



**CHRIST IN THE WORLD OF MATTER:  
TEILHARD DE CHARDIN'S  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND VISION**

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**Introduction**

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) has, through the wide diffusion and translation of his posthumous works, made a greater impact on postwar religious consciousness than any other theologian. His identity, whether as theologian, scientist, mystic, or philosopher, nevertheless remains contested. This paper highlights the importance of religious experience in forming and unifying his vision of the world. Teilhard is noteworthy as someone who both had religious experiences, and possessed the theological competence and imagination needed to interpret them. The paper begins with an examination of three short accounts of specific religious experiences which Teilhard wrote during October 1916, whilst serving as a stretcher-bearer with the French army in the Verdun region of north-east France. They are included in his collection of writings *Hymn of the Universe* (42-54). The implications of these specific experiences for Teilhard's wider religious vision will then be considered.<sup>1</sup>

**Teilhard's Religious Experiences**

The first experience, called 'The Picture', took place in a church in which a portrait of Christ offering his heart to humankind was hanging.<sup>2</sup> To begin with, the picture appeared as normal. Teilhard recounts that the outlines of Christ's figure, although originally solid, gradually seemed to dissolve, and

all seemed to merge as it were (though without vanishing away) into the rest of the picture. It was as though the planes which marked off the figure of Christ from the world surrounding it were melting into a single vibrant surface whereon all demarcations vanished. (*HU*, 42–46)

This transformation commenced

at one particular point of the outer edge of the figure [but] flowed on thence until it had affected its entire outline.

The metamorphosis then spread beyond the portrait itself, radiating 'outwards to infinity'. Through the vibrant atmosphere there

passed from time to time what seemed like trails of phosphorescence, indicating a continuous gushing-forth to the outermost spheres of the realm of matter and delineating a sort of bloodstream or nervous system running through the totality of life.

Each particular object in the universe nonetheless preserved its individuality whenever attention was directed specifically to it. This vibrant movement emanated from Christ, but above all from his heart.

The climax of the vision was not, however, Christ's heart, but his transfigured face, on which shone harmoniously

in an indescribable shimmer of iridescence, all the radiant hues of all our modes of beauty.

The centre of this radiance was hidden in the eyes of Christ. The fire flashing from them then changed into an

inexhaustible complexity wherein were gathered all the glances that have ever warmed and mirrored back a human heart.

These diverse expressions became gradually blended in a cloud to form a single indecipherable expression which echoed the creative form, or idea, of true beauty.

The second experience, named 'The Monstrance', also took place in a church, this time in a liturgical setting, before the host exposed in the receptacle which gives the story its name. (*HU*, 46–50) To begin with, the host's visible appearance was as normal. Its surface was, however, 'gradually spreading out like a spot of oil', except 'more swiftly and luminously'. Teilhard describes its expansion as being accompanied by a murmuring sound, or sigh, during which the whiteness enveloped all things, which nevertheless preserved its own shape and motion.

[It] did not efface the features or change the nature of anything, but penetrated objects at the core of their being, at a level more profound than their own life, [like a] milky brightness ... illuminating the universe from within [and forming everything from the] same kind of translucent flesh.

The whole world became incandescent, like a single gigantic host penetrated by an inner light.

The corollary of this expansive movement of the host was an inner attractive, or contractive, one in which the

whiteness was consuming all things from within themselves ... pulling back towards its centre all the waves that had spread outwards from it.

Not all the elements became reincorporated into the host, however:

Certain refractory elements in the universe remained behind, outside it, in the exterior darkness. There was indeed still something which lit them, but it was a heart of perverted light, corrosive, poisonous; these rebellious elements burned like torches or glowed red like embers.

The third experience, entitled 'The Pyx', was a general and persistent impression rather than a 'vision properly so called'. It did not, moreover, occur in a religious building, but in a trench during the lull in a battle. (*HU*, 50–54) During a meditation on the small pyx carried on a chain around the neck beneath the clothing, in which the host was contained, an 'intangible and invincible barrier' was experienced between the wearer's body and the body of Christ

within the pyx. Finally, the receptacle was opened and the host consumed. Teilhard states that the host, despite having been taken into the body, nevertheless remained *outside* it. The host appeared always further on in a more complete concentration and expansion of desire, in a greater permeability of the body to divine influence, and in a more absolute limpidity of affective powers, receding, but exercising at the same time an attractive power. The host could not, in this sense, therefore truly be consumed. Neither could its surface be touched, generating instead a new differentiation and complexity formed from any one of innumerable life experiences.

This revelation of the host as coextensive with the universe and placed intangibly between Christ and the subject produced a feeling of rapture, which revealed the previously ungraspable nature of the invisible barrier separating the pyx and the subject. This barrier was recognized as being the whole remaining time of the subject's life in its full extent and density: in other words, the duration leading up to his death and assimilation into the eternal body of Christ. In *The Mass on the World*, Teilhard reflects at greater length on this realization that perfect union with Christ is attainable only in death.<sup>3</sup>

### Genre and Context

The accounts just summarized are presented as descriptions of the experiences of an unnamed and now dead friend,

whose soul was instinctively in communion with the life, the one life, of all reality, and whose body rests now, as he wishes, somewhere in the wild countryside around Thiaumont. (*HU*, 55)

They are, despite this, clearly designed to articulate fundamental aspects of Teilhard's own religious experience and vision, confirmed in many of his other writings. For this reason, I will refer to them from this point onwards as *Teilhard's* religious experiences. He confides elusively to his cousin Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon:

What I've written is simply an imaginative fantasy, - into which, however, I've put a great deal of myself. (*MM*, 135)

In employing the genre of indirect disclosure, Teilhard consciously emulates the model of short story (*histoire*, or *conte*) written by Robert Hugh Benson, the Anglican convert to Catholicism and son of Edward Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in particular his collection *The Light Invisible* (*DM*, 96; *MM*, 130).<sup>4</sup> Teilhard's separation of subject from narrative by means of the voice of a third person is more than stylistic, however. The method of indirect disclosure of religious experience in another's voice suggests that a certain privacy and incommunicability were intrinsic to his religious experiences. Teilhard apparently had no plans to publish the three essays, intending simply to share them with his sister Marguerite-Marie and cousin Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon (*MM*, 130, 135). He also alludes to other specific experiences (*HU*, 54) of which no obvious record remains at all.

### From Sentiment to Sense

The first of the three experiences announces a rupture in philosophic and aesthetic perception. Before the experience begins, Teilhard is considering the question of what Christ's appearance would be like in a vision, what garments Christ would be clothed in, and what would be the nature of the differentiation existing between him and the ordinary surrounding material objects (*HU*, 42). The experience commences unexpectedly, when Teilhard's eyes come to rest on the picture of Christ offering his heart to humankind. This

contemplation of the person of Christ precipitates a transition from the rational into the mystical, and an ascent from the hypothetical to the real.

Teilhard is critical of the empirical classification of religious experience developed by William James, on the grounds that the mode of sensing which James describes is not specifically *spiritual*.<sup>5</sup> James, Teilhard implies, does not properly appraise the Christian element of Christian religious experience, preferring to articulate a generic vision of divine presence in the world (*MM*, 277–78). Teilhard critically describes this religious epistemology as “pantheist” (cosmic) mysticism’ because, he complains, it fails to establish the crucial difference between sense and mere feeling. In *The Divine Milieu*, Teilhard draws, in contrast, a clear distinction between *le sens* (the sense) of the omnipresence of God, and *le sentiment* (the feeling) of the omnipresence of God (*DM*, 92). The principal difference between these two modes of experiencing is that *le sens* suggests a qualitatively deeper type of sensing than *le sentiment*. The latter could comprise little more than an ill-defined stream of empirical or intuited sense experience. Teilhard affirms that the task for a catholic tradition of religious experience should be to ‘explicitly Christianize the compulsion that leads us to divinize the world’. *Le sentiment* is, he implies, insufficient for this task, being unable to reveal any truth of a distinctively religious nature. *Le sens*, by contrast, is the faculty that ‘prolongs, surcreates and supernaturalizes (*prolonge, surcrée, surnaturalise*)’ the “natural” taste for being’, or in an equivalent phrase, the ‘sense of universal being’. Teilhard describes the acquisition of this faculty, and its effects, as follows:

The perception of the divine omnipresence is essentially a seeing, a taste, that is, a kind of intuition bearing upon certain superior qualities in things. It cannot, therefore, be attained directly by any process of reasoning, not by any human artifice. It is a gift [*un don*], like life itself, of which it is undoubtedly the supreme experiential perfection. (*DM*, 93)

The rapturous quality of *le sens* is suggested by a variety of its characteristics: the union of the soul with the Godhead; the finding of a personal and loving Infinite; the heightened consciousness of vision; and the feeling produced by revelation.<sup>6</sup> All these are different ways of describing the unity of the soul with God that spiritual sensing perceives.

Religious conversion is, indeed, a sensory conversion, with grace causing a ‘special sensitizing of the eyes’.<sup>7</sup> Teilhard describes the resulting ‘spiritual’ senses as a ‘mystical faculty’, a ‘complementary’ or ‘sixth’ sense, and an ‘informed eye’.<sup>8</sup> Spiritual perception should not be regarded as a mysterious physical or psychical capacity, however. What Teilhard has in mind is a disciplined training of the senses by means of traditional religious virtues like purity, faith and fidelity—themselves divinely inspired—in order that the Christian subject may be attentive to the manifestations of Christ’s presence in the world (*DM*, 94–103). Spiritual sensing, despite the particularity of its content, nevertheless unites people of different faiths. Teilhard believes that religious people can be divided into two categories which cut across existing religious boundaries, distinguished by whether or not they possess a sense of the numinous.<sup>9</sup> A Christian with a heightened mystical awareness might, for instance, identify with this aspect of Sufism and Tantric Hinduism more than with other Christian traditions.<sup>10</sup> Similarities may be identified between this distinction and the one drawn by Henri Bergson between ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ religion. Bergson does not, after all, apply his categories solely to Christianity, providing a detailed analysis of the regenerative property of mystical experience, which is inherent in ‘dynamic’ religion, wherever it may be found.<sup>11</sup>

Religious sensing enables the synthetic apprehension of an actually existing complex reality. A contrast here with the reformed epistemology of William Alston is illuminating. Alston

grounds his account of mystical perception in the similarities between human perception of ordinary empirical objects and of God as equally direct and unproblematic. He describes it as a 'theory of appearing', and as 'direct', even 'naïve realism', which entails a willingness to accept phenomena at face value.<sup>12</sup> Teilhard grounds his account, in contrast, on the equally *complex* nature of empirical and spiritual perception: God grants ordinary material substances their physical consistence, and provides the possibility of their perception as well. A related point on which Teilhard and Alston differ is the reliability of sensory perception as a basis for truth claims. A corollary of Alston's 'direct realism', it might be assumed, would be that God, being the object of direct spiritual perception, exists. In fact, Alston wishes simply to analyse claims about the perception of God, remaining agnostic both about existence claims and about whether or not genuine perception of God is actually taking place on any particular occasion. Throughout his study, Alston therefore refers implicitly to the 'putative' perception of God.<sup>13</sup> Teilhard, in contrast, conceives of spiritual perception as made possible by divine revelation, and as providing evidence that God both exists, and acts on the world.

### Memory and Duration

A unifying theme in the three accounts is *recollection*, which functions differently in each case. In the second account, recollection occurs by means of the association of images: the switching-on of the glass desk lamp, designed to appear illumined from within, induced the retrieval from memory of the similar image of the illumination of the host in the monstrance (*HU*, 47). The lamp has an autobiographical association as well, however, evoking the one belonging to Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon at the Paris boarding school of which she was headmistress (*MM*, 135). In this case, therefore, recollection precipitates religious experience by means of a fusion of memory and sense experience. The role of recollection in the first experience is different. There, when Teilhard stood before the picture of Christ, the indecipherable final expression on Christ's face itself entered the memory, being recollected subsequently in the glance of a dying soldier (*HU*, 46). The glance performs, in other words, a function similar to that of the desk lamp, but whereas the desk lamp has a purely functional role in providing an analogy for the host which feeds the imagination, the glance is presented as an immediate experience whose significance is similar to that of the expression on the face of Christ. This association of vision with memory is clearly inspired by the Bergsonian notion that perception and recollection interpenetrate each other: when we look at an object, our notion of what the raw data actually tell us about the world is formed by the succession of our past perceptions of similar objects, which are at that point summed up, according to Bergson, in a single moment.<sup>14</sup> Teilhard realizes the importance of this doctrine for connecting specific religious experiences with a wider religious vision of the world, and specifically for understanding the role of the unconscious in preserving this link (*DM*, 37–39).<sup>15</sup>

In the third account, recollection appears to fail, despite deep silence, mounting love of mind and heart, personal humility, docility, childlike tractability, spiritual submission to God and purification of the heart. This failure is due not to a lack of receptivity in the meditator, but to the nature of the object of his contemplation. Teilhard states of the host:

By my withdrawal into myself and my continual purification of my being, I was penetrating ever more deeply into it: but I was like a stone that rolls down a precipice without ever reaching the bottom. Tiny though the host was, I was losing myself in it without ever being able to grasp it or to coincide with it: its centre was *receding from me as it drew me on*.  
(*HU*, 52)

Here, then, is presented another dimension of the intangibility of religious experience: not the difficulty of first-person description, but the intrinsic ungraspability of its essence. Teilhard's experience of the pyx presents an eschatological now but not yet, in which he remains in current reality, separated from its future consummation by the barrier of duration (*HU*, 53).

### Teilhard's Religious Vision

Teilhard's religious experiences were predominantly visual. Indeed, he believed seeing to be the most important among the sensory operations. At the opening of *The Human Phenomenon*, he affirms the pre-eminent place which vision occupies in human knowledge:

One could say that the whole of life lies in seeing - if not ultimately, at least essentially. To be more is to be united - and this sums up and is the very conclusion of the work to follow. But unity grows, and we will affirm this again, only if it is supported by an increase of consciousness, of vision. That is probably why the history of the living world can be reduced to the elaboration of ever more perfect eyes at the heart of a cosmos where it is always possible to discern more. Are not the perfection of an animal and the supremacy of the thinking being measured by the penetration and power of synthesis of their glance?<sup>16</sup>

Teilhard writes that

God is as pervasive and tangible as the atmosphere in which we are bathed, [and] tends, by the logic of his creative effort, to make himself sought and perceived by us (*DM*, 2, 93).

Visual images are the principal means by which God reveals his presence in the world, being more public than other sensory operations such as touch, taste, and even smell.

Teilhard's description to his sister and cousin of his experiences as an 'imaginative fantasy' (*MM*, 135) suggests that he is not even committed to their complete literal truth. They are not, in any case, events whose reality could be verified or falsified conclusively. Their function is, rather, to articulate fundamental aspects of Teilhard's wider religious vision. Teilhard suggests that these experiences, and others, aided him in reconciling his Christian faith with his natural pantheist sympathies. He states:

If in the last resort Christians become "one with God", this unity is achieved not by means of identification, God *becoming* all things, but by the action—at once differentiating and unifying - of love, God being all *in* all, which latter concept is strictly in accord with Christian orthodoxy. (*HU*, 54, n. 1)

Teilhard evokes the language of the writer to the Ephesians, who portrays Christ as the 'head over all things' and 'him who fills all in all' (1.22–23). This theme of unity in differentiation is central to Teilhard's cosmology. The material and spiritual unification of the world in Christ is achieved only by divine power acting transcendently on the matter and spirit of the world. God dwells in the universe because God is greater than the universe, not because God can be reduced to it. Teilhard affirms:

Were creation's dust, which is vitalized by a halo of energy and glory, to be swept away, the substantial Reality wherein every perfection is incorruptibly contained and possessed would remain intact: the rays would be drawn back into their source. (*HU*, 54–55)

Teilhard's belief that God is distinct from the being of the world and is mediated to the world is further demonstrated by the facts that the focus of all three of his experiences is Christ, and that they all take place in different ecclesial contexts. The first two both happen in a church, with the first centred on a portrait of Christ, and the second on Christ's presence

in the eucharistic bread. These settings are reminiscent of R.H. Benson's 'The Convent Chapel', in which the smallness of the building within which the experience occurs is unable to contain the effects on the world of what is experienced.<sup>17</sup> The third experience is also centred on the Eucharistic host. The reason, moreover, that Teilhard is carrying the pyx is that he is a priest and might be required to administer communion to combatants or others on the point of death. This is equally, therefore, an ecclesial context, although not one defined by the physical space of a church building. Indeed, the third story expresses in most developed form the vision of the presence of Christ pervading the whole world, and not just religious buildings or sacraments. There is a clear progression to the third experience from the second one that is initiated by a 'special impression of "exteriority"'. Teilhard writes:

My mind awoke to a new and higher vision of things ... of a cosmos in which the dimensions of divine reality, of spirit, and of matter were also intimately mingled. (*HU*, 50)

Teilhard's whole spirituality is indeed permeated by his awareness of the action of Christ on and within the world.<sup>18</sup>

All parts of world are not, however, uniformly receptive of Christ's power. This is shown with particular clarity in 'The Monstrance', in which certain 'rebellious elements' fail to be assimilated into the body of Christ (*HU*, 49). Teilhard compares this part of his experience with that of Benson, who employs similar imagery to depict a far more oppositional view of the relation between Christ and the world, identifying the 'spirit of the world' with the Antichrist in the closing paragraphs of *Lord of the World* (*MM*, 236).<sup>19</sup> Teilhard wishes, in contrast, to embrace the intrinsic goodness present in the world by virtue of its being formed and sustained by divine action. Only elements which actively repel the unifying love of God will, he believes, ultimately become estranged from God.<sup>20</sup>

### **Illumination of the World**

In *The Divine Milieu*, Teilhard describes the transfigured appearance of the material world by means of striking light metaphors. This vision, and the language he employs to describe it, are rooted in his early religious experiences. He writes of the world's *éclat* (brilliance), *brille* (shine) and *incandescence*. It is *éblouissant* (dazzling), *lumineuse*, *limpide*, and like a *rayon* (ray of light). In an earlier work, he sees the universe 'bathed in light'.<sup>21</sup> Fire and conflagration imagery also capture Teilhard's imagination: humanity lives, he affirms, 'steeped' in the 'burning layers' of the divine and in its 'living light'. Elsewhere, he refers simply to the 'universe ablaze' (*DM*, 73–74; *HU*, 21–29). He uses these images to describe the transformation of the surface appearance of the universe, in terms reminiscent of the first two of his religious experiences, in which the surfaces of the picture of Christ and of the host in the monstrance are transformed.

Teilhard's use of visual metaphors to describe divine action on the world and divine presence in it is clearly inspired by Ignatius Loyola, whose retreat he followed annually for eight days. In the 'Contemplation for Achieving Love', which Teilhard particularly admired,<sup>22</sup> Ignatius urges the retreatant:

See God living in His creatures: in matter, giving it existence; in plants, giving them life; in animals, giving them consciousness; in humans, giving them intelligence.<sup>23</sup>

Teilhard frequently depicts this type of vision with fire imagery, such as when he says in 'The Mass on the World':

The flame has lit up the whole world from within. All things individually and collectively are penetrated and flooded by it, from the inmost core of the tiniest atom to the mighty sweep of the most universal laws of being: so naturally has it flooded every element, every energy, every connecting link in the unity of our cosmos, that one might suppose the cosmos to have burst spontaneously into flame. (*HU*, 23–24)

This is a vision of God active in the world, preserving and animating it. Teilhard's vision contrasts sharply with the interior spiritual illumination of the individual soul expounded in Augustine's *De trinitate*, in which images of the Trinity discovered in the sensory world are presented as, at best, poor analogies for the inner illumination of the soul by God. This introverted conception of the illumination of the soul has dominated so much traditional and contemporary spiritual writing. Augustine proposes an overtly introspective path of illumination:

Let us put aside all consideration of things we know outwardly through the senses of the body, and concentrate our attention on what we have stated that all minds know for certain about themselves,

in other words, their possession of memory, understanding and will.<sup>24</sup>

Teilhard also distances himself from a more extreme doctrine of interior illumination. In formulating his religious vision, he criticizes the 'forbidden distortions' of the *illuminati*, or Alumbrados, according to whom the divine will could be communicated immediately, infallibly and privately to the soul following spiritual abandonment (*DM*, 78). Ignatius Loyola was himself falsely accused of holding this view, which was condemned in the Spanish Inquisition. Teilhard's theology of vision is intended to prevent exactly these kinds of excesses by establishing the shared, public context of spiritual enlightenment. By applying the spiritual senses to the world, the subject is called to test them, in the words of Hugo Rahner, 'against the tangible, the visible, and even ... the reasonable'.<sup>25</sup> Teilhard thus recovers a literal sense of vision as that which is given to the human soul by God through objects in the world that are external to the soul. He states:

*The Fire of heaven* which consumes us, reaches us in (and after) embracing the world.<sup>26</sup>

Visual imagery challenges the excessively interiorized conceptions of spiritual illumination that both the historic spiritual tradition and contemporary interest in it have tended to favour. In particular, it enables accounts of religious experience to move beyond the predominant Neoplatonic notion of the soul as the mirror of the divine. The world itself now becomes the mirror. Teilhard declares:

To the Christian's sensitized vision, it is true, the Creator and, more precisely, the Redeemer (as we shall see) have steeped themselves in all things and penetrated all things to such a degree that, as S. Angela of Foligno said, 'the world is full of God'. (*DM*, 78)

Elsewhere, Teilhard encapsulates Angela's statement more simply: 'God is everywhere.'<sup>27</sup> Not only the soul, but the world itself, reflects divine glory:

Everything, in every element and event of the universe, is bathed in light and warmth, everything becomes animate and a fit object for love and worship.<sup>28</sup>

Teilhard prays that he may perceive the divine presence most completely in his fellow humans (*DM*, 108), as on the occasion when he recollects the eyes of Christ in the glance of a dying soldier (*HU*, 46).

## Conclusion: Experience, Vision and Reality

Teilhard describes the vision of God made possible by religious experience as a 'restorative vision'.<sup>29</sup> The human imagination is given images of the reality of God by religious experiences, which it then uses, in its work and action, to construct that reality.<sup>30</sup> Teilhard insists that action is not simply any habit or change in circumstances, but an intended new beginning in which divine activity is necessarily implicated (*DM*, 21). By means of religious experience, Christ communicates his final will for creation to humankind. This enables humans to perform their role as enlightened created co-creators with God. Teilhard's own theology should, therefore, only be termed 'mystical' with caution. Religious experience and vision announce the *completion* of materiality rather than its annihilation, revealing the true spiritual significance of material objects in the world. Religious experience leads not to disengagement from the world, but to a renewed commitment to active living within it.

## NOTES

1. Abbreviations of the works of Teilhard de Chardin:  
*DM*     *The Divine Milieu*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004.  
*HU*     *Hymn of the Universe*, London: Collins, 1965.  
*MM*     *The Making of a Mind: Letters from a Soldier-Priest, 1914–1919*, London: Collins, 1965.
2. 'The Picture' is also available in *The Heart of Matter*, San Diego: Harvest, 1974, pp. 61–65. All three accounts were included in the collection *Écrits du temps de la guerre, 1916–1919*, Paris: Seuil, 1965, pp. 107–127, but not in its English edition owing to their prior publication in *Hymn of the Universe*. The original French text includes more detailed references than the translation.
3. This trajectory is discussed in Thomas M. King, *Teilhard's Mass: Approaches to 'The Mass on the World'*, New York: Paulist, 2005, p. 9.
4. Robert Hugh Benson, *The Light Invisible*, London: Isbister, 1903.
5. 'The Soul of the World' (1918), in *Writings in Time of War*, London: Collins, 1968, p. 189.
6. 'Cosmic Life' (1916), in *Writings in Time of War*, pp. 47, 52; 'Christ in the World of Matter', 'The Mass on the World' (both 1919), in *HU*, pp. 53, 26.
7. 'Introduction to the Christian Life' (1944), in *Christianity and Evolution*, San Diego: Harvest, 1974, p. 161.
8. *DM*, p. 94; 'The Heart of Matter' (1919), 'The Christic' (1955), in *The Heart of Matter*, pp. 31, 96.
9. 'Some Reflections on Progress' (1941), in *The Future of Man*, London: Collins, 1964, pp. 76–77.
10. 'Some Notes on the Mystical Sense: An Attempt at Clarification', in *Toward the Future*, San Diego: Harvest, 1975, pp. 209–211.
11. Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977, pp. 209–265.
12. William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 55.
13. Alston, *Perceiving God*, pp. 9–11.
14. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, London: Macmillan, 1911.

15. For a useful psychological perspective on Teilhard's spirituality, see Lee Robbins, 'Being in Darkness: A Jungian Commentary on Teilhard's "Passivities of Diminishment"', *Anima* 11, 1 (1984), pp. 17–23.
16. *The Human Phenomenon*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003, p. 3.
17. Benson, 'The Convent Chapel', in *The Light Invisible*.
18. See Ursula King, 'Consumed by Fire from Within: Teilhard de Chardin's Pan-Christic Mysticism in Relation to the Catholic Tradition', *The Heythrop Journal* 40, 4 (1999), pp. 456–77.
19. R.H. Benson, *Lord of the World*, London: Hutchinson, 1907; South Bend, Ind.: St Augustine's, 2001.
20. Ursula King, 'Love: A Higher Form of Energy in the Work of Teilhard de Chardin and Sorokin', *Zygon* 39, 1 (2004), pp. 85–89 and 97–99, discusses the role of love as a unifying dynamic in Teilhard's cosmology.
21. 'My Universe' (1918), in *The Heart of Matter*, p. 74.
22. Retreat note of 19–27 October 1940, in *Notes de retraites, 1919–1954*, Paris: Seuil, 2003, p. 169.
23. Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, Wheathampstead: Clarke, 1987, §§ 230–37.
24. Augustine, *The Trinity*, X.14, Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1997, p. 296.
25. Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, London: Chapman, 1968, pp. 226–27.
26. Paper of 29 December 1919, in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin – Maurice Blondel: Correspondence*, New York: Herder & Herder, 1976, p. 49.
27. 'Cosmic Life', p. 60.
28. 'My Fundamental Vision' (1948), in *Toward the Future*, p. 204.
29. Letter of 10 January 1927, in *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, New York: Harper & Row, 1969, p. 74.
30. Entry in unpublished *Journal*, 26 July 1947, cahier XV.

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