ARTICLE

BIBLICAL CRITICISM, THEOLOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY [1]

A PHILOSOPHY of history that is indifferent to the story of the changes in and behind the Bible is too imperfect to be of any value to-day. These changes show that the conditions of any one age cannot be regarded as permanent. Each age has its own needs, and while there is no return to and rehabilitation of the old, the old often reappears in a new form. Yet, in spite of the actual changes the Bible, as a whole, presents a striking religious unity and continuity. History, archaeology, and ideological continuity forbid any arbitrary severance of the two Testaments, although we can regard the New Testament as both (*a*) the end or sequel of the Old Testament and the collapse of the old Israel, and (*b*) the inauguration and programme of the new Israel that became Christianity. But while the Old Testament takes us back to primitive and ancient modes of thought, in the post-exilic writings we are in the Persian and Greek worlds, and, as the centuries pass, Christianity gives us the result of an amalgam of Hebraic religion with Greek and Roman thought. Thus our interpretation of the Bible as a whole unites rudimentary thought and the problems of modern thought, and the dividing-line comes partly at the rise of Christianity, but more particularly at the age of Greek speculation, the period round about the sixth century B.C. This period is the watershed between earlier and more primitive modes of thought and movements extending from Ionia, Greece, and south Italy to Israel and Persia, and to India and China.[2] Earlier and more static views of the Bible befitted the relatively settled states of thought which we now miss; and, as we look back to-day on the history of biblical exegesis, as well as on the prior epoch-making developments of the sixth century B.C. and the first century A.D., we take a more dynamic view of its growth. If, then, some further development is at hand, account must be taken of the feeling that we may have deviated too far from fundamental biblical ideas, or that we must return to the venerable *philosophia perennis*, or, indeed, that a more thorough re-thinking is called for.

[1] In an early revision of this article the present writer had the benefit of various suggestions and criticisms by the late Professor Creed all of which he has gratefully accepted, grieving only that it should prove to have been the last of many friendly discussions extending over nearly thirty years.

[2] See *T.B.* (='*Truth' of the Bible*), p. 216 and references.

It is not easy to gain simple conceptions of the Bible. Indeed, in some modern books the 'God of the Old Testament' becomes almost unrecognizable, and the history of a people that could not live up to their best is contrasted with the religious idealism of Christianity, ignoring the multi-coloured history of a Christendom that too often fell below its standards. One cannot sum up Yahwism in a paragraph. The task is to find effective conceptions which will enable us to understand the Bible, and which will also be in touch with our own religious convictions. One may say that the task is to co-ordinate the Yahweh of biblical criticism and the Jehovah of our personal religion, and that the difference between the two involves our ideas of progressive revelation. To this we turn first.

Gods and spirits are often spoken of 'biographically'. Totems 'become' gods, gods turn into demons or change their sex, and, on one favourite view, Yahweh was a Kenite or Midianite deity who 'became' the God of a united Israel and finally God of the Universe. Obviously we are referring to the history of a specific cult, its adoption by an alliance of tribes, and the subsequent developments. We begin with Moses and the Exodus, and while Josephus could speak of the Canaanite origin of Jerusalem and its temple (*B.J.* vi. 10. 1), the contemporary evidence from Amarna, Ras Shamra, and elsewhere, tells of religious conditions akin to but not identical with the Israelite. The 'Mosaic Age', or more generally the 'Amarna Age', was indubitably a great one.[1] International relations, striking ideas of truth, right, and order, prominent deities, and even monotheizing trends combine to make the whole period (say 1400–1200 B.C.) a landmark. The weakness or fall of the great powers (Egypt, Babylonia, Hittites, Crete) paved the way for Israel and other smaller states; and on the most conservative of estimates Yahwism included, as was only to be expected, much that was Canaanite or Palestinian and non- or pre-Israelite. Both the contemporary external evidence and the internal literary-historical criticism force a reconsideration of the 'biography' of Yahweh, that is, of the history of Yahwism.

Three great stages in Yahwism may be specified: (1) The Amarna or Mosaic age is followed by the introduction of Yahweh, who takes the place of such leading deities as the solar Shamash and the storm- and war-god Hadad. Of their cults there are many traces. This Yahwism is gradually purged by the pre-exilic prophets. (2) The exilic age belongs to another period of sweeping social and political changes; and the developments associated with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, II Isaiah, and the inauguration of post-exilic Judaism are not due

[1] See *C.A.H.* (= *Cambridge Ancient History*), vol. ii, chap. 13, and *T.B.* Index, s.v. Amarna Age.

merely to the Babylonian Exile and the Return, but are part of the wider vicissitudes round about the sixth century B.C. Finally (3) the rise of Christianity, at another great epoch, is marked by the fall of the old Israelite or Jewish state and the approaching end of the lengthy history of the old Oriental culture. Now, as we traverse these stages we can see that progressive development lay, not in the history of Yahweh from the Exodus onward, but in that of fundamental ideas of God, man, and the world.[1] Whatever the Israelite invaders brought—and there were other movements from the desert later—this development is more significant than either the biblical records (from Genesis) or the critical theory (from the Exodus), because it falls in line with a world-wide process.

Old Testament religion turns essentially upon Israel, her God Yahweh, and her land.[2] It is the *Israelite* form of widespread ideas ranging from primitive notions of the tribe, its gods, and its region or environment to modern reflection upon Man, God, and the Universe. Israel was the bearer of certain fundamental ideas, and her treatment and development of them constitute her uniqueness. Similarly, she uniquely developed fundamental ideas of the Sacred, Holy, and Transcendent; of Gods and their representatives or intermediaries; of relationship, covenant, and conditions; and of right or righteousness—all of which, in one form or another, are familiar outside Israel. They are eternal regulative ideas in diverse temporal forms, but Israel gave them a new 'spirit' and a more stable 'body'. Later, in the West, the Renaissance and Reformation opened the road for restatement, and the old problem now comes to the front: man's true environment, the whole of which he is part. Religion and science here require a unifying philosophy; and it is to be observed that from about the sixth century B.C. man, thanks to Greek speculation, has been learning of his physical or external environment, whereas the world of the earlier types of thought may be said to fuse what we should call the natural and the supernatural. At least the 'world' was more a matter of feeling and thought, 'mental' rather than 'physical'; it was what men thought it to be, and their ways of thinking were not ours. But the question remains whether we ourselves have found the best way of thinking about and of *describing* the universe, the whole of which we are part.

After what has been said, it can be urged that 'progressive revelation' does not lie simply in the 'biography' of Yahweh, or the history of Yahwism in Palestine, but in a profounder development, which

[1] This is seen clearly in the II Isaiah; for the earlier stage, see *T.B.* pp. 140 sqq.

[2] See *O.T.R.* (= *The Old Testament : A Reinterpretation*), ch. vii.

involves reconsideration of our place in the whole scheme of things and of God in Nature and Man.

Now to Israel more than to any other people are due the great convictions of the unity of history, and of the divine purpose in the world. History reveals God's activity as judge and redeemer, in Him we find the meaning of the world and of what is beyond; the whole interpretation of history and the shaping of history are swayed by these convictions; all events—and we may unite Nature and Man—are in the hands of God. But if theistic interpretations of history often seem to cut the knots, the alternatives are eventually mystical—e.g. we read of the logic of events, historical necessity, unconscious mental forces, and the like. Both types of interpretation agree that the historical process is not that of conscious individuals but goes outside or transcends their collective plans and purposes. Whereas modern convictions of a divine process or purpose in cosmic or in human history will turn upon our convictions of the attributes of God and of His operations, Israel, living at an early stage of thought to be sure, maintained her faith despite doubt and disaster through the threefold conception of (*a*) the intimate relationship between Yahweh and this his world, (*b*) the claims and conditions of the relationship, and (*c*) the unique attributes of Yahweh, in particular his eternal righteousness. The general 'pattern' is permanent; the specific forms capable of development.

But Old Testament theology is apt to leave off too early and ignore the fate of the one people to whom was due the great pregnant conception of a God of righteousness in history. When Israel fell as Christianity arose, was God vindicating His righteousness? When amid fierce events extending over a century a Jewish sect became a new religion, was Israel's faith justified? St. Paul's concern at the blindness of his people can be supplemented by the almost contemporary writer in 4 Ezra (2 Esdras).[1] The Old Testament theologian can dwell upon Hosea's 'glimpse of the awesome struggle in God's mind' as the Northern Kingdom fell, but what shall be said of the final fate of Jerusalem and the Jews, centuries later?[2] Round about the same age one writer can speak of God's love for His creatures (Wisdom xi. 24—xii. 1), another of His love for a doomed Israel (4 Ezra v. 33, viii. 47), and a third finds the supreme proof of divine love in the willing sacrifice of the Son (John iii. 16). Surely the more realistically we can envisage the actual historical background of the

[1] See *T.B.* pp. 164 sq., 167, and cf. p. 113.

[2] The reference is to Prof. Porteous, *Record and Revelation*, p. 243. Cf. the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem (Luke xiii. 34 sq., xix. 41 sqq.), and contrast the distress in the Jeremian writings with the joyful revival in II Isaiah.

first century A.D., the more impressive and meaningful do these convictions become for our ideas of a Divine Purpose.

Thus, by enlarging our field we gain truer conceptions of the Divine Righteousness. Yahweh, as the old prophets had insisted, was not the God of His firstborn Israel alone. The choice and the covenant were conditional. His interest extended to other peoples. But there was a 'hardening' (Rom. xi. 7. 25), even as befell Egypt when Yahweh became the God of Israel (Ex. ix. 12, &c.). Indeed the Bible gains in impressiveness if we view it as the record of the Election and Rejection of a Chosen People. Certain ideas of choice, destiny, and mission—not essentially peculiar to Israel—were canalized and developed uniquely by a gifted people whose collapse belongs to an age of disintegration, materialistic ideas of a Messiah, and ruthless methods of inaugurating his reign. But 'Israel' was an ideal, an ideological continuity, rather than a single persisting social organism,[1] and it bequeathed to the new 'Israel' conceptions of the Divine Power in history, the more impressive because of the tragedy of the old Israel. If, then, we believe that the old Israel forfeited the right to be considered the Israel of God and that this right passed to those who acknowledged Him, or if we freely speak of divine acts of judgement in history,[2] we are judging the past and acknowledging the reality and permanence of certain truths; and when such truths are felt to be overpowering and eternal we understand how a Thomas Jefferson could say, 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just'.

It was Israel's achievement to establish the ideal of a noble ethical monotheism. But Yahweh was not narrowly 'Israelite'—whatever the 'Israel' might be; and the supremacy or transcendence of God is the note both of the conditional relationship between Yahweh and Israel and of the New Testament Christology where Christ, the 'elder brother', the head of the 'body of Christ', is none the less subordinate to the Father. In a word, every close and natural relationship, forming a closed system, as it were, soon spells immanentism, unless care be taken to safeguard the essential transcendence of the God who is immanent.

There are here two important conceptions: (1) the relation between parts and wholes (i.e. the transcendence of the whole over the constituent parts), and (2) convictions of choice, election, and the like

[1] On the vicissitudes of the 'Israel' of the Old Testament, cf. *O.T.R.* p. 191; *T.B.* pp. 28 sq., 210; *C.A.H.* iii, pp. 287 n., 415 n.

[2] For the former, see H. W. Robinson, *The Cross of the Servant* (1926), p. 77, citing A. J. Mason; and for the 'acts of judgement', e.g., E. Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, p. 207.

(i.e. the relative importance of any integral part of a whole). The familiar idea of Nature's indifference to the individual—'so careful of the type she seems, so careless of the single life'—has its counterpart in every system that subordinates the part to the whole. That a part should be sacrificed to the welfare of the whole is a neutral principle, and every case is to be taken on its merits (e.g. John xi. 50). Similarly, the consciousness of choice and mission has often taken strange forms among individuals and peoples. But if it revived and preserved Israel, as in the days of II Isaiah and of the Maccabees, the instrument of the larger purpose must not boast: the Bible thus exemplifies the discipline of history.

The idea of the sacrifice of a part for the whole is familiar; and in sacrificial rites it is sometimes felt necessary that the victim should be willing. In the free-will offering of the part for the larger whole may there not often be a consciousness that one is the instrument of a 'purpose' transcending one's grasp, a 'whole' that needs this 'part'? St. Paul's conception of the 'body of Christ' is the highest religious form of the generalized notion of parts and wholes: the whole consists of a perfect articulation of the constituent parts, each with true freedom and liberty, 'selected', and with a purpose and mission. But while the New Testament has found the ideal interrelation between the individual and the whole, the Old Testament had in view the welfare of the group or nation as a unit. It is therefore interesting to notice that the treatment of the individual is atomistic and incomplete in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as is not unnatural at their transitional age. Thus in Ezekiel a man passes from one vital status to another and permanent status irrespective of his previous merits or demerits, the past, be it good or bad, is simply obliterated. On the other hand, the Indian conception of *Karma* has some right on its side in spite of its grimness. But there is profound truth in the popular saying that God may forgive, but Nature cannot forget. It combines (*a*) the precious personal relationship between God and every individual, and (*b*) the actual processes—ultimately no less divine—in world history. There is an eternal rightness: *de minimis lex divina semper curat*. So do the old writers depict the divine grief, consolation, and love, even though a righteous divine process must let Israel fall (Hosea), or go into exile, or finally collapse. An adjustment is made between the smaller and the larger claims, between the 'purposes' of the individual and the larger ones of his social group, his country, his cause, or the ultimate whole.

The Bible guides diversity of spirituality and unfolds the discipline of history. The ancient Orient—and the Old Testament in particular—throws valuable light upon the range of the religious consciousness;

the *milieu* from which arose the world's monotheisms illustrates all the extremes of human nature. There is an elemental forthrightness and worldliness, materialism and shrewdness, driving power and fanaticism. But the worst brought out the best, and when it forced the question, What does God really require of us (Mic. vi. 8)?—for everywhere men know that the gods need them—we contrast the prophet's reply with the horrible rites from Carthage to the Aztecs. Again, we justly contrast the lofty idealism of the Servant of the Lord with the triumphant Is. lxv. 13 sq. ('*My* servants . . . but *ye* . . .'), and the God of the Universe with the nationalist warring-god in Is. lxiii. 1–6. We have not to do with pious patriarchs patrolling Palestine but with a very human people, apt to be megalomaniac, yet denouncing the *hybris* of a Nebuchadrezzar; now sinking to the depths and now rising to the heights. In fact, the evidence is such that, just as conceptions of Truth must take account of Error, so we have to understand the recurrence of false prophets, pseudo-Messiahs, and all the 'stumbling-blocks' that are the worst enemies of a progressive religion. There are problems of consciousness, experience and content, of canalizing and disciplining ways of life and thought, of integrating and socializing a sane personality. So, while the Old Testament contains what we may call the discipline of history, with Israel as Yahweh's representative *people*, in the New Testament the Founder of the new Israel is the *personal* pattern. The result is to combine individual, national, and international principles and a manner of life and thought, which—perhaps more unconsciously than consciously—has influenced all who assimilated the Bible realistically. 'Ye are my witnesses' (Is. xliii. 10. 12): this is the fundamental principle—the testimony that men by their life and thought bear, wittingly or otherwise, to their greatest realities and to the sort of light that illuminates them (Matt. vi. 23).

The Bible tells of a people which was its own worst enemy, but which in dying gave mankind the vivifying conviction of a World-Redeemer. It would be difficult to say that any one part of the history was more essential than another; the diverse phases are interlaced: apostasy and return, individualistic prophets and social institutions, humanism and sacerdotalism, fanatical nationalism and universalism, the Wisdom literature and the Logos. But since the content both of II Isaiah and of Christianity is clearly indebted to the stages that preceded, we distinguish the more continuous and genetic developments from the more discontinuous occasions which inaugurate qualitatively new developments.[1] We can also distinguish

[1] See *T.B.* pp. 232, 258 sq. (also the Index *s.v.* Quantitative and Qualitative Changes).

between the greater and the lesser creative occasions, as when new sects or movements arise full of new life and energy but with objectively narrower bases. The evidence is of high interest. Thus, a closer study of monotheism and of monotheizing trends shows that among significant psychological moments, which may be subjectively complete, only those that have had definite social and historical consequences stand out as qualitatively distinct.[1] The history of religion itself is that of alternations of dissatisfaction and restatement: repeated religious experiences and impulses—varying greatly in quality and content—must be postulated to account for the general persistence of religion. The fresh experiences or impulses supervene upon the existing conditions; and as we cannot conceive what they were in primitive prehistoric man or in the young babe, the earliest example of religious experience, *recognizable according to our criteria*, cannot as such be the actual 'origin' of religion.

Here, Robertson Smith's famous theory of the communion origin of sacrifice is instructive, because (*a*) the usual objection has been that one cannot see how a sacramental meal could develop into the complex sacrificial ritual found in the Bible and elsewhere. Yet (*b*) 'the important point is really, not the means, but the gracious relation of God to the sinner'.[2] That is to say, in every genuine religious act there is some relationship between God and man; but there are times and occasions when a new creative impulse gives new life and growth and further development—and perhaps complexity—to the actual conditions, whatever they are. Actual origins lie outside sober enquiry; the history of sacrifice, like that of religion itself, is not of a development from some absolute, initial factor, rather are there innumerable reinvigorating spiritualizing phases, varying in degree, rejecting and selecting their material, and developing the soil on which they appear. They are, in a sense, outside the genetic, evolutionary process, though they give new impetus to it; they are the spirit or soul informing the new body—'new wine in new bottles'—and the nature of the spirit and the nature of the body are correlative.

The immediate question is the range and diversity of 'spiritual' factors. Some notable creative occasions can be recognized outside the Bible, as in the prominence of the ethical Indian god Varuna and, later, the Iranian Ahura-Mazda. It is instructive, therefore, to notice the general contemporaneity of advanced ideas of right and order in

[1] *T.B.* pp. 179 sq., 226.

[2] For both, see, e.g., A. B. Davidson; for (*a*) which is typical, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 314, and for (*b*) *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 426. See also *R.S.* pp. xlii sq., xlviii sq. On totemism as the 'origin' of religion see *ib.* pp. 541, 683, also *J.T.S.* xxxii (1931), 245 sq.

the Amarna or Mosaic age and the various sequels in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Palestine.[1] More impressive is the simultaneity round about the sixth century B.C., for (*a*) the religious impulses had different effects in the different lands from Greece and Israel to India and China, and we may ask whether this simultaneity is a coincidence, or is there a spiritual influence operative over a wide area, and do its possibilities depend upon the conditions everywhere? The answer will have important implications. Further (*b*), may we say with G. F. Moore (*History of Religions*, i, p. ix) that the simultaneity in progress and decline round about the sixth century is not only one of which 'the history of civilization has other striking examples', but that it is 'comparable to geological epochs of upheaval and subsidence'? Is this merely an interesting comparison, or should we think of a single process, physical in Nature and spiritual in Man? Christ, in Pauline teaching, is not only head of the Christian body, He is immanent in the Universe; and, like the Johannine Logos, He is the principle of order and reason.[2] Throughout the world's religions are gods that stand in a *personal* relationship to men, and also gods that sustain, maintain, and cause things; the latter answer *intellectual* needs. Hence it becomes necessary to emphasize the difference between the simpler, undifferentiated conceptions of Man and Nature at earlier stages of thought and our problems of coordinating our specialized departments of knowledge. We distinguish (*a*) Nature and Man, (*b*) the spheres of the religious and of the non-religious, and (*c*) the varying qualities and values of religion—the spirits must be tested (1 John iv. 1). So, to take (*c*), the category of the sacred or holy admittedly requires discrimination, and while the 'sacred' and 'mystical' state, as such, has no necessary ethico-social value, the 'right' life brings a man into relationship with the 'righteous' God of the universe. The world's religions imply certain ultimate realities; but some very strange conceptions of what is real and true have prevailed among men of unusual types. There are times of uncertainty and disintegration when it is necessary to guide and direct men to the right types, and in the Bible a distinction can be drawn between the specifically religious passages and the more didactic narratives, between the individualistic, creative phases (in the prophets), and the stabilizing and socializing stages.

Throughout, the relationship between Israel and Yahweh is of the closest; there is a fundamental 'racialism'; yet the bond is not unconditioned, and Yahweh is over all the instruments of his choice. There

[1] See *T.B.* pp. 144, 146 sq.

[2] On Christ as the principle of cohesion, see citations from Gore and J. B. Lightfoot, *R.S.* (*Religion of the Semites*), p. 663.

is the ideal of a nation of prophets and priests (Ex. xix. 6, Num. xi. 29)—but it is hedged about; the naïve testing of Yahweh (e.g. by Gideon) lends itself to abuse, and therefore Yahweh must not be put to the test (Deut. vi. 16). The reality of Yahweh's holiness, experienced by an Isaiah (ch. vi), must be safeguarded: Yahweh is in the very midst of the Israelite camp or of Ezekiel's city; but men cannot see God and live, His is a dangerous power (e.g. Ex. xix. 12 sq.) Religious and mystical experience, which readily encourages antinomianism, is checked by the character of Moses, the humblest of men but nearest to Yahweh (Num. xii. 3. 8); and the horror of spiritual pride is appropriately found among a people alive to wide ranges of experience and proud of their unique intimacy with the One and Only God of the Universe. But Yahweh is neither utterly transcendent nor wholly immanent; and notions of intermediary angels or messengers, of a Face (or Presence), of a Name, and finally of a Wisdom or Logos form the indispensable ideological preludes to Christianity. The ideas tended to preclude a simple, consistent monotheism, for every 'intermediary'—kings, idols, sacred books, doctrines, or symbols—has served now to unite and now to sever God and man.

The didactic writings canalized religious experience. But outside them the old Palestinian religion survived in Yahwism; and the Amarna and Ras Shamra tablets find parallels even in the later books of the Old Testament. Traces of the old 'nature' religion and 'nature' phenomena are familiar enough in the eschatology; although for personal and national religion Yahweh's work in human history is of course the more prominent. Primarily, the spheres of Nature and of Man are not so nicely distinguished as by us; and in fact the great seers of Israel base the God of social righteousness upon the divine cosmic order, of which the social order is part.[1] Cosmic and human creation and *re*-creation are one; the new stages set wrong right, they repair and redeem.[2] At the great crises men envisage something cataclysmic or else the quiet voice (1 Kings xix. 12), the concourse of warring peoples or else the New Covenant (Ezekiel and Jeremiah). Catastrophic events are associated with the rise of Israel (plagues of Egypt, &c.); but at the rise of the new Israel, amid internal disturbances and apocalyptic ideas, it was the gentle persuasiveness of Christianity that actually shaped subsequent history. The fanatics and apocalyptists merely destroyed the old Israel.[3] Different types of mentality envisage things differently, and while

[1] *T.B.* p. 154, n. 2. For II Isaiah, cf. Skinner on Is. xlv. 18; Davidson *Old Testament Theology*, p. 271; von Rad in *Werden u. Wesen d. A.T.* (1936), pp. 138 sqq.

[2] *T.B.* pp. 294 sqq.

[3] Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (1935), p. 213 sq., observes that Plato's

early thought readily combined cosmic and human events, to-day it is our *description* of the total universe—a description which we can accept as true—and not the factual physical world that can be re-created under the influence of re-created religious thinking.

The course of Old Testament criticism has shown that an embodiment of religious values may lose its earlier validity, that 'body' and 'spirit' may be so fused together that to touch the former is felt to injure the latter, and further that there are men who can appreciate the ideas, principles, or truths, apart from their 'body', although these soon cry out for a fresh embodiment, else they fade away. It is possible to re-embody the ideas, to create truth, i.e. to make things 'true' by life and action; though the principle is a neutral one, as is illustrated by the conflicting ideologies of the day. Hence it is highly instructive to find, in the disintegration of the exilic period, the insistence upon Yahweh's trustworthiness (Zeph. iii. 5), the restatement of the reality of the Living God of Israel (II Isaiah), and the eye turned, not upon the God of the Exodus of past history, but upon One who was imminent, waiting to intervene (Jer. xxiii. 7 sq.). The Second Isaiah sees a new Exodus (e.g. Is. xliii. 14–28), and the post-exilic writers in the Hexateuch give the old traditions a new form—not as mere ancient history, but as history uniting past and present, and enabling a community united by a common tradition of the past to face the future. Similarly at the rise of Christianity, although Israel's traditions had become fixed, they could be reinterpreted to give them a new meaning for the new Israel. This reinterpretation gave Christians a place in the Divine Purpose as surely as the old traditions had done for the old Israel. Thus can men be united by a description of the past in which they can find a place for themselves; and all modern critical and scientific research is, however unconsciously, preparing the way for a new description that can be as true for posterity as the old one has been for our ancestors.

New religious or spiritual experiences and impulses appear at different stages of individual, national, or ideological development. At the earlier stages the content will be simpler, at the later more complex. But there are initial or inaugurating occasions which go behind our analyses and dualisms, our disjunctives and ideal opposites.[1] They are experiences of some larger whole of which we are part, of

conviction that the divine element in the world is a persuasive and not a coercive agency is 'one of the greatest intellectual discoveries in the history of religion', and he asks, 'can there be any doubt that the power of Christianity lies in its revelation in act, of that which Plato divined in theory?'

[1] Cf. C. Lloyd Morgan, *The Emergence of Novelty*, 1933, p. 194 sq., on the necessity of starting, not from the secondary outcome of disjunctive thought, but from the prior complements.

the eternal embracing the temporal, of the 'otherness' of the God who is known sufficiently for us to say that His thoughts are not our thoughts. Only when the intellect has severed the terms do we wonder how an Eternity, which is outside Time, can enter into Time; how God, who is primarily seen in His works, can enter into Nature, and how the transcendent can ever become immanent.[1] There are limits to the purely intellectual processes; and we properly speak of 'creation', not from mental indolence, as has been alleged, but to bridge the gulf between the here-and-now and some ultimate reality. By 'creating' norms and standards and by finding and using patterns and regulative principles we certainly argue in a circle, because these have been derived from the material to which they are applied. But this is true also of Israel's interpretation of history, of the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum*, of the biblical critic who finds out of a mass of 'raw material' that which enables him to organize it, and of all scientific and creative minds which prescribe what they find.[2]

As we pass from the Old Testament and Greek speculative thought through the Wisdom literature to the rise of Christianity we see how conceptions of a personal intermediary and an immanent principle of order and reason in both Nature and Man stand at the head of subsequent thought, and how the dogma of the twofold nature of Christ has guided reflection upon the nature of man. We exist amid purposes and processes that transcend us. The famous Indian religious formula identifies the ultimate reality of the Self with that of the Universe (*Tat tvam asi*); theistic religion, however, finds, not identity, but the potential intimate relationship between man and a God immanent in the Universe but transcending it. Religion, taken as a whole, *implies* some extraordinary actual or factual truths concerning human destiny; and though we live here and now the most diverse experiences take men away to an existence not less, but more real than that of ordinary life. The universe of the physicists is remarkable enough, and the most sober exponents of psychical research tell of strange possibilities. We live in different worlds, or rather, on different levels, and must form some working compromise between the seen and the unseen. Hence we have to aim at some description of the Universe that shall enable us to live in it and understand it sufficiently—and such a description is for us the *true* Universe.

[1] Cf. W. Macneile Dixon, *The Human Situation*, 1937, p. 146, on our questioning how atoms, particles, or cells could ever co-operate or combine to form wholes, forgetting that they are the results of a prior analysis.

[2] Circular arguments are normal, see E. Wind in *Philosophy and History: Essays presented to E. Cassirer*, 1936, p. 257; cf. Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 733. But it is difficult to express the conceptual process: do we, through our minds, discover, put in, build, construct, or create?

The Universe that is real and true tells us what to make of the worlds of common sense, of the scientists and of the psychists. Now, in the history of some body of thought (e.g. a science) a new step may transform it and give it a new permanent direction; similarly some overpowering personal experience may change once and for all a man's history, and in this way even enable him to change the history of his environment, his little world. Hence when we reflect upon the *true* Universe of which we are integral parts and look back upon the progressive steps in its history, we can see how its meaning and value for us have been developed through the changes in and behind the Bible. The rise of Christianity is an event that may have lost its freshness, its historical vividness may seem a thing of long ago, yet it marked a new stage in the evolution of that Universe of which we and this world are only parts or phases. But religion points forward as well as back; it holds out its promise of an Avatar, another Buddha, a Mahdi, a prophet successor (Deut. xviii. 15), or a Second Coming. To-day there are scattered anticipations or hopes of some fresh and genuine revival of the religious spirit. Were there such a revival with all that religious realism that has operated so creatively in the past, it would inevitably have repercussions upon theology and philosophy. There is a natural transition from religion to philosophy; and any re-statement of a Christian philosophy, or of a philosophy of Christianity, would have a far larger field of experience upon which to draw than had the early Christian Fathers and their successors. Our problems would be approached from another angle, and description rather than proof would be the persuasive power: it would be the description of that true Universe in which the normal individual would recognize his self-evident position as an integral part of the whole.[1]

S. A. Cook

NOTES AND STUDIES

PHILO'S QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

The great preponderance in Philo of quotations from the Pentateuch over those from the rest of the O.T. on which Canon Knox contributed a note to the January number of the Journal is undoubtedly very striking, whether measured by 283 pages to 17 (many of them

[1] Cf. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (1938), p. 66 sq.: 'Self-evidence is the basic fact on which all greatness supports itself, but proof is one of the routes by which self-evidence is often obtained.'