

28.4.75

25.4.77 ✓

Haeckel Dies (Polish)

A quotation to begin with today [TABLET 19.4.75 p 373]

[Bygone &amp; Contemp.]

[Solomon  
DEC. 0.20]

"By reaching plain the splendours of the universal Christ, Christianity, without ceasing to be for the earth the water that purifies and the oil that soothes, acquires a new value. By the very fact that it provides the earth's aspirations with a goal that is at once immense, concrete and assured, it rescues the earth from the disorder, the uncertainties and the nausea that are the most terrible of tomorrow's dangers. It provides the fire that inspires man's effort. In other words, it is seen to be the form of faith that is most fitted to modern needs: a religion for progress — the very religion of progress of the earth — I would go so far as to say the very religion of evolution — — — What a blessed sense of release there would be in the Church, if in the name of this same faith — now a stimulant instead of being only a brake — they did feel themselves engaged in the total conquest of the world, for the universal supremacy of Christ! And what a revelation, to those outside the Church, of the might of Christianity! It is abundantly clear that Christianity is no longer advancing as rapidly as it did. In spite of the fact that the work of the propagation of the faith has never been organised with such vigour, we may well wonder whether the world as a whole, in all the best of its representatives and in its vital forces, is coming closer to Christ or whether it is in fact drifting further away. As I see it, this situation arises from a perfectly clear cause: 'Christianity, in the form we preach it, lacks sufficient contagious power.' We are no longer understood. How often have I heard it said, in complete sincerity, by non-believers: 'If I became a Christian, I wd. feel that I was less a man': or again

'We so badly need another revelation'. Christ offering himself as the salvation, not only of the 'supernatural' soul, but also of the whole physical structure that conditions souls — Christ manifesting himself, not hidden in clouds, but clothed in the energies of the world in which he is immersed — — — such a Christ wd. immediately draw to himself all the vital part of mankind. His love would spread in the only way that befits the true religion: like fire. In order to convert the world, we Christians must produce many more missionaries: but above all we must with all that is human in us, re-think our religion." That phrase is from 'Science and Christ', a lecture given in 1921 by Teilhard de Chardin. In many ways it is a prophetic piece, possibly even more true <sup>56</sup> 54 years later, and in some sense also in part fulfilled. I quote it today, for two reasons: it is really such an Easter message: and the man who wrote it was himself so much, in his own life, a disciple of the risen Christ, seeing so clearly the resurrection of Christ as the meaning and centre of the ~~whole~~ <sup>whole</sup> world, of everything. Shortly before the end of his life he expressed the wish that, for him, the most perfect day to die would be Easter Sunday. Was it just a coincidence that he did die, suddenly, on Easter Sunday, twenty years <sup>22</sup> ago this month? A couple of years later, when his writings began to be published, Teilhard de Chardin became a well-known name, a best-seller, and a strong influence and help for very many people, who found new ~~the~~ inspiration and fresh life for their faith from him. Today you don't hear about him so much, perhaps because he's become, somehow, "respectable". Pity! because our world cd. learn something from his vision of the risen Christ. What he once wrote to his sister on the occasion

of some crisis right will apply to people who are discouraged, distressed, depressed by their own or the world's problems and situations: You are looking at your crucifix from the wrong side. It is not only the cross we see, but Jesus Christ upon the Cross. He certainly never ceased to see the Cross and feel its significance: he contemplated the Crucified Christ, and his faith was so strong that in the Crucified he always at the same time saw the Risen Christ. For a prayer in music today, from a Mass by a fellow

-Friedman, Maurice Duruflé

MUSIC - PRAYERS.

'Play the Risen Christ keep

me young, for God's greater glory — young, that is optimistic, active, smiling, perceptive. A prayer of Fr Teilhard de Chardin: and one that all of us can use, it is so Christian. And perhaps it is one that we need to use these days. There is so much challenge and uncertainty about our world and society today, <sup>so much that makes people fearful</sup>. It is only those who have a vision of life and society, its reality and what it can be, who will change the world, try to right its wrongs and injustices. In what's called "the West", there often seems these days to be no vision except that of people seeking <sup>power or protection, political, economic or whatever</sup> [political power, one way or another] — a vision that is also limited. When are we to see Christ? If we haven't got faith that is certain of at least this, that Christ is risen and is the centre of everything (the way, the truth - the life), then in us the fire of Christ won't be the contagious thing for the world which it could and should be

RHK  
ERA-D-167  
3<sup>3</sup> (Sanctus)