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"The Eyes of a Fool . . ."

by BEATRICE C. BEST

An article in *The Hibbert Journal* for October 1960 by Professor Woodbridge O. Johnson of Park College, Missouri, purports to give Christianity a "new look", and bring it into line with "the new knowledge of our rapidly expanding universe." The Professor entitles this new look *Copernican Christology*, and contends that: "The substitution of heliocentrism for geocentrism is no longer disputed by educated persons." He tells us that: "What is needed if we are to keep our theology relevant to the new knowledge of our rapidly expanding universe, is a Christology centred in God as Logos rather than in Jesus of Nazareth", and, further: "The present pressure for a new look at Christology comes from two directions—scientific and religious. The scientific stimulus comes from the vastly larger universe given to us by the 200 inch telescope and improved methods of photography, Einstein's general theory of relativity, the development of jet propulsion and nuclear power . . . and the growing probability of intelligent beings living on other planets, the successful launching of man-made moons and the imminence of space travel. The religious stimulation comes from the amazing resurgence of the great Asiatic Religions, and our rapidly growing understanding and appreciation of them." From all this Professor Johnson concludes: "These pressures are forcing us to take a new look at the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation, a doctrine which at present reflects a static provincialism blind to expanding cultural and siderial horizons."

The Professor proceeds to support his contention thus: "This doctrine is provincial in insisting that a remote Creator God invaded his universe once and once for all at only one point in space-time when he assumed the body of a Jewish Carpenter 1960 years ago in Palestine on the planet Earth. It is provincial also in insisting that in the life of that Jewish carpenter the nature of the ineffable ground of Being has been fully and finally revealed to all his creatures in all worlds and that those unfortunate enough not to establish vital connection with that carpenter are doomed to eternal and spiritual death." As a new way of imparting a 'new look' to Christianity this takes some beating; but it is one the orthodox Christian would repudiate. The Christian does not insist that "a remote Creator God" invaded his universe (you do not *invade* your own territory); he believes in God the Father, creator of the universe—expanding or not—who revealed Himself and became incarnate in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, certainly at one point in space-time—since a birth can only take place in one place and at one time—on this planet earth. That is what the Christian believes, and one can dismiss it as

so much nonsense, as indeed Professor Johnson does; but it ill becomes him to tell the Provincial Christian that he, as an "educated person", should substitute for his geocentric orthodox provincial Christianity the heliocentric neo-orthodox 'Copernican Christology' favoured by himself.

Certainly the Christian does not take it upon himself, nor does he consider it within his province, to pronounce upon the matter of God's revelation of Himself to other conjectural creatures in other worlds. The orthodox Christian doctrine might be dubbed provincial in so far as it is concerned with man on this earth. Some, indeed, might consider that such provincialism would be a case of minding one's own business, and one might say, in passing, that considering the state of things on this earth today, some such provincial geocentricism appears to be needed before attention is focussed on heliocentrism.

"Such provincial Christology is doubly off-centre. It is culture-centred rather than humanity centred . . ." What one asks, does the Professor intend by that statement? Why *off-centre* if *culture-centred*? Also how can you be *culture-centred* without being *humanity-centred*? All culture must be regarded as *humanity-centred* since it derives from man, and is not a self-generated and spontaneous independent growth unrelated to humanity. Nevertheless the Professor maintains that being *culture-centred*: "it restricts God's active concern for men to the Jewish culture of the Near East, allowing him only an indirect interest in the rest of mankind,"—thus still further reducing the status of Geocentric Christianity to one purely local and comparatively insignificant.

In face of the admission that, "in 1835 A.D. an edition of the Roman Catholic *Index* appeared without condemnation of the double motion of the earth", how can the charge of geocentrism be maintained against orthodox Christianity? For the removal of the embargo did not alter nor affect the Church's orthodox belief in the Incarnation that, whether geocentric or heliocentric, it was to this earth and this world that God revealed Himself to man as the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ, Saviour and Redeemer of man. Nevertheless there is nothing really provincial about such a view in the sense of exclusiveness. There is no ground for assuming that Provincial Christianity "ignores the growing probability that other peoples needing spiritual salvation inhabit other planets in other solar systems in other galaxies." However, it is hard to see how it can act—as yet—on this purely *conjectural* "probability." But if larger telescopes, development of jet propulsion, nuclear power and space travel

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In Africa

The *Goa Herald*, May 22, 1961, claims that "fresh evidence is now available to show that Ghana is directly engaged in promoting terrorism in Angola with arms supplied by the Soviet Union.

"Recently, the American review *Newsweek* revealed that there is regular airlift of arms between Accra and Luluabourg, a Congolese city situated 150 miles from the frontier of Angola. The American newsmagazine *Time* has also revealed that Ghana has been receiving regular supplies of arms from the Soviet Union. Since Ghana's army has been equipped by Britain, the Soviet supplies can only be meant for dispatch to other countries . . . *Newsweek* and *Time*, between them indicate the whole truth—that Soviet arms are channelled to Angola through Ghana and Congo.

"Another revelation has been made by *New York Times* to the effect that Portuguese authorities in Angola have captured 71 Ghanian terrorists who were operating in that territory. . . ."

It may now be stated—says *Diario De Noticias*, of Lisbon—that Ghanian troops under the U.N. Command in the Congo actually helped train terrorists who were later sent to Angola.

"Western Intelligence sources are now piecing together information which indicates that President Nkrumah of Ghana had made an agreement with Russia to allow Russian ships to bring arms into the Ghanian port of Takoradi.

"During the past six weeks at least seven Russian freighters are known to have unloaded large quantities of weapons at Takoradi.

"Unloading takes place mainly at night, handled by

special labour squads, while the berthing area is cordoned off by armed police.

"Some of the arms are smuggled ashore along the Angola coast by sea."

—Quoted from *The Sunday Telegraph*, by the *Goa Herald*, May 22, 1961.

" . . . There is not much being done to restore order in northern Katanga. Railway communications have been restored only to be broken down. That is all. But there is much that could be done if United Nations troops were to join forces with the Katanga army. It would still be possible to make of one part of the Congo, if not a model African State, at least a viable African State.

"But the United Nations troops are not here to restore order in independent Katanga, for that would be a breach of neutrality. They are here to exert pressure upon the Katanga Government to put itself under Mr. Kasavubu at Leopoldville. They are here not to restore order, but to spread anarchy . . ."

—Lord Coleraine (writing from Elizabethville) in *The Daily Telegraph*, May 27, 1961.

Our Defences

With a covering letter, to say that it is their intention "to bring before the Nation and Parliament the fact that only we ourselves care enough about OUR freedom to defend it" and that "if we are not prepared to do so, no one else will do so for us", we have received from the Direct Action Group for National Defence, 27 Bourne Street, Liverpool, a copy of the following letter which they have sent to every Member of Parliament in England:

Dear Sir,

A brief examination of the increasing abundance of evidence will reveal the validity of the thesis that the present International situation is not accidental, but has an objective:

1. The Objective is World Dominion. This objective is being pursued as a conscious policy for the establishment of New York as the factual centre of World Financial Control. The chief instruments being used to secure this end are the U.S. State Department, the U.N.O. Secretariat, the World Bank and International Communism.
2. World Dominion requires a World Police Force for its attainment and maintenance; such a force now lies ready for use in the International Communist Party backed up by the massive military strength of the Red Army.
3. It appears most probable that the breakdown in Africa inaugurates the final stage in the strategy for World Dominion. This breakdown is intended to be a severe economic blow to Europe, the effect of which will be intensified by financial policy to produce a situation in which the Communists can seize power with the assistance of the Red Army. Alternatively, in the event of such an economic catastrophe allied to a deteriorating political situation, Britain, in common with other Nations, will be forced to surrender her sovereignty to a World Government having its seat in New York.
4. There is a basic weakness in regarding the continuing series of world crises as episodic and unrelated rather than as part of a very real and conscious Plan the nature of which is available for closer study in: *Problems of Leninism, P.E.P.*,

World Bank Reports, U.N.O. Studies and, in more dramatic form, the statements of *Mr. Krushchev*. Your particular attention, however, is drawn to a speech by *Sir Winston Churchill* in the House of Commons on November 5, 1919, and an article by him in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, February 8, 1920.

In the light of this thesis will you request the Government to give early and massive consideration to our island defences?

Yours faithfully,
A. ANDERSON,
National Secretary.

Kenya Farms

The following letter appeared in *The Times*, London June 1, 1961.

Sir,—In your issue of May 26, Mr. Fraser is reported as saying: "The British Government would not give compensation to Kenya farmers for a hypothetical seizure of their land . . . There will be no compensation for any event which has not yet taken place." But my contention is that the crucial event has already taken place, namely the loss of the value of the farms. My information is to the effect that in general the farms are now unsaleable.

This loss of value has been caused not by bad farming, not by earthquakes or floods or any other acts of God, not by the adverse climatic conditions (for losses due to such causes farmers would not normally expect compensation from Government), but by the deliberate action of the British Government in surrendering, rightly or wrongly, the responsibilities on which the value of the farms has depended, and surrendering those responsibilities not to a government which would naturally assume them and honourably discharge them but to one whose future leaders have already on many occasions publicly repudiated them.

In the belief that their titles to their lands were inviolate and enduring the farmers have naturally relied on a whole series of Government pronouncements encouraging and fostering white settlement right from the time of Lord Elgin in 1908, the most definite perhaps being the report of the Carter Land Commission in 1932. This report, which was accepted by the Government, defined the White Highlands as an area to be set aside for white occupation for ever. Government therefore in effect guaranteed the validity of the titles and has been the ultimate source of the value which has now vanished.

Is it unreasonable of the farmers to ask the British Government to say to them: "We seem to have let you down, unintentionally, of course, but none the less effectively, and we therefore feel that we are in honour bound to see that you get your value back, if necessary by buying your farms for what they were worth before the crisis which we have engineered?"

Mr. Lennox Boyd said in Kenya in 1954: "Her Majesty's Government are not likely to lend themselves to encouraging people to come if they intend to betray them or their predecessors. They will be entitled to feel confidence in the possession of the homes they have built or will build up for themselves and their children."

Where is now the confidence to which they are entitled?

Yours faithfully,
ARMIGEL WADE.

Farthings, West Chiltington, Pulborough, Sussex. May 28.

"THE EYES OF A FOOL"

—(continued from page 1)

brought these planets within negotiable distance, and there were found on them people needing spiritual salvation, there is little doubt that there would spring to life enterprising and intrepid Christian missionaries who—if funds and transport became available—would make it their aim to carry the Christian message of salvation to them. For the proselytizing zeal of every true Christian, who has no wish to keep the Word of Truth delivered to him to himself, tends to diminish the charge of provincialism levelled against him. This proselytizing zeal, however, is an offence to those who see in it an "intolerant provincialism" and a failure to recognise the virtues of other religions, especially of the "great Asiatic religions."

But the important and insurmountable difference between Christianity and these great religions, which Professor Johnson fails to note, lies in a matter of fact, not of locality, Geocentric or Provincial, but in the actual fact of the Incarnation, the Word made Flesh in Jesus Christ, and in His death and resurrection, which no "growing understanding and appreciation of" these great Asiatic faiths, nor a "new respect", and "new insight" into the non-Christian faiths can alter or affect. For a fact is an actuality, it must be accepted or rejected, it cannot be altered or reshaped to fit in with other ideas. It is inexorable, unyielding, and has not the malleability of a myth—an ethos—a symbol, the multiplicity of which forms part of our interest in our growing understanding of the great Asiatic religions.

"The new Christology will try to show that God has not in the past limited His self-revelation to Jesus of Nazareth, but that there have been other incarnations of God in human flesh, are likely even now to be others in other types of flesh and consciousness, and that there may well be, as Rebecca West phrased it, 'other and greater Christs' in the future." No evidence or authority is cited by the Professor in support of this claim but it must be assumed that, in accordance with it, the same fate would overtake these "other incarnations of God in human flesh", and "the other and greater Christs" of Rebecca West each in turn being superseded and replaced by one more in line with larger telescopes, current contemporary thought and the ever-increasing knowledge of our ever-expanding universe.

The Professor examines at some length attempts of religious thinkers to reconcile the paradox of the absolute and relative nature of God, and in his survey considers their different appraisals of the Trinity.

Into this "interfaith trinity" he contrives to incorporate Copernican Christology in line with and acceptable to "Contemporary thinkers sympathetic to the new Christological dawn" He achieves this by the simple method, roughly speaking, of eliminating Jesus. More precisely: ". . . . in the successful incorporation of the Biblical Trinity within the framework of metaphysical duality common to non-Christian systems and, by analogical extension, to a paralleling of the trinities." Hence he infers: "These attempts undermine the Christian doctrine of God's self-incarnation in Jesus alone, that cornerstone of Christian absolutism, break Jesus' monopoly of saving revelation, and suggest that Jesus as the Christ is not even the soteriological centre of this world and human history, but is rather only one (though Christians would insist the greatest) among other mediators in other religious cultures reconciling men to God and lighting their way to their divine destiny."

And he concludes: "The New Christology, if and when it becomes dominant, should transform the 'intolerant provincialism' of Christianity into a new humility and new insight into the wideness of the Divine mercy."

But this attempt to accommodate Jesus by allowing him a place as an 'also-ran' among other mediators, even if "the greatest", in order that he might be fitted in to the Copernican Christology, and thus be considered worthy to enter the ranks of the "coming interfaith world faith", would not be acceptable to Provincial Christians. Peter's reply to the question Jesus put to him would make that impossible; for Jesus did not repudiate Peter's answer, and there were other claims made by Jesus which, if not true, would expose Him as an impostor or a megalomaniac, and not the "Way the Truth and the Life" He proclaimed Himself to be and in whom Christians believe.

In the end one cannot help wondering why there should be this urge, this anxious desire to re-interpret the faith of Christians in order that it and they may be included in "the pluralistic Christology of a nascent world faith." Why not dismiss them and leave them outside? There are the great Asiatic Religions—"other mediators in other religious cultures", plus "a plurality of historical buddhas" or "a plurality of saviours" to choose from, all of which are, presumably, eligible for inclusion in a "nascent world faith". Why not become attached to one of them, and leave orthodox provincial Christianity to look after itself—outside? The answer to that question suggested here is that it would be too dangerous to leave Christianity outside.

It would be invidious to suggest that Professor Johnson has one eye on U.N.O. and the coming inter-state-world-state in his sponsorship of a "nascent world faith"; but one cannot help thinking how useful an adjunct "an inter-faith world faith" could be to a coming world state, and what prestige, indeed 'panache', it could impart to it *provided there were no outsiders*. So it is not unlikely that a Christianity separated and standing outside and apart from the "inter-faith world faith" might be regarded with suspicion as liable to act with an independence incompatible with the overriding power and eminence of a world state. Whereas the great Asiatic regions, being concerned, mainly, with mythological and metaphysical questions, with symbolism, and with other-worldly considerations, could be trusted to mind their own business, preserving their status intact indeed, but without questioning the claims and dictates of the World State. But there is a directness and simplicity about Christianity which might not be so easy to deal with; it is inclined to take things literally, to be matter of fact and drawn to the real rather than to the symbol. It cannot ignore or forget, for instance, the promise of its Founder that "The Truth shall make you free" and that he taught his followers to pray: "Thy Kingdom come on earth", and even more disruptive of an overriding World Power is the fact that the "province" claimed by Provincial Christianity is the smallest most irreducible of all territories, namely the individual—the one "lost sheep"—"the prodigal son" and, moreover, the command to love his neighbour as himself reveals the individual as the responsible unit, answerable to God and bound by His laws, and by no others. So one can see how inimical to a World State a Christianity so irreducibly provincial could be, and how important it must be to discredit it.

As already noted, Professor Johnson reviews various theories of the Trinity and their bearing on the "absolute-relative" nature of God, and concludes that his reappraisals of the Trinity support the Copernican Christology. "The inadequacy of the Biblical Trinity", he says, "is its ignoring of God's absolute-relative polarity, for all three persons are subsumable under God-as-related." The answer here, however, is that this objection applies to any and all theories of the Trinity, and to any and every conception of God. For to pronounce God as absolute is to relate Him immediately to your thought of Him as absolute. God as the absolute absolute is inconceivable, and cannot be said to exist for man in any guise—mythological or metaphysical. Only in fact can the absolute and relative nature of God be understood, not in ideas and thought alone, or conceived in the mind or in words; but realised and experienced in the Word made flesh. Only thus, made manifest in space and time, could the Word have entered into history, and taken possession of the heart of man. But it is the Eternal Word that was so manifested and, if time be the measure of our failure fully to experience reality, only in contact with the Eternal Word can the relative be realised in the absolute and both be embodied in Truth.

Major Douglas realised that this paradox existed also on the economic plane—the plane of "our daily bread", if "the Kingdom of Heaven" is to come on earth. He discerned it as both the dependence and the independence and freedom, embodied in, and deriving from, the cultural inheritance. Although this inheritance has been added to by increasing technical knowledge and the scientific discoveries of succeeding generations, the increasing wealth that resulted from the application of this knowledge was, in part, sabotaged, resulting in poverty in the midst of plenty and in part directed to materialistic aims inimical to man and his true nature and welfare. Moreover the possibility of increasing leisure which might have resulted from the replacement of human labour by mechanical and automatic methods of production has been denied and frustrated by the satanic policy of Full Employment, one without rhyme or reason beyond the intention to keep man in thrall. Douglas embodied in Social Credit the means to the end of enabling man to claim by right the wealth accruing to him from his inheritance, and at the same time to enjoy the independence and security, freedom and leisure, made possible by his dependence on it.

His proposal of a National Dividend to be distributed to every individual, not by decree, favour, or rule of Government, but by right as to an inheritor and heir of the ages, its distribution to be regulated by the rules of sound accountancy, would enable this end to be realised.

Esau "despised his birthright" and sold it for a mess of pottage, but at least he sold it. Christians have so despised their birthright that they have not even sold it, but have allowed it to be filched from them and degraded into an ever-increasing debt by an all-powerful money monopoly. Then, may one not ask, with reason, whether Christians who have thus allowed themselves to become slaves and bondslaves of Mammon can retain their claim to be considered heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and to enjoy, as promised, the glorious liberty of the children of God? Has the Christian Church no word to say on this matter?