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JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

**The Victoria Institute**

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VOL. LXXXV

1953

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute  
OR  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain

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VOL. LXXXV

1953



LONDON:

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## PAST PRESIDENTS

- 1865-1886.—The Right Hon. The EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.  
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 1927-1941.—Sir AMBROSE FLEMING, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.  
 1941-1946.—Sir CHARLES MARSTON, F.S.A.  
 1946-1952.—Sir FREDERIC G. KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D.,  
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 The Rt. Rev. H. R. GOUGH, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F. (Bishop of Barking).  
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- DOUGLAS DEWAR, B.A., F.Z.S.  
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 Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.  
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### *Honorary Officers.*

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 E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, M.B.E., M.A., *Secretary*.  
 F. F. BRUCE, M.A., *Editor*.

### *Auditor.*

- G. METCALFE COLLIER, A.C.I.I., *Incorporated Accountant*.

### *Assistant Secretary.*

- Mrs. W. R. OWEN (to October, 1953).  
 Mrs. L. I. HARGREAVES (from October, 1953).

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**NOTE:**—The Editor apologizes for the inconvenience caused to readers of this volume by variations in type and in the position of Discussions, which have arisen in the course of transition from the old arrangement to a new one.

# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

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## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1952

READ AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 18TH, 1953

---

### 1. *Progress of the Institute*

In presenting the Eighty-fourth Annual Report, the Council renders thanks to God for the continuation of the work of the Institute.

The Council expresses gratitude to all who have given their services in contributing and reading papers, in taking the chair at the meetings, and in taking part in discussion.

The Council also wishes to express thanks to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. E. J. G. Titterington, who continues to render efficient and tireless service in the executive work of the Institute, and to the Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Owen, for her loyal services.

Seven ordinary meetings were held during the 1951-52 Session.

The Annual Address was delivered by Rev. F. Cawley, B.A., B.D., Ph.D., Principal of Spurgeon's College.

The Council decided to submit to the Fellows and Members a revised Constitution for the Institute. The Revision was founded on the original Constitution, and it leaves unchanged the objects and aims of the Institute.

The Council also decided to dispose of the Library, and the Honorary Secretary has undertaken the sale of the books.

In view of the great increase in the cost of the printing of the Transactions, it has been decided to increase the annual subscription of Associate Members from half a guinea to one guinea.

The members of the Council have given much time and thought to consideration of the financial position, which has caused some concern. Certain measures have been taken to reduce expenditure, and it is hoped that in the coming year a considerable saving will be effected in current expenses.

The Council would value the prayers of the Fellows and Members for a successful continuation of the work of the Institute, and asks for increasing efforts to make the work of the Institute

more widely known, and to introduce an increasing flow of new members to replace the wastage due to deaths and resignations.

The Council would welcome suggestions and constructive criticism from Members which might help to further the aims of the Institute and make for increased efficiency in the carrying out of those aims.

## 2. Meetings

Seven Ordinary Meetings were held during the year, in addition to the Annual General Meeting and Annual Address.

“God in History,” by Dr. FRANCIS RUE STEELE.

D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C., in the Chair.

“The Place of Miracle in Modern Thought and Knowledge,”  
by Rev. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A. (*Schofield Prize Essay*).

A. H. Boulton, LL.B., in the Chair.

“Modern New Testament Scholarship and Psychology in regard to the Miracles of Healing,” by Rev. JOHN CROWLESMITH.

Ernest White, M.B., B.S., in the Chair.

“Religion and the Gospel,” by Rev. JAKOB JOCZ, Ph.D.

Rev. C. T. Cook, D.D., in the Chair.

“The Aims and Scope of the Philosophy of Religion,” by the Very Rev. W. R. MATTHEWS, K.C.V.O., D.D., D.Litt. (Dean of St. Paul’s).

Rev. Professor E. O. James, M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D., D.D., F.S.A., in the Chair.

“The Limitations of Natural Theology,” by R. T. LOVELOCK, A.M.I.E.E. (*Gunning Prize Essay*).

Ernest White, M.B., B.S., in the Chair.

“The Significance of the Dead Sea Finds,” by Rev. BLEDDYN J. ROBERTS, M.A., B.D.

F. F. Bruce, M.A., in the Chair.

Annual Address—“The Christian Assurance,” by Rev. Principal F. CAWLEY, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.

E. J. G. Titterton, M.B.E., M.A., in the Chair.

### 3. Council and Officers

The following is a list of the Council and Officers for the year 1952:—

#### President

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.

#### Vice-Presidents

The Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

The Rt. Rev. H. R. Gough, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F. (Bishop of Barking).

Professor Malcolm Guthrie, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.

Professor A. Rendle Short, M.D., B.S., B.Sc., F.R.C.S.

#### Trustees

Ernest White, M.B., B.S.

F. F. Stunt, LL.B.

E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A.

#### Council

(In Order of Original Election)

Douglas Dewar, B.A., F.Z.S.	R. J. C. Harris, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D.
Wilson E. Leslie.	
Percy O. Ruoff,	F. F. Stunt, LL.B.
Robert E. D. Clark, M.A., Ph.D.	W. E. Filmer, B.A., F.Z.S.
Rev. C. T. Cook, D.D.	D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., B.A., A.K.C.
Ernest White, M.B., B.S. (Chairman of Council).	F. F. Bruce, M.A.
Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A.	A. H. Boulton, LL.B.
E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A.	

#### Honorary Officers

F. F. Stunt, LL.B., *Treasurer.*

F. F. Bruce, M.A., *Editor.*

E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A., *Secretary.*

#### Auditor

G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., F.S.A.A., *Incorporated Accountant.*

#### Assistant Secretary

Mrs. W. R. Owen.

#### 4. Election of Officers

In accordance with the Rules the following Members of the Council retire by rotation: R. E. D. Clark, M.A., Ph.D., R. J. C. Harris, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., Wilson E. Leslie, and Ernest White, M.B., B.S., who offer (and are nominated by the Council) for re-election.

G. Metcalfe Collier, Incorporated Accountant, of the firm of Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Blake, offers (and is nominated by the Council) for re-election as Auditor for the ensuing year, at a fee of ten guineas.

#### 5. Obituary

The Council regrets to announce the following deaths:—

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt, LL.D., F.B.A. (*President*); Rev. Samuel M. Zwemer, M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S. (*Hon Additional Correspondent*); Brig.-Gen. H. Biddulph, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.; John P. Cohen; G. E. Dancer; Rev. E. W. Hadwen, L.Th., B.D.; Victor Levett; M. E. Moore-Anderson, B.A., A.M.I.C.E.; Mrs. E. M. Titchener.

#### 6. New Fellows, Members and Associates

The following are the names of new Fellows, Members and Associates elected in 1952:—

FELLOWS: Rev. C. B. Akenson, B.Sc., M.A.; J. B. Brown, F.C.A., F.Ph.S., F.N.S.; Miss M. F. Coston, B.A.; Rev. D. J. Huxley Evans, B.A.; L. W. G. Duff-Forbes, D.D., F.I.I.A., A.A.I.I.; Rev. E. Gordon, T.D., B.D., S.T.M.; W. E. S. Heath, C.A., A.C.W.A.; Rev. F. G. Jelleymann; G. C. Knowlson; The Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, K.C.V.O., D.D., D.Litt., S.T.D.; Rev. Herbert Mekeel, B.A., D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.; Rev. Alan Metcalfe; Rev. J. Purnell; E. P. Reavley; Rev. Prof. G. W. Ridout, D.D., F.R.G.S. (on transfer from Member); Rev. W. H. Turner, B.A., B.S.L., B.D., M.A., D.D., D.Litt.

MEMBERS: William Barnett, B.D., M.D.; Mrs. Marion Biddulph; Alan R. Braybrooke, B.A. (on transfer from Associate); Rev. B. M. N. Brown, F.R.G.S. (on transfer from Associate); Rev. N. B. Butler, L.Th.; Miss G. Charles, B.A.; P. Clapp, B.A.; N. L. Dunning (on transfer from Associate); Rev. Lorenz D. Emery, B.S., B.D.; C. Farah, B.A., B.D.; B. J. Fisher, Jr., B.S.; K. J. Frampton, B.A.; M. E. Fuller, M.D.; T. C. Gwynne; Mrs. Willis T. Hanson, Jr.; Miss Ann Hogg, B.A., Dip. Ed.; Rev. Robt. Holland, B.A., B.D.; Rev. J. Humann, Th.D.; R. V. Klint, B.Sc.; Bennet McInnes, M.Sc.; Rev. E. D. McMillan, B.Sc., B.D.; J. C. Macqueen; Stuart Merriam, B.A.; Miss A. Moore-Anderson; Rev. F. G. Nevell, B.A. (on transfer from Associate); Rev. R. A. Reminston, B.S., B.D.; Miss Lona Rives, B.A.; C. A. Ronan, B.Sc., F.R.A.S.; O. E. Sanden, B.A., B.D., LL.D., F.T.A.Sc.; D. G. Sayles, A.B.; Carleton Smith; H. L. Speagle, M.A.; H. Dana Taylor, B.Sc., M.E.; T. R. Tepley, B.S.; D. H. Trapnell, B.A., M.B., B.Chir., M.B.O.U.; Rev. D. E. Wallace, B.Sc., B.D.; R. A. Webster, B.Sc., M.Sc., B.D.

ASSOCIATES: E. LeRoy Bottemiller; L. Brainard; C. E. N. Brown; Miss Ann Chance; Miss N. Cunningham; C. Disbrow, B.A.; J. L. McL. Farmborough, B.A.; G. Goldsworthy; Rev. G. Howlett; R. J. K. Law; M. A. McMillan; J. H. Pickett; P. Price; J. A. Sevaratnam; D. J. Wilson, B.Sc.; F. Westberry, B.A.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATE: Columbia Bible College.

7. *Membership*

Life Fellows .. .. .	21
Annual Fellows .. .. .	145
Life Members .. .. .	33
Annual Members .. .. .	242
Associates .. .. .	53
Library Associates .. .. .	57
	<hr/>
Total Nominal Membership .. .. .	551
	<hr/>

Seventy-one new Fellows, Members and Associates were elected during the year, but deaths, resignations, etc., amounted to ninety-one, resulting in a net decrease in the total membership of twenty.

8. *Donations*

W. E. Filmer, £35; Mr. and Mrs. Laing, £20; Anon., £20; Dr. Mary Fleming, £15; J. Fielding-Smith, £10 10s. 11d.; Col. G. M. Oldham, £5; Anon. £4 4s.; Miss Myra Light, £4 4s.; P. H. Nielsen, £3 3s.; S. M. Robinson, £2 11s. 1d.; H. V. Goold, £2 2s.; J. W. Laing, £2 2s.; A. E. Preece, £2 2s.; Dr. B. P. Sutherland, £1 17s.; Col. R. Biddulph, £1 11s.; Dr. J. R. Howitt, £1 9s. 11d.; R. S. Timberlake, £1 2s.; L. Glyn Taylor, £1 1s.; C. J. Young, £1 1s.; Miss E. Boord, £1; Miss L. Bush, £1; S. Cooper, £1; Col. F. Molesworth, £1; Rev. J. Mills, £1; J. McGavin, 17s.; Mrs. Scott Challice, 10s.; Rev. J. W. Wenham, 10s.; J. Mikaelson, 9s. 4d.; F. E. Guest, 5s.; Miscellaneous, 5s.; Total, £141 17s. 3d.

9. *Finance*

Notwithstanding various measures of retrenchment, the state of our finances is not as bright as we should like and it will be noted that the total of subscriptions received is slightly less than for the preceding year. There would be no excess of income over expenditure apart from the fact that the actual cost of printing the Transactions for 1951 proved less than expected, and but for this the final result for 1952 would have been an increased deficit to carry forward. Moreover, the result would have been still more depressing but for the generous gifts of a number of Fellows and Members whose donations over and above their subscriptions amounted to £129 13s. 4d. We are most grateful to them for their assistance and would urge all Fellows and Members to do anything in their power in the current year to ensure that there is no further diminution in our income.

E. WHITE (*Chairman*).



**PRIZE FUND**

£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<b>To PRIZE AWARDED:—</b>			<b>By AMOUNTS IN HAND AT 1ST JAN., 1952:—</b>		
42	Gunning Trust .. .. .	40 0 0	78	Gunning Trust .. .. .	101 17 9
	„ BALANCES IN HAND: 31st Dec., 1952 ..		62	Langhorne Orchard Trust .. .. .	70 16 0
102	Gunning Trust .. .. .	85 11 1	57	Schofield Memorial .. .. .	24 6 11
71	Langhorne Orchard Trust .. .. .	79 18 6			197 0 8
24	Schofield Memorial .. .. .	33 16 3		„ INCOME:—	
		199 5 10	24	Gunning Trust .. .. .	23 13 4
			9	Langhorne Orchard Trust .. .. .	9 2 6
			9	Schofield Memorial .. .. .	9 9 4
					42 5 2
£239		£239 5 10	£239		£239 5 10

**CASH BALANCES**

£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
705	To LIFE COMPOSITIONS FUND .. .. .	691 16 0	556	By GENERAL FUND OVERDRAWN .. .. .	594 7 8
197	„ PRIZE FUND .. .. .	199 5 10		„ BALANCES AT BANK:—	
			121	General Account .. .. .	93 11 1
			44	Sundry Accounts .. .. .	— — —
			181	Prize Account .. .. .	203 3 1
					296 14 2
£902		£891 1 10	£902		£891 1 10

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## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 1952.

LIABILITIES				ASSETS			
1951		£	s. d.	1951		£	s. d.
£	<b>GENERAL FUND:—</b>			£	<b>GENERAL FUND:—</b>		
	Prepaid Subscriptions:				Subscriptions in Arrear:		
47	Fellows .. .. .	48	14 5	75	Fellows .. .. .	42	14 6
26	Members .. .. .	62	0 10	77	Members .. .. .	51	18 6
6	Associates .. .. .	4	13 0	17	Associates .. .. .	2	3 7
			115 8 3				96 16 7
210	Loan—W. E. Filmer, Esq. .. .. .		175 0 0	22	Office Equipment .. .. .		22 6 0
12	Sundry Creditors: Expenses .. .. .	11	15 8	41	Sundry debtors .. .. .		49 2 2
7	Audit fee .. .. .	7	7 0		Deficit on General Fund:		
802	Printing .. .. .	629	10 0	1,088	As at 1st January, 1952 .. .. .	1,434	5 10
			648 12 8		Less Surplus, 1952 .. .. .	69	2 0
556	Cash overdrawn, General Fund .. .. .		594 7 8				1,365 3 10
1,666			1,533 8 7	1,666			1,533 8 7
	<b>SPECIAL FUNDS:—</b>				<b>SPECIAL FUNDS:—</b>		
705	Life Compositions Fund .. .. .	691	16 0	705	Life Compositions Fund, Cash .. .. .	691	16 0
508	Gunning Trust .. .. .	508	0 0	508	Gunning Trust, £673, 3½% Conversion		
200	Langhorne Orchard Trust .. .. .	200	0 0		Stock at cost .. .. .	508	0 0
220	Schofield Memorial Trust .. .. .	220	0 0	200	Langhorne Orchard Trust, £258 18s.		
400	Craig Memorial Trust .. .. .	400	0 0		3½% Conversion Stock at cost .. .. .	200	0 0
197	Prize Fund .. .. .	199	5 10	220	Schofield Memorial Trust, £378 14s. 6d.,		
			2,219 1 10		2½% Consols at cost .. .. .	220	0 0
				400	Craig Memorial Trust, £376 7s. 4d.		
					3½% War Stock at cost .. .. .	400	0 0
				197	Prize Fund, cash .. .. .	199	5 10
							2,219 1 10
£3,896			£3,752 10 5	£3,896			£3,752 10 5

We have audited the accounts of which the foregoing is the Balance Sheet and have obtained all the information and explanations which we have required. Stocks of publications are held which do not appear in the Balance Sheet, subject to this, in our opinion the Balance Sheet shows a true and fair view of the affairs of the Victoria Institute, and is correct according to the books and records of the Institute, and the information and explanations given to us.

31<sup>st</sup> March, 1953.

199 Piccadilly, London, W. 1.

(Signed) METCALFE COLLIER,  
Incorporated Accountant and Auditor.

METCALFE COLLIER, HAYWARD AND BLAKE.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE WAS HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1, AT 5.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 18TH MAY, 1953.

Professor MALCOLM GUTHRIE, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M. Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 26th May, 1952, were read, confirmed and signed.

The Report of the Council and Statement of Accounts for 1952, having been circulated, were taken as read.

The Chairman first referred to the loss to the Institute in the death of the late President, Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, and those present stood for a moment in tribute to his memory.

He then put to the Meeting the *FIRST RESOLUTION*, as follows:

THAT THE REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1952, PRESENTED BY THE COUNCIL, BE RECEIVED AND ADOPTED.

There were no comments or amendments, and the Resolution was thereupon carried unanimously.

The Chairman then proposed the *SECOND RESOLUTION*, as follows:

THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, THE REV. PRINCIPAL H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.LITT., PH.D.; THE RIGHT REV. H. R. GOUGH, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F., BISHOP OF BARKING; PROFESSOR MALCOLM GUTHRIE, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.; AND PROFESSOR A. RENDLE SHORT, M.B., B.S., B.Sc., F.R.C.S.; THE HONORARY SECRETARY, E. J. G. TITTERINGTON, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.; AND THE HONORARY TREASURER, F. F. STUNT, Esq., LL.B., BE AND HEREBY ARE, RE-ELECTED TO THEIR OFFICES.

There being again no comments or amendments, this Resolution also was carried unanimously.

The *THIRD RESOLUTION*, moved by J. Purdue, Esq., and seconded by R. S. Timberlake, Esq., was as follows:

THAT R. E. D. CLARK, Esq., M.A., Ph.D.; R. J. C. HARRIS, Esq., A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., A.R.I.C.; WILSON LESLIE, Esq., AND ERNEST WHITE, Esq., M.B., B.S., RETIRING MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, BE, AND HEREBY ARE, RE-ELECTED.

ALSO THAT THE ELECTION OF A. H. BOULTON, Esq., LL.B., CO-OPTED TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE COUNCIL, BE, AND HEREBY IS, CONFIRMED.

There being no comments or amendments, this Resolution on being put to the Meeting was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then proposed the *FOURTH RESOLUTION*, as follows:

THAT G. METCALFE COLLIER, ESQ., INCORPORATED ACCOUNTANT, OF MESSRS. METCALFE COLLIER, HAYWARD AND BLAKE, BE, AND HEREBY IS, RE-ELECTED AUDITOR AT A FEE OF TEN GUINEAS, AND THAT HE BE THANKED FOR PAST SERVICES.

The Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer having referred to the services which Mr. Collier had rendered to the Institute, this Resolution also was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then made mention of the Langhorne Orchard Prize, for 1952, which had been awarded to Rev. A. Garfield Curnow, and the subject for the Schofield Prize for 1953, viz., "The Present Relevance of the Story of Eden."

There being no other business, the Meeting terminated.

# 911TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1,

ON MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 1952.

Rev. S. C. THEXTON, M.Th., in the Chair.

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## SANCTITY: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

By the Rev. W. E. SANGSTER, M.A., Ph.D.

### SYNOPSIS

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### ERRATA

Page 12, last paragraph, 'From' *should read* 'Fromm'.

Page 40, line 1, 'Rabinnism' *should read* 'Rabbinism'.

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The paper closes with a series of questions which show the lines along which the author believes that further thinking on this subject should be done.

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The mystery derives from some dim awareness that we have of his commerce with another world. He appears to be "the pilgrim of an inward odyssey." He treats material things (for which we long and to which we cling) as no more important than the furniture of an inn.

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## SANCTITY: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

By the Rev. W. E. SANGSTER, M.A., Ph.D.

### SYNOPSIS

The greatness of the saint is unlike all other greatness. Sublime goodness has fascinated discerning men and women through all time. What is the uniqueness of the saint? Can the origin and development of sanctity be traced through the centuries?

The paper is an attempt to do that. It recognizes sanctity in other world religions but concentrates (in the latter part of the paper) on its development in Judaism and Christianity. The first part of the paper is an attempt to analyse man's early apprehension of the Divine (and to isolate in it the "germ" of the holy) before the emergence of the great World Faiths. It puts stress upon the contribution of the non-rational to man's awareness of God.

The development of the idea of the holy is rapidly traced through the Old Testament, and an emphasis is placed upon the immense importance of God's revelation in Isaiah, wherein the ethical character of the divine holiness is clearly enunciated. The differences in the New Testament, subsequent to the gift of the Holy Spirit, are touched upon, and the "double standard" in morality, which grew up in the Church after the canon was closed, is indicated.

The paper closes with a series of questions which show the lines along which the author believes that further thinking on this subject should be done.

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SANCTITY is a kind of greatness unlike all other. The great statesman, the great writer, the great soldier may be far above us but he remains of our world. The great saint fills us with awe and seems almost a visitor from another sphere. Mystery and fascination clothe the thought of him in our mind.

The mystery derives from some dim awareness that we have of his commerce with another world. He appears to be "the pilgrim of an inward odyssey." He treats material things (for which we long and to which we cling) as no more important than the furniture of an inn.

The fascination derives from some strange conviction we cannot escape that we also could be—and *should* be—what he has become: that, unlike other kinds of greatness, this was within our grasp and that we have been defeated, not so much by external circumstances, but by impediments we have clung to in ourselves. We are awed and we are fascinated. Both—and both together!

Sanctity is not confined to one religion. The Buddhist, the Hindu, and the Moslem have their saints, though it will be most convenient in this paper to think of the term as it developed in Judaism and flowered in Christianity. Most of our space, however, must be given to the origin of the concept in the ages which preceded the emergence of the great Faiths.

A sense of the holy is far older than all the great religions. By the time the great religions took shape man is using clear concepts. The Deity is thought of as being Spirit, possessing Power, Reason and Will. The greater the religion, the richer its clear ideas. The development of religion is largely a development of its *thought*. It has grown in rationality. Dogmas have been rough-hewn, then shaped and, at the last, finely chiselled. Theology has become a science. Some of the debates that went to the shaping of the creeds can be followed only by philosophers.

Nor would the student of religion regret this if religion in some eras had not become intellectually lopsided. There is more in the religious consciousness than can ever go into concepts. It is generally conceded now that the non-rational has a contribution to make as well as the rational. The arrogance of supposing that what could not be clearly expressed could be cheerfully discarded has impoverished religion and made lonely men of its mystics and seers. So far from it being a mark of greater intellectual grasp to press only along the rational path, it was, in some ways, the path of least resistance. One had at least the help of language. The things discarded would not go into words; and how can one discuss what will not go into words?

But, perhaps, it is only *precise* words they will not go into. Mystics and seers are not normally dumb. If they preach the virtues of silence, they do so like Carlyle "in thirty volumes." Primitive man was aware of more things than he could put into clear concepts and the devout soul has been in that situation ever since. Religion has many inexpressible experiences. Indeed, those experiences may prove the unique contribution of the religious consciousness to man's understanding of himself and his world. To deny the contribution to religion of all which will not go into precise terms, is to equate the Deity with human ideas of His attributes, whereas those attributes are but predicates of the Sublime, Who is infinitely beyond their power fully to express, much less to encompass, and never to exhaust.

Throughout our enquiry this contribution of the non-rational must be borne in mind. Clearly, we do not mean the irrational. But just as man knows only the skin of the sea, and a few hundred feet beneath it, but is aware that the ocean is over six miles deep in places, and that the vast unexplored depths constantly affect the shallow area of his knowledge,

so the religious thinker knows that beneath the area of ordered thought there is a vast ocean of which he cannot speak in clear terms and with detailed understanding, but of which he feels the pull, and knows the effect, and from which he enjoys experiences he cannot put into plain words.

Scientific men used to smile at Pascal's assertion that "the heart has reasons of which the head has no knowledge" and decline to admit that thought can proceed on images as well as on ideas.

Yet it can. One can go by plane as well as by car. If, at the last, we conclude that there *is* something unusual in the way saints apprehend, we shall remember that we met at the outset of our study this contribution of the non-rational to the idea of the holy, and must keep in mind that there are other paths to knowledge than the path of logical thought.

Certainly our study begins before the emergence of clear ideas. Primitive man felt himself to be in a world in which he stood over against a three-fold "otherness": (i) things, (ii) other men, (iii) Something or Someone high and eerie.<sup>1</sup> It is with his awareness of this Something or Someone that we have to do, and our aim is to isolate in particular one element that we shall find there—the "germ" of the holy.

The most illuminating study of this question in our time is the work of Dr. Rudolf Otto. The First World War was still in process when he published *Das Heilige*. Ten editions had appeared in German before it was turned into English, though perhaps the best illustration of the influence of the book is seen, not in its numerous editions, but in the way in which terms Otto felt driven to mint have become common coin in theological exchange.

Otto began by asserting that "Holiness is a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion."<sup>2</sup> In the development of man's thought it gets transferred to ethics, but it is not derived from ethics. It includes "a quite specific element or 'moment' which sets it apart from the rational"—i.e. makes it impossible for the mind to grasp in terms of clear ideas. An analogy may be found in a quite different sphere—the category of the beautiful. A sunset cannot go into a syllogism.

Holiness means in common use to-day "absolutely good," but that use is derived. If the word originally included the seed idea of moral perfection (and that would be debated), it was not the only element and it was not the chief. Another was present, more primitive and more prominent. For this other element, Otto felt the need of a new name and adopted a word coined from the Latin *numen*. *Omen* had given us *ominous*: *numen* could give us *numinous*. He holds that "this mental state is perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any others; and, therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot strictly be defined."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of the Holy* (English trans., p. 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

He holds that this element lives in all real religion. It is in the Hebrew *qadosh*, in the Greek *ἅγιος* and in the Latin *sacer*. All these terms have come to connote ethical excellence, but they were not ethically excellent in origin and, even to-day, could they be robbed of the numinous element, something precious in them would perish. They would pass from the realm of the spiritual to become terms of interest only to moralists.

If a man has no sense of the numinous, there is not much one can do about it. Only God can open the eyes of the blind. Preachers in all ages, seeking to express the inexpressible and consciously failing, have said with Myers' *St. Paul*:

Oh could I tell, ye surely would believe it!  
 Oh could I only say what I have seen!  
 How should I tell or how can ye receive it,  
 How, till he bringeth you where I have been ?

Yet one can do a little. One can *try* to say it. One can draw analogies from other realms of thought. One can put a man in the place where others have seen it. One can encourage oneself with the knowledge that "the Father seeketh such"<sup>1</sup> and that it is highly doubtful if any man ever went through life without a gleam.

But more than this one cannot do. It is not taught, or explained, or expressed in a formula. Those who "attend" to the Spirit are "quickenened."

When Otto comes to analyse the numinous he pays tribute to Schleiermacher for isolating the "feeling of dependence" in this experience, but criticizes him under two heads.

First, because Schleiermacher makes his "feeling of dependence" differ from the feeling of dependence we have in other realms of life only in degree, whereas (so Otto argues), it is a difference of intrinsic quality. The two states of mind are clearly distinguished introspectively. This abasement before the Great Other is "only definable through itself" just because it is "so primary and elementary a datum of our psychical life." He names it "creature-consciousness." It is "abasement into nothingness before an overpowering absolute might."<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, he criticizes Schleiermacher because Schleiermacher argued that we only come to the fact of God as the result of an inference. Having a "feeling of dependence," man posits a cause for it.

The psychological data do not bear this out. Indeed, they testify to the contrary. Creature-consciousness is a concomitant and, at the same time, a consequence of another feeling-element "which casts it like a shadow" and which is begotten by the numinous felt as objective and outside of the self.

We have spoken of "analysing" the numinous, but the word "analyse" is too concrete. The nature of the holy can best be hinted at by looking

<sup>1</sup> St. John 4: 23.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 10.

at the feelings it begets in the mind. Let anyone who knows in experience what it is to have commerce with heaven think his way to the heart of his awareness and he will find what Otto calls *mysterium tremendum*: a feeling sometimes serene and sometimes volcanic; sometimes ecstatic and sometimes adoring. Charles Wesley tried to say it in a hundred ways and this among them:

The speechless awe that dares not move  
And all the silent heaven of love.

It is in this dim awareness in the mind of primitive man that we must work who would understand the origins of the holy. Even for the Christian, to begin with the Bible is to begin too late.

Passing *tremendum* first through his prism, Otto distinguishes three elements in it. The element of Awefulness, of Overpoweringness, and of Energy.

There is common agreement that primitive man knew an unearthly dread. It was no ordinary dread. It was not fear of other men; not even of *hosts* of other men: nor of wild beasts who disputed a cave with him. It was different in kind. It was shuddering and eerie and awe-ful. It was the realm of *mana* and *tabu*.

But notice, "the awe-ful" is still present in those lines of Charles Wesley just quoted: sublimated, adoring, and mute. We see in the unearthly dread of primitive man the seed and the soil from which that noble abasement sprang. The sublimest adoration of the saint is but the long refinement of that early awe.

To the element of the Aweful is added "Overpoweringness" (*majestas*).

A gleam of the numinous still lies upon the word "majesty." Who cannot feel the unutterable majesty and overpoweringness of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords and only Ruler of Princes? "The Lord," says the Psalmist, "sitteth as King *for ever*."<sup>1</sup>

Charles Wesley says it for us again:

The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,  
The sight that veils the seraph's face; . . .

O'erwhelming . . . and the veiled seraphs! The seed and the soil of this holy adoration are both in the awareness of the numinous in early man.

To the Aweful and the Overpowering is added Energy.

At the heart of the sense of the holy early man discerned a pulsating *activity*. Even before the era of the great religions begins, our primitive forbears knew that the Great Other *did things*. Power resided at the heart of the Mysterious. It was with a *living* God that early man felt himself in contact.<sup>2</sup>

Those who would replace the God of religion with the Absolute of philosophy know that the battleground is here. Those who still believe

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 29: 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, p. 48.

in a Living God, and seek to read in the events of their own time the righteous sentence of the Almighty on the conduct of men will feel their kinship with primitive man who sensed also, in his dim way, the urgent Energy at the centre of that Something or Someone with whom "he had to do."

Otto slips into an examination of *mysterium*, quoting Tersteegen: "A God comprehended is no God."

And God is not comprehended. He is the "Great Other." Mysteriousness and awefulness are not to be equated. A piece of machinery I do not understand is not strictly "mysterious" to me. It is, at present, beyond me. I cannot grasp it now. It is a problem in that sense but not (with an exact use of words) *mysterious*—for some understand it.

But the numinous is *mysterium*. Absolutely and forever beyond my comprehension. Not beyond my approaching. But beyond my comprehension. "A God comprehended is no God." Nothing can give adequate expression to this remoteness in accessibility. "Transcendent" is the word theologians use and "supernatural," perhaps, the plain man. Both will serve though neither is adequate. As so often in these dim borderlands, we deeply feel and cannot clearly say.

Fascination is another element Otto distinguishes in the holy. In the combination of daunting and fascination he finds "the strangest and most noteworthy phenomenon in the whole history of religion."<sup>1</sup> For primitive man the daemonic-divine object allured and repelled; charmed and terrified; held and yet utterly abashed. Otto thinks the daunting preceded the fascination.

To master the mysterious, primitive man employed magic. He wanted to use the power of God *for his own ends*. But not—in the history of the race—for long. To have God, and "to be had" by Him, became an end in itself. Remote ages dimly anticipated the cry of the saint: "It is not Thy gifts that I desire: it is Thyself."

In this soil grew the seed of some of the strangest and some of the most beautiful plants in the garden of humanity. To what amazing lengths have men and women gone to prepare their hearts as a dwelling-place of the divine. To have God: to be possessed by the Spirit: to be indwelt . . . ages and ages before THE LORD GAVE THE WORD in Christ men aspired. All the rigours of asceticism, the fastings and floggings and macerations and brandings . . ., all for this.

And the possibility of response to this fascination is in *all* men. "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." There is the ground of our hope: that when we weary of the things of earth we shall turn to Him in whom alone we can find rest for our souls.

In its climacteric moments the response to fascination brims over. This is the "overaboundingness" of which the mystics speak. Teresa of Avila knew it and, having known it, longed to die: did, indeed, die of it

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 31.

at the last. She succumbed to no normal illness; it was "the inextinguishable flame of Divine Love which caused her death."

In seeking to isolate the non-rational element in the idea of the holy, we had need to set aside the strictly ethical, and suggested (with Otto) that ethics belonged to later stages of thought, or was present in the primitive mind (if at all) in "germ"; and, in any case, was not our chief concern here.

But we are moving on to examine the idea of the holy in the Old Testament and, therefore, to a maturer stage of development and the question of how the ethical appeared in the numinous may be anticipated.

In this connection Otto dislikes the phrase "gradually evolved"—and not merely the phrase; he contests the idea. The appearance of the moral "ought" in man is said by many to have its origins in the constraint of the herd: that the custom of the clan "gradually evolved" into the moral imperative. How it so evolved is not explained.

Can it be explained on these lines? If the content of conscience is what society approves, did conscience itself arise in the same way? Otto does not think so. He holds that "'ought' has a primary and unique meaning, as little derivable from another as blue from bitter . . ." <sup>1</sup> "The idea 'ought' is only 'evolvable' out of the spirit of man itself, and then in the sense of being 'arousable' because it is already potentially implanted in him. Were it not so, no 'evolution' could effect an introduction for it."<sup>2</sup>

He holds rather that feelings like ideas are associated and can excite each other but that, so far from the custom of the clan "evolving" (or being transmuted) into a personal and commanding and deeply-felt "ought," the connection is to be sought rather in the association of feelings. It may be, seeing that both the custom of the clan and the moral imperative are constraints upon conduct, that the former aroused the latter in the mind but, if that were so, it aroused what was already potentially planted there and man effected a transition from one to the other. But it was a *replacement* of one by the other, not a *transmutation*. Moral obligation is not derived from any other feeling: it is *sui generis* and unevolable.

The relation of the rational and the non-rational in the idea of the holy becomes clear at this point. The association of feelings sets up lasting connections between one emotion and another. The religious and ethical are conjoined in this way and not by mere conjunction but by inward cohesion and affinity. The numinous and the ethical combine like oxygen and hydrogen in water, and become indistinguishable in experience. So there emerges the unitary but complex category of "holy" itself, "richly charged and complete, and in its fullest meaning."<sup>3</sup> Reason may strain dregs out of the water. This is its great but only office.

We may go further. We observed that the reaction of the mortal to the numinous was "creature-consciousness" with its attendant feelings

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

of human littleness and abasement. Another sort of self-disvaluation awakes with this: uncleanness, pollution, profanity. It is marked, Otto argues, when it comes, by an immediate spontaneity. It is not a fruit of deliberation but breaks "palpitant from the soul."

To those who know nothing of it, nothing much again can be said. A man must "see" the numinous to feel profane. Yet, if we were right in doubting whether any man passes through life without catching a gleam of the numinous, we may doubt, also, if any man is quite unaware of a sense of uncleanness within.

Men are often unschooled in their own nature, inattentive to what stirs only vaguely within them, and either neglectful or false in their interpretation of experience.

The religious consciousness of man developing through all ages, and awake among all peoples, bears immense testimony to this double apprehension of mortal mind: a judgment of unspeakable *appreciation* on the *numen*, and, in its presence, a judgment of unspeakable *depreciation* on the self. Only the *numen* is truly holy. If the numinous belongs to a few mortals (and community at its earliest stage included its spiritual leaders), this is merely by reflection. Only God is of transcendent worth and, therefore, *worshipful*: perfect, beautiful, sublime. From the far future we hear the crashing paean of praise: "Blessing and honour, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne."

But man is dyed in sin, loathsome and polluted. The awe of *tremendum*, when united with the ethical, has unfolded into this. Man needs cleansing, atonement and sanctification.

To the threshold of the great religions—and a little beyond—have we now come.

The development of the idea of the holy in the Old Testament is a fascinating study in itself. Holiness at first attached to *things* (the holy place, the tent of meeting, the ark and the vessels of the cultus), and to persons only as they handled those things or attended at the holy place. Holiness was quasi-physical and attached to the celebrant as an odour might cling to the clothes of a man who worked in a perfume factory.

But the great contribution of the Old Testament to the idea of the holy is the growth of the ethical within a concept that was largely ritual in its origin. Indeed, the word "holy" remains mainly a ritualistic word all through the Old Testament but it made a marriage with the word "righteous" and it was a marriage "made in heaven." In Isaiah we see the sovereign assertion of the supremacy of righteousness within the concept of the holy. Ritual still has its subordinate place but now—and for the first time with unmistakable clearness—a towering figure in Israel (and in all humanity) reads the mind of God and asserts that *only the righteous can be "holy"*. The very fact that the phrase now seems a tautologous platitude illustrates the complete triumph of what was then a piercing insight. During the first World War, Dr. Esme Wingfield-Stratford was talking with a learned Brahmin in India about Sivaji, the immoral and blood-stained founder of the Mahratta Confederacy, and protesting against his status as a holy man.

The learned Brahmin said: "Sahib . . . I tell you what I would not tell another Sahib. Sivaji holy man but Sivaji *not man of good conduct.*"

Isaiah had passed that point eight centuries before Christ. For the study of holiness in the Old Testament perhaps nothing surpasses Isaiah 6: 1-8.

In the New Testament sanctity is taught as the privilege of every believer through the operations of the Holy Spirit. All Christians are called "saints" in the New Testament but here, of course, it does not mean a person of superlative goodness so much as a person on the way to superlative goodness and who—unless he resists the Holy Spirit—may be expected sometime to arrive.

In the centuries succeeding the closing of the canon that expectation abated and a double standard of morality insinuated itself into Christian thought: one for the ordinary plain Christian in the world; another for those who were "all-out" for holiness and sought the monastery or convent. Either could achieve "heroic virtue" but expectation centred rather in those who had sought the cloister than in those who stayed in the world.

The tests of sanctity are now quite precise in the Roman Church and not imprecise in the Eastern Church. The Anglican Church has appointed a commission to consider the possible enlargement of its own calendar of saints and perhaps to shape its own more simple tests.

In Churches robustly Protestant no legal or precise tests of sanctity exist. The view is taken that as only God can make a saint, only God can know when he is made, but the view is widely held that the Church needs saints, and needs to recognize them, because human nature is bent on hero-worship and the people are worshipping the wrong heroes.

Millions of young people at an impressionable age all over the world make heroes and heroines of their favourite film actors. The pictures of women, some of whom have prostituted the "holy estate of matrimony," drifted from one husband to another, deserted their children and engaged in little more than licensed harlotry, are pinned up in the homes of young people and adored as the most admirable and enviable persons alive. Something of the moral decay of the times is to be explained by this perversion of the impulse of hero-worship. It is a serious and sad thing when the youth of the world admire the wrong people.

So the quest of an understanding of sanctity relates itself to the affairs of modern life and our philosophical interests prove again to be more practical than many suppose.

Perhaps I may conclude this paper by indicating the lines on which (as it seems to me) further thinking needs to be done.

(i) Are the saints religious geniuses, so set apart from ordinary men that, while their stories may be of fascinating interest, they give no practical guidance to plain people? Or is sanctity for *all*, and would a study of the "methods" of the saints prove of the most real help to the humblest

<sup>1</sup> *King Charles the Martyr*, p. vi.

aspirant after a higher life? Most generations produce a genius in painting or music. Because he soars above his fellows, he is not so set apart as to be without influence on the practice and history of his art. On the contrary! The age may be named after him and his influence felt for generations. Is it possible that those who practise the art of living are neglecting the greatest examples the ages have thrown up?

(ii) What effect has the new psychology had on the quest for holiness? There are those who suggest that the hand which opened the door on the subconscious, and put up a pointer to the unconscious also, has made the hope of sanctity more a mirage than ever. "Is salvation possible for the subconscious?" is commonly debated now among theologians.

But no close reader of the letters of St. Paul would seriously argue that he was unacquainted with the subconscious. He speaks of "another law working in my members." He knew what it was to will one thing and do another. The "unconscious motive" would be new to him only in name.

How can race and family memories, which might rise in the mind of any man to pull him from the path of probity, be met and conquered by the earnest pilgrim of perfection?

(iii) In what sense is holiness an achievement and in what sense is it a gift? If it is a gift, how does a man put himself in the way to receive it?

Hagiographers constantly speak of the "achievements" of the saints. The saints do not commonly speak of any achievements themselves. If anyone tells them to their face that they are further on the road of holiness than their fellows, they find it hard, or impossible, to believe, and the most that can be wrung from them in the way of admission is that God must have given them special grace.

Which is it—gift or achievement? And, if it is both, can a balance be struck between the two?

(iv) The re-union of the dismembered branches of the Christian Church is constantly discussed in these days. Are those people right who say that the saints will have more to do with its consummation than ecclesiastics? Ecclesiastics moil for a formula. The saints speak to each other's heart, and link hands across the barriers of denominations. It would surprise people, unread in hagiography, how close are the experiences of the saints even when they are divided by centuries and divided also by denominational walls. A sharper contrast could hardly be drawn, say, than that of St. Teresa of Avila and John Howe—a Spanish Roman Catholic and an English Puritan. More than a century divides them in time. Each would have regarded the other as being in heresy. Yet their insights and their discernings of God's love are staggering at times in their parallelism. So are some of their experiences. Teresa tells how she once saw an angel "with a long golden arrow, and on the tip of it I seemed to see a little flame. Then it befell that he pierced me with the arrow right into my heart; and when he withdrew it, it seemed that he drew my innermost heart out with it. Finally, he left me all afire with the burning love of God."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, chap. XXIX, paras. 16-18.

On the blank leaf of John Howe's study Bible, and under date December 26, 1689, he tells of "a wonderful and copious stream of celestial rays from the lofty throne of the Divine Majesty which did seem to dart into my open and expanded heart." He found the experience "ravishing;" and this, and subsequent visitations, "surpassed the most expressive words" his thoughts could suggest.<sup>1</sup>

I never look at Bernini's famous monument in the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome—or pictures of it—in which, with all the extravagance of the baroque, Bernini seizes on that moment in Teresa's life, without thinking also of the "copious stream of celestial rays" which darted into John Howe's "open and expanded breast." Evangelical and Catholic: Puritan and Carmelite. The saints interpret one another. Is it part of their sublime task to knit again the torn robe of Christendom?

(v) Finally, it would be humble to think again on the conviction of working people that any study of sanctity is completely irrelevant to them. A writer who claims to know the masses says: "The idea of a holy working man is grotesque. The virtues which the working classes at their best have recognized have been rather those of integrity, generosity, sincerity, good comradeship than those of meekness, purity, piety, self-abnegation and the like."<sup>2</sup>

Are they so different? Can *anybody* who has a fight against evil afford to neglect the saints?

#### DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN (Rev. S. C. THEXTON) said: In opening the discussion as Chairman, I will begin by saying a word about Dr. Rudolf Otto's analysis of the religious consciousness. While personally I feel that Otto's description of the religious experience, in terms of the mystery and fascination of the "otherness" that confronts man, is most helpful, I am not altogether convinced of the soundness of his conclusions about it.

For instance, is it true to say that this sense of the *numinous* is altogether unique to religion? I would mention two illustrations which suggest to me that what Otto describes is not altogether exclusive to the sphere of religion. First of all, was there not in one's childhood reaction to a ghost story, something of this same experience? There was a sense of something mysterious, powerful, frightening—and yet, even as you shuddered, you wanted the story to go on. You had some sense both of the mystery and awfulness on the one hand, and the fascination on the other. There is perhaps a better illustration to be found in the realm of mountaineering. Even in my own slight experience, I have known what it is to experience what one might call the terror of the mountains—to be there alone on the slope, with the chasm beneath and the peak beyond, and to feel something of that mingled awe and fascination, fear and longing, which Otto describes as characteristic of man's awareness of the *numinous*.

Again, it is very easy for Otto's emphasis upon the "otherness" of that which man apprehends in religious experience to be carried too far. It cannot be, as some have described it, the "wholly other", since if it were so it is difficult to see how man could have any kind of experience of it at all.

In general, I think that Otto's description, if pressed too far, runs into the danger of getting back to the old conception of a religious instinct—some peculiar capacity within man which is incapable of further analysis. I am not persuaded that this is

<sup>1</sup> *Life of John Howe*. [Edit. 1863], p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Box, *The Ethics of Socialism*, p. 17.

so. I think that in what Otto calls the experience of the numinous, there are elements which can be discerned—elements like fear, curiosity, submission, self-regard and others. In short, I believe that a further analysis is possible, and that the experience he describes draws upon psychic forces or energies which are at work in other fields of experience as well.

One of the most difficult questions raised in the lecture—and I am grateful to Dr. Sangster for stimulating us to think about it—is the question as to how the ethical became allied to the holy. I do not claim to know the answer. It may be said that it is the great contribution of the Old Testament that it did bring about a synthesis of the two. But when one asks how it came about, it is a difficult question to answer. It appears to me that as man became aware of this reality over against himself, it seemed to call for some response from him—awakened a desire for union with it, or to utilize it in some ways for his own ends. He tried to make that response in various ways, such as those of magic and ritual. These were attempts to bridge the gulf between himself and the “other”, to become familiar with it and establish rapport. The contribution of the great Hebrew prophets was to assert that this “otherness” of God which beckoned to something in man, was not to be thought of merely in terms of power or might, but in terms of righteousness, mercy, forgiveness. If therefore you wish to share something of the life and nature of this “other One” who calls to you, then those things must find some reflection in your own heart and life.

One might ask at this point whether the beginning of the quest for holiness did not begin on the rational, rather than the non-rational side. It is an interesting question. Which is the prior element? Is it non-rational—vision, the mystical sense of something “other”? Or is it rational—the fact that because you come to believe certain things about life and the forces that seem to control it, your conclusions indicate certain lines of conduct on your part? On this view it would mean that the first rung in the ladder that leads to sainthood is labelled “duty”. Perhaps too many studies in psychology of religion with regard to the saints have concentrated upon the extraordinary cases. Many of us, I suppose, have known people whom we should describe as saints. I wonder how many of them would say that for them the good life began with this sense of the “other” or the *mysterium tremendum*, of which Otto speaks. I believe a great many of them started from the rational side of doing what seemed to be their duty to God and man. Take, for instance, John Wesley. How far was his experience of God, his vision, dependent upon his very rational and methodical attitude to religion and the quest for holiness in the early part of his life?

If you concentrate upon the mystical side of religion exclusively, you tend to get the dervish or ecstatic, whose holiness may be entirely divorced from morals or ethics. On the other hand, if you concentrate entirely upon the rational side, the desire to live the good life, then you get something like the Confucian sage or the Buddhist monk. The highest sainthood would seem to occur when both elements find a meeting place in one individual.

The question Dr. Sangster raised as to the relation of all this to the new psychology is a very interesting one. It does seem to me that holiness has something to do with “whole-ness”, that the saint is someone who really does become integrated at the level of a God-centred life. That integration may begin on the rational side—in early training or in deliberate discipline. And because the saint is single-minded, because he really does take the implications of his belief in God seriously, not only his whole body but his whole mind, at all its levels, becomes full of light.

Dr. E. WHITE said: We are grateful to Dr. Sangster for his illuminating paper. He touches on psychological problems more than once in his paper.

Religious experience comes within the realm of psychological investigation, and many books have been written dealing with or referring to this subject. Such books as *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by James, *Conversion* by Sancto de Sanctis, and more recently, *Thouless's* and *From's* books on psychology and religion come to mind. Unfortunately the religion described by some psychologists, particularly by Freud and From, is not Christianity at all, but a colourless theism far removed from the warm living theology of Christianity.

Freud attempted to explain the sense of the numinous as an infantile regression. He regarded it as a reminiscence of the time when the infant opened its eyes on to a strange, wonderful, unknown world, and was filled with surprise and awe. He gradually discovered the "not me" outside himself, and felt almost lost in an immensity of space. This seems to me to be quite inadequate. As James points out, the experiences of the saint and the mystic lead to a great enrichment of personality, and appear to supply a new energy and motive for life. It is difficult to see how infantile regression could achieve this. Myers' theory is much more in accordance with the facts of experience. He postulates a subliminal self extending far deeper than the Ego, and holds that it is *via* this deeper, larger self that the Ego come into relationship with God. Some of Jung's teaching, especially that relating to the Collective Unconscious, points in the same direction.

The question Dr. Sangster raises concerning salvation for the unconscious opens up a large field of enquiry. I would make two comments on this.

Firstly, there is a danger in thinking of different areas of mental life as if they were separate entities. The super-ego, the Id, etc., are not separate and distinct things; they are different aspects of one personality, a unity. Surely salvation is for the entire man, not for a piece of him, such as the Ego or the Id! After all, these terms are used for purposes of description, and are not to be taken too literally as though they represented entities complete in themselves.

Secondly, we must not think of the Unconscious as being either evil or good in itself. It contains potentialities for development in either direction. When St. Paul prays for his Ephesian converts that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith", is he not suggesting that Christ should become the Lord of the unconscious as well as the conscious life? The "heart" in Scripture appears to include the whole of the "mind" investigated by modern psychologists. "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

I should not accept the view that modern psychology has made the hope of sanctity more of a mirage than ever. On the other hand, in the limited transformation of personality brought about by a successful analysis, there lies a reason for belief in a much wider and deeper transformation becoming possible when the depths of man's personality come into relationship with the Spirit of God.

This is but a suggestion of the lines along which thought might be directed. The questions which Dr. Sangster raises concerning the relation of the New Psychology to the quest for holiness might well supply a subject for a further paper to be read before the Victoria Institute.

Mr. A. H. BOULTON said: I have been very interested to hear what Dr. Sangster has said, especially in connection with the way in which the movement from the numinous to the ethical has been characteristic of the history of religion. It is perhaps relevant to point out how the same process has operated in the realm of law. I have recently been reading the history of the evolution of legal concepts, and here we have the gradual movement away from ideas which are essentially magical, toward our modern concepts which are based upon rational thought. But here we come up against a difficulty in that, as we move from the magical to the rational in the realm of law, we come to a point at which we have to face the fact that our ideas of right and wrong have become relative and have lost contact with the moral absolutes upon which we know that they ought to be founded. This is a real problem to be faced, because the movement away from magic toward reason is itself wholly good, and yet its apparent consequence in the loss of absolute values is dangerous. Just as the movement away from the merely numinous to the ethical in religion must retain the sense of mystery in the idea of the holy, so, in the rules for human conduct there is need that we do not lose sight of the absolute values in which those rules rest.

One homely illustration comes to my mind in connection with Dr. Sangster's comments about the need for ideals and the false ideals to which it is only too easy for the young to be attracted. In a hostel for girl workers maintained by my Company I recently went through the dormitories occupied by the employees, whilst none of the occupants were there. We have a number of Irish girls. The manageress made the comment that it was easy to see which rooms were occupied by the Irish

girls and which by English, because the former pinned to the wall pictures of the Virgin and the Saints, the latter photographs of film stars. Comment is perhaps superfluous.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. W. E. FILMER wrote: Dr. Sangster devotes more than half of his paper to guessing what primitive cave-men thought about, before "moving on to examine the idea of the holy in the Old Testament". In the first place, he has no means of knowing what pre-Adamites thought, since they left no written records. Secondly, it is unscriptural to derive the human race of to-day or its beliefs from pre-Adamites, for St. Paul says that God "made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 16: 26; R.S.V.). Elsewhere he confirms the Genesis account of the origin of the human race and its relationship with God (I Tim. 2: 13; I Cor. 15: 21-22, 45; Rom. 5: 12). Thirdly, it has been pointed out by a number of scientists such as D. Dewar, L. M. Davies, G. R. Fleischman and others, in the *Transactions of the Victoria Institute* and in other publications, that the theory of man's evolution from sub-human ancestors cannot be substantiated by any factual evidence.

Dr. Sangster seems to be unaware that the evolutionary theory of religion has long since been discredited, among others by Dr. S. Langdon in *Semitic Mythology* (Vol. V of *The Mythology of all Races*, Archaeological Institute of America). Unlike Otto, who seeks to derive Christianity from pagan sources, Dr. Langdon, basing his conclusions on a sure foundation of the most ancient Semitic and Sumerian pictographic and other written records, traces the pagan religions back to a primitive monotheism such as the Bible shows to have been revealed to Adam.

Commenting on these conclusions in *The Evangelical Quarterly* (April, 1937), Dr. Langdon wrote: "Darwinian evolution applied to the origin and progress of religion can only have one result: it must destroy the faith of mankind that there is any reality in religion at all. That is the conclusion which a very large part of mankind has now drawn from this Anthropological movement, a conclusion for which even Christian theologians are not blameless." Dr. Sangster agrees that "it is a serious and sad thing when the youth of the world admire the wrong people", and refers to the millions who make heroes and heroines of their favourite film actors. Does he not realize that by dragging out Otto's dead and out-of-date theories he is identifying himself with those same theologians who are to blame for depriving these poor folk of a God and thus reducing them to the worship of film-stars as a substitute?

Mr. TITTERINGTON wrote: I am sorry that Dr. Sangster appears to start with the premise that religion developed from primitive concepts. It is fundamental to any consideration of the meaning of sanctity, or holiness, to determine whether the concept originated from a vague awareness, or as a communication from above: whether in fact it began with man, or with God.

Dr. Sangster speaks of holiness in the Old Testament as being mainly a ritualistic word (p. 8), attaching first to things, and only later to persons as associated with things. Is this a correct reading of the Old Testament? The first time the root word (QDSh) appears is in Genesis 2: 3, where it refers to a *day*. Next, in Exodus 3, we read of holy *ground*. Then (ch. 12) we have a holy *convocation*, holy *persons* (ch. 13), God's holy *habitation* (ch. 15), and in ch. 19 a holy *nation*. Not until ch. 26 is there any mention of holy *things*. In each case the context suggests that the holiness is derivative, that is, it arises from a relationship to a holy God. The principle is clearly enunciated in Lev. 11: 44, 45, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."

Holiness in the creature is, according to Andrew Murray, wholly an impartation of the Divine nature. "In the Divine holiness we have the highest and inconceivably glorious revelation of the very essence of the Divine Being; in the holiness of the saints the deepest revelation of the change by which their inmost nature is renewed into the likeness of God." It is impossible to read the New Testament and conceive of holiness as existing apart from Christ. It is not an innate quality within us, but

the very life of Christ imparted to us. (See the whole Appendix, "The Holiness of God," to his book *Holy in Christ*).

Mr. E. H. BETS wrote: Effectively the thesis of this paper is that there is a call for more "sanctity", this term being held to mean the cult of the numinous, which cult would produce "holy" men, that is those who "have commerce with heaven"—non-rational experience, be it noted, of the mystic, the awe-inspiring, the *mysterium tremendum*. In speaking of such commerce Dr. Sangster seems almost to equate the experiences of Teresa of Avila and John Howe on the one hand with those of such obscenely immoral and bloodthirsty men as the Mahrattan Sivaji on the other.

Using the oft-discredited and refuted theory of evolution, Dr. Sangster in effect makes Christian knowledge and experience of God a kind of development of those of "primitive" man. In so doing he to all intents and purposes sets completely aside the plainest declarations of the Lord Jesus Christ who said "I am the Way . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14: 6). How can traffic with the numinous, with all its mystification, darkness and overpowering awesomeness be "commerce with heaven" as the Christian is given to know it? "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment" (I John 4: 18). In Christian communion with God there is NO *mysterium tremendum*. He is a God made known in perfectly revealed love. Nor is there "speechless awe", Charles Wesley's hymns notwithstanding, for through the spirit of adoption we cry "Abba! Father", and that is the reverse of the numbed silence of fear.

Therefore, should any instructed Christian even seem to have any direct manifestation of God it must necessarily be coloured and characterized by the glory and love revealed in Christ—as indeed proved to be the case with Teresa of Avila, John Howe and many another such.

Mr. R. S. TIMBERLAKE wrote: Dr. Sangster's fascinating paper suffers from the vagueness inherent in its subject and its author will forgive me if I take him to task on one or two matters. I feel that the paper could have been greatly improved by a more drastic treatment of the "origin" of Sanctity—it would have given precision and clarity to the sections dealing with development. As it is, the learned doctor has not produced sufficient evidence to rivet our attention: he must have a wealth of it to hand if he cares to use it.

By getting to grips with the origin of the subject, I think he could throw more light on the likenesses of religious experience in modern or mediaeval times as shown in the lives of saints from different denominations. I am not myself convinced by his quotations towards the end of the paper. The human mind and spirit, human emotions, and a symbolism drawn from human life and art unite to form the common denominator of the saints' experience, and, within the ambit of the Christian Church, they possessed a common source of reverence, piety, and religious ideas. It would have been a marvel if this common material had not produced common results, but can it account for something far more fundamental than visions?

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

I listened with great profit to the discussion on the night of the lecture, and have read with care the written communications which have come in since. I acknowledge the force of everything which Mr. Thexton had to say. Origins are proverbially difficult and it will surprise neither him nor me that I have no pat answer to many of his points. I believe that something akin to the *numinous* can be experienced (as he suggests) both in hearing ghost stories and in mountaineering but I question whether this wholly rebuts Rudolf Otto's point. Both of these experiences, in some way, touch the supernatural.

Nor can I—more than he—explain how the great Hebrew prophets perceived in the night and "otherness" of God the burning righteousness which is there. Our fathers would have said that it was "revealed" to the prophets, and it is hard to say more than that. How can we explain ourselves the personal fellowship with

God which has been granted to us: the piercing insight; the authority and assurance that comes with it; its consonance with all God's known will; the "signs following" . . .? Certainty, it issues (as Mr. Thexton says) in a higher degree of integration in a God-centred life, and "wholeness" and "holiness" are seen again to be akin.

Dr. White's contribution left me longing for the very paper he mentions as a possibility in his conclusion. Can our Christian psychologists do more for us here? Full explanations may be too much to hope for, but if we could have more light on how the Spirit of God deals with the deeps of human personality, it would be of incalculable worth. The most practical issues are involved in all this. Devout men and women, longing after holiness and troubled both by the vagaries of their waking thoughts and the vagrancy of their dreams, would find comfort in Dr. White's assurance that "we must not think of the unconscious as being either good or evil in itself". So many simple souls confuse temptation and sin, and feel compelled to "own" whatever image, warmed by desire, flashes into their mind, and they flagellate themselves in ways unhealthy and unjust. I hope that some subsequent lecturer before the Institute will give a paper on the theme which Dr. White suggests.

Mr. Boulton's word has stayed with me ever since he uttered it—not only because of the interesting comparison with legal concepts but because of the telling illustration with which it closed. Comment, as he remarks, is superfluous but the thought it provokes is furious!

Turning to the written communications, I am left wondering whether I have been misunderstood by some of the correspondents. It is no part of my thesis that man could manufacture holiness, or just grow into it, or even "achieve" it by unaided self-effort. God is the centre and soul of all holiness. It is His gift to men in response to faith and obedience.

But I wrestled in the first part of the paper with man's growing awareness of God, and His nature, and His will for men. It is incomprehensible to me that Mr. Betts could think that I was equating the experiences of St. Teresa of Avila and John Howe on the one hand, with the obscenely immoral and bloodthirsty deeds of Sivaji on the other. Nor must he forget that awe is a fitting state of mind in a mortal approaching the holy God, and to quote "Perfect love casteth out fear" in an effort to rebut a proper abasement of the human before the divine is a misuse of Scripture. Intimacy with God must never become familiarity. The fact that we are encouraged to address God as "Abba, Father" gives us no warrant to forget that it is to the *awe-ful* God that we are come.

Moreover, I was at pains to point out that the moral "ought" is no fruit of evolutionary growth. It cannot be derived from what society has found useful or "safe". I quoted: "'Ought' has a primary and unique meaning, as little derivable from another as blue from bitter." It is *implanted* in man and, were it not, "no evolution could effect an introduction for it."

This is part of the answer to Mr. Titterington. It over-simplifies the issue to say that it is "fundamental" to determine whether the concept of holiness originated in a vague awareness or as a communication from above. This is not a clear "either-or". All through my childhood, my father was seeking to impart his high purposes to me. The initiative was his. My apprehension of his aim grew over the years.

It is not dissimilar in God's dealings with our race. Stress the word "originated", and, of course, it all originates with Him. Look at it from the manward side and you see a growing awareness of His will.

Whether or not I have correctly divined a development in the use of *qadosh* will be affected by the dating of the documents.

Of Mr. Timberlake, I would ask this: Remember the proper and necessary limits of a lecture. A "more drastic" treatment of the "origin" of sanctity would have left me no time for the "development" at all. Perhaps I was over-bold to essay the double task, but my own judgment now is that it would have been better had I given *less* time to origins and *more* to development. I am happy, however, to assure Mr. Timberlake that I shall publish a volume shortly on this whole subject and (I hope), in his words, "throw more light on the likenesses of religious experience in modern and medieval times as shown in the lives of saints from different denominations."

912TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING  
HELD IN THE CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1,  
ON MONDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 1952.

Professor C. A. COULSON, F.R.S., in the Chair.

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**FROM MECHANISM TO MIND**

By DONALD M. MACKEY, B.Sc., Ph.D.

**SYNOPSIS**

This paper discusses an aspect of the classical problem of relating mental and physical descriptions of human thought-processes which has acquired new prominence from the development of mechanisms with mind-like behaviour. A factual account of possibilities inherent in mechanisms now known leads to the conclusion (elaborated elsewhere) that any test for "mentality" in terms of the activity of an artificial organism can in principle be met.

The suggestion is not that mentality is thereby guaranteed to such organisms, but that some traditional ways of posing the problem are inadequate and based on wrong assumptions. It is suggested that these developments are in no way inimical to the Christian doctrine of Man, but rather illuminate it by suggesting a possible synthesis between complementary ways of describing his powers.

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1. A new twist to the classical debate.
  2. Towards the "vitalization" of artefacts.
  3. The escape from determinacy.
  4. The personality of an artefact.
  5. Implications.
  6. Conclusion.

**1. A new twist to the classical debate**

1.1. Debate as to the possibility of explaining mental phenomena on a mechanistic basis is as old as the Greeks. Between their subjectively known decisions and the appropriate bodily outcome, men observed a regular relationship of dependence. Between certain physical events in the external world, termed causes, and others, termed their effects, they also observed a relationship of dependence. What more natural than that both relationships should receive the same name of "causality?" The impact of a rolling stone on a stationary one is termed the "cause" of the movement of the other. The decision to move my finger must naturally then be termed the "cause" of the motion observed.

Physical science progressed. Physical "causes" proved to be reducible to a small and apparently exclusive number, in the sense that chains and interlocking patterns of a few causal relationships, interpreted as the manifestation of certain "forces," seemed likely to represent adequately all observed sequences of physical events. Physiological science progressed. Causal links between bodily movements and events in the nervous system were discovered in increasing numbers. Any event simple enough to be chosen for study seemed to have a causal physical antecedent.

And, of course, the question arose, where do my decisions fit into the causal chain? Is any room going to be left for the Mind as controller of these events, if the network of physical cause-and-effect should prove to be complete? Further, if I accept the undoubtable dependence of voluntary movement on my decisions (and call the dependence "causal"), what analogue of physical "force" can be postulated as the link between the two? In short, how can Mind control Matter?

1.2. The problem, as thus formulated, was sharpened by further and complementary knowledge. It had always been known that physical violence could derange mental activity, and that the taking of drugs could distort the experience and character of the subject. Gradually, however, it became clearer that not only adventitious but fundamental features of personality and mental life were linked with biochemical, electrical and other features of bodily structure and activity. Here was evidence of a significant dependence in the reverse direction. Not only was there a problem of accounting for the action of autonomous Mind on servile Matter, but also one of explaining an apparently comparable action of material agencies on the very springs of mental activity. It began to be whispered, indeed, that Mind might be after all a "mere epiphenomenon" of the motions of Matter:—that Man might be but a "mere automaton," driven by "blind forces"—and so, of course, in no way responsible for his actions. But to the logic of this conclusion we return.

1.3. Naturally concomitant with these developments were speculations on converse lines. If the human brain and nervous system were in some sense a physical mechanism—or even if it were not—might it not be possible in principle to construct an artificial mechanism or "artefact" which should behave as if it had a mind? For a long time the question had scarcely an academic interest, for technology could hardly point the way to equip an "artificial man" with human powers of locomotion and action, let alone of thought and dialogue. Even when the age of the machine came to render trivial the problems of motor activity, it was easy to ridicule the mental limitations of any foreseeable artefact—chiefly in respect of its inability to modify its responses or carry out any trains of reasoning comparable with those of human minds. "Machine" indeed came to be synonymous for a servile mechanism, capable perhaps of executing more quickly or more powerfully the purposes of its designer, but (more or less by definition) without any power of forming or adopting purposes of its own.

It is to avoid begging the question in this way that I have introduced the neutral term "artefact" (in the sense of artificial construct) for the class of mechanism that we shall here consider.

1.4. The nineteenth century saw the growth of two independent developments that eventually revolutionized the prospects of synthesizing mind-like behaviour in an artefact. Both had their seeds in earlier work. The first was the development of self-adjusting control systems, typified by James Watt's famous steam-governor. The second was the development of symbolic logic, in which George Boole played a classical part, making it possible for arithmetical calculating machines symbolically to carry out trains of logical reasoning. The advent of electronics multiplied the complexity and speed of devices embodying these developments, without introducing any essentially new principle. Indeed in the 1830's Charles Babbage designed an "analytical engine" which in principle had all the powers of modern electronic computers, and brought upon him a spirited debate with those who saw in its imitation of human faculties a threat to the dignity of man.

But it was the advent of high-speed computers, using thousands of electronic valves, and capable of solving in seconds problems on which men spend months, that in the last two decades brought sudden popular attention to our question. Regrettably dubbed "electronic brains," these devices acquired a reputation for mental power that seemed to put the human brain itself in the shade. The inevitable reaction has followed. It is already no longer fashionable to suggest that such computers provide a good model of the brain, nor to take seriously the analogies between their disorders and mental disease. But the question has at last arisen in realistic terms: how far could we go if we *wanted* to make, not a computer, but an artefact with characteristics that in a human being we should regard as evidence of mentality? What are the differences between present-day computers and human brains, and could they be eliminated—in principle—if we wished to do so? The answer is largely a matter of fact, and it is chiefly towards clarifying some of the facts that this paper is directed. For good or ill, the classical debate has taken a new twist. Factual developments make it no longer derisory to ask: could an artificial mechanism be said to have a mind?

## 2. Towards the "vitalization" of artefacts

The author has elsewhere (*Brit. J. for Phil. of Sci.* 2, 105 (1951); *Proc. Arist. Soc. Suppt.* 1952, pp. 61-86 and references therein) discussed the technicalities of securing mind-like behaviour in artefacts, but a brief explanation of some of the principles on which present possibilities rest may help to place these in perspective.

2.1. What is perhaps the basic principle is illustrated by such familiar devices as the thermostat. An electric heater warms a room. When the thermometer rises to some preset level, the mercury pushes open a switch that cuts off the heat. When the room cools a little below that temperature, the mercury falls and closes the switch—and so on. The system behaves as if it were *trying to resist* changes in temperature. If the preset level is raised, the heater at once comes on until the room settles down at the new temperature. The system's basic "goal" is the matching of the level of the mercury to the preset level, wherever that may be. Any discrepancy between the two levels occasions activity (heating or cooling) calculated to *reduce* the discrepancy.

The activity of the heater is controlled by signals "fed back," as we say, from its field of action. Such a system is called a "goal-seeking" system because these so-called "feedback" signals drive it to minimize the interval between its present state and the preset state or "goal," against any opposing influences (within limits).

The "feedback principle" so illustrated can be applied in any situation in which a mechanism is required to act as if it had a purpose. It need only be provided with appropriate receptors of the necessary information as to its separation from its goal—i.e. as to the success of its activity—and means of calculating from this information the next step to try in order to reduce that separation. If the output of the calculator is used to steer the mechanism, it will then automatically pursue its goal to the limit of its powers. Examples now realized are the various self-guided missiles that can detect and pursue targets in spite of all evasive action.

2.2. In mechanisms such as these the various distances and speeds entering into the calculations are represented in the calculating device by electrical or other physical quantities. The representation of features of the field of action by internal configurations of the mechanism in this way is a very general principle, which can readily be extended to the field of abstract ideas.

In one possible method every fact to be represented is given a code-number, such that each digit in the number is either 1 or 0, representing the answer (yes or no) to one of a set of standard identifying questions—as in the popular game of "twenty questions." Making deductions from facts coded in this way then amounts to doing arithmetic (in the scale of 2) with the numbers representing them, and standard calculating-machine technique can be used to mechanize processes of reasoning in principle as complex as desired.

A code-system of this kind is ideal for handling exact information of limited variety. It can enable an artefact in principle to engage in active, responsive and apparently purposive interaction with any field of activity capable of representation in such a code, including dialogue with a human interlocutor on suitable subjects (such as chess, for example: see Shannon. *Phil. Mag.* 41, 256 (1950)). But the artefact, despite the flexibility of its responses, is still deterministic in its function. It may be judged to be so by a simple test: two such identical artefacts supplied with identical information would at all times be found acting in exactly the same way.

### 3. The escape from determinacy

3.1. The reader may have his own views as to the extent to which the above statement would also be true of human beings, but it is at least commonly supposed to be false, and it is certainly not necessarily true of all conceivable artefacts. There are many ways in which a limited amount of indeterminacy could be introduced into the functioning of even such an artefact as we have discussed, so as to enhance its resemblance to a normal imaginative human being (MacKay, D. M., *The Christian Graduate*, September, 1949; Turing, A. M., *Mind*, 59, 433 (1950)).

3.2. There is, however, an opposite approach. Instead of introducing indeterminacy into the functions of a deterministic artefact, we might

begin at the other end, as it were, and consider the possibility of introducing a measure of co-ordination and purpose into the activity of an artefact initially designed to function more or less randomly (MacKay, *Proc. Arist. Soc. Suppl.* 1952, *loc. cit.*).

As a brief illustration of this new principle, let us imagine a printing machine designed rather like a large typewriter, but printing complete English words instead of letters. For simplicity, let us assume that it has a "vocabulary" of 5,000 words, controlled by 5,000 keys. It is easy to devise some mechanism which would normally punch keys at random, producing a meaningless jumble of words. Suppose, however, that we could *control the probabilities* of its punching different keys, rather in the way that a loaded die or roulette wheel controls the probabilities of different numbers. It would then be possible to increase the frequency with which meaningful sequences of words were produced, by "weighting" the chances of each word according to the words preceding it, so that a word that made sense was more likely to follow than a word that did not.

For example, if the words "eaten my" happened to occur, the probability that some food-word should follow is much higher than the probability of one describing something non-edible. We should therefore arrange that when the mechanism has produced the words "eaten my," it automatically (by reference to stored information) "weights" its vocabulary so as to favour all such following words that could make sense, in proportion to their likelihood of doing so.

3.3. Now the labour of supplying the necessary information in this form to our artefact would be prodigious. The interesting possibility exists, however, of making such a mechanism *acquire the information for itself*. The key principle is in effect one of "natural selection." It will be remembered that by receiving information as to the success of its activity, our earlier artefact was enabled to pursue any preset goal. The "feedback signal," after some automatic calculations, was used to steer the mechanism.

In analogous fashion we could provide our present mechanism with signals indicating the meaningfulness or otherwise of its current output-sequences, and make these signals *control the probabilities of sequences according to their success or failure*. The simplest way to do so would be to sit by it in much the same way as one would with a child for the same purpose; but in principle the mechanism could be designed to extract its own corrective signals if given access to a large enough supply of standard English text suitably coded for its use. The effect would be that meaningful sequences should steadily become more frequent, and meaningless sequences steadily be eliminated. Finally, if the mechanism were designed also to receive and react to information from an external field of activity as in our previous examples, it may be seen—or at least perhaps accepted—that the incoming information could be used to secure for the sequences of the artefact's activity not only meaningfulness but relevance.

3.4. Such suggestions may sound fantastic, and it is necessary to remind ourselves on the one hand of the quite impracticable complexity of any such artefact to be comparable with the human brain (which has some  $10^{10}$  elements), and yet on the other of the simple factual basis on which the suggestions rest. We have considered word-sequences only by way of

example. It would be a much simpler matter to organize the artefact's activity at a sub-verbal level, making its verbal output the consequence of selections among a much smaller number of basic symbols. But the technicalities are not our chief concern.

The point that I believe to be established, though only scantily illustrated here, is that known physical mechanisms can suffice, in a suitably-designed artefact, to enable it to meet in principle any test for mental attributes that we can specify in terms of its internal or external activity.

As I have shown in the papers cited, such an artefact could pursue an active, autonomous, logically disciplined yet imaginative course, exhibiting any features of human personality that we are clever enough to know how to specify. It could make hypotheses, could form and change its own purposes either spontaneously or according to its experience, and could do all these things in responsive intercourse with human beings on human topics.

No barrier of principle—and it is only questions of principle that concern us from the philosophical standpoint—would seem to prevent an artefact from meeting any test of the kind usually suggested to “justify the inference to other minds.”

#### 4. The personality of an artefact

4.1. Does such an artefact then have a mind? Is it conscious of what it is doing? Does it feel and not merely simulate emotion? Such are currently popular questions. One might join in ridiculing the suggestion “that a mass of wireless valves could ever fall in love.”

But to consider the suggestion in this form is, of course, to commit a vulgar error. In the analogous case of a human being, it is not the mass of nerve-cells inside the skull that has fallen in love. To say so would be a misuse of language. It is the *person* who has fallen in love; and to assert—or even to deny—that the nerve-cells of his brain are in love would be to show ignorance of the proper uses of the terms.

It would therefore be but a perverse distortion of the issue to ask whether an artefact could be angry or affectionate, if by “artefact” we meant “some box of wires and valves.” If we are interested in evaluating the true parallel, we must compare the box of wires and valves with the sight that a surgeon sees on an operating table; we can compare only the *personality that it mediates* with the human personality.

We are accustomed to the unconscious abstractive process that can hear a declaration of love in the noisy wobbling of the red-and-pink protoplasm we call a face. We choose to use *personal* language in describing such an encounter, because it makes more sense to do so. It may require much mental discipline to bring ourselves to the corresponding abstractive effort with our artefact. One could perhaps be helped by imagining the artefact as a correspondent, or as decently clothed in some fashion! But it is only when this effort has successfully been made that we are in a position to face the philosophical question. In its original form the problem is quite overlaid by what amounts to the humour of buffoonery.

4.2. Our first question is therefore: could personal language consistently be used to describe encounter with such an artificial personality? I believe

that it could, for the simple reason that any deficiencies in the "personal" features of its activity can be remedied as soon as they can be specified (MacKay, *Proc. Arist. Soc. Suppt., loc. cit.*).

But in the last phrase there is a rub. It is easy enough to specify enough characteristics to make the artificial personality a tolerably intelligent and interesting and even emotionally-motivated interlocutor. To that extent personal language would indeed seem to be not only justified, but the only sensible language to use, just as in the case of a human being. But it is by no means obvious whether now or at any time or even in principle we can understand enough of the depths of human personality to be able to specify adequately *all* the deficiencies remaining unremedied.

4.3. To the second question therefore as to whether such a personality could ever be fully human, we must return the old Scots answer of "Not proven." The one thing that seems safe to assert is that the barrier, if barrier in principle there be, rests on limitations to our psychological rather than our mechanical knowledge.

In short it is worse than folly to consume energy in searching for "something you'll never be able to reproduce in a machine." To do so is to accept a misconception of the real issue, which concerns the extent to which man can understand his own nature well enough to specify the requirements for an artificial human personality.

4.4. What then of consciousness and mind? I should be prepared to defend the thesis that *as far as we can find words for tests* for these attributes, it is possible for an artefact to meet those tests. But if we were to leap the ditch that is deductively unbridgeable, and say that an artefact that behaves in every way as if it were conscious *is* conscious—what then? Or to put it conversely, what do we think we are denying if we say it is not? We are surely facing a problem quite similar to the classical one of deciding whether any one is conscious but ourselves; the reader who would venture to frame a deductive test for the artefact had better walk warily, lest he deprive himself also of consciousness (in the eyes of all others) by the same stroke.

4.5. But more seriously—and particularly to our present purpose—it may be asked whether there are any grounds in Christian revelation for pontification here where deduction fails. Bluntly, one might ask whether God's licence to men to grow new personalities places any restriction in principle on the manner in which their necessary bodies are made, or on the material—whether protoplasm or copper or anything else—from which these are constructed.

We have already seen how unlikely this problem is to arise as a practical issue. But it is difficult to see any specifically Christian objection to the possibility. Our suggestion would be that in the face of our patent ignorance, and even doubt as to the meaning of the question, the Christian attitude should be one of "reverent agnosticism"—reverent because personality, even an imitation of our own, is a great mystery; and agnostic because plain honesty thus best describes our position. What would seem a real disservice to the Faith would be to presume to foreclose a possibility that God appears to have left open, and so, as sometimes before, to distract men's minds from the real content of Christian belief.

## 5. Implications

5.1. We began by considering without comment the view that the relationship between my decisions and my bodily movements was one of causality. We saw that this view implied, but did not suggest the nature of, some mechanism of interaction between an entity termed my mind and my body. We saw how physical causation has gradually spread through the picture, steadily diminishing the area on which "mind" might be said to lay causal hands. We saw that, in this language, mind itself seemed subject to the action of physical causes.

And then from the opposite direction we have followed a new twist in the story. It has appeared that those features of behaviour which we most commonly attribute to the "causal action of Mind" can be quite well reproduced by a mechanism functioning throughout according to ordinary physical principles.

5.2. Squeezed out in one direction, never admitted in the other, it seems as if Mind might soon find no place in our view of Man. But of course it is not so. What we are being forced to realize is, I suggest, rather that "Mind" is a word which belongs to a different logical vocabulary altogether from words describing physical causes, in the sense that words of an algebra problem belong to a different logical vocabulary from words describing the ink that delineates it. "What is there" can be described completely in terms of algebra or in terms of ink, but the two descriptions do not mix. In the same way our suggestion is that the "mentalist" or personal description of a human activity does not rival but is complementary to a description in physical terms. It is not the descriptions which are exclusive, but the logical backgrounds in which the respective terms are defined.

5.3. What then is our alternative to the classical account? Between my decision and my *responsibility* it would seem proper to posit a causal relationship. Between the physical events in my brain concomitant with my decision, and the appropriate bodily motions, it may be proper to posit a causal relationship. But to attempt to use an identical relationship of causality as a link between my decisions and their physical expression appears to be an error. If we must call the link "causal," we should logically use some distinguishing adjective to prevent our habit from leading to nonsense.

For what we call our "decision" may from the physical observer's standpoint be an abstraction from a whole sequence or pattern of events whose causal linkages, even if not complete and unbroken, may extend backwards and forwards considerably in the time of the observer. Not even temporal priority could therefore be guaranteed to what we wish to term the mental "cause" of our action, and it seems not unlikely that in the physical picture the room available for a causal antecedent would often be almost completely occupied by well-knit physical events.

5.4. But why should we wish at all to use this language of pseudo-physical causality? Perhaps the commonest reason is the belief that unless I can call my decisions the (pseudo-physical) causes of my actions, I am not responsible for those actions. We cannot here discuss this view adequately; but I believe that it is fallacious. If I find my body jerking

in activity *against* my will, then I may fairly disclaim responsibility. But the reason is not that there was a physical cause of my action and therefore no mental cause, but that if I am asked "Was this of your will?" I know directly what is meant and can answer "no." If I choose deliberately to take some action, my answer to the same question is "yes" and I cannot evade responsibility, for the physical description of what went on in my brain, however causal, is but an account in a complementary language of the very process of deliberate choice that is apparently in question. In short, our suggestion is that responsibility is to be judged not by the question: "had the act a physical cause?" but rather: "was the act the outcome of a decision?" The language of the actor, rather than the complementary language of the observer, is the group in terms of which the calculus of responsibility is framed. And in the last analysis it is neither acts nor consequences that Christianity declares to be the first objects of moral appraisal, but attitudes, in the most fundamental sense of the term.

5.5. At the same time we may note that current physiology in any case gives little encouragement to the view that the physical course of a human brain should be predictable—even in principle—over any appreciable length of time. And we have seen that an artefact could show an enhanced resemblance to a human being in the domain of originality and choice if it incorporated a measure of indeterminacy in its mode of operation. The significance of this indeterminacy is yet another of the problems to which these developments direct attention, but which we cannot now discuss.

5.6. It may seem shocking to some to be invited to modify a thought-model so traditionally wedded to Christian apologetic. We have perhaps been accustomed to think of Mind as a kind of "stuff" inhabiting the body and exerting occult forces on its movements; and to suggest that an artificial organism could show the behaviour we have always interpreted as evidence of these forces may seem heretical.

But is that currently "traditional" view—or habit of speech—in fact Biblical? It would seem that for the Hebrews at least a debate in these terms could scarcely have been formulated, for their view of Nature entertained no such concept as "mere matter obeying mechanical laws." The main Biblical distinction would seem to be between "Spirit" on the one hand, and "mind-body" or "organism" on the other. *Spiritual* life is declared to be something not automatically present in a human being, but having to be received in repentance as the gift of God; it is eternal, and not limited to the spatio-temporal confines of the human organism.

The concepts of *mental* life on the other hand find no mention apart from a body of some sort. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body indeed lends weight to our suggestion that Biblically mind and body constitute two aspects of a concrete unity. This is not to say that the perishing of the body is the end of the personality it mediated; it need not be even an interruption. Even in the case of an artefact a complete knowledge of its momentary state before destruction could enable its personality to be reproduced in a new mechanism, not necessarily built of the same materials.

Nor do we imply that "spiritual life" and "mental life" are two varieties of the same thing. But here the water is deep, and speculation

finds few landmarks in revelation. It is evident that no linguistic distinction that we might wish to draw has any parallel in common usage, even in translations of the Bible, where "spirit," "soul" and "mind" are often interchanged. But conceptually the distinction seems clear and necessary, and might perhaps be followed up with profit by those more competent to do so.

5.7. Underlying our whole approach has been the conviction that either to assert or to deny that mind is "nothing but" a by-product of mechanism, is to lend countenance to a false formulation of the problem. The phrase "nothing but" begs the question here as in other debates, and typifies what one might call "reductionist" thinking.

Reductionism is properly attacked not by disputing the *exhaustiveness* of a given reduction—say to mechanical terms—but by challenging the implicit and undefended assumption of *exclusiveness*. The real question is not whether mind is an abstraction from the workings of a mechanism, but whether that fact if true affects the responsibilities of the personality so mediated.

## 6. Conclusion

The foregoing inadequate discussion has had one limited objective. It is not contended that artefacts constructed along these lines *must* in principle be admitted to have "mentality."

Our suggestion is merely that the contrary is not proven, and that any attempt to "maintain the dignity of man" by searching for limits to the powers of artefacts is misguided and foredoomed. This is no prophecy, but a deduction from the demonstrable fact that to specify exactly a behavioural test amounts in principle to specifying a mechanism that can meet it.

We have left open the question whether we could ever enunciate an adequate test for mentality in the full human sense. Indeed our plea would be for more open-mindedness in facing an issue on which it is difficult to conceive of the kind of evidence that would be adequate. The view here offered is that these developments only illuminate and in no way challenge the Christian doctrine of Man.

## DISCUSSION

The CHAIRMAN (Professor C. A. Coulson, F.R.S.) said: I believe that there is a profound change taking place in the whole field of Christian apologetics. To some extent this is being forced upon us by the astonishing discoveries of modern science, and by its evident power of building up a coherent picture of the universe in which we live. But, whether that be its origin or not, it seems to me almost wholly good. This change is well illustrated in the approach which we now make to the central problem of the nature of mind, so ably discussed in the paper by Dr. MacKay. There was a time once when Leibniz could say that everything that went on in the mind of a man was as mechanical as what went on inside a watch. And such a view, magnificently supported by the physiological researches of Sherrington and Adrian, and no less by the corresponding advances in pure physics, biophysics and biochemistry, seemed likely to make God into a hypothesis for which there was no real use. So long as Christians were willing to accept a "region of science" and a "region of religion", parcelling out the country of the mind into departments under independent authority, there was no hope for religion. Every new scientific discovery enlarges one department at the expense of the other, until religion, deprived of any

solid basis, becomes a sentimental nostalgia. Descartes had to locate the soul in the pineal gland since there was nowhere else for it. Even that habitat could only be granted on sufferance, until such time as the anatomist had found its "real" function.

There is—and never was—any hope that way. Advance, by which I mean the recognition of the right relationship between science and religion, could only come by an enlargement of our concepts. Such an enlargement would show that what appeared not to fit was in fact part of a bigger pattern. It has always been like this in science. In arithmetic, for example, immense difficulties appeared inescapable until the realm of positive integers (0, 1, 2, . . .), was supplemented first by rational numbers ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , etc.), then by irrational numbers ( $\sqrt{2}$ ,  $\pi$  . . .) and finally by complex numbers ( $x+iy$ , where  $i = \sqrt{-1}$ ). Each successive enlargement of the concept of number has been like a release, leading to a deeper understanding of the real meaning of a number than would have been possible before. Not infrequently the enlargement leads to a reconciliation of apparent opposites, as in the now famous situation in which an electron has to be thought of either as a particle or a set of waves according to circumstances.

I believe that this is the situation which we are now reaching in our thinking about the nature and science of mind. I am reminded (if I may use an illustration from mountaineering) of the different descriptions that a climber might give of any selected mountain. If this mountain were Ben Nevis, and the climber was standing on the North looking at the Ben, he would report that it was a rugged mountain with rock buttresses that required some skill to surmount. If he stood looking from the South, he would report that it was a gently rolling smooth surface, with grass almost to the top. Other points of view, such as from the loch side near Fort William, would yield yet other descriptions. But no one would say that the divergence of description mattered; all were partial views, and all cohered in the single concept of the mountain.

This is only an analogy, but it should remind us that if we ask questions about the nature of mind, framed in biophysical terms, we shall be bound to expect answers dealing with the almost innumerable collection of nerves and nerve endings that comprise the brain: if we ask questions in biochemical terms the answers are bound to be in terms of phosphorus uptake: questions in terms of the idea of beauty, or poetry, will necessarily receive answers within that same context (otherwise they are not answers). Questions in the language of a "spectator" of the mind may receive entirely different answers from apparently related questions in the language of an "actor" description. There is no conflict, nor can there be. Each view of the mountain, each description of the mind, is coherent and consistent in itself. It is exclusive—for in this matter it is dangerous to mix our drinks, and a superposition of two photographs of Ben Nevis from the North and from the South, would only lead to confusion and muddle—but it is not exhaustive, as MacKay so properly points out. The only really dangerous people on the mountain are those who, having familiarity with one way of ascending to the summit, claim to know all about the mountain.

This is familiar enough—now—in physics, where we call it the Principle of Complementarity. If we are prepared to carry it into our discussion about mind and matter, many of our difficulties melt away, and we are ready for an intellectual awakening. One illustration will suffice to show what I mean. It is taken from the scientific autobiography of Max Planck, one of the pioneers of twentieth-century physics. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon and burnt his boats, he felt himself free to cross or not to cross: and indeed he must have wrestled mentally some time before he felt he could make up his mind about this momentous decision. For him, as actor in the play, his will was free. But for the historian, writing his account of Caesar's military life and triumphs, just the opposite must be true. We count him a great historian just insofar as he is able to show us how inevitable the decision to cross the river had to be. For the historian, and for us as spectators of the event, it was inevitable: Caesar's will was not free.

Now both of these views are correct. The point is that we must not mix the actor and spectator descriptions. We must choose our language according to our intended mode of discourse, or type of discussion. Shakespeare's poetic outburst, "What a piece of work is man! . . ." is as much out of place in a treatise of anatomy as an enumeration of the function of each of our many bones would be in an exegesis of the words of Genesis which describe the way in which Eve was manufactured out of one of

Adam's ribs. We are on a new plane of thought now, and, perhaps for the first time for hundreds of years, we can begin to see the manner in which, behind all our varied descriptions of the nature of the brain as mechanism, as biochemical reaction, as seat of nervous control of the body, or as one of the manifestations of mind, where concepts such as truth, beauty and goodness begin to take on meaning, there is one reality. Just as the separate pictures of the mountain all cohered in the idea of Ben Nevis, so our separate pictures of man and his universe cohere in the concept of God. The truth has made us free—gloriously free, within a wider context and pattern than ever we could have dreamed.

I believe that Dr. MacKay's paper is most valuable, because it tells us of this new situation, and sets us along lines of thinking and conversation which must inevitably turn out to be utterly rewarding. A Christianity, free from the wasteful necessity to defend its little strip of the mind's territory, can appear more brave, more convincing, more fulfilling than it ever could have been for earlier generations.

Dr. O. R. BARCLAY said: It seems to me that the artefacts which Dr. MacKay describes are really logical machines, i.e. they are theoretically capable of carrying out any logical process. When they are described as showing non-logical properties such as free will, these properties have to be defined negatively for the artefacts, e.g. as degrees of non-logical behaviour. What is shown is not free will but freedom from logical constraint, which is one negative aspect of free will.

This has two consequences. On the one hand it defines the capabilities and limitations of the artefact. On the other hand, because it is possible to say something (albeit only negative) about all the functions of human personality in terms of this artefact, there is a misleading impression that all the functions of human personality can be described adequately in such terms. There is no activity of the mind of which this artefact is completely incapable, because every mental function has a logical (or non-logical) content. What the artefact can do, however, is so small a fraction of many mental processes as to be unrecognizable as the same activity. Looked at from the point of view of logic the description may be complete, but a description of some human activities in terms of logic only is so incomplete, and often so largely negative, as to be actually misleading. The impression that these artefacts can show homologues (not merely logical analogues) of free will, etc., is therefore seriously misleading. Yet it is given plausibility by the fact that they can show true equivalents of one aspect of every mental activity.

The Rev. U. E. SIMON said: Dr. MacKay's empirical approach is not out of harmony with the epistemology of Leibniz who, in his monads, makes provision for all levels of interpenetration and response to stimulation. Similarly I feel the subject-object relationship hinted at in the paper would be clarified if it adopted the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason* or indicated its point of departure from the position there given. In other words, I am concerned to show that a line of continuity with historical philosophy exists, and might be exploited with beneficial results.

Mr. GORDON E. BARNES said: It is often assumed that the basis of the psychological study of personality is an analogical argument—we find in our own personality that certain behaviour is a manifestation of certain inward experiences, and by analogy we conclude that the same behaviour in others is an accompaniment of the same inward experiences.

But I suggest that this view is a rationalization of something which we apprehend on other, allogical, grounds. If analogy were the sole basis of psychology, there would be no grounds for a psychological investigation of the insane, since by regarding a person as insane we are implying, amongst other things, that he has an abnormal relation between behaviour and subjective experience. Furthermore, a child seems to know whether its parent is angry, pleased, or fearful, etc., long before it appreciates argument by analogy. The basis of the "I-Thou" relationship seems to be, not a logical one, but an intuitive one.

Now I quite agree with Dr. MacKay that it is probably impossible to frame a "deductive test" that would distinguish between his hypothetical artefact and a human being, but I wonder whether his artefact would pass the more fundamental test of whether we, knowing it to be constructed of valves and wires, would believe intuitively that it mediates a personality.

On a logical basis, analogy would lead us to impute both mental and material aspects to the artefact as to other people. Now it would be theoretically possible to construct a whole series of machines with every grade of behaviour complexity from Dr. MacKay's hypothetical artefact down to a simple thermostat or governor, or even a cork floating on water and oscillating about a mean level. To be consistent then it seems that one would either have to adopt a panpsychism or else be prepared to say at what point in the series we should find a qualitative difference in behaviour that would justify the use of mental concepts in describing the more complex machines.

I think the same sort of argument holds if we start not with a complex artefact but with a complex organism. We are faced with the alternative of adopting a panpsychism or of explaining the qualitative difference between a living organism such as man and an inanimate object credited with no mental attributes. It was the latter alternative which led ultimately to the Cartesian dualism.

I should like to ask Dr. MacKay what his views are on this problem.

Mr. C. D. CURLING said: Dr. MacKay's paper is to be welcomed if only because it may help us to see more easily that the aim of philosophy is indeed just that enlargement of thought to which Professor Coulson referred. This was always a belief of A. N. Whitehead and his work on the theory of the abstractive process may soon receive more attention in the light of the developments reviewed in this paper.

Any attack on reductionism is in accord with this belief, but I am not clear that we know enough of the properties of exclusive logical backgrounds to do more than point out the paradoxes into which the reductionist is driven. What kind of theory of truth do we need that will admit of several descriptions with different logical backgrounds? Are these to be held equally true?

A scientist knows well enough when to speak of particles and when of waves. Is this possible elsewhere? Is the criterion "it makes more sense to do so" sufficient?

I accept Dr. MacKay's conclusions, but the grounds for decision between complementary descriptions do seem to need further exploration; if we knew more we might see a little better the kind of background which leads a person to take up a fundamental attitude which orders his thinking about all descriptions of, for example, mind and matter.

Dr. J. T. AITKEN wrote: In theory, a machine can be constructed to do anything, but the project usually fails on such practical details as accommodation and power. The value of "brain-like" machines lies in their ability to foster testable hypotheses. I agree with Dr. MacKay that much trouble has resulted from the false comparison of artefact and "mind" instead of "some of the activities of the brain". If mind is defined in terms of brain activity *only*, then I am happier.

When a moral choice has to be made, then Christians would be expected to react differently from Pagans because Christians *have been given* a bias which is not naturally present. Similarly even Pagans would react differently from animals. A machine which "learns from experience" and has the capacity to store suitable information is not likely to "commit suicide" and will thus choose the less lethal of the alternatives or the most advantageous and pleasant to itself, so to speak.

I am not quite clear about paragraph 5.6 (2) and would suggest the following hypothesis.

All animal life, including man, has a body with or without a co-ordinating nervous system. In the more complicated and specialized forms (I resist the temptation to say "higher animals") there is found a nervous system which not only reacts to the incoming stimuli but is capable of initiating action and creating sensory pictures. Now man differs from other forms of animal life, I *believe* (because of the revelation in Genesis and other parts of Scripture), in that man possesses also spirit (something with at least potentialities for eternal existence). After the Fall, man has lived off-side, and biased by sin. Regenerate man is body *plus* spirit *plus* Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit makes the regenerate man on-side and corrects the bias. (The latter is not completely corrected in this life because of the effects of sin on the body—the "pollution of sin" of the Reformers.)

Machines (artefacts) can be conceived of which will perform without the bias of sin all the actions of man's body and therefore perform them better. The artefact may even be trained to make moral judgements of a sort. But unless *God* in His wisdom *gives* that artefact spirit, it can never compete with man in "glorifying God and enjoying Him for ever."

Dr. R. J. C. HARRIS wrote: I have read Donald MacKay's paper "From Mechanism to Mind" with considerable profit, but there is one question which I would like him to answer.

He suggests (4.1) that the brain "mediates the personality" and further states (4.2) that "it is by no means obvious whether now or at any time or even in principle we can understand enough of the depths of human personality to be able to specify adequately *all* the deficiencies remaining unremedied". What does Dr. MacKay intend by "*in principle*"? Does he, for example, mean that the personality is only *partially* "mediated by the brain"? What, in fact, does he mean by personality?

We would all agree (5.6) that in Scripture the perishing of the body (physical organism) is not held to be the perishing of the personality, and that we shall, e.g. recognize each other on the other side of the grave, but surely it is an extension of an analogy (an over-extension) to suggest that the "personality" of an artefact could similarly be reproduced in *different materials*. For does Dr. MacKay mean "non-material" material? I suggest that by "reproduced in a new mechanism" he really means constructed in the *same materials* to a different pattern—i.e. the same valves, relays, etc., arranged in a different way.

Dr. MacKay suggests that by mental discipline we can bring ourselves to use "personal language" in describing our encounter with an artefact where this is appropriate. Perhaps he would like to go on and suggest what "language" one artefact could use to describe "its" encounter with another. What would constitute "individuality" in an artefact?

I feel, in view of the strictures of 4.1, that I ought to apologize in advance for what may appear to be the commission of not one but several "vulgar errors".

Dr. H. MARTYN CUNDY wrote: I have read this paper with considerable interest, but I feel rather inadequately equipped to comment on it, since I am no philosopher. My immediate reaction to all philosophical language is to translate it into simple words! It seems to me that what Dr. MacKay has shown is that if we decide in advance what we want a machine to do to resemble a human personality, then we can imagine a machine which will do it. (Is there any difference between "construct in principle" and "imagine"?) But this is surely self-evident. We need not do anything very elaborate. We could simply record all the sense-impressions received during the life of an actual person, and reproduce them. All these supposed "goal-seeking" machines can only seek a pre-chosen goal, or possibly, if they incorporate a random element, one of a number of possible pre-chosen goals. It would be simpler, and no different in principle, to make the machine do what someone has already done. Man still makes the machine, determines its laws of behaviour, and is himself the originator of whatever "order" or "purpose" it displays. My only comment is—"so what?" Surely man is a very wonderful person to be able to do all this, but it does not affect one way or other the question whether the wonder of man is the same kind of marvel as the wonder of the machine he makes. In short, I consider the question of what a man-made machine can do totally irrelevant to the Christian doctrine of man.

I consider the real point at issue to be the point brought out by C. S. Lewis in his book on *Miracles*. The thing which distinguishes Man from animals or other creatures (spiritual issues apart) is his Reason. This seems to be intimately bound up with his self-consciousness. I infer the self-consciousness of other men from observing their rational behaviour by the same kind of inference which is habitually used in scientific method. But if it could be shown that the apparent rational behaviour of other men was due to irrational (mechanical) causes, I should at once reject it as valid Reason; and if mechanical causes could be found for everything that appeared to present evidence for their Reason, I think I should be logically compelled to reject the inference that they were self-conscious. For if my Reason could be shown to be the product of irrational causes, then the whole validity of my thought is undermined.

It appears to me that "cogitat, ergo est" is neither more nor less reasonable than "cogito, ergo sum". Lewis (*op. cit.*, p. 29) quotes Haldane, who put the argument in this form: "If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true . . . and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms."

If Reason therefore is not extra-physical, non-mechanical, super-natural, or whatever way you like to put it, no thought is valid, no science can lay claim to truth, no human being can be held responsible for anything. This is a possible philosophy, but the best answer to it is that nobody has ever found it possible to live consistently with it. The alternative is that Reason is self-authenticating, and is not a product of a mechanism of any kind. I know that I can reason, therefore I am not a mere machine. I infer that because you are in all other points the same kind of object as myself, that you also can reason. It is a short step from here to say that all human beings share this Reason, and a longer one to say that this Reason inheres in God. But this is one of the places where we are forced to consider Christian revelation, for this is one of the things (if Christians are right) in which man is made in the image of God.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

Professor Coulson's lucid discussion of the notion of complementarity goes far, I think, towards answering some of the points raised by other speakers. There are just two comments I might make. First, I fear that I owe an apology to him, and doubtless to other readers, for not making clear my use of the terms "exclusive" and "exhaustive". Observer- and actor-descriptions are indeed "exclusive" in the sense used by Professor Coulson; but the truth of one does not exclude the other, so that they are not mutually "exclusive" in the sense I intended. An observer-description does not indeed exhaust *all that can be said*, and so is not "exhaustive" in Professor Coulson's sense; but it does exhaust *all that is to be observed*, and so is "exhaustive" in the sense I intended. Take the ink away from the page, and nothing is left. The ink-description is "exhaustive". But the algebra-description is equally "exhaustive" in *its own language*. And the two are not in any way mutually *exclusive*.

I was glad that in his analogy of Ben Nevis Professor Coulson represented the Christian's goal, the knowledge of God, by the conception of the whole mountain, rather than by just one of the complementary views. The illustration is easily and often misunderstood to imply that the "Christian view" is just one aspect, on the same footing as others such as the scientific or aesthetic.

I agree with Dr. Barclay that one cannot be *compelled* by observable evidence to attribute "freewill" to an artefact. But neither is this true of another human being. Any observable *evidence* can in principle be provided in both cases: there is no restriction to purely logical aspects of thinking. Creation of hypotheses, spontaneous innovation and the like can all be shown. But I would draw attention once again to the *caveats* of paras. 4.2, 4.3 and 6 in my paper.

Mr. Barnes's dilemma is illusory. To be able to distinguish beardedness from beardlessness it is not necessary to be able to say *at what point* in an increasingly hirsute series of chins "a qualitative difference" enters. I certainly agree that we do not in practice deduce the experience of others by logical argument: we rather "resonate" with them in dialogue. In fact we would demand evidence before *disbelieving* in the reality of their experience. But Mr. Barnes does not show why evidence of their bodily *composition* should be conclusive or even relevant to such an issue.

Mr. Curling lays his finger on the real problem in combating reductionism, which is the development of rigorous ways of distinguishing complementary from contradictory statements. I entirely agree with him; but the understanding of the very nature of this problem in both camps must, it seems, proceed *gradatim*.

I agree with what I think Dr. Aitken means when he says "Man possesses also spirit", but the sentence is easily misunderstood. To "possess spirit" is not I think the same *kind* of possessing as to "possess a body" or to "possess a watch". The verb "possess" means something different in the two cases. "I possess a body and I possess a spirit" may be a valid statement. "I possess both a body and a spirit"

may quite easily be subtly misleading. As a simple example, "I am in a towering rage and I am in pyjamas" may be a valid statement. "I am in a towering rage and pyjamas" is a misuse of language, inviting the question: "Well then, are the pyjamas inside the towering rage or is the rage inside the pyjamas, if you are in both of them?" There is a serious need, if it is not a duty, for Christians to analyse their use of language on many topics in these terms, without any consequent obligation to take the Gadarene plunge of some contemporary language analysts.

In reply to Dr. Harris, I would say that the act of analysis of a personality, whether one's own or someone else's, must introduce a "perturbation of the system observed" which I suspect may be irreducible in principle in the same sense as quantum "uncertainty" in atomic physics. By "personality" I mean roughly that to which reference is made when we use the word "he", as opposed to "his body".

By "reproduced in a new mechanism" I did *not* mean "... in the same materials". On the contrary, just as an algebra problem or a message could be the same whether it were written in ink or chalk, so I would suggest that a personality could be the same whether it were mediated in copper or protoplasm—or indeed in any other physical (or non-physical) structure.

Dr. Cundy's contribution shows that I have not made clear what is meant by "making an artefact behave like a human being". It is quite inadequate merely to reproduce recorded behaviour, because behaviour includes *dialogue*, and Dr. Cundy would be disappointed if the artefact's response to a question from him were a recorded reply to quite a different question in the past history of the artefact's prototype. No, the problem of securing spontaneous, originative, purposive and reactive behaviour in an artefact is, I believe, solvable in principle, but it is not trivial. The irrelevance of the achievement to Christian doctrine, as to which I agree, does not arise from any necessary inferiority to human capabilities demonstrable in the characteristics of such an artefact.

I agree that it would be difficult to hold Reason to be a "product" of mechanical causes. But it is a fallacy, though a common one, to suppose that a mechanical account of cerebral function *could* have any such consequence. An algebra problem is not the "product" of the chalk that delineates it. The conclusions of even a deterministic computer are not the "product" of the electrical causes of their appearance. To show that they "follow" we must talk, not electrical language, but the language of mathematics or logic. To be prepared to reject the validity of other men's Reason if mechanical causes were found for their behaviour is thus, I submit, totally irrational, and is indeed to share in the real error of the older-fashioned behaviourist. Reason is non-mechanical, not because of Lewis's or any *argument*, but because either to assert or to deny that it is mechanical doesn't make sense. It is as senseless as to ask whether algebra is chalky, or a mathematical conclusion electrically true.

May I end by reinforcing Professor Coulson's plea in rather a general and quite modest form: that whenever we meet two different accounts of what is claimed to be the same thing, we at least consider, critically but habitually, the possibility that the statements are in different complementary "languages" and *may* both be valid. It is not always easy to be sure. We must not admit contradictory nonsense under the aegis of Complementarity. But a wide field of new understanding awaits intelligent exploration in this spirit.

913TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 19th JANUARY, 1953

Rev. JAKÓB JOCZ, Ph.D., in the Chair

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JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

By

Rev. H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

21 LOWER BELGRAVE STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1

# JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

By Rev. H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D.

## SYNOPSIS

The traditional belief of Christendom has been that the Pharisees were hypocrites and their religion an arid legalism. It is comparatively easy to show that this belief is both illogical and contrary to the recorded facts of Judaism. Modern scholarship has tended to reconcile these facts with tradition by various unsatisfactory means, which are being increasingly abandoned. Normally relief is now sought from the difficulty by suggesting that only certain types of Pharisee were being attacked by Jesus. But it is clear that the Gospels cannot fairly be made to bear such an interpretation, so by most Jewish and many Christian writers the blame is put on the evangelists, who are considered to be reflecting the prejudices of the Church some fifty years later. If this were true, it would mean that the Gospels cannot be relied on to give an objective picture of the life of Christ. Since it is impossible to put all the blame on the evangelists, Jewish writers go further and accuse Jesus of grave defects of character in His dealings with the Pharisees.

The only satisfactory solution lies in recognizing the high quality of Pharisaic religion, and that Jesus was not charging them with deliberate hypocrisy but with play-acting. They had created their own setting for their religion in which self-satisfaction was genuinely obtainable. In this they were typical religionists, and we shall only judge the position correctly as we are prepared to see ourselves mirrored there as well.

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TO some it may seem strange that a subject like *Jesus and the Pharisees* should be included among the Transactions of the Victoria Institute. On the one hand it may be felt that there is little new to be said about it, on the other that it is more suited to the pulpit or the lecture hall than to the Institute.

So much fresh information on the Inter-Testamental period has been gathered during the past few decades that it would be easy to write a paper on the Pharisees containing a mass of material unknown to any but specialists. Such, however, is not the purpose of this paper. Rather it would draw attention to one of the subtler modern attacks on the Christian faith and to suggest an answer. This is the more necessary as the attack comes in the form of a correction of obviously biased and distorted views held by the Church about the Pharisees through most of her history.

Several quotations from standard writers of about fifty years ago will serve to show in a moderate form what these views were and indeed are for most educated Christians. Edersheim, a Hebrew-Christian, wrote: "Modern ingenuity . . . should own the terrible contrast existing side by side: Hebrewism and Judaism, the Old Testament and traditionalism;

and it should recognize its deeper sense in the absence of that element of spiritual and inner life which Christ has brought . . . there is not a difference, but a total divergence, of fundamental principle between Rabbinism and the New Testament, so that comparison between them is not possible" (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. I, p. 107). "Thus, tried by its own tests, Pharisaism terribly failed. It was hypocrisy . . . and that both negatively and positively: the concealment of that which was, and the pretention to what it was not" (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 212).

Schürer is perhaps less incisive but he is even more critical (*History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 4th German edit., vol. II, p. 548): "What were the results reached by this zeal for the Law? They corresponded to the motives. Since these motives were essentially external, the result was an incredible externalization of religious and moral life . . . the whole of religious and moral life was dragged down into the sphere of law. . . . Everything had now to be looked at from the same standpoint; the sole criterion was law, and that a law claiming divine authority. As a result the content of action became relatively indifferent. Everything had the same value, both purely conventional behaviour in externals and ceremonies, and the fulfilling of the highest religious and moral duties. The former was exalted to the level of the latter, the latter was lowered to the level of the former. . . . All thought and action were concerned with satisfying the letter of the law. . . . The goal was not the doing of good as such, but merely formal correctness in the fulfilment of the letter of the law . . . (p. 569) As we have seen, this external formalism is far removed from true piety. But for all that it might just have been able to exist under such a load. But when the centre of religious life, prayer itself, was imprisoned in the shackles of an inflexible mechanism, it is hardly possible to speak any longer of living piety."

Eaton is even more critical (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 828b): "One evil consequence of this 'idolatry of the law' was the externalizing of religion. God was conceived of mainly as Lawgiver and Judge. The religious relation between God and Israel was purely legal; it was founded on a purely legal compact. Religion was not a fellowship with God, but a strictly legal walk before God. Their zeal for the law was consequently a service of God for the sake of reward; more especially for the supreme reward of sharing in the glory and bliss of the Messianic age. . . . Their attitude to their almost deified law was external, formal, mechanical. . . . They made the law 'only a manual of religious etiquette.' Their righteousness was thus mere formalism; their righteous man was one who kept the law, written and oral, in an external, but formally correct manner. . . . The purely formal ethics of the Pharisees led to a great many other evils. They paid no attention to the ethical content of a law. . . . They divorced morality and religion. . . . There were doubtless in our Lord's time many good men among the Pharisees, but the tendency of the whole system was to produce hypocrisy . . . or in the case of earnest and sincere souls, self-torture and a sense of estrangement from God."

These lengthy quotations have been necessary in order to allow the reader of this paper to decide how far he has always shared these views. But although they have been almost universal in Christendom since at least the time of John Chrysostom (c. 344-407), they bear their refutation

within them. If they were a rounded picture of Rabbinic Judaism, it would be impossible to explain either its vitality or the very real saints it has produced. The various efforts made to avoid this difficulty, *e.g.* that a difference must be made between the scribe and the rabbi and the average Pharisee, that the Rabbinic Judaism of after A.D. 70 was not the same as the Pharisaic religion of the Second Temple, that the simple piety of New Testament times was apocalyptic rather than Pharisaic in its inspiration, that the vitality of Judaism is due to its mystic movements, have sometimes a grain of truth in them, but they remain unsatisfying for all that.

The first of these is to some extent supported, though not with this intention, by Edersheim (*ibid.*, vol. I, p. 312). While the rabbis may at times have despised the crudity with which the rank and file carried out their teaching—a weakness religious teachers are always prone to—it is impossible to drive such a wedge between the Pharisaic party and the rabbis. Such slighting remarks (see Edersheim, *supra*) were probably a by-product of that disunity within the Pharisaic ranks which is best known to us by the controversy between Hillel and Shammai.

The case for a distinction between Pharisaic religion and the Rabbinic religion of the Talmud is strongly argued by A. T. Robertson (*The Pharisees and Jesus*, pp. 10ff.), but we consider that this theory has been fully answered by Lukyn Williams (*Talmudic Judaism and Christianity*, ch. II) and that his conclusion, “The outlook and attitude of Talmudic Judaism is identical with that of Palestinian Rabbinic Judaism of the first century,” is unassailable. Development there was, but it was in the same direction. This is amply borne out by the many examples of the practical problems of Palestinian life before A.D. 70 with their Pharisaic solution given by Finkelstein (*The Pharisees*).

The influence of apocalyptic on popular piety in New Testament times was stressed by Charles (*e.g. Between the Old and the New Testaments*) and A. T. Robertson (*ibid.*, p. 48 ff.), and has found many popularizers. But the suggestion long put forward that Jewish apocalyptic is connected mainly with the Essenes, or similar sects outside the main stream of Jewish life, has been strongly reinforced by the Ain Feshka discoveries, now apparently known as the Qumran MSS. (cf. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, and Bleddyn Roberts, *The Dead Sea Scrolls—Towards a Perspective*, Victoria Institute, 84, 1952). True there is some apocalyptic which is indubitably Pharisaic, but this only tends to show that Pharisaism was not as narrow as is often pictured. In fact much of the picture of the narrowly legalistic Pharisee is due to the average Christian scholar's excusable ignorance of the wide sea of Midrashic literature in contrast to the Talmud, an ignorance that should gradually vanish as the mass of material in Strack-Billerbeck's commentary becomes better known.

The normal conception of the Pharisees' hypocrisy is really self-contradictory. The New Testament picture of them as the recognized religious leaders of the people is amply confirmed by extra-Biblical sources. Although the members of the temple aristocracy and the ruling circles were drawn with few exceptions from the Sadducees, and though the Pharisees were comparatively few in number—Josephus gives their number in the time of Herod the Great as something over 6000 (*Ant.*

xvii. 2. 4)—we find that sooner or later the Pharisaic rulings both in matters of religious and secular law were forced on their bitterly hostile Sadducean opponents. We can only explain this by recognizing that they had the bulk of the people behind them.

The extraordinarily bitter strife in the second and third centuries A.D. between the Pharisees and the *am ha-aretz*, the common people unversed in the law (cf. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. II, pp. 157 *seq.*; for some of its worst expressions see McCaul, *The Old Paths*, ch. LIX), and the normal refusal of the *am ha-aretz* to observe the laws of purity outside Jerusalem, while the temple still stood (cf. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, pp. 25 *seq.*), show that the bulk of the people admired rather than obeyed them. It seems incredible that this should have been the case had the Pharisees, or indeed any high proportion of them, been recognized as hypocritical humbugs—hypocrisy is one of the hardest of vices to hide over a long period of time.

That Rabbinic Judaism is a 'legal' religion is obvious; it glories in the fact. But it does not follow that we are justified in calling it legalistic. The New Testament does not object to law as such, but to the belief that the law can be so kept as to bring acceptance before God; once a man is justified, he is expected to keep the perfect law of love, not that he may be justified, but just because he is justified. No one familiar with the liturgy of the Day of Atonement could imagine that Rabbinic Judaism ignores the need for divine forgiveness and grace; though there is much in Rabbinic literature that teaches a doctrine of merit, it is balanced, or almost so, by a stress on the mercy and forgiveness of God (cf. Moore, *Judaism*, part III). In measure the difference in emphasis between Rabbinic Judaism and Evangelical Christianity comes from the fact that the cross is replaced by the Sinai covenant. There can be no "new birth" with all its emotional and spiritual connotation for the Rabbinic Jew.

Not only does the Divine mercy find its place in Rabbinic Judaism, but it is repeatedly stressed that our acts must have the right intention (*kawwanah*) and be done for their own sake (*lishmah*), not for the reward they may bring. "It matters not whether you do much or little, so long as your heart is directed to heaven;" "R. Meir said: All depends on the intention of the heart;" "If one studies the Torah for its own sake, it becomes to him an elixir of life; but if one studies the Torah not for its own sake, it becomes to him a deadly poison," are typical expressions of this conviction—for a representative selection of quotations see Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, ch. X.

The rabbis do speak constantly as though the commandments were all on the same level, but in practice there is never any suggestion that a man may commit crimes against his fellow men, because he has kept ritual prescriptions. It is very probable that the rabbinic stress on the equal importance of all commandments, a stress that led to the elimination of the Decalogue from public worship, is a reaction against Christianity with its distinction between moral and ceremonial. In any case the maxim, "If you become slack about one commandment, you will end by becoming slack about another; if you despise one, you will end by despising another," is sound common sense—compare too Matt. 5: 19; James 2: 10. It is a simple historic fact that the ethics of the synagogue have normally tended to be higher in practice than those of the Church.

Jewish criticism of the New Testament and its expositors has concentrated on the suggestion that the keeping of the law was a burden. We must concede that they are right where the Pharisee and his successors are concerned. For the *am ha-aretz*, or for the synagogue member whose religion had become mere ritual it could be a burden not to be borne—Peter was an *am ha-aretz* (Acts 15: 10)—but for those truly in the Pharisaic tradition it was a joy. As R. Chananya Ben-Aqashya used to say, “The Holy One, blessed be He, was pleased to make Israel worthy, wherefore He gave them a copious Torah and many commandments.” For a man like him the more commandments the greater joy.

Whatever our judgment on Rabbinic Judaism, these considerations should keep us from the judgments quoted at the beginning of this paper. There have been many manifestations of Judaism of which they may well have been true, but they were as certainly perversions of Judaism as many of the things that Jews object to are perversions of Christianity.

There is a great deal to be said for Finkelstein’s contention developing a remark of Huxley’s (*The Pharisees*, pp. xvii ff.), that there is a link of kinship between Pharisee and Puritan. In spite of the many similarities he points out, he seems to miss the most important. No commoner charge than that of legalism has been levelled at the Puritans. Their answer was that it was no more than taking the will of God seriously. If faced with evidence of genuine legalism among them, they could always plead truthfully that it was a corruption of true Puritanism. *Mutatis mutandis*, and bearing in mind that Judaism had perforce a stronger bias towards the law, one could affirm much the same of Rabbinic religion.

The realization of these facts among scholars has led to a radically changed attitude towards the Pharisees on the part of many. Entirely typical of a mediating school of thought is Lev Gillet’s statement (*Communion in the Messiah*, pp. 3 seq.): “Modern research has confirmed more and more the truth of Wernle’s assertion: ‘One thing is certain—that Jesus and his Gospel are intelligible from Judaism alone.’ The attitude of Jesus towards the faith of Israel can be summed up in the *logion* of Matt. 5: 17–18. . . . The rebukes by Jesus of the Pharisees are directed against a hypocritical section of narrow, exclusive and exacting men. What Jesus opposed in such Pharisees was not the fundamental element in Pharisaism, but rather a deviation from and a distortion of Pharisaism itself. ‘The impression is almost irresistible that the denunciations of the Pharisees occurring in the Gospels are directed primarily against a Shammaitic section, and that the incident described in Matt. 7 is an episode in the controversy between Jesus and the Shammaites.’\* The Talmud denounces as violently as the Gospels the perversions of Pharisaism. . . . Jesus Himself was nearer to genuine Pharisaism than to any other religious school in Israel. He knew that the Pharisees were the *élite* of the nation. His own piety and teaching were often identical with theirs. . . . Thus the meeting of Jesus with Pharisaism was not a fruitless encounter, but the assimilation by Jesus of what was best in the Judaism of His time and the elevation of this ‘best’ to its utmost.”

There is no reconciling this with Edersheim’s dictum, “There is not a difference, but a total divergence of fundamental principle between

\* Quoted from Box: Hastings’ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. IX, p. 835.

Rabbinism and the New Testament, so that a comparison between them is not possible." The four volumes of Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (1922–1928), suggest by their very existence that Gillet is certainly nearer the truth. In this, in some ways the most illuminating work ever published on the New Testament, light is thrown on almost every angle and thought of the New Testament by quotations from early rabbinic writings.

Indeed adequate parallels to the bulk of our Lord's public teaching—this does not apply in the same measure to that in John—have been discovered in Rabbinic writings, and have led to a profitless debate on priority in time. Few later rabbis would consciously have used the teaching of Jesus; and if the parallels may in some cases be due to unconscious borrowing, it still shows that there was a fundamental similarity between the teachings. Montefiore in his study of the more important of these parallels (*Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teaching*) recognizes on at least ten occasions the distinct originality and superiority of Jesus in certain points, but originality and superiority do not imply "total divergence."

Quite other is the suggestion of Gillet and Box that Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees did not apply to them all but either to those of their number whom they condemned themselves, or to the Shammaite rigorists in contrast to the more moderate school of Hillel. We consider that this widely held view is open to a fatal objection: neither Jesus' words, nor their setting can reasonably be so interpreted. It is quite out of the question that the mainly non-Jewish readers of the Gospels could have been expected to have known so much about the Pharisees that without guidance they could have divided them into two groups to the major of which our Lord's words did not apply. This is the usual modern explanation by Jewish and Christian writers alike; there is no point in our giving all the minor variations of the view that have been proposed. But repetition is not proof, and it does not meet the simple fact that the theory does not do justice to Jesus' words.

Many realizing this have gone further and accuse the evangelists of perverting Christ's teaching either out of ignorance or deliberately. Guignebert writes (*The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*, p. 165): "In fact, it is increasingly clear that the long-established habit of looking upon the religion of Jesus as a reaction against Pharisaism is erroneous. It was in reality the Christians who edited the Gospel stories, who conceived the idea of setting up the 'hypocritical' Pharisees in such strong contrast to Jesus, and their attitude is explained by the resistance which they had encountered from Pharisaic orthodoxy in their own efforts to win the support of the Jews." Parkes attributes the stronger sayings to an intensification of what Jesus really said in the interests of the rapidly growing antisemitism of the first century Church (cf. *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*). Jewish writers generally either accuse the evangelists of deliberate perversion of Christ's words (e.g. Loewe), or of ignorance and confusion (e.g. Büchler, Klausner, Montefiore), and link this with a late date for the Gospels.

Here then, whether the terminology is used or not, we find ourselves in the atmosphere of the form-historical school, where the gospels are evidence rather for the beliefs of the later first-century Church than for the life and

teaching of Jesus Christ. If moreover these beliefs can be shown to be definitely erroneous in one direction, it means that we are left without any definite and certain evidence for the foundations of our faith.

The Jewish writer is prepared to go further, and in this he finds support from some Christians. We quote from Montefiore (*Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teaching*, p. 103) just because he is far more drawn to the person of Jesus than most Jewish writers of recent years: "Yet how much more telling his [Jesus'] injunction would have been, if we had had a *single story* about his doing good to, and praying for, a single Rabbi or Pharisee! One grain of practice is worth a pound of theory. . . . Windisch . . . says that one must not judge a prophet, full of justified indignation with hypocrisy, etc., as one judges an ordinary man. But if Jesus was so marvelously perfect and sinless as his adherents maintain, should he not have been *more* able than other men to exercise patience, self-control and love? Should we not rightly demand *more* from him than from ordinary men, and not *less*? . . . Towards his enemies, towards those who did not believe in him, whether individuals, groups or cities only denunciation and bitter words! The injunctions are beautiful, but how much more beautiful would have been a *fulfilment* of these injunctions by Jesus himself."

However unpalatable these words, can we really criticize Montefiore for them? It is unfair and unscholarly to lay on the evangelists and the first-century Church the blame for words which we consider untrue or exaggerated and by so doing evade the real problem raised by Jesus' words. It is precisely teaching such as the Synoptic theory assigns to Q that would be most accurately remembered and transmitted. Even if, for the sake of argument, we were prepared to allow of the possibility of development and modification, it is impossible to believe that "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites!" are not *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. How then are we to justify them, if we accept the modern picture of the Pharisees as even approximately true?

There is no reason for trying to deny a fundamental similarity between the teaching of Jesus and of the Pharisees; they both drew from the same spring, the Old Testament. Jesus gave honour to the Pharisees as teachers (Matt. 23: 2 f.); it is not the teaching of the Pharisees that Paul objects to, but their ignorance of the goal of their efforts (Rom. 10: 2 f.) and the powerlessness of their creed. Indeed fundamentally Christianity rests on what Jesus Christ did rather than on what He taught. We do not add to the glory of Christ by needlessly depreciating others.

This recognition of the real spiritual quality of Pharisaic teaching will, however, not mollify the Jew and those that take his part. The sting in our Lord's words lies in, "they say, and do not" (Matt. 23: 3), in the accusation of hypocrisy. But here it must be looked on as most doubtful whether Jesus ever made the accusation which most take for granted He made.

A hypocrite is a man who being evil does good that men may consider him good and does so consistently; his motive in so doing is immaterial, though it may be presumed to be far from praiseworthy. *Hypocrite* is, however, merely a transcription of the Greek word used in the Gospels, and we have no right to assume that our modern understanding of the word represents its meaning in the first century A.D. Lukyn Williams

(*Talmudic Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 67 seq.) argues that it is impossible so to understand the word ὑποκριτής. In the LXX it is used to translate *chaneph*, i.e. profane. Neither in the secular nor religious literature of the time is it used in the modern sense of hypocrite. Indeed there is every indication that it first acquired this meaning from the later Christian interpretation of Jesus' words. The most suitable of a number of meanings the word bore at the time is *play-actor*. While neither the actor nor the hypocrite is in reality the character he is representing, the motive in the acting is normally completely different. It is interesting to note that Lukyn Williams' view is being increasingly accepted, or is being reached by others quite independently.

Perhaps the best evidence that the attacks on the Pharisees are a true reproduction of Christ's teaching and are not to be attributed to the conceptions of the first-century church is that they are virtually without parallel in the rest of the New Testament—Paul's hard words, I Thess. 2: 14 ff., Acts 28: 25-28, are addressed to Jews generally. Furthermore "hypocrite" is only found on Christ's lips, and that in the Synoptic gospels. In John, which is later, it is completely lacking!

That the disciples should be so much milder than their Lord, that Paul, who had so much to suffer from the Pharisees, his former companions, should treat them so much more gently calls for comment and investigation. The only explanation that satisfies us is that just as with His language about hell and the after-life, Jesus was recognized as having a knowledge and insight which His followers did not claim. They knew that they were not dealing with mere charlatans, people using religion for their own gain and reputation, evil livers who covered their baseness with a mask of outward observances, but rather with the very *élite* of the people, who so far as human judgment could go stood religiously higher than the disciples themselves.

The Word of God had to become incarnate as a Jew, for no other people had been prepared for His coming; by Jews He had to be rejected and given up to death, for only so could the exceeding sinfulness of sin be made known. It was essentially because of their religion that they rejected Him, and it was the Pharisees who were the first to do so, even though it was not they who were the prime movers in His death. One outstanding merit of Sholem Asch's *The Nazarene* is the way he shows, in spite of his warm sympathy for the Pharisees, that they could not do otherwise than reject Jesus, unless indeed they abandoned their whole position.

For the poverty-stricken proletariat of His day, for the struggling farmer and the small-town artisan Jesus has words of welcome and comfort but none of condemnation; to the worldly priest and the self-important dynast He has nothing to say, unless indeed they needlessly cross His path (cf. Luke 13: 31 f.); it is the truly religious man who has to hear His condemnations.

It is a commonplace that in few points do Judaism and Christianity diverge more widely than in their conception of sin. As Jocz puts it (*The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, p. 275): "It is then obvious that for Judaism there can only be sins, but no sin in the Christian sense. . . . Original sin was unknown to the old Synagogue and it is of no consequence

in the teaching of Judaism." While we know of no rabbi who claimed perfection for himself, it is clear that perfect righteousness was not simply a theoretical possibility, for, in spite of Loewe's note, the quotation on p. 601 of Montefiore and Loewe's *Rabbinic Anthology* can hardly mean merely the academic possibility when it says: "On the day of judgment there will be three classes, one consisting of the perfectly righteous. . . ." So we need not be surprised at Paul's saying of himself, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless."

When we look at it from this angle, it is not difficult to understand our Lord's use of "hypocrite," play-actor. The Pharisee lived normally—for there were also genuinely bad and hypocritical Pharisees—a harmonious life in which inner desires and outward actions blended; sincerity, consistency and self-sacrifice awoke the admiration of men of good will, even if it did not normally spur them to emulation. But this was only possible because they themselves had dictated the framework in which their lives were to be lived and the terms on which they would serve God.

This is naïvely expressed in the legend of R. Eliezer who after failing to convince his fellow rabbis even by various miraculous signs finally appealed to heaven and was affirmed to be right by a *bat qol* (a voice from heaven). In spite of that one of his colleagues replied, "The Law was given us from Sinai. We pay no attention to a *bat qol*. For already from Sinai the Law said, 'By a majority you are to decide'" (for the full text see the already cited *Anthology*, p. 340). This means quite simply that the rabbis believed that God had so delivered Himself into the hands of men by the revelation of the Law, that it was for them to decide how He was to be served, provided that decision was consistent with the Law.

So they lived in a fools' paradise in which they missed both the extreme majesty of God and the extreme fall of man. They were not deceivers, though we may well look on them as self-deceived, if we will, and they played their part well on the stage of their own creating. The fallen man knows he is a sinner, and the worldly man knows he has turned his back on God, but the truly religious man needs the sternest words that the Son of God can speak in love, and which only He dares to speak, if he is to awaken from his dream and face God and His claims as they really are. That the Pharisees realized that Jesus spoke neither in anger nor bitterness seems to be suggested by the fact that, so far as we can judge, it was His acts rather than His words they objected to.

However we interpret the details of the story of the Fall in Gen. 3, there will be general agreement that the power of the temptation was the desire to be "as God" (Gen. 3: 5, R.V.), the desire of the creation to be autonomous, independent of the Creator. It is this desire which characterizes the whole history of man. When man is in open revolt against God, both the fact and its inexorable results are so obvious, that few are long deceived. The real danger is when we meet autonomy in religious man.

Many are the ways in which religious man has tried to maintain his freedom as he faced God. Perhaps the crudest, and most widespread is magic, where by the right word and action it is sought to bend the Deity to one's will. We would do well to remember that magic is no prerogative of the savage, and that it has left all too many traces in the thought of religious man to-day. More dangerous, because more subtle and respect-

able are many of the esoteric practices of mysticism, whereby a man gains union with the ultimate reality, however conceived, by actions of his own doing and willing. Even though it means the end of the man's individual existence, he has reached "salvation" by his own action, by his annihilating of his own self. There is no suggestion that this is true of all mysticism, for the term is used to cover an exceptionally wide range of beliefs and experiences that have very little, if anything, in common.

It is, however, in the Pharisees that we see man's desire for autonomy at its subtlest. Though there are traces of both magic and theosophical mysticism in the early rabbinic writings, it is clear that they are both as alien there as they are in Christianity. The Pharisee never doubted that God was infinitely high above all His creation including man. Immanence has little place in his theology, much less than it has in Christianity. Though he minimized the reality of sin, if we judge him from the Christian standpoint, he had no doubt about the sinfulness of mankind, and indeed of Israel taken as a whole. His diminishing of the sin of certain individuals is almost in full measure compensated for by his much greater feeling for the reality of corporate sin. He knew that this world and mankind in it only existed by the mercy of God and that it was ruled and governed by His will. The story of R. Johanan b. Zakkai's death-bed (*Ber. 28b*) may have few parallels in Rabbinic literature, but his words are worthy of the Pharisee at his best: ". . . but now, when I am being led into the presence of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who lives and endures for all eternity, whose anger, if He be wrathful against me, is eternal, whose imprisonment, if He imprisoned me, would be everlasting, whose sentence, if He condemned me to death, would be for ever, and whom I cannot appease with words or bribe with money—nay, more, when before me lie two ways, one towards the Garden of Eden and the other towards Gehinnom, and I know not towards which I am to be led—shall I not weep?" (for complete text see Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, p. 478).

With all his recognition of his dependence on the power and mercy of God, the Pharisee yet carved out his sphere of autonomy. He believed that when the fear of the Lord was there and the right intention, the religious man had his autonomy in the keeping of the Law. By giving the Torah at Sinai God had yielded up something of His own authority. The knowledge of good and evil was now man's, provided he was willing to accept it and pay the heavy price for knowing it. From now on man knew God's will, the principles of action that gave life. If he followed them he was bound to experience the grace of God.

This autonomy did not deprive God of His prerogative of mercy, as the following extract shows: "'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious' (Ex. 33: 19). In that hour God showed Moses all the treasuries of the rewards which are prepared for the righteous. Moses said, 'For whom is *this* treasury?' And God said, 'For him who fulfils the commandments.' 'And for whom is *that* treasury?' 'For him who brings up orphans.' And so God told him about each treasury. Finally, Moses spied a big treasury and said, 'For whom is *that*?' And God said, 'To him who has nothing I give from *this* treasury'; as it is said, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I

will show mercy ' ' ( *A Rabbinic Anthology*, p. 224). Let us repeat: for the Pharisee man was dependent on the grace of God; the giving of the Law was an act of the grace of God; *but* this very grace had made it possible for certain men to be autonomous. They were able to do the will of God apart from the grace of God and were able to claim His grace as a right.

It may seem that the reduction of the sphere of autonomy to such small limits robs it of sufficient importance to justify Christ's language about the Pharisees. But Pharisaic principles are in direct contradiction to Christ's statement: " This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent " (John 6: 29). It is not the area over which man is in rebellion that matters, but the fact that he is in rebellion. The smaller the area of rebellion, the easier it is for man to deceive himself about his standing before God.

Christianity has developed exactly the same attitude among very many of its members. There can be no doubt that one of the commonest popular errors in the Church is that once a man has become a Christian—however this is interpreted—he then keeps the favour of God by the keeping of a certain code of conduct and of certain ecclesiastical rules and regulations, far easier to observe, be it said, than the code of the Pharisees.

Far more subtle and far-reaching in its effects is the belief that in Christ Jesus God set the pinnacle of Himself to accept which means salvation. It is indifferent whether that revelation is conceived to be contained solely in the Bible, or whether it is equated with the opinions of some theological expounder of Holy Scripture, or even whether it is considered that this revelation has been authoritatively developed and interpreted in some church. It is held that salvation or damnation depend on a man's mental reaction to this revelation, and that should the need arise man may take on himself the prerogative of Divine judgment and decide whether a man is saved or damned.

God has revealed Himself to man solely that man might have fellowship with Him, and this fellowship is salvation. Though a certain type of behaviour must perforce accompany such fellowship, it does not create it. Though a certain intellectual knowledge of God is inseparable from this fellowship, yet it can be held without the fellowship; and indeed the knowledge that springs from fellowship may express itself in ways that those without fellowship consider heretical. In this fellowship God is always giving Himself in grace; no man can say " I have God " or " I can have fellowship, when I please." The very basis of the fellowship is the renunciation of autonomy. The knowledge of good and evil has become an experience worked out in the daily experience of life, not a knowledge imparted once and for all.

Whenever the Christian would carve out for himself an area of autonomy however small, whenever he knows in advance what he should do or what he should believe, in that moment he stands on the same ground as the Pharisee. Whenever he thinks that he has in some way, however small, acquired any merit before God, in any way deserved His thanks and His rewards, the condemnation of the Pharisee is his condemnation. Whenever he sees in actions and habits that can be done and developed by human will signs of holiness, then there is nothing to distinguish him from

the Pharisee in the parable, except that the Pharisee was more excusable.

So then we can only justify the words of Christ about the Pharisees, if we are willing to apply them to ourselves as well, and to see depicted in them not merely a Jewish sect but any respectable Christian, if he succumbs to the temptation that he is most prone to. Perhaps it is just because the descendants of the Pharisees saw too much second-rate Pharisaism in the Church that they were all too often not drawn to Jesus the Messiah, the Lord of the Church.

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WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

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**THE CAUSES OF MODERN UNBELIEF**

By

Rev. A. GARFIELD CURNOW

*(Langhorne Orchard Prize Essay, 1952)*

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

21 LOWER BELGRAVE STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1

# THE CAUSES OF MODERN UNBELIEF

By Rev. A. GARFIELD CURNOW

## SYNOPSIS

The causes of modern unbelief may be grouped under three heads.

(I) *The Uncultivated Mind.* Reaction against reason in our day. Seen not only in the uneducated but also in the "intelligentsia." References to religion in books often uninformed.

The naïve assumption of the adequacy of science to pronounce on matters outside its province. Psychology particularly open to criticism in this connection.

(II) *The Defective Perception.* Thomas Hardy's reaction to the War of 1914.

The sundering (a) of the "liberal" values from their roots in religion; (b) of religion from its roots in revelation.

The attempts to discredit religion (a) because of its lowly beginnings; (b) because of man's insignificance in the universe.

The obsession in material interest which marks our day, and the false humanism based on it.

(III) *The Undisciplined Will.* There is sometimes a moral reason for unbelief. The deepest causes of contemporary degeneration lie not in man's environment but in his own nature, and especially in his will.

Unbelief as a shelter from some moral challenge. Intellectual difficulties often "rationalizations." The place of intellect in Christianity not primary. The main appeal of Jesus was to the will.

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**I**N the modern world, it has been said, "everything tends to be dragged down to the level at which it is intellectually understandable or emotionally satisfying to the man who has neither purified his perceptions, disciplined his will, nor cultivated his mind."<sup>1</sup> There is all too much truth in this statement; but, without necessarily taking it at its face value, it suggests a convenient three-fold division of our subject. The causes of modern unbelief, looking at them from the standpoint of the unbeliever, and changing the order of the quotation, may be said to be (1) the uncultivated mind, (2) the impure (perhaps "defective" would be a more suitable word) perception, and (3) the undisciplined will.

Needless to say, such a division is by no means exhaustive. Many causes of modern unbelief will fall outside its ambit. But as some limitation of our subject is inevitable—for a full treatment of it would require a treatise rather than a brief paper—the division proposed, with due acknowledgment of its inadequacy, may serve as a not altogether misleading framework for this essay.

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Hyde, *The Prospects of Humanism*, 16.

## I. THE UNCULTIVATED MIND

(1) "We often hear," writes Dean Matthews, "that Christian faith is out of harmony with modern thought, but it would be equally true to say that it is out of harmony with the lack of modern thought."<sup>1</sup> The "lack of modern thought," much more than "modern thought," is a prime cause of the indifference to religion which marks our day. Every now and again we find ourselves confronting some startling manifestation of it. When, for instance, we read in a recent book that "it is reported that one of the world's best-known air-transport companies demands from its pilots, in addition to the usual tests and examinations, the production of a horoscope,"<sup>2</sup> we can but regard it as a deplorable illustration of the reaction against reason, and the consequent growth of superstition, which is infecting modern life. A hundred years ago Kierkegaard, in an unfortunate phrase, asserted that "the crucifixion of intelligence is the condition for entrance into the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup> Nowadays it would seem that the crucifixion of intelligence, or something very like it—the stultification of intelligence, at any rate—is a chief means of keeping people outside the kingdom of God.

One of our periodicals recently gave a classification of English Sunday newspapers into "clean Sunday newspapers" and "papers of shame."<sup>4</sup> The circulation of the former was said to be about 6 million, that of the latter over 22 million. From which it would seem that the less desirable of our Sunday papers, reckoning two readers to each copy, are read by practically the entire population of the country. This throws a lurid light on the mentality of the populace. If the sort of pabulum served up in these prints represents the chosen week-end reading of the bulk of the people, if it indicates their mental attainment and their general outlook on life, then we cannot wonder that there is so little interest in spiritual concerns in general, and in Christianity in particular. The unbelief which marks our day is very largely an outcome of unintelligence.

(2) But it is not only a matter of the unintelligence of the mass of the people; we have also to take into consideration the unintelligence of the "intelligentsia." Here let us adduce another popular form of present-day reading: the novel. Most modern novels by-pass religion altogether, as if it is not even to be considered as a feature of modern life. And of those who do refer to it, what do we find? "Few of our high-brow novelists . . . can leave religion alone, but their references to it are often quite pitiful in their crudity. . . . Many men criticize and even oppose Christianity without ever having taken much trouble to discover what it is all about. . . . It is remarkable what nonsense is spoken about it even by men of the highest distinction in departmental fields of knowledge."<sup>5</sup> "Nonsense" is not too strong a word. Some of these writers, it has been

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, February 23, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> G. S. Spinks (ed.), *Religion in Britain since 1900*, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by J. K. Mozley, *Some Tendencies in British Theology*, 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Graphic*, June 7, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> John Baillie, *Invitation to Pilgrimage*, 13.

said, seem to have derived their knowledge of theology from their washerwoman; and it would be still nearer the mark to say that the source was their washerwoman's grandmother. Bishop Gore puts this point forcibly but with restraint: "It is . . . much to be lamented that those who stand out in current literature as the critics and repudiators of the Christian tradition, so often appear to have confined their study of Christianity to the theology of a hundred years ago. . . . This is a criticism which applies to really distinguished men. They exhibit an ignorance of Christian thought at its best, whether ancient or modern, the like of which in the treatment of science would expose a theologian to well-merited ignominy."<sup>1</sup>

This "ignorance of Christian thought at its best" on the part of those who have no excuse for such ignorance, and who are regarded as authorities by the undiscerning readers of their books, results in the acceptance of superseded aspects and antiquated categories of religion as still valid. "Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale," says one writer, with genial grimness, "have established themselves in the memories of hundreds as the symbols of a religion they have never been taught to think out, and of a faith they have never been encouraged to explore."<sup>2</sup> More serious evidences of the same tendency come readily to mind. Quite a few novels take for granted that the doctrine of hell-fire, in its crudest form, is still proclaimed from a large number if not from the majority of the pulpits of this country. Again, the article of the Apostles' Creed concerning "the resurrection of the body" is frequently interpreted with a complete lack of understanding of what it really means. This lamentable absence of acquaintance with modern Christian theology, as represented by its sanest and best-equipped exponents, is reflected in much modern unbelief, which is really a healthy reaction against a spurious presentation of Christianity—the contemptuous rejection of a counterfeit without any recognition that anything better than the counterfeit exists.

(3) The uncultivated mind, as a cause of unbelief, may also be seen in the naïve assumption of the adequacy of science to pronounce on matters altogether outside its province. We live, as we are often reminded, in a scientific age, but one feature of it is the thoroughly unscientific belief in the infallibility of science not only in its own proper domain but also in all others. "There is a popular fallacy that an expert in one realm must be listened to with reverence on all subjects. But the fact is that a great physicist is not by his scientific eminence thereby qualified to talk wisely on politics or literature or religion; rather, so far as *a priori* considerations are concerned, he is thereby disqualified."<sup>3</sup>

An interesting and indeed piquant recognition of this truth may be quoted from one of the great scientists of the nineteenth century. Tyndall once animadverted on the illustrious Newton's incursion into certain theological themes. The opinions Newton expressed were favourable to religion. But, urged Tyndall, "the very devotion of his powers, through all the best years of his life, to a totally different class of ideas . . . tended

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of the Good Life*, 269 (Everyman Ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Fosdick, *Meaning of Faith*, 163.

rather to render him less instead of more competent to deal with theological and historic questions."<sup>1</sup> Exactly, and the fact that Newton's views were favourable to religion of course does not affect the point at issue, which is that engrossment in science tends to rob a man of competence in fields other than his own. If Newton's views had been of an opposite character from what they were, Tyndall's criticism would have been equally valid—though one may surmise, in passing, that Tyndall could hardly have realized this, or he would have seen that when he himself expressed views unfavourable to religion, as he sometimes did, he was hoist with his own petard.

The disqualification of the expert outside his own field arises from the fact that the tendency of scientific specialization is to shut out the appreciation of life's other values. The expert reaches his eminence by denying himself an all-round culture. The consequence is that, however valuable the judgment of specialists may be on their own specialities, their judgments on anything beside are "much less valuable even than ordinary men's."<sup>2</sup> But those judgments are accepted as trustworthy by the uncultivated mind of the general reader, often to the undermining of confidence in the spiritual foundation of the universe.

(4) The modern science of Psychology, even more than the various branches of physical science, lays itself open to criticism in this connection. Many psychologists freely assert that whatever is not substantiated by their methods does not exist, is not true. The average individual is all too prone to regard these omniscient assertions as justified by the facts of the case. He does not remember, indeed is not aware, that many of the psychological explanations of religious phenomena are no better than hypotheses—some of them quite fantastic, all of them tentative; and that in no field of thought is the habit of a rapid hardening of an hypothesis into a theory, and of a theory into an assumption, more frequent. Still less is he aware that many things are attested as real and true on other planes, through other activities of our personal equipment. Above all, he does not discern the fallacy lurking in the contention—a common one on the part of psychologists—that all reasoning in defence of Christianity is merely an *a posteriori* attempt to justify by argument opinions dictated by irrational likes and dislikes which lie hidden in our subconsciousness. The fallacy is that all theories based on the irrationality of mental processes destroy themselves. "A brilliant young psychologist," writes a popular but well-informed Christian apologist, "spent some time demonstrating to me the necessarily irrational nature of all my beliefs. He said they . . . were merely the result of purely irrational desires and repulsions in the subconscious. . . . I asked him if the same was true of his psychological theories; were they also irrational outcrops from the subconscious; and, if not, why not? He had, of course, no answer. He had already successfully destroyed the basis of all rational discussion."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, II, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Fosdick, *op. cit.*, 164.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Green, *I Believe in God*, 35.

But all this is far from being realized by the untrained and unreflecting reader of certain varieties of psychological treatises, and the outcome is that he comes to think that psychology has demonstrated that there is no objective reality in religious experience, and tends to abandon his religious beliefs as not only explained but explained away.

It is over fifty years since the late Lord Balfour published his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, in which he formulates and develops a protest against "the principle that everything which cannot be proved by scientific means is incapable of proof, and that everything inconsistent with science is thereby disproved."<sup>1</sup> Modern science in all its branches, and Psychology in particular, would do well to bear this protest in mind, for it is as relevant to-day as when it was written.

## II. THE DEFECTIVE PERCEPTION

(1) In the biography of Thomas Hardy reference is made to the effect of the war of 1914 on his mind and outlook. "The war destroyed all Hardy's belief in the gradual ennoblement of man, a belief he had held for many years. . . . Moreover, the war gave the *coup de grâce* to any conception he may have nourished of a fundamental ultimate wisdom at the back of things."<sup>2</sup> With all respect for one so eminent in literature, and so distinguished in character, as the great novelist, it must be said that if such was his reaction to the war, and such its result upon him, it shows that he was gravely defective in historical perception.

An instance of another and entirely different reaction to the same catastrophe will make plain the point at issue. It is quoted from the memoir of one who died in 1918. "His sense of the burden and horror of the struggle was as great as that of any of his brethren, yet he does not seem to have been convinced that the war had added any new perplexities to faith. Probably this was due to the historical character of his mind. He knew that the world had experienced similar catastrophes before; that the records of humanity were full of cruelty, oppression, treachery, greed, and innocent suffering. He had long ago faced the difficulties which such things present to the believer in the God and Father of Jesus Christ: and he found nothing that was novel in the terrors of the latest strife. I think that he was puzzled to understand how men of historical knowledge and imagination should have their faith destroyed by being required to face in their own time such facts of human sin and anguish as they had always known to be part of the story of mankind."<sup>3</sup>

The fact is, "men of historical knowledge and imagination" would not find their faith destroyed by such happenings; and when, as in Hardy's case, faith is destroyed, the inference is obvious. An adequate philosophy of life, derived from an acquaintance with the long story of mankind, would prevent such a result. But there is no doubt that large numbers

<sup>1</sup> Blanche Dugdale, *Life of A. J. Balfour*, I, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Florence Hardy, *Later Years of Thomas Hardy*, 165.

<sup>3</sup> From a letter in *The Spectator*, January 6, 1950.

shared Hardy's feelings with reference to the conflagration of his day, and probably many more were similarly affected by the war of 1939-45. This lack of historical knowledge and imagination, this absence of historical perception and insight, is the cause of much of the unbelief of to-day. Mr. A. J. Toynbee says that "familiarity is the opiate of the imagination."<sup>1</sup> In some matters this is true; but when it comes to the light shed by history on the meaning of contemporary events, it is the lack of familiarity which is the greater danger. The withdrawal from the Churches, and the abandonment of the Church's faith, which mark our time, are based on a misunderstanding of the real significance of the tragic happenings of our day. "Reliance on power, greed for gain, suspicion, hatred, social injustice and national rivalry were the prime causes of the war. . . . The war as the outcome of forces that denied the moral supremacy of God is the greatest demonstration of that supremacy the world has ever seen."<sup>2</sup> Or, as Mr. G. K. Chesterton expressed it, in a characteristic passage, "As for the general view that the Church was discredited by the War—they might as well say that the Ark was discredited by the Flood. When the world goes wrong, it proves rather that the Church is right."<sup>3</sup> But a considerable proportion of people, from intellectuals like Hardy to the average individual, the "man in the street," fail to perceive this, with the result that the Church is discredited in their eyes, and the doctrines of Christianity regarded with suspicion and mistrust.

(2) Another form of defective perception which is a fruitful cause of unbelief is indicated by Prof. Basil Willey: "We seem to discern now that the old 'liberal' values—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the Rights of Man, tolerance, reverence for each individual as an end and not a means—can only flourish if they are rooted in the religion from which they originally sprang."<sup>4</sup> For several generations past the view has been held by large numbers that these values have no necessary connection with religion. Indeed, many have urged that, for their strengthening, they should be divorced from religion. That divorce has been largely accomplished, and the result is that nowadays, when these values are being invoked against the threat of pagan totalitarianism, their evident weakness is giving alarm to all men of goodwill who have the welfare of the world at heart. But the weakness lies not in the values themselves but in the fact that they are uprooted. They have withered because they have been cut off from their parent stock.

How this situation is to be faced, and the problem thus presented solved, would take us too far from the theme of this essay. We are only concerned to point out that this decay of long-cherished ideals, decay which arises because of their separation from their roots in Christianity, is by the imperceptive and unreflecting regarded as a reason for impugning, not the separation, but Christianity itself.

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization on Trial*, 62.

<sup>2</sup> John Kennedy, *The God Whom we Ignore*, 84.

<sup>3</sup> *The Everlasting Man*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Nineteenth-Century Studies*, 131.

(3) Another and more drastic "separation from roots" may here be mentioned. It is the suggestion, generally associated in our day with the name of Mr Julian Huxley, that religion itself should be cut off from its roots in revelation. In his *Religion without Revelation* Mr Huxley declares that he is intensely convinced of the value of religion, and wants to save it for men. But what he means by religion is "the sense of sacredness,"<sup>1</sup> and "the art of spiritual health."<sup>2</sup> It has no reference to a personal God. Neither has worship, which he understands as "an opportunity for a communal proclaiming of belief in certain spiritual values."<sup>3</sup> He denies that in worship we are worshipping anybody; in fact he appears to deny that there is such a thing as a personal being outside humanity. Certainly he denies the existence of a personal God. It follows then that Mr Huxley cannot believe in revelation in any Christian or theistic sense of the word, and he is quite sure that religion would be strengthened and made more effective if the idea of revelation were eliminated from it.

But if religion is cut off from the idea of a personal God who reveals Himself to man, what is left is so vague and abstract and subjective that its hold on the mind of man will be of brief tenure. Revelation, understood not as the dictation of writings nor as the communication of information, but as the self-disclosure of a personal God, is the very foundation of anything worth calling religion. And not only is the fact of revelation basic and essential, but also the belief that in revelation "God takes the initiative," that "all knowledge of God starts with His will to reveal,"<sup>4</sup> or, in still more emphatic words, that "God is for ever unknown and unknowable except so far as He reveals Himself."<sup>5</sup>

To base the claims of religion on its working value, personal and social, as Mr Huxley does, and to say that it should be maintained for its practical utility, is futile. Religion would soon lose its working value if men came to know or to suspect that it is entirely subjective. If God is regarded as only a convenient fiction, the projection of the father-complex or of man's ideal self, the fantasy-embodiment of his unconscious motives, desires, and aims, the idea will not long hold its ground in the mind. Men would inevitably and rightly say, to quote a sentence of Eddington's, "We do not want a religion that deceives us for our own good."<sup>6</sup>

It would be difficult to say with certainty how far Mr Huxley's ideas have influenced modern thinking. His book, which was keenly discussed on its appearance twenty-five years ago, is not often referred to at present, and does not seem to have won for itself a permanent place in the history of thought on its great theme. But quite likely it has counted for more than might appear from its present neglect. Its author's literary and scientific eminence, his obvious sincerity, and also, it may be, memories

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Dodd, *Authority of the Bible*, 271.

<sup>5</sup> Wm. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, 300.

<sup>6</sup> I cannot specify the book of Eddington's in which this occurs.

of the controversies in which his celebrated grandfather was engaged, won for his theory an attention which it would not otherwise have received, and which on its merits it does not deserve; and probably have resulted in not a little modern unbelief. Certainly the denial of a personal God is a common feature of the life and thought of our day, and Mr Huxley may be to some extent, perhaps largely, accountable for it.

(4) A third variety of defective perception is what Mr Edwyn Bevan describes as "anthropological intimidation." By this portentous phrase he means the attempt to refute theism by displaying the continuity of the belief in God with primitive delusion. The argument is that the noble conception of Deity gradually arrived at in the course of human thought is discredited because it can be traced back to lowly beginnings in animism and fetishism and the like.

It is an absurd contention. As well say that the modern custom of putting flowers on a grave is discredited because it is traceable to primitive endeavours to placate the spirits of the departed. Indeed, as well say that an oak is discredited because it was once an acorn, or Shakespeare because he started as an embryo. However interesting or valuable a knowledge of origins may be, it is a complete mistake, and a source of infinite confusion, to estimate a doctrine or anything else from its beginnings. It must be estimated, if we are to learn the truth about it, in accordance with the principle of Aristotle's great saying: "The nature of a thing is that which it is when its becoming is completed." But this indefensible and indeed ridiculous habit of looking for the explanation of things in their origins is a snare and a delusion to many to-day, and accounts for much modern unbelief.

(5) Another sort of "intimidation," and one much more frequently met with, demands a larger share of our attention—the astronomical variety. Man's insignificance in the universe is used as a cudgel to browbeat him. We are accustomed to pathetic pictures of the contemptibly puny figure he presents against the background of "the intolerable vastness of the awful homeless spaces." In former ages, when the earth was thought to be the centre of the universe, it was natural and easy for man to believe in a God who cared for His human children. But now, when we know the earth to be but a negligible member of a universe which is itself a negligible member of an infinitude of other universes, it is absurd to imagine that the great Creator of all that is can enter into personal relations with the denizens of this midjet planet.

Here again is a case of defective perception. For the truth of the matter is that man's feeling of insignificance as he contemplates the frightening immensity of the universes scattered through space is really an evidence of his greatness, for it is *his mind* that has conceived that immensity. "Astronomically speaking," an American materialist once said, "man is a pigmy—a speck of dust upon a speck of dust." To which a fellow countryman replied: "Astronomically speaking, man is the astronomer." It was not only a smart but a conclusive answer. "The insignificance of our midjet planet among the '1500 universes' of Herschel is not so striking

as the fact that a mere speck upon our midget planet was able thus to survey and co-ordinate the whole in an intelligible scheme.”<sup>1</sup> “The outward littleness of the lives of men is only demonstrated . . . by the magnitude of man’s own intellectual vision.”<sup>2</sup> If mental and spiritual values are the real values, all considerations of bulk are irrelevant, and astronomical intimidation a mere bogey. But this is not perceived by the great majority of those who are overwhelmed by the thought of the vast distances of boundless space, and here is a common cause of the abandonment of Christian belief in our day.

(6) Perhaps the most serious and the most widespread instance of defective perception in our time is that, as Mr. Christopher Dawson says, “we have come to take it for granted that the unifying force in society is material interest.”<sup>3</sup> Not only so, material interest is about the only allegiance to which humanity as a whole gives its devotion nowadays. What we see in the Soviet Union is to be seen, in principle, all over the world, even in countries farthest removed from Russia in form of government and political emphasis. Marxists, nationalists and humanitarians all seem to agree, though of course with important differences of interpretation and method, in the general view that the world problem is an economic one and can only be solved on economic lines.

How this view has arisen it is easy to see. The control which man has won over the forces of nature during the last hundred years, and particularly during the last fifty, has resulted in a new consciousness of power which has convinced our generation that human destiny is in human hands. “Man is the master of things.” He is uncomfortably aware that his new mastery is fraught with many dangers, but he is sure that these dangers can only be escaped, in as far as they can be escaped, by the use of his own resources. Everything that can be done at all to bring in a better day—and of course by a better day is meant an economically better day—man can do for himself by his own knowledge and equipment. “Here is the great reason why traditional piety and belief in God make so little appeal to the modern world. Salvation must lie in some political or economic gospel. . . . It is this new Titanism of man which has thrust God out of mind and blinded our eyes to the ultimate ends and issues of human living.”<sup>4</sup>

This “Titanism” is not the only cause of the dismissal of God from the minds of men, and of the darkening of their spiritual vision, but the writer just quoted is probably right in seeing in it “the great reason” why the principles of Christianity are out of favour in our day. This false and perilous humanism is almost certainly the major problem of the age, and the greatest menace that confronts us. Unless mankind can somehow be brought to see that its obsession in material interest is a fundamental blunder of the most serious magnitude, fraught with calamitous consequences, the future of the race is dark and ominous.

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Noyes, *The Unknown God*, 227.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Progress and Religion*, 249.

<sup>4</sup> Quick, *Doctrines of the Creed*, 21.

But this essay is an enquiry into causes and not a discussion of remedies. Suffice it to say that this distorted view of man's essential nature, this conviction of the adequacy of economic well-being to meet all his needs, is one of the chief reasons why the central doctrines of religion are losing their appeal to the human mind.

### III. THE UNDISCIPLINED WILL

(1) The old "faculty psychology" divided the non-material part of man's nature into intellect, emotion, and will—his cognitive, aesthetic, and volitional faculties, his capacities of knowing, feeling, and willing. Nowadays the accepted view is of the unity of his being. It is the one personality that knows, feels, and wills. Certainly the older idea, which tended to regard man's personality as made up of separate departments, marked off from one another, was too sharply divisive. "We must not fall into the common error of regarding thought, desire, and will as really separable. . . . They are three faculties or functions of one individual, and, though logically separable, interpenetrate each other, and are always more or less united in operation."<sup>1</sup> All the same, and so long as we bear in mind their mutual interaction, it is convenient for purposes of study to regard them as distinct entities.

Which of them then is mainly operative in the matter of belief and unbelief? "Which of our faculties," asks Dr Inge, "is the chosen organ of Faith? Is it the will, or the intellect, or that specialized feeling which creates aesthetic judgments?"<sup>2</sup> Dr Inge's answer is that the understanding and the emotion and the will "are all instruments of living," and that we must be chary of saying that either of them is "the most efficient of the three."<sup>3</sup> But while this is so, and we must not make belief and unbelief exclusively an act of the will, that is of the moral sense, the facts of experience go to show that the part played by the will is vital if not crucial. While we must not regard belief as simply and solely a matter of choice, the other two faculties are dependent on the decision of the will for their effective operation. The world, says William James, "puts all sorts of questions to us, and tests us in all sorts of ways. Some of the tests we meet by actions that are easy, and some of the questions we answer in articulately formulated words. But the deepest question that is ever asked admits of no reply but the dumb turning of the will and tightening of our heart-strings as we say, 'Yes, I will even have it so!'"<sup>4</sup>

(2) It follows from this that there may sometimes be a moral reason for unbelief. This is a contention which must be used with great caution, or it degenerates into a reprehensible form of the *argumentum ad hominem*. The history of the word "miscreant" is a warning in this connection. Originally denoting (as by etymology it signifies) a misbeliever, nowadays it means a villain, a scoundrel, without any reference to his belief or un-

<sup>1</sup> Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Faith and its Psychology*, 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>4</sup> *Text Book of Psychology*, 459.

belief. But in the middle ages it was held that a misbeliever was *ipso facto* a scoundrel. It would be impossible to hold such a view to-day. The facts of experience—the number of “misbelievers” of high character and noble life—would make such a suggestion even more ludicrous than shocking. But all the same there can be no doubt that in some cases, however reluctant we may be (and ought to be) in bringing this indictment against specific individuals, the cause of unbelief is some inward unsatisfactoriness rather than any of the external conditions of life. And when we look within for the causative factor it is found, not infrequently, in neither of those we have been considering—neither in an uncultivated mind nor in a defective perception—but in some fault of character, in some perversion of will.

Of course all due allowance must be made for the influence of the external conditions of life in the shaping of our beliefs and disbeliefs. The *Zeitgeist* has a profound effect upon us, especially in an age like ours. We must recognize that there is something in the very atmosphere of our day which is inimical to spiritual insight and spiritual endeavour. One writer refers to the “vague sense of the meaninglessness and emptiness of existence which underlies . . . so much of contemporary life. There is to be observed everywhere . . . a baffled and frustrated sense of the futility of human life.”<sup>1</sup> The truth of this must be granted; and this sense of the futility of life, the feeling that

Though kingdoms and apples may ripen and fall,  
There's nothing that matters, no, nothing at all,

has a deplorable effect on all that is highest and best in human life. It is but common fairness to admit that “contemporary life with its ceaseless movement and excitement, its concentration on what is external and increasing absorption in the mechanical, conspires to quench any vivid recognition of the spiritual aspects in our experience.”<sup>2</sup>

But when the writer just quoted affirms that “the deepest causes of the lost loyalty to the Christian religion in Western Europe should . . . be looked for in the changed conditions of modern life and the new forms assumed by the social order,”<sup>3</sup> we must demur. These changed conditions and new forms are certainly some of the causes of the spiritual degeneration of our day, but hardly the deepest causes. The deepest causes are to be found, in our age as in all ages, within the nature of man, and not in his environment. External conditions may influence but do not determine our conclusions on the great issues of life, or even our reaction to the external conditions themselves. The greatest of all authorities declared that defilement proceeds from within, “out of the heart,” and the same supreme teacher affirmed by his whole emphasis that the things that uplift and ennoble proceed from the same inward source, the fount of good and evil alike. The external powers that play upon us, whether “the contagion of the world's slow stain” on the one hand, or the grace of God on the other, are not effective in our lives apart from our co-operation. The decision of a man's own soul, the assent of his personality, the casting

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Farmer, *The World and God*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of Christianity*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

vote of his will—this is an indispensable factor. The Man of Nazareth's teaching that it was by "the power of God," "the finger of God," "the will of God," that healing of soul and body was brought about, did not detract from his reiterated declaration that "your own faith has saved you," and his characteristic enquiry, "Will thou be made whole?"

(3) To put the same truth in another way, the dividing line between people is not whether they are believers or unbelievers, for in a real sense we are all of us both. Faith and unfaith co-exist in everybody. In every life there are some things most surely believed, and others concerning which we are unconvinced, uncertain, agnostic. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" is the cry of every honest heart. The dividing line between people is whether we stress our belief or our unbelief, whether we identify ourselves with the one or the other, whether we come down on this side of the fence or that, whether we throw the weight of our personal choice and allegiance here or there, whether we make the one or the other our rule of life. "The *φρόνημα* of a man—the selection of thoughts he cultivates—is the most characteristic produce of his will."<sup>1</sup>

And so it comes about that an ill-disciplined will, a perverted will, must undoubtedly be included among the many causes of unbelief. In the words of one who has had a long pastoral experience, "We can find reasons and reasons why Christianity cannot be true, if we are looking for them. But they are generally shelters from some moral challenge."<sup>2</sup> Not "generally", perhaps; at any rate we will not press the word. But certainly "sometimes," and, it may be, "often."

We have in mind people who will argue at any length on questions of theology, problems of Providence and social injustice and so on, because they will not face what they know to be the real problem, the problem of their own soul. They drag out ancient conundrums which have been used for ages by those who want to avoid the challenge of the highest, and dodge the pursuit of the Spirit of God. They invent convenient "rationalizations"—plausible but illusory reasons for conduct or beliefs which are really motivated in quite other ways—for the opinions they advance or the positions they maintain.

For instance, a man says the reason he is not a Christian is that he has difficulties about the Virgin Birth, or the Atonement, or the Resurrection, or certain statements in the Creed, or Free Will, or the problem of pain, or economic inequalities, or the number of sects unto which the Church is split up. And we are far from saying that these things do not honestly bother thinking people, for they most certainly do. But in the cases we have in mind they are put forward as shelters from some moral challenge, smoke-screens against the searching light of conscience, camouflage to conceal the real state of affairs, dug-outs for hiding from God.

The real problem, again and again, is none of these things, but rather—something which has got between us and God; some wrong done to another which we will not confess, or some wrong done to ourselves which we will not forgive; some inward resentment, or hidden jealousy, or secret ani-

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, I, 162.

<sup>2</sup> Dr James Reid, *The Springs of Life*, 208.

mosity; some self-indulgence we will not relinquish, or some self-denial we will not accept. In a word, it is a question of *will*.

An eminent theologian of our day, in a candid and moving personal confession, asks and answers the question—which, as he says, every man must answer for himself, and which can be answered only by a very honest self-examination—whether “such doubts as I have had about God have had what would usually be called a moral root. Is it because I did not relish God’s commandments that I was tempted to deny His being?” After pointing out that “it has been convincingly demonstrated to us that our thinking, even when appearing to be quite straightforward, is determined by our desires in far larger measure than we had previously been in the habit of supposing,” he continues: “Must I then say that my own doubts were of this kind? I fear they were, in very real degree. Part of the reason why I could not find God was that there is that in God which I did not wish to find. Part of the reason why I could not (or thought I could not) hear Him speak was that He was saying some things to me which I did not wish to hear. There was a side of the divine reality which was unwelcome to me, and some divine commandments the obligatoriness of which I was most loath to acknowledge. And the reason why I was loath to acknowledge them was that I found them too disquieting and upsetting, involving for their proper obedience a degree of courage and self-denial and a resolute re-orientation of outlook and revision of programme such as I was not altogether prepared to face.”<sup>1</sup>

(4) This factor cannot be ignored in any consideration of the causes of unbelief. Intellectual difficulties concerning the Christian way of life are often the belated “rationalization” of conclusions to which we have already been led by our desires—that is, by the wrong functioning of our will. The place of the intellect in Christianity, however important or indispensable, is not primary. Christianity is an adventure of friendship, and not an intellectual enquiry or an intellectual conviction. Like friendship, it is capable of being intellectually formulated, up to a point at any rate, but primarily it is an experiment in living to be tried. And that experiment cannot even be begun apart from a decision and an effort of will.

The writer of *Ecce Homo* defines faith as “an overflowing attraction towards greatness and goodness, felt in the soul, responded to by the will, and acted upon in the life.”<sup>2</sup> The middle term in this definition is all-important. However much an overflowing attraction towards greatness and goodness may be felt in the soul, it cannot be acted upon in the life until it has been responded to by the will.

It is noticeable and significant that the main appeal of Jesus was to man’s will, and if that appeal is refused, or unheard; if the high meaning of life is rejected, and those great convictions which ennoble human living have no place in a man’s interest or attention, we have not canvassed all the possible explanations unless our enquiry includes the condition of the will, the state of a man’s own soul.

<sup>1</sup> Dr John Baillie, *Our Knowledge of God*, 54–56.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. R. Seeley, *Ecce Homo*, chap. 20 (1908 ed., p. 273).

(5) "I stand," says King Magnus in Mr Bernard Shaw's *Apple Cart*, "for the great abstractions; for conscience and virtue; for the eternal against the expedient; for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony; for intellectual integrity, for humanity, for the rescue of industry from commercialism and of science from professionalism." It may be that "great abstractions" have no compelling appeal to the average individual, but the abstractions in this impressive list are not *mere* abstractions—they are practical realities; and it is significant that the list begins with conscience, the organ and expression of the will. What a man "stands for" is to be traced back, perhaps more than is generally realized, certainly more than many an individual realizes, to that point.

An even more impressive list than Mr Shaw's, written from the same standpoint, is quoted by Mr Charles Morgan from Henry James, who said the things Robert Browning stood for were these: "The fascination of faith, the acceptance of life, the respect for its mysteries, the endurance of its changes, the vitality of the will, the validity of character."<sup>1</sup> Here the list, unlike the former, is obviously in an ascending scale of value, the most important clauses, where all are important, being the last two. Will and character are the supreme factors in deciding the things a man stands for, in determining his belief or unbelief.

A third list, and a more adequate one than either of the other two, is given us by one of the greatest teachers of the last fifty years. In it he tells us what, in his view, Christianity really means. "A certain view of the world, a certain way of meeting its calamities, a certain course of meeting its perplexities, a certain kind of valuation of its good and its evil, a certain attitude of forbearance and forgiveness, in short, a certain way of being conquerors over life's ills and antagonisms."<sup>2</sup> Writ large all over this passage we may discern the truth which the whole of life illustrates and enforces: the importance of a disciplined will. When the Christian view of the world is rejected, and the Christian way of life is declined, we have all too much reason for suspecting that the cause may lie, even more than in the intellect or the emotions, in the will.

<sup>1</sup> *Reflections in a Mirror*, 127.

<sup>2</sup> John Oman, *Paradox of the World*, 81.

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AT

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ON

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**THE BEARING OF RECENT DEVELOP-  
MENTS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS ON THE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION**

By

H. J. S. GUNTRIP, B.A., B.D.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

21 LOWER BELGRAVE STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1

# THE BEARING OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

By H. J. S. GUNTRIP, B.A., B.D.

## SYNOPSIS

1. *The Limitations of Science.* The psychology of religion, like all science, yields the kind of knowledge gained from detached investigation of experience. Religion gives the kind of knowledge gained from immediate living experience.

2. *Freud's Analysis of Religion* did not go beyond a destructive study of its neurotic forms, which has a practical value. It is rather his psychological instinct theory of man which needs to be challenged, for it is a sub-personal theory which leaves the cultural life with no ultimate intrinsic value.

3. *Neo-Freudian "Object-Relations" theory* (Klein and Fairbairn) restores the "person" and "personal relations" to the central place for psychology, and has far-reaching implications, especially in Fairbairn's work.

4. *Motivation.* Libido is not pleasure-seeking but object-seeking. Sex is only one among other (including cultural) pathways to good-object relations.

5. *Psychotherapy.* Since bad-object relations make people ill, it is good-object relations which must cure them. This approach links psychotherapy with religion.

6. *Science and Religion.* Science is a schizoid activity detached from immediate emotional living. It destroys values and symbols and dehumanizes life, in return for giving us useful knowledge about things. Unanalysed symbolic activity is necessary for mental health and for creative and productive living. This points us back from science to the need for religion.

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1. We find little difficulty to-day in accepting the view that there is nothing that science cannot study. It is not so generally recognized that there is nothing about which science can tell us *all* we want to know. The danger of confused thinking on the matter is not unconnected with the tendency to hypostatize Science, dignify it with a capital "S" and regard it as a mysteriously potent "thing-in-itself," the modern substitute for the deity and the new Saviour of mankind. This earlier tendency to personify and deify Science is perhaps intellectually, but not yet emotionally, on the wane. It still finds a stronghold in the minds of some political ideologists who believe it is possible to plan and run both the state and the individual on efficient and purely scientific lines, and make and remake human nature at will by scientific procedures. There are also

those who believe that "mind" and "person" are unnecessary hypotheses, and that the mechanism of the brain as revealed by Cybernetics on the analogy of the electronic calculating machine will explain and give us power to control all things.

Such modes of thinking surely lose their force the moment we remember that science is nothing but our own human selves making a certain kind of approach to phenomena, examining selected aspects of our experience of reality from a limited and basically utilitarian, practical point of view. *Scientific study therefore will only find the kind of thing it looks for, and rightly ignores all else as a distraction from its own proper purpose.* It is a pity if we should then forget the limited scope of scientific enquiry, and mistake the part for the whole.

There are many ways of expressing the fact that there are two ways of knowing and two sorts of knowledge. There is a knowledge of sherry to be gained from drinking it that is different from chemically analysing it. There is a knowledge of another human being to be gained by falling in love which is different from that of physiological and psychological analysis. There is a knowledge of God to be gained from having a religious experience which is different from that gained by theological, philosophical, and psychological investigation. *There is a knowledge contained in immediate living experience which is different from that of detached intellectual investigation.* It may be called the difference between intrinsic and utilitarian knowledge, for it is the difference between knowing something as an end in itself, and knowing something as a means to further ends: i.e. knowing as an experience of immediate intrinsic satisfaction, and knowing in order to be able to use something for a purpose beyond itself. It is the difference between *knowledge of* and *knowledge about*.

*Science has to do with useful knowledge gained by intellectually detached study unhampered by questions of urgent emotional satisfaction. Scientific knowledge is not the knowledge that comes from living, from plunging into the basic activities and human relationships that constitute our living.* Scientific knowledge comes by standing aside from the urgencies of living, detaching ourselves from the flowing stream of life and love and lack of love, and abstracting certain aspects of reality, not to enjoy it, but only to understand it—even though later, armed with that understanding, we may be able to plunge back into the stream of life and live and enjoy living all the better for our scientific knowledge. In fact it is only at the points where satisfactory living breaks down that we feel the urge to stand back and investigate to find out why.

Thus it is with religion and the psychology of religion: perhaps first I will say with love and the psychology of love. When love is successful no one bothers to analyse it to find out what it is and how it works. But when irrational infatuations lead to ruinous marriage choices, and useful marriages degenerate into dog-fights, then we need to look into the matter in a detached scientific way to find out why.

Similarly with religion: when religion flourishes in ages of faith and provides the great mass of the people with a secure defence against anxieties and a powerful, constructive inspiration for living, no one feels much of an impulse to pull it to pieces to find out how it works. We to-day

live in an age of cultural revolution and disintegration when religious and other faiths have broken down for great masses. Into the gap step dangerous fanaticisms, and we feel impelled to investigate coolly and find out what is going on and why.

So we come to the psychology of religion, which is no more a substitute for religion than the psychology of love is a substitute for falling in love. When people cannot be religious or cannot fall in love, psychology may throw valuable light on the matter.

*The psychology of religion investigates the nature and functioning of religion as a mental experience of human beings so as to discover what needs it meets, how it meets them or fails to meet them, and by what mental processes religious experience goes on.* This is clearly a possible and legitimate study. The devout sometimes accuse the psychologist of explaining religion away. How much truth there could be in such a charge may be assessed by drawing a parallel. Would we say that the psychological study of sexual attraction and affectionate relationships would destroy the love life and make people incapable of falling in love? Such a criticism would be absurd. What I think is true is that psychological insight into the love-life may make people less liable to fall victims in blind ways to irrational infatuations, infantile dependencies and neurotic, compulsive needs for affection as a defence against gross anxiety. A psychological approach may well prove destructive to *immature* forms of the love life, but will in fact make people more capable of mature love relationships, provided we recognize that scientific understanding is a servant of, and not a substitute for, living.

I believe that is also the truth about the psychological study of religion. It will unmask immature and neurotic forms of religion, and will doubtless prove destructive to some forms of religious fanaticism, morbid emotionalism, authoritarian dogmatism or what not. But no scientific, and no psychological, investigation can undermine the reality of what is indisputably real and valid, and the psychological study of religion may be expected to increase our understanding of whatever is the religious experience of the mature and mentally healthy person, again provided we do not think that science is the only proper approach to living.

2. How then shall we approach the psychological study of religion? Academic psychology takes us some part of the way. Three excellent books, *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* by R. H. Thouless, *The Individual and His Religion* by G. W. Allport, and *The Psychology of Religion* by L. W. Grensted, give us as much as academic psychology can contribute. It is primarily of a descriptive order, and certainly aids us in gaining clear ideas of what a reasonable and healthy religion is like. But we need something more penetrative and explanatory of the dynamic processes that make up religious experience.

What then of psycho-analysis? Classic Freudianism was almost entirely destructive in its approach. Freud was more obviously hostile and emotionally biased in his handling of religion than with any other subject. Religion was infantile phantasy and illusion, the projection of an idealized (and therefore unreal) father-image on to the universe as a source of

security and protection for frightened grown-up children scared by dangers both from without and within.

Yet I cannot feel that that is the real point at which it is necessary to take issue with Freud. What he said by way of a critical psychological analysis of forms of religion as he came across them may be disturbing, but is now recognized to contain a great deal of truth. Whether his conclusions can be pushed as far as he wished to push them, to the total destruction of all religion, is another matter. My own personal opinion is that Freud gave a substantially accurate first analysis of neurotic and immature forms of religious experience, but that there was a limitation in his own personality which made him unable to perceive the nature and validity of a mature religious experience. We can learn much from his destructive criticism, but he has no positive contribution to make.

I want to join issue with Freud on a much more fundamental level—namely that of the whole type or orientation of his theory of human nature. Classical psycho-analysis is a general psychological theory of human personality which is struggling but failing to emancipate itself from a psycho-biology of non-personal organic man. Freud's theory is an unrepentant instinct theory.

Instinctive drives are the ultimate motivational forces determining all human behaviour. The instincts are primarily organic tensions, chemico-physical tensions of which hunger and sex are the basic types. They are physiologically created forms of tension which can be relieved by the appropriate objects, the biological substrate of the love life in the broadest sense, the life of need and desire (libido). When, later on, Freud recognized that aggression also was an ultimate factor and appeared to be as primary as the "libidinal drives," he constructed a highly speculative and controversial theory of a death-instinct to account for it. The biological fact that organisms die and the psychological fact of a compulsion to repeat injurious experiences was made evidence for the hypothetical existence of a *positive drive towards death*, destruction and relapse into the inorganic state, which is supposed to be as innate in the organism as the life-urge. *Aggression is the turning outwards, away from the self, of the death instinct. Freud had to assume this because he had to find a biological basis for aggression comparable to those for hunger and love.*

We must add that psycho-analysts generally have not taken to this idea of a death-instinct, apart from the school of Melanie Klein. As Dr. Clara Thompson says, there is no evidence at all for the assumption that aggression has its roots in the biological tendency of organisms to die. So far as we can observe, aggression is always a vital reaction against frustration, and expresses a determination not to die. It is a secondary thing that when aggression is bottled up inside it undermines its owner from within.

However, that is Freud's view: that organic tensions of the hunger or sex type, and of the supposed death instinct, create psychic equivalents of themselves which we experience as impulses of a libidinal and aggressive order. These impulses are, on this theory, produced by internal and basically organic conditions, and are neat and complete before ever they drive us out in search of objects, in the shape of food and other human beings, to satisfy them with or to vent them on. Life is a striving to

achieve the reduction of biological tensions. It all comes down to that and nothing else in the end.

In its application to practical social and individual problems this theory has curious consequences, which Freud himself did not shrink from following up. In his paper in 1908 on "*Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness*", he works out the view that man is bedevilled by two innate and "mighty" instinctual drives, sex and aggression, which are fundamentally anti-social, so that culture and civilization can only be achieved at the price of instinctual renunciation. Culture and instinct are sworn foes. Culture enforces repression and so breeds neurosis. Instinct, if it is strong enough, enforces rebellion and so breeds criminality. Only a few innately superior natures have enough capacity for sublimation, for diverting instinctual energy to social and moral ends, to escape the dilemma. The rest of us are doomed to be, in varying degrees, either neurotically ill or morally bad. Instinct and our moral ideals and social values must strike a compromise short of our finest cultural aims.

We cannot of course criticize this theory on the ground that we do not like it: but only on the ground of whether the instinct theory on which it rests is scientifically validated or not. I think there is little doubt now that academic psychological theory, clinical evidence and recent developments in psycho-analysis itself are turning decisively against the Freudian psycho-biology.

It is unnecessary here to elaborate the whole controversy about instincts. It is sufficient to mention that in academic psychology "instincts" of the McDougall type are falling out of favour so far as human psychology is concerned. Human beings are not hereditarily equipped with specific drives prior to experience. G. W. Allport holds that our actual motivations are post-instinctual phenomena. Myers, Burt and Thouless hold a theory of instincts as innate, directional, determining tendencies of a general type, potentialities of action which wait on actual experience of the environment and of object-relations to be called out in definite forms.

*We are born with certain basic needs, both organic and psychic, but the actual ways in which we experience them, and the specific emotions and impulses that arise, are functions of our life-in-relationship-with-other-human-beings.* Thus Fairbairn holds that the term "instinct" is only admissible in its adjectival form and never denotes a "psychic entity" existing prior to our actual experience.

In America Sullivan holds strongly the view that instincts, those remnants of the old faculty psychology, do not exist, and we have no *definable* impulses outside of our "interpersonal" relationship situations. Karen Horney and Erich Fromm regard human sexuality and aggressiveness, in any forms in which they are troublesome, not as natural instincts but as neurotic trends developed as a result of bad human relationships primarily in early life. Horney was probably the first in psycho-analytical circles to point out that the need for love and sexual union is not necessarily an expression of strong innate instinct but may itself be an exaggerated, neurotic, i.e. anxiety-dictated compulsion.

We are not shut up to Freud's view that our trouble is the mighty force of innate biological drives which we can do nothing to eradicate and not

much to sublimate. If that were true we would have to accept his view that neurosis, or mental ill-health, is the price we must pay for cultural advance, and that to safeguard our mental health we must lower our cultural, i.e. moral and social values.

Classic Freudianism is a theory of which little constructive use can be made for the study of religious experience. For Freud the business of civilization is first to enforce instinctual renunciation by repression. Biological egotism, the ruthless possessiveness of sexual and aggressive instincts, must be curbed by force and law without, and by a strong super-ego within, to stop us murdering, raping and thieving at will and breaking up the cohesion of the social groupings we need for general security's sake. The second task of civilization has been to diminish rebellious discontent over enforced instinctual renunciations by the "compensations" afforded by art, religion and in other ways. *Freudian psychology of religion* reduces itself to the view that God is created as an ideal fictional lawgiver and father, first to enforce repression of instincts and second to make up for that by promising love, protection and rewards in an after-life for those who obey. God, as a concept, is a magnified version of the father-image of our childhood, projected on to the Universe, and religion therefore is a psychologically childish form of adaptation to life, and it serves to keep us childish and immature.

Now I have no doubt at all that Freud's analysis of religion is substantially true of a great deal of popular and official religion. Neurotic forms of religion have abounded all through history, and neurotic elements are discernible even in many of the finest forms of the religious life. It is important and valuable to have an objective and critical method of assessing such phenomena as extreme asceticism, morbid religious guilt, aggressive religious fanaticism, morbid and compulsive religious devotion of a world-denying and life-denying narrowness. It is valuable to have means whereby we can detect what is wrong with intolerant moral idealism, dictatorial religious dogmatism, and such opposite manifestations as hyper-Calvinistic rigorism and puritanism on the one hand, or sentimental over-indulgence in emotionalism and mere "comfort-seeking" on the other. Such problems as formalism and externalism, credalism and heresy-hunting, revivalism and outbreaks of enthusiasm, may well call for careful psycho-analytical study. Freud has done us a service in providing a method of scientific psycho-analytical investigation for the field of religious experience. I regard this, however, as a pruning activity, and somehow Freud misses the real heart of the matter. *I do not think a positive constructive psychology of mature religious experience is to be come by solely through the negative destructive analysis of immature and morbid phenomena.* There are mature, and also morbid and degenerate forms of art. Politics lends itself to critical psycho-analytical investigation just as glaringly, in our generation far more glaringly, than religion.

3. When we seek to answer the question "*What would be the religious experience, if any, of a mature personality?*" I do not think classic Freudianism, with its psycho-biological approach, outmoded instinct theory of human nature and its rationalist and purely scientific orientation, can

help us. We need a psycho-dynamic theory of man as personal, not merely as organic, for that. Nor do I think that American developments of psycho-analysis in a sociological direction, which replaces instinct theory by a theory of culture-pattern pressures, can give us what we need. There is, however, a British development, a neo-Freudian psycho-analysis, which I believe provides us with the fundamental conceptual approach required.

It is not an easy matter to give a simple account of this. It is based on Melanie Klein's pioneering and revolutionary work in the treatment of children, and her development of the theory of "internal psychic objects." To put this in a very simple way, our past experience is preserved in our minds in two forms, *memories* and *internal objects*. If I have an experience which is satisfactory to me and leaves no problems behind, its immediate emotional intensity subsides and it remains with me as a memory of a past event, rather pleasantly tinged with feeling, to which I can look back as something over and done with but comfortable to dwell on occasionally, when I may choose to do so.

If, however, I have an upsetting experience which ends very unsatisfactorily for me I cannot leave it alone, cannot let it drop back into the past to the level of memory so easily. I shall want to keep it alive in mind, keep on worrying at it, keep on reliving it and working over it so as to make it end up in a way that is more satisfactory to me.

If I had a quarrel with someone and feel that he got the better of the argument, I shall suffer a compulsion to keep on reliving the quarrel in imagination, not only keeping alive the pain of suffering his attack, but also now giving myself the pleasure of annihilating him with the brilliant repartee and the devastating replies I could not think of at the time. *This is not a memory but a living continuing experience. I have installed my enemy, my "bad-object" to give him his technical name, inside my mind, he has now become a very vigorous, living and disturbing part of "me" inside myself, and attack and counter-attack go on between us to keep me in a state of constant agitation and anxiety. If I remain fully conscious of all that, in time its intensity will subside, I shall lose interest, and it becomes mere memory. But if the internal warfare is so intense as to be too painful and disturbing, and too much of an interference with my freedom to do other things, I may automatically repress the whole situation into the unconscious. There it goes on as a never-ceasing underground warfare, often reappearing in my dreams. I have got rid of it consciously, but I pay the price of now harbouring an invisible enemy within myself and begin to feel nervous and apprehensive and develop defensive character traits and physical tensions and symptoms, without knowing why. Also I probably react at times to outer real situations and people with more fear or anger than is warranted because these emotions are always being unconsciously aroused inside me, and I must find someone or something to tack them on to. I am now mentally inhabited or "possessed" by an internal invisible bad psychic object.*

Something like that happens, and goes on happening, in our infancy and early childhood, in ever more complicated ways, until, as Melanie Klein showed, we build up a hidden inner mental world in which part of us is

always living in highly disturbing relationships with bad-objects. These internal bad objects originate in the splitting off of disturbing aspects of parents and other significant people personified in our minds. Our dream life is our only direct peep into our inner world. We also build up good figures within ourselves to help and protect us against the bad ones. *We live in two worlds at once, inner and outer*, and the bad figures in our unconscious are the originals of the devils, ghosts, and witches of legend, and of the sinister figures, wild animals, burglars and persecutors of our dreams.

Now W. R. D. Fairbairn (Edinburgh) has realized what Melanie Klein has not seen, that *this view makes the classic type of instinct theory unnecessary*. Our troublesome sexual and aggressive impulses are not manifestations of healthy inborn instinct; they are disturbed reactions roused in us by depriving, rejecting, persecuting figures in our unconscious. Our instincts, whatever they may be, would not be antisocial if we lived in a peaceful world deep down within ourselves. How far our unconscious inner world is peaceful or frightening depends, largely, though not entirely, on how happy, helpful and satisfying our parental and home environment was in our formative years. A really bad home can create a hell in the unconscious of the child who grows up in it. Human personality is multi-personal, structurally constituted by internal objects and parts of the ego in relationships with them.

I will only mention one other contribution of Fairbairn, but it is absolutely fundamental. He discards Freud's hedonistic theory of instincts which strive solely for physical satisfactions experienced as relaxations of tension or pleasures; and *he regards libido (i.e. need, desire) as primarily object-seeking, not pleasure-seeking. Object-relationships, not inherited tendencies, become the key to the understanding of all human experience and behaviour*. This runs parallel, on the scientific level, to Professor John MacMurray's central emphasis on personal relationships at the philosophical level.

Here is a psycho-dynamic theory with which we can deal constructively with moral and religious experience. We cannot here go into Fairbairn's extensive and highly original, not to say revolutionary, rethinking of classical psycho-analytical theory as a whole. His revision of the libido theory and recasting of the id-ego-super-ego theory of endopsychic structure, his view that it is internal bad-objects primarily, and not impulses, which are repressed, that the major psychic function of morality and the super-ego is that it is our defence against our internal bad-objects and their consequences; and finally that neurosis is due, not to a conflict of impulse and conscience, but to the internal dangers emanating from bad objects which persecute us inside our unconscious, so that psychotherapy is properly an "exorcism" of these internal devils—all this can be followed in his book of collected papers, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1952).

I wish merely to indicate some of the bearings of his theory on the psychological study of religion.

4. First, and of primary importance, is his insistence that object-relationships are the fundamental thing for psychology, that the need for

good-object relations is the basic human striving, coming before aggression, which only arises as a reaction to the frustration of the striving for good-object relations. On the original Freudian theory only one concept was available for explaining all cultural phenomena, social, moral, intellectual and religious. They were *sublimations*, expressions of sexual energy in the narrow sense, detached from its original aims, re-directed to acceptable social ends and so disguised: but all things were at bottom direct or indirect sexual activities. For Freud the organic development of the sexual instinct determined character. For Fairbairn sexual activity is only one of several pathways to, and means of achieving, good-object relationships. Our needs for object-relations determine what we do with our sexuality, not vice versa. The mental trickery of *sublimation* disappears. *Every activity, moral, artistic and religious no less than sexual, exists in its own right as a pathway of our libidinal needs in search of good-objects.* If our cultural activities are secretly sexualized it is a sign of domination by infantile needs and immaturity of development. It is only in infancy that life is almost exclusively physical. The more mature we are, the truer it is that sexual union is only one among other means of integrating a good-object relationship. Sublimation, then, turns out to be not the normal, but the neurotic, form of higher cultural activity. The cultural life of mature persons stands in its own right as an intrinsically valuable and necessary form of experience of the all-necessary good personal relationships in which our real life is found.

5. At this point, stressing the basic importance of the good-object relationship and of the multiple paths to it, as that in which the very essence of human living is found, we must take up the *problem of psychotherapy*. Briefly, the various personality-ills from which human beings suffer, known to us now under the headings of psychosis, psychoneurosis, perversion, criminality and character-disorder, all find a common root in bad-object relationships as their cause. A human being, whether child or adult, is secure, happy, creative and active, and free from fears, angers and conflicts, so long as his important human relationships are good and satisfying to all his primary personality needs. These needs are briefly to be loved, to return love, and to be free to develop his own proper individuality and be creative. *Personality ills arise out of deprivation of love and frustration of active development and creativity; i.e. out of the breakdown of good human relationships.*

*Now if it is bad-object relations which make people ill, clearly it must be good-object relationships which alone will cure and make them well.* Thus psychotherapy resolves itself into providing for the patient a good-object relationship with his psychotherapist, on the basis of which he can grow out of the results of bad-object relationships with parents and others encountered in the formative childhood years. Since the bad-objects of early years have been internalized, where they continue their disturbing activities as devils hidden in the unconscious, psychotherapy becomes an exorcism of internal bad-objects and their replacement by a good-object relationship in which the patient can grow mature. (Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.)

Now this links psychotherapy closely with religion. It is not scientific knowledge and technique as such that have saving power, but scientific knowledge and technique used as instruments of a good-object relationship. Religion is primarily a matter of good-object relations. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour as thyself." In fact all down the ages religion as opposed to science has been man's therapy for *personality* ills. *Religion is the form under which, historically, the psychotherapeutic factor for mental and spiritual distress has been recognized and cultivated.* Modern neo-Freudian psycho-analysis is rediscovering this on a scientific level. R. Money-Kyrle says: "religion is a form of psychotherapy which promotes a belief in the existence of idealized good-objects as a defence against persecutory and depressive guilt" (*Psycho-Analysis and Politics*, p. 84 n.). There is much more to be said than that; but I leave the definition as a challenge to further psychological, philosophical and theological study.

6. I will only raise one other issue, but that is a tremendous one, the relationship of religion and science. With the development of modern psychology and psycho-analysis, science invaded the sacred domain of religion, the inner life of the soul of man. The result was a furthering of the process set going by science elsewhere, a debunking of superstition. But along with this goes *the destruction of values and symbols*, which is why science has always aroused many misgivings in sensitive minds. Science has no values but utilitarian ones, except the value of truth in the limited sense of scientific truth. To put it differently, science is not concerned with emotional, personal, values; only with intellectual, impersonal values. It destroyed religious values and had nothing to put in their place.

When science began to be turned into a philosophy of life, as a substitute for the religion it was supposed to have destroyed, the scientific outlook led to a steady dehumanization of life. The nemesis of a purely scientific outlook is the Communist totalitarian state machine in politics and a general scepticism and emotional incapacity to believe in anything or live by any positive faith except the impersonal devotion to science and scientific techniques. *The nemesis of the scientific outlook is the dehumanizing of the human being*, his treatment on a sub-personal level, and official psychology carries on the bad work. A patient is someone to be investigated with batteries of psychological tests, personality inventories, intelligence tests, aptitude tests which cull out useful information no doubt. But the subsequent task of psychotherapy is made harder because the patient always resents, as a person, what he feels is the indignity of being put through this impersonal scientific sorting machine so that he can be labelled and pigeon-holed for future reference. He produces the same emotional reaction as people produce to being caught up and "shoved around" by the vast impersonal bureaucratic machine of the modern welfare, or centralized, or totalitarian state. *A world run on purely scientific principles has no regard for personality and no respect for human dignity.*

Psycho-analysis itself, due in part to Freud's particular personality

type, grew up in this scientific orientation and turned its scientific system into a secular religion, with an orthodoxy, heresies and veneration of the founder. But its weakness was betrayed by the misgivings continually felt about psychotherapy. *Freud seems to have concluded that psycho-analysis has more power as a scientific technique to understand, than power as a therapeutic technique to heal.* No special criticism can be levelled at psycho-analysis for this orientation. Such a movement was bound to originate in the scientific, not the religious, world, and it is being true to science. The important thing is that, in its later developments, psycho-analysis is giving us the means of transcending the narrow scientific point of view.

It is bringing us back once more in the neo-Freudian developments to the centrality of the person and personal object-relations. We are finding that *not scientific knowledge but good human relationship is the real key to human health, happiness and productivity.* To analyse a human mind to the bitter end may merely destroy whatever a patient had to live by. A motor car may be taken to pieces but that by itself does not enable it to go anywhere. Scientific analysis and the knowledge it gives can be a good servant in the hands of a positive and loving personality, but is a bad master.

*Our great problem, now we have become explicitly aware of the unconscious, is to know what to do with it.* Before we knew it was there, we took care of it by means of art, religion, and symbolic experience and activity in general. How has our scientific knowledge of the unconscious affected this question? Possibly it has made us more helpless in face of the unconscious than we used to be. Pure analysis does not necessarily solve its problems, and in any case only the tiny few can be analysed; but purely scientific psycho-analysis as part of our conscious educational equipment may make us simply unable to use art and religion, because having exposed all "the works," we become too self-conscious and "in the know" to be artistically and religiously simple and spontaneous. We take our clock to pieces and find it no longer tells the time.

It appears now that the unconscious, with all its secret hidden life of infantile phantasy, and of emotion which to some extent, even in the most mature and normal, operates on infantile levels, is a natural, inevitable and permanent part of our personality. It cannot be analysed out of existence. Kleinians tell us that unconscious phantasy has a positive part to play in all normal conscious mental activity. But if we were to analyse *all* conscious activities back into unconscious primitive phantasies we would paralyse the conscious cultural ego. *Unanalysed symbolic activity is necessary to mental health and to creative and productive living.* Our main business with a motor car is not to be looking at the works but driving somewhere. Our main business with our personalities is, not to be probing our unconscious phantasies, but living creatively in relationship with the outer world. Living is primarily an extravert, not an introvert, activity. Naturally when the "works" go wrong and we become unable to relate ourselves properly to our outer world, then we must take up the introvert task of looking inside. But if that should then become our major interest we shall have lost the capacity to "live" in the real sense, in external object relationships, and in symbolic experiences.

This is what happens when we try to make science "a way of life," and it becomes particularly deadly if we should try to make psychological science a way of life. Fairbairn has shown *the real nature of scientific activity to be a schizoid pursuit, the activity of the detached person who has stopped living in order to stand aside and investigate life*. It is remarkable how often schizoid persons enter into their own dreams as merely an onlooker or observer who does not feel anything. The reason why intellectuals are often dangerous and misleading guides is that they are basically schizoid personalities who value systems, ideologies and techniques, more than the personal relationships they feel too much unconscious anxiety about to enter into. Fairbairn writes:—

"Schizoid characteristics, usually in a less pronounced form, are also common among members of the intelligentsia . . . intellectual pursuits as such, whether literary, artistic, scientific, or otherwise, appear to exercise a special attraction for individuals possessing schizoid characteristics to one degree or another. Where scientific pursuits are concerned, the attraction would appear to depend upon the schizoid individual's attitude of detachment no less than upon his over-valuation of the thought-processes" (*op. cit.*, p. 6).

*What then is this scientifically-minded generation to do with the Unconscious viewed as a normal part of our personality, which needs symbolic expression in our outer life?* The schizoid scientific intellectual tries to do without it, becomes first emotionally unreal and then a prey to irrational compulsions. "Nature's way" has been to neutralize and *inhibit it*, so far as direct uncontrolled expression is concerned, by means of repression and the whole system of ego-defences; but at the same time to express it by means of art, religion and symbolic experience and activity in general. It has to be recognized that there is a hidden symbolic activity and a disguised expression of unconscious phantasy life in even the most practical, prosaic and utilitarian pursuits, including science and even, or perhaps especially, money-making and economic activity. But love and friendships in our object-relationships, and sport, and especially art and religion in our cultural life, provide more personal satisfactions for our unconscious emotional needs.

Our dilemma is that science and purely rationalist, intellectual and investigatory pursuits, concerned with understanding only and not with living satisfactions and personal relationships, have ruthlessly undermined our traditional symbolism. Just as there is a neurotic form of religious experience, so there is a neurotic form of scientific activity, when investigation is pursued not primarily to solve problems but to escape from emotional realities into an intellectualist's paradise. Under this kind of thing Religion has suffered more than Art because it always sought to give its symbols an intellectual basis and justification in a creed and combine the values of truth and love, of intellectual and emotional goals, of communion and of theological and philosophical comprehension. So it was vulnerable on its credal side to the results of factual scientific research, and science has undermined its credibility in popular estimation. Many scientists took the propositions of religion, not as emotional and symbolic, but as purely intellectual and factual and set about disproving them. The result is the destruction of symbolism and the drift into arid rationalism in European history, both religious and secular, with the ultimate out-

break of irrationalism in politics, and the collapse of the normal repressions of the civilized order, to produce the devilries of concentration camps and political torture. The unconscious, finding no proper symbolic provision for its expression, has avenged itself by crude outbreaks which in the individual we call psychosis.

*Religion*, in the advanced Liberal Modernist schools, *has been drifting away from the symbolizing of our unconscious emotional life and needs, by moving ever closer to a compromise with scientific rationalism.* This process could only end by science and philosophy swallowing religion and leaving us with nothing to help us to achieve emotional stabilization at deep unconscious levels.

*Art* seems to have moved in the opposite direction. It was immune to the impact of science because it made no attempt to compete with science on science's own ground. It has usually abhorred "the scientific spirit" and dealt with science only as a movement of our times. *But Art too has drifted away from symbolization of the unconscious emotional life in the opposite direction from the religious drift towards ever more crudely undisguised and unsymbolized expressions of the unconscious.* Fairbairn, in a paper entitled *The Ultimate Basis of Aesthetic Experience*, says: "The comparative poverty of the art-work in Surrealism is evidence of a relative failure of repression. Thus in Surrealism the 'found object' represents the demands of the unconscious urges with an unusual poverty of disguise" (*Brit. Journal of Psych.*, General Section, vol. XXI, Pt. 2, Oct. 1938, p. 173).

We seem, therefore, to be driven to one of two extremes, either to be schizoid scientific intellectuals with no mature and overt feeling-life, or else emotional primitives in art, politics and sexuality, who no longer feel any need to clothe the unconscious in decent dress or control its infantile impulses out of respect for the personality of other people. The second extreme is often a rebound from the first.

What we need to save us from this dilemma is a new development of religion which takes account of modern science and is not intellectually incredible to us, and yet conserves and expresses the values of the personal and especially unconscious emotional life. It must be much more than an attempt at a rational and scientific philosophy of life. In his *New Introductory Lectures*, in the closing chapter on "A Philosophy of Life," and in *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud pins his faith on science and the still small voice of reason as a substitute for religion. If Fairbairn's view of the schizoid nature of intellectual and scientific activity is correct, this attempt to shift the foundations of life off the emotional on to the intellectual functions can only condemn us ultimately to an arid rationalism in which we do more analysing than living. As Wordsworth says "We murder to dissect." The new religious development must enable us not only to think but to feel. It must be, not merely a scientifically credible belief *about* the universe and our place in it, but a dynamic faith *in* it and an emotional relationship *to* it. It would not offend our conscious intelligence but it would provide satisfaction for the deep unconscious dynamics of our personality. Freud had no vision of the need for, and possibility of, such a religion of mature minds. We may venture to predict, on the basis

of all that we know of human history, that the future will see the rebirth of religion in such a new and vital form.

It is not *my* business *qua* *psychologist* to say what this religion of the future will be, though we may observe that in our day scientific philosophy and political ideologies are manifestly unsatisfactory and even dangerous substitutes for it, as a basis of healthy emotional living. Some think, or hope, that Christianity has in it the living resources for such a rebirth. The future will decide. One thing is certain that the living religion of the future will not be one of the highly rational attempts at a synthesis of "the best" taken from all religions that scholars often attempt. Its founder or reformer, if it has one, will not be a scholar or a scientist or a psycho-analyst. The one thing we can say of it is that its basic truth will be a truth of "object-relations," it will give men an experience of living relationship to one another and to their world.

916TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 20th APRIL, 1953

E. V. Rieu, Litt.D., F.G.S., in the Chair

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**CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN  
EMPIRICISM**

By

BASIL MITCHELL, M.A.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN EMPIRICISM

By BASIL MITCHELL, M.A.

## SYNOPSIS

It is possible to discern three stages in the attitude of empiricist philosophers to Christianity. The first (represented by Hume) takes the form of an attack on traditional metaphysical *arguments*, including the proofs of the existence of God. The second (represented by the "Logical Positivists") impugns the significance of theological *statements* on the ground that they cannot be verified empirically. The third (here called "Logical Empiricism") poses a dilemma: *either* theological statements are empirically verifiable *or* they are not *assertions*. If they are not assertions, they may still possess meaning, but of a non-factual sort.

In the face of this third challenge three positions are possible: (1) to accept the dilemma and admit that theological statements are not, strictly speaking, assertions; (2) to accept the dilemma and maintain that they satisfy the criterion of an assertion; (3) to try to escape between the horns of the dilemma.

The paper examines an answer of the first type, viz. the theory that theological statements express attitudes; and an answer of the third type, viz. the theory that they express "presuppositions" which are more fundamental than assertions. It finds neither of these answers satisfactory and suggests that theological statements are assertions couched in analogical language.

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## I

I was asked in the first instance to read a paper on "Christianity and Logical Positivism." For reasons which will, I hope, emerge in the course of the paper, I emended the proposed title to the one which now appears.

The sort of modern philosophy which I have called "Modern Empiricism" is by no means the only kind of philosophy alive to-day. But it is dominant at Oxford and Cambridge and its influence is increasingly felt elsewhere. Very few contemporary philosophers in this country or America could claim to have been entirely untouched by it.

There are two things about "Modern Empiricism" which make it worth while trying to explain its bearing on Christian theology. The first is that very little has been published by its exponents, and most of that has been in technical journals, so that recent developments are unfamiliar to the educated world at large and are in some danger of being misunderstood. The second is that it is often thought that such philosophy

is inherently anti-religious and should, therefore, be deplored by all right-minded men. There is doubtless some justification for this impression. I shall not presume to decide the question, but will endeavour to make clear what the fundamental issues are. Inevitably the account will have to be simplified; one can only hope to indicate trends, bearing in mind that this is not a well-defined "school" of philosophy, but a general way of approaching philosophical problems.

There has been a change in the relation between philosophers and theologians which may conveniently be represented in a parable<sup>1</sup> :—

Fifty years ago, in the heyday of British Idealism, theologians and philosophers thought they understood one another pretty well. They might disagree—indeed they frequently did—but each thought he understood what the other was up to. The theologian asserted, interpreted and defended certain doctrines about God and the world. The philosopher was also concerned with fundamental questions about the nature of things, and he too put forward assertions about reality—propositions which he undertook to demonstrate. Thus there could be, and were, controversies between them about the nature of God: was He an Impersonal Absolute, as some Idealists maintained, or was He, as Christians believed, in some sense Personal?

Thus the theologian and the philosopher occupied rival pulpits. The philosopher was a scarcely less venerable figure than the theologian, and he was expected to have something to say about the meaning of life. Perhaps, even, his was a somewhat superior position, in that *he* undertook to prove what he said, whereas the theologian was compelled to resort to obscure concepts like "faith" and "revelation."

Then, one day, without warning, the philosopher put his lecture notes aside, got down from his pulpit and announced that he was going to devote himself to mathematical logic and to the analysis of science and common-sense. It was, he now said, no part of his business to discover truths about God and the universe. He possessed no means not open to other men of discovering the nature of things. His job was simply to examine the meaning of statements.

This, it must be admitted, was disconcerting to the theologian, who was inclined to regard his colleague's actions as frivolous and irresponsible. but so far no impediment was offered to his own preaching. But some little time later, the philosopher looked up from his new pursuits and pronounced, in a perhaps unnecessarily provocative tone, that the theologian was talking nonsense. Let him go on preaching by all means, but he must not suppose that there was any meaning in what he said. "Metaphysical propositions" were meaningless pseudo-propositions, and propositions about God were metaphysical. For his (the philosopher's) researches into the meaning of meaning had led him to rule out any proposition as meaningless if it was not empirically verifiable—verifiable, that is, by sense-experience.

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<sup>1</sup> This is reprinted from an article, "Christianity and Modern Philosophy," which appeared in *The Socratic*, published by Blackwell, 1951.

It now seemed that the philosopher's apparently harmless (if irresponsible) preoccupation with the analysis of meaning was more dangerous than it had looked at first sight. And the theologian's anxiety was not entirely allayed, when, as sometimes happened, the philosopher came and sat beneath his pulpit and murmured assent to his propositions (or, at least, quasi-assent to his quasi-propositions). "For," said the philosopher, "though these utterances of yours are not, of course, strictly *true*, because not, of course, strictly *meaningful*; yet they have a certain use and a certain value. They are nonsense, yes, but *profound* nonsense."

This rather frivolous parable serves to illustrate the change that has come over philosophy in this country during this century and has altered the whole question about the relation between philosophy and Christianity. Where the parable is misleading is that it gives the impression that the *whole* of this development is relatively recent; whereas, as I hinted earlier, it has its origin in the traditional English Empiricists.

There are, perhaps, three phases in this development, and I hope you will bear with me, if I try to sketch them briefly.

1. The first phase, which culminated in David Hume, took the form of an attack upon traditional metaphysical *arguments*—including, of course, the traditional proofs of the existence of God. These proofs, as they appear, for example, in Aquinas, purport to be strict demonstrations. The Ontological proof started with the definition of God as a perfect being and argued that a being so defined must exist: for if he did not exist, he would be less than perfect. The Cosmological proof started with the existence of finite being and argued in different ways to the existence of God. These are typical metaphysical proofs in that they purport to show that something or other exists—*must* exist—given that something else exists. This has been the method practised by all speculative philosophers (or at least the method they claimed to practise).

Against this sort of argument Hume forged a weapon aptly termed "Hume's Fork." About any piece of reasoning Hume asks, "Is it a piece of abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?" or "Is it a piece of experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?" It must, he thought, be one or the other. If the first, then it is capable of strict demonstration, but cannot prove the *existence* of anything. If the latter, then it can establish facts, but cannot be strictly demonstrated; it can only be shown to be more or less probable.

Hume was, in fact, drawing a sharp distinction between deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning; the first being the sort of reasoning appropriate to logic and mathematics, the second the one appropriate to the experimental sciences.

Now the sort of metaphysical reasoning represented by the traditional proofs fell into neither class and seemed to be a cross between the two—an illegitimate cross. The point cannot be more trenchantly put than in Hume's own words:—

"When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make! If we take in our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, 'Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning

quantity or number?' No. 'Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?' No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion" (*Enquiry*, Section XII).

Into the flames then, if this argument is correct, go the traditional proofs of the existence of God. For of these, the Ontological argument, which starts with a definition and purports to prove that that which is defined *exists*, cannot in fact to do more than show that God, *if* He exists, must exist necessarily; it cannot show that He *does* exist: the Cosmological argument implies that to assert that anything at all (this paper, for example) exists and to deny that God exists involves a logical contradiction. But this is surely not the case.

At this point I shall ask leave to state dogmatically that Hume was right (as most contemporary philosophers would, I think, agree). But I would not admit that the traditional proofs are therefore worthless. It is, I think, a mistake to regard them as strict demonstrations.

This attack was a serious one; but it bore almost entirely on natural or rational theology—on attempts to *prove* God's existence. It was still open to Christians to base their beliefs, not upon proof, but upon faith. And this was the course Hume himself recommended. "The truths of our religion," he said, "find their best and most solid foundation in Faith and Divine Revelation."

2. The second phase of the empiricist attack threatened even this position. In this country it was, perhaps, first formulated explicitly by Professor A. J. Ayer in his *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936). Ayer presented what has come to be known as the "Logical Positivist" thesis in its simplest and boldest form. Significant statements fell into two classes—analytic (or *a priori*) and empirical. Analytic statements included those of logic and mathematics and definitions of all kinds. These did not, strictly speaking, convey information, although they sometimes appeared to do so. They simply expressed our determination to use words or other symbols in certain ways. They told us nothing about the world. Empirical statements were any statements that could be verified by the senses. Such statements, and only such statements, were factual, i.e. imparted knowledge about the world.

It will be seen that this weapon of Ayer's resembles Hume's Fork very closely; it was an up-to-date version of this instrument specially sharpened by modern logic (we might call it Ayer's Axe). The important difference is that, whereas Hume's dichotomy was of two sorts of *reasoning*, Ayer's was of two sorts of *statement*.

The effect of this difference can be seen if we attend to the uses to which the two weapons were put. Hume's Fork, as we saw, was fatal to natural theology, but spared "Faith and Divine Revelation." Ayer declared that the propositions of metaphysics, ethics and theology were nonsensical pseudo-propositions: strictly speaking they had no meaning, and this went for revealed truths as well as the rest. It was, therefore, no defence against the positivist attack for theologians to say that they did not attempt to *prove* their doctrines, but based them solely upon faith and divine revelation, because what was being challenged was not the *truth* of these statements, but their *meaningfulness*.

Ayer summed up his position in the famous verifiability principle. "A sentence has meaning if, and only if, some conceivable sense experience is relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood." This, he thought, enabled one to dismiss as nonsensical the propositions of theology, metaphysics and ethics. For they were none of them capable of being verified in sense experience. If this contention could be made good, considerable economies could be effected in philosophy, which would be shorn of metaphysics and ethics and virtually restricted to logic and epistemology.

Certain consequences followed as to the nature of philosophy itself. For if only empirically verifiable statements were meaningful, then, unless the statements of philosophers were empirically verifiable, they too were meaningless, as opponents of Positivism were quick to point out. The paradox, however, had already been embraced by Wittgenstein, in his influential *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922). "The result of philosophy is not a number of philosophical propositions, but to make propositions clear." "The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts—philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations." Philosophical statements were not in any ordinary sense statements. They were not, that is, statements about the world, about things. Philosophy was "talk about talk," as distinct from science, which was "talk about things."

It is, I think, helpful to an understanding of "Logical Positivism," to realize that its exponents were primarily philosophers of science. They sought to discover a formula which would distinguish clearly between scientific statements and all other statements. They thought they had found this in the verification principle. The only accredited methods for finding out about the nature of things were scientific. The traditional notion that philosophers could—just by thinking and without experiment—discover facts about the world was in their opinion (as in Hume's) a mistake.

Thus, broadly speaking, the only meaningful statements (with the exception of definitions, etc.) were those that were empirically verifiable; i.e. scientific statements. All other statements, although their grammatical form might be similar, were in fact nonsense. So a division of labour was arranged between philosophy and science. It was the function of science to distinguish between what was true and what was false; it was the function of philosophy to discriminate between the meaningful and the meaningless.

"Logical Positivism" was thus a very simple doctrine (and this simplicity proves a great attraction to undergraduates, for whom it promises a welcome reduction of the problems they need take seriously). But its simplicity was achieved at the cost of a certain air of paradox, as often happens. (Philosophy seems to progress through the mutual irritation of radical, distorting minds and sensible, synoptic ones.) For it led one to class as nonsense all sorts of things that people were constantly saying—not only philosophers and theologians, but plain ordinary

people. To this the reply was made that "nonsense" was being used in a very strict sense that was not necessarily pejorative. Some kinds of nonsense might be very useful, even necessary. Some religious talk, for example, might be remarkably *profound* nonsense. And ethical talk was nonsense of high pragmatic value.

3. Through the raising and answering of objections of this kind "Logical Positivism" began to alter its character, and the empiricist attack on religion entered its third phase—a phase in which it ceases largely—perhaps altogether—to be an attack.

Strictly speaking, I suppose, a "Logical Positivist" is one who regards the verification principle as the sole criterion of meaning. In this sense of the word there are few Logical Positivists in the field to-day (Ayer is, perhaps, still true to the orthodox position). I think it is worth making this clear, since it is often said that philosophy at Oxford and Cambridge is "Logical Positivist." In fact, very few Oxford or Cambridge philosophers would call themselves "Positivists." But they have all, it is fair to say, been greatly influenced by "Logical Positivism."

The "Logical Positivists" were, in spite of their views on the nature of philosophy, something of preachers. They not only distinguished science from metaphysics: they wished to eliminate the latter. Indeed, the word "metaphysical" became the rudest word a philosopher could apply to another philosopher's views; as indeed it still is. Ayer *campaigned* against metaphysics and theology in a holy war against cant and obscurantism. "Logical Positivists" drew their recruits from amongst the hard-headed and the tough-minded. The elimination of theology and metaphysics was not just a consequence of the Positivists' reflection upon the nature of meaning: it to a large extent guided that reflection. So that one can almost see the verifiability principle being amended and adjusted in such a way as to preserve as meaningful all that the Positivist approves, e.g. science and commonsense beliefs, while eliminating all he objects to, e.g. theology and metaphysics. It proved in practice unexpectedly difficult to find, as it were, the correct setting.

The difficulty of the project suggested that it might be mistaken. Instead of looking for a clear-cut criterion for distinguishing between the meaningful and the meaningless, it might be more profitable to recognize different sorts of meaning. Thus, for example, rather than embrace the paradox that moral judgments were meaningless, philosophers began to suggest that they were indeed meaningful, but that the sort of meaning they possessed differed from that of straightforward factual statements. It might be called "emotive meaning;" so that although people who differed on a moral matter could not be said to disagree in *belief*, they could be said to disagree in *attitude*. Another suggestion was that moral principles were best understood as neither statements of fact nor expressions of emotion, but rules; and, as such, were rather like generalized commands or imperatives. On this view the *interesting* question was, "How do you justify moral rules or principles? What form does moral reasoning take?" A recent book on Ethics has the title *The Place of Reason in Ethics*.

This is, you will have noticed, a very traditional title. And the book itself, although written by a "Post-positivist" philosopher, is largely concerned with the traditional themes. This represents a considerable development from the dogmatic Positivism of *Language, Truth and Logic*. It is tempting, then, to say that we are now back where we were, on the right lines, and that "Logical Positivism" was an unfortunate aberration. But this would, I think, be a mistake. The Positivist distortion of Ethics served to bring out more clearly the respect in which moral judgments differed from statements of fact. It concentrated attention on the *logic* of Ethics. Moral philosophers had often tended to treat moral judgments as if they dealt with matters of fact which were yet not matters of *observable* fact; and this led them to talk about "the world of values" as if it existed in some supersensible sphere.

I have taken Ethics as a convenient illustration, but what has happened in Ethics has happened in other departments also. Philosophers who adopt this approach (they are sometimes called "Logical Empiricists") differ from the "Logical Positivists" in this characteristic way: in place of the dogmatic *assertion* that those statements alone have meaning which are empirically verifiable, they ask the *question*—of any class of statement—"What is the logic of statements of this kind?" that is to say, "How are they to be verified, or tested, or justified?" "What is their use or function, what job do they do?"

The task of the philosopher, on this view, is not himself to discover truths about the world—such discovery will fall within some particular science or discipline—but to examine these sciences and disciplines with a view to understanding how each works and how it is related to the rest.

Now, to return to our main theme, how will philosophers of this sort approach theology? Three things are, I think, clear:—

- (1) They will not, as the Idealists did, put forward a world-view or philosophy of life, which might conflict with Christianity; because they regard the construction of such world-views as no part of the philosopher's business.
- (2) They will not rule out theological statements from the start, on the ground that they are meaningless, as the "Logical Positivists" did.
- (3) They will ask the same sort of question about theological statements as they do about statements of other kinds, viz. "How are they verified?" "What sort of arguments or observations tend to confirm or refute them?"—in short, "What is their logic?"

It will, I hope, be apparent why I hesitated to call this third phase of Empiricism an *attack* on theology at all. The asking of such questions is, or purports to be, an entirely neutral undertaking; an attempt to understand, not to refute.

## II

My main object in the first part of my paper has been to convey, if possible, the trend, the tone or atmosphere of contemporary Empiricism. I want now to indicate what seem to me to be the problems it raises for

Christian Faith. For this purpose I think it is important to concentrate on what I have called "the third phase," rather than on "Logical Positivism" in the strict sense. It does not help to concentrate your fire, as, e.g., Dr Joad does in his *Critique of Logical Positivism*, on views which are no longer widely held.

I have said that this latest phase is not confessedly anti-religious. One reason for this is that it has become—at least in Oxford and Cambridge—the *orthodox* position, and that means that the people who adopt it, i.e. who practise the method—are no longer only those who are positivists by temperament—the hard-headed and the tough-minded; they include people of all temperaments. Nor are they all agnostics; there are plenty of Empiricists who are Christians.

So we ought to beware of assuming from the outset that the whole movement is by nature anti-religious and to be deplored by all right-minded men. Indeed one might go further, and say that it has introduced greater sensitiveness and flexibility into philosophical discussion: and greater readiness to look for significance in unlikely places.

But—with this foreword—it is time to consider the sort of answers such philosophers are in fact inclined to give to their question: "What sort of statements are theological statements?" or "What is the logic of statements about God?"

I said that they no longer regarded the verification principle as the sole criterion of meaning. They do, however, largely accept it as being in some form the criterion of *factual meaning*. That is, they regard a sentence as expressing an assertion (as distinct from, e.g., a command, exclamation, attitude, etc.) if and only if it can be verified in sense experience; or rather, because very few statements can be *conclusively* verified, if and only if it can be conclusively *falsified*. Thus, to take the text-book example, "All swans are white" cannot be conclusively verified, because we cannot observe all swans. But when black swans were discovered in Australia that did conclusively *falsify* the generalization.

Actually this is still too simple, because there are many statements, which are undoubtedly assertions, which cannot be conclusively falsified either, e.g. statements about other people's feelings and intentions. But—and this is the final formulation—in the case of all these statements we know—or "have some idea"—what counts as evidence for or against them. So that the criterion of an assertion or factual statement becomes this: a sentence expresses an assertion if and only if some possible sense experience could constitute evidence against it. If a statement fails to pass this test, it will not be dismissed as nonsensical in the fashion of the Logical Positivists, but it will not be classified as an assertion.

This looks at first sight like a trivial, purely verbal question. What does it *matter* whether statements about God are regarded as assertions or not? But it is not, I think, simply verbal. The point is this: can we be said to be making an assertion, that is, saying something which could be true or false, *if no conceivable evidence could tend to prove or disprove it*? Can we be said really to understand an assertion, unless we have some idea

what would constitute evidence for or against it? To understand a statement implies being able to recognize what it would be like for it to be true, and what it would be like for it to be false; or, failing that, what would, at least, *count* for or against its truth.

Now many, perhaps most, empiricist philosophers do not see how statements about God can pass this test. They complain that Christians, when asked what they would allow to count as evidence against their belief in God, protest that nothing *could* count as evidence against it. Suppose we take the statement, "God created the world." We clearly are not in a position to compare God-created worlds with non-God-created worlds and to recognize in ours the marks of a God-created world. No conceivable experiment could test the issue—which is, therefore, not an empirical one; not a question of fact. Or take "God loves mankind." (I quote from a recent article<sup>1</sup> by A. G. N. Flew.)

"Someone tells us that God loves us as a father loves his children. We are reassured. But then we see a child dying of inoperable cancer of the throat. His earthly father is driven frantic in his efforts to help, but his heavenly father reveals no obvious signs of concern. Some qualification is made—God's love is not a 'merely human love' or it is 'an inscrutable love,' perhaps—and we realize that such sufferings are quite compatible with the truth that God loves us as a father (but, of course . . .). We are reassured again."

But, Flew argues, to say "God loves" and then to make these qualifications is to take away much of the meaning from the word "love." It is, in his expressive phrase, "to erode the analogy." And if sufficient qualifications are made, the analogy is entirely eroded and the sentence ceases to make any assertion at all.

In face of the Empiricist's question, there are three possible positions:—

- (1) To accept the criterion and claim that theological statements satisfy it: and are, therefore, assertions.
- (2) To accept the criterion and agree that theological statements are *not* assertions but are something else: expressions of attitude, perhaps, or policies for living, or presuppositions.
- (3) To reject the criterion.

Now most Logical Empiricists, including some of them who are Christians, would take the second position. They would argue that theological doctrines have the *form* of assertions or statement of fact, but really are not. And the interesting question for them becomes: what sort of statements, then, are they? Some more subtle (e.g. Professor John Wisdom), would boggle at so sharp a dichotomy between assertions and other uses of language. They would say, "Well yes, in a *sense* they are assertions, but not in the ordinary sense": or "they are illuminating—they reveal to us what in a sense we didn't know before, although, of course, they don't provide us with information; don't introduce us to any new facts."

### III

Let us then consider these alternatives:—

- (1) To accept the criterion and claim that theological statements satisfy it.

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<sup>1</sup> *University* (published by Basil Blackwell), vol. i, No. 1.

The difficulty here is that Christians, however much some of them may say that their doctrines are "hypotheses," are not prepared to treat them as the scientist treats *his* hypotheses. Elijah on Mount Carmel was prepared to submit his God to empirical tests, but religious people nowadays are more sophisticated and do not recommend experiments on the efficacy of prayer. Christians, in fact, refuse to let anything count against their beliefs. But if the doctrines of theology are compatible with any state of affairs whatsoever; if, that is, there is nothing which they deny, which they rule out: then what can they possibly be asserting?

The theologians' traditional answer to the question, "How can we talk about God?" is "by analogy." Our language must be stretched to do it. Thus if we say, "God loves mankind as a father loves his children," we are saying that God's attitude to us is analogous to a human father's love for his children. But we cannot hope to know fully what it is for God to love. Sometimes the inadequacy of the comparison is so evident that it seems more proper to say that God's love is utterly different from man's love. But if we insist on this, then we can no longer justify the use of *this* word about Him rather than any other. Unless the analogy holds, however tenuously, we might as well say God hates as that He loves.

It is just this danger about analogy that the empiricist philosopher notices. It is frightfully easy for an analogy to get cut off from its base. You will remember Flew's statement of this (quoted on p. 90).

But to say "God loves" and then to make these qualifications is to take away much of its meaning from the word "love;" it is to "erode" the analogy.

If this danger is to be avoided, the theologian must be prepared to make a stand somewhere; to say that this or that, if it happened or had happened, would count against his belief. But this, apparently, is just what he will not do. He is not prepared to admit that anything at all could count against his beliefs. This being so, the empiricist is compelled to say that these beliefs are not, although at first sight they appear to be, *assertions*.

These are some of the objections to the *first* position. Whether they are conclusive, I do not propose to consider at this stage. Certainly a good many philosophers—including some who are Christians—regard them as conclusive.

(2) To accept the criterion and agree that doctrines about God are not assertions, but something else in a misleading grammatical form—attitudes to life, policies for living, or presuppositions.

The first two—attitudes to life, policies for living—should perhaps be considered separately from the third—presuppositions. For the view that religious doctrines are presuppositions calls in question the dichotomy between assertions and expressions of attitude in terms of which the empiricist dilemma is often couched: and it is, perhaps, misleading to try to fix it on one or other horn of the dilemma.

(a) Expressions of attitude. This answer accepts the contention that Christian doctrine is not concerned with matters of fact: that it does not comprise primarily a set of assertions (although the Creed, of course, *contains* assertions, e.g. "crucified under Pontius Pilate"). Rather is

it a comprehensive attitude towards life. Dogmatic formulae, although they *look* like assertions, are not really such, but serve to express a distinctive emotional attitude towards the world (or, if the "policy" view is preferred, a *resolve* to treat the world in a distinctive way). The best representatives of this general position would insist on both aspects. As a speaker in a recent broadcast symposium said, "Whenever people outside religious tradition talk about religion, they nearly always assume that the essential element is one of feeling. If you're going to classify it, it's much more a matter of the will."

This does not mean in the least that they are not important. Nothing could matter more than a man's whole attitude to life. To classify religious dogmas in this way is not to degrade them. It only seems so to us because we habitually overrate the descriptive, fact-stating, use of language. Nor must we suppose that they are like poetry, which we may accept or reject as we please. For there is no other language which will serve this unique purpose. After all, religious conversion is not primarily a rational process of assent to propositions; it is of the nature of a critical decision or commitment, where personal example counts for more than intellectual conviction. We should note also the place of ritual observances in the religious life. The Creed itself is normally said as part of a ritual, and what the worshipper then says is "I believe in God," not "I believe *that*. . . ."

Now—I have never seen this theory about the nature of Christian doctrine thoroughly worked out, but it is clearly the readiest answer for the anti-metaphysical philosopher who is impressed by the claims of Christianity (and it is important to remember that the number of these is increasing, and that their sincerity is beyond dispute).

But I am convinced, nevertheless, that it will not do. It comes near to defining God in terms of human attitudes. This is not the God to whom we pray as "Maker of all things, Judge of all men."

Yet it serves as a reminder that Christian belief is closely bound up with the whole life of the believer and intimately affects his attitudes and policies; so that, if a man professes to believe, but makes no attempt to live the Christian life, we may properly doubt the genuineness of his belief.

(b) A second possible answer is that given by Mr Hare in the *University* symposium and, if I understand him aright, by Professor Hodges in his *Christianity and the Modern World-View*. They accept the contention that the doctrines of Christianity are not, in any ordinary sense, assertions. They are *presuppositions* (Hare invents the word "blik"); and these are more fundamental than assertions in that they provide the framework within which assertions are made and tested. They are, in fact, so fundamental that we often do not know we have them, and become touchy when they are questioned. Other people's presuppositions we call "prejudices."

This answer seems to escape between the horns of the empiricists' dilemma; for presuppositions by their very nature are such that nothing can count against them. They determine what for any man shall count as "counting."

Is it equally clear that nothing can count for them? It is tempting to say that a "blik" is known by its fruits. But, of course, the "blik" will itself determine what value to set on the fruits. There can be no question of assessing them independently. The argument is circular. But, then, perhaps this sort of argument always is circular? Perhaps you have to make a "basic acceptance" before you can argue at all. Professor Popper's "irrational faith in reason"<sup>1</sup> is relevant here. You can only persuade a man to be reasonable in so far as he is already reasonable; so you cannot rationally persuade a man to be reasonable. In the same way you can find evidences for God, if you start by believing in Him; but until you believe you will not admit them to be evidences. This is incisively expressed by Karl Jaspers. "A proved God is no God. Accordingly, only he who starts from God can seek him. A certainty of the Existence of God, however rudimentary and intangible it may be, is a premise, not a result of philosophical activity" (*The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, p. 36).

This is a position of great power, and no one who has heard Professor Hodges develop it can fail to be impressed by it. It does seem to reflect a fundamental type of Christian experience, and it draws attention to an important feature of all Christian witness. To be a Christian *does* involve a basic acceptance, and the Christian clearly is not (and ought not to be) prepared to treat the articles of his Faith as provisional hypotheses to be set aside as soon as experience begins to tell against them. Moreover, this position provides the apologist with a telling rejoinder. He can now say to the critic: "You too have presuppositions, which you cannot justify: only I know what mine are."

It has, moreover, from the philosophical point of view the advantage that it deals in one and the same move with the objection that statements about God cannot be proved and the objection that they cannot be regarded as assertions. For it says that they are more fundamental than assertions and that they are logically prior to all proof.

Does this theory, then, give a satisfactory philosophical account of the nature of religious belief? (Remembering that to be satisfactory any such account must not only be philosophically acceptable, but must represent the way faith actually operates.)

Before we can attempt an answer to this question we need to examine more closely what having a presupposition or a "blik" is like. Mr Hare found it necessary to invent the word "blik" to express what he had in mind; so that one must be cautious about supposing that it is equivalent to "presupposition" as used by Hodges. Hare defines "blik" by giving examples. His most detailed example is that of a lunatic who thinks all dons want to murder him. No matter how harmless-seeming a don may be, this man will explain his behaviour as so much clever camouflage of his murderous intentions. The lunatic has a "blik" about dons. Another example would be if a man believed that everything happened by pure chance. In neither instance could anything count against the "blik;" which, however, remains significant because, in

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<sup>1</sup> K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. ii, p. 218.

each case, it is the contradictory of sane beliefs which clearly *are* significant.

Professor Hodges takes as his example what he calls "the Peter Wimsey type of argument" :—

"In Dorothy Sayers' book *Strong Poison* we begin with Harriet Vane in the dock and a strong case against her. The police, having no prepossessions in her favour, argue thus: all the known facts are against her, therefore she is guilty. Lord Peter Wimsey, who has a prepossession in her favour, argues thus: all the known facts are against her, but she is not guilty: therefore the known facts are not *all* the facts. And then he considers what the other facts must be, and seeks them out and finds them."

These two cases have one thing in common. Both the lunatic and the lover refuse to allow anything to count against their beliefs. It is, therefore, concluded—in terms of the empiricist's dilemma—that these beliefs do not constitute assertions. In this respect also they resemble the faith of the Christian, for he will allow nothing to count against his beliefs. It seems reasonable, then, to classify all these as "presuppositions."

But consider what this implies. It implies that these beliefs are so fundamental that *nothing could constitute evidence against them*. It is not that there just *happens* to be no evidence; there *could* be none. Presuppositions are not the sort of thing about which it *makes sense* to talk of there being evidence for or against them. The whole notion of "evidence" is here inappropriate.

But in the case of religious faith, is this so? Does the Christian maintain that the fact of evil does not count against the proposition: "God loves men as a father loves his children"? Surely not: for it is this very contradiction which generates the most intractable of theological problems, the Problem of Evil. It seems to me that the Christian does not deal with this problem, as Flew suggests, by so modifying the meaning of "love" that there is no longer any contradiction between "God loves mankind" and "God permits undeserved suffering." Still less does he deny the point, the relevance of the unbeliever's objection. He is likely to feel its force all too poignantly himself. It seems to me that what lends conviction to this talk of "presuppositions" is the feeling that, come what may, a Christian must not allow his faith to be sapped.

The Christian has, indeed, made a decision and is committed; but this is not to say that there are no reasons for his decision and no grounds for his commitment. It seems to me that the thinkers I have been considering have been so deeply impressed by this fact of total commitment that they have been led to represent a fact about the believer's attitude, as if it were a fact about what he believes. In this way, the articles of the Christian creed come to be regarded as instances of a peculiar class of statements which are inherently immune from the test of experience.

I think this becomes clear if we turn again to the examples, the lunatic and the lover. The striking thing about them is how different they are; as the sane from the insane. Hare's lunatic *means* what you or I would mean if we said that all dons wanted to murder us. His expectations are what ours would be and he takes the precautions we should take. But he has no *grounds* for his assertion. His trouble is that, where dons are concerned, he can no longer assess the value of evidence. But Lord

Peter Wimsey *has* grounds for his faith in Harriet, and he admits that the police evidence is, so far as it goes, evidence against her. If he said in Court, "Nothing *could* constitute evidence against Harriet. The notion of 'evidence' simply doesn't apply here," the court would be unimpressed. What he in fact does is set to work to get evidence. But he seeks the evidence because he has faith in Harriet.

There is this further consideration. Kierkegaard (and many others) have wished to emphasize that the venture of faith calls for a risk. "Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty."

Now if what is believed has the status of a presupposition and as such is proof against any empirical test, there can be no risk. The risk depends on the "objective uncertainty." This means that (if I am right) we must go back to the answer first suggested: to accept the criterion and claim that statements about God can satisfy it. I do not myself see how we can *reject* the criterion.

At this point I ought, perhaps, to remember that I am, in Kierkegaard's phrase, an "existing individual" and give you frankly my own opinion, so far as I have been able to form one. My object hitherto (and it remains my chief object) has been to present a kind of report on the present state of the question.

It seems to me that the Empiricist's question is a pertinent one and that traditional theologians have been more aware of it than many philosophers think. For, as we have seen, the traditional answer to the question, "How can we talk about God?" is "by analogy." This seems to me to be the right answer. But, if we give it, we must recognize the danger that Flew calls attention to—the danger of "eroding" the analogy.

The typical articles of the Christian creed are, I believe, assertions, but assertions couched in "analogical" language. The believer does indeed take a risk in accepting them, for they cannot be demonstrated. Instead there is "objective uncertainty." There is a great deal that counts against Christian belief about God—notoriously, the facts of evil. But the believer does not allow these things to shake his faith. The Christian bases his belief in the existence of a loving God on the life and death of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels and interpreted in them and in the tradition of the Church. If these things had not happened, or had happened otherwise, his faith would have lacked its main foundation. But, this given, he continually finds further evidences. This is not to deny that all these events can without contradiction be interpreted differently. If a man is in doubt which interpretation to adopt, he can only go through the story again and ask himself which interpretation is the more consistent with itself and with his whole experience of life.

In drawing this analogy between faith in God and faith in a person, I must not seem to overlook the essential difference: which is the reference of Christian thinking to a Transcendent Being.

It is this reference which calls for the use of analogy. It is, perhaps, less misleading to talk, as Dr Farrer does in *The Glass of Vision*, of "images." We have reason to believe that the "saving events" of the Gospel are interpreted from the beginning; and we find them interpreted in terms of certain dominant "images" or "analogies"—the Son of God, the Good Shepherd, the Father, the Suffering Servant, the Prodigal Son.

It may be misleading to talk here of analogy, because that suggests that we are in a position to state what the analogy is—i.e. to indicate the respects in which the analogy holds and those in which it does not hold. But this is just what we cannot do. When we say that God is "just" or "merciful" or "loving" or "active," we know that His justice, mercy, love and activity are not the same as ours; but we cannot indicate with any precision what the differences are. We are thrown back on the Gospels and the Gospel parables. These we accept with their simple and direct meanings. I cannot, I think, do better than quote from a recent article by I. M. Crombie:—

"We do not know how what we call the divine wrath differs from the divine mercy (because we do not know how they respectively resemble human wrath and mercy): but we do know how what we *mean* when we talk about the wrath of God differs from what we mean when we talk about his mercy, because then we are *within* the parable, talking within the framework of admitted ignorance, in language which we accept because we trust its source. We know what is meant *in the parable*, when the father of the prodigal sees him coming a great way off and runs to meet him, and we can therefore think in terms of this image. We know that we are here promised that whenever we come to ourselves and return to God, he will come to meet us. This is enough to encourage us to return, and to make us alert to catch the signs of the divine response: but it does not lead us to presume to an understanding of the mind and heart of God."

917TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 18th MAY, 1953

Ernest White, Esq., M.B., B.S., in the Chair

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ANNUAL ADDRESS

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THE OBJECTIVE BASIS OF  
CHRISTIAN FAITH

By

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GUTHRIE, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# THE OBJECTIVE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

By PROFESSOR MALCOLM GUTHRIE, PH.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.

There have always been some who have attacked religious belief on the grounds that it is based entirely on subjective evidence, but to-day more than at any previous time we are liable to be told religion is not worthy of thoughtful men because it has no objective facts to support it. In facing this criticism from the Christian point of view it would be possible to adopt an attitude based on a claim that the Christian faith is self-verifying, and therefore charges of subjectivity are irrelevant. Nevertheless any objection to our faith must be examined, particularly if it calls into question the very basis on which we stand. Moreover, if we were to hold that its validity is properly established on subjective evidence, we should have to take up an entirely esoteric position, which would among other things completely stultify the activities of this Institute.

It is worth reminding ourselves that many of the great Christian thinkers of the past were at considerable pains to find adequate answers to the kind of objection I have referred to. Unfortunately, however, when we read the arguments put forward in earlier times, much of what was convincing then seems to have little bearing on the questions as they are now framed. This is no doubt because we are confronted by a general situation that is in many respects unique. Perhaps the greatest single factor is the modern insistence on the need for factual evidence to which I have already referred, and it is often on these grounds that we are told that our faith will not stand up to present-day tests. As a preliminary then to a discussion of our theme proper, I must ask you to bear with me while we attempt to clarify this matter of "objective facts".

For most people the sacredness of what is presented as verifiable fact is beyond all doubt. Nevertheless for our present purpose it is important to recall that very different things are to be found put together into this category. While this does not matter in some ways, it may give rise to serious problems if these facts are to be used in the search for reality. As an example we may take certain typical things that are usually presented without any clear distinction of their status as objective facts. Thus it is said to be a fact that heat produces the vaporization of liquids. Similarly it is presented as a fact that the rings of the planet Saturn rotate in a given way. In another field it is accepted as a fact that in an earlier period there was an Ice Age over parts of Britain. In some circles it is equally claimed to be a fact that the human species evolved from earlier and simpler forms of life. It is immediately evident that, ignoring the general differences of quality and application in these things normally presented as facts, they do not in any sense have the same status.

Let us think for a moment about the statement that heat produces the vaporization of liquids. This is something that falls within the experience of all observers, and to that extent is not dependent on anything other than direct observation. It is true that to understand how it happens that heat turns a liquid into vapour may call for a great deal of specialized knowledge; nevertheless this particular behaviour of a liquid when it is heated can be regarded as typical of an objective fact of the most general kind.

In contrast to the kind of fact we have just discussed, the statement that the rings of Saturn rotate involves an important difference. This is because, although it is something that can be observed, it requires the use of special equipment before the observation can be made. As a result, such a fact lies outside the experience of most people, and has to be accepted on the evidence of other observers. This, however, introduces a fresh factor, since the status of the fact necessarily depends on the trustworthiness of those who claim to have made the appropriate observations. Naturally, important statements are usually based on a number of independent observations and in this way the reliability of the reputed fact is confirmed. Nevertheless it is a characteristic of a great many of what are regarded as the objective facts of modern knowledge that they cannot be verified by most of us, and we have to rely implicitly on what other people say they have observed. Moreover, even the fullest statement of corroboratory evidence cannot eliminate the necessity of taking many of the observations on trust.

The third kind of statement, such as that there was an Ice Age over parts of Britain in an earlier period, is actually of a quite different order from either of the other two, since it is based not on direct observation but on inference. It is clear that the use of inferences of some kind is a very necessary device if any sense is to be made of the multitude of observations made by different people. Nevertheless it is always essential to distinguish between the things observed and the explanations adduced to account for them. Naturally what is inferred may in the ultimate be objective fact, but there is no means of being certain of this. Thus all the evidence points to the occurrence of an ice sheet in some previous era over what is now East Anglia. For all practical purposes, then, this particular Ice Age may be treated as an objective fact, and indeed could have actually occurred, but in reality it is nothing more than a very likely explanation of certain verifiable observations.

We need not take time to discuss the inclusion among objective facts of complexes of hypotheses and speculations such as those underlying the statement that the human species evolved from earlier and simpler forms of life. Although this kind of procedure is not uncommon in presenting what is claimed as the body of modern knowledge, it is something on which no reputable thinker would insist, once the point is clearly raised.

Here, then, is the background against which we have to consider the challenge to produce the objective facts that form the basis of our Christian faith. As there is a considerable difference in the validity of the three main kinds of fact we have discussed, we shall have to state clearly to which type our Christian evidence belongs. Broadly we shall refer to the three types as "observed" facts, "given" facts and "inferred" facts.

Clearly we shall not expect to be able to claim that the basis of Christian faith consists of observed facts, since, if so, we could indicate what they were and there would be no further problem. Nevertheless there are certain things in this connection that are germane to our subject. It is a commonplace that the observations of different people do not necessarily agree, even in those cases where a single entity only is in question. Thus to take an example from my own field, it sometimes happens that an important point in the analysis of an exotic language turns on the difference between two rather similar sounds. Now this difference may completely elude the unskilled observer, who in consequence is probably unwilling to concede that the sounds in question really are different. Someone then suggests that the matter should be decided by the use of an apparatus that will supplement the direct observations. It then turns out that not only does the instrument require skilled interpretation, but that it actually records things that are irrelevant to the point under discussion. This creates a situation that is very common in dealing with linguistic observations, where it is the relevance of an observation that is fundamentally as important as its accuracy. As a result, the sceptical unskilled person finds no difficulty in rejecting equally the interpretation of what the instrument shows and the observations that the trained observer claims to make.

This kind of state of affairs also arises when the exponents of certain creeds find themselves confronted with reputed facts that are incompatible with what they believe. In such circumstances it is either the relevance or the accuracy of the unpleasant facts that has to be rejected. Unfortunately this is something of which certain people who are anxious to defend the Christian faith are not entirely guiltless. Essentially this problem turns on the extent of the area to which a creed refers. Any ideology which claims to cover the whole realm of nature and experience, as for example dialectical materialism, cannot ignore the challenge of any observed facts that seem to contradict its tenets. This, as we know, explains why some of its adherents have found it necessary to manipulate observations within established disciplines whenever they give the lie to its tenets.

What then really is the position of the Christian faith in this respect? Does it have something to say that relates to every realm? I take it that our association with this Institute implies that we think it does. Does it then display the same rigidity as certain other systems of belief? If so, then what happens when observed fact appears to conflict with its teachings? If not, then what finality does it have, and who is to decide what modifications shall be admitted? It is at this point that we encounter the position taken up by many Christians, which is that the basis of their faith is inferred fact. Not that this is explicitly stated, for the argument runs something like this. The Christian faith works in the life of anyone who will give it a fair trial. Since then everyone who genuinely puts it to the test finds that its claims are fully borne out in their experience, therefore it must be true. As the Christian faith equally claims to provide the answers to questions about ultimate reality, it must also be true in this respect.

Clearly this appeal to experience has a considerable usefulness for all whose task it is to persuade men to accept the Christian faith, but it leaves untouched the problem of the objective basis for such faith. Indeed, this is recognized by many Christians who contend that we need not worry ourselves about producing any valid arguments, since all that matters is that Christianity supplies the only answer to human need. Nevertheless there still remains the charge that if the only evidence for our faith is in the experience of those who accept it, then there is no guarantee that we are not suffering from delusions of some kind. While we can understand and even sympathize with the attitude of the person who says, "Even if I'm deluded, it's still worth being a Christian", we cannot but be aware that it does involve an evasion of the issues we are considering.

There have been of course many who have held that the operative word for the Christian is "faith", and since faith means accepting what you cannot prove, it is wrong anyway to bother about the question of an objective basis. This is a view that is still widely held, but it is one that easily exposes Christianity to a charge of obscurantism. It is worth pointing out that such a position is not consistent with the statement in Hebrews 11: 1, where faith is defined in terms of reality. Indeed, the clear teaching of the Scriptures is that Christian faith is not credulity nor adherence to a set of doctrines, but the acceptance of facts that are of the true substance of reality. It is for this reason, of course, that our theme to-day is a proper one to engage our attention, entirely apart from any questions of apologetics.

Some reference must be made in passing to the ontological and teleological arguments that have held the field at various times. Although attempts to prove the existence of God have been made along such lines by many thinkers, they lie outside the scope of our subject for two main reasons. On the one hand, even a valid argument to show that God exists would not provide any real grounds for asserting that the Christian faith has an objective basis, if only because belief in the existence of God is by no means confined to Christians. On the other hand, as all the so-called proofs that have been put forward are the results of inferences, they can at most never consist of more than conclusions with a high degree of probability, and probability is something quite alien to the Christian faith. Indeed one of the main difficulties encountered by many people when they approach Christianity lies in its categorical assertions about reality. Quite simply, no argument is admitted. The claims embodied in the Christian faith must be accepted or rejected. This then brings into sharp focus the need to show how such a system fits in with the demand for an objective basis, and that brings us to the other kind of fact that occupies so large a place in the corpus of knowledge: the given fact.

Perhaps it would be wise to point out the difference between the claims of what is called "revealed religion" and the kind of thing I have termed "given facts". There is more than one system in the world that claims to be built on the direct revelation of truth, but it is always a feature of such a faith that it holds that God spoke to certain people in the past. In effect there is no certain means of verifying that the people in question did really hear the voice of God, and were not subject to some kind of

hallucination. In other words, to rely on revelation of that kind is to be satisfied with a basis that is ultimately subjective. The difference in the case of given facts is that here there is always an observer whose trustworthiness may be assessed. Provided that it can be shown that he reports accurately, and that he is able to distinguish the things that really matter from irrelevancies, then the facts he presents to us are likely to remain unshaken. In practice this is just what we find, that given facts are in the main more reliable even than those we discover for ourselves. And it is just here that I suggest we find the true objective basis for the Christian faith.

On the scene of history there appears a man known as Jesus of Nazareth. Among other things that make Him stand out as unique is the extraordinary claim that when He speaks about unseen realities He is doing so as an eyewitness. He asserts that unlike other men He has come into the world from heaven, and did not begin His existence at birth. He says that He was a contemporary of a man who died centuries before. He speaks of God and angels in the way that one refers to a familiar environment. He talks about the nature of man and his ultimate destiny in terms that imply a full knowledge of all the facts. And in a breath-taking statement He calmly says that in effect it is impossible to distinguish between Him and God. Finally, after being arraigned on a fictitious charge, He offers no resistance, but is executed, and then comes to life again, just as He Himself has predicted He would.

Here then is a situation totally different from any other, which has been expressed in the form of a trilemma, as indeed it is. Unless it is possible to demonstrate that Jesus was either deluded or was deliberately making false claims—and the one fact that He rose from the dead disposes of those possibilities—then He must be taken at His face value. And that means that He is God, just simply that, neither more nor less. Once we reach this position, which is the only possible one, then we have the perfect eyewitness who can tell us all we want to know, or rather all we are *able* to know, about the facts of ultimate reality. It is, of course, in the acceptance of Jesus as the one whose given facts are totally reliable that what we term Christian faith operates. Nevertheless I suggest that while we need not deprecate the common meaning given to faith in this connection as accepting something on trust, in effect we are confronted in Jesus with an inescapable conclusion. While there is no question that many who do not accept His claims believe that they are sincere in their doubts, for my part I am certain that when all the facts are known, it will be seen that unwillingness to accept Jesus as God is always due to a dislike of some of the implications of doing so.

If what I have said about Jesus accurately summarizes the position, then certain things inevitably follow. On the one hand the basis of the Christian faith has an objective quality shared by no other system of thought. We do not believe in God because of any argument or preconceived idea. We do so because God Himself has reported His existence to us, not merely by revelation to any seer, but in person. When we speak of the creation of the world we are doing so not because it is in our creed, but because we have been told of it by the Creator Himself. We refer to

heaven, not as the Christian version of the Elysian Fields, but as the realm from which Jesus came and to which He returned after He rose from the dead. We have to accept the existence of hell, not because we cannot free ourselves from primitive superstitions, but because Jesus told us about it, and He must know. We know that as Christians we have a new and indestructible life, not because of any subjective experience, but because Jesus told us it would be so. We can speak of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, not as something that has been demonstrated, but as one of the "given" objective facts received from God Himself.

I am fully aware that the objector will retort that all this depends on the accuracy of the records about Jesus, and that this accuracy has been called into question. This is obviously not a proper occasion on which to array the answers to these points. Nevertheless, in the interests of our theme we may recall in passing that the central issue, the claim of Jesus to be God, if untrue, is so fantastic that the credulity required to believe that anyone invented it is vastly greater than the faith required to accept it. On this question, however, we should obviously not be surprised at attempts to discredit the sacred record, since anything which will enable men to avoid the plain issue centred in Jesus will always gain currency. We are sometimes told that in effect we have shifted our ground from an infallible book to an infallible Christ, but this is a ridiculous charge, since we have always known that Jesus was infallible, else He could not be God. Moreover we shall always maintain that as God came into the world at a fixed point in history, He must of necessity have ensured that there was an absolutely trustworthy record of His coming available to later generations.

One aspect of what I have said bears very much on the activities of this Institute. Since the objective basis of our Christian faith consists of facts given to us by the Creator of this universe, we know in advance that nothing that can be discovered will ever conflict with what He has told us. There is an absoluteness about our faith such that we might be tempted to say, if the facts do not agree with our faith, so much the worse for the facts. What we do say is, that when the facts seem to disagree with the basis of the Christian faith, then there is something wrong, not with the faith but with the things that look like facts. For these reasons, then, we shall continue to look fearlessly on all the discoveries that are made, knowing full well that the universe speaks with the same voice as the Christ, since it was made by Him. Unlike those who accept any other system, we shall never need to ignore or manipulate facts, since we base our beliefs on things given by Him Who knows all facts as they really are.

In conclusion, I should like to refer to the place of Christian experience in the scheme of things as I have attempted to outline them. Clearly our experience cannot be other than an integral part of the pattern of Christianity. Where then does it fit in? It seems to me that the answer to this question is found implied throughout the Scriptures. The teaching of the Bible requires the implicit acceptance of the objective facts that God has made known to us. Along with this there is a continual exhortation to us to adopt the right attitude to the facts that are given. And this gives rise to what I call the trident of Christian experience. At the one end

there are the objective facts, at the other the subjective, and the link between these is the attitude of the individual. Things being as they are, the given facts found in the Bible are unalterable; the only variable factor is in the people who are confronted with these facts. According as the facts are given their rightful place or not, so the result in the personality of the person concerned is inevitable. As an illustration of this I may remind you of the words of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." The objective facts given to us here are God's kingdom and God's justice. The attitude we are commanded to take is to make these things our primary object in life. The result is that the necessities of life are guaranteed. From one angle, then, we might say that our experience confirms the objective quality of the Christian faith, but, as I have tried to show, it is not proper to speak of confirmation in this connection, since as God Himself in the person of Jesus is the source of our facts, they are never open to question. For this reason neither can the discoveries of men in the natural realm disturb the basis of our faith, nor can our own experiences establish it. It is founded on realities unfolded to us by Him Who is the origin of all reality, and indeed it may be that the basis of our faith is the only thing that really merits the title of objective fact.

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#### CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Dr. WHITE said: We have listened with pleasure and with great interest to Professor Malcolm Guthrie's address, and we are grateful to him for sparing time in the midst of a very busy life to prepare and deliver the Annual Address.

The distinction he makes between three ways in which facts come to be accepted is of great importance as an aid to clear thinking. Of the three ways he describes, namely, direct observation, authority, and inference, by which we may ascertain reality, it seems that the last two categories are concerned in Christianity.

We first obtain our knowledge of Jesus by the New Testament documents. All that scholars have done to establish the authenticity of the original documents has added greatly to the weight of authority which leads us to believe in Christianity. As Professor Guthrie has demonstrated, the objective basis of Christianity rests in the firm foundation of Christ, His life, His teaching, His death, and His resurrection. We have here something much more than subjective experience. We are brought face to face with historic facts which challenge acceptance and demand interpretation.

All important as this is, I am sure that Professor Guthrie would agree that Christian faith rests on something more than belief in the historic facts about Jesus recorded in the Gospels. It is conceivable that a man might accept the historic facts, and yet not be a Christian. As Dean Inge points out in his book, *Faith and its Psychology*, in addition to belief in the historic Jesus, faith includes an apprehension of a living Christ. If faith were only a belief in an historic Person, it might become static, while faith in a living Christ renders it dynamic by bringing it into touch with a

living Power. It might be said that this experience is subjective, but surely some objective evidence for the reality of Christian faith is to be found in the effect it produces in the lives and conduct of those who claim it. All through the centuries of the Christian era down to the present time, the lives of men and women have been completely changed by their faith in a living Saviour. This is something more than subjective evidence. In his oft-quoted book on the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James states that the effects of religious conversion demand something more than a psychological explanation. He says that it is reasonable to assume that the sub-liminal personality has come into relationship with a Power greater than itself.

This is not the place in which to pursue this line of thought further, and we are grateful to Professor Guthrie for stressing the great fundamental fact that Christianity is centred in Christ. Herein it differs from all other religions. Most of the world's great religions have expressed belief in God; Christianity alone centres in a living Saviour Who once appeared in history to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

# JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

By

REV. H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D.

## DISCUSSION

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. J. Jocz, Ph.D.) said: It is a privilege to take the Chair for a friend of many years' standing. I read Mr. Ellison's paper both with interest and sympathy. I admire his erudition and up-to-dateness. Though specializing in Old Testament studies he appears to be well acquainted with the literature which by right belongs to the New Testament faculty. He also shows a fine grasp of the problem with which he is dealing.

There are two reasons why I am personally involved in the subject under discussion. First, I have myself dealt with it in my book, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (pp. 17-22 ; 29-33 ; etc.) ; secondly, my paper on *Religion and the Gospel* read before this Institute a year ago closely bears upon the problem we are considering to-night.

The traditional Christian attitude to Pharisaism is derived from Matthew 23 where Pharisee and hypocrite appear to be synonyms. Scholars, specially Jewish scholars, have felt this to be an injustice to the Pharisaic party. This is a justified objection. It will be difficult to maintain even by the most prejudiced that the pious Pharisee was more a hypocrite than the sinner and the publican. The choice therefore before us is: (1) either to regard the references as unauthentic ; (2) or to accept them at their face-value and to condemn the Pharisaic party *en bloc*, as the Church has done for many centuries; (3) or else, to modify the accusation by saying that the attack was directed against the *bad* Pharisees only. Students of New Testament history have made their choice in accordance with their predilections. These are reasonable enough explanations on the historical plane. But there is also a *theological* aspect closely linked to our Lord's life and ministry. In this context the problem assumes new dimensions. Here the answer is not deduced from a few scattered references but from the whole drama of our Lord's struggle. It is Karl Barth's peculiar contribution to our understanding of New Testament history to have formulated with such precision the dialectic of the situation : religious man *vis à vis* the Son of God. According to this view our Lord's attitude to the Pharisees is not conditioned by their moral failure. It is not any more a question of *bad* Pharisees versus *good* Pharisees. Before the Son of God all human values stand under judgment. The touchstone is relationship to God in terms of autonomy or surrender. The danger of the

Pharisee is the danger of every religious man. Whenever religion becomes an end in itself, a means of security, a "position" *vis à vis* God, Pharisaism is re-enacted. Thus we uncover the antithesis between religion and Gospel, "works" and faith.

Students have looked upon Pharisaism as the peculiar phenomenon of first-century Judaism; but thanks to Barth's insight we are discovering it to be inherent in the religious situation of man of all ages. Herein lies the strange perversity of evil that even man's goodness, piety, religion, become a snare to him.

Mr. Ellison, like a true Englishman, has tried hard to steer a middle course. He has also tried to soften the shock of his final conclusions by suggesting a milder word for the Greek *ὑποκριτής* as if play-acting were a more palatable description of a Pharisee.

But I rejoice to see that the theologian in him has won the upper hand over the historian and scholar. The New Testament is no source book for comparative religion. Who the Pharisees were we know from Rabbinic writings. The New Testament is a book where we discover *ourselves*—religious people—under judgment and grace. The problem of the religious man we find exemplified in the person of Saul the Pharisee who only by surrendering his religious position, his orthodoxy and his theology, could become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Thus a purely historical enquiry becomes a personal challenge regarding man's real position before God. We are grateful to Mr. Ellison for having raised the issue with such clarity and force.

Dr. PAUL LEVERTOFF said: Assuming that in Matt. 23 we have the *ipsissima verba* of our Lord, we must remember that *corruptio optimi pessima*, and Jesus had to deal with the Pharisees as He found them. The later Rabbinism is no better evidence for that of our Lord's day than the Catholicism of the counter-Reformation for the later mediaeval teaching. For the Pharisaism of our Lord's day His teaching is the best contemporary evidence that we possess, and St. Paul's the next best. Now, St. Paul does not say that the Pharisees were hypocrites in the sense that they only pretended to be pious, but were not so in reality. On the contrary, they were full of zeal for God (as he himself was), but without understanding. How are we then to explain our Lord's seemingly harsh language? Far from being hostile to the Pharisees from the beginning, Jesus appealed first to the religious Jews in their synagogues, and not to the "publicans and harlots." The Gospel story shows this as plainly as such a parable as that of Matthew 22: 1-9. If He spoke differently at the end, was there not a cause?

We must remember that our Lord spoke as a prophet, and did not all the prophets speak "harshly" against the spiritual leaders of Israel? Read Isaiah's denunciation in chapter 1, for instance. And as to "hypocrisy", cf. Isaiah 58: 1-7. But Jesus spoke not only as a prophet but as the Messiah, "the last Redeemer," in contrast to Moses who was called by the Rabbis

“the first Redeemer”. Now, in the so-called “Song of Moses” (Deut. 32 : 1-43), Moses at the close of his life sang of Israel’s ingratitude and lapse into idolatry, and of God’s goodness. The poem begins reproachfully ; but tenderness and pity prevail above severity, and towards the close the strain rises into one of positive encouragement and promise. Similarly, Jesus, “the last Redeemer,” in the last days of His ministry, denounces the spiritual leaders of the people with seeming harshness, and yet with tender pity He laments over Jerusalem.

By the way, we do not know which word Jesus used in Aramaic for “hypocrites”. In the only passages in the O.T. Greek where it occurs, Job 34 : 30 and 36 : 13, it stands for the Hebrew *chaneph*, “wicked” (“causing a *hypocrite* to be king” ; “and the *hypocrites* in heart will array wrath”). In the Talmud we find a remarkable saying ascribed to King Jannaeus, who was supposed to have said to his wife Salome Alexandra before he died: “Be not afraid of the Pharisees, nor of those who are not Pharisees, but of those ‘coloured ones’ (i.e. hypocrites) who do the work of Zimri (i.e. are immoral, cf. Num. 25 : 13), and yet expect reward from God, as if they were full of zeal like Phinehas.”

MR. A. KROLENBAUM said : My problem, as a Hebrew-Christian, is how to live the Christian life not away from my people, but as a member of it. I must, therefore, avoid saying anything which might be construed as a denigration of the Jews.

First, I would like to ask Mr. Ellison to revise his paper with regard to the Apostle Peter. In Acts 4 : 13 he is referred to as an *ἰδιώτης*, which connotation is also used in Rabbinical writings, such as the Talmud and the Midrashim, corresponding to our word “layman”. The saying “Do not despise the blessing of a *hedyot* (layman)” is quite well known among Talmudical Jews. “*Am ha'aretz*”, the expression used by Mr. Ellison, would describe the Apostle as having been an “ignoramus”, for which there is no warrant either in Scripture or elsewhere.

Montefiore, in my opinion, is receiving much more than his due from Christian scholars. True, he idealizes the Pharisees, but he himself found their teaching too much of a burden. The Liberal Synagogue, of which he was one of the founders, retains precious little either of the teachings or observances of the Pharisees, whom he would have us believe to have been such fine people, rejoicing in the commandments of God.

No, the Jewish people as a whole never acquiesced in Pharisaism. Often, in order to maintain their hold on the masses of the Jewish people, the Pharisees resorted to excommunication (John 16 : 2), and even invoked the power of the State. In the nineteenth century it happened again and again that young Jews, wishing to study other than Rabbinics, were handed over to the Russian Army, where they were kept for twenty-five long years doing military service !

Pharisaism was never voluntarily accepted by the Jewish people nor did this bring real joy to its adherents. The Hassidic movement was, perhaps,

the last mass movement on the part of religious Jews to break with Pharisaism in order to return from a static soul-destroying form of religion to a dynamic and, in a measure, prophetic form of religion.

The Pharisees, no doubt, contained many sincere devotees, but as a system it tended to warp the religious spirit, producing fanaticism.

Mr. W. E. FILMER said : I cannot see how any case can be made out for white-washing the Pharisees without rejecting the testimony of all four Gospels (cf. John 9 with the Synoptic records). The three quotations given on page 36 do not seem to me to represent a biased or distorted view, but to state much the same opinion of the Pharisees that Jesus himself gave, although they do not go so far as to contain a condemnation quite so harsh as that of calling the Pharisees a generation of vipers fit only for the damnation of hell (Matt. 23 : 33).

The suggestion at the top of p. 38 that the Pharisees were admired by the bulk of the people is surprising. A class who evidently made up rules and regulations that had no authority in the law of Moses (Matt. 15 : 3-6) would be no more popular than our own civil servants who issue orders in council which have no authorization from Parliament. Nor would their incessant fault-finding with harmless persons make them any more admired than does the behaviour of our own government inspectors. That the masses refused to observe the laws of purity outside of Jerusalem (p. 38), when they were not under the supervision of the Pharisees, seems to indicate scorn rather than admiration : those who evade income tax to-day do not do so out of admiration for income-tax inspectors. The impression given by the Gospels is that the people hated the Pharisees; thus when the condemnation of Matthew 23 was delivered to the multitude, this same crowd became a firm bodyguard to our Lord and hindered his arrest.

Mr. Ellison tries to make out that the Pharisees were not hypocrites, and that Jesus did not charge them with being hypocrites. He defines a hypocrite (p. 41) as a man who, being evil, does good that men may consider him good. Now Jesus called the Pharisees *ὑποκριτής* because they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while their inward part was full of wickedness, because they paid tithes but omitted the weightier matters of the law, because they were like white-washed sepulchres while being full of uncleanness. Each one of these charges corresponds exactly with Mr. Ellison's own definition of a hypocrite, so regardless of the meaning of the Greek word *ὑποκριτής* Jesus clearly did accuse the Pharisees of being hypocrites in the meaning of Mr. Ellison's definition. If, as is suggested, the word hypocrite has acquired its present meaning from the description of the Pharisees given by Jesus, surely this is the clearest possible proof that the Pharisees were hypocrites in the modern meaning of the word, and that in using the word *ὑποκριτής* Jesus meant hypocrites.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. G. E. H. FROHWEIN wrote: While I agree with the general thesis of Mr. Ellison's paper, I feel that some further comment on our Lord's words in Matthew 23 is called for. Inadequate attention is generally given to vv. 11-13 in the discussion on our Lord's attack on the Pharisees. The background of the attack is suggested by vv. 11, 12, and the real cause by v. 13.

Jesus' wrath and indignation were not caused primarily or mainly by the Pharisees' "play-acting", but by the fact that they "shut the kingdom of heaven against men"; they did not go in themselves nor did they allow others to enter, particularly the poor and simple, for whom our Lord came.

The fact that the Pharisees' shift of emphasis from God's mercy to works that might earn reward was probably only half realized by themselves greatly increased the danger of their living in a fools' paradise, from which they could only be saved by the harshest of words.

In any case I believe that our Lord's harshness is largely, if not entirely, explained by the Pharisees' exclusion of the 'am ha-'aretz as such from the Kingdom. An 'am ha-'aretz had to become something like a Pharisee to become acceptable; since few could, the majority were automatically excluded. As far as I see it, the very hard words concern mostly that attitude which made the little one to stumble (Matt. 18: 16; cf. Matt. 25: 45). I think here was the deepest clash with the Pharisees; because Jesus came to say that the Kingdom belongs to the little child and to him who is like him.

Mr. HERMAN NEWMARK wrote: Mr. Ellison's article is certainly thought-provoking, but I am not quite convinced.

It is most difficult at this date to judge the motives of the Pharisees of the New Testament, but his weakest point to me is to condemn such teachers as Edersheim—as if they knew little!

Paul says of his Pharisaic self-righteousness that it was as dung when he knew real righteousness in Christ. The Talmud recognizes seven kinds of Pharisees, and speaks in more scathing terms of some of them than does our Lord in the New Testament.

Mr. TITTERINGTON wrote: It is no easy task that Mr. Ellison has set himself, to attempt to get our understanding of the Pharisees into proper perspective, and find out what is the real essence of the Pharisaism that was so sternly denounced by our Lord.

On the one hand we have to make room for men of sincerity such as Nicodemus, as well as Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus.

But on the other hand we have to allow full weight to all that our Lord said about the Pharisees, especially in Matthew 23 and Luke 11. The picture is one that is absolutely consistent throughout; the charges are quite specific, and we cannot and must not water them down. We cannot get away from them by an appeal to language.

These charges included ostentation and externalism ; inconsistency (“ they say and do not ”) ; together with other charges more serious and fundamental —“ they devour widows’ houses,” “ they make the commandments of God of none effect by their tradition . . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,” “ they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others,” “ they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.”

Here, perhaps, we have the crux of the matter. They were so wedded to their traditions that they were not open to the truth, and not only rejected the truth themselves, but influenced others to do so too. Our Lord said of them that they were like whited sepulchres, *which indeed appear beautiful outwardly*, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. It was to a Pharisee that our Lord said “ Ye must be born again ”.

John the Baptist put his finger on the point when he enjoined upon the Pharisees to “ bring forth fruits meet for repentance ”. Our Lord referred to this teaching of the Baptist when He said (Luke 7 : 30), “ The Pharisees and lawyers *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, being not baptized of him.” The words of St. Paul are very similar (Acts 13 : 46), “ The Word of God . . . ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.”

The Pharisees’ attitude to the truth culminated when they joined in rejecting and crucifying Him Who said, “ I am the Truth.”

The meaning of the word “ hypocrite ” can probably be seen best from a passage like Matthew 6 : 2, 5, 16, where it plainly means “ showman.”

We need to take to heart Mr. Ellison’s salutary warning that there may be something of the Pharisee in all of us. It is terribly easy to pray, “ Lord, I thank Thee I am not as this Pharisee.”

#### AUTHOR’S REPLY

There are two minor criticisms of my material, both apparently based on misunderstanding. Mr. Krolenbaum may be correct in his criticism of Montefiore, but except in two cases where he was mentioned because of his admiration for Christ, he only appears as joint-author of an admittedly standard anthology of early rabbinic literature. Similarly Mr. Newmark failed to realize that Edersheim’s vast knowledge of rabbinic literature was not being called in question. When he became a Christian, the century-old Christian traditional view of the Pharisees had hardly begun to be challenged, and he took the view over with much more that was traditional.

Far more important is Mr. Krolenbaum’s personal rejection of the modern version of Pharisaism, but in separating the Hassidic movement from Pharisaism he shows that he has really missed the point at issue. The Hassidim were as much in the Pharisaic tradition as their chief opponents, the Mithnaggedim ; the two parties merely represented the opposite poles of one Judaism. His objection is only one more example of how those that

are really acquainted with the facts of Judaism try to meet the problem raised by our Lord's words by illegitimately trying to equate Pharisaism with something less than Rabbinic Judaism. His examples of rabbinic intolerance have no bearing on whether they were hypocrites. The rabbinic use of 'am ha-'aretz changed for the worse after the rebellion of Bar Kochba (A.D. 132-135). There can be little doubt that one who spoke as did Peter in Acts 15: 10 would have been reckoned among them before that date.

I am very grateful to Dr. Jocz and Dr. Levertoff for their contributions. They are both experts on the earlier rabbinic literature, and coming to the subject from entirely different angles they have confirmed my main thesis.

I am sure Dr. Jocz is wrong in deprecating my "middle course". The paper has an apologetic, not an exegetical purpose, and it is useless to pursue an apologetic goal along the high, *a priori* road of dogmatic theology. Similarly I believe him mistaken in questioning my linguistic approach to ὑποκριτής. Dr. Levertoff is correct in stating that we do not know what word our Lord used in Aramaic—though it is always dangerous to assume a complete lack of teaching in Greek—but for the purposes of this paper it was far more important to establish that our Lord was not calling the Pharisees hypocrites in the modern sense of the word than to fix the exact nuance of the word in His mouth. The disproof of my contention must come from linguistic evidence, not from traditional or theological interpretations of the Pharisees.

Dr. Levertoff is also correct in indicating that most of the rabbinic material quoted is at least a century later than the time of our Lord. That is one reason why I deliberately avoided any detailed reference to Matthew 23 (in this connection I am very grateful to Dr. Frohwein for his thoughtful contribution, which calls for a far more careful consideration than can be given it here). It has, I believe, been proved that Pharisaism, at all periods for which we have historical evidence, showed the same attitude towards God and man, and therefore the evidence is valid for our purpose. Indeed, had Pharisaism been *fundamentally* as evil in the days of our Lord as is sometimes suggested, it is hard to see how it could have risen to the levels to which its second- and third-century literature bear evidence.

Mr. Filmer too has done much to support my case. He is a whole-hearted supporter of the traditional view, but unlike most he has had the courage to think out how the ordinary man must have reacted to these creations of popular imagination. But historical evidence shows him to be wrong. He has not weighed the argument on pp. 37 f., which is expressly confirmed by Josephus, ". . . but the Pharisees have the multitude on their side" (*Ant.* XIII, x, 6). The Pharisees are by no means the only examples in the history of religion of unbending rigorists who have been respected and supported, but neither loved nor whole-heartedly obeyed. Mr. Filmer does not realize that the motive of the sins he enumerates need not have been deceit, and without this will to deceive, they were not hypocrites. Indeed both he and Mr. Titterton, in his very carefully weighed remarks, overlook that when Christ is speaking, the standard of judgment is not man's but God's. Both to

the Pharisees and to most of their contemporaries the faults were normally venial or even invisible ; to God they were sins of the deepest dye. It is one thing to say Amen to God's verdict ; it is another to interpret God's verdict in the terms of human judgment.

# THE CAUSES OF MODERN UNBELIEF

By REV. A. GARFIELD CURNOW

## DISCUSSION

The Chairman (Dr. C. T. Cook) said: We have to thank Mr. Curnow for an able and comprehensive analysis of the causes of modern unbelief. I suppose it is true to say that since the days of the Apostles, much professed scepticism has been based upon ignorance of the true character of God's self-revelation; and it seems to be generally agreed that such ignorance was never more widespread than it is to-day. It is not only that people do not understand the Gospel; they are often exceedingly naïve in their ideas of science. They unthinkingly accept the dogmatic assurances of Dr. Julian Huxley, and men of his school, that Scientific Humanism is adequate to meet man's every need.

I am glad that Mr. Curnow has dealt so cogently with the fallacious allegation of certain psychologists to the effect that all reasoning in defence of the Christian faith is merely the expression of wishful thinking. Only recently I came across a shrewd observation of Dr. C. E. M. Joad in refutation to this very point. In his book, *The Recovery of Belief*, he says, "So far from my own religious belief being the result of what the psychologists call wishful thinking, I am disposed to doubt whether, if my wishes had their way, I should to-day be trying to practise Christianity. For while it is true that my intellect is in the main convinced, my wishes—what I suppose Christianity would call 'the natural man'—protest."

Mr. Curnow's reference to the effective rejoinder to the objection that "Man is a speck of dust upon a speck of dust", recalls Pascal's remark: "Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed."

Few of us, I imagine, will dispute Mr. Curnow's concluding argument that much of the prevailing unbelief is moral in its origin. Here again, Dr. Joad may be quoted by way of illustration. He tells us that his conversion began with an awakening to his own sinfulness: "Let it suffice then to say," he points out, "that my eyes were gradually opened to the extent of my own sinfulness in thought, word and deed; so that finding that it was only with great difficulty and effort that I could constrain myself to even the most modest degree of virtue, and that very rarely, I came whole-heartedly to endorse the account of me given in the English Book of Common Prayer" (*The Recovery of Belief*, p. 65).

The paper has dealt with the causes rather than with the consequences of unbelief, but it may not be out of place to point to the state of the world to-day as affording a grim commentary on what it means for men to reject

the higher meaning of life. Refusal to recognize a divine Providence in human affairs, so far from turning this world into a paradise, as Communism would have us believe, is turning it into something like a hell upon earth. Denial of God and of a future life has carried with it a denial of all transcendent standards of right and justice and of the value of human personality. The individual is sacrificed for the sake of an abstraction called the State: he is the exploited victim of the brute law of force. It recalls a saying of an ancient sophist, Thrasymachus, that justice is simply the advantage of the powerful.

Mr. W. J. MOYNIHAN said: Is not one of the causes of modern unbelief the withholding of the gift of faith by God? We know that faith is the gift of God, so why does He blame man for not possessing it? Man's unbelief is certainly blameworthy, but how does one explain the mystery? How does one reconcile the doctrine of God's sovereignty on the one hand and man's responsibility on the other?

Mr. A. H. BOULTON said: First of all I should like to express my thanks to the Rev. A. Garfield Curnow for his paper, which I have read with very great interest. He is to be congratulated not only upon his erudition, but also upon the thoughtful way in which he has faced this matter.

I have two questions which I would like to put to Mr. Curnow in connection with the subject-matter of his paper, and upon which I hope he will be able to express an opinion out of his long experience.

The first is this. We all recognize that attendance at public worship is incomparably less general now than it was a generation or more ago, and that this fact is often regarded as indicating a decay of Christian belief. Fifty years ago, however, attendance at public worship was a matter of social custom, whilst to-day it has largely ceased to be so. To what extent is this change of social custom to be accepted as evidence of a change in the measure of belief? Is unbelief really more prevalent to-day than it was in other periods?

The second question is allied to this. How does Mr. Curnow feel that the younger generation to-day stands in the matter of belief? Is there, in his opinion, a tendency for the student age group to-day to be more accessible to religious thought than the last generation was at that age?

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said: Might we not perhaps add yet another cause of modern unbelief—that which might be described as “the competition of the secular”? Or perhaps it might be more correct to say that this has tended to bring to light chronic unbelief which previously was not so manifest.

Before the industrialization and urbanization of the masses, life was much more leisurely. Many people then went to church as a welcome diversion, or because it was the only intellectual or cultural pursuit open to them. It did not necessarily follow that they had deep and sincere religious convictions.

The tempo of modern life has changed all that. Modern inventions have provided a multiplicity of diversions which are eagerly seized upon by millions the nature of whose work makes them feel the need of such diversion all the more. The result is that, to many such, the continual round of work alternating with a variety of interests gives the illusion of a complete life, so that religion appears an irrelevance.

The cinema, the radio, the football pools, the greyhound racing track and the Sunday newspaper—these have the power to absorb a person's interests, so that he has neither the time nor the inclination for serious thinking. The secularization of the entire community with its deadening effect on spiritual life is the biggest challenge which the Church has to face to-day.

Mr. E. E. OAKES said: I have read the paper on the "Causes of Modern Unbelief", and am most grateful to the Rev. A. Garfield Curnow for a very clear presentation of the facts.

The paper generally is in accordance with my own experience, but there is one section with which I was somewhat disappointed, although I felt while reading it that my understanding and the author's intentions might be at variance. I refer to section 4 on page 58.

The author is at some pains to refute the argument that "the noble conception of Deity gradually arrived at in the course of human thought is discredited because it can be traced back to lowly beginnings in animism and fetishism and the like". There seems to be some confusion of thought here. If indeed such is the history of our idea of God, then, however exalted that idea may now appear to be, it is based on very insecure foundations, and I see no reason to accept the claim that the above contention is absurd. If the writer accepts it he is in fact supporting the evolutionary idea of religious development which he has attacked in the previous paragraph! To use his own quotation, "God is for ever unknown and unknowable except so far as He reveals Himself."

So, therefore, if our conceptions of Deity *can* be traced back to lowly beginnings in animism, etc., they have no greater claim to truth than had their forebears.

I would humbly remind the author that such has not been the history of our knowledge of God, as is made clear, not only in the Bible, but also by the modern researches of Langdon and Schmidt. They were convinced that the history of religion was of degradation from an original revelation of the true God, and that any truth in our present conception is derived from that revelation and not from a gradual growth. Langdon makes this clear when writing in *The Evangelical Quarterly* in 1937:—"Darwinian evolution applied to the origin and progress of religion can only have one result: it must destroy the faith of mankind that there is any reality in religion at all."

I would therefore suggest that those who use the argument stated in Section 4 of the paper are in error, not so much in their logic as in their facts.

Mr. R. MACGREGOR said: One root cause of modern unbelief is destructive criticism. Its effect is to cause a man to say, "If the Bible is untrue why should I read it?"

Mr. J. PURDUE said: One cause of modern unbelief is possibly due to the pulpit. There is a little textual preaching, and very little expository preaching.

Mr. WALLIS said: Acts 2 points to one cause of decline in belief: the lack of a vitality of faith in a living church. With so many half-dead people how can we *expect* people to believe? A lack of a living testimony is one of the main causes of unbelief.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. R. J. C. HARRIS wrote: I enjoyed and profited from Mr. Curnow's paper, but I fear that his section 3 on pp. 53-54 is far too sweeping, and may give offence.

Newton is a very unfortunate example of an individual whose "engrossment in science . . . tended to rob him of competence in fields other than his own". I am not so sure that Newton's field was primarily "science". There are good reasons for believing that theology—in the widest sense—was his first preoccupation. Raven in *Science, Religion and the Future* points out (p. 24) that "the early scientists, whether in Europe generally or in this country, were Christians and in many cases clergy;" and again the fact that theological questions appeared to occupy Newton's later years—as witnessed by his writing—is *not* evidence that he had lately *turned* to theology or that he was not competent to discuss theological questions. Did not his contemporaries do similar things in different circumstances just because there was *no* question of specializing in those days? Knowledge was a unity.

It is also misleading to assert that the judgments of specialists on anything beside their own specialities are "less valuable even than ordinary men's". Why "less"? Surely in respect of "other" things they are *ordinary* men with, if anything, a bias in the direction of "more", since some, if not all, of them will have been taught to think.

What Mr. Curnow is hitting at, and rightly, is that the *prestige* of a specialist in his speciality tends to add disproportionate weight to his judgments in other matters. It is not true to suggest, with Fosdick, that any physicist (e.g.) is *a priori* disqualified from talking "wisely" on politics, literature or religion.

He may not be able to talk about religion like a theologian, but he may yet talk "wisely" about it as a Christian; he may not be able to talk politics with the authority (*sic*!) of a politician but he may yet talk about politics "wisely", as a voter.

The important question surely is that of the *attitude* of the specialist to problems outside his field.

Mr. B. B. KNOPP wrote: The Rev. A. Garfield Curnow is to be congratulated on a workmanlike analysis of the causes of modern unbelief. Within his self-chosen limits he has produced an essay which goes to the root of the matter and with the great bulk of which all Christians can cordially agree. The Institute is indebted to him.

I feel, however, that one or two matters require comment: in omitting any direct reference to the rejection of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible by many modern leaders of the various Churches he has, I think, failed to put his finger on the greatest single cause of modern apostasy.

If, as we very well may, we define unbelief as the rejection generally of the paramount authority of the Bible, and the rejection specifically of the Gospel offer of a remedy for sin, then if we trace this rejection to its source we are on the way to a solution of the primary problem. The cause of the rejection of the Gospel offer is given by Paul in 2 Cor. 4 : 4 : "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." The same cause also undoubtedly accounts for the rejection of the Bible as a whole. But active aiders and abettors are (1) the men of materialistic science who in the nineteenth century and since have seized with alacrity what they thought was an opportunity to turn God out of His creation, and (2) those ecclesiastics who are ever ready to trim their sails to the latest scientific breeze. If these latter reject the Bible it is no wonder that sinful men gratefully do likewise.

There are one or two instances where Mr. Curnow might have clarified the position further :

On page 53 he mentions "Jonah's whale", and appears to suggest that this is a "superseded aspect of religion". But we make a great mistake if we reject as unreliable any part of the Old Testament. The attitude of our Lord to it should be sufficient to determine that of His followers, and Jonah's whale has profound symbolic significance in connection with the death and resurrection of our Lord Himself (see Matt. 12 : 40).

In remarking on page 57 that revelation was not the dictation of writings nor the communication of information, Mr. Curnow might have made it clear that (a) the revelation was given to men in the words God intended to be used (see Matt. 22 : 32, use of present and not past tense ; and Gal. 3 : 16, use of singular and not plural), and (b) the revelation did not contain inaccurate information.

In spite of what the author says on page 58, if the origin of the Christian conception of God could indeed be traced to animism and fetishism then it would be discredited. The true answer to this favourite evolutionary allegation is that in man's very early history, even outside the Bible, there are indications of a pure conception of one supreme God. Animism was the nadir of man's conception, not its origin.

Lt.-Col. L. MERSON DAVIES wrote: I agree with the author that the cause of modern unbelief lies mainly in the will. Both the cause and the effects of that

unbelief were clearly predicted in Scripture (e.g., 2 Tim. 3: 1 to 4: 4; 2 Pet. 3: 3-17; etc.), which showed that men in the "last days" would be evolutionists, basing their beliefs upon the unproved and unprovable dogma of Continuity. As a geologist, dealing with the remote past, I am continually faced by that dogma and its corollaries, which are precisely as described in Scripture eighteen centuries in advance. For discussion of this, see my papers bearing on the subject (*Journ. Trans. Vict. Inst.*, 58, 1926, pp. 228 ff.; 61, 1929, pp. 191 ff.; 62, 1930, pp. 62 ff.; etc.). It is significant that Peter tells us to remember the dogma of Continuity "first", when considering the rise of unbelief in "the last days". He calls that dogma "the error" (Gr. *planē*) "of the wicked" in those days. Similarly Paul indicates the basic position of a "strong delusion" (Gr. *planē*) which God would send upon men in the last days, because they would not receive "the love of The Truth" that they might be saved (2 Thes. 2: 10-12).

Belief in Continuity necessitates belief in wholesale organic evolution, which discredits early Genesis by teaching that man has risen, not fallen. So it undermines all belief in man's need of an Incarnate God to save him, and leads to denial of any coming judgment or perdition of the unsaved.

It is significant that although propagandists like Prof. D. M. S. Watson and Dr. Julian S. Huxley are allowed to broadcast assertions that evolution is now proved, the B.B.C. refuse to allow opposing scientists like Dewar and myself to broadcast the true facts, and expose the indefensible nonsense given out by the propagandists. Here is direct fulfilment of Paul's statement that men in the last days would deliberately turn away their ears from Bible Truth, and would heap to themselves teachers of "fables". For these endless evolutionary fictions are literally Gospel-discrediting fables, or fanciful stories about the past.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

I agree with Dr. Cook that "Scientific Humanism" is indeed one of the main perils of our day. But perhaps "materialistic humanism" would be a better name for it—more truly descriptive. I am grateful for the confirmatory references to Dr. Joad. I had not read his book at the time of writing my Essay, or might well have brought these in.

In reply to Mr. Moynihan I should say that faith is a universal possession. Everybody has it and everybody uses it—in one way or another. But it may be used in an unworthy and a degrading way, as well as in a worthy and an ennobling way. One man believes in luck and superstition, another in truth and God. The former is using his faith-faculty wrongly.

In reply to Mr. Boulton I should say:

(1) The slump in attendance at public worship is probably largely a result of changed social custom, and, as such, has no necessary relation to belief or

unbelief. But unbelief is without doubt another cause of the slump, and I should say it is more prevalent to-day than 50 or 100 years ago, but not so prevalent as in the eighteenth century.

(2) There are welcome signs of this tendency, but it is difficult to generalize (or at any rate unsafe). Anyhow, I have confidence in the future. If not this generation then the next, or a following one, is sure to show the turn of the tide.

Mr. Martin is right in his suggestion that "the competition of the secular" denotes a real factor in the life of to-day. There never were so many superficial interests to cheat the human soul in its search for satisfaction. But in principle there is nothing new in it. It is pretty-much what the New Testament means by *the world*—which in all ages is the great enemy of spirituality.

With regard to Mr. Oakes's remarks, I can never understand why religion is supposed to be discredited because of its lowly beginnings. Is an oak tree discredited because it started as an acorn, or a lily because it grows out of mud? "The nature of a thing is that which it is when its becoming is completed" (Aristotle); i.e., we should judge religion, as we judge anything else (persons, movements) from its finished product, not from what it is supposed to grow out of.

To Mr. Macgregor I would say that "destructive criticism" is certainly a bad thing if it is an end and not a means, but if it leads to reconstruction it may result in great good. The word "criticism" as applied to the Bible is much misunderstood. The true critic is he who appraises, estimates, helps us to see the excellence of the matter being examined.

I agree with Mr. Purdue that expository preaching in the old sense of the term does seem to have fallen on evil days, but it seems rather far-fetched to suggest that the lack of it is a cause of the unbelief of the masses outside the churches.

I agree with Mr. Wallis. Yes, a living Church, a Church full of faith and good works, would be a powerful instrument for the conversion of the world.

I can readily believe with Dr. Harris that Section 3 of the Essay is "far too sweeping"—the inevitable result of being so compressed—but am sorry to know it "may give offence". I hope not! But offence to whom? I have much sympathy with the remainder of Dr. Harris's criticism, and have noted it for careful future consideration.

I should agree with Mr. Knopp that the incident of Jonah's whale has "profound symbolic significance", but should regard it as "unreliable" if taken literally. I fear Mr. Knopp's view of the Bible is so different from mine that any discussion of his various points would be unhelpful.



# THE BEARING OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

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## DISCUSSION

The CHAIRMAN (Canon L. W. GRENSTED) said: Mr. Guntrip's paper has been a very stimulating one, resting as it does upon the great advances which are being made in psycho-analytic theory. He has kept strictly within the Freudian tradition, even though the new concepts of the bad-object and good-object relation constitute in themselves a criticism of Freud's own fundamental canons. I can only say that I wholly endorse his estimate of the importance of Dr. Fairbairn's work, and if the manuscript of my own recent book had not been in the printer's hands before Dr. Fairbairn's collected essays appeared I should have certainly re-written some part of it. It has, I think, revolutionized the whole outlook for the psychology of religion, so far as that is related to analytical theory. The essence of the matter is, of course, that in Dr. Fairbairn's analysis the good-object relationship is wholly personal, and its goodness depends upon the supreme value of personal being, vested in persons in their relationships with one another. That is a very great advance upon the theories of Melanie Klein, for whom the bad-object relationship, especially in childhood, is the basis of the wrong development which leads out into neurosis and psychosis. For in Melanie Klein the bad-object is not defined in the full moral sense, with reference to personal values. She is, in fact, much nearer the original position of orthodox Freudianism.

It is obvious to anybody who has tried, as I have done for thirty years, to relate psychotherapy to its religious background, and who is not entangled in psychological orthodoxies, that this stress upon the significance of the person has in fact always been the key to successful psychotherapy. That was indeed recognized almost from the first in Freudian practice, with its emphasis upon the importance of the transference, and Freud's own declared preference for scientific understanding as against cure was a fundamental weakness, and even a disloyalty to his own best work. And it is worth noticing that, in spite of his scientific depreciation alike of religion and of personal values as such, Freud actually makes a corporate brotherhood or love-life the goal of human society. This, coupled with his very remarkable understanding and appreciation of Christianity in his essay *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, makes his dismissal of religion as an illusion a very secondary matter.

May I venture a few criticisms, or rather comments, not so much upon the substance as upon the formulation of Mr. Guntrip's thesis?

Starting at the end, I find myself unhappy with the use of the term 'schizoid' for the scientific outlook, even though I agree wholly that depersonalized science can learn nothing and solve nothing within the range of personal values. The term suggests a psychological pattern of a rather different, more psychotic type. And while, turning to modern art, I should agree that it is often emotionally primitive, I should regard some of it as much more nearly psychotic than science, not merely schizoid but obviously and pathetically schizophrenic. But that usage, due to Dr. Fairbairn, is not an important matter.

More important, even if it can only be stated here very briefly and vaguely, is a feeling that Mr. Guntrip's argument, though it gains in precision, loses something in range by being kept too closely within the Freudian tradition. I should not myself, for instance, have called Freud's underlying conception of instinct classical. It is, of course, with that in mind that Mr. Guntrip can speak of the theory of the instincts as rendered obsolete by Dr. Fairbairn's work. But this is not at all true of the much more classical and far better known account of the instincts which was outlined by McDougall and developed by Shand. Nor is it true of the theory of a creative libido, the driving energy of the four functions and of the ultimate integration of the Self, as so strikingly developed by Jung.

And it is important to notice that McDougall's instincts or energies have each a specific object reference, and that in Shand's development of his theory the final organization of the instincts and emotions into sentiments has a reference which is not only objective but personal. The place for the bad-object and good-object relationships is already being marked out.

In the same way there is a fore-shadowing of Dr. Fairbairn's views in the recognition by Jung, and still more by Alfred Adler, of the libido as directive, even though the personal relationships involved in that directing are not yet fully in view.

Much more important, within the psycho-analytic school itself was Suttie's book, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, which, with a very different notation, paved the way for Dr. Fairbairn, and even, despite a great difference of outlook, for Melanie Klein.

It is perhaps a criticism at a different level to suggest that Dr. Fairbairn has perhaps gone too far in putting the strong appetites and emotions on all fours, as modes of the quest for the good-object relation. There is certainly an important truth involved. But sex and aggression cannot properly be compared, for sex and its behaviour pattern are at every point biologically controlled and necessary to the species, while aggression is not, at any rate in the same sense. Perhaps aggression can be set side by side with sex perversion, but not so easily with the strong demands of sex when physically and emotionally unsatisfied.

In general I have a feeling that this line of approach, warmly as I welcome it, does less than justice to the physiological and biological background of the disturbances of personality. I simply do not believe Freud's account of the origin of the psychoses in the oral and other phases of infantile sexuality, but

I have a suspicion that Freud's influence has lingered even when his theories, sometimes almost mythological, have been abandoned. My final comment must be a hope that the good work, in Mr. Guntrip's hands as in Dr. Fairbairn's, will go on, and a fully personalized approach to man's problems, allowing for his bodily as well as for his personal and spiritual heritage, open up before us.

Dr. E. WHITE said : Mr. Guntrip's paper covers such a large area of psychological theory for discussion, that I must limit myself to two or three points, without discussing the paper as a whole.

W. R. D. Fairbairn and Melanie Klein made a valuable contribution to psycho-analytical theory by showing the importance of good and bad objects in the mind ; but it seems to me that Fairbairn pushes the theory too far when he claims that this view makes the classic type of instinct theory unnecessary. To say that " object relationships, not inherited tendencies, become the key to the understanding of all human experience and behaviour " (p. 74) leaves out of account a great many factors of mental activity. Objects in themselves are static. If we discard instincts, whence arises the mental energy to activate the emotional responses to these objects? Our author speaks of " the needs to be loved, to return love, etc.," and of " striving for good object relationships," Whence the " needs " and the " striving " if instincts are to be discarded? Freud himself speaks of introjection of external objects, and no doubt this occurs ; but to make it the whole basis of psychology would seem to be a very one-sided and inadequate view.

Mr. Guntrip, in his address, spoke of the value of marriage as a means of psychotherapy. I believe there is a general consensus of opinion among psychiatrists that the neurotic patient is not often cured by marriage, and may be aggravated by it. No neurotic should marry until he has undergone treatment.

In his address (although he does not mention it in his paper) Mr. Guntrip stressed the importance of a good relationship being established between the patient and the psychotherapist. He suggested that Freud ignored this, and that he (Freud) recommended an entirely objective, scientific attitude to be adopted by the analyst. But in more than one of his writings Freud stressed the importance of the relationship established during analysis between doctor and patient. He pointed out the value of the transference in analysis, and showed how it could be used in useful ways during the progress of the analysis.

Mr. Guntrip speaks of the future rebirth of religion in a new and vital form. " Some think, or hope, that Christianity has in it the living resources for such a rebirth." Many of us believe that Jesus, who claimed to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, was in Himself God's final Word to this age. The future may produce new ways of presenting the old truths, but we believe that Christianity contains within itself the complete answer to man's spiritual needs.

Rev. W. E. BEVERIDGE said : (1) I would have liked to hear the essayist relate the psychology of Dr. Fairbairn to that of C. G. Jung. It seemed to me that by his own method Fairbairn had approached closely to a position that Jung had already reached. For example, Fairbairn's emphasis on his new analytic technique which concerns itself not only with the original cause of a neurosis but also and equally with the present situation which has called it into active being is something Jung has been teaching for years. Fairbairn's claim that religion may not be regarded merely as a sublimation of the sex instinct into socially acceptable behaviour but is a drive in its own right is the same truth that Jung points out in speaking of a spiritual drive that exists in its own right. Fairbairn's claim that it is the personal relationship that cures has been made already by Jung in saying that it is the reciprocal relationship between analyst and patient that brings healing and that the analyst is as much under analysis as the patient. Fairbairn's point that we need symbols to help us express ourselves most deeply is surely quite a Jungian position.

(2) I disagree that the most important motive in human conduct is to secure good relationships with other people. What about the martyr who accepts death for the sake of what he believes a higher relationship still, the relationship with God? Surely the supreme motive in human conduct is more accurately described by Jung as the striving after integration?

Freud claimed that God was merely a projection of the father, designed to supply the love that the father had once given to the child. Jung, as I believe more accurately, says that it is all the other way round and that the parent is a "little god" whose task is to lead his children on to the true love of God and supply love till his children can find it in God. Human relationships cannot be fully satisfying unless they lead on to the love of God. In themselves they are not enough.

(3) As regards the essayist's claim that the Jungian psychology is not one of "object relationships," I feel that he is not doing anything like justice to the objectivity of the archetypal images in the Jungian Collective Unconscious. Jung has effectively defended himself from charges of subjectivism and I feel that his psychology lends itself to a much greater understanding of religious truth than anything Freud, Klein or Fairbairn seem to have offered.

Rev. ERASTUS EVANS said : Without attempting a definition of religion, which I suppose could not be satisfactorily accomplished, I would point out that without *Mystery* there can be no religion. It is the mysterious depths in the soul of man, in the world and in God that call it forth. A deep psychology of religion would be aware of things that have a numinous quality. Although this paper is written by a psychologist, it is fundamentally in the realm of the highly conscious. Religion is construed in terms of personalist philosophy and made to rest almost entirely upon its ability to secure right relationships. That man's relationship with God and God's relationship with man is a strange and mysterious business, and that psychological investigation of their alleged phenomena would involve probing deep layers of the soul is nowhere apparent.

God is the chief "good object" and the acknowledgement of Him as such produces therapeutic effects. It is enough, the light has shone! Was God simply a "good object" for Job when he disputed with Him, or for Jeremiah when he sought to wriggle from His grasp? To my mind this conception of God as the "good object" is altogether too Sunday-schoolish to do justice to the complexities of the mature religious experience that the writer is sincerely anxious to justify. My point is that the relation between God and the soul is much subtler, stranger, and more complex than the use of the distinction between "good and bad objects" can clarify.

The "bad objects" formed within the mind by failures in human relationship are held to be the originals of the devils, ghosts and witches of legend and the sinister figures of dreams. This explanation of them is too simple and clear. The propensity to create and believe in such figures is surely deeper than unpleasant memories stored in the personal unconscious. It seems to point to more primitive layers than those that are concerned with personal experience. The lecturer represents Fairbairn as a liberator who depolarized the energy of the soul from Freud's all-engrossing sexual drive, and so made possible the conception of religion and cultural values as existing independently in their own right. But this work had been performed, as far as depth psychology is concerned, by Jung in an essay *On Psychological Energy*, published in English in 1928. As a matter of fact it had already been done by William James in footnotes to his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (see Penguin on *William James* by Margaret Knight, pp. 186f.). The significant phenomenon is not the originality of Fairbairn's conception, but its emergence in a Freudian school, in spite of the dogmatic prestige of the founder.

The lecturer laments the destruction of symbols by science and faces us with a dilemma between analysis and living. Either we analyse and reduce our religious values to dust or we go on living in blind unconsciousness. But this presupposes that religious needs and values lie at a shallow level of the unconscious, and are not subtly interwoven with the darkest depths of the soul. There will never be a time when we have "exposed all the works" as the lecturer fears, for the fear is based on a subtle denial of the infinitude that is in man. What is needed is a humbler psychology that recognizes that there is more to the soul than the draining of the personal unconscious can exhaust.

Since the lecturer was discussing the bearing of *psycho-analysis* on the psychology of religion it seems unkind to suggest that psycho-analysis is inadequately equipped for real understanding of religious phenomena. But the lecturer himself had to deal a blow to Freud's prestige before he could find living room for a psychology of religion. No one but a fool would deny the clinical value of Freud's discoveries but they are set in a philosophical framework which resists any open approach to the study of religion. If however the paper had been on "Analytical (Jungian) psychology and the psychology of religion" we should be in another universe of discourse, and breathing an ampler air. The canon of the "good and bad object" is altogether too thin and restricted to do justice to the amplitude of religious psychological pheno-

mena. The admission of the validity of Jung's concept of the collective unconscious would move the whole inquiry into a richer sphere.

Dr. C. T. COOK mentioned a psychiatrist who was accustomed to send his patients to a particular preacher, because he preached the forgiveness of sins.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Professor J. MACMURRAY wrote: I have read this lecture with much pleasure, and with general agreement. The only point that I feel an urge to criticize is the implication that science is primarily to blame for the controversy between science and religion. To my mind the blame must lie in the first instance on religion, which was the aggressor, and has never quite fully and openly admitted its responsibility. The effect, I believe, is much as he states it; but it is important in view of his conclusion, that the responsibility should be rightly assigned, for only then will religion recognize the need for a radical self-criticism which might lead to the more mature religion which he hopes for, as I do.

Dr. BURNETT RAE wrote: Mr. Guntrip has shown convincingly the inadequacy of science—and of psychology, in so far as it is purely scientific—to undertake the task of religion. Much that he says throughout his article makes this quite clear, and it was necessary to say it. The gospel of scientism as a religion is undoubtedly a great danger. Unfortunately he proceeds to spoil the effect of what he says by denying to science and psychology their legitimate place in the business of living, and to support this, he borrows from Dr. Fairbairn a very unhappy phrase to the effect that the scientific attitude is really a schizoid process of mind. This is more than unfortunate; it is quite misleading to employ a term, which we reserve for psychopathic cases, to describe a human activity which is one of the finest attributes of personality. We use the term schizoid in psychiatry to indicate a state of mind and conduct which leads an individual, unable to face reality, to withdraw from it; an entirely different thing from that reflection upon life and conduct which enables us to make better use of our powers and opportunities.

We may agree that thinking is not living; as a rule it is well to live first and reflect afterwards. "When love is successful," to borrow an apt illustration of the author, "no one bothers to analyse it, to find out what it is, and how it works." But when it is going badly, or when it leads to disaster, one must necessarily look into the matter.

The ability to stand outside the stream of life in order to reflect upon it detached from emotion and other "urgencies of living" is an absolutely necessary human activity, and one which man has acquired in the course of his mental and spiritual development. Mr. Guntrip acknowledges this when he says that "armed with the understanding which reflection gives, we are better able to plunge back again into the stream of life, and live all the better for

our scientific knowledge." Strange then that the writer should be so averse to admitting the legitimate place of science and psychology alongside that of religion. The great commandment is not to think correctly, it is to love greatly; we are told to love not only with all our heart and soul but also with all our mind. Right thinking is as much a religious duty as right feeling or any other faculty of our nature.

Mr. Guntrip very convincingly lays stress upon good-object relationships, and draws attention to the valuable contribution W. R. D. Fairbairn makes in this connection in pointing out that "right object-seeking, not pleasure-seeking, is the key to the understanding of human experience and behaviour." Such a relationship is never just an intellectual matter; it is a total attitude of the subject towards the object, and as such includes the exercise of the intellect.

In view of all the facts which he gives and many of the opinions he holds, it is surprising to read in the concluding section of Mr. Guntrip's paper that "the nemesis of the scientific outlook is the dehumanizing of the human being, his treatment on a sub-personal level, and official psychology carries on the bad work."

One agrees with him when he says that "a world run on *purely* scientific principles would have no regard for personality and no respect for human dignity," but need it be run like that? It does not follow that because science by itself is insufficient it should therefore be discarded. It would be equally valid to argue that religion by itself would be ineffective in a scientific age. Man does not live by bread alone, but we cannot live without it, or without the science that brings it to our doors. It is well to warn us against a psychotherapy which is only scientific, which ignores the personal and the religious factor, but an entirely false picture of psychiatry to-day is given, when it is implied that this is necessary or usual.

The importance of the relationship of the patient to the physician is a *sine qua non* and generally recognized. The mechanisms of mental behaviour, and the interaction of mind and body are a matter of scientific interest and explicable by the scientific method, but the application of all this by the physician to his patient is personal, and as such requires the support of religion.

History warns us against any disposition to separate the world of facts from the world of values. One may remember with profit the words of Prof. John Caird: "Religion is not a duty, but something which has to do with all duties." For a thousand years in the Christian era this was forgotten and there was a sad falling away from that vision of truth which blossomed five hundred years before Christ in the Hippocratic era when it was understood that medicine and religion were necessary to each other. Since the dawn of the scientific age the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. Medicine became then almost entirely material in its outlook, again with unfortunate results.

This is passing: there is now a growing recognition in medicine that health means wholeness, that it is a complex of body, mind and spirit. We stand on

the threshold of a great advance through a better understanding of the principles which the Christian Church and the medical profession have in common ; and on this account I am disappointed and perturbed when I find an able psychologist propounding views which would make impossible a fuller co-operation between those engaged in the spiritual and the medical aspects of healing.

Mr. TITTERINGTON wrote : There is one thing in Mr. Guntrip's interesting paper which I do not think should be allowed to pass without comment. In the closing paragraphs he made the suggestion that we need a new religion, with an implied doubt as to whether Christianity possesses within itself the living resources for this rebirth. I know that Mr. Guntrip himself does not share this doubt, but I am sure I am speaking for others as well as myself in saying that it is a pity that Mr. Guntrip should have allowed himself to express any doubt on such a matter, and make this concession to the views of the unbeliever. THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE is a Christian Society, and to a Christian any doubt of this kind is unthinkable.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

A survey of the comments and written communications shows that the discussion ranged mainly round three points, the nature of science, the problem of instinct, and the relationship of Fairbairn's views to the psychology of C. G. Jung. I will deal with these in that order, starting with the contribution of Dr. Burnett Rae.

1. *Science*. Dr. Burnett Rae obviously agrees with my basic position and most surprisingly goes out of his way to make and repeat an entirely unwarranted charge to the effect that I "deny to science and psychology their legitimate place in the business of living." That is odd in view of the fact that I spoke primarily as a scientist and psychologist, which I certainly would not do if I held the view Dr. Rae attributes to me. His impression must arise from too hasty a reading of the lecture and I must counter it by an unequivocal denial. He writes : " One agrees with him when he says that ' a world run on *purely* scientific principles would have no regard for personality and no respect for human dignity ', but need it be run like that? " Of course not. That is precisely what I was contending for. But Dr. Rae apparently overlooked the fact that in the first place I was answering the original, classic, psycho-analytical position, the position of Freud himself, that religion should be eliminated in favour of a purely scientific approach to life, and in the second place we are faced with the fact that some of the most revolutionary social and political developments of our time actually constitute an attempt to do this very thing, and that that is in line with prominent cultural trends of the last hundred years which have not by any means been superseded. It is *not*

therefore, "surprising to read in the concluding section of Mr. Guntrip's paper that 'the nemesis of the scientific outlook is the dehumanizing of the human being, his treatment on a sub-personal level.' " We have seen this happening.

Dr. Rae says: "It does not follow that because science by itself is insufficient it should therefore be discarded." True, but I did not say that. I stated expressly that when problems of living arise we must stand back and think scientifically, and then return to living armed with the result of our scientific understanding. Dr. Rae has mistaken the orientation of the lecture. The Middle Ages were dominated primarily by religion, the modern era is dominated primarily by science. It is the separation and opposition of these two that we must regard as dangerous. In stating clearly the nature of science *as it is in itself apart from religion* I was making plain the danger of allowing the continuation of this state of affairs. But there are many who still do desire to oppose science to religion, and to build on a purely scientific and non-religious foundation. Among such was Freud, but he does not stand alone. Canon Grensted underlined my position when he said: "Freud's own declared preference for scientific understanding as against cure was a fundamental weakness."

Dr. Rae and Canon Grensted both find a difficulty in Fairbairn's characterization of science as a schizoid process, on the ground that "schizoid" means "psychotic." "Schizoid" however, is not equivalent to "schizophrenic." Etymologically it means "split" and is used in psychiatry to denote the splitting apart of emotion and thought, an attitude of mind that is cut off from human relationships on the emotional level, i.e. *intellectually detached and emotionally uninvolved*. For Fairbairn, this involves a splitting of the ego itself, not a repression by an intact ego of impulses that do not belong to it. It is one of Fairbairn's recognized contributions to have shown that *schizoid processes* are only seen in the extreme in schizophrenia and some psychopathic types, and that they are far commoner than has been recognized in the neuroses, and also in many apparently normal people, particularly in intellectuals. Science naturally, properly, and voluntarily occupies the schizoid position of intellectual detachment and emotional uninvolvedness, and for that very reason it attracts the intellectual whose schizoid attitude is not voluntary but embedded in his personality structure as an escape from disturbing emotional realities. That has a great bearing on the inability of many scientists to view religion sympathetically.

2. *Instincts*. Canon Grensted and Dr. White find difficulties here. The point at issue is whether human experience is to be explained psychologically on the biological or personal level. Freud tried to combine the two and apparently never realized that this involved him in an unresolved inconsistency. His theory of "instincts and the id" is a non-personal psychology according to which human motives arise outside of and prior to the formation of the

ego. Id-impulses are impersonal or pre-personal and cannot therefore be regarded as "object-seeking" but only as "pleasure-seeking," i.e. as urges towards physiological detensioning. His later developed ego-psychology, i.e. the super-ego theory, clearly implies that motives arise out of personal relationships, and that the endopsychic structure of the personality develops by means of the psychic internalizing of early object-relationships. That called for a revision of the id-theory, which he failed to recognize.

Fairbairn's work eliminates this inconsistent mixture of biology and psychology and develops a fully psychological theory of personality. That agrees with what Professor Hobhouse laid down a quarter of a century ago. His view was that the last word of biology was only the first word of sociology, and we may add of psychology as well. In academic psychology to-day G. W. Allport holds that adult motives are a "post-instinctual phenomenon" (*Personality*).

Dr. White considers that Dr. Fairbairn goes too far in holding that "object-relations theory" makes the classic instinct theory unnecessary. Fairbairn, of course, does not deny innate factors. Libido, or rather the ego's libidinal drive towards good-objects, is innate, and is the basic striving of all human beings. The capacity to react to frustration with aggression is innate. The point at issue is that *reference to innate factors does not explain developmental phenomena* which are what the psychotherapist must deal with in clinical practice. The "innate" belongs to biology, the "developmental" is the sphere of psychology. Thus, compulsive sexual cravings or hunger cravings are not explained by reference to a sex or a hunger instinct. They are due to the fact that as children, and subsequently, human beings are driven back on to experiencing their personal needs predominantly in terms of bodily appetites because of the breakdown of good-object relations on the personal level of understanding and love. It is the experience of many children that no genuine personal relationships with parents could be achieved. The kind of relationships that existed were mainly in terms of bodily attention, or else of criticism and blame. When Dr. White says that "objects in themselves are static" I can only register surprise. The child's first object, the mother, whether loving, angry or neglectful, is anything but static. Dr. White has evidently not grasped the significance of the terms "object" and "object-relations" in dynamic psychology. I agree with him that marriage does not "cure" a neurosis. A neurosis may ruin a marriage (and a religious experience), but marriage (and religion) in other cases provide an effective defence against the outbreak of neurosis, and have a psychotherapeutic value of a supportive kind. As to the "introjection of external objects" being a one-sided and inadequate view, the clinical facts do not support this but are forcing us to a multi-personal conception of individual personality. A much deeper appreciation of the weight of evidence behind Fairbairn's views is called for on this point. Dr. White suggests, lastly, that I ignored Freud's recognition of the patient-therapist relationship. Freud's theory of transference is a theory of what the patient projects onto the therapist (which is vastly important) but not of what the therapist must mean as a real good object to the patient in reality.

3. *C. G. Jung*. The Rev. W. E. Beveridge raises the question of the relation between Fairbairn and Jung. It would require a full book to deal with this. Fairbairn has himself dealt with this in a paper to be published shortly. I would recommend a detailed comparative study of Fairbairn and Jung. Though parallels can be drawn piecemeal, they differ fundamentally on the question of instincts and the priority of object-relations as the shaping, dynamic factor in development. They differ in the fact that Jung has not, by his own admission, systematized his views scientifically as Fairbairn has done. Further, as Frieda Fordham writes: "The Jungian attitude may be said to be introverted since the factors in which Jung is most interested belong to the inner world, and especially to the 'collective unconscious'" (*An Introduction to Jung's Psychology*, Pelican Books, pp. 30-31). Jung does not relate the inner and outer worlds on the basis of internal and external object-relations in the radical way Fairbairn does.

Mr. Beveridge does not agree "that the most important motive in human conduct is to secure good relationships with other people." That is not what I said. He misses the point when he cites as an argument the fact of relation to God; and then, incidentally, he makes a curious *volte face* in adding, "the supreme motive in human conduct is more accurately described by Jung as the striving after integration." Which does he intend it to be; relation to God or an integrated personality? To make *integration* the supreme goal is narcissistic. In accordance with this it is seldom recognized by religious thinkers who build on Jung, that an objectively real God apart from man is quite unnecessary to his system of thought. For Jung, God is, in the end, wholly inside the integrated individual, and is identical with the true Self in the integrated psyche. To my mind that is only an illumination of one aspect of religious experience. If it is taken as the whole truth, then we become more and more introverted the nearer we get to our goal. The absolutely fundamental fact of real object-relationships, of which communion with God is the supreme example, is obscured. It is in conformity with this that Mr. Beveridge cites, as evidence that Jung's psychology is one of "object-relationships," what he calls "the objectivity of the archetypal images in the Jungian collective unconscious." The argument is of no avail when what is required is *real-object* relations, a personal relation between separate and independent persons, i.e. communion. I did *not* say that "the most important motive is good relationship with other people"; I said "good-object relations," and again "personal relations". That includes a relation to God which is as much a personal relation as one with human persons. In *Psychology for Ministers and Social Workers* (Independent Press, 1948) I developed the theme that integration and personal relationships are two sides of one and the same thing. We cannot become integrated persons except in, and by means of, the integration of good relations with other persons. That is the basis of psychotherapy. Integration cannot proceed as a process wholly internal to the psyche as Jung undoubtedly implies.

The Rev. E. Evans feels that the terminology of good and bad objects is too simple "to do justice to the complexities of mature religious experience." I feel that he overlooks the fact that the business of psychological science is to arrive, if possible, at certain clear, simple, and basic explanatory concepts. Theory provides only a skeleton to be clothed with the rich complexity of life when we turn to the understanding of actual, concrete, individual human beings. I agree that it is a significant phenomenon that Fairbairn's work should "emerge in a Freudian school" and I welcome Canon Grensted's generous acknowledgement of its importance. But when Mr. Evans denies originality to Fairbairn's work and waves it aside as having all been done already by Jung, I must be allowed to state that that somewhat rash judgment is not in accordance with the facts, and to wonder whether Mr. Evans knows Fairbairn's work as fully as he does Jung's. I am aware that some Jungians are trying to maintain this idea, but it does not hold good. I would add that the controversies of schools are only important when they are necessary for the preservation of genuine new insights. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is richly suggestive, though speculative, but very far from being scientifically validated. Jung has not, in fact, produced anything like Fairbairn's conceptually clear and soundly scientific theory of the development of the endopsychic structure of human personality, which I had no time to elaborate in the lecture. It is necessary to make a thorough study of his own recently published work before sweeping judgments are made about it. Perhaps the Jungians present were only acquainted with Fairbairn at second hand through my lecture.

I ought to add that the title of my lecture indicates that I intentionally limited myself to dealing with *psycho-analysis* and I did not set out to take in the entire field of psychological contributions to the study of religion. I cannot, however, refrain from quoting the conclusion arrived at by the Rev. Principal H. Cunliffe-Jones, of the Yorkshire United Independent College, in a privately read paper: "In the long run the open hostility of Freud will do less harm to religion than the non-committal friendliness of Jung." For myself, I am unable to agree that Jung provides a solid basis of psychological fact for an understanding of religion. He seems to me to provide a religious aroma, rather than a religious answer, concerning the problems that here occupy us.

With regard to the point raised by Professor J. Macmurray, I need only say that I agree with him.

Finally Dr. White and Mr. Titterington wish me to be more definite about the religion of the future. I myself believe that Christianity has the resources to meet the need for a rebirth of religion. I would, however, make two observations. The first is that I was speaking *qua* scientist and this is not a matter on which science can pronounce. The second is that I did intend to challenge complacent assumptions that Christianity as at present preached and practised is adequate. I agree with Professor Macmurray that religion must "recognize the need for a radical self-criticism which might lead to the more mature religion" which I hope for.

# CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN EMPIRICISM

BY BASIL MITCHELL, M.A.

## The Rev. S. Runsie Craig Memorial, 1953

In accordance with the terms of the Trust the Council have selected for the 1953 Memorial the Paper on "Christianity and Modern Empiricism" read before the Institute on April 20th, 1953, by Basil Mitchell, M.A., as being strongly confirmatory of the Christian Faith.

### DISCUSSION

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. E. V. RIEU) thanked Mr. Mitchell for his valuable and lucid account of the main trends in recent and contemporary philosophy. He was particularly glad to learn that Logical Empiricism, the successor of Logical Positivism, does not render all our abstract thinking *meaningless*, but confines itself to the enquiry, "What is the logic of it?"

One of the main points which emerged from the paper was this—we must admit that God is an axiom. If Science objects, we could retaliate by pointing out that Science itself relies on two assumptions, namely, the uniformity of nature, of which there is no final proof, and the infallibility of human logic, an axiom which has been badly shaken by the late G. N. M. Tyrrell's analysis of scientific thinking in his book *Homo Faber*. Since God, though he cannot be intellectually proved, can be experienced, Dr. Rieu favoured the first of the criteria put forward by the lecturer, to the effect that "theological statements are assertions because they can be verified by experience".

He went on to stress the tremendous part played by metaphor both in the Creeds and in the Gospels themselves. Old metaphors tend to become "eroded" (to borrow a term from the lecture). He thought the time had come for the Church to clarify and refurbish much of the metaphor it relies on in its doctrine. Philosophy could help in this work. He hoped that the Church would set its face against fundamentalism and avail itself of the helping hand that philosophy seems now prepared to offer it.

Dr. E. WHITE said: In spite of the criticisms of the doctrine of presupposition brought forward by Mr. Mitchell, it seems to me that there is a great deal to be said in its favour. Both the scientist and the theologian must have some basic principles on which to found their investigations and reasonings. Mr. Mitchell's quotation from Karl Jaspers supports this: "A proved God is no God. Accordingly only he who starts from God can seek Him." This is in accordance with the statement made many centuries ago by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who said that "he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him".

The idea of the existence of God is all but universal. I am not a philosopher, and I speak only from a psychological angle when I enquire from whence

came this universal idea of God. Jung's theory of Archetypes has some bearing on this question. As a result of his analytical work he believes that the mind of man has an innate tendency to form certain "images", and that some of the images are independent of race, of time, and of geographical location. They are common to myths, to dreams, and to the unconscious of patients of various nationalities whom he has analysed. They are part of the basic framework of the human psyche. He believes that God is one of these Archetypes, or, to express it in another way, that every man holds within himself the image of God. It is this Archetype which produces man's belief in the existence of God, a belief independent of reason, but which may be informed by reason.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Mr. ARTHUR CONSTANCE wrote: This excellent paper deals with the significance of significance, so that—logically—any comment on its subject might well be termed "the significance of the significance of significance". And so we might go on, applying the recessional principle of Professor Dunne's "Serialism" to philosophic concepts instead of "observer stages" of existence. For the life of me I cannot see how we can halt at a second or third stage of this "Logical Empiricism" or "Logical Positivism", or whatever its newer know-all may like to call it. Those who accept its crazy criticisms of Christianity are on a slippery slope. Such slopes have occurred again and again in the long story of man's examinations of his own examinations of himself, and are the inevitable result of stepping off the firm ground of Christian fundamentalism. I wish that Mr. Mitchell had had a thicker and tougher whip for these self-assertive non-asserters—all that he has appears to be a broken straw, to damn it with faint praise. My own castigation may seem a scorpion by comparison, but I must use it: I consider the foolish babblings of these spouters of Ayer to be, not whales as they imagine themselves, but pitiful goldfish swimming round and round in transparent bowls, and getting just as far ahead in a straight line as ordinary goldfish usually do in a month of Sundays.

Their efforts to elucidate the "meaning of meaning" leave them less competent to explain the meaning of life. Their efforts to expound "semantics" are no more than simian antics—they chatter and swing from branch to branch of philosophical speculation, yet remain lost in a jungle of nonsense. They cannot see the wood of the true Cross for the trees they have erected themselves: gibbets on which they presume to hang the saints of Christendom.

Mr. Mitchell takes a few burnt matchsticks from Kierkegaard—who might have supplied him with a flaming ocean of petrol—to consume this rubbish. Let anyone who doubts this read the Danish theologian's *Works of Love*—an exposition of "By their fruits ye shall know them" which shrivels this present paper into charred fragments, excellent though it may be as a statement of the present position (as I have already suggested).

It is a mad paradox of the devil himself that these men, such as Ayer, should pretend to be getting a little nearer to sincerity, and sanity, and a basic "existential" philosophy, yet should in actual fact be ridiculing sincerity, undermining spiritual sanity, and contributing to the *Zeitgeist* of Christ's enemies. Professing themselves to be wise they become fools.

Knowledge of Christ—Who is still the Way, the Truth and the Life—is not a matter of experiment, but of experience. Either we know Him or we do not know Him: there is no third possibility. To know Him is to have life eternal—to have no need of speculation, to have a firm foundation for our belief, which needs no pretence that we are not asserting anything, while making unproven assertions ourselves. For the falsity of all this modern speculation regarding the "meaning of meaning" is seen in what it can do to a man's mind. It can make a man believe he is "making no assertion" when he is whispering philosophic sedition. And it can make a man think he is saying something new when he is merely echoing the first sinister and cynical piece of speculative philosophy recorded in Holy Scripture: "Yea, hath God said . . . ?"

The slime of the wriggling Serpent is on this thing, and in place of it I would offer you a whip—the whip of Him Who drove the money-changers in scorn from His Temple. That is what we need for these false doctrines: which take the current coin of human thought and debase it. They are the money-changers of to-day, defiling the holy places of England.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

I shall begin with the comments of Mr. Arthur Constance, since they constitute the most radical criticism of my paper.

I wish Mr. Constance had made clearer exactly where he stands. I think it is fair to say that his remarks contain only one *argument* (that enquiries into the "significance of 'significance'" are involved in an infinite regress); the rest is denunciation and exhortation. He implies that these are the weapons that should be used against the Logical Empiricists. There may indeed be proper occasions for their use, but I do not think that they are in place in a philosophical paper. I suspect that Mr. Constance is dissatisfied with my paper not because he thinks there are stronger *philosophical arguments* that I might have used, but because he disapproves of analytical or speculative philosophy as such (at least in this context). In this he follows Kierkegaard, whom he mentions with approval.

If he *does* take this view, there is a long Christian tradition behind him—one thinks immediately of Tertullian, Pascal and Kierkegaard. But there is also another tradition (and it is, perhaps, the dominant one) which sees in philosophy a legitimate and necessary attempt to understand and interpret human experience. The paper was concerned with the question, how it is possible to think about God, and this is a question which (as I pointed out)

many theologians have tried to answer. I think they were right to ask this question; Mr. Constance, I suspect, thinks they were wrong. *If* this is a legitimate question for a Christian to ask, then I think we may properly be grateful to any philosophers who help us to get it clear (just as St. Augustine learnt a lot from the Neoplatonists).

But the point at issue is whether it *is* in fact a legitimate question for a Christian to ask.

I can only try to indicate very briefly why I think it is. First, if we may not ask such questions about God, we are compelled to draw a clear line between our religious thinking and all the rest of our thinking. It will be proper to ask what are the differences between scientific and historical concepts, but not between either of these and theological concepts. To take an example from Mr. Constance's paper: "Knowledge of Christ is not a matter of experiment, but of experience." This seems to me an illuminating remark, based on a distinction between types of knowledge. But on the thesis I am considering it would have to be ruled out.

Secondly, and as a consequence of this, we should find it extremely difficult to bring our religious beliefs into any kind of relation with the rest of our life. We should, as it were, be talking two independent languages and allowing ourselves no way of relating what was said in one to what was said in the other.

Thirdly, there would be a similar gap between the language of believers and non-believers. This is already apparent to-day, when so many people find that the old beliefs have lost their meaning. They are often looking for the wrong sort of meaning, but they can only be helped by people who are able to start from where they are.

I think, in conclusion, it is worth pointing out that Kierkegaard was familiar with a very different kind of philosophy, the Hegelian, which with its grandiose system-building was largely responsible for his hostility to the speculative intellect.

Dr. White's contribution is a most interesting and valuable one. I wish I were familiar enough with Jungian psychology to answer it adequately.

In bringing the Jungian "archetypes" to bear on the logical problem discussed in my paper I should, I think, want to ask in what form the "image" of God actually appears. The image would presumably be the image of some natural form which is taken to "stand for" the unseen God (as, e.g., the lion does in some of Charles Williams' books). Need it be the same image in different people or in the same person at different times (e.g., always the image of a Lion)? If not, how do you tell that the various images are in fact images of God? I imagine, by the kind of rôle they play in the individual's life, just as you would with different *graven* images.

Jung's theory certainly suggests that there are *natural* images, besides the revealed ones which I referred to in my paper, and there seems to be no reason why such natural images should not enable us to think about God in the same way as the others.

I am less clear that this theory favours, as Dr. White claims, the doctrine of presuppositions. That doctrine was considered as one way of meeting the Empiricist's dilemma: "Either admit that evidence could be conceived which would count against your statement or admit that you are not making an assertion." The doctrine of presuppositions sought to evade the dilemma by claiming that statements like "God loves us as a father loves his children" state presuppositions, and of these it doesn't *make sense* to ask whether there could be any evidence against them.

I criticized this doctrine, because it seemed to me that Christians *do* admit the possibility of evidence against the love of God (e.g. the facts of evil).

Now does the psychological fact that men tend naturally to think of God by means of certain archetypal images of itself settle this issue one way or the other? Would not it still be possible to hold any one of the three views I discussed? The Empiricist might say, "Certainly men have these images, and I admit that they play a dominant rôle in their lives, but they cannot have reference to a transcendent being because the statements they are used to make are such that nothing could count against them, and hence they do not express assertions". The advocate of the presupposition theory will, of course, meet this objection by claiming that these statements are presuppositions. I shall try to meet it by claiming that they *are* assertions and that evidence *can* be conceived which would count against them. So far as I can see at the moment this whole question is a *logical* one, the answer to which turns on the way in which theological statements are to be verified. If so, it is a question which arises whether we have an innate tendency to form such statements or not, and whether or not our thinking makes use of archetypal images. But I admit that this is only a first impression and a deeper study of Jung might show me to be wrong.

I am very grateful for Dr. Rieu's comments from the chair. I agree particularly with what he says about the importance of imagery in the Creeds and in the Gospels. I do not think we can give a satisfactory philosophical account of religious language and religious experience (the two being indissolubly connected) unless we pay close attention to the part played in it by analogy and metaphor. This was one of the things I most wanted to stress in my paper and Dr. Rieu has brought it out very clearly.

In the other main point he makes he may well be right, but he is not, I think, agreeing with my paper. He says "we must admit that God is an axiom". I did give a great deal of attention to the view that theological doctrines are "presuppositions", but I did not finally mean to identify myself with it. It has certainly much to recommend it, but I am inclined to reject it on the ground that it makes nonsense to talk of evidence for or against presuppositions (or axioms), whereas we are prepared to consider the possibility of evidence for or against, e.g., the love of God.

The comments and criticisms which my paper called forth serve to indicate how many-sided and difficult is the subject it set out to tackle. I am as

strenuously opposed as Mr. Constance to any attempt to reinterpret Christian doctrine in deference to prevailing philosophical fashions, but I strongly suspect that if we refuse to subject our beliefs to any kind of philosophical scrutiny we shall be in danger of yielding to unexamined philosophical prejudices.

OBJECTS AND  
CONSTITUTION  
of  
THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE  
or  
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

ADOPTED AT THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES, 27TH MAY, 1867, WITH REVISIONS OF 1874-75, 1910, 1912, 1920, 1938, 1939 AND 1952.

1. THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE, or PHILOSOPHICAL **Objects** SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN, is established for the following objects, viz.:—

*First.* To investigate fully and impartially the most important questions of Philosophy and Science, but more especially these that bear upon the great truths revealed in Holy Scripture: with the view of reconciling any apparent discrepancies between Christianity and Science.

*Second.* To associate together men of Science and authors who have already been engaged in such investigations, and all others who may be interested in them, in order to strengthen their efforts by association; and, by bringing together the results of such labours, after full discussion, in the printed Transactions of an Institution: to give greater force and influence to proofs and arguments which might be little known, or even disregarded, if put forward merely by individuals.

*Third.* To consider the mutual bearings of the various scientific conclusions arrived at in the several distinct branches into which Science is now divided, in order to get rid of contradictions and conflicting hypotheses, and thus promote the real advancement of true science; and to examine and discuss all supposed scientific results with reference to final causes, and the more comprehensive and fundamental principles of Philosophy proper, based upon faith in the existence of one Eternal God, who, in His wisdom, created all things very good.

*Fourth.* To publish Papers read before the Society in furtherance of the above objects, along with full reports of the discussions thereon, in the form of a Journal, or as the Transactions of the Institute.

*Fifth.* When subjects have been fully discussed, to make the results known by means of Lectures of a more popular kind, and to publish such Lectures.

*Sixth.* To publish English translations of important foreign works of real scientific and philosophical value, especially those bearing upon the relation between the Scriptures and Science; and to co-operate with other philosophical societies at home and abroad, which are now or may hereafter be formed, in the interest of Scriptural truth and of real science, and generally in furtherance of the objects of this Society.

But so that nothing shall be done which shall not directly or indirectly advance the Christian religion as revealed in Holy Scripture.

- Membership** 2. (a) The Society shall consist of Fellows and Members elected as hereinafter set forth and signifying interest in the Society's charitable work by financial contributions thereto.
- (b) The roll of Fellows of the Society shall include such as are so designated on the 17th day of November, 1952, and such other persons (whether previously Members or not) as the Council may deem proper.
- (c) The roll of Members of the Society shall include those so designated on the 17th day of November, 1952, and all others subsequently admitted by the Council as Members.

- Council** 3. The government of the Society shall be vested in a Council (whose members shall be chosen from among the Fellows and Members of the Society and be professedly Christians), consisting of a President, two or more not exceeding seven Vice-Presidents, an Honorary Treasurer, an Honorary Secretary and ten or more not exceeding twenty-four ordinary members of Council.

- Election of Council** 4. The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Secretary shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute, with power to the Council to fill up any casual vacancies.

At the Annual General Meeting in each year, one-third of the ordinary members of Council or if their number be not a multiple of three then the number nearest to one-third shall also retire, in order of seniority of election to the Council, and be eligible for re-election: as between members of equal seniority the members to retire shall be chosen

from among them by ballot unless such members shall agree between themselves. Casual vacancies may be filled up by the Council.

5. For such annual elections nominations may be made by Fellows of the Institute and sent to the Honorary Secretary not later than 1st December in any year. The Council may also nominate for vacancies, and all nominations shall be submitted to the Fellows and Members at the time when notice of the Annual General Meeting is posted.

If more nominations are made than there are vacancies on the Council the election shall be by ballot.

6. Any person desirous of becoming a Fellow or Member shall send to the Honorary Secretary an application for admission, which shall be signed by one Fellow or Member recommending the Candidate for admission. Upon such application being transmitted to the Honorary Secretary, the candidate may be elected by the Council, and enrolled as a Fellow or Member of the Victoria Institute, in such a manner as the Council may deem proper. Such application shall be considered as *ipso facto* pledging the applicant to observe the Rules of the Society, and as indicative of his or her desire and intention to further its objects and interests; and it is also to be understood that only such as are professedly Christians are entitled to become Fellows. The Council shall have power when it deems proper to delete the name of any Fellow or Member from the roll. **Membership Procedure**
7. The Council may make such Rules as it considers desirable for furthering the objects of the Society and regulating its business including arrangements for associating University and other Students and Christian Workers and others as Associates in the work of the Society. **Rule Making**
8. The whole property and effects of the Society shall be vested in the Chairman of Council the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Secretary for the time being as Trustees. The Trustees are empowered to invest such sums as the Council may, from time to time, place in their hands, in or upon any of the Stocks, Funds, or Securities, for the time being, authorized by statute for the investment of trust funds by trustees, and shall have the usual powers of trustees in regard thereto. **Property Trusteeship**

- Papers** 9. Papers presented to be read before the Society shall when read be considered as the property of the Society unless there shall have been any previous engagement with its author to the contrary, and the Council may cause the same to be published in any way and at any time they may think proper after having been read.
- Funds, etc.** 10. All moneys received on account of the Institute shall be duly paid to its credit at the Bankers, and all cheques shall be drawn, under authority of the Council, and shall be signed by any two of the following, the Chairman of Council, the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Secretary.
- Audit** 11. The accounts shall be audited annually, by a Chartered or Incorporated Accountant or Auditor, to be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Society for the following year, and this Chartered or Incorporated Accountant or Auditor shall make a written Report to the Council at the first Meeting after such audit, and also to the Institute, upon the day of the Annual General Meeting next following—stating the balance in the Treasurer's hands and the general state of the funds of the Institute.