
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

we believe we have) that *all* the evidence supports A.D. 29, we demonstrate that the Crucifixion was an historic fact, and not the myth which it is asserted to be by some popular writers of the day.

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The Religious Philosophy of William James.

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II.

WE Christians have some good reasons, we saw in the former article, for welcoming this new American way of looking at religion. Scientific men have too often set religion altogether on one side by simply "pooh-poohing" it, but now someone has come forward from the heart of the scientific world and demanded fair play. It is true, he says, that the churches seem often to contain only bigots, who have never thought their faith out for themselves, and that systems of theology have rested on unproven and unprovable ideas rather than on facts, and yet religious institutions and theologies are, after all, only secondary products of religion. Let them by all means be put on one side, but only in order that we may look fairly and sympathetically at the primary product and real home of religion—the hearts of individual men. Professor James was addressing himself, we saw, to the scientific people who think that religion can all be explained away on materialistic principles, and showed them that it is not simply a theory, but an actual power. And if this is the case, he went on, it cannot be unreasonable to adopt the believing attitude of mind, if only because the saints have been more effective than the merely

moral men, and because we can see that belief is in very many cases an essential factor in action.

"There are cases, for example," he says, "where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming. And where faith in a fact can help to create the fact, that would be an insane logic which should say (as writers like Professor Clifford used to say) that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the 'lowest kind of immorality' into which a thinking being can fall. Yet such is the logic by which our scientific absolutists pretend to regulate their lives! No; in truths dependent on our personal action, faith based on desire is certainly a lawful and possibly an indispensable thing" ("Will to Believe," p. 24).

"The greatest saints, the spiritual heroes, whom everybody acknowledges, are successes from the outset. They show themselves, and there is no question; everyone perceives their strength and stature. Their sense of mystery in things, their passion, their goodness, irradiate about them and enlarge their outlines while they soften them. They are like pictures with an atmosphere and background; and, placed alongside of them, the strong men of this world, and no other, seem as dry as sticks, as hard and crude as blocks of stone or brickbats. In a general way, then, and on the whole, our abandonment of theological criteria, and our testing of religion by practical common sense and the empirical method, leave it in possession of its towering place in history. Economically, the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare. The great saints are immediate successes; the smaller ones are at least heralds and harbingers, and they may be leavens also, of a better mundane order. Let us be saints, then, *if we can*, whether or not we succeed visibly or temporally. But in our Father's house are many mansions, and each of us must discover for himself the kind of religion and the amount of saintship which best comports with what he believes to be his powers and feels to be his truest mission and vocation. There are no successes to be guaranteed, and no set orders to be given to individuals, so long as we follow the methods of empirical philosophy. This is my conclusion so far" ("Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 376).

Professor James's trenchant refutations of a bland materialistic incredulity in "The Will to Believe," and in the early chapters of "The Varieties of Religious Experience," are undoubtedly a contribution of permanent value to apologetic literature, and they have helped many people to a more receptive attitude towards religion. They have had the same kind of effect, one may say, on the mind of the ordinary man as the development of foreign mission work. Educated men are coming in a way to believe in missions, instead of talking against them, because they have begun to realize their effectiveness. The missionary is often seen to be succeeding with the

child races of the world where the politician and the educator have been powerless, and many people, who perhaps have no personal belief in religion, are coming round to the opinion that Christianity is a good thing for uncivilized nations.

Foreign missions are being commended and supported—in other words, on the ground, not of their truth, but of their effectiveness. And the same is true of William James's way of defending and commending the religious attitude of mind. We are urged to set on one side the assertions of theology, and to concentrate attention upon the undeniable fact that religion is in individuals an experience and a power.

Thus both the psychological and missionary movements in their different ways have been of service to religion by bringing it into relation with practical life, but in both there is obviously the same danger of encouraging an indifference to the truth that lies behind the power. They are both so occupied with the effects of God's working that they tend to ignore His nature and even His very existence.

If religious conviction were simply a heightening of natural buoyancy and courage—a mere impersonal reinforcement of human capabilities—this way of treating it might conceivably be satisfactory, but, unfortunately for the new school of apologists, this is not the case. Religious conviction not only changes men's spirits and makes them able and willing to act in a way different from the way of the world, but it causes them to make dogmatic assertions about the nature of the spiritual world, and the honest student of human nature cannot therefore evade the question, Are these assertions true? Professor James, one feels, would immensely like to find a good reason for evading it; his whole temperament, so to speak, makes him long to be able to march along gaily with the Salvation Army band, and then slink round the corner when the sermon begins. He sees, however, quite clearly that this cannot be done, and so he braces himself rather desperately to face the difficulty, and to be loyal both to his sympathy and to science. He stands there steadily, then, on the outskirts of the crowd, listening to one saint after another

through the Christian centuries, giving his testimony and fearlessly proclaiming that he has found the truth. But no steady current of fact seems to reach him upon which a scientific induction can be built. The "one truth" seems to the critical observer to take a different colouring and shape for every different mind, and the longer he listens, the more bewildered he becomes. He would gladly give no answer at all, but the seekers after truth crowd round him and compel him. "You have listened to all the sermons. What are we to do, then, and to believe?" Reluctantly the answer comes: "So long as we follow the methods of empirical philosophy, there are no set orders to be given to individuals."

"In the interests of intellectual clearness, I feel bound to say that religious experience, as we have studied it, cannot be cited as unequivocally supporting the belief in a one infinite God. The only thing that it unequivocally testifies to is that we can experience union with *something* larger than ourselves, and in that union find our greatest peace" ("Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 525).

"Here the over-beliefs begin; here the prophets of all the different religions come with their visions, voices, raptures, and other openings, supposed by each to authenticate his own particular faith. Those of us who are not personally favoured with such specific revelations must stand outside of them altogether, and, for the present at least, decide that, since they corroborate incompatible theological doctrines, they neutralize one another and leave no fixed result. If we follow any one of them, we do so in the exercise of our individual freedom, and build out our religion in the way most congruous with our personal susceptibilities. Over-beliefs in various directions are absolutely indispensable, and we should treat them with tenderness and tolerance, so long as they are not intolerant themselves. As I have elsewhere written, the most interesting and valuable things about a man are usually his over-beliefs. Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self, through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true so far as it goes" (p. 513, *et seq.*).

The picture of the kindly philosopher at the street corner stands out before us from these sentences. For the moment the situation is saved. The ardent zealots retire, a little baffled, but unable to say that he has been unjust to them. His academic disciples breathe freely once more; he has not capitulated to the fanatics. But in a few minutes the real seekers after truth come

back again. "But surely there are other methods than those of empirical philosophy? Is there no system of reasoned theology by which all these apparently conflicting 'truths' can be tested?"

As he sets himself to answer this question, he becomes harder and more professional and the sympathy begins to fade from his face. As we saw in the last article, he has an instinctive dislike of ready-made maps, and he allows this prejudice to warp his customary openness of mind. He always suspects theology of being at bottom unscientific, and of resting on mere notions instead of facts. He quotes Newman as a typical example of the theological mind, when he defines theology as "the science of God, or the truths we know about God, put into a system, just as we have a science of the stars and call it astronomy, or of the crust of the earth, and call it geology." This claim of religion to systematize itself is always too much for his tolerance, and he breaks out accordingly rather petulantly against the bare suggestion of any *a priori* method in these matters. When he spoke above about the impossibility of finding any one definite line of religious truth, "so long as we follow the methods of empirical philosophy," it sounded as if he might be prepared to admit some other method. As a matter of fact, that is the only method in which he believes, and the bare suggestion that there may be a different method throws him at once on the defensive. It seems to be opening the door to everything which the new method of Pragmatism has set itself to discredit. What we need, he has been saying, is to unstiffen our theories. "Pragmatism has no prejudices whatever," he is emphatic in asserting, "no obstructive dogmas, no rigid canons of what shall count as proof. She is completely genial; she will entertain any hypothesis; she will consider any evidence" ("Pragmatism," p. 79).

Thus his new method seems to force him into antagonism with every school of thought which teaches that the work of the individual mind is to adjust itself to eternal and pre-existing realities.

"Philosophy has always professed to prove religious truth by coercive argument, and to found religion upon universal reason; but, as a matter of

fact, philosophy has always failed to make good its pretension to be objectively convincing. The arguments for God's existence have stood for hundreds of years with the waves of unbelieving criticism breaking against them, never totally discrediting them in the ears of the faithful, but on the whole slowly and surely washing out the mortar from between their joints. No; the Book of Job went over this whole matter once for all, and definitely. Ratiocination is a relatively superficial and unreal path to the Deity: 'I will lay my hand upon my mouth; I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.' An intellect perplexed and baffled, yet a trustful sense of presence—such is the situation of the man who is sincere with himself and with the facts, but who remains religious still. We must, therefore, I think, bid a definitive good-bye to dogmatic theology. In all sad sincerity, I think, we must conclude that the attempt to demonstrate, by purely intellectual processes, the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience is absolutely hopeless" ("Varieties of Religious Experience," chapter on Philosophy).

The earnest truth-seeker finds himself dismissed accordingly with rather a sharp warning. If he wants a ready-made system of religious truth, he cannot find it in the religious experience of the saints, and he must not try to find it in any *a priori* philosophy. But why, thinks the Pragmatist—and this is the really important thing to notice—should he want to find it at all? The controversy has revealed, in fact, the deep-down difference of temperament between the scientist and the philosopher, between the empirical student of human nature and the mystic who is athirst for the absolute.

If a man's interests are confined to the study of human nature and the conditions of its efficiency, religion will only seem important to him in so far as it promotes that efficiency, and he will have neither sympathy nor patience with its claim to reveal the eternal truth of things. He is like the politician who is interested in missionary work only in so far as it tends to produce good citizens, and is ready to support any and every creed which can do this. Such a temperament inclines men, in fact, to be sceptical about abstract truth altogether, and a little scornful of those who cannot be content without it.

Provided you have light enough, they say, for your next step, why trouble about discovering the light of the world? This mood is as prevalent nowadays in philosophy as in politics, and

in Pragmatism it has received formal expression. The Pragmatist tries to confine his attention to the actual facts before him, and is frankly impatient with the mystical temper, which tries to look always at actual facts in the light of some universal truth. He seems, indeed, to have abandoned almost explicitly the great quest which has been the inspiration alike of thought and of prayer.

"The only thing that religious experience, as we have studied it, unequivocally testifies to is that we can experience union with something larger than ourselves, and in that union find our greatest peace. Philosophy, with its passion for unity, and mysticism, both 'pass to the limit' and identify the something with a unique God who is the all-inclusive soul of the world. Popular opinion, respectful to their authority, follows the example which they set. Meanwhile the practical needs and experiences of religion seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man, and in a fashion continuous with him, there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more godlike self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realized in it at all" ("Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 525).

"The alternative between Pragmatism and Rationalism, in the shape in which we have it now before us, is no longer a question in the theory of knowledge—it concerns the structure of the universe itself. And it is impossible not to see a temperamental difference at work in the choice of sides. The rationalist mind, radically taken, is of a doctrinaire and authoritative complexion. The phrase 'must be' is ever on its lips. The bellyband of its universe must be tight. A radical pragmatist, on the other hand, is a happy-go-lucky anarchistic sort of creature. If he had to live in a tub like Diogenes, he wouldn't mind at all if the hoops were loose and the staves let in the sun.

"For pluralistic pragmatism, truth grows up inside of all the finite experiences. They lean on each other, but the whole of them, if such a whole there be, leans on nothing" ("Pragmatism," p. 259).

We must all have a great deal of sympathy with this adventurous temperament, whether we meet it in the schoolboy or in the philosopher, and when it confronts us in the shape of Professor James's irresistible bonhomie, it has undoubtedly a very charming side to it. But it is confessedly only a one-sided mood, and, if it tries to make out that it is the only

right method for handling life, it carries with it, surely, its own condemnation. Such a mood represents obviously the way men feel in their unphilosophic and non-religious moments, and it is the purpose of philosophy and religion alike to discipline and deepen it. The "King's fool," with his clever, irresponsible banter, served an invaluable purpose as a critic, but it would never have done to put him on the throne. In the same way, one may welcome the Pragmatist's desire to unstiffen our old theories, while refusing to let him take the backbone out of philosophy altogether.

The question at issue, however, is not settled by saying that these conclusions spring from a certain kind of light-hearted temperament, and represent rather a superficial way of looking at life. If we are unwilling to accept them, they must be criticized upon independent grounds, and good reason must be shown for holding that it is possible to handle experience on *a priori* principles. The Pragmatist contends that—temperament or no temperament—his is the only philosophy justified by the facts. From the data before me, Professor James would say, I am unable to believe that God has revealed His nature and will to men in a single definite religious system.

The philosophic quarrel we may safely leave to the philosophers, but the religious conclusions of the new school of psychology are a definite challenge to the Christian self-consciousness. If the case is not to go against us, we must up and give our testimony, and explain why we think the verdict is unjustified. We must say, like the Apostles, that we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, and then stand our ground fearlessly, even though we have to encounter much scornful incredulity from the learned world. We know from history, no less than from prophecy, that the simple truths of Christianity will always be a stumbling-block to those who cannot use them as stepping-stones, and it would be foolish to expect any general assent to them. But the time has come, in this particular field, when clear distinctions need to be drawn, and men be obliged to choose their side.

Now the first thing, I think, which occurs to a Christian, upon reading Professor William James, is that his conclusions explain only such a very small part of his data.

The kind of religion which he considers adequate to explain the phenomena and to meet the needs of human nature would appeal really only to the people whom he calls the "healthy-minded," and dismisses in one chapter as knowing very little of the mysteries of the spirit's life. Their religious needs are met by a sort of vague, impersonal Theism, with no definite dogmas, but supplying an emotional reinforcement to the isolated personality and a new motive for the duties of life. And yet the greater part of his book is taken up with those whom he calls the "sick souls," who need and find "conversion," and for whom this vague assurance of a larger world is plainly insufficient. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that his conclusions would be repudiated indignantly by nearly all the religious people upon whose testimonies they are supposed to be founded.

The convictions about God, which he sets aside so patronizingly as mere individual over-beliefs, were, as a matter of fact, for them the central truths which made their religion real. No one who had ever seriously studied the phenomenon of the sense of forgiveness could maintain that the thought of a Divine act of redemption is a mere negligible idiosyncrasy of belief. And yet redemption by an act of self-sacrifice done by God for man does not appear at all in Professor James's final statement of the minimum creed which explains the data supplied by religious experience.

Secondly, a Christian feels very dissatisfied with Professor James's choice of examples. He seems to have thought that abnormal people, whose religious history had been a turbulent upheaval, and who wrote their own spiritual autobiographies, were the only really characteristic specimens for his purpose. He ignores, therefore, the great mass of ordinary Christian people in all ages who have not had exciting inner experiences, but in whom the sense of sin and forgiveness and reliance on

grace and victory over temptation and quiet consciousness of the truth of the Incarnation has been just as real, and just as much an individual possession, as they were for St. Augustine or Luther, or any of the more modern believers whom he quotes. All these ordinary folk are dismissed in an off-hand way as mere conventional adherents of the traditional observances of their countries, whether it be Buddhist, Christian, or Mohammedan. "Their religion has been made for them by others, communicated to them by tradition, determined to fixed forms by imitation, and retained by habit." Real faith, he maintained, can be found "only in individuals for whom religion exists, not as a dull habit, but as an acute fever, rather." We all know there are plenty of professing Christians whose religion is such as he describes, but this indiscriminate lumping together of all unemotional Christianity with traditional religiousness betrays a great ignorance of actual human nature. It is important to emphasize this point, because it shows how his natural sympathy was warped by a certain academic exclusiveness. He had never explored the religious consciousness of the average man. It is a constant temptation of academic people to argue as if the ordinary man will accept uncritically whatever is offered him, and it is perhaps only by studying at close quarters the religion of the poor that one finds out how false this assumption is.

Lastly, the Christian feels that the radical defect in Professor James is that he did not know what the religion of the Incarnation has really claimed to teach. Like so many educated men nowadays, he cannot be said to have rejected the claims of our Lord, because he had never really considered them. One is conscious of this in all that he says about systematic theology. He complains that it is founded, not on fact, but on fancies, and speaks indeed as if all Christian theology rested on no firmer foundations than—let us say—the mediæval speculations about the orders of the angels or the condition of the souls in purgatory. If he had studied the actual history of Christian dogma, he would have seen that its central conclusions are based directly upon the claim of our Lord to be equal with the Father and to have

become incarnate in order to save believers from sin. In other words, the *a priori* principles of the Christian philosophy are based, not on theories, but on a supposed historical fact. It may, of course, be questioned whether the facts justify the theology, but it cannot be questioned that they have always been looked to as its starting-point and justification. There is no trace, however, in Professor James's writings that the doctrines of the Incarnation and of the new life of fellowship with God in Christ through the Sacraments had ever presented themselves to him as a "living option." Nor does he seem to have realized that the union with God offered by Christianity is entirely different in kind from that offered by any other religious system, and so he was quite willing to view it as being no more or less true than Buddhism or Confucianism. If anyone had confronted him with the supposed facts of the Christian story, he would have answered vaguely that their historical character had been shattered by modern criticism, and that the doctrines of St. Paul were derived from Greek speculation. In an English University such airy generalizations could not, of course, be made with impunity. There would be theologians on the spot prepared to challenge and refute the mistaken results of much modern criticism, and to show the impressive unity and continuity of the Christian witness to the Catholic faith about the Person of Christ. But Professor James moved in quite different circles, and probably thought that "historical Christianity" had been abandoned by all competent scholars. His writings always make one feel the need for better orthodox theologians in the American Universities.

The consequence of this ignorance of Christian teaching and a defective use of the data is that a method of handling religion, in itself quite legitimate, has become in Professor James's hands the very reverse of scientific. The operations of God's grace in the lives of certain exceptional individuals are of course as legitimate a phenomenon for scientific observation as any other, but they ought not permanently to be considered apart from the general religious life and thought within which they have appeared.

An exclusively psychological way of looking at Christians suggests the picture of an unhappy recruit in his new uniform being gazed at by his old friends in the village. He is forlorn, awkward, and unexplained—isolated from his proper environment and unable to show the qualities which he knows himself to possess. Under such a scrutiny neither the recruit nor the Christian can give a true account of himself, and the village gossips learn no more about the British Army than the modern philosopher learns about the kingdom of God. A Christian must be judged in relation both to Christ, whose servant he is trying to become, and whose life he is more or less imperfectly expressing, and to the Church, the spiritual society within which he is merely a more or less insignificant and unworthy co-operator. This grace or religious experience, in which he is seen to share, belongs to him not as an isolated individual, but as a member of Christ and of the Church, and this is an essential feature indeed in his consciousness. "While ye have the light," our Lord said, "believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light." This is just what the Christian feels. His effort of self-surrender brings him into a sphere of light and power which is independent of himself, and will persist, whether he himself continues to stand in it or not. A true observation of grace in individuals then is bound to lead to the study of God. The work which Christ does in the hearts of men is to bear witness of Him, that the Father has sent Him. In other words, the religious psychologist must be prepared to become a Christian, or he will cease to be scientific.

These are the considerations which I think ought to be borne in mind in approaching the new method of religious apologetics. There is nothing really wrong about the method itself, provided it is properly applied. If future investigators in the same field will learn to be true to all sides of life, to past experience as well as to the present, to the witness of theology and religious institutions as well as to that of individuals, Christians will have nothing to fear, and a very great deal to gain from their work. The defects which we have had to point

out in Professor James's application of the method were due in large measure to the meagre and ambiguous witness of the Christian life around him. It is for us Christians of the twentieth century to see to it that his successors are set free from his disabilities.

Endowments and Disendowment.

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NEARLY sixty years ago was published "The Warden," by Anthony Trollope, the first of the six famous "Barsetshire" novels. Modern lovers of Trollope—and it is to be hoped they are not few—will not need to be reminded of the story; but those who are not acquainted with it may be told briefly that it relates the mental and social conflict through which an elderly clergyman passed as his conviction grew that he was not honourably entitled to the large income attached to his sinecure as Warden of a Charity Hospital. Mr. Henry James has described the book as "simply the history of an old man's conscience."[1] In striking contrast is the attitude adopted by the Warden's son-in-law, a worldly-wise Archdeacon, who "did not believe in the Gospel with more assurance than he did in the sacred justice of all ecclesiastical revenues."[2] This gentleman hears that there is a flaw in the legal action which has been initiated against his father-in-law, and his subsequent advice to the old man shows us to what extent he is really aiming at justice. "All we are to do," he tells him, "is to do nothing."[3] "Can't you see that if we tell them that no action will lie against you, but that one may possibly lie against some other person or persons, that we shall be putting weapons into their hands, and be teaching them how to cut our

[1] In his "Partial Portraits." Quoted in introduction to "The Warden" in *Everyman's Library*.

[2] "The Warden," chap. v.

[3] *Ibid.*, chap. ix.