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The Meaning of God for Modern Man

The Concept of Faith

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I begin with a disclaimer. Indeed I must do so if what follows is to gain pardon let alone sympathy. I am not a systematic theologian, not a theologian at all but a teacher and lover of poetry who in order to understand that love feels compelled to enter another sphere. Or could I say a very minor example of a genre not uncommon in England (would it were much more common) which seems to be dissatisfied with the conventional bounds of subjects and disciplines and to feel the need to strike out into more than one field. I have in mind such people as Dorothy Sayers, Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis and Owen Barfield, part of whose Englishness (if there is such a word) is that unconsciously aware of the impossibility or at least the danger of specialization found themselves some would say trespassing outside their own domain others that some necessity of satisfying their fuller humanity compelled to become more general practitioners. And now that I say this, I recall that though none of them were primarily poets but two of them novelists, one a literary critic and one a philosopher and philologist, all of them wrote and published poetry. I recall this interesting fact because I feel strongly that what I have to say on the subject that has by mischance—a worse mischance for you, I fear, than for me—fallen to me, needs poetic rather than dry prosaic expression. This matter is essentially poetic and it needs a poet, a lyric almost an epic poet, and alas I can make small claim to such a dignity. I have also to apologize for not having read the other papers in this series before I set to work on my own, and thus for the failure in co-ordination which I am afraid you are bound to feel.

The first thing that strikes me about my title is the assumption that there is or can or ought to be a Concept of Religious Faith; or that faith is something that can be conceptualized, is in fact an intellectual construct. I hope you will agree that this is a permissible, if not an obvious, deduction from the title because almost everything I want to say depends on this.

For is there not a deeply false assumption implicit in most theological writings in our time, a time in which as we all know theology literally pours from the printing presses? I mean the assumption that the intellectual is identical with the spiritual, that the two are the same. If so, in a sense it is an intimidating thought but one which I believe should strike us more deeply than it does. For in a way it means all writing with words, fallen words that is, all books about Religion and more so all books about God, have unintentionally something murderous about them: in some degree they kill the very thing, that very Being, whom they aim to bring to life. Why, could we not ask, do we find William Blake, say, and William Shakespeare, neither of whom were, so far as we know, either churchmen or orthodox Christians, moved by their imaginations to consider with great profundity the spiritual nature of men and women, increasingly popular in the West today among young and old alike? And why on the other hand do we find Theology in the doldrums in the sense that, though rarely if ever so prolific, it is cold shouldered by the majority? I believe the answer is that in an incoherent sort of way people feel that it is an expertise, an academic preserve of an elite, an interesting but limited field of study, an intellectual game above all, with its own abstruse terminology, a game of expert for experts, a game, that is, for a few but a bore for the rest. The poets, on the other hand, I suggest are felt to be nearer real life and the problems of humanity, to be dealing with these problems because they know them in their own lives and above all to be dealing with them in depth and with the full resources of their feeling and imagination and not with their intellect alone.

Even if today we are very uneasy in Zion I suggest we are rather easy-going in the way we toss words about there. In our almost desperate need to find the meaning, as we feel it, of God in the modern world, we bandy THEOS and LOGOS about with far too little thought. For as the poets like the prophets of old knew well, these words are hardly and hesitantly to be used seeing that their meaning is beyond intellectual comprehension. They are the sounds we make to express the Divine Being, that loving yet absolute Otherness. We, however, clever shallow creatures that we are, are forever making abstractions from it and in doing so making an idol of it in order that, as we claim, we may give intellectual definition of or make useful descriptions of it.

You may now be thinking I am indeed putting a case and a very one-sided one. I wonder; yet I do not think so. I wonder if we are really so very different in our spiritual condition from the Scribes and the Lawyers who incurred such a weighty condemnation from our Lord Himself. Would it be very unfair to suggest that the language, methods and aims of theology today in some sense merited the reproof administered

in Matt. 23:3. 'But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in!' And to come closer to my point, now that I am quoting scripture, could I recall Isaiah's description of the sin of those whom in his later days Jesus condemned repeatedly because it was their sin also. The words, as we all know, are from verses 14 and 15 of chapter 13 of St. Matthew. 'You shall hear indeed but never perceive.' For this peoples' heart has grown dull and their ears are heavy of hearing and their eyes they have closed...' My subject, I remind myself, is faith in God in the conditions in which we live today. My contention is that in a way very similar to that in which a narrow literalist over-scrupulous approach to the law once given in full circumstances of its original glory to Moses by Yahweh himself had over the centuries dulled the vision of that glory, circumscribed the minds of the scholars the scribes and reduced their spiritual range and sympathy till they wholly failed to recognize and finally killed the very Being whom they supposed themselves to be honouring, the scientists of today after some three hundred years experience of the so-called scientific method have gone far towards deadening and making a travesty of the human mind. One result of which is that Religious Faith today if not a caricature of what it could and should be is certainly an extremely inadequate and fragmentary thing. Yet in this context it may not be the scientists that are primarily to blame, however truly in fact they can be convicted of error. It is we the non-scientists who without knowing what we are doing have accepted the implicit or explicit assumption of the Physical Sciences. From one point of view like good scientists but bad theologians, we have insisted on defining God, making Him manageable, removing Him from inconvenient proximity to ourselves and so to say insulating ourselves from Him as from a very powerful and unpredictable electrical charge, pretending He spoke figuratively when He spoke literally, disbelieving those amazing promises, defusing the current of Grace, protecting ourselves from those impossible demands. But it is not quite from that point of view that I would develop my theme, for enough has been said and written on it, but from another. We are most of us fairly sure whatever boat we are in and however near it may be to capsizing we are not in the same boat as these Sadducees, Scribes and lawyers of old. For one thing are we not more humble than they? Are we not openly uncertain, admitting we do not know the answers, almost excessively unwilling to dogmatize? Casting general aspersion and offering undifferentiated praise are alike facile and useless activities. But surely it is time to insist that it is not the Church that is so much to be found fault with for our present failure of faith as the Universities; in particular the University Departments of Theology. Have we not for a very long time now been suffering

in this particular context from *le trahison des clerics*, betrayal by the intellectuals?

Whoever it was, whether Aquinas, Bacon, Descartes or another who first divided the single human-divine experience of the world into two spheres, making Reason the guide in one and Revelation in the other may not very much matter. But the division itself, the conscious separation of the two, inevitable as it may have been and up to a point necessary and good, has produced consequences which are now a trouble to us all. Let nothing I may say or seem to be saying suggest I am opposed to Science or, I suppose I should now add, to Intellect in itself. But I am opposed, as I feel we all here must be opposed, to the failure to distinguish between science with a capital letter, the Divine Being of Wisdom Herself, and science with a small initial letter, which is fast becoming a very unscientific activity indeed, in some spheres half-way to becoming a sub-human, even a diabolical one. If only in order that the modern consciousness, typical of the western half of the world, analytical consciousness that is; and the self-consciousness that today is at once our pride and our despair, might develop, it was necessary. It was necessary for the development of the freedom of the human mind through detachment from the world that surrounded it that the period 1650-1950 should be that of the scientific attitude in the narrow sense, the attitude that is to say, that held that only that which is observable by one or more of the five senses and thus can be weighed and measured is real and has objective existence. Almost all of us would say that this epoch of the scientific Revolution is one we may be very proud of. Has it not given us modern Industry with its wonderful machinery; modern Architecture, Communication, Medicine, and hundred other things undreamed of before 1650, in a word the great giant of modern Technology which after all, let us admit, only threatens us with world war and world destruction if we its inventors and controllers allow it to do so? But the real question perhaps is could we not have arrived at our modern type of consciousness without having also arrived at the brink of wholesale self-destruction? More important, can we fully understand the real nature of the self by which we are so burdened now and practise its real and creative powers without plunging over the precipice?

There is not time to try to indicate in what sense and to what degree Religion and Theology have consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly followed in the wake of where they felt Charles Darwin and most of the other geologists, archaeologists, historians and the rest of this time and later were leading. Let the churches' apparent acceptance of Darwin's theory of the Evolution of Species through chance mutation, and its apparent acceptance of the modern astronomers' universe of vast vacuities of space, interspersed at rare intervals with incandescent physical matter at extremely high temperature, that they call stars, galaxies

or nebulae, serve as instances of the general trend by which they have come to believe in a wholly material Universe whatever they may say is the nature of this strange creature called man within it. Thus most of the exponents of the physical sciences ostensibly present us with the facts of life and the creatures of the world, in terms of matter only, however deeply and evermore deeply the exploration into the nature of the particles and sub-atomic particles of matter may go. And on the other hand, the sciences of the mind, Philosophy and Psychology in particular, insist in so far as I can understand them, that the mind is but a ghost in a machine, that the language of religious faith is meaningless, that all statements about any but measurable facts are subjective; that is to say that when we talk about Truth or Beauty, more still when we talk about God, we are really only talking about our own feelings. But as the Linguists and Existentialists and Positivists will allow us no Divine Ultimates so the Psychologists too give us little comfort. To Freud, religious faith is a neurosis even if a temporarily necessary neurosis. To Jung it is a necessity for man's health indeed and organic to his being, a vital and original element of his nature, yet (and I feel sure this is a reasonable conclusion from what I have heard him say) it is ultimately purely physically determined. That is to say he sees no reason to believe in the independent objective existence of the Divine Being, of angels and spirits and the archetypal Beings of which he writes so fascinatingly. In fact the observable phenomena in the form of myths and legends from pre-historic time show that ordinary human consciousness, as it then was, apprehended the divine everywhere and in everything. Then Reason split itself off from Divine Revelation that has disappeared and given place to religious faith so that each of these two might go their separate ways, one a human and the other a divine way. After which Reason gradually lost sight of, less and less felt the need of, and more and more was embarrassed by Revelation. So we arrive at today when the professional exponents of rationality altogether dismiss the category of Revelation and more and more claim as their own the whole field of human experience.

What shall we do then? Shall we submit, as do many Christians today, to this gloomy diagnosis in the conviction that such potluck, cold comfort as it may be, is the proper spiritual diet for our time? Or shall we rather with the Protestant liberalists on the one hand or the Catholic authoritarians on the other, make a somewhat similar dichotomy of our experience, let Nature go hang and hug our Revelation to ourselves? Or shall we perhaps feel that neither of these solutions is right but that the true vocation both of Science and of the Spirit call us to adopt a different attitude? I myself, needless to say, am convinced we should adopt this last alternative. But what does it imply?

It implies above all, I think, that we should conclude that the image of man that over these last three centuries, and in particular during the last hundred years, the sciences have been unobtrusively urging upon us is in fact not a scientific one at all. Thus if we are going to consider modern man's faith in God rationally we must first of all know what modern man himself is. And I am sure he is not the being whom most of the Philosophers, Psychologists, Sociologists and Biologists suppose he is. But neither is he quite, if only they would be honestly explicit about what they do believe, the being the theologians make him out to be. He is in fact a different, much more complicated and much more exciting creature. In short, he is not this poor forked creature, a head on two legs that he appears to be but a threefold being, a being of thinking, feeling and willing, that is of head, heart and hand. It is here that modern Education, School, College and University alike has let us down. For it is the primary failure of Education, the world over today, to regard the head as a receptacle to be filled with information and the human being not so much a living mind as a memory, an attic as it were, in our top storey, a warehouse of information which by the mere process of cerebration it can unload for the purposes of Examinations, for example, or those wretched programmes of Questions and Answers beloved of listeners to Radio and of watchers of Television in Britain today. The most forcible commentary on the failure of their view of man and this ideal of his education is surely the malaise, the deep restlessness of Youth in Europe but more still in the United States of America today. For it is hardly disputed that a main if not the main cause of this malaise is the faulty diagnosis of the human being upon which the whole structure of modern Education with all its unregarded presuppositions has been built. It is an exaggeration no doubt, but only a partial one, to insist that the uncertainty of Youth, its anxiety, its desperate insistence upon all manner of experiment in the art of living, its very paralysis before the spectacles of the modern world which confronts it in all its monstrosity is caused by the simple fact of experience that the head can only operate the hand by means of the heart. Yet the heart has been left out in the cold by our scientific educators who have felt that it was subjective, emotional, unable to detach itself from the pure unbiased vision of fact. It is partly out of reaction from this barren wilderness of incessant information to which it has been submitted that so much of our youth in western countries has plunged into the false warmth, the deceptive comforts of our permissive society, drug addiction and the so-called sexual revolution.

I wonder if you recall how the newspapers of two or three years ago, describing episodes of student violence in Paris, told us how some young people had painted in large letters on a wall, *Vive l'Imagination*, 'Long live the Imagination'. It may be this trivial episode will bear a little consider-

ation. For surely it exemplifies the same trouble that we find in America, a vast discontent with the wholly intellectual (cerebral might be a more precise description) approach to the world we live in, and indeed with the whole trend of the Scientific Revolution which is manifestly moving towards Absurdity and worse. What we are looking for is not intellectual man, the man of the head, with his shadowy ideas mirrored by his brain, William Blake's Spectre or Nobodaddy as he often calls him. Nor, however, is it feeling man, merely, the man of the heart, nor again the man of mere will, the creature moved by the surging power of his own intestines, the creature whose life is in his limbs alone. Modern man, intellectual man, possessing his faith conceptually, thinks it natural and proper so to express it. The fact is surely that such faith is not faith in the true sense of the word, for that is the expression of the entire being of man, the fully human trinal being of head and heart and hand. After all is this not implicit in the very fact of man's being made in the image of his creator? Trinitarian structure is his very being, his essential nature. I will not press it now but it would be a fruitful as well as a fascinating exercise to explore this and to see the Holy Spirit imaged in man's head, the nature and working of his conscious mind; the Son, the second Person in his heart the organ of feeling which intermediates between the conscious spirit in the head and the immense will-forces of his subconscious and unconscious being, in which if we choose, we may see therein one sense more remote, yet in another the wholly present and all powerful being of the Father.

Such a man when a new environment, a different parental influence and a transformed system of education can present him to us, will be a whole man, a much more integrated and fully human personality than he now is. Knowledge for him will be quite a different thing from what it is for us, seeing that with all his faculties and organs he will confront the world about him. For as the mind behind the eye, so the vision the eye sees: a new man with a new vision will behold a new world. And as I have suggested this world will be much more like that of the artists and poets than that of the scholars. With this truly modern man, faith will be knowledge in the biblical sense of the term, experience at first hand, intimate union with its object. It will be spiritual but it will also be scientific. For is not this combination what so many modern young people particularly are demanding today? Let us be fair with them: they are not all looking for escapes into imaginary dream worlds. They are not all irresponsible and selfish. Many seek escape indeed but escape from the nightmare world they find around them into a reality if only they could find that reality. Religion do you say? Christian faith do you say? May be, but certainly not the Christian faith and religion that they know of from their closest experience. For remember they are, many of them, the children of parents who are decent Christians, regular Church-goers most

of them, but whom they see to be uncertain and unhappy people, unaware often and obviously unable to sustain the burdens let alone solve the manifold problems of the world's most affluent society. Here in India we see extreme poverty almost everywhere and if you ask young people here what the main cause of their unrest is, the reply is always the same; economic need. As I have learned by talking to them in Calcutta in the last few weeks they just cannot understand what is meant by Spiritual Starvation, the main disability of their opposite numbers on the other side of the world. It is nevertheless a fact. Even if not everywhere starvation, it is spiritual malnutrition in less or more degree that is the predicament of the entire western half of the world today.

It strikes me now, thinking of what I have said so far, that there may be nothing in it that has not been said, and better said, before. Could I now then, risking more direct controversy, make a few points somewhat more precisely? For I am sure that the religious faith of the future has got to be in many respects a different and certainly a much deeper, more ardent and richer experience than it has been for at least four centuries. Is it not clear that it will have to be? It can hardly be morbid to assert that the forces of evil are plainly on the increase; one has only to take a very quick survey of human affairs in the world to see that. History moreover some might now agree does not proceed at an even or uniform pace. The ways are beginning to part more obviously, Good to become more itself, true goodness that is, aware of its nature deliberately and consciously making its choices; and Evil similarly to become more deeply and terribly evil, ever disguising itself more successfully and ever more accepted as the good. A Christian, I imagine, surveying the ills of our society today would find far more formidable devils behind them than Screwtape himself or any of those diabolical dignitaries above him with whom he had dealings. A revolution is now called for in comparison with which the Communist Revolution in Russia and China and the Industrial Revolution of Britain and America may be rather superficial things. A new Renaissance, a more profound Reformation are, I believe, forcing themselves upon us; a new America, another New World are anxiously waiting for us to awake, crying loudly to be rediscovered.

But where is this New World, this content of our new and richer faith? The answer is that it is the Kingdom of Heaven itself and that it is, as we have been told, inside us. But this answer which after all we all know may appear more meaningful if we consider it in the light of Evolution, that Evolution of consciousness which Darwin either did not notice or was not interested in, but which is of the greatest significance and runs parallel with the Evolution of the Physical Species with which we are all familiar. Its importance in relation to our concept of

Faith, if we may still use that expression, may perhaps be conveyed in some such way as follows:

My experience is that in explaining the origins of religious faith most Christians even now are of the same mind as that exemplified by H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw a generation or so ago. That is, they see our primitive forefathers in the period preceding the known course of History, having to explain all manner of natural phenomena beyond their limited understanding, doing the obvious thing: projecting what they did understand, namely their own spiritual being, upon Nature which they proceeded to fill with gods and goddesses, demons and devils. The assumption underlying this explanation is of course that the real world that these distant forbears of ours were anxious to render explicable was in fact the wholly material or physical world devoid of Spirit which Wells and Shaw, like their nineteenth century predecessors in Britain, most of them convinced materialists, took for granted. Thus the possibility that the ancient myths of the gods might really be true, that spiritual beings of diverse sorts did in actual fact walk this earth passing in and out of the company of men, as for instance the Odyssey and the Iliad of Homer describe, never occurred to them. An inanimate spiritless world, Nature essentially devoid of all that we call extra or superhuman that nineteenth century science described was authoritative dogmatic truth. It was and I feel still is accepted by almost everyone including many Christians. Yet it is not only advances in Anthropology that have led us to question this established assumption, but Philology and in particular the study of the spiritual origins of language that should, we might now hope, have finally demolished it. These and of course, all the Imagination and all that the artists and the mythmakers, the poets, tell us; all that Intuition sees as also that which the depth of our nature demands.

Yet the gods and goddesses so vividly real to our forefathers have certainly departed. The history of all peoples and our own experience are sad testimony to this. Where then have they gone? We must ask; and the answer is not that they have simply gone out of mind as things that never existed, whose non-existence only later and cleverer times could prove; but that they are still here and still alive, only they have taken up residence inside us. They have in fact become those Archetypal Beings that live in that Collective Unconsciousness that Jung, not understanding their real nature or origin, has done so much to call our attention to.

Consider the double nature of man's experience of the Divine in the Old Testament. At first that Divine Being who is wholly other than man is yet as familiar with him as a friend. But as consciousness develops with man's increasing knowledge of the ill effects of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, experience of the Divine outside himself in the sphere of Nature grows more and more rare till even angelic visitations

have become things of the past by, shall we say, about 1000 B.C. Thus the outward visions grow fewer, as man's outer eyes lose their primeval native clairvoyance in order that gradually our sort of consciousness may develop, the typically modern self-consciousness of the free individual man unknown to that ancient world with its group or tribal consciousness before writing began.

But as this loss took place in the outer world—and are not the *Upanishads* that follow upon the world of the *Vedas* with all their gods and goddesses filled with a sense of the loss?—their inner experience of the Divine grows till by the sixth century B.C. we have Jeremiah saying: 'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel not according to the covenant I made with their fathers. I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts' (Jer. 31:31-33). It would not be difficult to indicate this progressive interiorization which reaches its climax with Jesus' statement 'the kingdom of Heaven is within you'. The sovereign powers of the Godhead, that is to say, have not died; they have, in the course of the evolution of human consciousness, itself the operation of the Holy Spirit, transferred themselves from the Outer World where our primeval ancestors openly beheld them to the Inner World. A process of far greater importance to us today than we realize is here indicated. Those Divine Indicatives of the Gospel, that seven times repeated I AM, what are they but the taking up with a decisive difference of the 'I AM that I AM' of Yahweh at Exodus 3:14? St. Paul's words 'not I live but Christ lives in me' are sometimes taken, I fancy, to be the sort of mystical or semi-mystical statement that only a Saint Paul could make, though here as always he is but taking and applying the Gospel's words. Am I wrong moreover in assuming that Jesus' words to the Twelve 'greater things than these shall you do' and 'nothing shall be impossible to you' are taken by many of us to be slightly figurative or in some sense exaggerated? But are they to be so taken? His 'I am the light of the World' are later taken up with the 'Ye are the light of the World' spoken to the Twelve; and once again it is Paul who is true to the Gospel, who reminds us that we are sons of the Father, and if sons heirs, and that we should act accordingly, know of what family we are children, and enter upon our inheritance. If we are sons of the Father it follows we are brothers of the Son and here too no doubt we are to know who we are and to enter so to speak into the Family Property. Or would we put this more intelligibly by saying that it is because He can say 'I', and does so emphatically, we both can and are to do so too and so realize our identity? The most popular science of our time, perhaps, is Psychology, the science of the soul. In the west, as those who spend much of their lives with young people know only too well, preoccupation with the self, the almost unbearable burden of the self as it sometimes seems to be, is both the main subject of literature today and the principal topic of serious conversation. Ultimately there can

only be one solution to this modern problem of problems, of course. Youth's only hope as our own lies in the fact, that now that Evolution has forced our self-consciousness upon us (for no other age and no other part of the world has experienced this phenomenon comparably with the modern west), we are able to say 'I' with meaning and security because He who in all things except sin identified himself with us said 'I' before us and for us. Our selves are safe and sound in this agonizing time only because His Original and Archetypal Self is one with ours, its ground and its home. As it is clear today as never before, knowledge of and faith in God are inseparable from knowledge of the human self, so we must make up our minds what the human self, made, let us remind ourselves, in the Divine Image, really is. And having said this one immediately sees the absurdity of it. In fact we can of course no more understand the essential nature of the human self than we can understand God Himself. This said however, it would appear that we can know far more about the human self, about man, than the psychologists with all their digging and diving appear to know. Before however we consider this could we revert for a moment to my statement that we must now see the Holy Spirit as the Lord of, among other things, Evolution?

This may seem a rather trite thing to say seeing it is an assertion so large and vague and one any way that we can neither prove nor disprove the truth of. But if there is one thing the Church needs to reconsider more than any other now it is surely the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And to the question with what special emphasis the new version of the old doctrine would be concerned the answer surely is with the Holy Spirit as the Lord of Time as time ought to be understood, and on the Lord of Space as space ought to be understood; with pre-History, History and post-History on the one hand and with the Cosmos, the Heavens with a truly spiritual as opposed to or in addition to the modern Astronomy. Does not one become justifiably impatient with a Church, with a Christian Theology, that in these days of lunar and planetary exploration has no word for us on the solar system? *Pravda* imposes its dead Universe upon millions, while the Christian Theologians, shame upon them, puzzled accepters of the inadequate picture of the cosmos that the science of the last three centuries has presented to us, are silent. But what, let us ask briefly and specifically, would this new teaching maintain?

It would assert, among other things, that the Church, the increasingly Roman Organization of the third and fourth centuries, in making too sharp a divide between the new Christian and the old pagan world, and in seeing little but error in the latter, showed an ignorance which is now costing us dear. Of course there were good reasons. There was indeed in an important sense a divide, and there was the need to protect a young ignorant and vulnerable community from all manner of false

teaching. Nevertheless the Christian Church's suspicious detestation often, of the non-Christian Religions, the Mystery cults in particular and the Mythologies of the Middle and Further East have had very unfortunate consequences in both medieval and modern ignorance and impoverishment. Here at least in his insistence that the great pagan religions were the Christian Religion till Christianity itself appeared, and only then become inadequate, Augustine showed an imaginative vision that the Church has disregarded. The Old Testament, Amos and Isaiah in particular, could see the hand of Yahweh working far outside Israel in the interest of His chosen people. Why, one may ask, has the Church been so slow to do so? And, as a sort of extension of the same question, when will the modern churches be able to see how much vital both primitive and medieval teaching it lost or let go at the Reformation to its great loss now? Had this teaching not been abandoned we would have been spared the literally disastrous acquiescence in the modern astronomy, the telescope's vision of the stars. Or if the truths that Christianity has still insufficiently taken to itself from the *Gita*, say, and the *Upanishads* in particular, were then beyond its reach there was the profound and vital vision of ancient Iran. At this season of the year when we remember the Magi we should, I believe, both be grateful for this brief entrance from the pagan world on to the Gospel scene and sad that the Church has done so little to understand or to value the Divine wisdom manifest in the Heavens by which those ancient sages were guided to the place of the Saviour's birth. Ahura Mazdao himself, the Divine Sun, for centuries expected by the Zoroastrians of Persia to descend from the Heaven had done so. Such instance might be multiplied from other lands, other religions, other mythologies: but the Church (how easy for us to be wise and superior after the event!) missed its chance and the world does not yet contain that book on the Comparative Study of Religion, many books though it has now on this popular subject, that needs to be written. And then could one, without excessive rashness, going both beyond ancient Persia and ancient India, recall the myths of other still more ancient peoples? For the myths, let us remember, are themselves the remembered visions incapable as yet of conceptualization since the abstracting intellect was not yet born, had not separated itself from that more integral consciousness at once dreaming yet awake of primitive mankind, of a Past when as Genesis itself reminds us, God and man, Heaven and Earth lived in familiar and vital proximity. If one can do this then one would arrive at an interpretation of history and pre-history wholly unlike anything understood or even dreamed of today. One would have a vision of man, not as now a late and casual product of matter, but of eternally existent spiritual Archetypal Man, from whom proceed, in exact contrast to the prevalent modern view, the various levels of the Creation. Thus from one aspect physical matter,

plant, and animal creatures, are the descendants of Man, and from another they are the creative levels of increasing complexity that precede and finally lead up to this being at once distinguished from them by virtue of the ego and by recapitulating in his own person these inferior species. The Bible has little to say of this, for after all this is not its subject: but Indian Mythology, the teaching about Purusha for example, is concerned with it and has much here that will speak to present need. Does it not follow from this that if man does in fact recapitulate, draw to a head the inferior orders of creation, and is himself a complete Image of the Creator, then he too is in a manner a saviour of that lower and fallen creation for whose fall he is himself responsible and which St. Paul tells us looks longingly to him to save it? Thus whereas Christ, the Head of the Church is the Saviour of the world, in the strict sense of that word's meaning the sphere of Man, Man in his term is the Saviour and Messiah of Nature. This is, I think, implicit in New Testament teaching, in the Pauline Epistles in particular. In a year that in the west has been greatly alarmed and concerned with such troubles as the pollution of earth, sea and sky, with the problems also of factory farming, the importance of such a doctrine, if doctrine it is, will be obvious.

But there is much more to modern man as the Church in the latter part of this century should be proclaiming him than this. And here our too lightly abandoned medieval theological inheritance can help us. But since it is proper now to stress the wisdom the Church has inherited with all too little acknowledgement from pre-Christian times, we have beyond and behind this the *Upanishads* with their teaching among very much else, of microcosmic and macrocosmic man; and the Zoroastrian and Jewish wisdom of the Heavenly Hierarchies which I assume to be the main source of that great textbook of the Medieval Church, the Celestial Hierarchies of the pseudo-Dionysius of about the fifth century of our era.

In the course of this paper I have called attention to the ambiguity of the church in the modern period, its uncertainty, and in particular I have alluded to a new form of its Babylonian Captivity to the world, its disgraceful capitulation to the pronouncements of the wholly materialist point of view in Physiology, Zoology, Biology in particular. I invite your attention to the last two syllables of these words. Is one not compelled to wonder whether Christians believe in the Divine Logos at all? Certainly one is bound to ask in what sense we now accept this central teaching. To make my point briefly (I am afraid it is becoming all too evident that I am trying to compress too much matter into too little space), how can a reasonable man, a man, that is, who whether explicitly or implicitly claims that the Logos lives in him as the ground and operation of his mind, at once accept both the implications of the New Testament teaching on the Divine Being of the Word and the modern world's presentation

of it in these sciences as in Psychology and the rest, the so-called sciences of life and of the soul? Does it not seem that it is not only a new doctrine of the Holy Spirit that is called for but almost a rewriting of Theology itself as it has been understood for some four hundred years? Yet this of course is what we should expect if the subject is alive and therefore growing but not one must hasten to add a rewriting along the lines of some of the theological rewritings that are the rage and craze today.

Just consider for one moment. Theological tomes, heavy and learned volumes, fall with a dull thud upon the balding heads of a few and their sound is soon forgotten; and the light and bright little paperbacks are quickly blown to us and from us by the ever-changing winds of fashion. Think on the other hand, what deep stirrings of minds too long deprived of their true nourishment, what slow surmise at the immensely altered universe offered to our gaze, what excitement would quicken the dismayed and disappointed minds of Youth and Age alike could the textbooks of the sciences rewritten (as one day they will have to be) in such a way that Biology and Psychology, say, man's life and soul were seen to be intelligible only in terms of the one same Logos, the Universal Reason, Christ Himself. But this new science will not of course be restricted to these two instances. With a new Geology, Zoology, Botany for instance, the very dust beneath our feet, as Blake said; yes, and the very paddy in the field and the oxen that plough it will all shine with the new light that our more living gaze will give them. My contention is that it is along some such lines that the new Renaissance we all feel to be overdue could be, should be (would I might say, will be), expressed.

In a more than usually prosaic phrase in one of his longer poems Wordsworth once wrote 'my drift I fear is scarcely obvious'. That charge could now be levelled against the general tenor of my theme as in all too inadequate manner I have so far argued it. Before I draw it to an end, however, could I make a few suggestions, offer one or two indications of the directions in which a new doctrine of the Logos the second Person of the Trinal Unity, ought perhaps to take us? I must add however that I have in no sense argued them out into a methodical or complete system. I am neither logician, philosopher or theologian, only a person of a dimly poetic turn of mind, given to speculative hunches and intuitions which he feels the need to offer to the more powerful energies of stronger minds who may work them out more fully.

Intellectualism, it was maintained at the beginning of this paper, is the real cause of a large part of our modern malaise. For intellectualism, I have tried to show, is the dead materialist habit of mind that is born, a still born babe with a vengeance, when the paternal analytical attitude is separated from the maternal imagination. It is the product of a divorce, that is to

say. But it has now become so rooted a habit, so accepted an attitude that it is equated with thinking itself, the normal activity of the mind. In fact it is as wholly different from and inferior to thinking as the brain is different from and inferior to the mind as a whole. Intellectualizing is a physical, thinking is a spiritual activity; intellectualizing kills, thinking brings to life. This is emphasized here because it is so important to see how it is that our modern scribes, as was suggested earlier, have shut our ears and blinded our eyes while convincing themselves and us that all the time they were as true and orthodox as their counterparts in the Jerusalem Establishment of old. It is a grim reflection, is it not, for such people as ourselves here? For ultimately it means that the real enemies of society are not those we call criminals and protect society from, but the apparently law-abiding decent and intelligent people. The fact that we may be unconscious of and have no wish to mislead is neither here nor there; we have after all set ourselves up or allowed ourselves to be set up as those who know. But do we know? If we do not, we must comfort ourselves with the hope that we shall be included with those for whom forgiveness was asked because they did not know what they were 'doing'.

For the crime of which we—it is better that we should frankly say we, is it not, rather than use some comfortable circuitous phrase like twentieth century man or modern scholarship, the Church or the Universities—are guilty of is murder or intent to murder. Intent to murder whom, in God's name, we ask. But the answer is surely clear. The Logos. Our good pharisaic predecessors did their best to kill the Christ; we in our turn, I submit, have been more successful in our attempt to destroy the Word. You see, words are as inseparable from the Word as thoughts are inseparable from the mind. If they are separated, as we in our time have tried to separate them, they die. T. S. Eliot, have you noticed, is always complaining about words, about the uselessness of modern language for his purpose as a poet. What he should have complained of is the mind of this time, the thinking of modern men and women which for a century and more has become something less than thinking. As true thinking is more than intellectualizing, as the mind is more than the brain, so the Word of God, the Logos, is more than a rigid abstraction, more than, shall we say, Universal Reason. It is not so much thought as thinking, Divine Creative Mind eternally and endlessly creating. That is, it is not so much something done as Someone doing; now, newly and freshly and all the time. Something, Someone, it should be added, in which, in whom, we participate and are in the future ever more consistently and fully to participate. Some of us might prefer to recall the Divine Promise and say, this is all said in St. John's Gospel; others that it is the Mind in Evolution created and controlled by the Holy Spirit. In either case it is the one same Householder bringing out of His treasures things old and new.

But to return to thinking in its connection, a connection that let us hope will begin to grow more clear, with faith, the faith of modern man. All I can do here and now is to ask what we remind ourselves that as we are made in the Image of the Creative Mind our specific nature lies in our own creative Imagination. Though obvious, this is perhaps worth saying because the phrase Creative Imagination in most people's mind wakes thoughts of artists, poets, visionaries and other, exceptional people that is, when of course it applies to us all. In Heaven we shall be artists though we may be sure art will have a wider application than it has with us. My real concern, however, is to suggest that if we consider with any care what sort of activities Thinking and Imagination are, whether they are related and how, we shall arrive at some interesting conclusions. The more these are their true selves, the more attention and meditation we bring to them the more we find that their essence lies in the discovery of a tension or polarity and an overcoming of that tension between subject and object, the I who thinks and the thing or person I think about. There could be no thought were there no other to think about or words to think with, let me add, even if that other should be the otherness of the self as it well may be. But the more thinking is its true self the more the other while remaining itself is moved to a relationship with, towards identity with it. After all I am only advocating you will notice a new reference for St. Paul's well-known words. The middle wall of partition is removed and we discover ourselves in the other. We learn, if you like, who are our relations, that they are no fewer than every single person and thing in the world. Living in them in Imagination, subduing our own Image of ourselves for a brief moment to theirs, by a sort of charity of the mind, we at once create and to that extent are ourselves re-created. As so often in such matters as these one returns to the *Vedas*, to Indian Wisdom in general, and in particular to Svetaketu's words, nine times repeated, to his son Uddalaka in the *Chandogya Upanishad*. TAT TUAM ASI, words we have all heard a hundred times yet perhaps only half heard or overheard. So far perhaps we are all more or less agreed for this is fairly well-trodden ground. It is possible now, however, two and a half or three thousand years after those words were written, to go further, to see and say more. How can it not be, seeing the Incarnation of the Logos occurred between that time and ours? What then is this additional quantity and how does it bear upon modern man's faith?

What has been said in the last few minutes could be summed up, perhaps, by saying what one thinks largely depends on how much one thinks. If we think with our brains only, as we are bound to do for most of the time, we shall produce only mirror images of objects, their external surfaces. If we draw our heart, the seat of feeling (our forbears not so long ago were sure it was the real organ of the mind), into our thinking, we shall both

enrich and warm it. If we go further, as we should, and seriously try to bring to our thought what our stomach and limbs the whole system of our will wish to but are nearly always barred from bringing to them, we shall deepen and strengthen it, we shall in fact arrive at wisdom. And wisdom is a live being, Divine Person, let us remember, not an abstract entity. Is it not clear why we are such a clever and such an unwise generation? Why we know so much and are so little able to be helped by our knowledge; why we are dealers in gimmicks, pursuers of expediency, full of bright ideas and paralysed in our efforts to put them into practice? How should it be otherwise when only one-third of us think? It is almost the same as to speak of the attic as if it were the whole of the three-storeyed house of the mind. Only a third of us is alive. Is not this bound to have a wholly deadening effect upon what we call faith? I am taking it for granted of course, that we agree that thought is or should be the activity of the whole personality and that man is that threefold trinitarian being mentioned earlier on of intellect, heart and will, so that if these three primary organs are not alive and active within him, he is not a fully human being.

If this is so it seems to follow that since what we call our thinking is so inadequate, such a fragmentary and weak operation for the most part, we must strengthen and renew it. This is where the meditation that I mentioned just now without further explanation has its importance. My impression is that today most of those occupied with faith, religion, morality, even with thought itself are feeling the need of deeper thinking, meditation, and it is clear that this must take a much larger part in our lives than it has done for a long time. The reason perhaps is that we are unconsciously aware of the shallowness, the mere surface quality of our experience, and we wish to deepen it. We know we are not drinking of the water of life and that we are desperately thirsty for it; so we try to dig, penetrate, bore through the hard and barren rock of our brains to release the springs beneath.

If man really is made in the Trinitarian Image of the God-head and if God is Love as St. John tells us then the truth of William Blake's words follows that 'Man is Love' also. And this surely is no merely vague or ideal sense but the precise sense we endeavoured to define in treating of Thinking and Imagination. Here surely some excellent arable land far too long let go and lain fallow must, if faith in the future is to be a living faith, be ploughed, and if the metaphor may be pursued, harrowed, drilled and hoed. For these operations of man's spirit thinking, imagination and love are, it is beginning to be seen, closely related, in some sense even identical. If the distinctive function of that thoughtful brooding of the mind which is real imagination is that it bridges gulfs, breaks walls and partitions down; at once pondering on the polarity of subject and object, thing and self, and so penetrating it that the division between

them is overcome and the identity is perceived, much more is this true of love. And here again we have entered upon territory on which unfortunately we may not stay, for it is high time to draw towards the end of our little journey. Yet here there is no need of regret, for once again we may go to the poets for wisdom. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, some of whose prose works (a thing that could only have happened in England) are still unpublished well over a century after his death is our author here. No one in English has written on this subject with such power and perceptiveness. Fortunately there are signs that mainly through the work of his wisest modern interpreter Owen Barfield, he is going at long last to come into his own, to enjoy the reputation and, what is more important to gain the attention that is his due.

In the end all the arts must become sciences and all the sciences arts. None see this so well as the young today with their indignation at the profound schizophrenia in which all of us live. For simply through being modern people all of us willy-nilly in some degree inevitably suffer from it. Is not modern man demanding that the spiritual shall be seen and felt to be scientific and the scientific spiritual? The painful dichotomy that has been paralysing our energies for so long is, we must feel, drawing to an end. On the one hand then there lies before us the task of patient and intelligent practice of mediation, the drawing of the roots of our thought down, piercing that barren rock of the mere intellectual, into the richer soil of our too neglected feeling; and the drawing upwards of the heart's sunshine and warmth to enable that thought to gnaw evermore strongly upwards. Is it not after all the Tree of Life within us? This on the other hand; the activity by exercise of which we shall prove on our pulses, as Keats would say, becomes genuinely aware of the Spiritual Being of Thought, Spiritual Presences perceived or half-perceived or, if you prefer it, the Holy Spirit active within our own minds. And on the other, lest we should deceive ourselves, the obedience of our will in habitual act and attitude, in the reminding ourselves that in the end only those who do the Divine Will shall know the Divine Doctrine. Or shall we say simply re-learning the Science of Love; Love, note, that finally is the only means and the only mode of Cognition? In some such directions as these, I believe, will the faith be found, at once ancient and orthodox and young and new, that will both explain and sustain the heavy burden of the modern world and enable its possessor joyfully and powerfully if painfully also to attain to the end of his journey.

May I conclude by passing in quick review one or two matters to which I have tried in too ambling and rambling a way in this paper to invite your attention? The first is that just as no decent modern doctor would for a moment consider treating his patient for a serious illness without full inquiry into his case history, so neither should the Church. If I am rather

over-heavily emphasizing the significance of the human past and the importance of drawing the right deductions from it; if here in India I am stressing the need to pay far more attention than we do to the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta*, the *Puranas* and the classified Philosophical Systems of this country it is not primarily because we are Indians or live in India and so must interest ourselves in things Indian. No; it is because we cannot afford to be without it, because we need it, because it is the Christian wisdom in a pre-Christian form without which the modern churches cannot hope either to understand either the health or the sickness of the world today and so cannot possibly preserve the one or treat the other. Macaulay's ghost (that is, if so robust and flamboyant a personality could have such a thin and shadowy thing as a ghost) still walks the world. But may it not be that the omniscient schoolboy of Macaulay's who made such easy mockery of the mythology and wisdom of India, and was so sure that the west had nothing of worth to learn from them was in fact his own ghost, the part of him that he could not outgrow? The ignorance of course was Macaulay's own; and let us add a large part of the nineteenth century's and our own century as well. Is it not an illustration of the foolishness of God which is wiser than the wisdom of men?

But this deeper explanation of the past without which intelligent advance into the future is impossible, must take us back beyond the *Vedas* to Atlantis if may be and beyond it, to those immense spheres of the pre-historic and the primeval that are now being laid open before us. To these we must bring that new strengthened and inspired thinking which we have, I have suggested, now to learn. And here for their benefit and blessing as well as for ours, we must invite Hinduism and Buddhism to join us in our new look at Evolution. For we must arrive at a new interpretation of Evolution, that convenient abstraction, that word that says at once so much and so little. We may be forgiven surely if we see in its question-begging abstraction the modern materialist intellectual's mode of disguising his own ignorance. With the mythology of East and West to help him, those ancient myths that are often so much more profound and so much more scientific than that shallow mythology which is or which underlies so much of what we still call science, we will arrive at a new vision of the Wisdom of God the Holy Spirit in creation. We shall then behold an Evolution both beautiful and purposeful, as much concerned with the mind and its operation as with the external physical aspects of the species. For what after all is the Spirit saying to the Churches today? Surely He is not only as in the words of the New Testament saying 'Awake' but 'Get up, Grow Up, become conscious, know who you are'. For what is this faith of which we have heard and read so much but to know and to become our real selves? The conscious and willed knowing and becoming of

what we eternally are, what for millennia hitherto we have always but only unconsciously or partially consciously been?

And what is this? What in fact are we? Surely both priests and kings. The promises made to the old Israel are to be fulfilled, are being fulfilled, in the new. It is worth emphasizing, for in this time of the degradation of almost all that makes life human, the royal dignity and destiny of man can hardly be overstressed. The people of God the world over it would seem are to be at once priestly, aristocratic and republican. That great and good man Dr. Samuel Johnson once wrote of the pain of being a man, and no doubt he wrote from personal experience. It is a sombre phrase but we, helped a little, let me hope, by some such reflections as the foregoing, can take hope. Human life, being human, is a pain, and, let us make no mistake, as our consciousness and thus our awareness increase it is going to become more painful. How should Christians expect otherwise seeing they both share and fulfil the Passion of their Lord? The Incarnation has potentially no doubt transformed our condition, but we are fallen creatures, we live in *Kali Yuga* still. But if with the ever-growing threat to so much we hold precious from the subtle and hidden powers of Evil corroding and perverting on the one hand; and the open and violent destruction of it on the other, the passion and the pain of mankind is going to become more intensive, so will its opposite. That difficult yet too much neglected poet Charles Williams wrote of a 'passion of peace'. We may be sure that all who want and will work for it will realize this positive passionate peace; and an ardour and power of love also and a joy that our times as yet know little of. A nation of priests and kings, notice, is the phrase in the Old Testament, that book which appears now to be about as much disliked as it is misunderstood by both Christians and non-Christians alike. That happier world, we notice, is to be a University in which all come out top, all receive prizes; that blessed republic in which each single human being is royal. It is important that we understand what is meant and believe it to be spiritually and literally true. From the time of the Incarnation or rather perhaps from the moment of Pentecost the kingdom of Heaven, as we saw in a manner of speaking, changed its whereabouts. Those Aristocratic Powers, that is, those nine Hierarchies of the Heavens that have for centuries been falling into deeper desuetude and disbelief, those sovereign Beings that for all I know may be differentiated energies, of that Spirit whom the Son of God while insisting that He would remain always with his disciples promised to send them on this departure from them; those Powers, we must never now cease to remind ourselves, are to become the powers of our own conscious and unconscious minds. Freud, Jung and the post-Freudians, we see, said neither the first nor the last word on psychology. The soul of man is indeed a very different thing from what they imagined it to be. We may then have some idea of what the

rishis of Ancient India and the writers of the *Upanishads* meant when they insisted that the *Atman* is Brahman. This is the truth ; moreover, these are the truths which alone are the safe foundation for that Democracy, that paradoxical combination of such apparent antitheses, hardly yet known among us and perhaps already receding, which we still hope will spread to and include the whole world. Which is also to be the Church itself, that larger lovelier Church which is to hold within its warm embrace all creatures whatsoever, the whole of Creation.

In this double issue we are printing nine of the papers read at the Triennial Conference of the Indian Christian Theological Association, held at Bangalore in December 1971. The general theme of the Conference was *The Meaning of God for Modern Man*.

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