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

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

slow and even ineffectual in its working, but if it is the will of God there is nothing for us but to wait upon it. To hasten its working, to turn it into a new channel, to widen its scope, is certain to end in disaster. And when the disaster falls it is poor consolation to remember that we thought we were doing it for the best. They say that Judas Iscariot

was guilty of nothing worse than a desire to make Jesus reveal Himself. He would put Him in a corner, where He would be compelled to declare His Messiahship and accept His crown. It was an interesting experiment. But it ended on Calvary for Jesus, and on Aceldama, the Field of Blood, for Judas.

## Belief in God and its Rational Basis.

BY THE REVEREND J. DICK FLEMING, D.D., PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, WINNIPEG.

SINCE the time of Immanuel Kant it has been customary, for theologians and philosophers alike, to concede that the existence of God is not a matter of reason, but only of faith. The critical philosophy of Kant was directed to prove, on the one hand, that since the categories we employ in our thinking have validity only in the field of the empirical consciousness, we can only conceive, without being able to comprehend or verify, the Absolute realities; and on the other hand, that the Absolute reality from which our theoretical reason is thus debarred is made known to us by the Practical or moral reason. In other words, theoretic knowledge concerns itself with the realm of nature, the things of sense-experience; the realm of ends, which is the Absolute reality, is shut out from science proper, and must be relegated to moral faith. We know only phenomena, the things of space and time; the ultimates of existence are only matters of moral persuasion. Hence philosophy must limit itself to a criticism of the categories and forms of our knowledge; while those absolute realities, with which Ontology formerly dealt, have their true place in the moral sphere, as ethical postulates of the practical life.

In varying language and under somewhat modified forms, this distinction has largely prevailed in the thought of the nineteenth century. It reappears, in its Kantian form, in Hamilton and Mansel; in Herbert Spencer's doctrine of phenomenalism, which relegates religious faith to the realm of the Unknowable; and in the Ritschlian and other theologies which are based on Kant, and maintain that our beliefs in the supersensible rest on Value-judgments. It reappears in a more directly empirical form in the activism of Eucken,

in Bergson's exaltation of intuition and instinct above the theoretic intelligence, and even in modern Pragmatism. In the last form, however, it threatens to abolish the theoretic side of knowledge altogether; for the pragmatist proclaims that all truth has its value ultimately in its practical application, and that the test of truth is its working value.

This agnostic, or anti-intellectualist, attitude of mind seems to be in a fair way of working out its own salvation. The original doctrine here was that knowledge properly so called is confined to phenomenal experience and has a higher degree of rationality within these limits than the faith which carries us beyond phenomena. But the advancing anti-intellectualism of our time is beginning to criticise this distinction, and to recognize that if the knowledge of things seen is only phenomenal and partial, it has no valid claim to be exalted above the other factor—call it faith, intuition, or moral will—which brings us into living touch with reality. Very few adhere to the extreme view of Spencer that the non-phenomenal is absolutely unthinkable. It is widely recognized that the conclusions of faith are quite capable of being intelligently stated, and the reasons for these conclusions intelligently given. But if they thus yield us deeper insight into reality than that which the scientific intellect gives, why should we refuse them the title of knowledge? Why not allow that they belong to a higher kind of reason, which deals with things beyond sense by methods that are proper to them? No one, of course, would deny that we have many practical beliefs and intuitions which we have never rationalized; that is true not only of our faith but also of all our

ordinary 'knowledge.' But we cannot make a single statement in any realm of thought which we do not implicitly declare to be reasonable and justifiable. Is not all science—including philosophy—the endeavour to verify, deepen, and enlarge this elementary knowledge or faith of the ordinary mind?

Further, it is a mistake to suppose, as the critics of rational metaphysics do, that science and metaphysics are distinguished by the fact that the one keeps within the limits of experience, while the other attempts to go beyond these limits. The very first step in science is a step beyond the visible to the invisible nexus of things. On the other hand, while metaphysics, dealing with the whole of experience, inevitably passes beyond the sense-world to its deeper meanings and implications, it does not repudiate its starting-point in experience. If metaphysics finds the ultimate truth to lie in the unseen and eternal, wherein is it more venturesome than the science which, starting from only a part of experience, finds the ultimate reality in ions or electrons?

Coming more directly to the question before us—the reality of God—we find that the rational grounds for a belief in God's existence have assumed in the main these four forms: the Causal argument, from the contingency and change manifest in the world to unchanging necessary Being; the Design argument, from the order of the world and its conformity to ends, to the Infinite Mind; the Ontological argument, from the very thought of God to His existence; and the Moral argument, from the moral life of man to the moral Governor of the Universe. Here again the authority of Kant is invoked; and it is the fashion to regard these old dogmatic props—the first three at least—as obsolete fallacies, annihilated by the critical philosophy.

Are we to suppose, then, that reasons which appealed to Socrates and most of the master-minds in philosophy and theology up to the time of Kant, have been disproved and shorn of value by a few strokes of Kant's critical pen? Kant himself knew better; and lest there be some who accept Kant's authority without having opened his *Critique of Pure Reason*, let us hear how Kant himself expresses his mind on these old arguments. 'The world around us opens before our view so magnificent a spectacle of order, variety, beauty, and conformity to ends, that whether we carry our

observation into the infinity of space in the one direction, or into its illimitable divisions on the other, whether we regard the world in its greatest or in its least manifestations, even after we have attained to the highest summit of knowledge which our weak minds can reach, we find that language in the presence of wonders so inconceivable has lost its force, and number its power to reckon; nay, even thought fails to conceive adequately, and our conception of the whole dissolves into an astonishment beyond the power of expression—all the more eloquent that it is dumb. Everywhere around us we observe a chain of causes and effects, of means and end, of birth and death; and as nothing has entered of itself into the condition in which we find it, we are constantly referred to some other thing which itself suggests the same inquiry regarding its cause; and thus the universe must sink into the abyss of nothingness, unless we admit that, beside this infinite chain of contingencies, there exists something that is primal and self-subsistent—something which, as the cause of the phenomenal world, secures its continuance and preservation.' Is this eloquent presentation of reasoning, in which Kant really combines the teleological argument with that of causality, finally repudiated by the philosopher? In form and details, yes; but in substance, no! 'This argument,' he says, 'always deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and that most in conformity with the common reason of humanity. . . . It would be utterly hopeless to attempt to rob this argument of the authority it has always enjoyed. The mind, unceasingly elevated by these considerations, which though empirical, are so remarkably powerful, and continually adding to their force, will not suffer itself to be depressed by the doubts suggested by subtle speculation; it tears itself out of this state of uncertainty, the moment it casts a look upon the wondrous forms of nature and the majesty of the universe and rises from height to height, from condition to condition, till it has elevated itself to the supreme and unconditioned Author of all.'<sup>1</sup> So Kant speaks; and yet those who regard themselves as his followers proclaim that Kant has destroyed these arguments and robbed them of all value! What is true is that Kant could find no place

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, Dialectic Bk. II. ch. III. sec. 6.

for them in his system of philosophy, and was led, in spite of his recognition of their value, to deny that they were absolute demonstrations. The special difficulties raised by Kant were not new; what was new was his contention that the mind's categories were only suited to grasp phenomena, and thus the understanding was from its very constitution incompetent to deal with noumenal reality. But do the modern thinkers who invoke Kant's authority accept his system—his abstract distinction between phenomena and noumena, between sense and understanding, between a *posteriori* and a *priori*? We may safely say they do not. But if we set Kant's system with its mechanical distinctions aside, the old proofs remain where they were—Kant himself not denying their force for the common reason.

But, it will be said, some of the objections presented by Kant remain, whether his entire system be accepted or not. Thus, we cannot logically deduce the infinite from the finite; we cannot speak of a 'cause' of the world seeing that causality is only applicable to the parts of the world to one another; we cannot conclude to necessary being from contingent being, or from the limited design in nature to the infinitude of wisdom. Such arguments against the proposed proofs of God's existence were presented long before Kant's time; and they are more conclusive from the point of view of formal logic than from that of the real logic of thought. Neither science nor philosophy has bound itself by rules of formal demonstration; but both alike have insisted on advancing from particulars to the universal, and from the facts assumed to some principle which transcends and explains them.

Coming to the objections themselves, we should probably be accused of quibbling with words if we argued that just as phenomenal reality implies noumenal reality, so the finite implies the infinite, and the changing or contingent implies the unchanging and necessary. The accusation would be just if the noumenal reality were, as the Kantian conceives it, a mere unrelated Absolute, and if the infinite had no relation to the finite. But if the phenomenal is the appearance of the noumenal, if the contingent is the changing appearance of the abiding, and the finite the veritable manifestation, in partial form, of the infinite,—why, in reason's name, should we not advance from one to the other? If it be still objected that we cannot,

by any kind of logic, conclude from anything to the opposite of that thing, and that there are no terms more opposed than contingent and necessary, conditioned and unconditioned, finite and infinite,—we may reply that those who charge the idealist with 'vicious intellectualism' should beware of it themselves. Vicious intellectualism, as Professor James defines it, is 'the treating of a name as excluding from the fact named what the name's definition fails positively to include.' Now, the things we call finite and infinite are opposed in respect of their magnitude, whether extensive or intensive; but they may be otherwise one in innumerable ways. In fact, absolute opposites are unthinkable. But if finite and infinite are related in manifold ways, the one being the dependent existence, the other the ground-existence, why in the name of reason should we not argue from the one to the other? Nay, is the finite world absolutely finite? Can we conceive it otherwise than as resting on the bosom of infinitude?

But the Kantian theologian will again invoke his master in reference to the Ontological argument. Kant has shown, it is said, that the empirical arguments drawn from experience of the changing phenomenal world rest ultimately on the purely *a priori* Ontological proof. And this proof, which argues in various fantastic ways from the very idea of God to His reality, has been refuted a thousand times before Kant; but Kant has finally extinguished it by showing that the *a priorism* which argues from mere conception to real existence is a glaring *non sequitur*.

But before setting aside a type of reasoning that has appealed to the greatest minds from Augustine to Hegel and down to the present day, we may surely ask if there is not a substance of truth in it. Grant that it is illogical to argue directly from a psychological idea to the real existence corresponding to it; grant that apart from experience all 'pure' reasoning is empty and void; may it not still be true that our experience, when we analyse it, is found to contain the idea, and along with the idea, the reality of the Infinite Being, the Absolute Intelligence?

The general distrust with which the Ontological argument has been viewed is due to the very inadequate form in which it has been stated. To say, with Anselm, that the idea of a Perfect Being involves reality, because a perfect being who did not exist would be inferior to one who did exist,

*i.e.* would not be perfect, is only a logical quibble. One might argue quite as logically that Satan, the vilest being, must needs exist, because if he did not exist he would be less vile than a monster that did exist, and so would not really be the vilest being. Much more reasonable is the special argument put forward by Descartes in his *Discourse of Method*, that the real existence of the infinite and Perfect Being must be assumed, as being the only adequate explanation of the existence of the idea in ourselves. There is no principle more commonly affirmed by the radical empiricist of to-day than that all our ideas, however complex, imaginary, or distorted, run back to some root of reality. That is to say, the elements of which any idea is composed are constituted by some past experience which brings us into touch with the real. What, then, is the original experience which will explain the idea of the Infinite and Perfect? Whence has the idea come? Surely not from our sense-experience which yields only the finite and imperfect. It cannot be made up by addition or multiplication of finites; for no combination of finites brings us nearer to the infinite, nor any addition of imperfect things to the perfect. Nor can the infinite be explained away as being a mere negation; the word is negative of the finite, but the idea itself is no more negative than that of the finite itself. Whence, then, comes the conception of the infinite and perfect, if not from the Infinite and Perfect Being Himself?

But the Ontological argument, as stated elsewhere by Descartes, and as interpreted by others, is much more than a mere causal argument from the idea in the mind to its origin in real existence. It is rather the argument that the reality of God is verified directly and immediately by the very idea of God; or, as Descartes says, the necessity of God's existence imposes itself upon our thought, in the same way as the idea of a valley is necessary when we think of a mountain, or as, when we think of a triangle, the equivalence of its three angles to two right angles is rationally imposed upon us. Later idealism fills out this argument by pointing out that reality is rationality, and that all our judgments base themselves on this presupposition of rationality, that is, of the presence of universal mind. We may put the same thing in simpler fashion by saying that the same process of thought which leads us to the conception

of God as Infinite Mind leads us of necessity to assume His reality. When we reflect on our experience as a whole, we cannot help arriving at the conception, which carries with it the reality, of the Infinite and Perfect Being. As our sense-experience leads us inevitably to the realization of the infinity of space and time, and our scientific study leads us on to the idea of Infinite power or energy; so our reflexion on the process and the validity of knowledge reveals to us the implicate of Absolute Truth or Infinite Mind; and our moral nature reveals the Infinitude of Goodness.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that these lines of reasoning do not furnish a solution of all problems as to the Divine nature. They lead us to the conception of Infinite Being, Infinite Intelligence, Infinite Moral Will. But the modern mind will still inquire whether this Infinite Being possesses also Personality, and, again, whether God, if He is a personal being, can be identified with this Infinite Being at all. We can speak of infinite mind, and infinite energy or will; but is not personality a limiting anthropomorphic conception? The theory of a 'symbolic' knowledge of God is widely accepted by modest philosophers who recognize the difficulty of combining the thought of infinite being with that of a progressive realization of truth, which human knowledge implies; or with the thought of imperfectly realized ends, or with the thought of personal emotion and passion. Other thinkers again, who have little taste for metaphysics and prefer the idea of a Divine person to that of an abstract Infinite or Absolute Being, favour the conception of a personal 'finite God' as being more in line with the common understanding. Still others maintain that any doctrine of God as the Absolute Being is inconsistent with the freedom of finite beings, and declare that God must be finite, at

<sup>1</sup> The division made between *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments has only led to confusion. All argument takes its start in experience, and is verified by experience. In fact, the distinction has never been greatly favoured by philosophers; but it has maintained itself in this connexion because it is commonly held that experience contains only what is finite. Were that true, the argument from experience must appear as a somewhat venturesome leap into the dark; and the 'pure' *a priori* argument might commend itself as starting from the pure speculative realm, and entrenching itself in the infinite reality. In truth, however, the Ontological argument, when rightly understood, is the general summary of the other arguments; it is the expression of that movement of the mind which insists on running out into the Infinite.

least in the sense that He has limited Himself, and even that He is eternally self-limiting.<sup>1</sup>

But whatever difficulties remain unsolved in the doctrine of Infinite Personality, they are as a drop in the bucket when compared with those that meet us when we seriously accept such vagaries as are offered in its place. Infinite intelligence without a centre of personality is pure abstraction personified. A 'finite God' implies that some other principle is needed for the ultimate explanation of things; and those who argue in favour of such a God seem to be scarcely able to persuade themselves of His existence.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the conception of a God who has limited Himself from all eternity will strike the ordinary mind as a sheer contradiction in terms.

Some of the difficulties which surround the conception of God as Infinite Personality, and

<sup>1</sup> Ward, *Realm of Ends*, Lectures XI. and XX.

<sup>2</sup> McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*; and Mill, *Essays on Religion*.

which have led to such impossible solutions, are due to an erroneous conception of the relation of the infinite to the finite. The general underlying assumption seems to be that the Infinite Being, conceived as the All-being, must sublate and destroy all finite self-reality and freedom. But while it is a serious problem so to present this relation as to allow room for the self-reality of the finite without resolving the Infinite into the abstract totality of being, the solution does not seem impossible. Infinite space includes all finite spaces, both transcends them and is immanent in them. Infinite time or eternity transcends all finite times; yet it is immanent in all times. So the Infinitude of the Divine Personality transcends all finite beings, all human personalities, and is nevertheless immanent in all. The double doctrine of the transcendence and immanence of the Infinite Personality is not a combination of two contradictory pictures; it is essential to the very conception of the infinite.

## Literature.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

THE BAMPTON LECTURES for the year 1920 were delivered by the Rev. A. C. Headlam, D.D., who chose as his subject *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion* (Murray; 12s. net). It is the subject which is now occupying the attention and interest of Anglican theologians more than any other. But to Dr. Headlam it is not a study of yesterday or of to-day. He has given his life to it. Whatever interest Christ has had for him personally, professionally his chief interest and occupation has for thirty years or more been the doctrine of the Church. And Dr. Headlam is a High-churchman.

What do we expect? We expect that the unique opportunity of the Bampton lectureship will be used by him to defend a 'high' theory of the Church, a theory fixed and settled in his mind long ago. And what do we find? All our expectations vanish. Dr. Headlam determined, when appointed Bampton lecturer, that he would follow the historical method of study strictly, and state fearlessly the conclusions to which it led

him. He knew what the historical method meant. He knew that to profess to follow it was one thing, to follow it another. He knew that Bishop Gore had professed to pursue the historical method of study in his book on *The Church and the Ministry*, but (he says in a footnote) 'the reader will notice throughout that the dogmatic presentation always precedes the history, and that the function of the latter is to prove rather than to instruct.'

What are the conclusions? One conclusion is that Episcopacy is not a form of Church government to be found in the New Testament. 'There are no definite Biblical arguments in favour of it. The name we have, but its signification is different. Attempts have been made to find arguments in favour of it, the position of James the Lord's brother, the Angels of the Churches in the Revelation, the language of the Pastoral Epistles. A more careful exegesis will show us that these arguments are based upon misinterpretation. There is no Biblical authority for Episcopacy.' And Dr. Headlam is Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, and Editor of the *Church Quarterly Review*.