoing and split into many subdivisions.

Out of the thousands of these prophets and their sects which spawned from unrestrained religious lawlessness, only one was destined to a sort of glory: This was Joseph Smith who founded the Mormons. In what I tell about him, I am much indebted to Fawn Brodie's biography of him, entitled *No Man Knows My History*. This title represents a saying of his own. An amusing commentary on those words of his is that he wrote a six-volume autobiography which talks much but tells little. He was born in Vermont in 1805.

Joseph reflected the irreligion and cynicism of his own father. He is described as being a likable ne'er-do-well, notorious for his tall stories. America at that time was full of legends of gold and other treasures hidden away by the Indians. Joseph thought that this was a good way of getting rich quick. His operations went further than that, leading around a band of idlers and digging for the buried wealth. He utilised all the apparatus of magic, crystals, stuffed toads, mineral rods and seer-stones. The procedure would be that when the foregoing implements had located a supposed treasure, a circle of wooden stakes would be

driven in around the spot. One man would march around with a drawn sword to guard against Satan's counter attacks. Then a black sheep would be led around and its throat cut to appease the evil spirits – the guardians of the place. Then would follow a furious but futile digging.

Eventually, this conduct ended in a prosecution. At that time, he was 21 years of age. The court record shows that he was charged with being a disorderly person and an impostor. He admitted to practising magic and organising hunts for buried gold. The court found him guilty of disturbing the peace. He gave up the money-digging then, but we must connect that pursuit of his with what subsequently occurred.

He later claimed that when he was 14 he had a vision of the Lord in which it was revealed to him that all the existing religions were false and that he must not touch any of them. It is peculiar that he had kept quiet about this. Not a word about it until considerably later! This is unlike the behaviour of a boy.

Then in 1823, on the night of 21 September, the great revelation took place. The angel Moroni indicated to Joseph the spot where certain gold plates lay buried. Inscribed on these was the story of the first settlers in America. It is odd that Joseph did not go there until four years later. Then he went and Moroni gave him a strong box containing a volume, six inches thick, made of thin gold plates eight inches by seven, fastened together by three gold rings. These plates were covered with small writings in reformed Egyptian. This remarkable find was accompanied by two crystals, joined together after the manner of a pair of spectacles. These crystals were named Urim and Thummim. Using them, he was enabled to decipher the plates.

As Joseph was unable to read and write fluently, he employed a friend called Oliver Cowdery to whom, from behind a curtain, he dictated a translation.

This translation was printed in 1830 under the title of *The Book of Mormon*. It was accompanied by a sworn statement by Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris that an angel had shown them the plates. This testimony was subsequently repudiated as false by the three of them, but they went back on this again. Subsequently, when a clamour arose that the gold plates be produced, they most mysteriously disappeared. So nobody ever saw them except Joseph and the three hesitating ones.

The story told by those plates was truly a strange one. The first settlers to arrive in America were the Jaredites. They came directly from the Tower of Babel.

They multiplied but were destroyed about the time of the second settlement. These were Israelites from Jerusalem who arrived in 600 BC. They were alleged to be descendants of the Patriarch Joseph. They were called the Nephites. They were annihilated about the year AD 400 in a battle at Cumorah, in the State of New York. Among the handful who escaped were Mormon and his son Moroni. The former collected the sixteen books of their records into one volume. At his death this was supplemented by his son Moroni and buried in that hill at Cumorah, destined to be discovered one day by God's chosen prophet. The descendants of the Nephites were the Indians. I need not tell you that there is not a word of truth in this genealogy.

The Book of Mormon states that Jesus made his appearance in America immediately after his Resurrection and planted the gospel in all its fullness, precisely as in the other continent. The doctrines, the priesthood, the evangelists, the gifts, were all the same. But the unbelief

and the misconduct of the Nephites cut them off from this inheritance. Mormon was the last of their prophets. When the record on the gold plates would be brought forth in later days, it would be united with the Bible and would be its supplement and equal to it. It is to be noted that our Bible has no pre-eminence over the Book of Mormon and the other two documents, which contain the Mormon religion. These latter, i.e. the doctrine, covenant and the pearl of great price, are the work of Joseph Smith.

In the Book of Mormon, Joseph is constituted the prophet of the Revelation with fullest powers.

It is possible that of all forms of belief in the whole world those of the Mormons, as purveyed by Joseph Smith, are the most irrational. The Mormons do not claim to be a Christian sect – no more than Mohammedanism does. The Holy Trinity is repudiated. The Holy Spirit is not a person but only a sort of divine fluid or influence poured out by the Father. Christ, Mohammed, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young are all prophets and partake of divinity. There are passages in the Mormon writings which convey the notion that they believe in a plurality of gods. There are statements as to the gods performing creative functions and organising the earth.

They teach that Adam was God and the only God that they know. The following is the declaration of Brigham Young who succeeded Joseph Smith: 'When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came with a celestial body and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He is our father and our god, and the only one with whom we have to do.' Joseph Smith states: 'The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's.'

The fall in the Garden of Eden of this Adam-god is declared to have taken place. God thus submitted to

falling in order that the Redemption of the human race would be accomplished. Subsequently the Father begot Jesus Christ by the Virgin Mary. As all know, one of the special inclinations of Mormonism was subsequently towards polygamy. Therefore they had to put Our Lord Jesus Christ into this category. They assert positively that he was a polygamist; Martha, Mary and Magdalene being among his wives. They state that the marriage feast at Cana was his own wedding.

The Mormons lay great stress on baptism as essential to salvation. But what exactly salvation means is not so clear. Because everyone is to be saved except a very small handful of un-regenerates called the Sons of Perdition. These must be very bad; one would be curious to know who they are! Smith divides Heaven into three sections: The Celestial for the members of the true church. The Terrestrial for those who have never known the gospel! The Telestial for a third kingdom, whose glory is that of the stars, to be peopled by those who had refused the law of God. So there does not seem to be much gain in being saved as a Mormon!

One of the extraordinary tenets governs the baptism of the dead. The Mormons make no distinction between the living and the dead in this matter. They make a special feature of these proxy baptisms, running as part of their system a genealogical department. Members are enjoined to discover the names of their ancestors so that they may receive this benefit.

Let me remark that this procedure is based upon their interpretation of St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, (15:29), which is as follows: 'Else what shall they do who receive baptism for the dead? If the dead do not rise at all, why then do people receive baptism for them?'

I here give the Catholic commentary on the foregoing abstruse text: 'From this it seems that the Christians were accustomed to receive baptism externally as substitutes for the Catechumens who had received it only in desire. It did not have sacramental effect but was tolerated as being the performance of an act which the Catechumens desired but could not themselves receive. It showed a belief in the Resurrection.'

The drinking of alcohol in any form is prohibited to the Mormons, as is also tea, coffee and tobacco. Here as an aside, I mention that Joseph Smith in his hey-day as a prophet opened a bar in his own home. On various occasions it was stated that all the brethren were drunk except himself. The Smith family fought and boxed each other. The same took place among the elders, and even Rigdon, second after Joseph, was assaulted by Joseph himself.

After initially declaring an equality with the Negroes, Joseph was turned in the opposite direction by the violent clamour which ensued. Ever since that, the Mormon doctrine has taught that the Negroes are the cursed sons of Ham. They may become Mormons but they are ineligible for the priesthood. This law is at present causing great trouble among the Mormons because it has become untenable in the present state of affairs in the USA. Even the Mormons themselves say that it will have to be changed, but there is no other way of changing it except through a positive revelation. The present head of the Mormons says that there will not be any revelation.

Such is the amazing medley which issues from the *Book of Mormon* and its accompanying documents. The first Mormon Church was organised in 1830. The history of the movement after that is one of migration and

struggle. Various locations were tried by Joseph Smith for the building of his great city, but each of these had to be abandoned in turn. Needless to say, the doctrines of his Church, and still more perhaps the behaviour of those who held those doctrines, stirred the ordinary easy-going settlers into a frenzy. There was abundant persecution of the brethren, and in the course of these Joseph Smith and his brother were shot dead by a mob in 1844. In dying, he declared himself to be a Master Freemason. Some claim that his death constituted a martyrdom, and that it made him great and his religion a success. It started the Smith legend from which all evidences of deception and human frailty were gradually eliminated by his followers. Today, the personal side of Joseph Smith is forgotten by the Mormons. His writings are not read by the average Mormon. What survives is a spirit of conquest and zeal for the building of their Kingdom of God. They have a great zest for knowledge, and they identify God with material progress. The communistic ideas, which were a feature of the earlier days are now totally disavowed. It has been said that they beatify big business.

One of the very troubled aspects of Mormonism was its polygamy. This was based on a revelation of Joseph Smith and was practiced determinedly. However, the Federal Government declared themselves against the practice and an era of a semi-war followed. Later on, the Mormons abandoned this ground. After Joseph's death, a dozen women signed affidavits that he had taken them as wives in the full sense of that word. And there were, of course, many others who did not present themselves publicly.

One of the best ways of countering Mormonism would certainly lie in making its followers read their own historical records. These are now proved to contain an

absolute tissue of fabrications, errors and inconsistencies. For instance, Smith produced what he called the *Book of Abraham* and exhibited as his source for it a papyrus alleged to have been recovered from an Egyptian tomb. This has been seen to be a ghastly fraud. Not a single word in it is true. Experts have pronounced it to be a total collection of fancies and nonsense. This document has been rejected by the modern Mormon Church.

Though unpossessed of the slightest qualification for the work, Joseph Smith had the audacity to undertake a new edition of the Bible. Into the Book of Genesis he inserted a prophecy about himself. On the lips of Joseph, the son of Jacob, he placed the following: 'Thus saith the Lord God of my Fathers to me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father.'

It is to be wondered if the history of the entire world affords a greater case of duplicity and impiety than that one where Joseph Smith seeks to smuggle himself into the Bible 4,000 years after it was written.

A kindred forgery was his introduction into the Book of Isaiah of references to the Book of Mormon and the return of the gold plates to the Lord. Let it be mentioned that the modern Mormon Church has availed of the fact that Smith's fantastic production was unfinished to put it aside. They use the ordinary King James Bible.

Of course, Joseph Smith, like all others of that type, tried his hand at prophecy. He assured various followers of his that they would stand on earth until Christ came. That misfired, as we know. He also proclaimed that fifty-six years would wind up the world. This prediction was inserted in his *History of the Church* but was subsequently deleted. It is good to be able to cancel false prophecy like that.

It worked out well for the Mormons that the world did not end thus before 1900, for they have multiplied and prospered. Today they number on their own estimate 2,600,000. Lest, however, this growth be thought to be utterly prodigious and supernatural, I point to the fact that, at the common rate of population increase, a figure of 150,000 in 1840 would amount to 2½ million today. Even if the Mormons in 1840 fell far short of 150,000, still this would take any marvellous or supernatural flavour out of their growing; more especially as few of them have drunk or smoked themselves to death. Moreover, determined addiction to polygamy for many years should have greatly increased the normal rate.

The Living Core

It is not easy to project one's ideas. Without proof it is unwise to suppose one has succeeded in getting over to others what is in one's own mind. You talk clearly and convincingly and believe that you have conveyed to another mind what is in your own, and yet it is possible to construct something quite different. This affects every department of thought, but here I am applying it to the field of religious instruction.

I refer to a number of discussions, which have recently taken place on this subject. One was in connection with the problem of missionary catechumenates. A bishop of quite exceptional experience proposed to his priests the desirability of increasing the local catechumenate period from two years to three years. His contention was that the existing system was turning out baptised pagans! But simultaneously in another missionary area, where the catechumenate period was three years, the suggestion of raising it to four years was made on the same grounds, i.e. that 'baptised pagans' were being produced. So apparently the mere increasing of the period would not secure the desired result.

And when there is talk of long terms like four years, it is well to consider that the longer the period the fewer will be those who will submit to it or accomplish it. It is possible to demand too much of human nature, and especially this mistake should not be made when that human material is un-baptised and primitive. Why expect from such persons standards of conviction and resoluteness, which would not be forthcoming from an old Christian community?

Other similar discussions relate to more advanced territories. Children judged to have satisfactorily completed the usual long years of religious instruction, have been subsequently shown to be exhibiting: (a) a serious inadequacy in point of actual knowledge; (b) reasonably good knowledge but incapacity to use it; or (c) what I must, for want of a better term, call a lack of the sense of Catholicism. In saying this I hark back to my opening sentences. The teachers of those people had not communicated to their minds the picture of Catholicism, which they themselves possessed. What is in some of those minds is virtually a caricature of Catholicism. In what way? I will try to explain.

Frequently we find with a shock such persons regarding other religions as being rivals to Catholicism in the sense that those religions have their own status, their own range of truth, their own powers to save – and hence that the people in them should be left alone. As the phrase puts it: Do not interfere with their belief! My comment on this is that such a valuation of Catholicism truly denotes a ‘baptised pagan’.

Another variant is to view Catholicism as a sort of test or examination, comprising things to be known or things to be done, which (if finally passed) entitles one to eternal happiness. In other words those persons carry on into

adult life the idea they had of religion when at school, i.e. a knowledge and disciplinary system based upon a whole lot of doctrines (representing 350 questions in one Catechism) which in those persons' minds so lack any principle of unity or connection as to amount almost to chaos.

One supremely competent and authoritative quarter, approaching this entire question from a different angle, has gone so far as to estimate that when the process of teaching the Catechism has been well and truly done, one-third of the work of teaching *Catholicism* has been accomplished! Oh! And what has been left undone at that stage? The missing two-thirds is what that authority described as 'indoctrination,' and which I venture to bring into line with what I have been saying above. I attribute to 'indoctrination' the meaning of easy familiarity, ability to handle, conviction, urge to spread, and kindred ideas. It will be realised how far this conception is from those other ones of Catholicism as a religion among many or as a divine examination set in many unrelated subjects.

I suggest that the mind of very many Catholics is not a little like a builder's yard. In separate heaps lie all the materials for a house. For instance that yard might contain enough roofing for a terrace of houses but little or no wood. Furthermore the intrinsic value of those materials is quite different, for example the Mass and indulgences. Side by side in apparent equality are the vital things, the secondary ones, and the lesser. The teacher who has the Christian idea clear in his mind is seeing all those items assembled into the correct whole. But too often he does not succeed in casting that picture into the mind of the pupil. In the latter's mind is all the confusion and disproportion of the builder's yard; it does not add up

to the Catholic mind. One would have to be fanatically optimistic to believe that such a person will do battle for the Church or sustain the substantial shocks which the waves of the world will administer.

Those various aspects of defect which we have been looking at – i.e. the baptised paganism, the divine exam, the builder's yard and the 'one religion nearly as good as the other' – do not represent a living thing, nor a unity nor a simple idea. Yet our religion must necessarily be this. For Christianity and Christ must be largely interchangeable terms. Have we become too complex? Are we aiming at too much in the case of initial instruction, so that in the end we stack up the builder's yard and miss our aim altogether?

Let us return to the primitive days before formal catechisms were drawn up. Let us try to imagine for ourselves how the catechumens were handled at that time when all instruction was oral, and when minds were not readily open to abstract ideas. I think we can gather accurately enough from the gospel what those pupils were told. It certainly all centred around a person. It would have told of the Fall of our first parents and the promise of the woman and her seed who would redeem what had been lost. The ages pass; the woman comes; her child is born in circumstances which are told in vivid, loving detail. He grows up and enters on his mission – again replete with all the detail – and more – afforded in the gospel. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried. He rose again the third day and ascended into Heaven. Then Pentecost and the expansion of the Body of Christ.

And here one had to get over to those simple audiences the idea of the Church as the Living Body of Christ, or as the Church later put it for the sake of greater accuracy, the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church is of course an institution. It is visible. It has its system of government, membership, teaching and ceremonial. But it is no mere institution. It is the personal action of Christ continued on earth. It is Christ living in us and pursuing his life to a planned fullness. It is plain from the gospel that, whatever clouding attached to that doctrine in later times, it was peremptorily proposed to the primitive Christians. And indeed it is difficult to see in what other way the Christian life can be explained or reduced to one simple, coherent whole.

It is constantly being asserted that the Mystical Body represents select, inaccessible doctrine. Yet St Thomas Aquinas calls it the central dogma of Christianity. True, we cannot probe it, but we can grasp the general idea. Is it any more difficult than the Eucharist, which is proposed to little ones?

Our Lord at the Incarnation attached to himself all those for whom he was going to die, and in such a fashion that they formed one mystical person with himself; and that the acts of any one would affect the body for better or worse. Actually it is quite impossible to understand Redemption without the aid of that idea. Without it, Redemption becomes a most puzzling transaction, for why should the death of another person redeem *us*?

Our Lord expiated our sins because they were the offences of a body which he had taken unto himself. In that body circulates the acts of all its members. Our contribution is a sorry one – mostly sins. But some persons play a worthier role. Some try to act in the spirit of that striking suggestion of St Paul, i.e. that we are called on to make up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ.

In this interchange of contributions Our Lord gives his divinity and his infinite satisfaction. Without that

contribution, all the acts of the body would be unavailing. But granted that contribution, our acts do avail and accomplish things. We are summoned by the divine idea to make *our* contribution, which God exacts at its absolute maximum. We must give what we can towards our own salvation and towards that of others. That is the idea of Redemption, and everything in Christian doctrine takes its position in relation to that fact.

The Church is infallible because it is a case of Christ's voice speaking out of his own body; it claims authority because he is ruling through his deputies. Our prayers have worth because he is praying through them: but for that fact, as Fr Faber puts it, our prayers would have little better value than the querulous crying of the plover. There are miracles, and there have to be miracles, because he is continuing his wonder-working life in us. The Mass is not merely a ritual with varying vestments; it is the prolongation of the awful sacrifice; it is Calvary in our midst. The Eucharist is the food of that body; baptism, matrimony and holy orders provide for its increase. Penance and extreme unction are its remedies. Confirmation is the prolongation of the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit.

Mary's pivotal position in Christianity is due to the fact that she is mother of Jesus and therefore of his body, with the same function, the same necessity.

All that is a pious estimate of what the ancient catechumen would have been taught. It is nothing more than the substance of the gospel. It represents living truth, applying to a living body and centred on a person. It is not difficult to understand it. Rather, anything different is impossible to understand. Depart from that person and that unity, and we swing over to those defective notions

which we have been contemplating with dismay. We are back to silence, inactivity, doubt and defeat! We would have reduced the Church to the level of a mere institution – a sort of religious university.

On the other hand, that idea of the living Body of Christ simplifies, transforms, energises and conquers. What was it caused ignorant spectators, along the martyrs' march to death, to fall in behind them and share their doom; or to make magistrates and guards undertake the martyrdom to which they had just been condemning Christians? It was not the builder's yard; it was one simple, even rudimentary idea: Those people believe in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is truth, is love, is God.

I am not of course contending that all doctrinal teaching should be reduced to the core which I have specified, but only urging that it be recognised as a core; and as such concentrated on; and at the very beginning given to the young and the catechumen without further embellishment. The general notion should be that everything else is only as something growing out of that body, much as the plumage grows out of the bird. Primary preoccupation should be with the living core. We must not let the doctrinal plumage absorb us to the extent of causing us to lose grip of the idea of the Church as the living Christ. If we relax there, we have lost everything that matters. And even the 'plumage' would have lost its value in our eyes. For its only status is that of an outgrowing of the divine life of the body, a putting forth which is necessary for the purposes of that life. Any doctrine divorced from the living Christ would be as plumage without the bird, or as the anatomy book without the man.

When that core or fledgling has acquired some maturity, or in other words when it has been grasped

by the mind, then the plumage can be thought of. The Christian embellishment can take place without danger of confusing or concealing the main fact.

When we think naturally about the Church as that person, and realise that there is very little difference between Christ surrounded by his disciples, and the Church composed of ourselves, then everything comes to life and gains vivid colour. Our hearts melt in us. Our religion becomes an adventure, and we are ready to take seriously that man who says to us: 'Do you love me? Will you lay down your life for me?'

De Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*¹

Here is a book which, I imagine, is positively unique. Most of its readers will see it only as yet another attempt to reduce man and his world to materialistic dimensions; to further whittle down the biblical account of the origin of man; and to establish a total evolutionary system, that is one in which the supernatural does not assert itself from start to finish. Everything works itself out by natural processes. It is in fact the sort of book on which the non-supernaturalists would, and have, unhesitatingly put their seal.

But, strange to say and disguised though its theme is, the book may not be that but the reverse. I can see it as a Trojan Horse introduced into the camp of the materialists, an effort to capture them for a theory of the origin and ascent of men which is nothing more than the Christian

1 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ, *The Phenomenon of Man*, first published by Éditions du Seuil in 1955 in French and by Harper & Brothers (US), William Collins (UK) in English in 1959.

one. This the author, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ, hopes to accomplish by toning down aspects of the Christian story which the scientists have got into the habit of scorning, by investing everything with a scientific gloss, i.e. calling God 'Omega' and by using jargon expressions instead of saying 'God did this'.

The remarkable thing is that he seems to have got away with this to a large extent. That white knight of materialism, Sir Julian Huxley, writes an enthusiastic eighteen-page Introduction, but says that: 'De Chardin's thought is not fully clear to me; and especially where he suggests an emergent divinity, and where he speaks of his trend as a Christogenesis ...I find it impossible to follow him all the way in his gallant attempt to reconcile the supernatural elements in Christianity with the facts and implications of evolution" (page 19).

But Sir Julian goes on to say that these things 'in no way detract from the positive value of De Chardin's naturalistic general approach'. This latter phrase appears to express the mind of De Chardin himself. For on page 29 he insists that his book is to be read purely and simply as a scientific treatise. He adds that the book deals with the whole phenomenon of man.

My comment here is that there is either a complete misunderstanding at work between Sir Julian and De Chardin, or else that the latter is perpetrating a sheer artifice (though this is repudiated by him on page 292). Sir Julian is judging the book to be Mr Hyde pure and simple, whereas the author intends it to be Mr Hyde evolving into Doctor Jekyll.

This is made plain by the Epilogue and Postscript (which I refer to in future as the Epilogue), which occupy the last few pages (page 291 etc.). When he speaks of his 'book'

he must be including the Epilogue in its scope as a vital, indeed the vital part, whereas Huxley is not really counting it into the book at all, but is only dealing playfully with it as being a mere professional gesture which De Chardin had to make.

The Epilogue cannot be dismissed in this way. Without it, the rest of the book is only nonsense. The Epilogue is the Trojan Horse. It takes the previous parts of the book and reverses the meaning they seem to have. Yet this is so cleverly done that the race of materialists has hailed the book as an up-to-date gospel.

On page 26 Sir Julian makes the following strange statements: 'De Chardin has forced scientists to see the spiritual implications of their knowledge' and again: 'Nor can the materialistically-minded deny the importance of spiritual experiences and religious feeling.' I do not understand what meaning Sir Julian intends those remarks of his to possess. For without the Epilogue, which he repudiates, I cannot see any spiritual experience or religious feeling in the book.

I am tempted to take the Epilogue immediately and to endeavour to put its ideas before you, because after that the book itself would have some sense. But this would spoil the purpose of presenting De Chardin's work in the manner he stipulates and as it is being seen by the naturalistic fraternity, and (with distress) by a great number of others, namely as a purely naturalistic explanation of the origin of man. It has been hailed as a supreme achievement, 'a landmark in modern thought,' 'A synthesis of evolutionary science and religious doctrine that has the lucidity and sweep of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*'. What wonder then that so many of us common people are dazed, dismayed and impressed!

So now I approach the book from the angle prescribed by De Chardin; that is without the Epilogue and as a scientific account of the phenomenon of man.

The book breaks radically away from the traditional account of the purpose of life, including that of man, on this earth. The author shows no creative acts or steps in the emerging of the different forms of life. All is ruthlessly evolutionary. He goes so far as to attribute to matter and to each atom of it a psychic quality, a sort of consciousness of life (he even uses the word 'soul') which has always contained in itself a plan towards which it would work, leading it to combine with other particles and ascend the long ladder of evolution, always striving towards higher forms; vegetable, animal, intellectual, being steps in the process.

Hearing him talking thus we are inclined to knock him off with the word 'pantheism'. But De Chardin was a trained theologian and he denies specifically that he is a pantheist. So even without the Epilogue we must exempt him from that imputation.

The 'mind' of each of those particles has been getting a bigger and bigger grip on itself as the years went by, and as a consequence was producing more and more complicated forms. To those who cannot see how such a process could accomplish itself at all, the overwhelming figure of five hundred million years is exhibited. The inference is that nothing is impossible in that length of time. Every scientist seems to be hypnotised by this idea of the Might and Bigness. Apparently the 'Passage of Time' is endowed with omnipotence and omniscience. Incidentally it follows that man has no real importance because he is so infinitely small in comparison with the hundred billions of boiling globes of gas which we call

the stars, and with the corresponding billions of years. Of course this sounds impressive to the unthinking. But reduced to simple shape it would prove that a man is inferior to an elephant. The position is the reverse – and to the drastic extent declared by Pascal, i.e. that all those billions of stars are less than a single human thought.

So those intelligent, plan-filled particles steadily improved themselves. They entered into such fruitful alliances with others that they organised into advanced structures. Then to use De Chardin's own phrase, there was nothing to prevent them from going further. He has a chapter entitled: 'The Advent of Life'. Which gives us the 'low down' on what was taking place. After ages and ages, and pages of Gilbertianese, life was born on earth. God, we say created the world with a word. There are many, many words, confident and intuitive (his own words) in De Chardin's genesis of that first living cell, but nothing that the mind can recognise as an adequate explanation, though one sees such words as 'evidence' and 'proof' scattered about.

But the upshot of it all was that something which we in our foolishness would be found regarding as a naturally impossible step – the transition from inanimate or inert matter to living substance – accomplished itself with less trouble than it took aeroplanes to beat the supersonic barrier! So that it is impossible for him to head the next chapter 'The Expansion of Life'.

Someone will protest that I am turning things into a farce. I protest back that I am not. The farce is already there, dressed up in science like a skeleton in a suit of armour. I am only opening up the armour to let you see for yourself.

Of course that must have been a real encouragement to the psychism of those particles and of the living forms which had been evolved. The moment a primitive life was at large on the earth, there is no trouble about its multiplying itself. With the experience gained and the gathering momentum of self-improvement, there was no holding back cellular life. That psychic quality had now earned its real chance and was getting well into its stride. It had little or no trouble – of course with the help of the Passage of Time – in promoting itself with vegetable life, and then into animal life and into that allegedly special form of the latter known as the primates (apes).

Now we are on the eve of things! For, says De Chardin 'this instrument (the anthropoid ape) was so remarkable supple and rich' that the next inevitable step had to have prodigious consequences, so much so that any of those previous mutations was as nothing compared with what was to come. Let that step be told in his own rendering which surely could not be improved upon:

By the end of the Tertiary era the psychical temperature in the cellular world had been rising for more than five hundred million years: From branch to branch, from layer to layer, we have seen how nervous systems followed *pari passu* the process of increased complication and concentration. Finally, with the primates an instrument was fashioned so remarkably supple and rich that the step immediately following could not take place without the whole animal psychism being as it were recast and consolidated on itself.

Now this movement did not stop, for there was nothing in the structure of the organism to prevent

it advancing. When the anthropoid, so to speak, had been brought 'mentally' to the boil, some further calories were added. Or, when the anthropoid had almost reached the summit of the cone, a final effort took place along the axis. No more was needed for the whole inner equilibrium to be upset. What was previously only a centred surface became a centre. By a tiny 'tangential' increase, the 'radial' was turned back on itself and, so to speak, took an infinite leap forward. Outwardly, almost nothing in the organism had changed. But in depth a great revolution had taken place: consciousness was now leaping and boiling in a space of super-sensory relationships and representations; and simultaneously consciousness was capable of perceiving itself in the concentrated simplicity of its faculties. All this happened for the first time.

It is difficult to comment on this. I suppose for colossal bluff nothing like it has ever been seriously put down on paper. The ordinary run of mortal, uneducated in scientific phraseology, could hardly fail to be awed by this photographic description, all the more so as it has received such a good press. And yet, what does it all amount to? Reduced to honesty, it means exactly nothing except a welter of words. I venture to give the gist of some phrases. Listen:

Boiling point was reached in the anthropoid, and a dose of extra calories was added in; the axis exerted itself convulsively and upset the previous equilibrium. (But may I interpret that this was doubtful equilibrium with all that fierce evolution and its drastic refashionings going on.) The central surface becomes a

centre. The radial turns back on itself and, so to speak, takes an infinite leap forward. Consciousness is now bubbling and effervescing in a space of super-sensory relationships and representations. Man comes silently into the world.

But why should I be recapitulating what the author has already said so much more effectively – and according to certain ecstatic reviewers, ‘in words of vision, greatness and lucidity’!

Lest any of the commonality might wonder if that startling conglomeration of technical phrases stands for some sort of recognised scientific process, I explain that such is not the case. Although it is depicted as if he had been witnessing it through a microscope, that process is only in De Chardin’s mind. The fact that it is boiling over with scientific vapour does not make it more substantial. The whole operation is just plain fantasy. The anthropoid may have been transformed into man, but certainly this was not effected in the manner prescribed.

Now an important point arises: Why had it to be the ape in whom all these evolutionary convulsions took place? The author tells us in a way which one might call determined and direct. Arguments are made bend to his purpose. Here is his explanation:

It all derived from the fact that the ape was operating, to a large extent in any case, on two legs and more or less using the front ones as arms. This meant that he had not to snap at his prey like so many other animals had, and, therefore, that his jaw muscles were not so aggressively developed. This in turn left his skull free to expand and of course this facilitated brain evolution, which was essential if that future being was to think!

This leaves one breathless. Reason rebels:

- a. How could a little thing like muscles on the brain hold back an evolution which the author has already explained 'had to take place; nothing could stop it'? Remember too that there were five hundred millions of years, and more if necessary, for the process.
- b. Not everyone will be satisfied with that explanation as to why the ape was the mark for man rather than, say, the dog which would strike one as more intelligent and humanlike in its ways, and certainly more willing than the ape to consort with man.
- c. The suggestion that the snapping of prey develops inordinately great jaw muscles sounds plausible until one reflects on it. How much snapping at prey does a biggish animal do? Not so much – a few times a day at most, certainly not enough to produce those monstrous fettering muscles. The greater use of the jaws would lie in the biting off and masticating of pieces. And in this occupation the ape would have to indulge just as much as the other four-legged animals.

De Chardin has some further remarks on the importance of this lessened muscularity of the ape's face. He points out that the ape's eyes in its diminished face (I have just argued that it should not have diminished) proceeded to converge: and that having one's two eyes pointing in the same direction is an aid to reflection: which is no doubt true, although many a man with a bad squint has been able to reflect effectively!

But why should the eyes proceed to look forward? Surely it is justified reasoning that if pressure behind a swivelled object is lessened, the object would tend to swing in that direction? Therefore the eyes should turn backwards and not forward as the result of the shrinking of the jaw muscles.

But all the foregoing seems to me to be an impossible straining of the argument. Why should an accidental circumstance, i.e. the muscles, be of any real consequence? According to De Chardin's theme, those physical particles – having achieved life and then higher living, then going on consciously to their superior destiny of becoming man – would work out a way which would not be dependent on mere diet and feeding habits. The process of evolution which can transform the primitive 'stuff of the universe' into man would hardly be stymied by a matter of jaw muscles hundreds of millions of years ahead. A course would be steered which would by-pass such a difficulty.

No doubt the author's reply to this would be that it did – through the ape's getting on its hind legs so as to get rid of the jaw muscles! But why then did not all the other animals do the same? The answer supplied by the book to this is that each particle had its own particular goal. The 'tiger-souled' particle could not avoid becoming a tiger, and no doubt particles with inferior souls would have to go onto their own less distinguished destiny. This is on page 150 for you to read.

But this does not seem to me to be reasonable except those particles were subject to a law outside themselves which was ordaining the progress. Otherwise the primordial atom having in itself the potency to go on to manhood, would impart the same power to all its produce. Why should some be frustrated along the way and develop the soul only of a tiger or a stone? It would seem logical that all that matter should possess the capacity to be transformed into men in the end. Why, too, should the capacity have restricted itself to a very few specimens of apes who did become man? For De Chardin says there were only a few, who then peopled

the world by human generation. Why should not all apes go on to becoming man? Why is the process not in operation today?

However, the main thing is that man had to come silently and softly into the world.

On page 137 the heading appears: 'The Evidence.' This is the attitude of the book. It assumes the tone of supplying proof of everything. For instance, after that half-stage of crazy assumption about the passing of the ape over the threshold into manhood, the author is found talking as if it had been demonstrated. He is all the time indulging in phrases like: 'We have shown' and 'as we have seen,' etc. Assume a thing and hereafter treat it as if it were a historical fact or an accepted formula.

Take the second half of page 195 and the first half of page 196 and see how scientific one can be: 'if it is really so'; 'may serve to shed light'; 'surely suggest the idea'; 'it might seem'; 'if this is so'; 'may have had its equivalent'; 'doubtless'; 'perhaps'.

The phraseology is all part of what is supposed to be a presentation of evidence.

But there is proof of a sort offered. It is two old friends, paraded triumphantly once again, but this time alas without their old stable companion, the Piltdown skull, which has come to misadventure. While De Chardin is silent on Piltdown Anthropus, Huxley faces up to it like a man and turns it into a joke. But it was no joke before it was discovered to be a fraud. It did duty for a long time, showing how gullible experts can be.

De Chardin discusses the two survivors. We presume he makes the best of it. But one would tremble to think of Pithecanthropus and Sinanthropus in the witness box exposed to the deadliness of, say, Perry Mason.

First, *Pithecanthropus*. De Chardin admits that it is not supported by any evidence that the skull belonged to a tool-making animal (which is one of the definitions of man). But he is able to explain the reason. The skull must have been carried away from the tools by water! I ask if ever such a gratuitous assumption as that has been so solemnly made? Secondly, if the skull is convincing proof by itself, why seek to explain away the absence of the tools as if these were necessary? Thirdly, if the tools are a necessary part of the proof, then their absence destroys the value of the skull. This forms a dilemma for De Chardin because he believes he has another case where there are tools.

This is the *Sinanthropus*. The skull was found in a cave littered with stone implements mixed with charred bones! The ape in his lair surrounded by the evidence that he had become a man! But now watch a perfectly priceless juggling of ideas. De Chardin admits that Mr Boule, his old master and a scientist of repute, disagrees and holds that the cave indeed belonged to a man, but that the skull was that of an animal which the man had used for food!

This is a radical difference of opinion, invalidating the skull to that extent; we have one expert against another. But this gives De Chardin no trouble. He declares that so long as no remains are found of that hypothetical man it must be held as proved that *Sinanthropus* was the real article, the tool-making animal, the missing link. I have to say that this strikes me as verging very close on an insane statement. Two items are found in juxtaposition after many millions of years full of the heavings of nature – and until disapproved – we must consider them to have always belonged to each other! You are found near the corpse and you are guilty until you prove absolutely that you did not do it. This reverses the usual rule of evidence.

And what about the action of the water which took away the skull from the evidence in the case of *Pithecanthropus*? In the case of *Sinanthropus*, might we not just as legitimately argue that the flood action swept the skull and bones into the cave? Or that the pirate, Morgan put them there!

The presentation of that sort of evidence and in that sort of way gives us the feeling of being in a cave in Wonderland along with Alice. But then in the end De Chardin seems to throw those skulls away. For on page 193 and 197 he states that they are not the skulls of men such as we are: 'they represented strange creatures which have long ago vanished from the earth, and about which science could hesitate, wondering what sort of creature it was dealing with.' He goes on to insist that at least one further stage would have to be passed through on the way to full manhood. This must be a shock to those who had previously been led to believe – and that by De Chardin's own argument – that *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus* were the real things. In those circumstances why call them 'anthropus' which means 'man'? And would the full transformation have to be attended by the same sort of frantic gyrations as characterised that first silent entry?

The foregoing is typical of the book. And here I urge a few general principles. Science is supposed to be an exact thing. You proceed by proof and deductions and these must be reasonable. In our enthusiasm to open up new frontiers of knowledge we must make sure that our science does not suddenly become a fairy tale. De Chardin has gone closer to making it a pure fairy tale than any other writer ever has – with his psychic, self-animated particles which steer themselves along through the ages towards deliberately calculated objectives, some towards

becoming a man; others animals; others into minor forms of life; and others not getting that far.

That is not science, nor could we even call it a scientific fringe such as the space travel fiction is. It is a pure exercise of imagination. It reminds me of those stories which credit a human personality to animals. Paul Gallico has gone one better than that. He animates with personality a bubble which has inflated itself in a kitchen sink, then being carried down to a river and to the sea. Its adventures make a charming tale. But what Gallico did as fiction De Chardin is supplying to us as fact. To every primordial atom (page 300) is attributed a psyche which appears to be the equivalent of Gallico's creation. But the bubble burst, whereas the primordial atom went on to become man on a still unfinished course.

The book affects to have been written for scientists, so that surprise is expressed when it becomes a popular hit. But I do not remember any purely scientific work being written in that style. A scientist who produced such a work solely for his own brethren would be laughed at by them. Apart from its arguments, the phraseology would be inadmissible.

Of course the book had also to view a popular consumption, which sets the scientific luxuriance of its language in an interesting light. It was written to 'impress the natives'. No common word is used where a technical or coined one could be introduced; nor an easy one where a difficult one could be had. It is not to be thought that these are necessary (as such words sometimes are) for the establishing of his meaning. The opposite is the case. It is only on the measure that one breaks down the ultra-scientific expressions and eliminates the pure verbosity that one gets to grips with the meaning. To

cap things he has recourse to the invention of words of his own. Personally I can only see in all this the play of charlatanry.

It is understandable that such work would impress the natives, but it is incredible that it should impress the scientists, as apparently it has done. But perhaps the explanation is that they understand that even a scientist has to have recourse to little devices to get home with the populace.

The London *Times* reviewer talks of the 'poetry' which wells up behind the logic of this remarkable man's mind? What is this poetry? Presumably it lies in mellifluous phrases such as the following which might have been taken right out of Gilbert and Sullivan:

'The planetary convergence of all elemental terrestrial reflections' (page 307); 'the rationalised recoil of all the forces of research' (page 306); 'the physical impossibility of the cosmic revolution' (page 304); 'defines experimentally as the scientific effect of organised complexity' (page 301); 'clearly recognisable as the individual orthogenesis' (page 138); 'the confined and functional explosion of the internal combustion engine' (page 141); 'the decantation and automatic patterning of associated ideas' (page 300). Phrases such as the foregoing jump out at you all the time. It is the style of the book.

If the scientific fraternity are really impressed by this book, it shows how easily they are convinced when they want to be convinced, for there is not a shred of proof and hardly a legitimate argument, in the length of it. It is written to bolster up at any price the theory of whole-hog evolution, i.e. particle to man without any supernatural intervention from start to finish. And where, might we ask, did the original particle come from?

In it, or rather in the degree of approbation it has received, we are looking at the working out of an old law: 'Those who will not acknowledge the miraculous will soon be found taking up with the absurd.' This book (deprived, as I have said, of the Epilogue) is absurd to such a degree as to remind one of the comment of an honest old agnostic on Ernest Renan's unbelieving *Life of Jesus*. He found its reasoning so perverse and insufficient that he set it down with the explosive comment: 'The opposite must be true.' That I have to confess, is the reaction produced in me by De Chardin's treatment of his subject.

The lesson I draw is that Sir Julian Huxley, and those others who think with him, having closed their minds to the possibility of anything but a natural theory of man, are found going down on their knees before charlatantry and nonsense.

And this brings me to the Epilogue, which may be the key to the book, the explanation of what Huxley is referring to when he speaks of De Chardin's effort to reconcile religion with all-out evolution. Because in the remainder of the book there is no entry of the supernatural.

Therefore *The Phenomenon of Man* is a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, two quite different affairs, but directed by the one personality; one emerging out of the other. I think that the purpose of the book is that very one of reconciling the supernatural elements of Christianity with the facts and implications of evolution.

Perhaps I am unduly simple in thinking that De Chardin's idea may be the following: God's plan was that the Incarnation would reconcile and exalt to himself all nature. This was to be accomplished in the first place through man, who is the microcosm, that is containing in himself the vegetable and animal orders and 'all the stuff

of the universe'. United with that body is a soul which has capacity for God. That operation of uniting man and the universe with God is fulfilled through Jesus Christ. He takes hold of man and lifts him up to God. As he said, the universe was for Christ, and Christ for God. Looking at things from this angle, every step forward from the creation of the universe amounts to that Christogenesis (to which Huxley refers incredulously); not in the sense that it was going to bring forth Christ but that it was a step on towards him.

Nowadays everyone agrees that that in this forward march evolution played a great part. The Huxley school believe it to have been a total part, the supernatural being excluded. The different stages of life emerged naturally, terminating in man!

The Christian believes that inside the different grades of existence, evolution operated freely, but that to carry lifeless matter over into the order of vegetable life a creative act was required, proceeding from outside, that is from God. And a similar act would be necessary at the stage of producing animal life, and again in the creation of man.

To the casual reader De Chardin would appear to be suppressing those successive supernatural creative acts and to be evolving right through from the most primitive material to man. So thinking, the conventional Christians would be upset by this treatment. As they would see it, he has made a common front with the purely evolutionary school which repudiates Christian belief. And it has to be admitted that his book without the Epilogue unquestionably bears that mark, so that Huxley hails him as one of the fraternity.

But that is where Huxley and Co. may be wrong. De Chardin has to some extent successfully introduced the

Trojan Horse of Christianity into the camp. It is painted all over with their symbols and it neighs in their own dialect. And there they are gathered around it in admiration! So that, without meaning it, he has perpetrated as elaborate a hoax on the scientists as the Piltdown skull.

De Chardin takes the primary particles of nature and he invests them with what he calls psychism, life, mind, consciousness. Of course, put in that way, this is just absurd. But it is a point of view held by many of the scientists. These extraordinary particles enjoy a transcendent faculty, i.e. of aiming at a higher state, and planning and working to attain it. This seems to me to be claiming more for those particles than is possessed by man at his best, because we, apart from revelation, have no idea of what we are supposed to achieve. For instance, a great number of 'thinkers' believe that Communism is the higher state to which we are struggling. Yet as a philosophy, Communism is degrading to the dignity of man and reduces him to the role of mere particle out of which the evolutionists have evolved him.

So let us return to that Christian idea of the universe being worked on by God, ever upwards through the different stages of life on to man and Christ. That psychism or mind which De Chardin credits to the particles as they evolve and ascend in order, is what we in our simpler way would call the hand of God resting on them. His is the mind, the life, the consciousness, the power: and the particles possess nothing of those things other than what he imparts to them.

But the point is that De Chardin does not seem to intend to depart from the ordinary Christian idea of successive creative interventions. God takes stuff which has evolved and imparts to it a new condition. And he

does this several times, including the creation of man and then again at the Incarnation.

But there is a mysterious page which shakes me. It is page 186. There De Chardin wonders what our first parents looked like. And he also asks how many other anthropoids crossed over the animal border. This seems to be a break with the essential Christian idea of a single original pair, and indeed a single original person, Adam.

De Chardin's veiled treatment of the foregoing is what Huxley refers to as the emergent divinity, the Christogenesis. Huxley understood it as being a production of Christ and divinity. But De Chardin asserts that there is no question of a Christogenesis in that wrong sense of the evolution bringing forth Christ as a higher stage in its progress. He insists that God (Omega) was already in existence before the first primordial atom (page 291/2) but he intervenes in a special way when those secondary causes come to the end of their tether, i.e. when it would be a question of going on to a higher order of existence. God, it is true, may then take as the basis something already existing, but it is he who has to confer the higher state by an act superseding the mere evolution. Huxley and Co. say no; that the mass itself successively produced the higher stages. De Chardin believes that God throughout from the beginning used the evolving mass and uplifted it at each new state. To the reader this may not be as plain as the proverbial pikestaff, because De Chardin is evolving his Trojan Horse. But it could be nevertheless that all his juggling with words has nothing else in view.

All the convulsions of that ape, the calories, the axis, the recoiling and then advancing radial, the surfaced centre, the tangential increase, the mental boiling and the leaping consciousness – all the hodgepodge

of meaningless (in this connection) terms and veneer of science is just meant to be a super-impressionistic rendering of a creative intervention by God. If pure evolution was proceeding over many millions of years, there would be no paroxysms of this kind; all would be moving so gradually that the new would arise out of the old imperceptibly. Let us remark that there is no need to be parsimonious about years when there are so many of them to spare. De Chardin says a few thousand million years. Gilbert Ryle says eight billion years. Fred Hoyle says the universe was always there.

Unfortunately many people are being worried by the book. It is too artful, or clever if you like. It has made itself too much like a whole-hog materialistic evolutionary work, explaining everything without God, and fitting into the dominant scientific concept that 'there has to be a natural explanation of man,' as Hoyle insists. But, as an aside, why? And why is Hoyle, who is an eminent astronomer, pontificating about biology?

De Chardin's book looks like unbelief, and it may be the opposite. With the one exception which I have mentioned, he may be taking no particular liberties with our commonly accepted Catholic doctrine. But he is being greeted as hail-fellow-well-met by all the unbelieving scientists, and many of the ordinary believers are a little dismayed.

So I think this corrective is needed.

But of course there is the possibility that it may not be a corrective; my explanation may be wrong and De Chardin may really be a pure Huxleyite. In that case we would be driven back to the other alternative, namely that this book is only dangerous nonsense.

The Marian Texts Blend with Each Other And Define Each Other

When the great Cardinal Newman was beginning to move towards the Catholic Church, one of the difficulties which presented itself to him was the prominence of Mary in the thought and worship of the Church. At that time he was under the influence of the Protestant opinion that such devotion to her was a comparatively modern growth and unjustified. That idea further contended that there was no sign of devotion towards her in the primitive Church, and that the first traces of it were only to be discerned after the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Here let it be remarked that 431 is early enough in the life of the Church. At that stage the Church was only beginning to know itself. It was only one hundred years out of the Catacombs. Before the time of Constantine, the Church was outlawed. Outbursts of persecution were frequent. Churches could not be built. Worship was largely secret and the liturgy was necessarily undeveloped,

reduced to skeleton form. Aspects of devotion which later on would figure prominently were not thought of. It was the case of a flower gradually unfolding. But this would affect approaches to Our Lord just as much as those to Our Lady.

Newman applied an apt description of that situation. His minute examination of the past convinced him that everything in the later Church was to be found in the primitive Church but in germ or miniature form. He suggested that it was like looking at a scene through a lens or diminishing glass; everything was reduced, some of it almost to invisibility. But it was all there. Then reverse that process into magnification and the fact of faithful proportion between infancy and maturity becomes evident.

When Newman began to delve into the very earliest years for indications of devotion to Mary, he had no trouble in finding it. What was there was significant; it was the recognition of Mary as the New Eve. It would be impossible to assign her a higher level than that. For it makes her intrinsic in Christianity. I mention that this is the very latest expression given to her in the latest papal document, *Marialis Cultus*. 'Intrinsic' is a very special word. It goes deeper than 'important' or 'essential', which could relate to accessories only. Intrinsic means that something belongs to the inner essence, so that if it be removed, the character of the thing is no longer the same.

That is the identical idea which is presented to us by the rendering of Mary to us as the New Eve; it makes her intrinsic in salvation. The part that Eve played in the Fall and in her subsequent housekeeping for Adam was utterly intrinsic – if indeed we can apply the word 'utterly' to what is already superlative. If Mary had a role proportionally equivalent to that of Eve, then Mary is

unquestionably intrinsic in Christianity; so that what the Pope says today is no more than what the Adam and Eve parallel proclaimed in the first age of the Church.

The effort has been made to take from the force of this by pointing to the fact that St Paul, when specifying Jesus as the New Adam, carefully abstained from terming Mary the New Eve. The suggestion is that he did not regard her as a New Eve. But if that were so, he was more than imprudent to call Our Lord the New Adam. Because logical minds would not stop where he had done but would press on. This would be inevitable. Adam and Eve were so closely conjoined as to be almost one expression; they cannot be thought of apart. St Paul was not mentally defective; therefore there had to be a good reason for his silence about the New Eve. Anyone aware of the special circumstances of that time would know that reason. It was that in the first presentation of Christianity to the pagan people there would have to be nothing which would create an impression that Mary was a female goddess beside her god-man son. All the pagan religions possessed that feature of a female deity beside the male one. That had to be avoided and for the moment Mary had to recede into the background.

But that reason no longer held when the Christian teaching had been spread and when instructed converts were about in number to explain the Christian position. We see that the immediate successors of the apostles took the forward step which had been inferential in St Paul's teaching and did not hesitate to propagate the full Adam and Eve parallel. Mary was preached as the New Eve. All that emerged from Newman's analysis of the beginning of Christianity and was conclusive for him as setting the role of Mary in the highest possible relief.

I do not discuss the further interesting implications of the Adam and Eve analogy. I content myself with repeating that in the most primitive era of Christianity, Mary is shown in the same primary position as the latest papal document ascribes to her – no more, no less.

That Adam and Eve analogy so peremptorily portrays the central place of Mary in Christian doctrine that it would seem impossible to go further. Yet I dare to think that it is possible to touch greater heights both of antiquity and of grandeur in regard to her; that even a more portentous pronouncement is available – actually given to us in words of the Eternal Father himself.

Immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve, God spoke words which though directed to Satan were really addressed to the coming generations of men to serve as a mainstay to them. This would be necessary. Mankind knew itself to be reduced to the extreme of deprivation. They sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. If they were not to surrender completely to their misery it was imperative that they be given hope. They must realise that their present condition was not final but a tunnel which, however long it might be, had an exit into happiness. That prophecy pointed to a future restoration. It was as a point of light in the distance but it was enough to keep faith alive.

That first of all prophecies was contained in a brief sentence: 'The Lord God said to the serpent; I will put enmities between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. She shall crush your head' (Gn 3:15). That sentence has been styled the *Protevangelium* which is a Greek term meaning 'the first Gospel'. That is a colossal description to bestow on a sentence, but not an excessive one considering its infinite importance. Into a

brief compass it contrives to impress the substance and quality of an entire gospel. I will try to show its almost unbelievable scope and its Marian import.

It is a promise of Redemption. The element which it mentions first is the woman who shall repair what a woman ruined. It makes it clear that she is not going to accomplish the restoration by herself any more than Eve wrought the harm by herself. She will have a child and between them in a sort of partnership they will crush the head of the serpent who had crushed Adam and Eve.

There, immediately after the Fall, we have in precise outline the same image of the new Adam and Eve which the Church will use thousands of years afterwards. Both images show that the Redemption represented what is called a divine revenge. In other words by a merciful process it took every detail of the Fall and converted it into the opposite purpose.

I have spoken of a partnership between the woman and her seed. That is not to signify an equal partnership. Jesus is divine. His mother is not. It is his virtue which affects the Redemption, but nonetheless her co-operation is made necessary to it just in the same measure as Eve's action was instrumental in the Fall even though it was in Adam that the race fell.

The same type of mind which refuses to put the New Eve beside the New Adam likewise will not recognise Mary in the woman of Genesis. Then whom do they make out that woman to be? Surely she is unmistakably the mother of the Messiah who is designated as the seed? So one would think but they will not have it so.

They claim that the word 'woman' does not denote an individual but stands for the Chosen People out of whom the Messiah will spring. Of course there are innumerable

examples in scripture where such a symbolism is employed. Can this be one of them? If it is, it is a mixed symbolism, the case of a class bringing forth an individual person. An interesting commentary on this is afforded by the fact that the modern Jews, having being compelled by the lapse of time to abandon the hope of a person as the Messiah, have taken refuge in the idea of a national restoration of their people brought about by political or military means. But would this not make nonsense of the other interpretation, for the two together would say that the Jewish race will bring forth the Jewish race!

Let us delve into scripture and see what justification there can be for ruling out the woman as a real person.

1. The Fourth Chapter of Genesis (4:1) says that Eve conceived and brought forth Cain and said: 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.' Some writers have contended that this form of expression showed that Eve believed her child to be the promised Redeemer and herself to be the designated woman. This may only be a legend, but at least it would indicate that Adam and Eve, the immediate heirs to the Promise, believed that a real woman was to bring forth the Messiah. Furthermore, is it at all likely that the original, simple generations, for whom that prophesy was intended, would see in it anything but the direct sense that a real woman would have a real child?

At that moment, before a child had been born to constitute a family, and when the idea of a nation would be utterly before its time and inconceivable, why should God propose a symbolism which would be meaningless in the circumstances? I just say that it is not likely. Moreover, if God had been speaking in terms of a symbolism, it was not in that way that

people took it up. In their expectation the people looked forward to a personal Messiah and to a woman who would bear him. It became the ambition of the Jewish maiden that she might be that person.

2. Nor did the earliest races of men read the prophecy in that symbolic light. As mankind dispersed over the face of the earth they brought with them that prophecy. Though it became distorted in different ways, it formed the nucleus of all their ancient religions or mythologies. Side by side with their deity was a female one. This imagery unquestionably derived from that promised woman and her seed whom those peoples understood as real persons.
3. The Prophet Isaiah, about 700 years before Our Lord, declares (7:14): 'The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be Emmanuel,' that is God is with us. Therefore it is a virgin who will bring forth and her child shall be none other than God himself. St Matthew includes that text in his Gospel (1:23).
4. St Matthew (1:20) tells us that when St Joseph was distressed at finding that his espoused wife was with child, the angel of the Lord instructed him: 'Fear not, son of David, to take unto thee Mary, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' Here again is Mary's position defined. The Messiah has been conceived in her by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it could not have been God's intention to exclude her from his original promise of that very occurrence.
5. St Luke (1:42-43): 'Elizabeth cried out with a loud voice and said: blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to

me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?' This phrase that a person spoke with a loud voice is used in scripture to denote that it is an utterance of the Holy Spirit. There is no doubt in Elizabeth's mind as to the fact that the woman of Genesis stands before her, and that the child she carries within her is the promised Messiah.

6. St Matthew (2:11) says that when the Wise Men from the East came to Bethlehem, they found the child with Mary his mother. And immediately afterwards (2:13) the angel appeared to St Joseph and bade him to take the child and his mother and to fly into Egypt. Again this specific pointing to the mother and the Messiah!
7. St Luke's prodigious prediction description runs (1:35): 'The angel said to her: the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' Where does this show the very slightest divine intention of overlooking or lessening the motherhood of Mary? Could language rise higher or speak more clearly? That passage of St Luke shows the fulfilment in time of the Genesis promise. Bring the two texts together and see how impossible it is to suppose that Mary is not the woman of Genesis. God is author of both of those texts, of the one which promises and of the one which describes the fulfilment of that promise.
8. St Luke (2:29-30; 34-35) tells us: 'Simeon said: now thou dost dismiss the servant O Lord according to thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation. And he said to Mary his mother: behold this child is set for the Fall and Resurrection of many in

Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.'

As he speaks those prophetic words, the eyes of holy Simeon penetrate the future and see the accomplishment of the Redemption by the woman and her son. He is hanging upon the Cross, and she is being crucified in her soul.

9. The Apocalypse (12:1) says; 'And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of 12 stars.' This points to the glorified Mary. As the council teaches, she signifies in her person the fullness of Redemption. She is now what all saved mankind will be.

This sequence of texts could be pursued. But perhaps enough has been said to prove how strained and impossible in the circumstances would be any interpretation of that Genesis text which would turn the woman into a symbolism, meaning the Jewish people. This latter procedure is only possible if one divorces that text from those others which I have been quoting; and such a separation cannot be thought of. I will expand on this because of its extreme importance.

God is the originator of that first prophecy just as he is of the various texts which I have set out. He is not like a writer who in the course of the years may contradict himself, or give different meanings to the same thing.

To God a thousand years are but a moment; and all those different texts are as but one single thought of his. This fact will be our master key to the situation. We must bring all those texts together and see them as facets of God's prophecy to Satan. Each taken by itself may offer

a problem. Assembled, each explains the others and all blend into a harmony. Looked at thus, the Protevangelium could not be more clear about the future: the Blessed Virgin Mary, untouched by the Original Sin will bring forth the Son of God and with him will reverse the Fall and restore mankind.

None but the perverse could refuse to see what a vital part the Protevangelium thus gives to Mary. The Church has always mirrored it faithfully. The Catholic tradition assigned to her the office of crushing the serpent. The translation of the Old Testament into Latin put it: she shall crush your head, a rendering that must have been influenced by the common understanding of the day.

But it could also be translated by 'he' or 'they' or 'it', the cause of this varied possibility being the absence in Hebrew of the personal pronoun. The modern tendency is to adopt 'he', attributing the defeat of the serpent to the direct action of Jesus. Protestantism had its own reasons for reading it thus. Today for the sake of achieving a uniform Bible, the Church is turning to that version. Whichever word is used, the ultimate meaning is the same. Jesus, not Mary is the Redeemer. If Mary crushes the serpent, it is by the power of her son. But her essential place in the total scheme is evident is evident from the Protevangelium. She is second to Jesus. She is intrinsic in Christianity.

Another point: why does the Protevangelium use the word 'seed' instead of the more natural one of son or child which appears in the other parts of scripture where he is mentioned along with Mary? A special reason may be intended. So let us look carefully. 'Seed' points to a plurality as much as to an individual. But why suggest that when it is Jesus who is being prophesied? Can the explanation be that the great prophecy is also teaching

us the doctrine of the Mystical Body? To legionaries that doctrine is familiar. Perhaps for others I may devote a few words to it. It means that by baptism a union between Jesus and the soul is contracted. A sort of common life is subsequently lived in which each contributes to the union. The soul bestows its faith, its other qualities and energies – and perhaps its weaknesses. The Lord gives his divine power. The sum total of all the souls thus comprised, together with Jesus and his mother, form what the Church calls the Mystical Body. It is a real body and not in any sense a symbolism or mere image. It is the Catholic Church. In it each one fulfils a particular role. The leading roles are of course those of Jesus and Mary. Following the imagery of the human body, Our Lord is likened to the head, the principal part; and Our Lady to the heart, the distributor of life.

I repeat: can it that the use of the word ‘seed’ where we would expect to find a more individual expression, is to express that future fullness of Christ which we call the Mystical Body? This would display still more the nuclear richness of that first and divine prophecy. I quote from the Gospel of St John: (19: 26-27) ‘Jesus seeing his mother and the disciple John standing by the cross, said to his mother: woman behold thy son. Then he said to the disciple, behold thy mother.’ Therefore ‘seed’ is at the same time one and many. It stands for Jesus and his members. And Mary is true mother of both.

Note again the use of that word of destiny ‘woman’ in regard to Mary. I have given four instances of it, each representing an epochal moment of Redemption.

I bring them together: first, in the Protevangelium. Second, at Cana where Our Lord enters on his mission. Third, on Calvary where Our Lord consummated his

work. In saying 'woman' he is undoubtedly pointing back to the Protevangelium where he and Mary are promised. Fourthly, where Mary is crowned as the first fruits of Redeemed mankind.

I have made so much point of the Marian aspect of the Protevangelium because it seems to me to be the most significant of all scriptural pronouncements about Our Lady. I do not think that sufficient attention has been given to it from this aspect. As I have been urging, it compresses into a nutshell the whole mighty epic of Redemption. It starts by announcing the woman. She proceeds first in time; she has at least that little precedence over her son. But she does far more than arrive before him. She generated him both physically and by faith, and after that she is his partner, necessary to him for the carrying through of the divine plan in its entirety. Not only does she help in the winning of Redemption but in the application of it. Not only is she the mother of Jesus but of his Mystical Body, and as necessary to it as she was to him.

So I say it once again: As an exposition of Mary's place and grandeur, the First Prophecy stands monumental, towering over everything else. Mary is not the chief ingredient in Christianity. Jesus is that. But Mary is intrinsic to it.