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854TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT THE NATIONAL CLUB, 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 3RD, 1944, AT 4.30 P.M.

AIR COMMODORE P. J. WISEMAN, C.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr. Ruoff to read the paper entitled "The Philosophy of Religion" for the Rev. E. W. Hadwen, L.Th., B.D., who was unable to be present.

The Meeting was later thrown open to discussion in which the Rev. A. W. Payne, Mr. Ruoff and Mr. Bunker took part.

The following elections have been made: Laurence H. Bunker, Esq. (Member), Frederick R. Dain, Esq., M.A. (Member), Rev. J. Graham Miller, LL.B. (Member).

The Rev. S. Runsie Craig Memorial, 1944.

In accordance with the terms of the Trust the Council have selected for the 1944 Memorial the paper on "The Philosophy of Religion," presented to the Society on April 3rd, 1944, by the Rev. E. W. Hadwen, L.Th., B.D., as affording strong confirmation of the genuineness of the "Faith once delivered to the Saints."

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

By the Rev. E. W. HADWEN, L.Th., B.D.

THE function or process implied by this title needs to be carefully defined. It is possible to think of Philosophy and Religion as two entirely separate spheres with different and conflicting elements which it is the function of both to investigate and appraise with a view to the harmonising of them. This, however, is not here contemplated, for there is much in Philosophy which is outside Religion and much in Religion that cannot even be "dreamed of" in Philosophy. Philosophy is more extensive than religion in relation to Nature, whilst religon is more intensive in relation to human nature. Philosophy is largely speculative, progressing tentatively from postulates: religion is experiential, moving forward from factual data. Of philosophy proper we may say the idea of God is the last and highest postulate that might be laid down as the result of a long, intricate chain of inferences and probabilities, but

religion begins with God, in some form or conception as a fundamental datum. If, therefore, philosophy and religion sometimes appear contradictory it may be because they view truth and facts from entirely different angles and, in some respects, operate in quite distinct fields of thought and investigation, and not that they conflict with each other in matters of essential and ultimate truth.

Again, we need to distinguish the Philosophy of Religion from Theology. Theology is a science in that it is a system of thought involving a process of investigation, comparison and co-ordination of definite conceptions of God and the soul. It may be very crude and confused as in many non-Christian religions. It may be highly developed as, for example, in the Institutes of Calvin. But while speculation and inference dominate in Philosophy, instinctive belief and dogmatic definition characterise Theology. Theology, therefore, has its own peculiar sphere and is apart from Philosophy proper.

Still further, we must consider religion which, in our title, covers, I suppose, religious beliefs and practices of all names and forms. Religion is neither a science nor a philosophy, but a way of life; not fundamentally abstract or theoretical, but essentially instinctive and experiential involving beliefs and practices that rest on an ultimate consciousness of personal relationship with the Divine. The conception of the Divine may be polytheistic and the religious responses animistic, and, indeed, these may take a great variety of forms; but there is an ultimate instinctive religious property in mankind, and it is upon this and its various definitions, expressions and ramifications that the philosophy of religion concentrates.

To make this as clear as possible I record a few authoritative definitions. Principal Caird writes: "It is not religion only, but the history of religion which the philosophy of religion has to explain." Its function is, he says, "to unfold relations of the human spirit to the Divine and to determine the ideas of God and the soul that are involved in religious experience."* Professor C. S. Shaw: "Religion must first be distinguished from science and philosophy. The precincts of worship may fittingly be determined . . . Philosophy properly consists in a view of both soul and world . . . and seeks by an indirect method to indicate the ultimate meaning of life and the final essence of the world.

* J. Caird, "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion," p. 314 (1880).

. . . Philosophy of religion consists of something more than the mere sentiments of worship and of the beautiful, respectively."* Professor A. M. Fairbairn defines it as "the dialectical or reasoned interpretation of the consciousness of man as expressed in his religions and unfolded in his history . . . it has to do with the causes which made all religion possible, and the conditions which turned the possible into actual religions."†

One of the difficulties of this subject is to avoid confusing it with dogmatics. They deal largely with the same subjects, handling many identical factors of evidential value and consequently they interact on many points. Dogmatics seeks to support by evidence a religious system already believed in, whilst philosophy sets out to investigate the underlying factors and elements of the system and, by a rational process, establish their credibility.

The field before us is as extensive as human nature and all its history, and therefore, any adequate treatment of our subject would require acquaintance with all religious history and a sound knowledge of the subject of comparative religions. We content outselves by looking at a few of its leading features.

1. *Man's Universal Religious Consciousness.*—The more this has been investigated the more impressively true it has appeared. Human nature is not wholly self-sufficing. Man is possessed of an innate craving after something other than himself: his being feels after a greater, since it is by its constitution a dependent entity. "Man did not become religious when he heard that there were gods; he only had the idea of God and believed in Him because he was religious."‡ Doctor Fairbairn puts it this way: "Man is religious not by chance but by nature, not by choice but by necessity."§ This religious instinct takes on a variety of expressions and creates for its gratification many different ideas and forms of worship, but "within the local (religion) there lives and moves what may be termed a universal Spirit, a life we may feel rather than analyze."

Now philosophy of religion seeks to correlate these phenomena. Whence came this religious instinct in man? Is it false or true? Can it be related to any-

* C. G. Shaw, "The Precinct of Religion," pp. 18 and 20 (1902).
† A. M. Fairbairn, "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," pp. 227 and 229 (1902).
‡ A. Sabatier, "Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion," p. 272 (1897).
§ *Op cit.*, p. 215—Fairbairn.

thing or anyone in the universe that really and adequately satisfies it? If so, is this satisfying quality to be found in the Divine? Does the instinct itself oblige our reason to postulate God? To quote once more, "Philosophy of religion is concerned with 'concrete religion' and enquires why religion as an objective fact and living organism has appeared, and how it has behaved; when it arose, its relations and issues in human history and experience. It recognises religion as a universal fact which has to be construed through what is universal in human nature; it seeks to discover the forces and the factors that modify the universal fact into the infinite variety of forms it assumes in time and place and to determine the worth of these modifications."* Doctor Brunner says, "Religion in the sense of longing for God is the greatest of all man's characteristics."†

This fundamental urge towards the Divine gives to human nature and life a definite character and value. Man's existence is dignified with definite meaning—an intensive value which we call the soul. Our business is, therefore, to trace man's consciousness of himself, of the world with which he feels himself to be associated by nature and instinct, and of this spiritual "*other*" which his soul demands and, having traced them, to discover their relationships with one another and endeavour to find a synthesis. "The proper attitude of religion" says Professor Shaw, "can only be found when the temporal and eternal are reconciled; how this may be done is a special question for Philosophy of Religion."‡

Christianity, however, as it has its own theology, has also its own distinctive philosophy. And it is concerned primarily with the individual man as a responsible person made in the image of God and held accountable to Him for his moral conduct. "In the case of Christianity which is the climax of religion, the unity of soul and world appears in response to a religious need which is felt when the soul as self-contained rejects the whole world. The commandment to lose and hate one's life could have no meaning to a savage living in nature and in conflict with alien tribes, and he could discover no value in the Kingdom of God."§

Religion is not an end in itself. It is a means of attaining

* Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, pp. 186 and 187.
† E. Brunner, "The Philosophy of Religion," p. 112 (1937).
‡ Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
§ Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-9.

contact with the Divine or, in the more specifically Christain sense, a means of the Divine establishing contact with the human. "What men want is not religion but something by means of religion, and what God bestows is not religion but something for the sake of religion."*

A further question arises. Why is this universal consciousness in man so confused and his religious instinct thwarted? Why, again, does this religious bent, accompanied by conscience, so frequently create a cringing attitude in presence of the thought and power of the very Being for whom it longs? Most religions attribute this condition to some conscious disparity between man and his ideals, to a sense of alienation from, and a feeling of unworthiness in relation to, the Divine. Niebuhr quotes Gilson to the effect that "This incesssant pursuit of an ever fugitive satisfaction springs from troubled deeps in human nature . . The very insatiability of human desire has a positive significance; it means this: that we are attracted to an infinite good."† Christianity calls this disturbing element sin and defines it as lawlessness, transgression, iniquity and the like. This is the essential barrier not only between man and his God, but also between man and his self-attainment. "The essence of man is his freedom. Sin is committed in that freedom. Sin can therefore not be attributed to a defect in his essence. It can only be understood as a self-contradiction, made possible by the fact of his freedom but not following necessarily from it."‡ Hence the philosophy of the Christian life, based upon the fundamental theology of Atonement for human sin wrought out by Jesus Christ, is concerned with the necessary readjustment of man personally to God in heart and conscience as also in thought and conduct. To quote Professor Shaw, "The religious world order is neither that of nature nor of Spirit, but is found in humanity which is a synthesis of the two. St. Francis with his holy love is more of an argument for God than Anselm with his Ontological proof. . . Logicians may seek to demonstrate God, seers may indicate traces of His shining presence in the world, but saints who are with Him reveal His Being directly."§

2. The reasonableness of belief in God and of religious worship is another feature of our subject. "Religion is sense and taste

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* Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
† R. Niebuhr, "Nature and Destiny of Man," Vol. I, p. 131 (1942).
‡ Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
§ Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

for the Infinite." This sense and taste come within the range of scrutiny and definition, but the Infinite transcends both. Nevertheless, man with his *capax Dei* feels affinity to the Infinite and by a process of thought, contemplation and common religious experience arrives at some attempts at definition of it. His knowledge, however, is only partial. This is true even of the Christian man. But partial knowledge is not false knowledge and limitation does not imply unreality or illusion. Even Saint Paul declares, " We now see through a glass darkly . . we know in part." But the very terms " limited " and " finite " applied to the human mind and human knowledge imply the " unlimited " and the " infinite." It is asserted that " when you try to find in religion available data of knowledge, both experience and reason pronounce the attempt to be futile." But we cannot allow that religion and reliable knowledge are opposites, nor that the instincts and emotions are independent of reason. Just as " the correlations—subject and object, thought and reality are indissoluble, distinguishable and yet indivisible " so the instincts and the emotions, the spirit and the reason in man are integral elements mutually reacting and dependent. The assertion, therefore, that religion which is instinctively natural to man is at the same time irrational is itself irrational and involves a profound contradiction. Belief in God and the worship of God are not contrary to reason, though they defy complete rational explanation. Yet rational explanation is not necessarily the highest and fullest satisfaction to man's personality. Such satisfaction may be found in the mystical experiences and the practical expressions of religion—the exercises of faith and hope towards God, the practice of prayer and the operations of love and goodness towards one's fellows ; and such mighty forces, so real and unmistakable to the soul, defy contradiction even though the reason be unable to grasp and intrepret them. God is " supra-knowable " and religion which concerns the whole personality leads man into realms of thought and belief where reason is inadequate as an interpreter or expressive agent ; but where, nevertheless, it need find nothing foreign to itself.

Religious knowledge is not cast in a philosophical mould, but " philosophy would have no power to deal with religion if religion were not implicitly rational." God is not known or proved by anything foreign to His own being. He reveals Himself *in* thought and *to* thought. " All true thought of God is itself divine thought . . . Nothing that is absolutely inscrutable to

reason can be made known to faith." Brunner pertinently remarks, "It is not reason that is opposed to revelation, but man's pride in his rationality, science, philosophy and culture.* He goes on to quote Luther to the effect that, "The judgment of reason is reliable as to negative conclusions; but as to positive it is deceptive (he means in reference to the assertions of theology)."

A modern tendency is to exaggerate the place and function of reason, to regard it as the final judge and arbiter both of objective truth and subjective experience. If, however, as we contend, religious truth and experience although verifiable by reason, yet in some respects transcend it, then, reason cannot in those transcendent particulars be regarded as arbiter and judge. Reason as an instrument is itself limited as are human thought and emotion. "In religion as elsewhere," writes Professor Caird, "philosophy is based on experience, but it is something more than a mere result of empirical induction."† Indeed the same writer declares that all our human faculties are together inadequate to produce a complete explanation or interpretation of religious history and experience. And Niebuhr declares, "No pattern of human reason, but only the will of God can be the principle of the form and order to which human life must be conformed."‡ To quote another authority, "As a spiritual being man is conscious of an end which transcends all particular and finite satisfactions, of a life above and beyond them, of being his own end and law."

In Christianity knowledge and faith are mystically yet none the less really related and these again operate by means of love. Thus reason and emotion, thought and affection are co-ordinated in a common experience of apprehending and absorbing truth and spiritual energy, which, by the grace of God, operate in the soul. These possessions are employed in service to humanity, rendered both as a loving obligation to God and a Christian duty to our neighbour, and such a life brings us self-harmony. By this means any contradiction between the ideal and the actual vanishes for "religious progress is not progress *towards*, but *within* the sphere of the Infinite."

As conscious creatures we possess a "potential infinitude," and true religion conveys to us a principle by which we can see that

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* Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
† Caird, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
‡ Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

God is all in all, and we can see this " without denying reality to the finite world and to every individual human spirit, or without denying it except in so far as it involves a life apart from God. Who is at once the presupposition and the end of all finite thought and life. That which raises man above the animal and provides for him an escape from the limits of his own individuality, is that he can, and even, in a sense, that he must, identify himself with a consciousness that transcends all that is particular and relative."*

3. We now turn for a moment to glance at the intimations of immortality. Such intimations cannot be denied. Some may think to suppress them as a delusion and a snare ; mere figments of the imagination ; vague wanderings of the still uncivilized mind. But surely, in view of what we have been saying, the most deep-rooted of all our instincts and the most refined of our thoughts reaching out with conscious desire for the Infinite imply a context of immortalities. We can hardly think of an Infinite who is not also an Immortal, for the truly Infinite must transcend time and the material order and therefore belong to the sphere which we call eternity.

We readily admit that this aspect of man has been set forth at times too plausibly and that many analogies between human nature and nature in general, between the soul and recurrent Spring, for example, do not constitute proofs of human immortality. Poets have delighted to sing of the immortal elements in man and have made free use of these analogies. Yet the whole conception and purpose of religion tends to support the view " that man was made for a happier world " and that his mind and spirit can find no adequate fulfilment within this realm of time and space.

The conditions and occupations of the future world are, in some religions, far from ennobling, and, indeed, often repulsive to the truly civilized. The Christian religion, however, takes the " immortality " of man for granted. Jesus Christ consistently regarded this life as a probation, leading up to a Divine judgment and a further existence, yet He lays down a vital corrective. He made it quite clear that immortality as the ideal, never-ending life was not the inherent property of natural man and recognised that though all human beings will survive this temporal life not all will enjoy the fruition of immortality. Hence we

* Caird, *op. cit.*, pp. 233, 243, 248.

must distinguish between mere conscious existence after death which may even be an experience of pain and woe, and what our Lord calls eternal life which surely means not only life everlasting, but life that is instinct with the Divine properties, rich because filled from the immortal fountain of the Divine life of love and joy. Our view is that such a consummation is intimated by man's natural capacity and desire for what is pure and permanent and that, since we cannot believe the Creator would impart such qualities only to mock us, they may, they *must*, be provided for in His great scheme of things. And this brings us to the vital subject of

4. *Revelation.*—All religions claim the the sanction of revelation and so we have rival revelations and a vast quantity of religious literature. Suffice it to say that the Christian Revelation is obviously most in keeping with our highest notions of what God should be like and of how we should expect such a Being to reveal Himself. If we view man as everywhere conscious of a desire for the Infinite and as one who, in the midst of his personal confusion through sin and in the midst of a confused material order, finds his true unity, his selfhood, in the great Infinite Unity, we must expect a unity of revelation. So Niebuhr writes, "The simple fact is that both the obviously partial and unique and the supposedly universal values of history can be both appreciated and judged only in terms of a religious faith which has discovered the centre and source of life to be beyond and yet within historical existence. This is the God who is both Creator and Judge revealed in Biblical faith . . . Without the presuppositions of the Christian faith the individual is either nothing or becomes everything. In the Christian faith man's insignificance as a creature is lifted into significance by the mercy and power of God in which his life is sustained."*

Christian Revelation is for us a "recorded" substance—a spiritual reality of thought and personal qualities which came upon chosen men as a Divine impact and therefore a record of historical facts bearing upon every human faculty of perception and belief and issuing in the acquisition of a knowledge which while capable of rationalization is essentially spiritual and supra-rational. I suppose it is on this view that Brunner says, "We can neither experience nor understand divine revelation, but only believe it."† A statement with which we may find it

* Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
† Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

difficult wholly to agree, for since the Revelation is itself living by reason of the fact that the Spirit of God who inspired it still operates within it and by means of it, we may, in a sense, experience it, and as it is set forth in human language and is therefore rational we may in a measure understand it. And surely man, in his natural state, is not incapable of response to the Divine Revelation nor devoid of faculties whereby he may recognise the symbols and the approaches of the Divine. Otherwise all we have said about the universal religious consciousness ceases to have any practical meaning. God must always take the initiative in Revelation and grace, but there must also be responsive conditions in the man whom He approaches and these necessary conditions are, of course, the gift of God, though not dispositions created by grace, but rather faculties natural to man as originally created. To the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ man may respond instinctively, morally and rationally. The business of Philosophy of Religion is " to unfold the relations of the human spirit to the Divine and to determine the ideas of God and the soul that are involved in religious experience."*

Any philosophy of life which is to be of permanent service to mankind must be Christian. " True progress," says Niebuhr, " is possible only upon the ground of a Christian culture."† When we Christians confess that we live our lives " in Christ " or " by the faith of the Son of God," and that our living is really the outworking of saving qualities imparted to us by the grace of God we are only saying in the language of religion what philosophy declares to be in true accordance with the fundamental principles of human nature. " Strictly speaking, Christianity is not a view ; but a type of life ; not a system, but a new conscious process."‡ To quote Sabatier, " Christianity is nothing if it is not in us at once an ideal which is never reached and an inner force which ever urges us beyond ourselves."§

The perfect synthesis which the philosophy of religion seeks is found in Jesus Christ, who realised it in human nature and human experience. This perfect attainment therefore is a fact of history, and the Christian religion exists to enable men by its faith and virtues to emulate Jesus Christ in His ideal character and life. He realised it in the clear consciousness of filial love

* Caird, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
† Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
‡ Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
§ Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

and devotion to God and man, and He, as the new Head and Heart of humanity, now re-establishes such a filial relationship in every man who receives Him and who thus is a Christian in so far as the filial piety of Jesus Christ is reproduced in him. It is "this feeling," says Sabatier, "filial in regard to God, fraternal in regard to man, which makes a Christian and consequently is the common trait of all Christians." And this sublime experience he describes as "God giving Himself to man and realising in him His paternity, man giving himself to God without fear and realising in Him his humanity."*

Our conclusion is, therefore, that Christianity is the supreme revelation of God, the sovereign unifier of the human personality and of human society, the adequate satisfaction of man's true nature and desire; and that the very essence of it is the Person of Jesus Christ Himself, Son of God and Son of Man, incarnate, redeemer, risen and interceding for us in heaven, the "one mediator between God and men" in whom and by whom the whole race and the whole universe move forward to the perfect consummation Divinely planned before the world began.

* Sabatier, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 and 150.

Discussion.

The Chairman, Air Commodore Wiseman, having thanked Mr. Ruoff for the illuminating and understanding way in which he had read the paper, said: I am sure that you would wish to express our thanks to Canon Hadwen for the valuable paper which he has given us. In his opening paragraphs the author has defined the spheres of Religion and Philosophy. Religion begins with God ("In the beginning God"), while philosophical thinking may end with a knowledge of God. While philosophy subjects revelation to a critical examination, it cannot possibly claim to be an alternative to revelation. Had there been no such revelation as that contained in the Bible, philosophy could not have given us the same clear knowledge of God. Speaking in the philosophically minded Athens, the Apostle Paul described the general results of the philosophical thinking of that day as having got as far as to realise the certain existence of God—but He was still to them "the unknown God." He could say to them, "Whom ye ignorantly worship Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing

that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing that He giveth to all life, and breath and all things . . . For in Him we live and move and have our being . . . He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath . . . raised from the dead." The Apostle's statement was not based on the " wisdom of the philosophers," or on " a general consensus of opinion," but on revelation, and in his case of a direct contact with the risen Lord who would be the Judge of all mankind.

On page 96 he refers to the innate religious instinct in man. I would have liked him to have developed the explanation why man is so often at enmity with God, and so often wishes to throw off his sense of dependence on God.

Under the heading of *Revelation* the author refers to Brunner's statement " We can neither experience nor understand divine revelation, but only believe it." It was over this question whether sinful man had any capacity for Divine revelation that Barth and Brunner parted company. Brunner did not go as far as Barth; the latter insisted that man cannot receive the Divine revelation unless the Spirit of God has already worked in him. Brunner, while maintaining that man could neither achieve revelation nor merit it, considered that he had the innate capacity to receive it.

Can a man by searching (without the aid of revelation) find out God ? On its scientific side I submit that this question has been answered by Professor Wilhelm Schmidt's work, that the ideas of God contained in the Old Testament are not merely the result of an evolutionary development.

Apart from revelation, God as He is known to us in the Bible would still be the " unknown God " of the philosophers. And since God has become known to us by the greater historic revelation of Jesus Christ " manifest in flesh " we have " beheld His glory."

Mr. Percy O. Ruoff said: The lecturer cites Gilson that the insatiability of human desire means attraction to an infinite good, and makes this comment upon the statement: " Christianity calls this disturbing element sin, and defines it as lawlessness, transgression, iniquity and the like." The Bible presentation of sin is (in its

essence) breach of the laws of God, and not "insatiability of human desire."

Mr. Hadwen says that God "reveals Himself *in* thought *to* thought." If this means that by thinking man can discover God, the answer that the Holy Scriptures give is found in the Old and New Testament alike—in the former, Zophar, in the Book of Job, says, "Canst thou by searching find out God?"; and Paul, in the latter, affirms that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Another statement perhaps needs qualification, viz., "Surely man, in his natural state, is not incapable of response to the Divine revelation." In a most remarkable interview between Nicodemus and the Son of God recorded in John's Gospel (chap. iii), Christ tells Nicodemus "the teacher of Israel," that a man must be born from above before he can see the Kingdom of God, adding "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." From this it appears that man cannot respond apart from God.

Let it be added, however, that the paper serves a very useful purpose; it is written with much ability and clarity, and will be appreciated by thinking people.

Rev. A. W. PAYNE expressed gratitude fot the paper, so suitable to the character of the Victoria Institute. The word *Philosophy*, of course, is the Love of Wisdom and the word *Religion* means "to rejoin," indicating the fall of man through sin and the need to return to God in repentance.

Christian theology teaches the unity of the Infinite with the Finite in the person of Immanuel, the Redeemer.

Dr. Dwight, the founder, I believe, of Yale University, said that the real theology was the religious teaching concerning God, who alone is its true subject and one object.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Rev. H. S. CURR, Ph.D., wrote: Mr. Hadwen has rendered timely and valuable service to the Institute by his paper. There is a vagueness about such a phrase as the "Philosophy of religion" which makes it to be very perplexing, and it is helpful to read such a discussion of the subject matter with which it is concerned as the

paper provides. The evangelical spirit and standpoint of the latter increase its usefulness enormously.

In endeavouring to frame a working definition of the Philosophy of Religion, I have been much indebted to an observation made by the late Professor A. S. Pringle-Pattison, who adorned the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in Edinburgh University for so many years. In the course of a class lecture he remarked on one occasion that metaphysics is concerned with the presuppositions of the sciences. The latter take both being and matter for granted. But the metaphysician enquires as to what these entities may be. Again science does not concern itself with the nature of knowledge, while metaphysics never seems to make an end of trying to explain what it is.

On the same analogy, the philosophy of religion is occupied with questions with which theology is not concerned. The conception of God is an excellent example. All such theories regarding the Divine existence and nature as are designated by such titles as atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, polytheism, deism, and theism tacitly assume that the mind of man is warranted in accepting such a notion as that of God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm xiv, 1.) But his words prove that he has got some notion of a Divine Being in his mind, even although it be utterly baseless. The question arises as to how he got it, and as to what it may be worth. In the same way, the zoologist affirms that there is no such creature as a unicorn, while the student of primitive culture and psychology will endeavour to explain the way in which the belief in unicorns arose. It might thus be suggested that the philosophy of religion deals with the validity and value of religious knowledge. It is the theological department of epistemology.

As the paper shows, Christianity offers its own peculiar problems to the investigator, and the more these are studied the profounder will be the conviction that the roots of the Christian Religion are so deep and wide and strong as almost to constitute in themselves a guarantee of its genuineness. Nevertheless, we must never forget the famous words of Hamlet in all such researches :—

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
>
> (*Act* 1, *Scene* 5.)

Mr. E. W. BATTERSBEY wrote : " Philosophy is largely speculative, progressing tentatively." Whilst I agree that philosophy is of a highly speculative nature, I understand the term philosophy to imply something more comprehensive than idealism alone, as it embraces all conceivable attitudes adopted to explain the nature of phenomena, and thus includes the philosophy of materialism which is based on scientific data.

" Religion is neither a science nor a philosophy, but a way of life." May I point out that philosophy, too, professes to be not only an explanation of life, but when applied—a way of life.

Luther : " The judgment of reason is reliable as to negative conclusions ; but as to positive it is deceptive (he means in reference to the assumptions of theology)." Is one to understand that all the criticisms levelled at religion are true at face value, whilst nothing positive can be supplied in its place ?

" We can hardly think of an Infinite who is not also an Immortal." The Immortal indicates a concrete entity or substance which endures forever. The Infinite does not necessarily limit itself to identity, but can also be an endless series of progressions of similarities.

" The whole conception and purpose of religion tends to support the view ' that man was made for a happier world ' and that his mind and spirit can find no adequate fulfilment within this realm of time and space." This sounds to me as being altogether too pessimistic and I, personally, side with Democritus, the apostle of laughter.

" We must distinguish between mere conscious existence after death, which may even be an experience of pain and woe, and what our Lord calls eternal life." Does this imply that those in heaven have no consciousness, no memory of mortal events ? What about the story of Dives, which is authentic and not a parable, according to the scholars ; does it not contradict this ?

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The Rev. E. W. HADWEN gratefully scknowledges the various opinions in reference to his paper expressed by some contributors and deeply appreciates the kindly reception given by Principal H. S. Curr and Air Commodore Wiseman.

In reply to Mr. Percy O. Ruoff, who points out that " sin is (in its essence) breach of the laws of God and not ' insatiability of

human desire,' " I must point to the earlier statement in the context : " Most religions attribute this condition " (*i.e.*, man's cringing attitude in presence of the thought and power of the very Being for whom it longs) " and my statement following the quotation is that amongst these religions Christianity " calls this disturbing element sin and defines it," etc.

In reference to his question on the phrase " God reveals Himself *in* thought *to* thought—if this means that by thinking man can discover God, etc.," the reply is that the writer contemplated no such inference. *Thinking* is a process or operation of the human mind and by such a process of searching man does not find God ; but *thought* is a faculty and a realm, and within this realm and to this faculty God reveals Himself. Moreover, the very statement criticised, when read as a whole, refutes Mr. Ruoff's suggestion, for the verb " reveals " implies a self-disclosure of God and an impartation from Him.

Finally, in answer to the criticism of the statement : " Surely man, in his natural state, is not incapable of response to the Divine Revelation," I hold the doctrine of prevenient grace, but I believe man in his natural state has (despite the fact of sin) some affinity to the supernatural realm and can will to receive or reject the overtures of God ; and this natural faculty is, of course, God's gift.

It is difficult to reply adequately to the criticisms of Mr. E. W. Battersbey, some of which appear to be evidence of misreading or misunderstanding of the paper. I deal with the items in order :—

1. The definition is right, I think, because of the qualifying word " *largely.*"

2. I agree that Philosophy, like religion, is " a way of life." Perhaps the distinction would be clearer if we say religion is a way of *living*—a dynamic of life. At least it is intended to be.

3. The answer is No ; but it must be admitted that the final positive elements of Christianity are spiritual and moral, not primarily rational, though they are rationally interpretable.

4. " Infinite " spelt with a capital letter is, in Theology, a synonym for God, who certainly is not " an endless series of progressions of similarities " and who in Christianity does limit Himself within the space of Revelation to " identity."

5. The statement here objected to is but a commonplace of

Christian belief and thought, and the criticism seems beside the mark.

6. Here, I fear, is but a quibble. The contrast which I myself set forth is that eternal life is infinitely superior to mere conscious existence and the inference that eternal life is therefore not conscious is unwarranted and absurd. We commonly distinguish physical life as we think it ought to be from " mere existence."