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JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
**The Victoria Institute**

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VOL. LXXXIX

1957

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute  
OR  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain

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VOL. LXXXIX

1957



LONDON:

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 1886-1903.—Sir GEORGE GABRIEL STOKES, Bart., D.C.L., F.R.S.  
 1903-1921.—The Right Hon. The EARL OF HALSBURY, P.C., F.R.S.  
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 1927-1941.—Sir AMBROSE FLEMING, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.  
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### *Auditor.*

G. METCALFE COLLIER, A.C.I.I., *Incorporated Accountant.*

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# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

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## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1956

READ AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 27TH, 1957

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### 1. *Progress of the Institute*

In presenting the Ninetieth Annual Report, together with a Balance Sheet and a Statement of Income and Expenditure, the Council is thankful to God for the continuation of the work of the Institute.

The Council expresses its thanks to all who have contributed papers, and to those who have taken the chair at the meetings. This has been a fateful year. Early in the session Dr. Ernest White, who had been Chairman of the Council for many years, felt that he could no longer continue in that office.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Institute owes its continued existence in large measure to his devoted work during the difficult post-war period. The Council is pleased to report that Dr. White's resignation from the chair does not, however, mean that the benefits of his experience and wisdom have been lost for he continues to be a member of the Council. To succeed Dr. White the Council has appointed Dr. R. J. C. Harris.

In January last Mr. E. J. G. Titterington was killed in a road accident—a sudden and tragic loss to the Institute of one, who as Honorary Secretary, was untiring in his services. He kept in the closest touch with all that was done and spared no effort to ensure that the Institute's programme went through smoothly each session. More than that he was, of course, a considerable contributor to the Institute's transactions both in wise comments on the papers of others and as an enthusiastic writer of papers himself.

The Council also regrets to announce the death of Dr. H. S. Curr, a Vice-President, and of Mr. Douglas Dewar, a former member of Council, both of whom served the Institute with great faithfulness for many years; and the retirement through illness of Mr. E. W. Crabb. The Council trusts that he will enjoy a very speedy return to full health.

Unfortunately this does not make up the total of our vicissitudes this year. Professor F. F. Bruce, the Hon. Editor of our Transactions, has also proffered his resignation. In accepting with great regret the Council is mindful of the distinction which Professor Bruce has brought to this post and of the time, the care and the attention which he has always given to it—time which the Council realizes he no longer has at his disposal. The Institute cannot award honorary degrees to its distinguished men and the Council wishes to congratulate Professor Bruce on the honour which Aberdeen University has bestowed upon him.

Our Assistant Secretary Mrs. Hargreaves, gave up her post last year and we were very sorry to lose her. In her stead the Council appointed Mr. T. C. Burtenshaw. He came at a difficult period in our history and, even in so short a time, he has proved himself a tower of strength in the office.

Despite the set-backs our programme for the session has been completed. Last year we took action to advertise the activities of the Institute more widely by making ourselves known to the readers of two of the better-known weekly periodicals. This year we have, as it were, taken the Institute to the people. Four of our papers, including the one which we are presently to hear, have been read in University centres, the first in Oxford, the second here in King's College, London, the third, in Cambridge, and the fourth, in King's.

The meetings at Oxford and Cambridge were particularly well attended and the Council is grateful to all those who helped to make them known there. This experiment appears to be worth repeating at other University centres because it is there that we shall find, in greatest concentration, the thoughtful men and women towards whom the Institute must look for its future, and for whom it should have the more to offer.

In view of the reorganization necessitated by the deaths and resignations of Council members this year, Council does not wish any of its surviving members to retire in accordance with the usual practice. The appointments to the offices of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Editor have not yet been fully considered and Council would value your prayers for its guidance in these important decisions. Meanwhile we still have our valued Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Francis Stunt, and I would like to call upon him now to give us his Financial Report.

## 2. Meetings

Seven Ordinary Meetings were held during the Session, in addition to the Annual General Meeting and Annual Address.

“Reflections on Law—Natural, Divine and Positive,” by  
PROFESSOR J. N. D. ANDERSON, O.B.E., M.A., LL.D.

Henry S. Ruttle, Esq., LL.D., in the Chair.

“The Presentation of the Christian Gospel, and its impact  
on the Individual to-day,” (Schofield Memorial Prize  
Essay), by JACK HANNAH, Esq.

Rev. John A. Caiger in the Chair.

“Contemporary British Philosophy and Christian Belief,”  
by MICHAEL FOSTER, Esq., M.A.

Professor C. A. Coulson, F.R.S., in the Chair.

“Science and Christian Apologetic,” by DOUGLAS C. SPANNER,  
Esq., A.R.C.S., Ph.D., D.I.C.

R. L. F. Boyd, Esq., A.C.G.I., Ph.D., in the Chair.

“The Influence of Science on Ideas of the Universe,” by  
C. D. CURLING, Esq., M.A.

Professor H. Dingle, D.Sc., in the Chair.

“The Transmission of the New Testament and its Reliability,”  
by PROFESSOR G. D. KILPATRICK, D.D.

Professor F. F. Bruce, M.A., in the Chair.

“Psychology and Religion—A Retrospect and Prospect,” by  
MALCOLM JEEVES, Esq., M.A.

Dr. A. P. Waterson, M.D., in the Chair.

Annual Address—“Heaven in the Hebrew Tradition,” by  
REV. U. E. SIMON, M.Th., F.K.C.

Dr. R. J. C. Harris, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., in the Chair.

## 3. Council and Officers

The following is a list of the Council and Officers for the year  
1955:—

### President

### Vice-Presidents

Professor J. N. D. Anderson, O.B.E., M.A., LL.D.

The Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

The Rt. Rev. H. R. Gough, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., H.C.F. (Bishop of  
Barking).

Professor Malcolm Guthrie, Ph.D., B.Sc., A.R.S.M.



**Trustees**

Ernest White, M.B., B.S.

Francis F. Stunt, LL.B.

E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A.

**Council***(In Order of Original Election)*

Douglas Dewar, B.A., F.Z.S.	W. E. Filmer, B.A., F.Z.S.
Robert E. D. Clark, M.A., Ph.D.	D. J. Wiseman, O.B.E., M.A., A.K.C.
Ernest White, M.B., B.S.	Professor F. F. Bruce, M.A.
Rev. C. T. Cook, D.D.	E. W. Crabb, Dip.Litt., Dip.Th.
Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A.	Gordon E. Barnes, M.A.
E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A.	D. M. MacKay, B.Sc., Ph.D.
R. J. C. Harris, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D. (Chairman of Council).	Rev. H. L. Ellison, B.A., B.D.
Francis F Stunt, LL.B.	

**Honorary Officers**Francis F. Stunt, LL.B., *Treasurer.*Professor F. F. Bruce, M.A., *Editor.*E. J. G. Titterington, M.B.E., M.A., *Secretary.***Auditor**G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., A.C.I.I., *Incorporated Accountant.**Assistant Secretary*

Mrs. L. I. Hargreaves

**4. Election of Officers**

A. H. Boulton, Esq., LL.B., was re-elected to membership of the Council.

G. Metcalfe Collier, Esq., F.S.A.A., Incorporated Accountant, of the firm of Metcalfe Collier, Hayward and Blake, offers (and is nominated by the Council) for re-election as Auditor for the ensuing year, at a fee of ten guineas.

**5. Obituary**

The Council regret to announce the following deaths:—

Dr. H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.; G. H. Carter, Esq.; D. Dewar, Esq., B.A., F.Z.S.; Rev. L. Sale-Harrison, B.D., D.D., F.R.G.S.; Rev. H. R. A. Philp, M.B., Ch.B.; E. J. G. Titterington, Esq., M.B.E., M.A.; Rev. G. I. Thomas; C. J. Young, Esq.

## 6. *New Fellows, Members and Associates*

The following are the names of new Fellows, Members and Associates elected in 1955:—

**FELLOWS:** Rev. R. E. Ashmore; Rev. A. L. Blomerley, M.Th.; M. L. Bufton, Esq., B.A., F.R.G.S.; Rev. William Coombs; Rev. D. Warren Campbell, B.A.; Rev. H. Carter; Rev. Prof. D. E. Demaray, B.D., Ph.D.; Rev. J. A. Howell; Rev. Dr. H. L. Leu, B.A., M.Th., D.D.; W. G. C. Murdoch, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.; D. F. Osborne, F.B.S.C., F.R.Econ.S.; Rev. P. Royston-Bishop, F.I.E.C.; Dr. D. C. Spanner, Ph.D., A.R.C.S., D.I.C.

**MEMBERS:** Dr. D. P. Belgrave, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.; J. R. Blair, Esq.; S. S. Brown, Esq., B.Sc.; Rev. E. L. Clark, B.D., M.A.; S. F. Dawney, Esq.; Capt. W. A. Ewbank, M.C., B.Sc.; M. R. Gourlay, Esq., B.Sc., B.E.; T. Hock Heng, Esq., B.Sc.; D. H. Jones, Esq. (from Associate); M. J. Keatley, Esq., B.A.; Herr J. L. B. Krook; Dr. Oon T. Khoo, M.D., M.R.C.P.; Prof. G. Irwin Lehman, B.S., B.D., S.T.M., F.R.G.S.; A. M. Klaus Muller, Dipl.-Phys.; Dr. Siew-Kheng Oh, (from Associate); Mrs. E. M. Purkis; A. J. R. Penny, Esq., M.A.; H. J. Smith-Boyes, Esq., F.R.I.C.S., M.T.P.I.; Rev. R. Jim Seibert, B.A. (from Associate); Mrs. Vera Vere, B.Sc.; G. H. Young, Esq.

**ASSOCIATES:** K. C. Austin, Esq.; R. J. Berry, Esq., R. S. Cherry, Esq., B.Sc.; P. T. Chapman, Esq.; Rev. W. L. Duewel, A.B., Th.B., M.Ed., Ed.D.; S. N. Downs, Esq., M.A.; S. R. Moulton, Esq., B.Sc.; D. B. Wilkinson, Esq.; T. J. C. West, Esq.

**LIBRARY ASSOCIATES:** Christian Sanatorium Library, Wyckoff, N.J., U.S.A.; Medical Society of the County of Kings, Brooklyn, N.Y.

## 7. *Membership*

Life Fellows .. .. .	18
Annual Fellows .. .. .	125
Life Members .. .. .	30
Annual Members .. .. .	233
Associates .. .. .	41
Library Associates .. .. .	62
<b>Total Nominal Membership .. .. .</b>	<b>509</b>

Forty new Fellows and others were elected during the year and there were eight deaths and twelve resignations.

## 8. *Donations*

W. E. Filmer, Esq., £35; Dr. Siew-Kheng, £6 8s. 6d.; Rev. S. M. Robinson, £4 18s. 3d.; Dr. B. P. Sutherland, £4 6s. 4d.; R. Hodgkin, Esq., £3; P. S. Henman, Esq., £1 17s.; Prof. W. Broomall, £1 13s. 11d.; H. Dana Taylor, Esq., £1 7s.; J. B. Henderson, Esq., £1 1s.; Rev. A. L. Blomerley, £1 1s.; E. E. Oakes, Esq., £1 1s.; Dr. J. W. Wenham, 10s.; Total, £62 3s.

R. J. C. HARRIS.  
*Chairman.*

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER, 1956

9 months to 30.9.55	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	9 months to 30.9.55	INCOME	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
£	PAPER, LECTURES, ETC.							£	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:—							
477	Printing: Transactions, 1954 .. ..	218	11	4				360	Fellows .. .. .	367	16	1				
	Transactions, 1955 .. .. .	247	12	6				473	Members .. .. .	460	11	3				
	Reprints .. .. .	55	2	6				36	Associates .. .. .	35	9	4				
					521	6	4	63	Library Associates .. .. .	61	11	10				
12	Lecturers' Expenses .. .. .					8	1						925	8	6	
14	Hire of Halls .. .. .					20	10	0								
									LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS:—							
503					549	17	8		14	Proportion for the year .. .. .				41	5	6
	ADMINISTRATION							86	Sales of Publications .. .. .				85	8	6	
163	Salaries and National Insurance .. ..	228	1	1					DONATIONS:—							
10	Rent .. .. .	13	0	0				17	Casual .. .. .	34	3	11				
19	Rates .. .. .	31	7	6				61	Covenanted (gross) .. .. .	60	17	6				
12	Lighting and Heating .. .. .	14	16	6									95	1	5	
11	Cleaning .. .. .	14	13	6					DIVIDENDS RECEIVED:—							
					301	18	7		7	Craig Memorial Fund .. .. .	13	3	4			
--	Duplicating and Reporting .. .. .	26	13	1				--	General Fund .. .. .	2	3	9				
11	Telephone .. .. .	24	3	2									15	7	1	
--	Addressing Company's Services .. ..	42	15	11												
21	Stationery and Advertising .. .. .	33	18	4												
--	Printing (other than Transactions) ..	56	12	6												
--	Old Volumes .. .. .	10	10	0												
--	Insurance .. .. .	1	0	0												
1	Bank Charges and Cheque Books .. ..	3	13	2												
10	Audit Fee .. .. .	10	10	0												
48	Postages .. .. .	65	14	9												
--	Sundry Expenses .. .. .	4	16	11												
					280	7	10									
809																
					£1,132	4	1									
308	Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year .. .. .					30	6	11								
					£1,162	11	0						£1,162	11	0	
					£1,117								£1,117			

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PRIZE FUNDS

EXPENSES OF SYMPOSIUM—charged to			
Langhorne Orchard Trust .. ..		18	11 0
BALANCES as at 30.9.56			
Gunning Trust .. ..	111	13	0
Langhorne Orchard Trust .. ..	54	18	7
Schofield Memorial Trust .. ..	71	13	6
		<u>238</u>	<u>5 1</u>
		<u>£256</u>	<u>16 1</u>

AMOUNTS IN HAND at 1st October, 1955:—			
Gunning Trust .. ..	84	8	4
Langhorne Orchard Trust .. ..	62	11	8
Schofield Memorial Trust .. ..	59	16	11
		<u>206</u>	<u>16 11</u>
INCOME:—			
Gunning Trust .. ..	27	4	8
Langhorne Orchard Trust .. ..	10	17	11
Schofield Memorial Trust .. ..	11	16	7
		<u>49</u>	<u>19 2</u>
		<u>£256</u>	<u>16 1</u>

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CASH BALANCES

LIFE COMPOSITIONS FUND .. ..	574	18	6
		<u>574</u>	<u>18 6</u>

BALANCE AT BANK: General Account ..		124	8 8
BALANCE IN HAND: Postage Float ..	4	16	10
Cash.. ..	4	1	3
		<u>8</u>	<u>18 1</u>
GENERAL FUND OVERDRAWN .. ..		441	11 9
		<u>£574</u>	<u>18 6</u>

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1956

30.9.55	LIABILITIES	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	30.9.55	ASSETS	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£				£			
	GENERAL FUND:—				GENERAL FUND:—		
13	Prepaid Subscriptions: Fellows ..	3 3 0		55	Subscriptions in Arrear:		
8	Members ..	14 14 0		74	Fellows .. .. .	53 11 0	
1	Associates ..	2 12 6		8	Members .. .. .	78 12 0	
1	Library Associates 3 3 0 ..			17	Associates .. .. .	9 9 0	
			23 12 6		Library Associates .. .. .	— — —	141 12 0
70	Loan: W. E. Filmer, Esq. .. .. .		35 0 0	—	General Fund Investment: £253 3%		
11	Sundry Creditors: Audit Fee .. ..	10 10 0			British Transport Stock at cost ..		200 0 0
—	Other Expenses .. .. .	7 10 7		14	Office Equipment as at 1.10.55 ..	14 0 0	
			18 0 7		Additions Typewriter at cost ..	30 10 0	44 10 0
275	Cash overdrawn on General Fund ..		441 11 9	78	Sundry Debtors .. .. .		29 15 0
					Deficit on General Fund as at 1.10.55	132 14 1	
379			518 4 10		Less Excess of Income over Expenditure		
	SPECIAL FUNDS			133	for the year .. .. .	30 6 11	102 7 2
616	Life Compositions Fund .. .. .		574 18 6				518 4 10
508	Gunning Trust .. .. .		508 0 0		SPECIAL FUNDS:—		
200	Langhorne Orchard Trust .. .. .		200 0 0	616	Life Compositions Fund (cash) ..		574 18 6
220	Schofield Memorial Trust .. .. .		220 0 0	508	Gunning Trust: £673 3½% Conversion		
400	Craig Memorial Trust .. .. .		400 0 0		Stock at cost .. .. .	508 0 0	
207	Prize Fund .. .. .		238 5 1	200	Langhorne Orchard Trust: £258 10s.		
					3½% Conversion Stock at cost ..	200 0 0	
				220	Schofield Memorial Trust: £378 14s. 6d.		
					2½% Consols at cost .. .. .	220 0 0	
				400	Craig Memorial Trust: £376 7s. 4d.		
					3½% War Stock at cost .. .. .	400 0 0	
				207	Prize Fund:		
					Balance on Deposit Account ..	38 5 1	
					£213 14s. 6d. 4½% British Electricity		
					Stock at cost .. .. .	200 0 0	
							238 5 1
<u>£2,530</u>			<u>£2,659 8 5</u>	<u>£2,530</u>			<u>£2,659 8 5</u>

We have audited the accounts, of which the foregoing is the Balance Sheet, and have obtained all the information and explanations which we have required. Stocks of publications are held which do not appear in the Balance Sheet; subject to this, in our opinion the Balance Sheet shows a true and fair view of the affairs of the Victoria Institute, and is correct according to the books and records of the Institute, and the information and explanations given to us.

15th November, 1956.

199 Piccadilly, London, W. 1.

(Signed) A. C. BLAKE,  
Chartered Accountant

940<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 1956

---

HENRY S. RUTTLE, Esq., LL.D. in the Chair.

---

**REFLECTIONS ON LAW—NATURAL,  
DIVINE AND POSITIVE**

By

PROFESSOR J. N. D ANDERSON, O.B.E., M.A., LL.D.

---

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# REFLECTIONS ON LAW—NATURAL, DIVINE AND POSITIVE

BY PROFESSOR J. N. D. ANDERSON, O.B.E., M.A., LL.D.

## SYNOPSIS

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Legal developments in many different countries to-day forcibly remind us of the medieval classification of law as natural, divine and positive—with its inherent recognition of a transcendent law to which positive law ought always to approximate.

This attitude seems strangely alien to most modern theories of jurisprudence, especially in Britain and America. Yet none of these theories, on examination, prove wholly adequate; and a return to the recognition of certain ultimate values is overdue.

The long history of the theory of natural law in the West reveals that concept as undergoing many transformations. Yet in some of these it remains basic to much of the law of the Western World, and is to-day receiving a new emphasis.

A brief examination of the Chinese, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim theories of law discloses many points of similarity. And even in the customary law of tribal Africa the same basic concepts emerge.

It seems clear, then, that the idea of a transcendent law, whether expressly enjoined by the Creator or inherent in His creation, represents a conviction which is in some sense common to mankind.

It is also interesting to observe the prominent, and even somewhat equivocal, part which is being played by some of these concepts in contemporary developments in Asia and Africa—e.g. in India, where the Fundamental Rights (natural law) sometimes come into conflict with “revealed” religion; in the Middle East, where the concepts of divine law and positive law are in competition; or in Pakistan, where a similar conflict is imminent. And the attitude of mind of those Muslims and Hindus who face these problems, intellectual and moral, is itself instructive.

Nor can the Christian lawyer conclude such a reverie without some consideration of the attitude which he must himself take to this whole question of law—divine, natural and positive.

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Legal developments which are taking place before our eyes to-day in many different countries—in India and Pakistan, for instance, or in the Near and Middle East, or even in Malaya, Indonesia and parts of Africa—inevitably call to mind the mediaeval classification of law as natural, divine and positive. Not, indeed, that the content of this three-fold division was ever regarded as mutually exclusive. For “natural law”

was thereby conceived as divine law deducible, or actually deduced, by natural reason, as inherent in the nature of man and of human society; "Divine Law" was the term used, in this context, for the law of God as inculcated by the precepts of revealed religion; and "Positive Law" represented the legal system applied by the courts of any, or every, national State. Thus all natural law was necessarily divine, and some divine law was also positive. By some the precepts of revealed religion were regarded as vouchsafed to correct and amplify the deductions of natural reason, while what reason established as natural law was taken by others as a criterion to test the validity of propositions for which claims were made to special revelation.<sup>1</sup> Both, however, stood together, over against positive law, as the ideal of which the latter was, at its best, only an imperfect transcript and, at its worst, an impious distortion; for it was by this ideal law that positive law must always be judged, and to it that it must ever seek to approximate.

Any such conception seems exotic and unrealistic in the light of most contemporary speculations in jurisprudence, especially in Britain and America. Here the existence, character and content of divine law are usually regarded as exclusively the concern of the theologian, while the theory of natural law has commonly been relegated to the spheres of the moralist or historian; the current debate about the nature of law has tended to be pursued, by lawyers, on a very different level.

The analytical jurists, for example, lay a primary emphasis on the total exclusion of any abstract, ideal concepts from the study of law and concentrate on examining the structure of some actual legal system by means of logical analysis. Such is the attitude of the "Imperative School", typified by Austin, whose view may be summarized in his assertion that "The matter of jurisprudence is positive law: law, simply and strictly so called: or law set by political superiors to political inferiors".<sup>2</sup> To Austin all law, properly so called, represents, in the final analysis, the command of a sovereign power. But the analytical jurists also include writers like Kelsen, with his "pure theory of law": for he, like Austin, confines the province of jurisprudence to law as it is, not as it should be; he, like Austin, seeks to free the law "from the metaphysical mists with which it has been covered at all times by the speculations on justice or by the doctrine of *ius naturalae*,"<sup>3</sup> and proceeds to analyse it with the aid of logic alone; but, unlike Austin, he does not regard law as the command of a sovereign but as a system or hierarchy of norms which

<sup>1</sup> Cp. F. Pollock, *Essays in the Law*, London, 1922, 42-4.

<sup>2</sup> J. Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*, London, 1954 edition, 9.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kelsen, "The Function of the Pure Theory of Law," in *Law: A Century of Progress*, New York, 1937, II, 237.



prescribe what always *ought* to happen in given circumstances<sup>1</sup>—all resting, in the final analysis, on the “basic norm” of the “first” constitution of the state concerned.<sup>2</sup>

Against any such logical abstraction the historical jurists react strongly. To them the basic question is how the law has in fact come to be. It is determined, Savigny affirmed, by a nation’s peculiar history and character, and cannot be changed arbitrarily. “Like language, manners and constitution, law has no separate existence, but is a simple function or facet of the whole life of the nation. In early times the common conviction of the people is the origin of the law. But with the development of civilization the making of law, like every other activity, becomes a distinct function, and is now exercised by the legal profession”. So law “arises from silent, anonymous forces, which are not directed by arbitrary and conscious intention, but operate in the way of customary law”.<sup>3</sup> This attitude can easily develop, of course, into Hegel’s view that the national State is “the actuality of the substantial will” which is “an absolute and unmoved end in itself” and “has supreme right against the individual”.<sup>4</sup> And from such an attitude the Western world has already suffered—and is still suffering—grievous wounds, as Rosenberg’s phrase “Law is what the Aryan man considers as law; non-law is what the Aryan man rejects”<sup>5</sup> eloquently testifies, or the Communist thesis that “Law is a system (or order) of social relationships which corresponds to the interests of the dominant class and is safeguarded by the organized force of that class”.<sup>6</sup>

A similar insistence that it is utterly unrealistic to attempt to analyse law in a vacuum is found among the sociological jurists, but with a certain difference of emphasis. To them the paramount consideration is not so much the history of the law as the mutual influence of law and society. Thus the primary unit is not the individual but the social group, for the individual “is never actually an isolated individual; he is enrolled, placed, embedded, wedged, into so many associations that existence outside of these would be unendurable.” Similarly the law “does not consist of legal propositions, but of legal institutions. In order to be able to state the sources of the law one must be able to tell how the State, the Church, the commune, the family, the contract, the inheritance came into being, how they change and develop”.<sup>7</sup> Where, then, the first concern of

<sup>1</sup> H. Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and the State*, Cambridge, Mass., 1949, 123 ff and 153.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, 115 f.

<sup>3</sup> Kantorowicz, “Savigny and the Historical School of Law,” in 53 *L.Q.R.* (1937), at 332 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox, Oxford, 1942, 155 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Hughes, *Jurisprudence*, London, 1955, 10; also J. W. Jones, *The Nazi Conception of Law*, in Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, especially 12–16.

<sup>6</sup> H. Kelsen, *Soviet Legal Philosophy*, London, 1955, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Erlich, as quoted by Hughes, *Jurisprudence*, at 127 f. Cp. Erlich, *Fundamenta Principles of the Sociology of Law*, translated by W. L. Moll, Cambridge, Mass., 1936 474 f.

the historical jurists is the integrity of history, the insistence of the sociologists is on the integrity of society and its institutions.

This thesis is in part accepted by the American "realist" school of jurists, but in part only. They direct their attention almost exclusively to the legal institutions as such, and emphasize the uncertainty and the arbitrary element which these institutions inevitably embody. Their attitude can be summarized in the famous dictum of Judge Holmes: "The prophecies of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more pre-tentious, are what I mean by law"; or, again, in the words of Professor Llewellyn: "The doing of something about disputes, the doing of it reasonably, is the business of the law. And the people who have the doing in charge, whether they be judges or sheriffs or clerks or jailers or lawyers, are officials of the law. What these officials do about disputes is, to my mind, the law itself."<sup>1</sup> But besides these American jurists, the term "realist" may also be applied to a group of Swedish thinkers, whose approach is much more philosophical. Thus Olivecrona is of the opinion that "The 'binding force' of the law is a reality merely as an idea in human minds. There is nothing in the outside world which corresponds to this idea."<sup>2</sup> The idea, indeed, even fulfils a "dangerous, reactionary and obscurantist function. It suggests to the human mind that law is something standing outside and above the facts of social life, that law has an independent validity of its own which is not man-made, that it has a realm of its own outside the world of cause and effect. . . . The reality is that law is made by men, that it exerts pressure on men, on the public and on policemen and on judges; it is therefore a most potent influence on conduct, but only in the natural realm of cause and effect."<sup>3</sup>

But a growing body of "teleological" jurists regard all these theories as inadequate. It is essential, they emphasize, to consider the ends and purposes of law in a much more radical way. An answer must be found somewhere to the basic problem of the intrinsic validity of law. To the analytical school the primary question is one of purely formal validity. So, to take an extreme example, if a formally correct legislative enactment were to give a dictator the power to issue any edicts he saw fit, and if he, in turn, were to issue edicts, in the proper form, making incest lawful and infanticide obligatory, these edicts would satisfy all the demands of valid law. To the realist the same would, presumably, be true if such were in fact the decision of the courts or the effect of such edicts on the public and its appropriate officials. But no such attitude will satisfy the teleological school. Law, they emphasize, must always remain intimately related to justice and morality, and some attempt must be made to find an absolute criterion by which positive law may be judged.<sup>4</sup> It is clear, then, that to

<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn, *The Bramble Bush*, New York, 1951, 12.

<sup>2</sup> K. Olivecrona, *Law as Fact*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, *Jurisprudence*, 162.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Paton, *Jurisprudence*, Oxford, 1951, 27.

some the wheel has turned almost its full circle, and the way is again open for a new approach to a consideration of the classifications of the past.<sup>1</sup>

That the customs and laws of primitive peoples, in the West as well as in the East,<sup>2</sup> were regarded as emanating from a divine origin, scarcely needs elaboration. This can be shown to be true, for example, of the Greeks, the Romans and the Germans.<sup>3</sup> Thus the concept of divine law can be traced right back to antiquity. The doctrine of natural law in any articulate form, on the other hand, seems to demand a considerable degree of philosophic thought.<sup>4</sup> It is not surprising, then, that it first emerged, in the West, among the Greeks. It can there be traced back at least as far as Heraclitus of Ephesus, who taught that "Wisdom is the foremost virtue, and wisdom consists in speaking the truth and in lending an ear to nature and acting according to her. Wisdom is common to all. . . . They who would speak with intelligence must hold fast to the (wisdom that is) common to all, as a city holds fast to its law, and even more strongly. For all human laws are fed by one divine law."<sup>5</sup> Thus the doctrine emanated, in Heraclitus, from a conservative attitude of mind, which found in the transcendent law the ethical foundation for the binding force of positive law. But very soon the same basic concept was used by the Sophists for radical and even revolutionary purposes; for they emphasized the discrepancies between the positive laws of the Greek city-states and the basic moral law which alone had any inherent value, and were the first to stress what came to be regarded as the natural rights of men.<sup>6</sup> And while the Sophists' views developed, among the Epicureans, into scepticism and what Rommen has described as the first legal positivism, the teaching of Heraclitus was elaborated by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, each in his own distinctive fashion, and handed on to the Stoics,<sup>7</sup> whose view may be summarized in the statement of Cicero: "True

<sup>1</sup> Thus Professor J. L. Montrose has recently remarked that "In the realm of legal philosophy natural law is once again busily employed in burying its undertakers. . . . Outside the United Kingdom the signs are not that the tide is at the turn, but that the return of natural law is a flooding full tide" (*Political Studies*, III, 3, Oct. 1955, 212).

<sup>2</sup> See below.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. in this context H. A. Rommen, *The Natural Law*, trans. by T. R. Hanley, St. Louis, Mo., 4th printing, 1955, 3 and 4.

<sup>4</sup> It is quite unnecessary, however, to explain this—as is so often attempted—by the hypothesis that the conviction gradually gained ground that "the tribal deities are not the ultimate form of the religious background of reality. For if an eternal, immutable law obliges men to obey particular laws, behind the popular images of tribal deities exists an eternal, all-wise Lawgiver who has the power to bind and to loose". (Rommen, *The Natural Law*, 4 and 5). On the contrary, the same basic conclusion could even more naturally have been reached by peoples who still retained a faint memory of a monotheism they had once known but had largely forsaken, as St. Paul asserts was in fact the case. (Romans 1: 18–32).

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Rommen, op. cit. at 6, from Fragments 112–14, in C. M. Batewell, *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy*.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, 8–11. Thus Alcidas asserted that "God made all men free; nature has made no man a slave".

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–26. The Stoics also, however, took over some of the views of the more moderate Sophists (e.g. natural rights), and handed them on to the Roman jurists.

law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. . . . It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. . . . And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens . . . but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and one ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge".<sup>1</sup> It was in this way, and under the influence of Stoic philosophy, that the doctrine of natural law may be said to have entered Roman law; for not only did the idea of *ius naturale* underlie that *aequitas* which came, in the hands of the praetors, to replace much of the ancient law, but the same idea can also be found in the *Institutes* of Gaius and the *Corpus Juris* of Justinian, where the emphasis passes over from the contrast between the eternal law and the dictates of men to the distinction between the law common to all nations (*ius gentium*) as corresponding to the basic requirements of humanity—and the law peculiar to the Romans as such (*ius civile*).<sup>2</sup>

The next major development was for the concept of natural law to be reinterpreted by the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup> In the hands of the Canonists it was sometimes identified with divine law in contra-distinction to customary law, as in Gratian's *Decretum*: "Mankind is ruled by two laws: Natural Law and Custom. Natural Law is that which is contained in the Scriptures and the Gospel." And this law must necessarily prevail over every rival, for "Whatever has been recognized by usage, or laid down in writing, if it contradicts natural law, must be considered null and void".<sup>4</sup> It was, moreover, regarded as essentially inherent in human nature; although a distinction was made between a primary natural law, applicable to a state of innocence, and a secondary natural law, applicable to human nature since the Fall.<sup>5</sup> But it was with the Scholastics, and particularly Thomas Aquinas, that the idea attained its full systematization. To Aquinas, natural law was not merely the "eternal law" as contained in the Scriptures and the Gospel but, more specifically, the participation in the eternal law by rational creatures, who "have a certain share in the divine reason itself, deriving therefrom a natural inclination to such actions and ends as are fitting. . . . As though the light of natural reason, by which we discern good from evil, and which is the Natural law,

<sup>1</sup> *The Republic*, III, xxii, 33, trans. by C. W. Keyes.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, London, 1951, 24-31. The term *ius gentium* was at times used in a theoretical sense, approximating to *ius naturæ* (Cp. Gaius, who identified the two terms); but more often it was used in a practical sense, of the law applicable to non-citizens.

<sup>3</sup> Where the deistic views of the Greeks and Romans were at once replaced by the personal Creator God.

<sup>4</sup> d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, 33 f. (Cp. *Decretum Gratiani* I, v, 1, para 1.).

<sup>5</sup> Rommen, *The Natural Law*, 36-8. The distinction between a primary and secondary law of nature had been made by the Stoics, but not with this theological connotation.

were nothing else than the impression of the divine light in us". This is because "Grace does not abolish Nature but perfects it", and because Revelation similarly perfects Reason. Again, "St. Augustine says: 'There is no law unless it be just'. So the validity of law depends upon its justice. But in human affairs a thing is said to be just when it accords aright with the rule of reason: and . . . the first rule of reason is the Natural law. . . . And if a human law is at variance in any particular with the Natural law, it is no longer legal, but rather a corruption of law".<sup>1</sup> In the Reformed theology, with its insistent emphasis on the "total depravity" of human nature since the Fall, the place accorded to natural reason by the Schoolmen was, indeed, taken (in part) by the doctrine of "common grace": but the result, in the present context, was not substantially different.<sup>2</sup> And in England the influence of Hooker tended to preserve the doctrine of the Schoolmen, for he taught that man always had knowledge of "Law Rational", that is, "the law which human nature knoweth itself in reason universal bound thereto" and which embraces "all those things which men by the light of their natural understanding evidently know (or at leastwise may know) to be beseeing or unbeseeing, virtuous or vicious, good or evil for them to do."<sup>3</sup>

In the hands of Grotius the Arminian and, still more, in the hands of the rationalists of the succeeding centuries the idea underwent a further change—back, in effect, to an attitude adumbrated by the Sophists.<sup>4</sup> Grotius himself put forward, as no more than a theoretical abstraction, the thesis that natural law would be valid even if there were no God or the affairs of man were no concern to Him.<sup>5</sup> But to many of his successors this was much more than a theoretical assumption. The whole concept, moreover, changed from a theory of natural law to a theory of natural rights, with a primary emphasis on the individual. The focal point was not the natural law of God which men could, in part, comprehend but the inherent and "sacred" rights of man.<sup>6</sup> It was thus that the Virginian Declaration of Rights, 1776, asserted that all men had "certain inherent rights"; it was thus that the American Declaration of Independence

<sup>1</sup> *Summa theologica*, as quoted by d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, at 39–43.

<sup>2</sup> For the idea of a law "written on the heart" was thoroughly Biblical: cp. Romans 2: 12–16. What the Reformers denied was that "the order of the precepts of the natural law" was, since the Fall, "according to the order of natural inclinations", or that man now has "a natural inclination to know the truth about God" and can trust his own natural reason (Cp. *Summa theologica*, as quoted in Rommen, *The Natural Law*, 49).

<sup>3</sup> *Social and Political Ideas of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, London, 1926, 73 (chapter by Prof. N. Sykes).

<sup>4</sup> See above, and cp. Rommen, *The Natural Law*, 10 and 11.

<sup>5</sup> *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*, Prolegomena, para. 11, as quoted by d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, at 52.

<sup>6</sup> Another characteristic of natural law as developed by thinkers of the Enlightenment was the belief that human reason could evolve a complete system of this law down to the most minute details.

<sup>7</sup> J. W. Jones, *Historical Introduction to the Theory of Law*, Oxford, 1940, 119.

declared that men are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" which are "self-evident"; and it was thus that the French National Assembly "resolved to lay down, in a solemn Declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred Rights of Man."<sup>1</sup>

Not many years ago even this, however, would have sounded somewhat of an echo of a by-gone day. But such ideas have recently gained a new lease of life by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris. In large part, no doubt, such declarations can be dismissed by lawyers as 'ideological programmes or metaphysical ideals'. But even in the common law the idea of natural law, in some of its connotations, has always survived, as Pollock reminds us, "under the name of reason, reasonableness, or sometimes natural justice . . . but the difference of terminology has tended to conceal the real similarity from English lawyers during the last century or more."<sup>2</sup> It is in the theory of the law of nature, too, that Pollock finds the "origin both of the maxim, still received, that a custom cannot be good if it is contrary to reason, and of the doctrine—now rejected, but current . . . down to the eighteenth century—that a statute may be held void for being repugnant to reason or 'common right'."<sup>3</sup> It is on this concept, again, but in rather different connotations, that both the validity of the law merchant has been held to be based<sup>4</sup> and the foundations of modern International Law have been built—for this law has been considered to be "founded upon justice, equity, convenience, and the reason of the thing, and confirmed by long usage."<sup>5</sup> It is in part, moreover, in the validity of this basic concept that the justification for the Nuremberg trials must be found; for such, as d'Entrèves has pointed out, is the origin of the assertion "So far from it being unjust to punish him, it would be unjust if his wrong were to go unpunished", and of the rejection of the defence of superior orders.<sup>6</sup> Somewhat similarly, the French

<sup>1</sup> d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, 48 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock, *Essays in the Law*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, 42. For a discussion of the idea of "fundamental law" in English legal history, cp., *inter alia*, J. W. Gough, *Fundamental Law in English Constitutional History*. And Mr. R. O'Sullivan, Q.C., has argued persuasively "that the law of nature was throughout the creative centuries of the common law a familiar idea and a guiding principle among lawyers and judges, and that it may even be said to be the source or spring of the common law as it was conceived and developed by Bracton and Fortescue and Littleton, and Thomas More and Christopher St. Germain and Coke and Holt, and even by Blackstone"; while he also emphasizes both the "identity of meaning and use between the law of nature of the canonists and the law of reason of the common lawyers" and the vital role played throughout long periods of English legal history by the "concept of a universal law of nature, that is superior to Pope and Prince and Parliament". ("Natural Law and Common Law," *The Grotius Society*, 1946, 119, 129 and 138).

<sup>4</sup> Sir John Davis, *Concerning Impositions*, as quoted by Pollock, *Essays in the Law*, at 55.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Silesian Loan Case (opinion of English law officers), quoted by Pollock, *ibid.*, at 64.

<sup>6</sup> *Natural Law*, 110.

Civil Code makes it incumbent on a judge who can find no relevant provision to rely on the principles of natural equity in reaching a decision. As for the concept of divine law, it comes as somewhat of a shock to the modern lawyer to read the dictum of Chief Justice Bert, in 1828, that "There is no act which Christianity forbids that the law will not reach: if it were otherwise, Christianity would not be, as it has always been held to be, part of the law of England."<sup>1</sup> This, it can confidently be asserted, was an outrageous overstatement; but the influence of the Christian religion on the common law and statute law of England is still not far to seek, while it was only as recently as 1917 that the Lord Chancellor, in his dissenting judgement in the House of Lords in the famous case of *Bowman v. The Secular Society Ltd.*, could say that it had been "repeatedly laid down by the Courts that Christianity is part of the law of the land, and it is a fact that our civil polity is to a large extent based upon the Christian religion. . . . (This) is quite sufficient reason for holding that the law will not help endeavours to undermine it."<sup>2</sup> Both natural law and divine law represent, therefore, in Western thought the notion of an eternal justice; "a justice which human authority expresses, or ought to express—but does not make; a justice which human authority may fail to express—and must pay the penalty for failing to express by the diminution, or even the forfeiture, of its power to command. This justice is conceived as being the higher or ultimate law, proceeding from the nature of the universe—from the Being of God and the reason of man. It follows that law—in the sense of the law of the last resort—is somehow above law-making. It follows that lawmakers, after all, are somehow under and subject to the law."<sup>3</sup>

But all this concerns the Western world, and comparatively well-trodden paths. Yet this basic idea is by no means confined to the West. Among the Chinese,<sup>4</sup> for example, a variety of concepts which bear a distinct resemblance to some, at least, of those which have thriven in Europe, lie at the very basis of legal thought. From the earliest times the Chinese believed that Heaven or the heavenly Emperor (*T'ien Ti*) was the ancestor of man, and that the Son of Heaven (*T'ien Tzū*) or the earthly Emperor had the duty of leading mankind to follow the behests of Heaven, chiefly disclosed by oracles. Later, but at least as early as Confucius, the notion developed that Heaven had implanted in men's

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Macmillan, *Law and Other Things*, Cambridge, 1937, 70.

<sup>2</sup> A.C. [1917], 406 ff., at 428.

<sup>3</sup> To borrow words used of natural law alone by Sir Ernest Barker, *Traditions of Civility*, 312-13. It is impracticable, in the scope of this paper, to discuss the views of recent advocates of natural law. The tendency is, however, to give it severely restricted scope and to recognize changing applications.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted, in this outline of Chinese concepts, both to my colleague Mr. H. McAleavy and to the contribution of Hu-Shih to the 1951 *Proceedings of the Natural Law Institute*—from which the quotations have been taken.

breasts a consciousness of its behests, so the road to right conduct lay in self-scrutiny. In the sixth century B.C. Lao-tzu, allegedly the teacher of Confucius, laid great emphasis on the Way (or Law) of Heaven (*T'ien-tao*), which he conceived in terms of man standing aside while Heaven itself worked out its will. This concept was given a new meaning in the fifth century B.C. by Mo-Ti, who taught that the Will of Heaven (*T'ien-chih*) should be the criterion both of moral judgement and human law. "Now I have the Will of God, I shall use it to measure and judge the laws, penalties, and governments of the kings, princes, and grand officers of all states in the world; and I shall use it to measure and judge the words and acts of all the people. Whatever is in accordance with the Will of God is right; whatever is opposed to it is wrong."

Again, in the third century B.C., in the earliest extant commentary on the *Book of Lao-tzŭ*, it is stated that "*Tao* (the way of the law of Heaven or Nature) is that by which all things become what they are; it is that with which all *li* (the law of things) is commensurable. Each of the ten thousand things has its own distinct *li* but the *tao* commensures the *li* of all things." Similarly Mencius, at about the same date, affirmed that "All mouths of men agree in enjoying the same relishes; all ears agree in enjoying the same sounds; all eyes agree in recognizing the same beauty. Is there nothing which all minds agree in affirming to be true? What is it then which all minds recognize to be true? It is *li* (universal law) and *i* (universal right)."

Both in the classical language and in popular parlance, moreover, the terms *Tao-li* (literally the way, or law, of reason) and *T'ien-li* (literally the way, or law, of Heaven) are of frequent occurrence. *T'ien-li*, indeed, was sometimes regarded as interchangeable with *T'ien-tao*; but at other times the latter was used of the universal, immutable law of God or Nature and the former of that law in its manifold manifestations in the universe.

It is noteworthy, however, that the Chinese concept does not stress the natural rights of man as an individual, but insists instead on his duty of proper subjection in his various human relationships. As a result, moreover, of the distinctively Chinese identification of Heaven in its moral or spiritual sense with Heaven in the sense of physical nature, human conduct is regarded as so much part of the natural order that improper behaviour causes such disruption in the rhythm and harmony of the universe as to result in various kinds of natural calamities.

In addition, the canon of sacred Scripture of Confucianism was, until fairly recent times, revered in China as the highest authority in all matters of morals, law, social relations and government policy. Thus these Scriptures represented, to the Chinese, something very close to the concept of divine law: a law to which social reformers and political critics continually appealed, and which the most despotic ruler scarcely dared openly to challenge.



The doctrine outlined above remained the dominant force in China till the end of the Empire. It was modified in part, however, by the opinions of the Legalists, who were especially influential during the fourth to third centuries B.C. and insisted on the necessity for positive law and, in particular, severe penal codes which must be administered with impartial severity. This new emphasis not only played its part in the unification of China under Ch'in Shih Huang in the third century B.C., but gave rise to a whole succession of dynastic penal codes. Yet many provisions of these codes, especially those of a "civil" or "family" nature, seem to have been regarded more as official enunciations of an ideal than as binding enactments; and the pure Confucian doctrine remained throughout in the ascendant.

Among the Hindus<sup>1</sup> somewhat similar ideas were current. Thus the term *Rta*, which is a Vedic expression not used by the classical jurists, is said to include the three meanings of "the course of nature", "the correct and ordered way of the cult of the Gods", and "the moral conduct of man."<sup>2</sup> But the key to the Hindu ideal of life is provided by the term *Dharma*, again of Vedic origin, which is used in classical Sanskrit in the sense of the totality of positive and negative injunctions derivable from the Veda (the source of all knowledge), as interpreted by the prehistoric Sages, applicable to an individual and relating to his sex, age, station in life and civil function. It is also permissible to refer to the sum total of all *dharma*s as *dharma* in the abstract. Thus every human being has his or her own individual *dharma* to practice; and this constitutes what may be termed the God-given law of man's being which, though difficult to discover in its individual application, is yet immutable in its essence—and every transgression of which involves the most serious consequences, in future existences if not also here and now. It is the duty of the king, moreover, to uphold and enforce *dharma*s (or *dharma* in general). In theory he cannot legislate, or his powers of legislation extend only to issuing particular orders in particular cases; instead, it is for him to apply this eternal law, to which he is himself subject.

The doctrine that all civilized peoples have certain institutions and laws in common did not, however, impress the ancient Hindus, because their learning, by definition, came from a particular revelation to which they alone were heirs. Yet reason was certainly called in aid both to elucidate (and thus apply and expand) the sacred sources and to mitigate the untoward effects of a rigid or too literal application of an unequivocal injunction. It is thus that *nyāya* (the science of reasoning) is frequently used to prevent a text being applied without due regard to what amounts to equity or "natural justice".

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted, in this summary of Hindu ideas, to my colleague Dr. J. D. M. Derrett.

<sup>2</sup> By Dr. V. Kane, in *History of Dharmasāstra*, Poona, 1930, IV, 2-5.

Again, the notion of Eternal Right (*sanātana-dharma*) has always been a vital influence in India. Although the concept is, clearly, exceedingly difficult to define or apply with any precision, yet most Indians have always felt that they know the essential difference between what corresponds thereto and what does not. And the ancient courts certainly claimed to apply this notion as it was embedded in the traditional wisdom of their remote Aryan ancestors, distilled through the trained minds of successive generations of professional commentators.

When we turn to the Jews<sup>1</sup> we find that their whole attitude was dominated by the idea of divine law. The Old Testament is full of laws, yet scarcely a law properly so called emanates from king or council. There was only one Lawgiver, and only one Source of the law which governed the community: "The Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Law giver; the Lord is our King."<sup>2</sup> And this fact is emphasized in the very form of many Biblical laws, which frequently end in the refrain "I am the Lord."<sup>3</sup> The Rabbis, moreover, reinforced this attitude when they emphasized that the people of Israel were not the servants of their kings, but of God alone. Thus we read in the Talmud:<sup>4</sup> "To Me are they servants, but they are not servants to other servants."

Yet from an early date the divine law as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures was augmented by a great body of oral law, as developed by generation after generation of pious scholars. In theory, however, this was as much divine law as that written in the Scriptures, for the doctrine prevailed that God had given Moses on Sinai both a written and an oral law. Not only so, but all that was progressively included in this oral law came to be regarded as revealed to Moses himself, for the Talmud says: "Whatever a competent student, in the presence of his teacher, will yet derive from the Law, that was already given to Moses on Mount Sinai."<sup>5</sup> And this oral law, with its age-long development, represents, on the one hand, a massive extension of the Old Testament law by means of human reasoning and argumentation and, on the other, an avoidance of the implications of some of the sacred texts by a process of casuistry. These developments, moreover, were in part facilitated by the distinction which the Rabbis made between those features in the divine law which could not be understood by man but must be implicitly obeyed<sup>6</sup> and those

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted, in these references to Jewish ideas, both to my colleague Mr. I. Wartski and to Rabbi Solomon Freehof's contribution to the 1951 *Proceedings of the Natural Law Institute* (15 ff).

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 33: 22.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Lev. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Kiddushin 22, 2.

<sup>5</sup> j. Megillah IV, 74 d.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. the law concerning the red heifer (Numbers 19). What seems particularly to have mystified the Jews was the fact that, while its ashes served to purify the unclean, yet those concerned with its slaughter, etc., suffered defilement. Thus the relevant section of the *Pesiqta Derav Kahana* states: "But God said: 'A statute have I made, a decree have I decreed, and you are not permitted to transgress them'."

features whose underlying purpose could be apprehended and even extended by analogy.<sup>1</sup>

It might, moreover, be argued that the Old Testament itself includes a doctrine of natural law in the passages in honour of that Wisdom by which "Kings reign, and princes decree justice" and "princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth"; and which was, itself, "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was".<sup>2</sup> But Wisdom, in these passages, seems so manifestly personified as to become the Old Testament equivalent of the New Testament divine Logos.<sup>3</sup>

In the Muslim theory the divine law (the Shari'a) is, again, wholly paramount. It governs every aspect of life and constitutes a complete code of conduct or scheme of duties. Every act of man is classified, according to a widely accepted system, as either commanded, approved, left legally indifferent, disapproved or forbidden by God Himself, Who is regarded as the only Lawgiver. True, it is the duty of the Caliph or Sultan to lead the Muslim community in war and act as its executive in peace; but he is under, not above, the sacred Law and may not meddle in what God has prescribed. It is, at the most, only within the category of acts which are left legally indifferent by the Shari'a that the ruler can properly legislate; and even then the jurists preferred to regard his injunctions as administrative regulations rather than actual legislation.

The sphere of human positive law is, then, completely subordinate, in the Muslim view, to the divine law. Similarly, in the opinion of the most orthodox school of Muslim theologians, there is no place whatever for any concept of natural law; for the Ash'aris denied not only that man's reason is competent to apprehend, of itself, the difference between virtue and vice but even that such qualities as virtue and vice exist *per se*, or have any meaning whatever, apart from divine Revelation. It is true that all Muslim jurists agree that certain qualities, such as justice, enhance a man's prestige, while others, such as oppression, undermine it; that some acts conduce to certain purposes and further their ends, while others do not; and that human reason can perceive and appreciate factors such as these.<sup>4</sup> But the Ash'aris denied that man could, of himself,

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of a "civil" law, based on statutes of the community and applied according to the "dictates of reason", among the Jews of Spain in the fourteenth century A.D., see an article by J. L. Teicher "Laws of Reason and Laws of Religion" in *Essays and Studies Presented to Stanley Arthur Cook*, London, 1950, 83 ff. Teicher suggests that the "dictates of reason" in this context represents the *ius naturale* of Roman law.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 8.

<sup>3</sup> The emphatic insistence on the need for social justice and righteousness which marked the writings of the Prophets is also relevant in this context.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted in these passages to Maḥmūd Abū Daqīqa, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd*, Volume for Third Year Students of Theology at the Azhar, 229 ff.

perceive any quality in human acts which is intrinsically praiseworthy on earth and meritorious in heaven, or which deserves blame on earth and punishment in heaven. More, they denied that there was in fact any essential quality in the acts themselves which made them so. God did not command some things and forbid others because the first were intrinsically good and the second intrinsically evil; on the contrary, the former were only virtuous because God commanded them, and the latter vicious because He forbade them.<sup>1</sup>

But this theory, though dominant, was by no means undisputed in Islam. The Mu'tazilīs, for instance, took a very different view. They asserted that human acts were either good or bad in themselves, and that God commanded the good because it was good and forbade the bad because it was evil. More, they held that in some cases human reason could perceive, independently of any direct Revelation, that an act was good or bad in itself, and in this case Revelation did no more than confirm the judgment of the human mind; in other cases, however, man could not,<sup>2</sup> of himself, perceive the essential virtue or vice inherent in an act, and in these circumstances it was only direct Revelation which made manifest the essential nature of the acts concerned.<sup>3</sup>

Yet others, such as the Māturīdīs and many Ḥanafī jurists, took up an intermediate position. They agreed with the Mu'tazilīs that human acts were in fact good or bad intrinsically, and that human reason could in some cases perceive their quality even apart from Revelation. But, unlike the Mu'tazilīs, they refused to admit that the perception of what was virtuous or vicious involved any apprehension of a divine command or prohibition—except, according to al-Māturīdī and the Shaykhs of Samarqand, in regard to the basic duty of belief in God and his Prophet, while the Shaykhs of Bukhara excluded even this. They denied, therefore, any duty or responsibility to practice virtue or abstain from vice before

<sup>1</sup> The similarity between this attitude and that of Duns Scotus and, still more, William of Occam, among the Scholastics, is most striking. Thus Rommen says of the former that he believed that "morality depends on the will of God. A thing is good not because it corresponds to the nature of God or, analogically, to the nature of man, but because God so wills"; and of the latter that for him "the natural moral law is positive law, divine will. An action is not good because of its suitability to the essential nature of man . . . but because God so wills. God's will could also have willed and decreed the precise opposite . . . Thus, too, sin no longer contains any intrinsic element of immorality . . . it is an external offense against the will of God" (*The Natural Law*, 58 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Not, however, because of any doctrine of Original Sin, but rather the inscrutability of many divine commands.

<sup>3</sup> Here the affinity is with Aquinas among the Scholastics, for he found the basis for natural law not *primarily* in the will of God but in His divine essence and reason; and thence also in the nature and reason of man.

the Law had been enunciated.<sup>1</sup> It is plain, then, that the concept of natural law is utterly alien to the Ash'arī philosophy of life but is basic to the Mu'tazalī opinion, while the Māturīdīs and Ḥanafīs fall somewhere between the two viewpoints.

Nor is this all. Even within the divine law as represented by the Shari'a, it must be emphasized, there is an enormous amount which has been deduced by the mind of man. Even in the classical theory of Islamic jurisprudence it is acknowledged that the early jurists, in default of a relevant text, relied on their own judgment as to what best accorded with the spirit of the sacred law. And although this liberty of judgment later became progressively restricted to a strict process of analogical deduction, the Ḥanafīs allowed their early jurists on occasion to discard the rule to which the ordinary application of analogy would lead in favour of a view they felt to be "preferable", while the Mālikīs (and others) allowed rules to be accepted, where no divine text applied, because they appeared to be in the general interests of the community. Again, a distinction was often made between those divine commands the reason for which was beyond human understanding and which must therefore be blindly obeyed (*al-ta'abbud*) and those commands which were conceived as designed to confer some distinct and recognizable benefit on man and which might, in certain circumstances, be interpreted and applied accordingly. But the dominant emphasis was always on the inscrutability of the divine commands—a consideration which was often called in aid to justify those "devices" which the jurist-theologians of Islam themselves invented to enable persons to achieve by indirect means, and without any direct infringement of the letter of the law, purposes which would otherwise have been frustrated by the presence of some express and definite prohibition.

Even when we turn to customary law, moreover, we find that somewhat similar ideas, although in a far less developed form, are frequently inherent in such legal theory as exists. To take an example from Africa, Professor Max Gluckman affirms that the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia

<sup>1</sup> This controversy resembles, but with a difference, that between Vasquez, and Suarez and Bellarmine, among the late Scholastics. Thus Vasquez "regarded rational nature, irrespective of the positive will of God, as the primary ground of the obligation to obey the natural law. For him, consequently . . . the natural law is not properly law in the strict sense". For Suarez and Bellarmine, on the other hand, the natural law is "a judgment of reason which presents actions as commanded or forbidden by the Author of reason, because the light of reason shows them to be in agreement or disagreement with man's essential nature; and at the same time reason judges that God wills that which accords with nature" (Rommen, *The Natural Law*, 64 f.). Similarly, Grotius on the one hand "defended the nominalist doctrine that essentially bad acts are evil, not because they are intrinsically at variance with God's essence, but because they are forbidden by God"; yet on the other hand defined the law of nature as "a dictate of right reason which points out that an act, according as it is or is not in accordance with rational and social nature, has in it a quality of moral baseness or moral necessity; and that, in consequence, such an act is either forbidden or enjoined by the author of nature, God" (*ibid*, 71 f.).

generally consider that "their major laws are *milao yabutu*, laws of humankind, or *milao yaNyambe*, laws of God, and that they embody general principles of morality. They believe that these laws and principles are themselves obvious and self-evident to all men, even to Whites".<sup>1</sup> The term *milao yaNyambe* is, it seems, primarily used by the Lozi of the laws of nature in a material or scientific sense, and *milao yabutu* of those other laws of God "which more patently refer to certain moral premisses in Lozi social life" or which "lie at the basis of social life everywhere".<sup>2</sup> Thus the Lozi consider that fundamental questions of right and wrong are inherent in the reason (*ngana*) of man, are obvious to and accepted by men of all tribes and nations, and ultimately derive from God.<sup>3</sup> And Professor Schapera, writing of the kindred Tswana people, informs us that they speak of their laws "as having always existed, from the time that man himself came into being; or as having been instituted by God (*Modimo*) or by the ancestor spirits (*badimo*)."<sup>4</sup>

No attempt need here be made to analyse, or to compare in detail, the different concepts of divine or natural law which have prevailed, respectively, among the Chinese, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Greeks, mediaeval Schoolmen and eighteenth-century Rationalists, for instance. Nor is there any call to try to determine the extent of the debt owed by the Muslims to the Jews and the Greeks; by the Schoolmen and Canonists to the Jews, the Greeks and the Arabs; or by any two groups to some common source. It is enough—and this is, indeed, the primary conclusion of these reflections—to emphasize the fact that the basic idea of a transcendent law, whether expressly enjoined by the Creator or inherent in His creation, is by no means confined to any one people or civilization. On the contrary, it seems to represent a conviction which is in some sense common to mankind—a conviction which may, indeed, be disparaged or denied in periods of sophistication, tranquillity and agnosticism but which regularly reappears—as has been noted by more than one writer—in times of despotism, jeopardy or a return to religious faith.

It is also, however, of considerable interest to observe the prominent, and even somewhat equivocal, part which is being played by some of these concepts in contemporary developments in Asia and Africa. Thus the Fundamental Rights enunciated in the Indian Constitution may, in practice, represent little more than the basic liberties previously enjoyed under the common law, just as they are, beyond question, protected and enforced by the equivalent of the English prerogative writs. But, however this may be, their enunciation as "fundamental rights" clearly betrays their connection with the American and French Declarations and, through these, with the doctrine of natural law in its eighteenth-century

<sup>1</sup> Max Gluckman, *The Judicial Process among the Barotse*, Manchester, 1955, 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 165.

<sup>3</sup> *Cp. ibid*, 203.

<sup>4</sup> I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, Oxford, 1938, 39.

guise of the inherent rights of man. As such, moreover, it is fascinating to observe how they are being called in aid to-day to abrogate some of those institutions, such as caste, which partake, to Hindus, of the nature of divine law as enjoined by their revealed religion.

Thus Article 14 of the Indian Constitution provides that the State "shall not deny to any person equality before the law". Article 15 goes further and lays it down that, as between citizens, the State may not discriminate on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth; and that no citizen may, on these grounds, be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction, or condition with regard to access to any buildings or facilities maintained out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the public. Article 17, moreover, forbids "untouchability" in explicit and general terms, and declares that the enforcement of any disability arising therefrom shall constitute an offence punishable by law. And appeal may, of course, be made to these rights against any statute which is alleged to infringe their terms. But it must be observed that while the phrase "equality before the law" has been interpreted to mean the equal subjection of all persons to the law,<sup>1</sup> the phrase "equal protection of the laws" does not mean that all laws must be uniform, but rather that a law "may not discriminate for or against a person or class, unless there is a rational basis for such discrimination."<sup>2</sup>

Previously, indeed, the High Court of Bombay had on three occasions given the narrowest possible definition of the meaning of religion in so far as those clauses in the Indian Constitution which safeguard religious freedom are concerned;<sup>3</sup> but the Supreme Court has now ruled that

<sup>1</sup> *Surapayal Singh v. U.P.*, A.I.R. [1951] All. 674.

<sup>2</sup> A. Gledhill, *Fundamental Rights in India*, 42; cp. *Bombay v. F. N. Balsara*, A.I.R. [1951] S.C. 318. Two examples of attempts to impugn legislation (whether by statute or Government order) by an appeal to these Rights (e.g. Art 15 forbidding discrimination on grounds of religion *only*) may be cited by way of illustration. In the first, which succeeded, the Madras Communal Government Order of 1948, which allotted vacancies in Government colleges in fixed proportions between Brahmins, Non-Brahmin Hindus, backward Hindus, Harijans, Anglo-Indians, and Muslims, was held to be void, as deliberately classifying applications for admission to the colleges on the basis of caste and religions, irrespective of individual merit. (Gledhill, *ibid.*, p. 49). But, in the second, an attempt to impugn the Madras Hindu (Bigamy Prevention and Divorce) Act, 1949, as discriminating between Hindus and Muslims on grounds of religion only was rejected by the Court, which held that the Constitution, by placing legislative power in respect of personal law on the Concurrent List, had recognized a classification already existing; and that the essence of this classification was not a matter of religion only, but a result of the fact that Hindus and Muslims had preserved their distinctive personal law throughout the centuries. (*Dorairajan v. Madras* A.I.R. [1951] Mad. 120. Cp. Gledhill. *op. cit.*, 50).

<sup>3</sup> "It is not every aspect of religion that has been safeguarded, nor has the Constitution provided that every religious activity cannot be interfered with. . . . Whatever binds a man to his own conscience and whatever moral and ethical principles regulate the lives of men, that alone can constitute religion as understood in the Constitution." [*Ratilal Panachand v. State of Bombay* (1953), 55 Bom. L.R. 86 (at p. 96)]. Cf. also *State of Bombay v. Narasu Appa*, A.I.R. [1952] Bom. 84 (at p. 86) and *Taher Saifuddin v. Tyebbhaji Moosaji*, A.I.R. [1953] Bom. 183 (at p. 188).

“Freedom of religion in the Constitution of India is not confined to religious beliefs only; it extends to religious practices as well, subject to the restrictions which the Constitution itself has laid down.”<sup>1</sup> Even so, legislation has been promulgated providing that outcastes and untouchables may enter temples,<sup>2</sup> in spite of the fact that this is utterly repugnant to the religious principles of the higher-caste Hindus who founded and endowed these temples, which have been desecrated and made unfit for worship, in their view, by the consequent influx of untouchables. Somewhat similarly, a statute of the Central Legislature has recently been enacted<sup>3</sup> providing that anyone who obstructs an “untouchable” in the exercise of any of the rights conferred by this Act shall be punishable; and that anyone who imposes any disability on one who refuses to practice untouchability will also be guilty of an offence. It is clear, then, that the Indian reformers are determined to abolish all distinctions of caste root and branch, in so far as this can be accomplished by legislation; and this in spite of the fact that caste is an institution both praised and rationalized in the *dharmasūtra*, which is regarded by all orthodox Hindus as representing divine law.

Somewhat similarly, the Bombay Prevention of Hindu Bigamous Marriages Act, 1946, penalizes polygamy, which the Hindu Scriptures sanction; the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, provides for divorce, which their Scriptures prohibit, and permits persons to marry whose union, according to those same Scriptures, is incestuous; and the Special Marriage Act, 1954, facilitates the inter-marriage of Hindus and Muslims by means of a civil contract, although such marriages are absolutely forbidden by the religious law of both religions. It seems clear, then, that although the personal law of each religious community is being maintained, in general terms, for the present—in spite of the apparent inconsistency between this (and, in particular, some of the relevant rules) and the fundamental rights discussed above—yet the Indian reformers are already taking tentative steps in furtherance of Article 44 of the Indian Constitution, which provides that “The State shall endeavour to secure to the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India”. This can only be described either as a triumph of enlightenment over traditionalism or as a victory for natural law, in one of its connotations, over what has always been regarded as divine law.

There is, moreover, a marked similarity, in some respects, between the attitude of the Indian reformers and the position assumed by progressive opinion, in recent years, in the Muslim states of the Near and Middle East. Thus it was characteristic of the Ottoman and Egyptian reforms of the

<sup>1</sup> *Commissioner v. L.T. Swamiar*. A.I.R. [1954] S.C. 282, at 283.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the Temple Entry Acts of Madras, Travancore and Bombay.

<sup>3</sup> Untouchability (Offences) Act 22 of 1955; cp. also the East Punjab Removal of Religious and Social Disabilities Act, 1948, and similar enactments in West Bengal and Bihar.



last century that life should be divided, in a way never before openly acknowledged in Islam, into two distinct spheres: the secular and the religious. This was to include (unlike India) a distinction between the Shari'a courts and the secular courts; and the intervening years have witnessed a progressive restriction of the sphere of the religious courts, and of the "divine" law which they apply, in such countries as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and the Sudan. It would seem, however, that there is a certain difference of approach in this matter: for, whereas the progressive restriction of the sphere of religious law may appear to the Indian reformers as a triumph of reason (and thus, in a sense, of natural law) over tradition (represented by the alleged divine law), and so of the ideal over the retrogressive, the professed attitude of most Muslims in the Near and Middle East has always been to recognize the Shari'a as the ideal, and to seek to justify all departures therefrom as regrettable concessions to the exigencies of modern life.<sup>1</sup> Yet this attitude can scarcely be consistently maintained. For the Muslim reformers have not been content only to replace the divine law, in so far as criminal and commercial law (and much else) is concerned, by codes of predominantly Western and secular inspiration, but have also been actively engaged in the reform of the religious law itself, as applied by the Courts. Thus a number of attempts have been made in country after country, to put an end to child-marriage, although this is regarded, by the orthodox Muslim, as sanctioned by the divine law as revealed, in this instance, by the inspired example of the Prophet<sup>2</sup>; a scheme was devised in Egypt, and has been given legislative effect in Syria, restricting the right of a Muslim to have more than one wife;<sup>3</sup> and a number of not very decisive steps have been taken towards limiting a Muslim husband's unrestricted right of unilateral divorce.<sup>4</sup> Yet it is significant that these innovations have everywhere, except in Turkey, been introduced by means of some device or formula which either professes to re-interpret the sacred law or at least to avoid any direct repudiation of its dictates.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted in this context that in Sa'udi Arabia and the Yemen the sacred law still reigns supreme, nominally at least; while in Turkey it has been completely abandoned, officially, in favour of a wholly secular law.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in Egypt (Cp. article by J.N.D. Anderson, "Recent Developments in Shari'a Law, III", in *The Muslim World*, April 1951, 113 ff.); in Lebanon under the Ottoman Law of Family Rights (Cp. 116 f.); in Jordan (Cp. "Recent Developments in Shari'a Law, VIII", in *The Muslim World*, July 1952, 191 ff.); and in Syria (Cp. "The Syrian Law of Personal Status", in *B.S.O.A.S.*, 1955, 37 f.).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. "Recent Developments in Shari'a Law, III", 122 ff. and "The Syrian Law of Personal Status", 36 and 38.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. "The Problem of Divorce in Shari'a Law", in the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 1950, XXXVII, 2, 171 ff.; "Recent Developments in Shari'a Law, V", in *The Muslim World*, Oct. 1951, 274-7 and 287-8; and "The Syrian Law of Personal Status", 39-40 and, especially, 41-2.

There can be no doubt, moreover, that problems of a broadly similar nature will arise, before long, in Pakistan. Unlike India, which is now a secular Republic, Pakistan has been proclaimed to be an "Islamic Republic", and the Qur'an and Sunna have been acknowledged as fundamental to the Pakistani way of life. It may well be, of course, that this represents little more than a recognition that the very *raison d'être* of Pakistan was the desire of most of the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent to form a state in which they could follow their own religion and culture without any possible dominance by the Hindu majority and, as such, may mean no more than the claims which have sometimes been made that Christianity is part of the law of England. It certainly seems most unlikely that the prescriptions of the Shari'a regarding hand-cutting for theft, stoning for adultery or death for apostasy from Islam will in fact be imposed in Pakistan, or that witnesses will be considered ineligible in that country by reason only that they are not Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, experience in Egypt<sup>2</sup> shows how difficult it is for a modern state to put the clock back, and to abandon "Western" law for a code which is basically Islamic. In particular, it seems wholly impracticable to maintain the traditional prohibition of any loan at a fixed rate of interest, even if room is left for those "devices" which have always made it possible for this rule to be largely evaded in practice.

Nor is the field of possible conflict limited to that between the new outlook which now prevails in the Orient—whether regarded as "Western" or as founded on natural law and the fundamental rights of man—and the religious or "divine" law. Another fertile source of conflict is between customary law and divine law, as exemplified, for instance, in those Muslim communities—whether in Africa, Malaya or Indonesia—which still follow a matrilineal system of inheritance, for among such the Quranic injunctions regarding succession are consistently flouted. In British colonial territories, moreover, the application of both customary and Islamic law is commonly restricted by a proviso that it must not be contrary to "natural justice"—a phrase which clearly makes a direct appeal to the doctrine of natural law. Similarly, on the positive side, the concept of the law of nature, which was formerly one of the means by

<sup>1</sup> This last point might, in any case, be regarded as contrary to the fundamental right of equality before the law.

<sup>2</sup> Where 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Sanhūrī, the chief architect of the recent Civil Code, while claiming that he would yield pride of place to no one in his love for the Shari'a, not only admitted that little that was new had in fact been borrowed exclusively therefrom, but stated categorically that "I assure you that we did not leave a single sound provision of the Shari'a which we could have included in this legislation without so doing. We adopted from the Shari'a all that we could adopt, having regard to sound principles of modern legislation; and we did not fall short in this respect" (J. N. D. Anderson, "The Shari'a and Civil Law", *The Islamic Quarterly*, I, April 1954, 29 ff.). But the attempt to draft a civil code with the Shari'a as its primary source is, it seems, being pursued in Syria.

which the sway of Roman law, often regarded as "written reason", was extended in Europe, has in the modern age been used to expand the sphere of application of the common law; for in India and elsewhere British courts have been empowered, in default of any other suitable law, to decide litigation in accordance with the dictates of "justice, equity and good conscience";<sup>1</sup> and this, in turn, has been held to mean the rules of English law so far as they are applicable to the society and circumstances.<sup>2</sup> And it is interesting to observe a similar development in the Egyptian Civil Code of 1948, where the first article enacts that "In the absence of any provision which is applicable, the Judge shall decide according to custom and, in the absence of this, in accordance with the principles of the Shari'a. In the absence of these, the Judge shall apply the principles of natural justice and the dictates of equity".<sup>3</sup>

It is intriguing to speculate, moreover, about the various attitudes of mind which may characterize those Muslims and Hindus, for instance, who are faced by cases of conflict, whether apparent or real, between their divine law as it has always been interpreted and those more liberal ideas which may appeal to them, consciously or unconsciously, as natural law. An equivalent to the mediaeval dichotomy between Church and State, or between the religious and the secular, may represent a workable compromise in practice, but scarcely provides a satisfying synthesis. Some, no doubt, still regard the divine law, as authoritatively expounded, as the basic ideal, but recognize that circumstances in the modern world are singularly adverse to its application; but this, too, scarcely resolves the conflict. Others, again, feel that their theologians and jurists went astray in some, or even many, of their deductions, and that the divine law, in its essence, cannot be at variance with what their reason now approves. Yet others would, no doubt, draw further distinctions, and regard part of their sacred law as representing the eternal law and part as inspired concessions to human weakness, or to the circumstances of time and place.<sup>4</sup> Such, it seems, is an increasingly common attitude among Muslims towards such matters as the ideal of monogamy on the one hand and concessions to polygamy on the other. And there are some, no doubt, who have been

<sup>1</sup> Thus a Bengal Regulation of 1793 prescribed that, where no indigenous laws were properly applicable, the judges were "to act according to justice, equity and good conscience"; and Pollock remarks that, English officials in India being what they were, they naturally interpreted these words as meaning such rules and principles of English law as they happened to know and considered applicable (*Essays in the Law*, 75).

<sup>2</sup> 14 I.A. (1886-87) at 96.

<sup>3</sup> These provisions reappear, but in a different order, in the Syrian Civil Code, 1949.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hooker's view that positive laws, whether human or divine, were "either permanent or else changeable according as the matter itself is concerning which they were first made; whether God or man be the maker of them, alteration do they so far forth admit as the matter doth exact" (*Social and Political Ideas of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*, 77). This represents a radical way in which the alleged immutability of divine law may, in part, be denied and avoided: cp. Matt. 19: 8.

impelled by such considerations to doubt the basic validity of their revealed religion.

Nor is it possible for the Christian lawyer to conclude such reflections without some consideration of the attitude which he must himself take to this whole question of law—divine, natural and positive. Only a very tentative and general answer can be attempted in the concluding paragraphs of this paper; but certain basic considerations seem sufficiently clear.

To the Christian, in the first place, God has spoken, through both the Old and New Testament Scriptures and, pre-eminently, through Christ Himself. In the Old Testament, in particular, there is much that can only be described as divine law; and this may be subdivided into the moral law, the ceremonial law and the law designed to govern the Hebrew people in their tribal and national life. This last (part of which, moreover, clearly represents concessions to human weakness or modifications of the moral law to meet the needs of a very imperfect community)<sup>1</sup> has accomplished its purpose with the substitution of a spiritual Church for a theocratic nation,<sup>2</sup> and has thus been "fulfilled";<sup>3</sup> and the ceremonial law has also done its work in pointing to Christ and His redemption, and has now no other significance: but the moral law, although equally fulfilled in Him, is itself of eternal and unchanging validity, and has been re-emphasized and re-imposed in the New Testament—although more by way of the enunciation of principles than the prescription of detailed regulations.

Equally, however, the Christian believes that this moral law may be known, in part,<sup>4</sup> even without special Revelation. It is thus that God's eternal power and Godhead are "understood" by observation and reason<sup>5</sup>; and it is thus that those who have no Revelation may prove that the requirements of the divine law are "written in their hearts" and consciences, and may fulfil its precepts "by nature".<sup>6</sup> And this applies, of course, to those who belong to any other religion, even where the Christian cannot accept what they claim as direct Revelation to be authoritative as such.

Yet again, the Christian lawyer will recognize the absolute necessity for human positive law. He may, of course, belong to more than one school of jurisprudence in his view of how this law should be defined, the sources from which it is derived, and what constitutes its binding force.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Matt. 19 : 8 and above.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Matt. 21 : 43; 1 Peter 2 : 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Matt. 5 : 17.

<sup>4</sup> That is, in its basic principles, rather than its detailed applications, many of which may, in any case, vary to some degree according to circumstances.

<sup>5</sup> Rom 1 : 20.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 2 : 14, 15.

But he will also regard it as binding on his conscience—except, that is, in so far as it may in some cases run diametrically counter to the transcendent law as directly or indirectly revealed—because the divine law has itself made him subject to “every ordinance of man”<sup>1</sup> and has enjoined on him all the duties of good citizenship<sup>2</sup>, while he can also readily appreciate the chaos to which any other attitude would lead. Where, however, any clear case of conflict may arise, this must be recognized for what it is; and he should neither assert that the divine law abrogates the positive law as such or that the positive law absolves from obedience to the divine. Instead, he should use every legitimate means to remove any radical contradiction between the law of the State and the law of God or Nature—while recognizing that there must always be a certain antithesis between them<sup>3</sup> and avoiding, to the best of his ability, all attempts to secure the enforcement by law of what no law can properly enforce or to impose his own convictions, however sincere, on other people. And where a radical contradiction can neither be avoided nor remedied the Christian must be prepared, in the last resort, to disobey the positive law and take the consequences.

Nor is this attitude to the relative claims of the law of God and the law of man in any way peculiar to the Christian. On the contrary, there are many, from a variety of different religions, who would take up much the same position—except, of course, in regard to the Person, book or other revelation in which the divine law is authoritatively proclaimed. What is peculiar to the Christian is the conviction that the demands of the divine law—which all men, in their different degrees, have failed to meet—have been perfectly met, by God Himself, in Christ and His Cross, so that he who confesses his guilt and embraces this provision may not only entertain a wistful hope of some capricious mercy but may enjoy the assurance that the divine law will itself declare him free from condemnation—that is, that he is justified;<sup>4</sup> and that the requirements of that law, so impossible of attainment to human nature, may be more and more fulfilled in the life of one over whose heart the Divine Spirit progressively extends His sway—that is, that he may be sanctified.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2 : 13.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 20 : 25; Rom. 13 : 1-7.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Brunner's statement (as quoted by N. Micklem, *Law and the Laws*, at 12) that “the modification of the status of man due to evil necessitates a modification of the order of justice, not only in the sense that it becomes a co-ercive system of positive law but also in the sense that the substance of this positive law cannot coincide with that of the law of nature laid down in the order of creation. That is why there *must* be a difference, if not an antithesis, between positive law and the law of nature”.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 3 : 21-31; 7 : 1-6.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 8 : 4; Hebrews 10 : 16.

941ST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

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THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 14th JANUARY, 1957

REV. JOHN A. CAIGER, in the Chair

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**THE PRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN  
GOSPEL, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE  
INDIVIDUAL TO-DAY**

By

JACK W. HANNAH

(Schofield Memorial Prize Essay, 1956)

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# THE PRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL TO-DAY

BY JACK W. HANNAH

## SYNOPSIS

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This essay begins by developing a definition of the Gospel—the message that God through Christ Jesus seeks to establish a new relationship with man so personal that He wills to be known as Father.

Since the manner of effectively communicating a message depends on the nature of the message, it is necessary that Christians should embody their message. The love, or care, of God as Father is realized by the internal and external care shown by the Church. This care not only gives fellowship and meets physical needs, but satisfies mental needs as well.

The historical significance of Christianity is discussed, and its usefulness in presenting the Gospel.

The significance of the Paraclete is considered. God's manifest care and power are His Church.

The negative aspect of the Gospel, the wrath of God, shows how seriously God regards the new relationship. This aspect, therefore, has more relevance for Christians than for non-Christians.

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THE very fact that we can entertain the prospect of writing on a subject that uses such words as "presentation", "impact" and "to-day" relative to the Christian gospel testifies that there is widespread opinion that the gospel is not, or at least historically has not shown itself to be, of the nature of a fixed dogma for every person in every generation. Whatever the basis of the church's "glad tidings" might be, it is certain that the message has undergone adaptation in its presentation to the world. Paul Tillich reviews the sweep of church history in terms of the changing emphasis of its message by pointing out that the early Greek church dealt primarily with death and doubt, the medieval church with the social and spiritual chaos which followed the decline of Roman power, the Reformation with guilt anxiety, and modern protestantism with religious cultural unity.<sup>1</sup> Another indication of the variability of the

<sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich, "Communicating the Gospel" in *Union Seminary Quar. Rev.* vol. vii (June 1952), p. 8.

gospel is the multitude of denominations, sects, and denominational subdivisions voicing messages which often bear but scant resemblance to one another. While doubtless this record of the church illustrates the adaptability of the gospel and the effort made on the part of the church to serve the everyday needs of its constituents, it also more than hints that there has always existed a general lack of understanding or agreement as to what the gospel is and why it should prove so readily adaptable. This means that we cannot begin to think about the presentation and impact of the gospel until first we have defined it, for the method by which any message is presented depends in large measure upon the nature of the message itself.

The simple phrase "Christian Gospel" is itself fraught with meaning. It tells us that we are concerned with the message of good worth resulting from the activity of Jesus the Christ. Whereas in the foregoing paragraph we have pointed to the variety of expression the gospel has undergone, this rudimentary definition of the gospel leads us, for its expansion, to the earliest church testimony to the activity and meaning of the Lord.

However, in the preaching of the early church, the *kerygma*, where we should surely expect to find the gospel, we find instead a multitude of ideas each of which has such potential that they have served as bases for whole later theological systems. While the gospel is in the *kerygma*, it is not as evident as we might wish. In Peter's Pentecostal speech allusion is made to the fulfilment of prophecy, to the Messiahship of Jesus, to the crucifixion, to the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord, and to remission of sins in His name. This pattern, in other examples of apostolic preaching, has been presented as a model of gospel preaching containing the essential elements which the church's message must deliver. But this is misleading, for it gives us the impression that the gospel is the doctrine of prophetic fulfilment, Messiahship, atonement, etc. Using Peter's Pentecostal message as an illustration, let us consider another possible interpretation. Keeping in mind that Peter is addressing a predominantly Jewish audience, let us imagine what might be in the mind of the average Jerusalemite listening to him. Such a Jew had doubtless heard rumours of the deeds of Jesus, and he well knew that but fifty days previously his city crucified the Man. Rumours and counter-stories of His resurrection were a topic of interest, as were the stories of strange earthquakes or of the tearing of the Temple veil at Jesus' death. The Jerusalemite happens on the peculiar gathering of disciples, joyous and speaking in all manner of tongues; we can scarcely imagine his perplexity. Peter speaks to just such a man. He explains the behaviour of his fellowmen; he announces to Jews the fulfilment of prophecy; he identifies Jesus as the promised Messiah; he clarifies their responsibility for the crucifixion; he proclaims the triumph of the resurrection and exaltation; he claims that what they now witness is evidence of God the Father pouring forth



His Spirit upon them. Peter has answered the questions of his audience. As Jews they are interested in prophecy; they look for a Messiah; they sense guilt over the crucifixion of a righteous man; resurrection is a current hotly debated subject; and Jews have longed to see the mighty moving of the Spirit of God since the exploits of Mosaic and Davidic times. It seems far more conservative to regard such *kerygmatic* speeches as examples of the early church's attempt to adapt its message to the needs of listeners and inquirers rather than to say they constitute the doctrinal content of the early church's gospel. What Peter said was really good news, but only because it was understood by Jews in a particular situation.

However, we are not warranted in so briefly dismissing the *kerygma*. Historically the church has taken either the crucifixion or resurrection or both as the principal focus of its doctrinal formulations and of its preaching. Probably the majority have given attention primarily to the death on the cross. Over the centuries it has become considered as the perfect sacrifice, the victory over the forces of evil, and the epitome of God's love. Certainly these express truths, but are they the truth in an absolute sense, or reflections of what the event of the crucifixion has meant to the needs of men? Even for the early church we are left to doubt how far any consistent interpretation of the significance of the Master's death prevailed. In Heb. 2: 14, 15 is presented the idea that death is a weapon used by Satan to bring men in fearful subjection to himself. Jesus had to die to destroy him who has the power of death. In Heb. 9: 15, 17 the death of Jesus is necessary so that an inheritance could become effective. Then, of course, there is the concept that Jesus bore our sins in His body (1 Peter 2: 24), while in Ch. 3: 18 Peter states that Christ died for sins once for all. H. A. A. Kennedy says that three elements are clearly discernible in Peter's thoughts about Christ's death: Christ takes upon Himself the consequences of men's sins; He ransoms men from sin; He cleanses or covers sins so that men can enter a covenant with God.<sup>1</sup> Similar divergent ideas are found in 1 John 1: 7 and 2: 2. Paul presents the idea that the blood of Christ reconciles us to God. Christ, the mercy seat, is pre-eminently the place where man confronts God (Rom. 3: 25). From such scriptures as these the church has attempted to reconstruct what really happened on the cross. Perhaps these writers were attempting the same task, but it is far simpler to presume that the New Testament writers were pointing to the events of the crucifixion as God's answer to certain of their needs. Just how this was God's answer we shall discuss later.

The second event which the church has often emphasized as the core of its message is the resurrection. A consideration of the significance of this act of God calls to mind Paul's 15th chapter of the first Corinthian epistle.

<sup>1</sup> H. A. A. Kennedy, *Theology of the Epistles*, p. 178.

“ I preached to you the gospel . . . I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures . . . He appeared also to me . . . if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. . . . If in this life we who are in Christ have only hope, we are of all men most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.” The resurrection certainly has profound meaning for Paul, and well might this be expected in light of the nature of his initial confrontation with Jesus as related thrice in Acts. In Galatians Paul says he received his gospel by revelation, not from men. If this refers to his conversion experience, as it very likely does, we can expect that for Paul the resurrection was of central importance for his gospel. We may even conjecture that as regards his gospel Paul gives more emphasis to the resurrection than to the cross. For instance, in Philippians, a letter not to Jews who might need an answer satisfying their religious problems concerning sacrifice but to Christian Gentiles, Paul hardly mentions the death of Christ. In this epistle he lauds the resurrection and exaltation of his Lord,<sup>1</sup> and in another place expresses the longing, “ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”<sup>2</sup> But although Paul placed great emphasis on the resurrection, the author of Hebrews made bare mention of it, as also the author of the Johannine epistles. There is also a wide range of interpretation given to the resurrection. For Paul the event confirms the exaltation and Lordship conferred upon Jesus by God. Ignatius avers it is an ensign set up for the saints and believers of all ages, giving the apostles confidence to despise even death.<sup>3</sup> Clement of Rome thinks of it as proving the future resurrection of all and, also, as giving confidence to the apostles.<sup>4</sup> However, as Weizsäcker and Emil Brünner, for instance, have concluded, the historical references to the resurrection in the New Testament cannot be correlated. The records of the Christophanies vary in nature, time and place. The accounts are inconsistent and indicative of later emendation.<sup>5</sup> Justified as these criticisms may be, they certainly do not warrant a conclusion that the resurrection is unhistorical. What they do indicate is that the resurrection was not early witnessed abroad in detail as central to the gospel, but alluded to as an illustration of the gospel. After all, referring again to 1 Cor. 15, does not Paul use the resurrection as an illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy ? It gives courage to believers

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 2: 9.    <sup>2</sup> Phil. 3: 10, 11.    <sup>3</sup> Ign. Smyr. I, III.    <sup>4</sup> 1 Clem. 24-27, 42.

<sup>5</sup> C. von Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, vol. i, pp. 3 ff., and E. Brünner, *Dogmatics*, vol. ii, pp. 363 ff.

by supplying a ground of faith for personal resurrection, and by vindicating the message of Jesus.

In reality the early church recognized the message of Jesus as the gospel even before the crucifixion and resurrection. In Mark's Gospel Jesus begins His mission, announcing, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."<sup>1</sup> The parallelism of this statement, testifying to its Hebraic origin, informs us that in Mark's opinion the gospel is related closely to the message of the kingdom of God. The significance of this can best be apprehended from the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus teaches concerning the new kingdom relations established by God. God's blessings have come upon those whom the world scorns; and if God has drawn near to the simple, ignored, and rejected, what reason have such to be unduly concerned with this world? In words such as, "Be not anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink . . . your heavenly Father knows that you need . . ." ring true and eternal good news, for they declare that God's reign is a new personal relationship in which He would have Himself known as a loving father.

In the Third Gospel, near its beginning, the mission and message of Jesus are welded and authorized through the quotation of Isaiah 61: 1, 2:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

The Synoptics truly demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. He went to the neglected common people, the outcasts, the 'am-*ha-aretz*, healing their infirmities and declaring God forgives sins apart from law. The power exemplified in healing, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes, and teaching such things as that the Sabbath was made for man, testify that, through Jesus, God was establishing a new relationship, a covenant of personal Fatherhood with man. The old covenant became too easily a relationship to things; a trend which culminated in Judaism. Historically the Jews ultimately met God through proper sacrifices or over the Mercy Seat of the Ark in the Holy of Holies. Things! In such a religious framework it was natural to raise the law and word of God themselves to objects of veneration and to hedge them about with traditions. But Jesus called for a new relationship of man to His fellowman, and of man to God Who was personal, and Who was now drawing near to reign over men. The personal intervention of God had long been the Messianic hope, and Jesus claimed to fulfil that rôle. Laws arising from this new relationship could be summed up as loving God with the whole heart and your neighbour as

<sup>1</sup> Mark 1: 15.

yourself. For Jesus this was the essence even of the Mosaic commandments. Jesus was free to disobey the Sabbath, to eat without first cleansing Himself, to associate with publicans and sinners, because He knew God in a relationship quite different from that within the law; He knew God as His Father.

It was the mission of Jesus as it should be the mission of the church to bring men to understand just what it means to have new personal relationships with one another and with God. The New Testament uses the word *agape* to help express this relationship. Perhaps we have erred in trying to understand this word as undeserved love, or as love toward a worthless object. Certainly in such a definition we may be suspicious that we are reading our theology back into the word. Etymologically, little more can be said than that it is used to indicate a relationship between husband and wife, between siblings, between a charitable contributor and the benefactor, or between God and man. Jesus lived and taught the definition of *agape*, and from His life we should not be far off if we translate it as personal care. When the scribe asked Jesus who was His neighbour, our Lord's answer in the parable of the Good Samaritan became the epitome of care. The broken, robbed Jew of the story was not necessarily a worthless man, but he was suffering, near death and rejected. Only a Samaritan was personally interested enough to care for him. This parable not only tells us that our neighbour is anyone to whom we can give assistance, but, also, it is a vivid description of what Jesus means when he says, "Love (*agape*) your neighbour as yourself." *Agape* is not heartless, indirect care motivated by a sense of obligation, such as we often experience even when we lavishly support some charity; it is personal care motivated from a sense of appreciation and respect for life and the potentialities of life. This sense can only come through a high regard for our own life and its potentialities. This is just as Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as *yourself*." It is because God respects Himself and His creation that He respects man who is the image of Himself.

Since we conclude that the core of the gospel is the establishment of a new relationship, the reign of God as a Father, we must further become cognizant that it is a core that depends for its very existence on its communication. No cross was needed for God to forgive sins. Without man ever knowing it, God can forgive him his sins. Jesus forgave the paralytic his sins long before the cross (Mark 2: 5), and Paul writes that God passed over former sins (Rom. 3: 25). No resurrection was needed for God to resurrect us to eternal life. But for God to establish personal relationships, He had to act. The message of personal relationship had to be incarnated; the Word became flesh. Jesus Christ came to give men the message of the new personal relationship they could have with God, but God required of this messenger the actual performance of the message, the exemplification of *agape*. Thus, the manner of propagation of the

gospel is to be such that the individual experiences, not just acknowledges, something of the care of God for Himself personally; and within the individual a new self-respect because of his relationship to God and a consequent desire to enjoy fellowship and exemplary care are generated.

As we have said, the core of the gospel is a message on relationships, and, therefore, it is more experienced than explained. We experience our fellowship with God through our fellowship with one another. We reflect and represent the care of God through the care we give. The tendency is to think of care as providing for the physical welfare of another or of sympathizing with another. But care is really providing for the needs of another, and these needs, especially for the person to whom a message concerning relationships with God would have any appeal, are to a large degree questions about his being, his society, and God that he seeks to have answered. This deserves special consideration, for it is that root of the propagation of the gospel that keeps Christianity historically centred and serves as the basis of our theology.

Religion is notorious for the mythological answers it has given man over the centuries. For the honest thinker this is and seems always to have been repugnant. We can note in the rise of philosophy man's effort to answer his questions about his very being apart from the cant of religionists.<sup>1</sup> To accomplish this end man puts his trust in his own observations and introspections, attempting to integrate them. This attitude is specialized in the sciences, and this is the mind of the modern age. Not contrary to the philosophical trend of mind, but scarcely as well appreciated, is the realm of history. The very nature of history as the study of unrepeatable events makes it suspect. The modern mind often finds satisfaction difficult with the indefinite, remote and often uncertain events of the past. Since the Christian gospel has its ultimate source in the historical event of Jesus, the method of the gospel for answering questions must be that of historical interpretation. Our whole New Testament with the exception of some epistles is an illustration of this statement. Theology has risen as an attempt to interpret, integrate and apply the historical event to the current mind; this is its point of relationship with philosophy. Thus, while one aspect of propagating the gospel is to communicate oneself through care and fellowship as a representative of the Father, another aspect is to propagate the historical events initiating the gospel in such a way that they become pertinent for to-day's needs.

Outside of satisfying curiosity, there are three ways in which a man finds history useful. Since the church in propagating its message has the problem of applying history to the present, a study of these ways is warranted. First, Polybius expressed a very practical approach when he said, "It is history, and history alone, which without involving us in actual

<sup>1</sup> See W. H. V. Reade, *The Christian Challenge to Philosophy*.

danger, will mature our judgments and prepare us to right views. . . .” This is history studied for examples applicable to current problems. It helps us avoid mistakes; it spurs and guides us through appreciation of the hardships and achievements of others. This is the most popular approach to history. Second, some review history to help determine the trend of events, to discern the great purposes motivating certain trends. Here the historian displays the frame of mind of the philosopher in his quest for an integrated view of events, such as Hegel’s hypothesis of historical dialecticism or Marx’s dialectical materialism, or, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, eschatology. Third, we may look to history for its promises that still have present, personal application. The interest that has been shown toward the events surrounding the Magna Charta, the American Declaration of Independence or the Covenant of Sinai show how men cherish a promise. This is the realm of history in which we feel immediately related to the past. The conquests and decisions of our ancestors become more than mere embellishments to our education; they are grounds for many of our present hopes and actions and constitute the very soul of patriotism.

Without difficulty we can see how the church keyed its gospel presentation to these three historical approaches and answered men’s questions within each of them. The *didache* of the church was an ethic built upon the teachings of the Master and the example of His life. Peter writes, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus Himself taught, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you should also do as I have done to you.”<sup>2</sup> While there are many reasons for the Christian movement taking over the Jewish scriptures, Paul writes in reference to Jewish history, “Now these things are warnings for us. . . .”<sup>3</sup> These illustrate the early church’s appeal to historical examples.

While the romantic inclination of the ancient world, and even until to-day, tended to turn history related to religion into myth, it was the genius of the Hebrews to keep their history more pure and to see in it the activity of God. Thus there arose a philosophy of history in which they were convinced that God was working out a great purpose through them. Albert Schweitzer has done modern theology a great service in pointing out the eschatological conviction of Jesus himself. Jesus was convinced that God was really working out a purpose in the world and that He was the apex of that historical activity. The followers of Christ carried forth this conviction in teaching that in Jesus the eschatology of the Jews was realized. For the church the advent of Christ began a new era which would end with His return. If we are to give a gospel which speaks of a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2: 21.

<sup>2</sup> John 13: 14, 15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 10: 6.

personal relationship between God and man, we must assume almost of necessity that through history we can see evidence of God working out a purpose for the world. Our theology should be dedicated to discovering this purpose, and to proclaiming it to those who have need for guidance in ontological problems.

Closely related to the eschatological view of history, yet far more individualistic in application, is the assurance or promise view. The Old Testament is full of promises: Noah was guaranteed by the sign of the rainbow that man would not again suffer such a great deluge. Abraham cherished a promise through his progeny. The followers of a crucified Jesus went forward undaunted with their Master's promise of salvation. It is a promise that makes history really come alive to us. Eschatological viewpoints alone might readily lead us to a fatalistic attitude. The world with its inhabitants becomes easily regarded as but an act on the stage of time whose ultimate meaning exists only for the Divine Scenarist. But the Christian gospel promises that God has a sharing motive within His purpose for the creation.

There are three main events, celebrated throughout the church since its beginning, which carry in them answers within each historical quest that show forth the care of God for every person. In this way, these have served through the centuries as the church's principal vehicle for the presentation of its message.

Although the crucifixion has given men an example of the love of God, and for many it has been a promise of the forgiveness of sins, yet its greatest significance lies in its disclosure of God's purpose to close the old covenant and generate a new. When Christ died an era was being culminated. Jews could rarely be argued out of following a sacrificial system that had centuries of tradition and patriotic hope behind it. Their trust in the offerings served as a strong tie to Judaism, and this had to be broken. Jesus shows His care by becoming a willing sacrifice for the Jews. In Him the perfect immolation was realized, and, truly, all the laws and ordinances were nailed to the cross with Him. Now, for those interested in a new relationship with God as revealed by Jesus, the sacrificial system needed no longer to be a hindrance, for God had completed it in His Christ. Even for Gentile pagan religions, steeped in the sacrificial systems common to the world into which the new message came, the final self-giving of Christ opened a door of freedom to understand and live within the new relationship to be had with God. The cross really was necessary for preparing the ancient world for the gospel. But in another way it prepares us for fellowship with God by revealing an ultimate comparison between the purposes of God and the purposes of man. Jesus was crucified because He obstructed the scheme of things. Man accomplishes his purposes through force, while God accomplished His through sacrificial care.

With each Sunday Christians are proclaiming a promise in history which Jews could never give. However, not only the observance of this day rather than the Sabbath, but our whole lives should be a testimony to the resurrection. Ignatius said, "Therefore (seeing Jesus as resurrected) they (the apostles) despised even death, and were proved to be above death."<sup>1</sup> We can scarcely realize the despondency experienced by those who had lost their beloved Master; their source of hope. The resurrection showed them that the last enemy, death, had been conquered. Jesus had overcome the world! The resurrection can give to us who feel the futility of our lives, the anxiety of the world and the fear and awesomeness of death a vital hope even to-day, and it is the church alone that can proclaim this care which God has for man.

In the Lord's Supper we are proclaiming a historical example of communion which witnesses to the relationship now established between God and man. But this example is more than a mere copying of something which happened in history. The error of our sacramental and example views of the Eucharist is their rather impersonal witness to the sharing motive of God. It is significant that in the Fourth Gospel where we should expect to find the portrayal of the Eucharist we are given instead the story of the washing of the disciples' feet. Jesus' words should pierce our ears just as theirs when He said, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."<sup>2</sup> The Last Supper, whether described by Jesus' words of His body and blood or by His washing of feet, as a historical event commands us to exemplify in our own lives the self-giving care and communion expressed by our Lord, the first representative of the Father.

The Fourth Evangelist carries this theme to its conclusion when he writes further in his pre-passion narrative the teaching of Jesus concerning the Holy Spirit. In the giving of the Comforter or Paraclete God expresses His continuous care for those who would relate themselves to Him. And as we study the functions of the Paraclete, it is clear that here is summarized the whole office of the spiritually endued church in presenting its gospel. What the Paraclete accomplishes are the things the church accomplishes through the care, comfort and fellowship it demonstrates within and without itself. While Jesus passes from the scene of world history as the direct witness and proclaimer of God, a new continuous witness, present even to-day, was established as God prepared the instrument of the church with the endowment of His Spirit. First, the Paraclete will teach and bring to remembrance what Jesus taught.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> Ign. Smyr. III.

<sup>2</sup> John 13: 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> John 14: 25-27.



God is certainly the root idea here, and this is our ground for confidence through the present pilgrimage. But also, just after the Paraclete and His office are named, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." The logical interpretation of this promise is in relationship to the Paraclete. It is the source of peace possessed by Jesus; it gave the Son's heart confidence in time of trouble and removed fear from Him. Here we draw close to the significance of Jesus' experience of the Spirit at His baptism by John. In the Spirit Jesus had peace of heart through His filial relationship with the Ground of all Being, God His Father. How often the church has thought that to experience the power of the Spirit of God means ability to work wonders, heal, or teach excellently, but these were the things Jesus did following His baptism. The author of the Fourth Gospel gives an insight into Jesus' true evaluation of the Spirit He possesses. It is His very peace and confidence, and this He gives to His church. If the Spirit Jesus gave were a spirit for works, healings and teachings, it would be a gift somewhat like the world gives, but the world has no remedy for anxiety arising from a feeling of loneliness and alienation, but the fellowship of God gives such peace.

In John 16: 8 the Paraclete will convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The confidence and peace each Christian has from his personal relationship with the Father and the knowledge that his Father cares for him are the things that can best convince the world. The world is convinced of sin when it realizes how it has spurned God's care. This is incomparably demonstrated in its crucifying of Jesus. He who comforted the poor, healed the lame, raised the dead, and fed the multitudes was hated by the religious leadership of His age who agitated the masses to call for His crucifixion. This is the meaning behind verse 16: 9, "The Paraclete will convince the world of sin, because they do not believe in Me." The world is convinced of righteousness because God has shown His care for His Son in raising Jesus from the dead, as in 16: 10. In the resurrection the Righteous One is vindicated. The Paraclete witnesses through the church to this event. The world is convinced of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. This world is the world of anxiety, guilt and meaninglessness, affording only life which ends in death. Consequently, this world depends on death for its very meaning. Legal systems retain their ultimate force because of the threat of death society places on its members. Power politics have their ultimate basis in the threat of destroying the lives of others. The system of life in this world is a picture of anxious, egocentric beings trying to expand and enlarge their "selves" against the forces of competition, sickness and finally death. The plight of man is that death always wins. Ironically, our lives can actually be symbolized by death; the realization of this paradox is the source of

meaninglessness man confronts in his own being. This world can only be overcome through a new relationship to the Father of life. We must be born again, i.e. attain a new relationship with a heavenly, eternal Father. The Paraclete gives us confidence of our relationship, and it is this relationship that breaks the power of this world, enabling Christians to speak of eternal life and to scoff at death. The world speaks of immortality, but this is only its dream. If an Epicurean had been resurrected, the world might have hope; but He Whom God raised from the dead was He Who could say, "Be not anxious about your life. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Thus, this world is judged, for its ruler, Death, has been overcome; and the possession of eternal life as lived out by Christ's followers is the witness of the Paraclete to this judgment.

The gospel to this generation must carry out the mission of the Paraclete. In our witness we declare the personal care of God concerning this world. We evaluate this world for what it is, meaningless in itself, and man for what he is, a being anxiously desiring to expand his vitality against the inevitable consequence of total loss of vitality. We bear witness to the great historical actions of God in which He had demonstrated His care for the world. We demonstrate our faith in God's care for us by the care we show for one another; and in doing this, we, as the body of Christ, are also living instruments of God's tangible care toward the world.

It is this theme that predominates in the epistles. The epistles are hardly to be considered as "newsy", personal letters. They were written to help young, growing churches carry out their divine mission, and might be termed for their day "letters on the presentation of the Christian gospel". As we have shown before, in these letters no particular event predominates in the author's thinking; and while they did deal with various doctrinal subjects, they show more consistent concern for the ethics and practices of the churches. For practice being more difficult than belief, in the infant church as to-day, they had continuously to be reminded of the care they were to give one another. The Johannine epistles are classics of this theme: "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Peter writes of the exiles, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable. . . . That word is the *good news* which was preached to you." <sup>3</sup> Nor must we forget Paul's approbation of love in I Corinthians, chapter thirteen.

How empty the Christian mission enterprise of this present day seems. We have organized boards to direct our mission cause. We have spent vast sums to send volunteers forth, but the very body that makes this possible does not show internal, personal care. It seems better to remain a heathen

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6: 25.

<sup>2</sup> I John 3: 11.

<sup>3</sup> I Peter 1: 22-25.

and receive Christian care than to become a Christian and receive none. Nor is missionary zeal a satisfactory substitute for *personal* care. It has become the deception of our age of materialism that "things" can adequately express the gospel. This is wholly false; the message communicated in the gospel is highly personal, and its vital realization must also be personal. The Communist ideology has shaken the world with the idea that they will care for their own. The Christian Church has lost its impact by slipping into the practice of each member for himself. Our best witness is not the missionary, but the church fellowship.

But the gospel as we have limned it seems to emphasize only the care of God in His personal relationship. There is, however, another aspect to the presentation of the gospel, of judgment and wrath because of the imperative, serious nature of its subject. The gospel speaks of the personal involvement of God in human affairs which is no nonchalant activity of God. He takes Himself seriously in this matter. No better illustration of this fact can be given than the cross of His Son. The epistles to Hebrews and of 2 Peter and Jude, all regarding apostasy, firmly claim that God intends man to take hold of his Christian relationship with unshakable constancy. Jesus will not tolerate men who lightly call him "Lord". However, we are mistaken if we think this serious aspect of the gospel is to be interpreted as giving us license to call all "non-believers" or "non-Christians", etc., eternally rejected men in order to "show them" just how seriously God takes this matter. Such judgment is not given to us. Paul writes most passionately when he nears this question. In Romans 2 he begins, "You are without excuse, O Man, whoever you are, when you judge another. . . ." In Romans 11: 25, 28 Paul expresses himself warmly, "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren. . . . As regards the gospel Israel are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers." We may conclude cautiously with E. Stauffer and H. A. A. Kennedy that Paul does not discuss clearly the fate of those rejecting the gospel.<sup>1</sup> Even such a ruthlessly clear passage as John 3: 36 becomes debateable when we recognize that the author writes that *believing* on the Son gives eternal life but that *disobeying* the Son means rejection. What is disobedience?

On the other hand, the wrath of God is nowhere more clearly expressed than toward those who have claimed the fellowship but have shown no care for the fellowship. The apostates previously mentioned were those who left the community in its time of need. In the parable of the sheep and goats,<sup>2</sup> the goats are those who have shown no care, given no drink, offered no food or clothing. To show care is to obey the Son and to do the

<sup>1</sup> E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, chapter 57, and H. A. A. Kennedy, *The Theology of the Epistles*, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 25: 31-46.

will of the Father. Perhaps no story in the Bible comes upon us so unexpectedly and shockingly as that concerning Ananias and Sapphira in Acts. Their hoarding showed their lack of care for the fellowship, and was called a lie to the Holy Spirit. There is no need to pile up here examples of the seriousness with which the early church looked upon the unity of the fellowship, but this attitude had its roots in their realization that their very gospel depended for its impact as well as its abiding reality upon the care that the believers showed one for another and for the whole of the world. This behaviour was now God's way of witnessing to the care He had for men.

If we now ask ourselves how shall the gospel be presented to-day, how shall we expect an individual to-day to respond, the answer cannot be specific, but must be derived along broad principles. The goal of this essay has been to delineate these principles, and what shall we conclude? First, we must say that we have the task of convincing men that God *really* does desire fellowship with a person as a father to his child. To communicate this fact Jesus was sent forth and a church was established. Secondly, we must realize that the best way to nurture and to communicate the type of relationship God wishes to establish is through the exemplification of fellowship and care. This includes the example of the church's internal fellowship and care as well as exemplification of this without the church. And by care, we broadly include the meeting of intellectual needs pertaining to our basic purpose of being as well as physical needs. Thirdly, we must be ever aware of the seriousness of the relationship we advance. The church carries a grave responsibility in being the very essence of God's relationship here on earth. Last, we must realize that the church exercises this function only so far as each member is willing to give as well as receive—both are necessary—care and fellowship.



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OF THE

VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE TOWN HALL  
OXFORD

ON

THURSDAY, 31st JANUARY, 1957

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PROFESSOR C. A. COULSON, F.R.S., in the Chair

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CONTEMPORARY BRITISH  
PHILOSOPHY  
AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF

BY

MICHAEL FOSTER, M.A.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE  
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# CONTEMPORARY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

By MICHAEL FOSTER, M.A.

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## SYNOPSIS

Contemporary British philosophy repudiates allegiance to a "school", but certain traits seem characteristic of it. It sees the task of philosophy as "analysis", i.e. as clarification, rather than as the attaining of new knowledge. It marks itself off from Logical Positivism, in that it does not restrict the claim to be meaningful to the factual and verifiable statements of science, history and common-sense, nor write off ethical, aesthetic and theological propositions as nonsense. (But though it concedes *meaningfulness* to these latter classes, it is questionable whether it concedes to them the capacity of being *true*.)

In considering the relation of contemporary philosophy to Christian faith, two standpoints are possible. (1) One may examine the statements of Christian faith or theology from the point of view of contemporary philosophy. The debate has hitherto been conducted, both by Christians and others, mainly from this standpoint. From this point of view a main question concerns the validity (in respect both of meaning and of truth) of theological propositions. Or (2) one may attempt to see contemporary philosophy in the light of Christian faith. An attempt at this is made in the paper. From this point of view a main question is whether the demand for clarity, in the form in which contemporary philosophy makes it, is not contrary to a belief in mystery which Christianity must hold.

Philosophy on a theological basis is an alternative to the existing contemporary philosophy.

In writing this paper I have drawn largely on Chapter 1 of my book *Mystery and Philosophy*, which is to be published shortly by the S.C.M. Press.

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### 1. *Historical*

A GREAT change has come over British academic philosophy in the last forty years. Up to the first World War, British universities were still dominated by the idealist philosophy of T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, B. Bosanquet, the Cairds etc. This dominant position has now been taken over by a different philosophy which originated largely in Cambridge, but has now its chief centre in Oxford and has spread rapidly among universities in many parts of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian world, though as far as I know not yet much outside these areas.

Professor B. Blanshard<sup>1</sup> has brought the features of the new philosophical scene into relief by contrasting the Oxford philosophy of the 1950's with that which he remembers of the Oxford of the period from

<sup>1</sup> B. Blanshard, a lecture *The Philosophy of Analysis*, Proceedings of the British Academy, 1952.

1913 when he studied there, and Mr. J. O. Urmson has written a brilliant and authoritative account of the development of the new movement between the two World Wars.<sup>1</sup>

The movement has historical roots in the tradition of British Empiricism. Hume is an important figure in its ancestry. Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, both of Cambridge, broke away from the prevailing idealism (to which both had been originally attached) in the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, and the new movement is very largely derived from them, with additional influences from the Viennese Logical Positivists (whose philosophy was introduced to English readers by A. J. Ayer in 1936), and an original genius, L. Wittgenstein. Among its representatives in England are J. Wisdom of Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> G. Ryle,<sup>3</sup> J. L. Austin, Stuart Hampshire,<sup>4</sup> P. F. Strawson,<sup>5</sup> D. L. Pears, G. J. Warnock,<sup>6</sup> G. A. Paul, R. M. Hare,<sup>7</sup> T. D. Weldon<sup>8</sup> and P. H. Nowell Smith<sup>9</sup> of Oxford.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *Characteristics: Repudiation of Allegiance to a School*

What is this philosophy? What are the tenets which its representatives hold in common? This is not a question which contemporary philosophers themselves would regard as legitimate, because they do not regard themselves as belonging to a school, or as subscribing to any common tenets. "There is no official doctrine of modern philosophy. Modern philosophy is a common pursuit of illumination in certain fields."<sup>11</sup> "I suggest that what is new and genuinely original in contemporary philosophy, or in the best of it, is just the fact that it offers not yet another new method or system, but (almost for the first time) a cultivated absence of method or system."<sup>12</sup> Whatever it may look like to an outsider, contemporary philosophers themselves regard themselves as pursuing not a certain kind of philosophy, but philosophy. They are more conscious of the differences which divide them from one another than of common characteristics. If there is any delimitation which they could accept, it would perhaps be

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Analysis, its Development between the two World Wars*, Oxford 1956.

<sup>2</sup> His writings are collected in two volumes, *Other Minds* and *Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, Blackwell, Oxford (1952 and 1953).

<sup>3</sup> *The Concept of Mind*, London, 1949. *Dilemmas*, Cambridge, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> *Spinoza*. Pelican, 1951.

<sup>5</sup> *Introduction to Logical Theory*, 1952.

<sup>6</sup> *Berkeley*. Pelican, 1953.

<sup>7</sup> *The Language of Morals*, Oxford, 1952.

<sup>8</sup> *States and Morals*, 1946. *The Vocabulary of Politics*, Pelican, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> *Ethics*, Pelican, 1954.

<sup>10</sup> Further examples of the writings of many of the authors named will be found in the two volumes *Logic and Language*, ed. A. G. N. Flew, Blackwell, Oxford, 1951 and 1953.

<sup>11</sup> G. J. Warnock in a broadcast talk in 1955.

<sup>12</sup> Stuart Hampshire, "Changing Methods in Philosophy," *Philosophy*, April, 1951, p. 144.



the characteristic of being *contemporary*. Thus a volume of essays by some of the younger contemporary philosophers bears the title *Revolution in Philosophy*. This implies a clear consciousness of distinction between this philosophy and philosophy as it has been pursued, or mis-pursued, in the past: but not a consciousness that there could be alternative methods which would be legitimate in the present.

Nevertheless, my purpose in this paper is to do what contemporary philosophers themselves are reluctant to do, namely to identify in contemporary philosophy, if not common tenets, a common spirit, and to try to understand its significance as a whole.

### 3. "Analysis"

In spite of the reluctance to adopt a common label, sheer pressure of practical convenience favoured the introduction of a title which should be a little more informative than "contemporary" is, and the name which has been most commonly accepted for the new movement is Philosophy of Analysis.<sup>1</sup>

Writers who have used this term have warned against treating it as more than a name.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it does seem to indicate correctly some of the common features of the new philosophy, and we may start by using it as a clue.

### 4. Rejection of Metaphysics

The name "Analysis" gives a clue especially to some things the new philosophy is not. It rejects the notion that philosophy is to be thought of as a means of knowing which is parallel and additional to the empirical knowledge of the sciences, history and common sense. E.g. that while science can discover truths about the world of the senses, philosophy can discover truths about a super-sensible world. Or that, while science is concerned with the explanation of particular happenings within the natural universe, the explanation of the universe *as a whole* is something

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the titles of the following works: *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. H. Feigl and W. Sellars, New York, 1949; *Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Max Black, Ithaca, New York, 1950; *Philosophical Analysis, its development between the two World Wars*, J. O. Urmson, Oxford, 1956; *The Philosophy of Analysis*, lecture by B. Blanshard, Proceedings of the British Academy, 1952; and of the periodical *Analysis*, which appeared first in 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Professor Max Black wrote in the introduction to his *Philosophical Analysis* (1950) "Instead of trying, where so many have failed, to analyse analysis, I shall confine myself to some informal comments upon the work of Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein; these may serve to recall the complexity of the recent historical background and act as a deterrent against treating 'Philosophical Analysis' as a 'school' having well-defined articles of association", and Margaret Macdonald in her introduction to *Philosophy and Analysis* (1954) wrote that the phrase "philosophical analysis" was "introduced as a technical philosophical term for the work of Moore and Russell. It was later extended to that of Wittgenstein, and is now applied to the work of any philosopher which resembles, or shows the influence of, one of these models".

which falls outside the scope of science and in that of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In these and similar conceptions philosophy is thought of as though it were a sort of super-science, pursuing truth and attaining knowledge in the same way as the sciences do, but somehow freed from the limitation of a science, in not being confined to a special field, or in not being subject to empirical tests.

The conception of Analysis involves a fundamentally different view of philosophy from this. According to it, the task of philosophy is not to inform, but to clarify; not to give new knowledge, by means of some faculty of speculation or intuition, but to enable me to know in a new way what I knew already. An early statement (or foreshadowing) of this view was given by G. E. Moore in his famous paper "The Philosophy of Common Sense" which was published in 1925.<sup>2</sup>

There are two senses in which we can be said to "understand what we mean". In one sense, I understand what I mean by a sentence if I can use it correctly, though I may never have reflected philosophically. E.g. a competent scientist who uses the phrase: "the light causes a blackening of the photographic plate," and a competent historian who writes: "the religious struggles culminating in the Thirty Years War had caused a widespread demand for religious toleration," certainly understand what they mean, without the need of a philosopher to tell them. And yet the philosophical analysis of the concept of cause, while not doing or undoing the work of the scientist or the historian, gives a new understanding of what they were meaning all the time.

Analysis, according to this view, is what philosophers in the past always have been doing, without realizing it, except in so far as their performance of their task has been distorted by their own misconceptions of what the task of philosophy is.

##### 5. *Linguistic Analysis*

What does philosophy analyse? Moore says it analyses Common

<sup>1</sup> This is a view which G. E. Moore held in 1910. See his *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 1-2. "It seems to me that the most important and interesting thing which philosophers have tried to do is no less than this; namely: To give a general description of the *whole* of the Universe, mentioning all the most important kinds of things which we *know* to be in it, considering how far it is likely that there are in it important kinds of things which we do not absolutely *know* to be in it, and also considering the most important ways in which these various kinds of things are related to one another. I will call all this for short, 'Giving a general description of the *whole* Universe', and hence will say that the first and most important problem of philosophy is: To give a general description of the *whole* Universe."

<sup>2</sup> In *Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. Muirhead, Second Series. Moore writes: "I am not at all sceptical as to the *truth* of such propositions as 'The earth has existed for many years past', 'Many human bodies have each lived for many years upon it', i.e. propositions which assert the existence of material things: on the contrary, I hold that we all know, with certainty, many such propositions to be true. But I am very sceptical as to what, in certain respects, the correct *analysis* of such propositions is," p. 216.

Sense. But how do I get access to the datum which is to be analysed? An older English tradition would have said: By looking into my own mind and consulting my own consciousness. Locke appeals to this datum in the following words: "I ask anyone, whether he be not invincibly conscious to himself of a different perception when he looks on the sun by day, and thinks on it by night,"<sup>1</sup> and the use of the term Common Sense still as it is used by Moore implies this possibility of consulting an inward authority. But modern philosophers deny such access to an inward oracle. In their view my only access to a man's meaning is through what he *says*, i.e. the datum of analysis is *language*, and this is what philosophy is concerned with.

### 6. *Logical Empiricism and Ordinary Language*

To think of philosophy as concerned with the meaning of words is not entirely an innovation. Socrates, who founded the tradition of European philosophy, devoted his inquiry to the search for definitions, asking such questions as: "What is justice?" "What is virtue?" But he assumed that each word had a single true meaning, if one could discover it, and that the philosopher's business was to elucidate this, transcending the varied and confused versions of it current among ordinary men. The modern analyst renounces this ideal. He sees it as his business to elucidate not "the true" meaning of words, but the meaning which language actually has in the mouths of those who use it. If common usage fluctuates, let him trace the fluctuations; it is not his business to establish for a word<sup>2</sup> a single unchanging meaning (which in fact in actual use it never has!) but to analyse the meanings which it has in actual use.<sup>3</sup>

Hence "ordinary language", instead of being thought of as something imperfect, which philosophy supersedes, remains as the datum which philosophy has to analyse.<sup>4</sup>

### 7. *Therapeutic Clarification*

It would be wrong to think that this is necessarily a matter of trivial importance (though, as with other philosophies, it is possible to pursue

<sup>1</sup> *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Bk. IV, ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Actually analytical philosophers are concerned rather with the meanings of sentences than of single words. This is another characteristic, which I mention only in passing.

<sup>3</sup> This empirical attitude is expressed in Wittgenstein's famous directive, "Don't look for the meaning, look for the use". "Don't look for the meaning"—otherwise you will fall under the influence of the old Socratic assumption that there is something which can be called *the* meaning of a word; "look for the use"—i.e. for the ways in which it is actually used.

<sup>4</sup> Analysis of ordinary language is one of the directions which contemporary philosophy takes, and is that with which this paper is principally concerned. Another is the attempt of formal logicians to construct a logically perfect language.

it in a trivial spirit). Logical analysis has been compared<sup>1</sup> to the task of the psycho-analyst. It is the work of revealing a man to himself. The gain to be derived from this may be thought of in terms of an increase in intellectual mastery. The tools are sharpened, and mistakes made in the past may be avoided in the future. Perhaps most contemporary philosophers tend to see it like this. But it can be seen differently. It may be part of the task of enabling a man to face and accept what it is that he believes, liberating him from dogmas which he could no longer wholly accept, but which haunted him because he had not faced them.<sup>2</sup>

### 8. *Philosophy of Analysis and Logical Positivism*

Contemporary philosophy is identified in the popular mind with "Logical Positivism". This is the name given to the philosophy of a group of Austrian philosophers (the "Vienna Circle"), which was introduced to the English-reading public by A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* in 1936. Its basic doctrine is that (apart from the tautological statements of logic and mathematics), a statement can have literal meaning only if it is empirically verifiable. This implies that the statements of logic, mathematics, natural science and history are to be accepted as meaningful: but that aesthetic, ethical, metaphysical and theological "statements", whatever emotional value they may have, are to be regarded as being literally nonsense.

Contemporary philosophers hotly repudiate the identification of their philosophy with Logical Positivism, and for a critic to fail to distinguish them from it is to forfeit at the outset any claim to be taken seriously by them. "I am not," said Mr. G. J. Warnock in a broadcast talk in 1955, "nor is any philosopher of my acquaintance, a Logical Positivist". What is repudiated in Logical Positivism is its "restrictive iconoclasm"; its *restriction* of meaning to empirically verifiable statements and its pejorative designation of other classes of statements as nonsensical. The contemporary philosopher is catholic, while the Logical Positivist is discriminated. He accepts *every* use of language as worthy of unprejudiced examination. Each will be shown to exhibit a logic of its own, which it is the philosopher's business to elicit, and ethical statements (e.g.) in being *different* from scientific statements are not therefore *worse*.

I confess, for myself, that I think nevertheless that "Logical Positivism" would be not at all a bad name for contemporary British Philosophy. "Positivism" seems to me to indicate its distinctive feature better than "Analysis" does, and the difference which I have just been describing could be safeguarded by distinguishing British

<sup>1</sup> By Professor H. A. Hodges.

<sup>2</sup> As Professor Ryle was haunted by the dogma of the "ghost in the machine". See *The Concept of Mind*, p. 9.

Positivism from the earlier Viennese form (in a somewhat similar way to that in which J. S. Mill distinguished his form of Utilitarianism from his father's and Bentham's without discarding the name). It is true that Oxford has broken through the Viennese restriction in respect of *meaning* (it does not confine meaning within the limits marked by the Verification Principle), but has it broken through the parallel restriction in respect of *truth*? Does it admit as *true* any statement outside those classes of statement which the Viennese philosophers marked off as meaningful?<sup>1</sup> But I shall continue in this paper to use Logical Positivism of the Viennese doctrine and Philosophy of Analysis of the contemporary one.

### 9. *Christian Faith in the Light of Contemporary Philosophy*

This philosophy clearly presents problems to Christian believers. To some students who come to the university from a Christian environment in home or school it can present itself as a challenge to their faith itself.

The challenge of Logical Positivism is obvious. If its division of statements into the meaningless and the nonsensical is accepted, theological statements will fall into the latter class. The challenge of the philosophy of analysis (or "Logical Empiricism") is more subtle and perhaps more penetrating. Starting from a recognition of the *difference* which separates theological from scientific statements, it inquires (or at least invites inquiry) into the peculiar character of the former. This is a new inquiry, because it is a new<sup>2</sup> idea, to believers as well as to unbelievers, that theological statements have any *peculiar* character at all. Archbishop Ussher, e.g. in *dating* the Creation in 4004 B.C. assumed that it was an historical event, i.e. that the logic of the statement "God created the world" is the same as that of the statement "Julius Caesar invaded Britain". Is this not perhaps a lesson which Christians are to learn from the new philosophy: viz. that a statement of faith is something different from an historical statement or a scientific one, and different again from a metaphysical one in the sense which metaphysics bears in the tradition of European philosophy? If Christian philosophers have been forced to ask: What then is the special nature of statements of faith?<sup>3</sup> have they not been forced into a reflection which is salutary and was needed from a Christian point of view?

The debate which has so far proceeded between philosophers of analysis and Christian philosophers and theologians has started from the basis which I have tried to indicate: on the side of the philosophers of analysis

<sup>1</sup> I return to this question later in this paper. See p. 49 below.

<sup>2</sup> I don't mean *brand* new. Classical Christian theology has recognized it, as the doctrine of "Analogy" bears witness. But perhaps we needed to have it brought home to us afresh.

<sup>3</sup> Usually referred to in philosophical discussions as "theological statements". This term is correct enough, but can be dangerous if it misleads us into thinking that the problem is only that of elucidating the (professional) *theologian's* use of language.

there is the new willingness to investigate the logic of theological statements without prejudging them to be meaningless, on the side of the Christian philosopher there is, or surely ought to be, a desire to discover the logical nature of the statements in which he expresses his faith. Some documents of this debate are collected in Flew and McIntyre's book *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (1955); the best critical appreciation of the state of the discussion which I know is that of Mr. B. G. Mitchell in his paper "Christianity and Modern Empiricism", which was given to this Institute in April, 1953; The most enlightening contribution to it from the Christian standpoint which I know is Mr. I. M. Crombie's Socratic paper on "Theology and Falsification".<sup>1</sup>

It is not my main purpose in this paper to continue this debate, but I venture to offer two suggestions before I pass on from it.

(i) From all that has been said so far, it might seem that there is no necessity, nor even possibility, of conflict between Christian belief and contemporary philosophy. If contemporary philosophy does not claim to set up a "world-view" (as, e.g. the materialist philosophies of nature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did) which is incompatible with that of Christianity, nor set up a standard of reason by which to judge theological argument, nor a standard of meaning by which to condemn it as meaningless; if it contents itself with examining the logic of what believers and theologians in fact say, without questioning their right to say it, how can there be any conflict between them? The conclusion that there can be no conflict here is commonly acceptable to the analytic philosopher, but is baffling to the Christian, who feels obscurely that there ought to be a point of conflict, but is unable to locate it.

On this I should like to press a point which has been made already by Mr. Mitchell,<sup>2</sup> but which analytical philosophers, so far as I know, are slow to take up. These philosophers assume that when they have conceded meaningfulness to theological statements they have conceded everything which can be demanded. But a Christian has to claim for his statements of faith not only that they are meaningful but that they are *true*. If he insists on following out what is involved in *this* conviction, I suspect that he will find that the situation of conflict has been restored.

(ii) Mr. Mitchell rejects on this ground (rightly, in my opinion) the philosophies which would interpret theological statements as something other than assertions—e.g. as expressions of attitudes to life, policies for living, presuppositions. If they were any of *these* things they would not be capable of being falsified nor verified, i.e. would not be the sort of statements which are capable of being true. Mr. Mitchell therefore himself wishes to revert to the position that they are assertions in the ordinary

<sup>1</sup> Published in "The Socratic" No. 5, Oxford (Blackwell), 1952: reprinted in Flew & McIntyre, *op. cit.*, pp. 109 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In the paper cited, p. 89.

sense—i.e. in the sense in which the assertions of science and history are so; while he safeguards the distinction between theological statements and factual statements of these other kinds by appealing to the principle of the doctrine of analogy, according to which predicates *change their sense* when they are applied to God.

I would like to see what is perhaps in some respects the same fundamental truth expressed in a different idiom. The doctrine of analogy thinks of theological statements as statements which we make about God. This is consonant with the Greek conception of theology, according to which theology is that part of philosophy which is directed towards God, or the divine, as its object (as "geology" is the study of the earth, "physiology" the study of nature, etc.<sup>1</sup>). Etymologically this meaning is embedded in the Greek-derived words "theology", "theological", which we still use. But their meaning has changed (though perhaps we are not wholly conscious of the change) under the impact of influences which are other than Greek. "Theology" is for us no longer a branch of philosophy, but is a study contrasted with philosophy. To call an argument or inquiry "theological" no longer means that it has God as its object; it means that it is based upon divine revelation, not solely upon reason. If we are clear that *this* is what theological statements are, then the task of logic in respect to theology will be conceived differently. It will no longer investigate the logic of statements about God, but that of *revelatory* statements. Mr. David Jenkins of Oxford has suggested in some unpublished talks that the task of logical analysis should be conceived in these terms, and this seems to me the proper approach.

#### 10. *Contemporary Philosophy in the Light of Christian Faith*

Though it is salutary and may be good training to bat on the opponents' wicket, the basic question for a Christian must be, not "What does Christian doctrine look like when seen from the point of view of contemporary philosophy?" but, "How is contemporary philosophy to be understood in the light of Christian faith?"

There is a difficulty here, which I do not know how to remove. How can a writer, though a Christian, claim that *his* point of view is the view of the Christian faith? Must not such an identification reduce Christian philosophy to a school or philosophy among other schools? Whereas in fact must we not expect that Christians who philosophize will fall into a great variety of schools? In face of these considerations, it seems that Christians too must follow the example of contemporary philosophers of Analysis in renouncing attachment to a school. What will distinguish them will be an allegiance of faith which is compatible with a variety (though not of course with all varieties) of schools.

<sup>1</sup> Newman was presumably using the word in this sense when he said "Theology is science of God".

The question will then arise: Is another allegiance discernible in the writings of contemporary philosophers and underlying the variety of opinions which is in conflict with that of Christian faith? Such an allegiance need not be consistently maintained, nor maintained in conscious opposition to Christian faith, since it will probably never have been recognized as being a position to which, within philosophy, an alternative exists.

It seems to me that there is such another allegiance, that there is a spirit abroad which inspires many at least of the diverse manifestations of contemporary philosophy. I shall try to delineate it, and shall illustrate what I say by quotations from contemporary philosophers; but I shall not assert that any of them is wholly to be identified with it, nor claim that any of us is wholly free from it.

This spirit shows itself in a demand for clarity, and in the assumption that this demand can always be met. Or rather (since all philosophy has been in a sense a search for clarity, and has assumed that it is to be had) the distinctive character of contemporary philosophy, is its demand for clarity of a particular kind. It demands a clarity from which the mysterious has been excluded, and assumes "that nothing is really puzzling and that therefore there cannot be anything unclear that we can legitimately want to say".<sup>1</sup>

"Nothing is really puzzling" means "Nothing is really mysterious". Just as in the realm of science "mystery" designates only what has *not yet* been explained, and it is assumed that the mystery will be eliminated as science advances, so in philosophy mystery is only obscurity which has not yet been clarified.

The following are examples of this demand and this assumption. "There is no unfathomable mystery in the world."<sup>2</sup> Professor Margaret Macdonald said of the periodical *Analysis* that it is "hospitable to many points of view, so long as they are definite and clearly stated".<sup>3</sup> As long ago as 1903 G. E. Moore wrote in his preface to *Principia Ethica*: "It appears to me that in Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements of which its history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause; namely, to the attempt to answer questions without first discovering *what* question it is that you desire to answer."

This passage was cited both by Professor John Wisdom and by Susan Stebbing in their contributions *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*.<sup>4</sup> Professor Stebbing's comment is especially apt to my present purpose; she writes,

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is quoted from a letter of Mr. I. M. Crombie. It was he who made plain to me that clarity (not analysis) is the distinguishing characteristic of the contemporary philosophical spirit with which I am here concerned.

<sup>2</sup> M. Schlick, "Meaning and Verification," in Feigl and Sellars, *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophy and Analysis*. Introduction, p. 1, my italics.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. P. Schilp; Wisdom, p. 421, Stebbing, pp. 518-19.



“To think is to be asking oneself questions and seeking to find the answers to them: hence to think clearly it is necessary to see exactly *what* the question is to which one wants an answer”.

If thinking is this, thought must end in the elimination of mystery. This is to demand that the answer shall be cast in terms which we have specified beforehand, and this implies that the truth of the matter is not such as to exceed the measure of our understanding. It is to claim a mastery of the human intellect over the subject of investigation.

A similar mastery over nature was claimed when the experimental method was introduced into natural science at the beginning of the modern period. The essence of this method is that by it nature is compelled to answer questions *framed by man*. This is the meaning of Bacon's famous phrase about “putting nature to the question”, as Kant saw and explained 150 years later.<sup>1</sup> The method of experiment distinguishes modern science from the contemplative study of nature conceived by the Greeks and medieval scholastics. It is a means to man's achievement of mastery over nature in the technical sense,<sup>2</sup> but in a subtler sense the application of the method itself, even apart from the practical application of its results in technology, is a claim of mastery for the human intellect over the processes of nature. It is a claim that there is nothing ultimately mysterious in nature, no truth in it to be revealed which would exceed the possibility of being expressed in terms of the answer to a question framed by man beforehand.<sup>3</sup>

If I am right, the philosophical spirit which we are considering is parallel to this spirit of natural science.<sup>4</sup> It rests on similar claims for human reason, and is inspired by a similar ambition for human dominion.

### 11. *An Alternative Conception of Philosophy*

To deny mystery is not to deny the existence of anything which is beyond the comprehension of human intellect. It is to deny the possibility of *saying* anything about what exceeds the comprehension of human intellect. “What can be said at all can be said clearly; and

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*. Preface to Second Edition; B xii-xiii, E. Tr. Kemp Smith, pp. 19-20; though Kant, characteristically, speaks of “reason” not of “man” as putting questions to nature. For a modern statement of this characteristic of natural science cf. Mary Hesse, *Science and the Human Imagination*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>2</sup> As the prophets of this movement proclaimed. Bacon said knowledge is power, and the principal part of his *Novum Organum* bears the title *Aphorismi de Interpretatione Naturae et Regno Hominis*. Descartes claimed to introduce a new physic which would make men “the lords and possessors of nature”. (*Discourse on Method*, Pt. VI, Everyman, ed. p. 49.)

<sup>3</sup> It may be that some recent developments in physics are bringing about a modification of their claim within science itself (Quantum mechanics, Indeterminacy Principle). I have no competence to assess their significance. But they do not reintroduce mystery into nature in the old sense of those for whom nature was divine.

<sup>4</sup> I would not be taken to imply that this method in natural science is wrong. Man is commanded to subdue the earth in Genesis 1; cf. Psalm 8.

whereof one cannot speak, thereof must one be silent."<sup>1</sup> This is to deny not God, but Revelation; or more accurately, it is to deny that language can be the vehicle of revealed truth.

Revelation is of mystery, but mystery revealed is not eliminated, but remains mysterious. It remains object of wonder, which is dispelled when mystery is eliminated. There is no method by which revelation can be commanded: "it is" (in the Bible) "not a thing to be procured from God by any technique."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, it is not subject to human mastery.

I have argued elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that *Greek* philosophy, in its main tradition, was a philosophy of revelation. It was based on the assumption that Nature or Being, which was itself divine, disclosed itself to the contemplating intellect.<sup>4</sup> Hence philosophy on the Greek conception not only originates in wonder (as both Plato and Aristotle say it does), but ends in wonder.

The notion of philosophy as revelational excludes the notion which we found to be assumed in contemporary philosophy, that philosophical doctrines are to be thought of as answers to questions or solutions of problems.<sup>5</sup> Revelation is *prevenient* to our problems. The truth here is similar to that expressed by Karl Jaspers, as quoted by Mr. Mitchell: "A proved God is no God. Accordingly, only he who starts from God can seek him. A certainty of the Existence of God, however rudimentary and intangible it may be, is a premise, not a result of philosophical activity."<sup>6</sup>

Revelation is of a mystery. A question which specifies the terms in which an answer is to be given, determines in advance that it shall not be mysterious, because mystery, when revealed, exceeds what we could have anticipated.

Gabriel Marcel has distinguished between "problems" and "mysteries": science for him is concerned with problems, metaphysics with mysteries. It is a mistake to try to turn mystery into problem.

<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein, in the Preface to *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (1921; E. Tr. 1922). Cf. *ibid.*, 6.522: "Everything which can be known, can be expressed in the propositions of science. Besides that, there is the mystical, which is inexpressible."

<sup>2</sup> *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson, s.v. "Reveal".

<sup>3</sup> In the book already mentioned, ch. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Aletheia," the Greek term meaning "truth", is used to denote this character of Being, the character, namely, of disclosing itself fully. The word is derived etymologically from roots meaning "not remaining hidden". M. Heidegger paraphrases it as "Die Unverborgenheit des Seienden" ("the unhiddenness of the real").

<sup>5</sup> As examples of this assumption, compare the following: "All philosophers must take account of the same facts; of particularity and repetition, physical objects and minds, moral and aesthetic values, necessary and contingent truth, etc. What is important is whether they satisfactorily explain these facts, or such of them as they consider; *whether they solve philosophical problems*, not whether they use one trick, or wave one banner, rather than another." Margaret Macdonald, *Philosophy and Analysis*, Introduction, p. 7. My italics.

<sup>6</sup> Jaspers, *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, p. 36; quoted by B.G. Mitchell, *loc. cit.*, p. 93.

Problems are solved by the application of technique, whereas a mystery transcends every conceivable technique. The sphere of techniques is the sphere of man's achievement, whereas mysteries are subjects of revelation.<sup>1</sup>

The conception of philosophy against which contemporary British philosophy is in revolt is a conception of philosophy as revelation. In the case of the continental idealist philosophers, it is obvious that they conceived their role in this way. The pictures and interpretations of the universe which they give differ from religious revelations only in the claim that they have been received through the vehicle of reason. But this revelational exercise of reason was not confined to those Rationalist philosophers, who produced metaphysical speculations on the grand scale. It extended also to the sober philosophers of the British Empiricist tradition. Thus Locke says, "Reason is natural revelation".<sup>2</sup>

This claimed *revelatory* function of reason—this seems to be essentially what contemporary philosophy rejects; and I cannot defend it (although I was myself brought up in a philosophy based upon it, of which no doubt I bear the traces still). In this paper I wish to defend the idea of a philosophy based upon revelation, but not of a philosophy based upon *natural* revelation. Natural revelation is open to attack from two sides, not from one only; not only from the side of those who reject revelation as a means of knowledge, but from the view-point of a different conception of revelation.

This different view-point is expressed in the words of Canon T. R. Milford, in the preface to his book *Foolishness to the Greeks*.<sup>3</sup>

"This book expounds a definite point of view, which might be called "Christian Realism", in the sense in which Kraemer speaks of Biblical Realism. It tries to interpret life and the world from a position inside the historical body whose centre is Christ. It invites others to stand where we stand and to see if they can see what we see."

"It invites others to stand where we stand, and to see if they can see what we see." Yes; but it does not assume that what can be seen from here must be equally visible to others from where they at present are. Such thinking will be theological, not in the etymological sense of that word, but in the sense which it has now come most commonly to bear:<sup>4</sup> the sense, namely, of *apocryptological*, or "based on revelation", where it is assumed that the revelation is communicated, not universally to all men through their reason, but through the Spirit indwelling a certain community. "Arm-chair revelation" is suspect from this point of view, as much as arm-chair speculation is from the point of view of the scientist.

<sup>1</sup> For all this see Marcel *The Philosophy of Existence and Being and Having*; in the latter volume especially the "Metaphysical Diary" (which was written between 1928 and 1933).

<sup>2</sup> *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV, ch. xix, §4.

<sup>3</sup> London, 1953.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 50 above.

Wittgenstein is said once to have described what he did as "one of the heirs of the subject which used to be called philosophy".<sup>1</sup> It is as though different elements which were held in solution in the traditional philosophy have now been precipitated. Perhaps natural science is one, and linguistic analysis another. Certainly theology is another such element, and if it did not already enjoy a better title, could put in its own claim to be "one of the heirs".

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by M. Macdonald, *Philosophy and Analysis*, p. 11.



943RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 18th FEBRUARY, 1957

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R. L. F. BOYD, A.C.G.I., PH.D, in the Chair

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## SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC

By

DOUGLAS C. SPANNER, A.R.C.S., PH.D., D.I.C.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC

By DOUGLAS C. SPANNER, A.R.C.S., PH.D., D.I.C.

## SYNOPSIS

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Science, which is a human activity with a distinctive approach of its own, has a prestige which is both great and well-deserved. Yet its method and results often appear to be in conflict with the approach and content of Christian faith. This conflict, which is real enough to many thinking people, arises not from the inherent nature of science and faith respectively, but rather from the imperfections of our fallen personality, imperfections both of will and of understanding. So long as these remain the conflict will be a source of inner tension. However, these considerations apart, the methodology of science provides very weighty and powerful arguments for the validity of the historic Christian attitude to revelation and to life. While we must recognize that science is a partial activity of man, limited by the *observer*-attitude; while faith is an activity in which man must be a *partaker*, and as a totality (Mark 12: 30), it still remains that there are close parallels between them. In both man must necessarily start with presuppositions, beliefs, taken for granted. In both, knowledge of Reality is founded not on reason, but on perception. The attitude of both the scientist and the conservative Christian to authority is very similar; science is one of man's most authoritarian pursuits. Certainty in each arises from analogous grounds; though in faith it springs from a deeper and more fundamental level. The disparagement that while science gives certain "proof", faith yields something far less ultimate is a reflection rather on human nature. Finally, both encounter the element of startling paradox. Even within the confines of a single department—physics—Science has had to reconcile, what, for centuries, seemed sheer contradictions. Christian Apologetic should not wonder, therefore, if in its far wider sphere, it meets the same situation.

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1.1. OF all the influences that have contributed to fashion the mind of twentieth-century western man that of science is surely one of the most predominant. Its range is all-pervasive; not only do the fruits of scientific research meet us at every turn in our domestic and public lives, their very use requiring of us and confirming in us a scientific twist of mind; but even when the immediate results of scientific inquiry are too intangible or abstruse to make an immediate practical impact on us—as for instance in the case of cosmological theory—they nevertheless excite a fascination and a respect which enhances in its turn the prestige of Science, or more precisely, of the scientific method and approach. Thus from both points of view, oriented towards the twin domains of Applied Science and pure Science, respect for the achievements of the scientific

approach is forced upon us, and few escape being, in certain contexts quite overwhelmed by it.

Now the purpose of this paper is certainly not to belittle science. In all fairness we must admit that the invention of the scientific method has been one of the greatest intellectual achievements of man. To many at the present day this may hardly seem so—after all, isn't science often described as just "organized common sense?" How then can we regard its procedure as anything other than ordinary? The truth, however, is that we have been conditioned so thoroughly by the scientific way of looking at things that many of us can scarcely even imagine another way of doing so. But so far is the scientific method from being obvious, that for many centuries it never occurred to the mind of man. The Chinese and the Indians, broadly speaking, never thought of it; and it was left to arise, almost accidentally, among the numerically weak and insignificant populations of the Greek islands. It is with the scientific method as with our use of Arabic numerals; familiarity has in one sense bred contempt, and we fail to realize what a tremendous intellectual advance was signalled by the invention of each.

The relevance of this to our present subject is obvious. Science not only possesses an immense prestige in the eyes of twentieth-century man; it is a *justified* prestige. Science is a really big thing; it deserves the respect it has. Both facts are of importance to us. The thesis of this paper is that the practice and progress of science form a very helpful and illuminating analogy for Christian apologetic. But were the prestige of science not justified the analogy would be worthless or positively harmful; were it not also widely accepted it would be futile. As it is both, we may reasonably hope that any valid parallels drawn between the life of the scientist on the one hand, and of the Christian believer on the other, will be both arresting and effective.

1.2. To these considerations we may add a further one. Rightly or wrongly, very many people to-day regard science and religion as mutually antagonistic. In a limited and very special sense this is undoubtedly true; but in the sense in which the antagonism is ordinarily understood it is not true—at least that is our present thesis. This misconception however, if such it can be shown to be, challenges us in two ways: firstly it constitutes an additional incentive to clarify the relation between the approaches of science and Christian faith, for the double advantage may be gained of proving science not merely not an adversary, but rather a positive friend; and secondly, it carries with it a warning that in the real interests of our Christian faith we must never, for the sake of apparent immediate advantage fall into the snare of dishonest argument. The author speaks from experience; it is perilously easy to try at all costs, with our tongue in our cheek, to enlist the authority of science on our side by arguments that we know in our hearts would never bear the light



of informed criticism. It may be that if we are honest, we shall have to concede that science appears directly opposed to our faith; but to do so is far more likely in the long run to establish our cause than if we obstinately cling to arguments which do not carry conviction even to ourselves. All life contains the element of paradox, the apparent head-on contradiction. The inner life of science is no exception to this rule, nor is the still wider life which embraces science and other disciplines as part. But the very forceful argument which can be drawn from this fact is entirely lost if we stubbornly refuse to admit paradox. When all is said and done science and Christian faith will still for a long time confront one another with apparently contradictory assertions. Let us accept the probability of this in advance; there we shall be saved from the impossible and damaging position of having to reject on principle, a position for which possibly science can offer very solid evidence.

### 2.1. *The Characteristics of Science*

We must begin our considerations by endeavouring to get an adequate idea of what we mean by science. To begin with, the term is apt to mislead. In the minds of many "Science" is almost a personal being, like the Greek goddess Athene, presiding over a realm of human endeavour. This sort of idea arises very naturally from our way of speaking—"Science fights superstition", "Science conquers disease", "Science has immensely enriched life". These are common expressions, and unconsciously they condition our minds to thinking of science as a sort of Entity existing in its own right, and very often semi-personified. A man serves the cause of "Science". Of course, a moment's reflection shows that this personification of science ought to be regarded as a mere figure; but so fundamentally is the idea of God implanted in man's nature that except where God is consciously present to his thoughts ideas like Science, or Evolution, or the State or Reason tend to find themselves—permit the expression—gravitating into that category, and becoming almost deified.

We must therefore free ourselves from this verbal tangle at the outset. When science is set in opposition to Christian faith what is meant is one of two things: either, that the *results* of scientific inquiry, its established facts, are at variance with the assertions of Christian faith (for instance, that drought is due to physical causes, not to Divine displeasure); or that the *method* of scientific inquiry is capable of leading man into all truth; all the truth, that is, essential to his fulfilment stated like this, Science does not appear as an Entity; and the subject of our discussion takes the form of a comparison between the scientific method, and in a subsidiary sense its results, and the practice of the Christian in the realm of the spiritual life. Whenever the word "science" is used, therefore, it must be understood in this sense; man is the entity, science is a method and result of his activity.

What are the characteristics of the scientific method? In the very broadest sense it is conditioned and in part defined by a particular human attitude, the observer-attitude. The characteristic of this is that, as far as possible, the man remains outside the situation he is studying. He is an observer only, and in moments of reflection is at once conscious of his "outsideness", as a position deliberately taken up. In this sense we can speak truly of the scientific study of history, or art, or religion, no less than of nature. This "outsideness" constitutes both the strength and the weakness of science; its strength, for it means that science connotes impartiality and universality, its results being without personal bias and therefore acceptable equally to all; and its weakness, for it excludes science for ever from the battleground where the real conflicts of human life are fought out.

But the observer-attitude is only a definition in part; it covers only the collection of material. The scientific method implies also a rational element, for the collection of facts is followed by their logical arrangement into an ordered body of knowledge; and here again the approach of science can be directed towards any department of human life. If science has limitations (and it clearly has), they belong to its method, not to its subject matter.

Different sciences, of course, are distinguished in both the above respects. They employ different methods for gathering their facts, different modes of observation; and they differ in the way in which they attempt to relate these facts together. At this point however we shall narrow our conception of science rather drastically, both for reasons of space and also for reasons of clarity. We shall confine the rest of this discussion to the natural sciences, such as physics, chemistry and biology; but in doing so we shall gain far more than we shall lose. On the one hand it is probably true to say that, to the average man the prestige of science belongs mostly to the natural sciences; on the other hand there is about them something tangible and immediate which does not at once make its appeal with the others (such as history or psychology). But the analogy will hold with these also, if suitable changes are made in terminology and emphasis; the narrowing down is therefore more apparent than real.

## 2.2. *Nature of Scientific Activity*

From now on therefore, "scientific" refers to the natural sciences. The method of fact-gathering here is by means of observation with the physical senses, pre-eminently vision. Following this descriptive stage comes the explanatory one, the attempt to relate facts together in terms of physical cause and effect. This involves the invention of hypotheses and theories, and this again is followed by a final appeal to observation—again sense-observation is meant—to see if consequences logically derived from the hypotheses correspond to facts.

There are several highly suggestive elements in this pattern of scientific procedure, but before we enlarge on them it will be useful to consider an analogy, in simple terms, of the nature of scientific activity. It is due, I believe, to the Cambridge physicist, the late Sir Arthur Eddington. According to him the scientist is like a child sitting before a box containing the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. He removes the curiously shaped pieces one-by-one, and looks at them carefully. They correspond to the facts of observation of the scientist. Sometimes they appear to stand quite in isolation; at others the child sees sooner or later that the piece he has just picked up can be fitted into what is evidently its proper place on the edge of a section of the picture already built up. On the scientific side of the analogy we say that the new observation had been "explained" in terms of older and more familiar ones, facts which have already been brought together into an ordered group by means of an hypothesis. Such an hypothesis in the case of the puzzle, might take the form of a suggestion that particular dark lines on certain pieces really represent parts of a cart-wheel, and the child hopes to build up the complete picture with the help of such suggestions. Thus to the scientist hopes to arrive at a unified picture of physical nature with the help of hypothesis such as relativity or the leafy nature of floral organs, suggestions which individually help him to unify particular and restricted groups of observations.

### 2.3. *Relevance to the Activity of Faith*

Now what is the relevance of this picture of scientific activity to the life of faith? How can we argue from the validity of the scientific approach to that of the Christian believer? The points of resemblance are in fact numerous and weighty. Let us take them in order.

One of the criticisms levelled against Christian faith is that it requires a position of fundamental importance to be taken for granted. Something of supreme moment must be "believed". No proof is offered, nor, it is beginning to appear, can one be offered. This, it is argued, is a state of affairs unacceptable to intellect and reason, and certainly it is a sore point with many young objectors trained to think scientifically. The objection is often quite sincerely held; "Science teaches us to take nothing for granted but to test every hypothesis; and here at the very outset of the Christian life we are required to take on trust a position so fundamental that should it prove untenable, the entire fabric erected on it would come down in ruins." This seems to many to be an unreasonable requirement for a rational being; and even before the advent of modern science the objection was evidently felt to be so weighty that immense efforts were made by Christians—like Ambrose and Thomas Aquinas—to erect irrefutable arguments in support of this basic article; I refer, of course, to that which asserts the existence of God. All such arguments have failed to carry conviction, and we are back where we were before.

When we turn to science, however, we find a strikingly similar state of affairs. The scientist picks out, one after another, the fragments of the puzzle. He may spend his entire life looking for the connections of a single obstreperous piece, only to fail. But unless he is a quite unusual sort of scientist he never pauses to ask, "Am I sure that all the pieces belong to *one* puzzle?" In spite of his domestic experience—if he is a father—he maintains an unshakeable conviction that the puzzle is all of one piece, and that every genuine observation has its place in a single unified pattern. He does more; for he not only entertains this conviction, he is also persuaded that the single pattern is of such a sort as to be intelligible, capable of being "spotted" by himself; that is, with his human faculties.

Now these two presuppositions, of the Unity and Intelligibility of physical nature, are closely similar to the presuppositions of the Christian life so clearly expressed in Heb. 11: 6. In proportion as they are strongly held, scientific inquiry is vigorously pursued; where they are seriously questioned, to that extent the intellectual impulse of science dies; where they are genuinely disbelieved, no real science is possible at all. They are entirely fundamental to the life of science. Yet neither is susceptible of proof *a priori*. They can only be demonstrated as increasingly probable *a posteriori*. Nor is either self-evident. Where polytheism or animism reigns men would hardly expect unity in natural phenomena; and where the gods are capricious they would hardly expect intelligibility. If it is not true that polytheism is self-evidently false, neither can it be true that the presuppositions of science are self-evidently true. For the scientist no less than for the Christian, the foundations of his life must be taken for granted; he that comes into the laboratory must believe that there is a single pattern in nature, and that it will be rewarding to seek it. For to live without presuppositions is the prerogative of Absolute Being, not of the Creature. Christian faith therefore, rightly involves the element of presupposition.

#### 2.4. *The Knowledge of Reality*

There are two categories, the occupants of which cannot be defined; will o' the wisps, and concrete realities. The former cannot be defined, enclosed in words, because of their indefiniteness; they *evade* definition. The latter cannot be defined just because of their concreteness; they *transcend* definition. Thus the abstract idea "table" can be defined; the concrete reality, "*this* table", cannot. It is important to recognize that Faith cannot really be defined not because it is indefinite, but because it is concrete. This is shown by the fact that many very definite things can nevertheless be said about it; its concreteness means that there is no end to them.

We have just seen that one thing that can be said about Faith is that it involves presupposition; we now come to another of its aspects.

Unlike many branches of mathematics, science is concerned with reality, with the real world. The scientist is not interested in geometries as such as the mathematician is; he wants to know which geometry fits the facts of nature. This concern with reality is a very obvious characteristic of science; but at the moment we merely want to ask—In his approach to the knowledge of the real world, what constitutes the first and basic step? There was a time when men believed that in this quest reason by itself was adequate. The early philosophers were rationalists in this sense. They believed that from their arm-chairs—or their early equivalent—logical inquiry would enable them to establish the nature of reality. The rise of science put an end to this attitude. Nature's laws were not necessary laws, deducible by reason; they were contingent, they might have been otherwise, and their form could only be discovered by observation. Thus it came about that in the search for real knowledge, the recognition dawned that perception must take the first place, reason the second. Only when perception has acquainted her with the facts can reason proceed to weave them into her description of the real world. The doctrine of the self-sufficiency of reason can now be of interest to those alone who are concerned with fantasies.

It is at this point that the procedure of science is again of interest to the Christian. Faith is often considered to be in antithesis to reason: As Watts says:

“ Where reason fails with all its powers  
There faith prevails and love adores.”

It is hardly a fair criticism of Watts, but it can be pointed out that in Scripture faith is set in antithesis, or is compared, not to reason, but to sense:

“ We walk by faith, not by sight.”<sup>1</sup>

“ Moses endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.”<sup>2</sup>

“ God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

“ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”<sup>4</sup>

“ The hearing of faith.”<sup>5</sup>

In all these passages there is a clear reference to faith under the metaphor of one or other of the physical senses. Faith in other words possesses the aspect of perception; it is “ new eyes ”; once we were blind, now we see. “ He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness ”<sup>6</sup> expresses the same truth; so does “ The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.”<sup>7</sup> It would hardly be too much to say that the contact, by faith, of the believer with Christ is spoken of metaphorically in Scripture under the image of every one of the five senses.<sup>8</sup>

Now that is the significance of this to our inquiry? Briefly it is this. It means that when Scripture asserts that the “ righteousness of God is

<sup>1</sup> II Cor. 5: 7.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 11: 27.

<sup>3</sup> II Cor. 4: 6.

<sup>4</sup> John 3: 3.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 3: 2.

<sup>6</sup> John 8: 12.

<sup>7</sup> John 5: 25.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. I John 1: 1. Ps. 45: 8. Cant. 2: 3.

revealed from faith to faith"<sup>1</sup> rather than that it is discoverable by reason, it is only saying the same sort of thing as that which science has already concluded holds in the physical realm; perception must precede reason if we would gain contact with reality, and not merely entertain fantasies of our own devising. But perception is merely one pole; in a sense it means nothing more than the being open to receive impressions. The other pole, without which perception is unfulfilled, is revelation. Unless the table makes an approach to me, reveals itself, through the medium of light my eye does not see it, and can, in fact, do precisely nothing about it; and unless God reveals Himself to my faith through the medium of Spirit, I must for ever remain ignorant of Him. I can never by searching find Him out. Where then does reason enter? It comes in of course afterwards, just as in science. When faith has apprehended spiritual truth reason has still to work out its implications, or reconcile truth with truth; and the Bible places no premium on mental laziness. But again it belongs to our very status as creatures that spiritual perception, with its complement of revelation, should have the primacy over reason; and any attempt to formulate rationally a "religion without revelation" not only runs counter to the intuitions of the great majority of men but finds no support from the experience of science.

### 2.5. *Certainty in Science and Religion*

Of course, it is not intended to imply that the parallel between faith as a mode of perception and the physical senses is a perfect one. It is sometimes said that no analogy is perfect, but that is merely a tautology; were it perfect it would no longer be an analogy, but an identity. Faith has profound differences from sight; but so has sight from hearing. One difference is that faith, in the Biblical sense, is very much less a universal characteristic of men than is sight; and it is to this fact that we must attribute a situation often emphasized to the disparagement of Christian belief. Science, it is maintained, yields assured results, perfect certainty. Everyone knows that sugar dissolves in tea; if he doesn't, he can easily ascertain it for himself and all controversy will end. But in matters of religion, where faith is involved, it is far different. Except for obvious aberrations, there is only one science the world over; but there are numerous great religions. Even where differences of opinion do exist among scientists they are essentially temporary, for the procedure of science contains within itself the element of self-correction. In its final appeal to observation it possesses a technique which, applied consistently and with ability, is ultimately infallible. Only if "science" repudiates the scientific method can it land in permanent error. Can anything comparable be said for religion?

There are several things to be said in answer to this criticism. In the first place the certainty of science is hardly so cast-iron as it appears. It

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1: 17.

is based, of course, on the reliability of our sense-observations. But what we see, for instance, may be mirage, illusion or hallucination. Even if it be argued that hallucinations are rare among scientists actually engaged in their work it is still true that the other two categories, or something like them, are exceedingly common. Every time we see a simple reflection we have to recognize that we are confronted with an observation we cannot accept at its face value; there isn't a chair the other side of the mirror. It may be impatiently objected to this that of course any reasonable person knows how to interpret such a situation; but the fact is that reason has little to do with it. A Cambridge professor of logic who had never seen a shiny surface in his life would undoubtedly be fooled; and even a dog will in turn learn that there is not another dog behind the glass. Once we are outside the realm of the familiar the difficulty of interpreting sense impressions becomes at once obvious, as every high-power microscopist knows. The fact is that we have formulated a working series of rules-of-thumb, by the use of which we more-or-less unthinkingly decide whether we can accept our observations at their face value. But they remain rules-of-thumb, formulated—unconsciously as a rule—as a result of experience and not of logic, and liable on occasion (witness the controversy about flying saucers) to prove inadequate. Into these rules enter such diverse elements as the "majority opinion" of our senses and of occasions, our distance from our object, the weighted opinion of others, subjective calculations of probability, and a whole complex of considerations elaborated by reason. Experimentally of course, it is found that by-and-large our arbitrary rules of decision do lead to general agreement, and that is their justification. But it can hardly be maintained that the "facts" of science are of cast-iron certainty. Mass hypnotism does occasionally occur.

In the second place it can be pointed out that Christian certainty does follow, to quite a large degree, the analogy of science. According to Scripture we are members one of another; we are never intended to function in isolation. The Christian's certainty does, therefore, to some extent (just as the scientist's) depend on the fact that others believe as he does. Did no one else but he in all history believe in Christ as Divine there would be a grave doubt whether this belief of his was not indicative of obstinacy rather than of insight, for the Divinely-established solidarity of the human race must mean that all truth, whether scientific or religious, must be to some extent public property, in actuality no less than in potentiality. Thus the element of the agreement of opinion, in distinguishing fantasy from fact, has a place here also. Admittedly it should not be over-emphasized; but then neither should it be in science. The element of individual training is important in both spheres; the trained microscopist can see a reality which very many inexperienced observers fail to see, and the man who, like Abraham has walked all his life with God has an insight into Divine realities which the casual majority may repudiate.

What is important for our purposes is that the basis of certainty in both cases includes the element, not of logical inescapability, but of agreement of opinion.

## 2.6. *The Moral Question.*

Here however we run up against a distinction. It applies in two ways. Faith operates in the moral sphere; the physical senses do not. A bad man can read a thermometer, and his badness has no direct relevance to the observation he makes. We should be surprised if he observed anything differently from a good man, always supposing he is a capable scientist. But the same is not true in the spiritual sphere. The Scriptures make plain that a mean man sees God, if he sees Him at all, as mean; the merciful man as merciful, and so on. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Certainly this state of affairs has its analogy in the realm of science, for the imperfect eye sees things as deformed, or only in monochrome; whereas the perfect eye sees them complete. But the moral sphere of faith has a very important difference from the physical sphere of sense. Men have a vested interest in seeing things correctly, and in hearing them distinctly, and this gives them a decided inclination to do so by all means in their power. That is why they wear spectacles and use deaf aids. But, as Scripture declares and as experience only too often corroborates, these same men rarely feel the inclination at all costs to attain moral uprightness. Where they appear to do so, all that is frequently indicated is a perverse desire to attain one virtue at the expense of another—the pursuit, shall we say, of honesty (for respectability's sake) at the cost of disinterestedness. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."<sup>1</sup> The result of this is that clear-sighted faith is much less universal among men than clear-sighted vision, and the majority rules which the scientist applies, albeit unconsciously, to determine the status of his observations cannot be employed to anything like the same extent. It is this more than anything else that means the exchange of the universally accepted and agreed conclusions of primary scientific data—the existence of which is one of the chief glories of science—for the hazy notions and conflicting opinions that so dominate the world of religion. Yet the Biblical emphasis is certainly reflected by Bunyan; the man who will faithfully follow "yonder shining light" will inevitably come to the wicket gate; and if only sufficient men would do this, Christian conviction believes that the whole question of certainty would begin to appear in religion very much as it does in science. In so far as men are disposed to cast reflections on the life of faith as affording shallower degrees of certainty than the life of science they are really casting reflections on human kind. Scientific truth is open to the curious; Christian truth only to the obedient.

<sup>1</sup> John 3: 19.



### 2.7. *The Voice of Conscience*

There is a further thing however which must be said while we are discussing this question of the relation between the moral and the physical spheres. From what might be called the external, public point of view faith offers, for the reasons just given, less certainty than sight. This gives the advantage to science. But from the inward, personal point of view the tables are turned completely. The advantage lies decisively with faith. The reason for this resides in the unique nature of moral experience. In the realm of science, a conclusion may be established with the utmost rigour of logic, but that does not mean to say that I shall experience it as a compelling force in my life. I can turn away from it with considerable facility and decide that it has interested me enough. In doing so I do not open any cracks in the structure of my personality; I do not start a process of inner disintegration. But in the realm of faith the matter is far different. Conscience steps in to enforce the conclusion and demand a decision. It has a finality, an intolerance about it that I cannot escape, and if I refuse and turn away a disintegrating influence at once sets to work. "I ought" arises as a new conception, unknown in science. Science is abstract; it touches part only of that totality which is a man, and among the elements in his nature which are left untouched are conscience and the will to obey. This follows at once from the fact that science is defined by the observer attitude, for obedience clearly means more than seeing or hearing. "I go sir; but he went not." But faith is concrete; it touches the total life, and the truths which faith knows cannot be known by any sort of observation alone, but only when the will to obey is present. "If any man willeth to do God's will he shall know."<sup>1</sup> And this fact means that to the obedient man faith's certainty, when it comes, rises from a far deeper level than that of science. Not only his physical senses, but the voice of conscience and of every other element in his nature adds its Amen to it; and he becomes profoundly conscious of a unifying and integrating influence in his total personality. It is a "making whole". This may make his certainty appear like irrational pig-headedness to an outsider; but in measure it is surely a universal experience of men of faith in all times and places.

### 3.1. *Science and Authority*

We must now turn to another topic altogether, that of the place of authority in science and faith. This may be particularly relevant to those of us who hold the historic Christian view of Scripture; but to every type of outlook the problem of the seat of authority is a pressing one. Man is a creature, he is not self-existent. He did not choose when or whether he should come into existence, and the essential nature of his earthly environment is altogether beyond his control. Yet he has

<sup>1</sup> John 7: 17 R.V.

freedom, an endowment which the profoundest thinkers, such as Dostoevsky and Schweitzer, have recognized as his greatest burden. Why? Because even here where genuine freedom exists it encounters the fact of obligation; even when man *can* do what he likes he has to consider whether he *may*.

Thus in the physical sphere man confronts "givenness"; his life is given him, and he finds he has to live it in an environment the form and pattern of whose behaviour is given. His science may discover its laws and teach him to use them; but he can do nothing to change them. He has to accept that his gastric juices will attack the last meal he had; he is immediately conscious that the chemical behaviour within him follows a pattern independent of his will. In the spiritual realm he is, it is true, conscious of freedom, and only sophistry would lead him to deny it; but even in the presence of freedom he is compelled to recognize a givenness, a law he cannot alter. Conscience confronts him; only now he has the power to disobey.

In the realms of both science and faith therefore man has to recognize givenness; in other words he has to acknowledge authority. It is because this springs from his very nature as a creature that lawlessness is so entirely disruptive of his personality—it digs it up by the roots. And this in itself confirms the Christian in his conviction that, in every department of his life, submission to rightful authority is a prerequisite of personal fulfilment.

The question however which remains to be answered is, what is rightful authority? And it is here that the analogy of science is of help to the Christian.

Science arose among the Greeks of the little islands of the eastern Mediterranean. Its progress was sometimes fitful, sometimes steady. Eventually it threw up a man of consummate genius, Aristotle, and then for various reasons it began to decline. So great became the prestige of Aristotle that, fostered no doubt by the authoritarian attitude of rulers of church and state the practice became widespread of settling points of dispute in science by appealing to his authority. Other great leaders of science, such as Galen, were revered similarly, and the result was the stagnation of science. For centuries very little advance was made, and it was only when men once again became bold enough to question the rightness of what Aristotle and Galen had said that progress again began. So obvious was the new tempo of advance that the new outlook which arose became firmly established, and to-day the scientist enjoys a cherished tradition of freedom from the shackles of authority from which it would be difficult to separate him. Even when, as has recently happened, political authority asserts itself scientists everywhere instinctively recognize it as an unseemly state of affairs, bound in the long run to strangle science and discredit politics.

Now from this attitude of science to authority—an attitude to which

manifestly science owes its success—it has been argued, for instance by Prof. Huxley, that religion ought to repudiate revelation; only then will it find universal acceptance. Revelation, as something “given”, obviously means authority; hence it must, on the analogy of science, be eschewed. But this surely, is a very shallow view. It has already been argued that science operates in the realm of the givenness of physical nature; revelation, to sense though not to faith, operates in the scientific sphere also. What the experience of science teaches is surely this: not that authority should be repudiated, but rather that the *right* authority should be found and acknowledged. In no sense can the works of Aristotle be said to be fundamentally “given”; it is the pattern of nature which is ultimately given to human experience. Nature therefore is the authority to which science must bow; appeal must be made to observation and experiment to settle points in dispute. In turning from Aristotle and Galen science did not become lawless; it merely submitted to what has proved to be the right authority. That this is a correct interpretation of the situation is clear; for when scientists differ the question as to how the rights and wrongs of the case shall be decided is never for a moment in dispute. Nature shall be interrogated by experiment; all that remains to be decided between them is, How? And if her answer is decisive against one of the disputants he never complains that in the experiment Nature made a slip, or misbehaved, or that some extraneous agency had inserted a gloss. In so far as he is a true scientist the answer of nature, of experiment, is final; her authority is absolute. Thus it comes about that science, as opposed to art or philosophy, can point to a vast body of universally agreed data. In a dispute as to whether Picasso or Michaelangelo is the greater artist, no final answer can be given; no agreed authority exists to give it. The same is true in philosophy. But in science the case is far different. Of all human disciplines science is the most authoritarian.

### 3.2. *Authority in Religion*

To the conservative Christian this is an encouraging state of affairs. He recalls that in Psalm 19, and in Romans 1 the Bible supports the idea that physical nature and Scripture are two modes of revelation of the Creator. They are apprehended in different ways. The study of one—in the role of observer—constitutes science. Obedience to the other—in the totality of one’s being—constitutes faith. And just as nature, as apprehended by sense, is the authority for science; so scripture, as apprehended by faith, is the authority for religion. Looked at thus, he is not ashamed of the charge of authoritarianism. All he is concerned to ask is, Have I the right authority? How he decides this question is beyond the scope of this paper, but doubtless the attitude of Jesus Christ looms very large in his mind. To him the analogue of the scientific renaissance is not the

modern movement for "religion without revelation"; it is the Protestant Reformation with which, in fact it had historical ties.

Nor is he concerned with the charge that such a view of Scripture means that religion is not a living growing thing, but tied to a "faith once for all delivered to the Saints". He can point out that there is something in nature which every scientist believes is "once for all": the fixed pattern of laws to elucidate which he devotes his life. The givenness of Scripture no more means a static theology than the givenness of nature means a static science. Whatever objection can be raised against one can be raised against the other.

### 3.3. *The "Reformulation" of Christian Doctrine*

Far more than this can, in fact, be derived from our analogy. Scripture does not present us with formulated doctrines, like a theological text; its language is concrete, not abstract. Nor do we find scientific laws written across nature; her language again is concrete. Scientific laws are never once-for-all statements. They are continually subject to revision, though precisely in so far as they are true and accurate for one age they are true for another also. The same is doubtless the case with theological statements. To the conservative Christian the urge to jettison the great creeds is thus to be resisted. In so far as they accurately interpreted experience in the light of Scripture they are just as valid to-day as they were then. Only in those respects in which our experience goes beyond that of the Saints of the past—as the study of high energy particles goes beyond the experience of Newton—only in so far as this is the case should we call for their reformulation. The mere change of intellectual climate and thought forms does not make the inverse square law of gravitation out of date; it is the recognition of a new type of experience, inaccessible to Newton, which does this. The great creeds may indeed require rewording, since words change their meaning; but on the analogy of science those who press for a radical reformulation of Christian belief, in which, shall we say, the ideas of expiatory atonement and justification by faith are no longer represented—those who advocate such a restatement have to show that we now have accessible to us a type of spiritual experience which in the nature of the case St. Paul and St. John could never have known. It is no more adequate here to say that thought-forms have changed than it would be to attribute the rise of Quantum Theory to the same cause. The Analogy of Science and Religion indeed, points rather in the reverse direction. No one can deny that the range of scientific experience open to man since New Testament times is now vastly extended; very few would affirm anything of the sort for spiritual experience. It is to be expected therefore that other things being equal theological statements would have a far more timeless relevance than scientific ones. But other things are not equal; and their inequality, stemming as it does from the distinction between time and eternity,

reinforces the contention. Those who would radically reformulate Christian doctrine find little encouragement therefore from the analogy of science.

#### 4.1. *Plural Explanations*

It would take far more than the compass of the present short paper to deal adequately with the subject of what is meant by the term "explanation". That this term is understood will therefore have to be taken largely for granted—rather an unsatisfactory state of affairs. In a very obvious way however this question of explanation is of immediate interest in apologetics. As small boys—or girls—we learned that one satisfactory explanation alone was needed to fix the blame and secure punishment for breaking a window pane or doing something else equally reprehensible. If the evidence showed conclusively that *A* did it, no other explanation was admissible. This attitude, obviously justified in such a case, is often carried over within a much wider context. Man has always been more or less puzzled by his experiences, and has accordingly sought for explanations of them. In his earlier history these explanations took the form of myth; later came the scientific treatment in terms of physical cause and effect. It is too obvious to need statement that the scientific programme of explanation has been extraordinarily successful. It has carried all before it in a long range of successful predictions, culminating in the astonishing success of atomic explosions. Science has, moreover, in its advance, often encountered situations and offered explanations for them where other disciples, earlier in the field, had done similarly. It is then an obvious question, which explanation is right? The scientific explanation, as has been discussed earlier, can in principle be very simply put to the test. Further, if established, it confers an immediate power over the material side of experience which has time and time again been put to very great use. Is it any wonder then that many people have jumped to the conclusion that a scientific explanation, once established, renders any other sort of explanation not merely unnecessary, but invalid? If disease is due to germs, why then entertain the idea that it may be due to Satan, or to Divine displeasure? If Newton's Laws of Motion present an adequate explanation of planetary motions, why then bring in God? This at least seems to have been the reaction of Laplace who in reply to Napoleon's query about the place of God in his system replied, "Sir, I have no need of that hypothesis". And while perhaps not directly formulated in the mind, the idea that only one explanation can be valid does seem to influence many. And the climate of the times ensures that it is the scientific explanation which usually holds the field.

The idea that one explanation only can be valid does not of course stand up to any real scrutiny. We are constantly advancing plural explanations; my arm moves because of muscular contraction; but it also moves because I have decided to relieve an irritation. What is

interesting at the moment, however, is the fact that in science itself plural explanations form a very real and important contribution to advance. What is the explanation of the appearance of starch in an illuminated green leaf, and of the concomitant disappearance of carbon dioxide from its vicinity? The biochemist now has a fairly complete explanation worked out with great skill and labour, and its elaboration has been a remarkable triumph. But the scientific fraternity does not thereupon fold its hands on the completion of a task. A complementary explanation has to be worked out in terms of energy quanta, electron levels, entropy and many other conceptions. These two explanations, the chemical and the thermodynamic, move in worlds of quite different ideas. Their language and methods are entirely distinct, even if, deceptively, they appear sometimes to employ the same words. They diverge entirely; only in the concrete reality itself do they meet. Their relation to one another is of course, that of complementarity, a notion which has become, within the last few decades, of great importance in science. And this, it is at once obvious, is of interest to the Christian. No longer need he regard the success of scientific explanations as endangering the validity of Biblical ones. Rather should the experience of science lead him to expect that from points of view not based on the observer-attitude, that is not within the framework of science, there should be valid explanations of experience given in terms of altogether different worlds of ideas. Happenings may follow a pattern satisfactorily predicted by scientific laws; but the thoughtful Christian can still give thanks to God for an answer to prayer. Of course complementary explanations, like the chemical and thermodynamic ones previously quoted, have still to be patiently fitted together into a unified whole. Their "points of contact" have to be established, and this may be a matter of supreme difficulty. But at least science suggests that the mere existence of diverse accounts, within different frameworks of ideas, is no real difficulty; rather is it to be expected.

#### 4.2. *Science and Paradox*

The foregoing considerations lead on rather naturally to the question of paradox. A statement is paradoxical for our present purposes, when, though true to experience, it has logically the form of a contradiction. Many great thinkers, such as Kierkegaard, have stressed the paradoxical element in human life; and the simple Christian who knows the Scriptures is well aware that it is a very present element there.<sup>1</sup> "He that findeth his life shall lose it," in the very finding, is something we all know to be true, despite its logical absurdity; and the historic controversies over predestination and free will, grace and faith, God's goodness and His severity, springing as they have done from deeply-felt convictions present us with the same problem.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Phil. 2: 12, 13; Acts 2: 23; John 6: 37, 44.

But this element of contradiction is very important in science too. It has also more than once been the pointer to a striking advance. When the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which distinguishes a forward and a back direction for time, was formulated the molecular theory of matter and Newton's laws of motion were already well established. Matter was believed to be composed of molecules which individually obeyed Newton's laws; and Newton's laws were reversible with respect to time; backwards and forwards were both the same to them. The problem then arose, How could matter in bulk behave irreversibly, as Thermodynamics described, when it was made up of elements which knew only reversible behaviour? This was a paradox indeed, and its history is illuminating. Only when a totally new idea was introduced, that of probability, could the paradox be resolved. Thinkers had to go right outside the world of concepts then comprising the discipline of Mechanics to find the answer; but when it had been found a fundamentally new insight had been gained. A new view-point had been won. Is it too much to suggest that in the wider sphere of personal and social life many of the tragic contradictions now facing us will only be resolved when a totally new element is brought in? And is the Christian altogether unreasonable in asserting that this new element lies in the direction of faith in God? Surely science at least would not suggest it.

A still more striking example of scientific paradox arose from the discovery of the dual wave-particle nature of light and matter. A particle, by definition, can only be described as occupying a point; a wave must be described as occupying an extended region. How then can an electron, say, be both? One has only to remember that the opinion that the two views were mutually contradictory was not, in the case of light, merely the conclusion of third rate minds but rather the conviction for over two centuries of the foremost men of science, to see how startling the paradox raised by the Quantum Theory really was. For Newton himself regarded the two points of view as irreconcilable. Yet faced with overwhelming evidence Science has been forced to embrace both. For a long time it was an uneasy marriage; only slowly have the two views been reconciled, and again only by the incorporation of radically new ideas.

The lessons to be learned from the history of paradox within science itself ought to be written in letters of gold for all to see. Every Christian ought to think deeply over them, and they ought to mould and condition his apologetic. They will warn him from the pursuit of immediate but cheap advantage, and they will put into his hands a weapon very difficult to blunt. They will encourage him to take a more generous and sympathetic view of the difficulties of others, and of the ability and honesty of his opponents. And they will preserve him from the all-too-frequent attitude of claiming for the faith he holds what the Bible itself never claims for it; that it here and now resolves all difficulties

and settles all problems. He will be the more willing to recognize that, even on the plane of intellect, we must be content, even with New Testament light, to "know in part", believing that we shall "know hereafter".

To see the force of these lessons we must transfer them from the realm of science to the wider sphere of real life where faith and science meet. What then do we find? Firstly, that we must expect, almost inevitably, to encounter paradox. It must not surprise us in the least if even *well-founded* scientific theory appears to meet Christian doctrine in head-on collision. We must not throw up our hands in despair if science's revelation of the law-abidingness of Nature seems to rule out the possibility of miracle; or if its discovery of man's physical insignificance seems to dethrone him from the lordship of creation; or if its tentative account of origins threatens to obliterate respect for what he believes is Divine revelation. Many genuinely great minds may consider the entire world-view of science to be irreconcilable with that of the Bible; but he must remember that the Quantum Theory met and overturned even more widely-held and impregnable-entrenched convictions.

In the second place, we are led to expect that the solution of such life-paradoxes will not be easy. Both sides of the paradox must be fully accepted; neither may be whittled down. It has not been easy in the narrow field of Physics alone to do this; how can we expect it to be when the scene is immeasurably enlarged to embrace the whole range of human life and endeavour; the fields of art, of morals, of politics as well as the mysterious unfathomed depths of moral experience and of suffering? Only a fool would imagine that the answer was within his easy grasp. Yet that is the line that apologetic has often unthinkingly taken, and which the Christian apologist now has to live down.

And finally, the experience of science leads us to anticipate that paradoxes indicate the presence of an unsuspected element. A consideration of great importance has been overlooked; it must be re-established in its rightful place and the paradox will sooner or later, as the mind accustoms itself to thinking in the new way, dissolve into a new and enriched view of things. With Thermodynamics the new consideration was that of probability; with Quantum Theory it was the essential place of the observer in the scientific scheme of things. Only the transformation we must expect in the wider scene is vastly more complex. Thought is only part of life; the transforming of life therefore will transcend the transforming of thought. By such a line of approach we are brought nearer to the New Testament conception of conversion; the "change of mind" (repentance) consequent on the recollection of a forgotten factor, our relationship to God, issuing with increasing clarity in the dissolution of our tormenting paradoxes; the inner contradictions which all of us, in our moments of insight, recognize as belonging to our fallen nature.



### 5.1. *The Conflict of Science and Religion*

This paper began with a recognition that in the minds of many science and religion were not friends, but enemies. It has attempted to show, by the method of analogy, that there was really no essential conflict at all; in fact, that science can be a powerful ally. We have to recall again that science and religion are not self-existent entities, having a being apart from the minds of men, and engaging in friendly or unfriendly encounter which we can sit by and watch, like a football match. They are human concerns; and the real problem is whether this or that particular man, in his inner life and thought, finds that the committal of himself to both approaches produces within himself a stress or tension. In this sense it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that religion and science are, in fact, in conflict. And this may happen in two ways. Western man is often said to have concentrated his attention on vision to the detriment of hearing. That there is a danger of doing this can be appreciated at once; one has only to deliberately close one's eyes on a summer day in the forest to become conscious of a whole world of sounds of which one was formerly almost unaware. The complementary approach of vision, being the more spectacular and arresting, diverts the attention from the universe of sound to such an extent that it may require a real effort of will to bring the mind into intimate contact with it. Something of this sort is true of science. Its world has an immediate impact and "glamour" which the unseen world of faith has not; and it needs a strong act of will, an established self-discipline, to determine to "hear" as well as to "see". The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, monopolize the attention.

Further than this, there is the element of paradox which we have discussed. No doubt all men of faith have problems; but he who is also scientifically aware has to face this particular one, that his faith and his science confront one another paradoxically. There is no need to enlarge on this; but it obviously introduces the experience of conflict.

But these two relationships of conflict can hardly be said to be inherent in the nature of science and religion themselves. The scientific approach may distract our energies too totally from the approach of faith; and it may appear to lead to results which meet those of faith in head-on collision. But the element of conflict really arises from within the nature of man. In the one case it is due to the imperfection of his will and affections; in the other, to the imperfection of his understanding. And that being so, we must expect that, so long as human nature is not fully regenerate, Science and Religion will appear, somewhere, to be in conflict. Complete reconciliation belongs to a state which, while we remain in the flesh, we can never know. The most we can hope for is the gradual enlistment of the one in the service of the other, of science in the service of Faith. In this enlistment reconciliation will become more and more apparent; and the notion of conflict, already on the run, less and less obtrusive.

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AT

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STRAND, W.C. 2

ON

MONDAY, 18th MARCH, 1957

Professor H. DINGLE, D.Sc., in the Chair

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**THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE ON IDEAS  
OF THE UNIVERSE**

By

C. D. CURLING, M.A., (Cantab.)

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE ON IDEAS OF THE UNIVERSE

BY C. D. CURLING, M.A. (Cantab.)

## SYNOPSIS

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The story of science since Francis Bacon has two threads. One quickly led to an idea of the universe which put the truths of abstraction at odds with the truths of feeling and imagination and undermined the work of the artist and the poet by diminishing the possibility of spiritual vision. The quest of science along this thread is power, and the fate of man is hubris and the destruction which follows it.

The other thread is less predominant but still strong. In it the experience of the scientist is not merely scientific but aesthetic and religious as well; his idea of the universe is at heart biblical and incarnational, and in this universe nature and grace are congruous. The quest of science along this thread is truth and the hope of man is redemption through faith by encounter with God.

This paper attempts to show how these two threads have developed and where, at particular times and sometimes in a particular person, they have been in opposition.

The present requirement for more scientists threatens to alter the balance of the faculties in the universities and with the decay of the liberal tradition the maintenance of a continuing respect for truth in the universities may demand that the will to power is countered within science itself.

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### *Introduction*

Professor Heisenberg, one of the scientists pre-eminent in modern physics, came to Cambridge in 1947 and gave two public lectures at the Cavendish Laboratory on atomic physics and quantum mechanics. He was asked also to lecture on his philosophical beliefs but because of language difficulties he preferred to open a discussion on these in private and a meeting for this purpose was arranged at the Vice-Chancellor's lodge.

On that occasion Professor Heisenberg spoke to an audience of Cambridge philosophers and scientists about the idea of the Universe which had been nurtured inside science since the beginning of the seventeenth century and how this model (or level) of reality, as he called it, had come to be at odds with the model of reality with which the artist is concerned.

Professor Heisenberg has also stated his views in a series of lectures which have since been translated into English,<sup>1</sup> and has made it plain that he foresees serious danger in this division.

However, he says, science cannot be stopped and "we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that it is the destiny of our time to follow to the end of the road along which we have started".

I intend in this paper to show some of the implications of the way in which these two models of reality have developed into secret, if not open, opposition, and also to point to another idea of the universe which scientists have held and in which the activities of scientist, artist and Christian can be directed towards a common experience and ultimately to a common end.

The present progress of modern physics indicates that science will continue to influence our ideas of the universe. The consistent pursuit of classical physics forced a change in the foundations of physics and it is not now possible to believe fully in a directly-accessible accurately-delineated objective world revealed by science. As Heisenberg says, "Science no longer deals with the world of direct experience but with a dark background of this world brought to light by our experiments", and in another place "the dangers threatening modern science cannot be averted by more and more experimenting, for our complicated experiments have no longer anything to do with nature in her own right, but with nature changed and transformed by our own cognitive activity". Dirac puts this in a slightly different form. "Nature's fundamental laws do not govern the world as it appears in our mental picture in any very direct way, but instead they control a substratum of which we cannot form a mental picture without introducing irrelevancies", and he goes on to say "there is an increasing recognition of the part played by the observer in himself introducing the regularities that appear in his observations".

It is important that the thinking of scientists about their science should be directed towards understanding the present position. The increasing numbers and impact of scientists in the universities means that in the future the vacuum left by the passing of the liberal tradition will necessarily be filled by whatever changes in human thought and desire are being at this time shaped and encouraged by science.

### *Francis Bacon and the founding of the Royal Society*

To begin the subject-matter of this paper with Francis Bacon and the scientific movement of the seventeenth century is not to imply that this is the beginning of science; there are many scientists from Leonardo da Vinci onwards who could be included with profit. Yet it is with Francis

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophical Problems of Nuclear Science" (Faber and Faber, 1952).

Bacon and the generation who followed him—the pioneers of the new philosophy and the founders of the Royal Society—that scientific ideas began openly to organize men's beliefs about the nature of the universe and provide for the western world a new set of assumptions and a re-orientation of interest and attention.

Bacon was an iconoclast, often secretly and sometimes openly. In his statement of his philosophy he failed to find any place for whatever good there was in the largely sterile scholasticism of the previous centuries; although he claimed "to leave the honour and reverence due to the ancient undisturbed and undiminished" he and his followers made it clear that the opinions of the ancients were no longer to be considered seriously.

Some of his followers found in Bacon's dissociation of science and faith the excuse to lead a life divided between godliness and utilitarianism; they became the first of the utilitarian materialists and foreshadowed parts of the Marxist doctrine of science and some beliefs of modern scientific humanists. Marx certainly acknowledged him as one of the founders of modern materialism. Bacon declared he intended with his new philosophy to "endow the condition and life of man with new works". The object of learning was to be "the relief of man's estate" and the discoveries of the new science were to "contribute to man's wants and vanquish his miseries". "Only let the human race recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest, and let power be given it; the exercise thereof will be governed by sound reason and true religion."

Bacon put poetry outside "the palace of the mind", and throughout his writings his dissociation of faith and science was accompanied by an implied, though not clearly stated, dissociation of the work of the artist, and all imaginative and aesthetic activity from the plain world of science.

This dissociation became very clearly marked in Bacon's followers. In their enthusiasm to apply Baconian ideas to educational reform they were very sure that scientific knowledge was the only worthwhile knowledge. Noah Biggs set out to remove "the rubbish"—"the frothy lectures, the Latin, the stupendous bulk of blind learning"—from the universities. John Durie was content to leave literary studies "to such as delight in vanities more than in Truths". William Petty who was Professor of Anatomy at Oxford and a foundation Fellow of the Royal Society not only sought to replace the old learning (which he declared ought to be suppressed and brought into disgrace and contempt of all men) by instruction in science for the good of the realm, the relief of material wants and the advantage of the pupils, but thought children should be taught to observe things accurately before they could read.

Forty years later the foundation of that body that was to lead science in Europe for nearly a century—the Royal Society—was one of the fruits of the new philosophy. Boyle's Invisible College in London, perhaps stimulated by the visit of Comenius (who was certainly influenced by

Bacon and was invited here by Durie and Hartlib to further their educational aims), obtained the King's approval and the Royal Society came into being. It would be idle to pretend that the founder fellows were all Baconians, and indeed I should point out here that there were some who believed in another kind of model of reality in their work; but even Boyle is known to have seen Bacon's works when he was young, though he does not seem to have been much influenced by them.

By the time Sprat in 1667 wrote his *History of the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* he could look on a world subdued, manageable, and untroubled by mystery, and say "The course of things goes quietly along, in its own true channel of Natural Causes and Effects. For this we are beholden to Experiments: which though they have not yet completed the discovery of the true world, yet they have already vanquished those wild inhabitants of the false world, that used to astonish the minds of men". It remained only for Newton to fill in the details of the model of reality so that it became the ideal stage on which the growth of classical physics could be played out. James Ward puts it in this way. "As soon indeed as the movements of sensible bodies were found to admit of exact description by the science of mechanics the hypothesis at once presented itself that, as Newton expressed it, the other phenomena of nature might be deduced from mechanical principles." For long this mechanical theory was held to furnish us with the knowledge of the empirical reality which our sensible experience was supposed only obscurely to symbolize.<sup>1</sup>

With the development of the necessary mathematical apparatus, physicists saw this mechanical theory become an abstract scheme—a pure science which could only be applied with the help of the calculus. "In place then of the concrete world of sense symbolizing this abstract scheme, it has now become clear that it is the abstract scheme itself which symbolizes the concrete world from which it set out." The abstract scheme became reified into the accepted model of reality, and our idea of the universe has been moulded by it.

Of course the scientists' picture of the world was not stationary. Whitehead in his two lectures on "Nature and Life" has summarized the subsequent history of this model of reality. To trace it here in any detail would make this part of the paper intelligible only to scientists. Instead I wish by way of commentary to examine the position of Goethe and the reasons for his attack on the Newtonian theories; a particular piece of poetry by Wordsworth and W. H. Auden's comment on it; and four books which attempt to show how science has influenced the ideas of the universe held by poets and artists generally.

In conclusion I shall try to show the other thread in the story in which scientists and others have witnessed to a model of reality of a different

<sup>1</sup> *Realm of Ends*, James Ward, p. 4.

kind, and indicate in its light the questions which seem to face Christians and scientists to-day.

### *The Dilemma of Goethe*

Goethe's two scientific works *Metamorphosis of Plants* and *Theory of Colours* were published in 1790 and 1810 respectively; neither of them has had a noticeable influence on the subsequent course of science. Yet Goethe is important if only because he made clear in himself the unbridgeable gulf between his artistic vision and what could be comprehended through the mental manoeuvres of the science of his day. Goethe stands a hundred years after the establishment of the Newtonian scheme, yet he regards it as his scientific mission to "liberate the phenomena once and for all from the gloom of the empirico-mechanico-dogmatic torture chamber". After him, he hopes, scholars will refer to the Newtonian interlude in science as "the pathology of experimental physics".<sup>1</sup> His importance is demonstrated by the fact that Heisenberg gives a chapter in his book (referred to above) to explaining the differences between Goethe's and Newton's theories concerning colour, and Heller (referred to below) heads the first chapter of his book "Goethe and the idea of scientific truth".

In his preface to *Theory of Colours* Goethe compares the Newtonian theory of colours to an old castle "which was at first constructed by its architect with youthful precipitation".<sup>2</sup> This he proposes to "begin at once to dismantle from gable and roof downwards that the sun may at last shine into the old nest of rats and owls, and exhibit to the eye of the wondering traveller that labyrinthine, incongruous style of building, with its scanty, make-shift contrivances, the result of accident and emergency, its intentional artifice and clumsy repairs. Such an inspection will, however, only be possible when wall after wall, arch after arch, is demolished, the rubbish being at once cleared away as well as it can be".

This bitterness is only explicable in terms of an inward uncertainty and a dilemma; "the conflict which my scientific efforts had brought into my life was as yet by no means resolved; for my dealings with nature began to make claims on all my inner faculties". Even the possibility of continuing his poetic work was in question. It was the knowledge of this that not only provided Goethe with an essential theme for his writings but committed him in his science to a campaign (as Heller puts it) "for retaining the balance of power between analytical reason and creative imagination".

Heisenberg's treatment of Goethe and Newton leads him to examine the background of the two theories. He says it is not clear how far

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *The Disinherited Mind*, E. Heller, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> I have used a rather inadequate translation by Eastlake in 1840. Preface, p. xxii.

Newton's work was linked with the realization that an accurate knowledge of physical laws could lead to the technical mastery of nature; but he is sure that the two theories, one appealing to the scientist, the other to the artist, are dealing with two entirely different levels of reality. In the reality with which Goethe is concerned "events are not counted but weighed and past events not explained but interpreted".<sup>1</sup> Goethe's struggle, says Heisenberg, will have to be continued to-day on an extended front.

### *Stones and Shells*

Near the beginning of the fifth book of *The Prelude* Wordsworth describes the dream of a man who fell asleep while considering poetry and geometric truth. In this dream he sees an Arab who is riding off to bury a stone and a shell "with the fleet waters of the drowning world in chase of him".

But the Arab has time to explain that the stone is a symbol of abstract geometry and analytical reason and the shell a symbol of imagination and poetic truth. The stone and the shell, the Arab's two treasures of Wordsworth's dream, are just those elements which Goethe fought to reconcile within himself.

In *The Enchafed Flood*, W. H. Auden examines these symbols of the stone and the shell and traces how each taken alone is full of danger. He links these with Blake and the concept of the universe which Blake associated with Newton, regarding it as having disastrous psychological, religious, political and artistic consequences. The development of these symbols is very interesting but it might be questioned how far Wordsworth was himself in sympathy with this interpretation. As much has been written about Wordsworth which shows him to be in favour of science as has been written showing him to be a severe critic of it; and Wordsworth was prolific enough to allow the search for quotations to support either case to be rewarding. But I think Wordsworth understood what he was saying here; in a pamphlet called *The Convention of Cintra* he writes: "While mechanic arts, manufactures, agriculture, commerce and all those products of knowledge which are confined to gross, definite, and tangible objects have with the aid of experimental philosophy been every day putting on more brilliant colours, the splendour of the imagination has been fading". And he points out that holding all these possessions one may still be "a slave in mind; and if they veil from us this fact, or reconcile us to it, they are worse than worthless".

### *The situation of the artist*

To demonstrate the wide-spread effects of this model of reality upon the work of the artist and the poet, I have chosen four books which cover

<sup>1</sup> Heisenberg, *Philosophical Problems of Nuclear Science*, p. 68.



the ground from several viewpoints and each of these will be considered in turn.

(a) "*The Disinherited Mind*"—E. Heller

It is Heller's belief that at the end of the Middle Ages "there occurred a radical change in man's idea of reality, in that complex fabric of unconsciously-held convictions about what is real and what is not".<sup>1</sup> He illustrates this change by reference to Cowley's poem which prefaces Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* to which I have already referred, and asserts that by this change reality and symbol were divorced, leaving the artist in a private world out of communication with the scientific sphere of reality, "that obedient patient under the fingers of man's mind".<sup>2</sup>

His book, *The Disinherited Mind*, deals with German literature from Goethe to Kafka, and he adds in the preface: "I can hardly think of one major writer or thinker within this period of German literature, whose work would not reflect the situation of mind and spirit which I have tried to describe within the limits of my choice". The whole book is the story of a progress into desperation and despair, reflected often enough in the author's own style.

Heller quotes a remark of Goethe's in a review: "A man, born and bred in the so-called exact sciences will, on the height of his analytical reason, not easily comprehend that there is also something like an exact concrete imagination". As we have seen, it is Goethe's attempt to hold together analytical reason and concrete imagination—the stone and the shell—the world of the scientist and the world of the artist—that explains so much of his work. In Nietzsche's *Will to Power* the prophecies of Goethe are elaborated into the certainties of nihilism. With Rilke, Kafka and Karl Kraus, the full implications of this nihilism are explored.

Clearly in some part of what I have written in this paper I am in agreement with Heller; he has traced in German literature and stated in an extreme form the consequences, "the potential hubris", inherent in the scientist's quest. Yet I cannot feel that this simple pessimism does justice to the whole complexity of the story of science. Certainly there appears to be a crisis in scientific method; but a crisis surely implies the need for a decision and the possibility of a choice. And Bacon's wish to keep science pure from religion can never succeed in a world loved by the Father of Christ; God works in history and in science, and matches man's desperation with His greater love.

(b) "*The Structure of Poetry*"—E. Sewell

Miss Sewell's book is noteworthy here for two reasons; in it she develops a method for the critical appreciation of the poetry of Rimbaud and

<sup>1</sup> *Hazard of Modern Poetry*, E. Heller, p. 13. (Bowes and Bowes, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

Mallarmé, two French poets who illustrate the extremities of isolation into which poetry can be driven; and her way of thinking about poetry she introduces with the help of ideas drawn from mathematics, logic and physics. Her bibliography includes sixteen books on physics and an equal number on logic and mathematics.

Miss Sewell was surprised to find how much these subjects helped; but one can see that the task of the poet who has to build himself his own poetry universe is likely to have parallels with that of the scientist who has constructed a model of reality and who is still seeking to understand the nature of the abstractions into which he has led himself. "Rimbaud was trying to create a poem-universe that should contain everything, every thing; Mallarmé to create a poem-universe which should contain nothing, no thing".<sup>1</sup> Rimbaud's efforts were directed to creating a universe divorced from reality and entirely without order—a nightmare; Mallarmé's intentions were to make a world of perfect order and complete abstraction; and both fell into extreme obscurity and encountered great difficulty with the language in which they had to express themselves.

The language we use to-day was well-formed before the dissociation of sensibility and science began; to communicate efficiently, both the scientist and the artist are continually modifying and struggling with words—though with quite different intentions.

Rimbaud and Mallarmé and Miss Sewell's study of them map quite clearly the roads of dissociation from experience, and the one towards abstraction is already known to all scientists. The centre in which poetry and science both belong can only be held, Miss Sewell suggests, with the help of laughter and religion.

(c) "*Science and English Poetry*"—D. Bush

This book does not seem to me to be so important as the others discussed in this part of the paper, but I have included it because it gives a straight-forward account of the influence of science upon many English poets from the Elizabethan age to the present. Bush begins by showing how the Elizabethan poets' reactions to traditional problems became from then on largely conditioned by science. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "the last great presentation of the traditional concept of one divine and natural order", the theme is, according to Bush "the violation of divine order in heaven and in earth, the contrast between irreligious pride and religious humility. And this theme is directly related to science, indeed to the whole problem of knowledge which is the great problem of the seventeenth century".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Structure of Poetry*, E. Sewell, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Science and English Poetry*, D. Bush, p. 47.

In Dryden, Pope, Thomson and Young, with the help of a Deist approach, we find some attempt to reconcile the new philosophy with poetry and with religion. To Blake this was impossible, and indeed even a brief examination of the poets of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century explains the need for what Bush calls the romantic revolt against rationalism. The madness of Blake had little influence, but in Coleridge and Wordsworth, and later in Byron, Keats and Shelley, "the romantic protest against the mechanistic abstractions of science" was continued declares Bush, but it did not last. "In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the heritage of romantic optimism passed to the scientists, leaving poets to the contemplation of a great void".<sup>1</sup>

In the third section of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson writes:

. . . Nature stands  
 . . . A hollow form with empty hands.

And shall I take a thing so blind  
 Embrace her as my natural good;  
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
 Upon the threshold of the mind.

Tennyson had to conquer despair; more modern poets have carried on his battle. Bush concludes his book with a chapter on the poets of our own age; although he seems to have an inadequate grasp of what is now happening in science, he shows quite clearly that the main effects on the poet's vision of the world-view built up in science have been far from welcome.

(d) "*The Dilemma of the Arts*"—W. Weidle

The last of the books I wish to examine here is more widespread in its theme and more hopeful, for although Weidlé once proposed the sub-title "A study in Disintegration" for his book, he does find a solution within the Christian faith to the dilemma of the artist.

It is only fair to say that Weidlé does not attribute the titanism of the artist directly to the changes wrought by science. But he does place its upsurge at the Renaissance, and sees its result as a self-enclosure of the artist "within his calling and within the irreducible confines of his own person".<sup>2</sup> To Weidlé the sickness of art is a sickness of the creative soul itself. "With an anguish, a despair which for a century has not ceased to grow, the artists chase the impossible, covet the extreme, array one against the other the contraries which it was their mission to reconcile,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *The Dilemma of the Arts*, W. Weidlé, p. 12, trans. by M. Jarrett-Kerr. See also his remarks in criticism of Leonardo da Vinci on p. 15.

and each time sink deeper into the irreversible night of art that is disembodied and slowly disintegrating."<sup>1</sup>

Weidlé reviews many of the arts in turn, architecture, painting and music as well as poetry and literature; all seem to him to be in different ways in the same case—and this, he makes it clear, is a bad case. Yet, unlike Heller and Bush, in the end he sees a clear hope; "the creative imagination cannot work indefinitely in a vacuum without some kind of metaphysical justification, and it is faith alone which can provide it".<sup>2</sup> In Christian faith Weidlé sees the hope of the creative word returning to the artist. Indeed he would claim that this hope is in a minor way already expressed in poets like Claudel and Eliot, G. M. Hopkins and Charles Williams.

### *The other thread*

If, at this point of the paper, it now seems clear that the idea of the universe with which we have been dealing is such as to undermine the work of the artist and poet, and that such a generally accepted model of reality has by the influence of science come to underlie all the thinking of Western society, we might have good reason to be pessimistic.

But it would be quite wrong to suppose that only this one model of reality has arisen as a result of the influence science has had on men's ideas of the universe. The exploitation of nature and the achievement of power over things, the desire to assume that anything not scientific is of no worth—all these were present in the seventeenth-century beginnings of the modern period of science; but also present was the quest for truth. It is sometimes assumed in science that truth is something we can manipulate, gain power over, or collect. This is not so; and nor can it be identified with the class of all true propositions or with any catalogue of facts. Truth requires an involvement and a trust in experience, a willingness to submit to the test of events in a manner shared by scientist, artist and religious man alike. The Christian consideration of truth begins with Christ's statement "I am the Truth".

Jaspers has said of science in one of his books: "The evil consequences of subjecting science to the will to power, have already shown themselves. They have to be countered with reason and science itself. The source of science is not the will to power over things but the will to truth. The most admirable, selfless and unassuming men, inspired by the human capacity for knowledge, have their place among the great scientists and scholars of the last few centuries (not excluding such figures as Bacon and Descartes who may nevertheless have contributed something to the misinterpretation of science as a product of the will to power). The will to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

truth, this source of human dignity, is the origin of modern science, and its character".

There were scientists in the seventeenth century who saw and fought for a different idea of the universe from that held by Bacon and his followers. John Ray in *The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation* published in 1691 was able to quote Henry More and Ralph Cudworth in his support. More's *Antidote against Atheism* was a reaction to the first pangs of mechanistic sterility, and the pamphlets that surrounded the early years of the Royal Society were expressive of a division, often hidden, sometimes mis-stated, that was to be in the background of the history of science from then on. In our own day Whitehead and Eddington have campaigned for a concept of nature in which understanding and relatedness are more important than precision and prediction. Collingwood<sup>1</sup> suggests "that the scientific movement of the seventeenth century produced a huge outbreak of dichotomies, e.g. (a) in metaphysics, between body and mind, (b) in cosmology, between nature and God, and (c) in epistemology, between rationalism and empiricism. The distortions in the relationship between these have not been improved in the subsequent history of science. It is my opinion that the work of Eddington and Whitehead has begun to remake these relationships, and there is good hope that the sheer need to make sense of modern physics will lead scientists to think again about the nature of the world which has yielded so much power into men's hands.

### *Conclusion*

It is not easy in a world where the production of power is becoming so large a thing and the concern with truth so small a thing to find hope in reality and faith in God. Yet in the beginning man is placed in the garden of earth, which is, as he himself is, God's creation. The Bible speaks of man's relationship to nature in terms of a matrix of grace in which all things are significant because they are created and all things find fulfilment in praise, as the work of Christ in men and in creation is accomplished. It is on biblical grounds that it seems that only a Christian conception of the universe will enable science to exhibit its character as the will to truth.

The spirit of truth is needed in both science and religion, and it is a sign of the spirit of truth in both when they cannot be opposed or even separated. When Simone Weil declares "Scientific investigation is simply a form of religious contemplation" or Professor Coulson "Science is a religious activity", the ordinary scientist is incredulous. His incredulity derives from the idea of the universe he has, and the concept of truth held not only by scientists but by theologians.

<sup>1</sup> Collingwood, *Idea of Nature*, p. 100. (Oxford University Press, 1945).

The Augustinian-Franciscan principle that God is truth (and, therefore, immediately certain more than anything else, including myself) began to be lost, according to Tillich, when Thomas Aquinas interpreted it in Aristotelian terms and said that God is immediately certain for Himself but not for us. But Hort has declared "It is not too much to say that the Gospel itself can never be fully known till nature as well as man is fully known; and that the manifestation of nature as well as man in Christ is part of His manifestation of God. As the Gospel is the perfect introduction to all truth, so on the other hand it is in itself known only in proportion as it is used for the enlightenment of departments of truth which seem at first sight to be beyond its boundaries".<sup>1</sup> The Transfiguration of Christ is, as a physical event in Christ's life, a demonstration of the truth about matter. As a spiritual principle it reveals that nothing in science is outside the redemptive work of Christ and that science and any idea of the universe that is part of it are frustrated without the transfiguring power of God.

Seen within the will of God and as part of the quest for truth, science can still provide an integrating force to replace the liberal tradition which in the past did so much to strengthen the universities. It is difficult to see any alternative to science that could prevent the continuing of the process that has already reduced some colleges and universities to a collection of departments uninterested in anything except their own gadgets and concepts. It is easy in the light of past science to be pessimistic about its contribution to human values, however much advantage one attributes to its concerns with technical progress and with social betterment. Yet there may be in the new physics with all its dangers to the survival of man in either body or soul a slowly-forming idea of the universe which may remould the problems to which Collingwood referred, renew the scientists' quest for truth, and reawaken men to the persistent call of God to repentance and redemption.

<sup>1</sup> F. J. A. Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, p. 83.

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OF THE

# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

THE CAXTON HALL

WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

ON

MONDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1957

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PROFESSOR F. F. BRUCE, M.A.,

University of Sheffield,  
in the Chair

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## THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS RELIABILITY

By

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## SYNOPSIS

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The use of the Bible, both as a norm for Christian belief and practice and as a cardinal witness in the Christian appeal to history, requires the substantial integrity of the New Testament text. The New Testament was copied, before the age of printing, by hand for centuries in which errors and changes were bound to occur. Can we, despite these errors, recover the original form of the text? We have very early manuscripts for much of the New Testament and they vary among themselves, showing that their archetype must be older still. We can trace the text of the separate Gospels to a time before the formation of the Four Gospel Canon and perhaps that of the Pauline Epistles to a time before the formation of the Epistle Canon. The text preserves the distinctive styles of the various writers and conforms to the conditions and language of the first century A.D. No conjecture for any New Testament passage has established itself as certain. By comparison the Septuagint, well preserved on the whole, has suffered change which sometimes can be remedied only by conjecture. In choosing between variants in manuscripts there is still much to do, but, allowing for this task, we may conclude that the New Testament has come down to us substantially sound.

EVERY so often we see a report on gambling, on marriage and divorce, on nullity or some such subject. Usually these reports include a section in which the evidence of the Bible is explored and the text and meaning of the Bible passages in question examined. This procedure assumes that the teaching of the Bible is normative for life and practice. The Bible, however, is more than a norm for conduct. For our purposes we may assume that its significance lies, in addition, in its claim to be a vehicle of divine revelation and the archives of a religion whose appeal is to history. For each of these functions it is important that the Bible should have come down to us at least substantially in its original form.

Here we encounter a major difficulty. Our view of the Bible requires its textual integrity, and yet the Bible came into being in times and conditions which were less favourable to such integrity than those of our day. We are used to the comparative security which books enjoy in the age of printing. When manuscript was copied by hand from manuscript, at each copying mistakes and changes were introduced into the text with the result that of our thousands of New Testament manuscripts no two agree completely in text and the variations are innumerable.

This state of affairs might sound desperate, but it is not as bad as it sounds, and this for two reasons. The first is that early manuscripts



enable us to trace the text of the New Testament books back to a period near to the time of composition. The second reason is that scholars have evolved criteria which enable us to choose with fair confidence among the variants that the manuscripts offer.

The nineteenth century was a great time for the study of the New Testament text. Manuscripts were discovered and published right and left. Among them a few of the fourth and fifth centuries seemed to provide the oldest evidence for the text. Two, Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus, are in the British Museum, Vaticanus, which was thought to be the oldest and most important, is at Rome, Codex Ephraemi at Paris, and Codex Bezae, the most erratic, at Cambridge.

For long this picture was unmodified by the discovery and publication of Greek papyri from Egypt. Some New Testament fragments which came to light were ascribed to the third century, but they were too small to signify. The last twenty-five years have brought a change. Among the Chester Beatty Papyri are a fragmentary manuscript of the Gospels and Acts, another, relatively intact, of the Pauline Epistles, both of about A.D. 200, and a third with a large part of Revelation of about A.D. 250. Further there was published last December in Geneva the Bodmer Papyrus containing John 1:1-6:11, 6:35-14:26, again of about A.D. 200. Meanwhile, several smaller fragments have come to light dating from the second century. The earliest, a tiny piece of John, is older than A.D. 150.

When we contrast this state of affairs with the evidence for the text of most classical authors we can see how fortunate we are. For even the best preserved of the writers of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. we are in the main dependent on medieval manuscripts which are at the earliest not older than the ninth century A.D. Thus there is a gap of some twelve hundred years or more between these authors and their earliest manuscripts. If we agree, as scholars are coming increasingly to do, that the Gospel According to St. John was written at the end of the first century A.D., there is about a century between the composition of the book and the Geneva papyrus just mentioned.

If this were all the story, we could fold our hands in our felicity, knowing that nothing more need be done. Unfortunately, it is not so. The early witnesses for the New Testament, which make New Testament scholarship the envy of those less fortunate, reveal also that the variation in text between manuscript and manuscript existed already by A.D. 200.

Let us take our two manuscripts of about this date which contain parts of John, the Chester Beatty Papyrus and the Bodmer Papyrus. They are together extant for about seventy verses. Over these seventy verses they differ some seventy-three times apart from mistakes.

Further in the Bodmer Papyrus the original scribe has frequently corrected what he first wrote. At some places he is correcting his own mistakes but at others he substitutes one form of phrasing for another. At

about seventy-five of these substitutions both alternatives are known from other manuscripts independently. The scribe is in fact replacing one variant reading by another at some seventy places so that we may conclude that already in his day there was variation at these points.

It is worth considering how the scribe incorporated his variants. He may have copied the text from his exemplar and then have corrected it by another manuscript. This would mean that immediately behind the Bodmer Papyrus there were two older manuscripts which differed from each other in at least some seventy places.

Certain characteristics in the corrections suggest that the scribe came by his corrections in a different way. The corrections may have been written in the margin of his exemplar. This is not uncommon. For example, Sinaiticus has been corrected by more than one scribe in this way. If this suggestion is true we can reconstruct three generations in the history of our manuscript. In the first generation would be two grandparents. One of these would serve as exemplar for the copy of the next generation. The scribe of this copy would then note in the margin of the copy divergences in the text of the other grandparent. The scribe of the Bodmer Papyrus would use this manuscript with its marginal variants as his exemplar. He would first copy the text of his exemplar and then correct his copy from the marginal variants in the exemplar. If this hypothesis is true, then many of the differences between what our scribe first wrote and his subsequent corrections go back well into the second century.

Whatever we learn from our two papyri is confirmed by other evidence. We have many quotations from the New Testament in the works of early Christian writers from the time of Irenaeus (A.D. c. 180) onward. Their evidence is confirmed by the ancient New Testament translations. The oldest forms of the Latin and Syriac versions belong to the second century. Quotations and versions support our papyri in showing that already in the second century there was a considerable number of variant readings to our New Testament text.

This conclusion may seem disturbing at first sight, but on reflection we can see that there is something reassuring about it. It was pointed out earlier in this paper that at each copying of a text by hand changes are bound to occur. If we doubt this, we can copy out a long passage by hand from a printed text. Sooner or later we begin to make mistakes. Some of them we shall see at once and correct, others we shall notice only on reading our transcript over and others will escape our eye only to be noticed when someone else reads our copy. Jerome had this experience. We know from a letter of his that in his own lifetime his translation of the Psalter into Latin suffered changes, both mistakes and deliberate alterations.

Let us imagine that all our manuscripts of the New Testament could be traced back to a single ancestor of about A.D. 200, and that we had

this ancestor before us. We would be delivered from the multitude of variations that now beset us and would have to concern ourselves only with the text of our manuscript.

No manuscript is perfect, not even the author's copy. If we doubt this, we have only to look at one of our own manuscripts. As we read it over we will notice places where we want to correct what we have written. If our manuscript is long, some errors in it we may well overlook. When it is typed some of these errors will be corrected but others may be introduced. By and large it is probable that at each copying new errors will be introduced. Suppose that our manuscript of A.D. 200 is for parts of the New Testament the fifth copying, for parts the seventh copying and for parts the ninth copying. It will have a number of sheer mistakes quite apart from any deliberate changes or attempts at correction.

How would we correct these departures from the original form of the text? We would have no other manuscripts to consult, for all our other manuscripts would derive from this one faulty archetype of A.D. 200. Where we were not satisfied, we could correct only by guesswork or conjecture. To the subject of conjecture I will return later, but conjecture is not a satisfactory alternative to the errors of one manuscript.

From this it can be seen that the variations in our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are a reassuring feature. They enable us to trace our text back to a date nearer our archetypes than any existing manuscript.

How far back can we get? Before we answer this question we must remember that behind our collection of the New Testament books as a whole lie smaller collections. The best known of these are the Four Gospels which came into being about A.D. 140 and the Pauline Epistles which were assembled some time in the second half of the first century.

Let us begin by considering the Gospels. Can we trace the text of our Gospels to a time when they circulated separately before the collection of the four Gospels was formed?

First, the Four Gospel Canon has played a large part in hypotheses, but it is surprising how few early manuscripts containing only the Four Gospels are known. The earliest demonstrable example seems to be the Washington manuscript, probably of the fourth century. We cannot always be certain of the contents of early manuscripts, but where we are certain, they contain either more, like the Chester Beatty Papyrus of the Gospels and Acts, or less, like the Bodmer Papyrus of St. John. This evidence, as far as it goes, does not bear out the suggestion that the Four Gospel Canon played a large part in the history of our text.

Next there is the evidence of the text itself. Manuscripts perhaps show greatest variety in Mark and least in Matthew and John with Luke coming in between the extremes. There are several possible explanations

for this. For example, the language of Mark may have been so individual that, even after the Four Gospel Canon was formed about A.D. 140, it may have invited the corrections of scribes to a greater extent than the other three Gospels.

There is, however, one consideration that makes this explanation unlikely. From Irenaeus onward we have indexes of the New Testament quotations from ancient Christian writers and they show that very soon after the Four Gospel Canon was formed Mark dropped very largely out of use. This does not allow a long enough time for this considerable number of variants to come into being.

Let us take a concrete example of such variation. In the Authorized Version of the Gospels we often meet the expression "answered and said". It is not an English expression any more than its equivalent in the Greek Gospels is Greek. It is a reproduction of Semitic idiom and foreign to both languages. Twentieth-century translators have been aware that the expression is un-English and have avoided it in their renderings. The scribes of the Gospel text were equally aware that it was not Greek. They sought not to eliminate it but to reduce its incidence.

How did they do this? If we take our modern printed texts which rest largely on the fourth-century manuscripts, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, as an example of the degree of correction that texts were likely to undergo, we reach the following results for the Synoptic Gospels. Mark has about thirty examples of the expression "answered and said" in the current New Testament texts, but in the manuscripts there is evidence for about fifty. One or two of these may be suspicious but if we allow for five doubtful instances we are making generous provision. This means that out of about forty-five instances in the original Mark some thirty have survived in our modern texts and one-third have fallen casualties to the scribes of our manuscripts.

In Luke and Matthew the figures are different. In Luke there are about forty instances in our printed texts and some five more examples in our manuscripts so that originally there were about forty-five examples in this Gospel and one in fifteen of these has been eliminated by the scribes. In Matthew there is one example out of fifty-one.

These figures show a considerable disparity in the treatment of the three Gospels. Mark has suffered heavily, Luke has been moderately corrected and Matthew hardly at all. If this correction had taken place when the Canon of the Four Gospels was formed, or while the Four Gospels were associated in one book, we would have expected the correction to have been uniform throughout all of them or at any rate that Mark would not have been the most heavily corrected.

There is a reason for this last opinion. We have already noticed that Mark went out of use early. The Canon guaranteed that Mark would be copied with the other Gospels, but it could not guarantee that Mark would be given the same attention. It is the opinion of those who have

studied the text of the Gospels in the manuscripts that scribes interfered with the text of Mark less than with the text of the others.

These considerations suggest that Mark suffered the disproportionate correction that we have just noticed at a time when it was not part of the Four Gospel Canon but circulated independently and was in much greater use. These conditions would hold good for the period before A.D. 140.

Our arguments point to the conclusion that the tradition of the text of our Gospels does not begin with the introduction of the Four Gospel Canon but in an earlier period when each Gospel circulated independently. Our archetype for each of them must belong to this earlier time when many of the changes in our Gospel text were made.

We can see reasons for thinking that the text of our Gospels goes back to a time when each Gospel circulated independently before the Canon was formed, but can we say this of the Epistles? First, the Canon of the Epistles, or at any rate the nucleus of the Pauline Epistles, was formed earlier. If the Canon of the Four Gospels came into being about A.D. 140, the nucleus of the Canon of the Epistles was in being by the end of the first century. Secondly, no reasons have been shown for thinking that any Epistle, like Mark among the Gospels, remained in the Canon but dropped out of use after the Canon was formed. So we cannot use an Epistle as the criterion for the age of variants in the way that we have used Mark for the Gospels. Thirdly, we saw just now how we can study the correction of the Gospel text but there is no similar study for the Epistles. We have no studies of criteria comparable to "answered and said", for example. Search may reveal such tests, but they have still to be found.

Though those considerations suggest no answer to our question, there is one characteristic of our manuscripts that does. When Sir Frederic Kenyon finally published the Chester Beatty Papyrus of the Pauline Epistles, he included in his introduction figures showing the agreement and disagreement of the Papyrus with the principal manuscripts of the Epistles. These reveal significant variation in the relations of the Papyrus to the manuscripts from epistle to epistle. The Epistle to the Romans in particular stood apart from the others. If we leave the Papyrus out of consideration the relation of the manuscripts still varies from one epistle to another. This variation is most easily explicable if it goes back to a time when the Epistles circulated separately and not in a collection. This is most likely to have obtained before the Canon of the Pauline Epistles was formed.

This consideration is not as weighty as those brought forward for the Gospels but as far as it goes it points to the same conclusion. The tradition reaches back past the period when the New Testament books were circulating as constituents of a collection or canon to the time when each book circulated by itself.

If this conclusion is sound, our text goes back to a very early date, a time near the authors' copies. Can we determine its relation to those

copies themselves? More precisely, does our evidence enable us to recover what the authors wrote?

Before we answer this question, we may recall one probability. The authors' copies were not perfect. Even if the authors carefully revised them, it is likely that some faults survived. As in writing about the authors' copies we frequently assume that they were faultless, it is well to bear in mind the probabilities.

Now let us return to our question. In answering it we may have in mind two lines of argument. Along the one we may consider the condition of our text as it has come down to us, along the other we may examine conjectural improvements of passages where it is suggested that our whole tradition is wrong.

Let us take the first line of argument. Here we may consider the New Testament as a collection of first-century texts. As such does it contain anything conflicting with the history and conditions of the first century in general? We have an increasing knowledge of this period and our chances of detecting an intrusion of features from a later period into our texts are great. So far such an intrusion has not been demonstrated.

Our knowledge of the language and idiom of the time is detailed. We can detect the movement of language and even the trends in spelling. No one has so far shown that the New Testament is contaminated with the grammar or orthography of a later period.

We can go further. We have just argued about the New Testament as though it was a body of texts uniform in language and style. This is far from being true in detail. In the printed texts the works of the several authors are sharply and clearly distinguished linguistically. When we take into account the variations in the manuscripts as well, we find that these distinctions become even more pronounced.

This is not what we should look for, if the text had undergone any irremediable and considerable rehandling. Such revision might be expected to iron out differences and individual features, imposing on the text a smooth uniformity. If this is lacking to any noticeable degree, it is an argument in favour of the general soundness of our text.

There is in the New Testament a number of passages which present serious problems for the interpreter. We are aware that sometimes the solution has still to be found, but we are not confronted with the breakdowns in the text that we experience in some of the classical authors. In Aeschylus or Plautus, for example, we sometimes have no option but to conclude that the text is hopelessly corrupt.

This consideration leads us to our second line of argument. Are any of these conjectural restorations of the text clearly right? If this is so, then at these points the whole manuscript tradition is wrong.

Let us take one instance. John 19: 29 runs in the Authorized Version: "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." With

one exception our manuscript tradition agrees in having hyssop. Hyssop caused no difficulty to the ancient commentators as far as we know, and yet it is an unsatisfactory plant to use for this purpose. Unlike the reed which Mark mentions in this context, Mark 15: 36, it has no long firm stalk on which to fix the sponge. To meet this difficulty a sixteenth-century scholar, Camerarius, suggested that the evangelist wrote the word for javelin (ΥCOC) instead of the word for hyssop. The relevant Greek letters would run ΥCOC instead of ΥCOCOC. An early copyist wrote OC twice instead of once, the kind of mistake that frequently occurs in manuscripts. We know now that the reading ΥCOC is to be found in one medieval Greek manuscript, though in it this reading was later corrected to ΥCOCOC. It probably arose in the medieval manuscript through the opposite kind of mistake, the copying of the two letters once instead of twice.

The suggestion, javelin, has had wide acceptance. It is noteworthy that on the whole the translators have welcomed it more than the commentators. It is reproduced for example in the *Bible in Basic English*, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Rieu, Phillips, and Kingsley Williams.

Is this acceptance well founded? Alas, when we examine ΥCOC, "javelin", doubts appear. For them there are two grounds, first, the nature of the vocabulary of John, and, secondly, the meaning of ΥCOC itself.

John's vocabulary is limited. On one count it contains no more than 900 words in Greek and all but some twenty of these recur elsewhere in the New Testament, in the Greek Old Testament, in related texts, in the Apostolic Fathers, or in the non-literary papyri. On the other hand, it has no words common to it and the historians alone. By contrast ΥCOC occurs elsewhere only in historians or semi-historical writers. Thus in using a word like this the evangelist is going outside his normal range of vocabulary in an unparalleled way.

Let us take ΥCOC and examine it. As we saw it occurs only in a limited group of authors and is not a term of common speech. What is its meaning? It is used not for any kind of javelin but only for the Roman *pilum*. The Roman *pilum* was the weapon of legionary troops, not of other troops in the Roman Army. But no legionary troops were stationed in Judaea before A.D. 66. The troops under Pontius Pilate were, as we know, auxiliaries. Auxiliaries, not being legionary troops, would not be armed with a *pilum*. Consequently the soldiers round the Cross would not be so armed and the sponge of vinegar would not be elevated on a *pilum*. The javelin has no part in our story.

Thus we see that this plausible conjecture lands us in improbabilities and difficulties greater than those of the text of our manuscripts. It is true that the manuscript text has difficulties for the exegete, but these difficulties can be met in other ways. Thus the evangelist may have had in mind in his reference to hyssop its use in purification in connection with the *Passover*.

No other conjecture in the New Testament has had the same plausibility. Some have been taken up by this or that translator or commentator. Very often their popularity has been temporary as well as limited. All are open to serious objections.

We have discussed two directions along which the tradition of the text of the New Testament might prove imperfect. The condition of the text as it has come down to us might appear faulty. On the other hand, conjectures might establish themselves in the judgment of those concerned as necessary to the text. Our discussion has revealed neither kind of imperfection.

How does the state of the Greek New Testament text compare with that of the Greek Old Testament, the translation that was made in the last two hundred and fifty years B.C.? This translation, the Septuagint, has been handed down in many manuscripts the oldest of which are fragments dating from before the Christian era. Thus it too is in much better case than our classical authors.

It does not, however, show up under examination as well as the New Testament does. All our manuscripts of I Esdras and those of Daniel go back to ancestors which were defective. We know this because I Esdras lacks its beginning and end, and the Septuagint Daniel its beginning. There would, of course, be behind these ancestors older manuscripts without these defects but of them we have no independent knowledge.

Secondly, as we can see from a modern edition of the Septuagint at a number of places conjectures are incorporated into the text. For example, the form of the proper names has sometimes gone very much awry and we can usually arrive at a better form by comparison with the Hebrew.

Thus in two ways, the general condition of the text and the opportunity for conjecture, the Septuagint does not compare favourably with the New Testament. We would not suggest that it is a badly corrupted text but we cannot claim on its behalf that it is immune from corruption. This feature of its tradition may connect with two others. First, despite the date of the earliest fragments of the Septuagint, its manuscripts are in the main separated by a much larger interval from the period of translation than the New Testament manuscripts from the time of authorship. Secondly, if our examination of early papyri has shown that scribes almost from the beginning began to modify the New Testament text, the Septuagint invited alteration even more. It reproduces, and parts of it do so lavishly, Semitic idiom to a degree which has little parallel in the New Testament. It was open to constant correction to forms of the Hebrew text which differed from that from which the Septuagint translation was made. Finally, like the New Testament, it was affected by the stylistic canons of a later age but for a longer time.

If a comparison with the Septuagint confirms our view about the reliability of the New Testament text, can we put this view into practical



terms? Can we in effect say what our conclusions are likely to mean, for example, for the man who sets out to construct a text of the New Testament?

Before we answer these questions we must recall two facts. First it has been pointed out that, if we are to judge by the experience of writers, the authors' copies cannot be assumed to be flawless, and, if we set out to correct and improve everything which seems faulty, we soon find ourselves correcting our authors and doing what the second-century scribes did.

Secondly, it is well to remember that we have taken for granted much that is involved in the construction of a text. For example, we have not discussed how we choose between readings. Silence about this has been deliberate because such a topic would require at least a paper to itself where procedure could be considered in some detail. This silence would be serious only if behind it was the recognition that we lacked the methods whereby we could make a defensible choice from variant readings. Most students of the subject would recognize that this is far from being the state of affairs.

We may now return to our question and to it make short answer. We may assume as a rule of thumb that at each point the true text has survived somewhere or other among our manuscripts. This assumption, of course, cannot be proved unless we have before us the authors' copies to test our conclusions. This we cannot expect to do and so its general probability must rest on the considerations we have brought forward.

To summarize these we may say that we have unusually early manuscripts of the New Testament. They vary among themselves, but this very variety is a ground for confidence that the tradition of our text goes back to an early date. Further, it seems to antedate the formulation of the Canon of the New Testament as a whole and the appearance of the smaller Canons of the Four Gospels and probably of the Pauline Epistles. In keeping with this is the general impression of soundness that the New Testament text makes and the fact that no conjecture has really succeeded in establishing itself or meeting all the requirements of criticism.

If this argument justifies our rule of thumb, we may proceed to apply it with reasonable confidence. It should result in the provision of a text which at any rate does at all significant points give us what the authors wrote. If this can be achieved, then the suggestion that the place of the Bible in Christian belief and practice requires its textual integrity does not lead to difficulty. The requirements can be met, even if it calls for much scholarly labour to do so.

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**PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION—  
A RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT**

By

M. A. JEEVES, M.A.

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# PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION— A RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

By M. A. JEEVES, M.A.

## SYNOPSIS

This paper discusses the present relationship between Psychology and Religion in the light of the development of Psychology over the past fifty years. The contributions made by Sigmund Freud and William James are briefly reviewed and critically evaluated. It is suggested that there are to-day several points of overlap between Psychology and Religion which are still live issues. Five such points are discussed. The importance of a recognition by the psychologist of the limitations of his methodology is emphasized, but it is suggested that the religious man has at times been at fault in misconstruing the intentions of the psychologist who investigates religious experience. Attention is drawn to the dangers of attempting to defend, in the name of orthodoxy, some forms of religious experience which can scarcely be labelled Christian.

It is suggested that the experimental psychologist has a significant contribution to make in the investigation of current practical problems in parochial settings. Some examples of work already carried out are given by way of illustration.

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1. Introduction.
  2. The Methodology of Modern Psychology.
  3. Freud and Religion.
  4. William James.
  5. Some Contemporary Points of Overlap.
    - (i) Emotionalism.
    - (ii) Conversion.
    - (iii) Guilt.
    - (iv) Mental Illness.
    - (v) The Nature of Religious Faith.
  6. The Contribution of the Experimental Psychologist.
  7. Concluding Summary.

1. *Introduction.* It is my intention to sketch on a broad canvas the relationship between Psychology and Religion and to do this adequately I shall take a brief look into the immediate past, i.e. the last sixty years, and after evaluating the contemporary situation I shall then go on to make some tentative suggestions concerning future prospects.

It is partly through looking into the past that we are able to understand what it is that Psychology is claiming to do to-day and this will help us

to decide what status we should assign to it as an academic discipline. Psychology emerged as a separate discipline in the mid-nineteenth century. Its principal earlier connections were with Philosophy, Theology and Physiology. The Philosopher, for example, Descartes, had propounded his views on the duality of mind and matter, putting forward a mechanistic view of mind. The connection with Theology is, I suppose, almost too obvious to be worth stating, since theologians have wrestled unceasingly with the problems relating to the nature of man, whether for example he be bipartite or tripartite.

2. *The Methodology of Modern Psychology.* The actual methods of investigation employed by the Psychologist are many and varied and a brief list will serve to show how we have borrowed from other sciences to establish our own methodology. Thus in the first place Biology has taught us to give due attention to the importance of environment. Anthropology has raised problems of nature *versus* nurture. Medicine has shown us that mental illness may have a physical or a psychological basis or both. Mathematics has provided us with one of our most important tools, namely statistics. Physics has helped us in the construction of our recording instruments and, more recently, developments in electronics have provided us with useful analogical models of the human brain, and so on.

To-day then, Psychology is laying claim to its rightful place amongst the Natural Sciences, but as it does so it must at the same time discipline itself to the acceptance of the scope and limitations of the hypothetico-deductive method of the Natural Sciences. This is the method of investigation of the Psychologist who claims also to be a Scientist and we may perhaps wish to ask, "What has the Psychologist to do with making any pronouncements whatever about religious experience?" The answer briefly is that since his terms of reference are as wide as the scope of human behaviour and experience this, by the very nature of the case, also includes religious experience. Notice, however, that his brief is to explain in detail and to describe, if he can, the underlying physical and psychological mechanisms of the particular behaviour with which he is concerned. This, however, is different from any attempt on his part to pronounce upon the ultimate validity or otherwise of the particular interpretations given by the religious man in religious language of his religious experiences. When this stage is reached the opinion of the Psychologist has as much and as little claim to be heard and believed as that of any other layman, whether he be philosopher, artist, physician, physicist or chemist. Speaking on this particular subject, Sir Frederick Bartlett, until recently Professor of Experimental Psychology at Cambridge University, has written in his Riddell Memorial lectures for 1950,

"It is inevitable that the forms which are taken by feeling, thinking and action within any religion should be moulded and directed by the character of its own associated culture. The Psychologist must accept these forms and attempt to show how they have grown up and what are their principal effects. Should he appear to succeed in doing these things he is tempted to suppose that this confers upon him some special right to pronounce upon the further and deeper issues of ultimate value and truth. These issues, as many people have claimed, seem to be inevitably bound up with the assertion that in some way the truth and the worth of religion come from a contact of the natural order with some other order or world, not itself directly accessible to the common human senses," and Bartlett goes on, "So far as any final decision upon the validity or values of such a claim goes, the Psychologist is in exactly the same position as that of any other human being who cares to consider the matter seriously. Being a Psychologist gives him neither superior nor inferior authority."

3. *Freud and Religion.* With our terms of reference now more clearly defined let us turn at once to consideration of the claims to be believed of the particular interpretation of religion and religious experience given by Sigmund Freud. Freud was without doubt one of the greatest Psychologists of the first half of the twentieth century and although he liked to think himself a Scientific Psychologist his main claim to fame was undoubtedly as a Clinician, and as the author and originator of the method of Psycho-Therapy known as Psycho-analysis. There came a time when Freud decided to turn the torrent of his genius towards the consideration of the origins and functions of religion in the history of the human race. Much of the material upon which he based his judgment was collected by him in his Consulting Room in the course of the Psycho-analysis of his patients. Most people to-day are at least aware of, if not familiar with, Freud's basic picture of personality structure. If I might be allowed to over-simplify it just now for the sake of brevity, saying just enough to give a meaningful picture of how Freud's personality theory has been bound up with his opinion of religion, and how it is essential for a clear understanding of his views, I would proceed thus. Each of us, if we consider the real me or the real you as our Ego has to balance out in daily living the conflicting demands of our Id, which is the source of all our instinctual demands and basic drives, with those of our Super-Ego. In the adult the Super-ego represents the internalization of our early childhood reactions to our environment and particularly our parents' attitude and example, and this we may partly identify with what we usually call conscience. Such a view as this makes no provision for any inherent or absolute appreciation of right and wrong and is in this sense independent of fundamental religious or moral significance. According

to this picture of the developing personality Freud saw the idea of God and the fact of religious beliefs as no more than the projection in later life of the child's relationship to his father. Thus as a child developed and grew up he found that his earthly father was not able to protect him from all the stresses and threats to his existence in his daily environment, and moreover, he discovered that the day would come when he, the growing man, must assert his independence of his earthly father and then he must face the problem of to whom or to what he would then turn to fill the resulting gap in his life. One solution would be to attribute to a heavenly father all those characteristics which the developing child had found so essential in his earthly father. It was thus, said Freud, that primitive man developed his idea of God or Gods which were in fact merely the products and projections of his own imagination. In his book *The Future of an Illusion* Freud accordingly sums up the three-fold task of the Gods as being to exorcize, to reconcile and to make amends. Thus for Freud the idea of God was in fact an illusion created by men to comfort them in the face of their helplessness when they had outgrown or been deprived of their earthly parents. The amazing thing about all this is, that despite this sudden excursion by Freud into the field of imaginative mythology, he believed and proclaimed that this theory of the origin of religion provided a rational basis for the abandonment of religion. At the same time he concluded nevertheless that mankind at his present stage of development was not yet ready for the challenge to him implied by this liberation from religious belief and, therefore, for the time being at least, it was necessary that this fiction should continue. It would seem that this myth-making once embarked upon by Freud had for him a strange and compelling fascination for he soon found himself compelled to postulate in order to account for evil as the enemy of good, a death instinct "Thanatos" at war with "Eros", the life instinct, to be found in every living creature. There is in fact a striking contrast between the brilliant contribution made by Freud on the one hand to our understanding of the unconscious factors influencing thought and feeling and behaviour in the realm of everyday life, as well as in those of neurotic and psychotic symptoms, and on the other hand, the unfettered speculations concerning religion made in his consideration of some of the philosophical implications of the same basic clinical experience.

What then is to be our answer to Freud's wild speculations as to the origins of the religious life. I want to suggest two possible answers. In the first place there are no *a priori* reasons for accepting his explanation of the origin of God with the character of the divine Heavenly Father in preference to the accounts given to us by Revelation and preserved for us in the Scriptures. Indeed, rather than saying, as Freud does, that a Heavenly Father is a projection of the earthly father figure made by man himself to satisfy his adult demands and secure his independence, we

would assert that rather is it the case that God in His wisdom has ordained the pattern of human family life in such a way that as we grow up in it He teaches us progressively more about the characteristics of Himself as our Heavenly Father. Thus we see that the love, the care, and the consideration, of an earthly father is but a faint shadow or reflection of the infinite love and care which our Heavenly Father has for all His creatures. At the same time it serves to prepare the way for us to a deeper understanding of His wonderful, divine Fatherhood. In the second place it is not difficult to demolish Freud's own edifice of religious theorizing with the very same principles upon which his own case is built; thus, if we permit ourselves the same kind of speculations about Freud as he has permitted himself about Moses, for example, we may justifiably wonder whether his own unresolved conflict and intensely charged feelings about his father were not perhaps as much responsible for his views about conscience and religion, as were any of his scientific abilities. Thus from this thesis we should easily see how Freud, rather than wishing to preserve his own father figure in adulthood, in the form of a heavenly Father, instead sought to be rid of his own unresolved conflict with respect to his earthly father. And therefore, he went so far as to reject any idea of a Heavenly Father. On the face of it either explanation is equally likely and equally tenable. Thus we may conclude that it remains true that Freud can claim no more authority for his conclusions than could be claimed for the subjective speculations of any one else. His brilliant ability to explain how the idea of God and the idea of fatherhood might be linked in the human mind, and how both ideas could be expected to become involved in the developing conscience of the individual is in no sense an answer to the very much wider and infinitely more important question of why the concept of God should be a part of human mental existence at all. Moreover, the fundamental philosophical fallacy at the foundation of his speculative edifice is clearly summarized for us in his own words in the closing paragraph of *The Future of an Illusion* when, asserting that Science is the only way to knowledge and truth, he writes: "No, Science is no illusion but it would be an illusion that we could get anywhere else what it cannot give us."

4. *William James*. Another figure to whom I would turn your attention in this brief retrospect is that of William James. William James' approach to the study of religion was in many ways much more comprehensive than that of Freud and I personally feel that his contribution to this field, preserved for us in his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, has not been bettered before or since. This is not to deny that there are many shortcomings, but in general his approach and his conclusions have stood the test of time much better than those of Freud. Perhaps his most outstanding contribution was his brilliant analysis and contrasting of

the "once-born" and the "twice-born" souls. So much then for our backward glance. Let us now direct our attention to some of the places where to-day there seem to be points of overlap between Psychology and Religion. I should like to illustrate my thesis with five particular points where it is generally agreed that both Psychology and Religion have something to contribute.

5. *Some Contemporary Points of Overlap.* I shall consider first of all one of the most widely discussed topics of to-day, what is usually referred to as Emotionalism in religious experience and I shall then proceed to discuss in turn Conversion, Guilt, normal and pathological, the Christian attitude to mental illness and the Nature of religious faith.

(i) *Emotionalism*

First then let us turn to a consideration of a form of attack not infrequently made upon the validity of Christian experience in the name of psychology. This has to do with what is most often referred to as Emotionalism, by which is usually meant that Christian experience is *nothing but* emotional experience with no objective truth or reality in the professed interpretation of such experience. Now before I seek to answer such an accusation may I add a word of warning that there are times when we are tempted *for a variety of reasons*, to defend positions which in our own more sane moments we should not, for a moment, seriously wish to establish. I believe we must ever be on our guard against such a temptation in the name of orthodoxy, which in fact, may really be a cover to shield our own pride or personal prestige. In the first place, whether we like it or not, there is emotion in everything that we think, or say, or do, and so what we are concerned with is not really to explain why there are emotional accompaniments to religious experience but rather to understand what is their function and when are they rightly in balance and when are they unhealthy and pathological.

Emotional activity is part of our make-up and to maintain, as some do, that our decisions in spiritual matters must be devoid of emotional content is to be as mistaken on the one side as are those on the other extreme who seek to work up excessive feelings of guilt and conviction of sin. It seems to me that the well-taught Christian must join wholeheartedly with Psychologist and Psychotherapist in condemning that kind of evangelism which deliberately works up mass emotion or exercises undue influence over the free choice of an individual. At the same time it is a fact that all schools of dynamic psychology accept as one of their basic principles, that intellectual understanding or acceptance of a new outlook or attitude is ineffectual unless accompanied by an emotional experience of such a change. This is perhaps shown most clearly in the



Psychiatrist's consulting room where it is not at all an uncommon thing for an intelligent and well-educated patient to come along having read all about his case in one of the many readable and readily available books on psychology and yet be no better than he was before he read the book. The reason for this, amongst other things is, of course, that although he has a correct intellectual understanding of the problem there has been no emotional experience accompanying this understanding.

(ii) *Conversion*

The next and most controversial of all religious experiences and the one most often attacked by unbelievers is what we usually know as Conversion. I should like to turn now to a fairly detailed consideration of conversion which I hope will also serve to illustrate the general points I have tried to make thus far. May I begin this consideration of Conversion by briefly summarizing various forms of Conversion which I feel that we should not as Christians attempt to defend or justify. There are two kinds of conversion which are apt to appear especially among adolescents. First of all there are those kinds of conversion which result in unhealthy regressions to submission and authority. Such is often the case when, under social pressure from a family or Church group, a young person surrenders to his parents or his pastor's wishes and becomes "converted". This usually represents a regression to infantile submission. Such submission and obedience should be to Christ Himself and not to any earthly substitute. A similar type of experience may occur in the case of conversions which follow closely upon sorrow or failure in examinations. In such cases they may be only consolations and compensations.

Secondly, there are those types of conversion which result from the insistence made by religious groups upon a standardized type of conversion. In such cases the model tends to be St. Paul or Augustine or Wesley or the individual's own experience. It thus occurs that in some circles unless there has been an emotional crisis, doubt is cast upon the reality and validity of the individual's religious life. People converted under such circumstances are often those who in later life are the most cynical and are most likely to proclaim that all Christian experience is *nothing but a psychological myth*.

Thirdly, there are those conversions which are associated with an acute and almost pathological sense of guilt which, especially in adolescence, is often associated with the emergence into consciousness of sex life proper. Many adolescents tend to equate sex impulses with guilt and they seek relief in conversion, only to find that they are more tormented with doubt and fears than ever. To equate sexuality with guilt and then to banish it from their life is to reject what is an essential part of their nature and that is sometimes how the seeds of neurotic illness are sown. Thus there

comes to be a repression of guilt through conversion rather than the removal of it in forgiveness. These considerations of some of the types of conversion experience which take place will I hope help us to see where there is an element of truth in the accusation that Christian experience, where it is not true to the forms described in the New Testament, is a psychological myth.

#### (iv) *Mental Illness*

I should now like to return and take up in more detail a point which I made in passing earlier. I am referring to the question which is usually put in some such form as this, "If all you say about Christian experience is true, why is it that so many people whom I know and who claim to be Christians seem to be mentally ill in different degrees?" "Surely," the questioner goes on, "a Christian should not be neurotic or psychotic?" In the first place let me be quite clear that I do not for a moment wish to deny what I have said already, namely that conversion and that which follows should be a truly healing process. I personally like William James' definition of conversion; he wrote, "Conversion is a process gradual or sudden by which a self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, to the establishment of a right relationship with the object of religious sentiment."

I would actually wish to alter the last phrase to read "to the re-establishment of a right relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ".

While the power of the love of Christ is a reality in the lives of countless Christians we are bound to admit that there are also not a few Christians who have what are usually called "nervous breakdowns". As we learn more and more about the genesis and basis of mental disorders we become more and more aware of their close affinity with physical disorders and in one sense at least it is almost as foolish to expect to find less *serious* mental disorders amongst Christians as it is to expect to find less cases of acute appendicitis amongst Christians than amongst non-Christians.

We must, moreover, realize that it is sometimes the case that people who are neurotic or psychotic are drawn to Christianity because of the hope of reaching a solution to their mental problems, which in fact some of the neurotic ones do. For this and for the following reasons we should not be too surprised to find that Christians appear to be almost as much subject to mental disorders as others. It is also possible that some who call themselves Christians and who are members of religious communities are, in fact, religious neurotics. They are sometimes "escapists" who seek the shelter of Christianity whenever trouble arises and are only interested in Christianity for what they can get out of it. These people

somehow manage to ignore Christ's injunction that "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Lastly, there are those who persist in breaking even the most obvious rules of mental and physical health. This I know is a great temptation to Christian workers who often tend to ignore the command to rest one day in seven. It is, of course, possible to use myriads of meetings simply as a means of escaping from oneself. Our answer, therefore, to the question why Christians or those who call themselves Christians still have mental disorders should, I suggest, be along two lines, firstly that there are no *a priori* reasons for believing that a random sample of Christians should be any more or less innately prone to disorders than a similar group of non-Christians and secondly that it is in fact a compliment to the claims of Christianity that so many should turn to it as a help in time of need and hence that not a few unstable personalities should be found within its bounds.

#### (v) *The Nature of Religious Faith*

Traditionally the word faith has been used in two senses, perhaps best expressed by *fides* and *fiducia*. "Fides" has been taken to denote the act of knowing God and knowing or believing that there is a God. "Fiducia," on the other hand, denotes the worshipper's attitude of practical trust in God. Faith in the New Testament sense includes all three attitudes towards God.

A psychologist sees in faith three different though again related types of belief which are best expressed perhaps in shorthand form as credulity, credence and conviction. The first, *credulity*, is the attitude exemplified most clearly in infancy.

To children in their early years everything is real and upon this attitude depends all the later non-believing attitudes for their existence. With infants perception through the senses is to be equated with reality and yet we, as adults, must learn to interpret our immediate perceptual data. Thus, for example, we learn that what appears to be a wet patch on the road on a hot summer day is but the result of a particular manner of refraction and reflection of the light above the hot surface. There is, however, an adult correlate of this infantile attitude, namely, the kind of unquestioning intellectual assent under accepted authority which at times seeks to pose as faith.

Secondly, there is *credence* which denotes that kind of intellectual assent which can only follow upon doubt, and yet this attitude can result in conceptual belief which can even supersede and dislodge the evidence from immediate sense data.

*Conviction*, the third part of belief, involves first credulity and credence but with the difference that it also involves the total personality at the

deepest emotional level. At this stage an individual commits himself to the truth of the proposition or the trustworthiness of the person in whom he has believed. That a belief of this kind involves and affects the whole personality is confirmed by many psychological researches in the field of what is known as personality dynamics.

6. *The Contribution of the Experimental Psychologist.* I have left until now what to me, as an experimental psychologist, is potentially the most interesting point of contact between psychology and religion to-day. I am referring to the assistance which the experimental psychologist should be able to give in the investigation of the practical problems which arise in most parochial settings

During the past few years a number of techniques have been evolved in particular by students of psychology and the social sciences which are capable of being applied with some profit to some, at any rate, of the practical problems of the Church. These techniques aim at obtaining data which are fuller, wider and more objective than those which can be obtained by the lone observer working on his own unchecked observations. As examples of the type of work envisaged I should like to sketch very briefly three particular studies which have already been carried out. Quite the most famous and comprehensive piece of work already carried out is the study of conversion and religious development during adolescence made by Professor Starbuck and published under the title of *The Psychology of Religion* as long ago as 1889. Starbuck was able to produce quantitative data about the ages at which conversion most frequently takes place, showing that for boys there seems to be a steady rise until about the age of 16 followed by a steady fall whilst for girls there are three peaks at 13, 16 and 18 years. For the second example I should like to cite a study made by Professor Allport of Harvard and his collaborators *The Religion of the Post-War College Student*, *J. Psychol.*, 1948, 25, 3-33). They were interested in the nature of the religion of the post-war college students (that is the post 1939-1945 war), and I quote from the first paragraph of their report: "It is said that among young intellectuals religion is a thing of the past, contrariwise it is asserted that the shattering experience of the war has caused modern youth to become unusually responsive to the values of religion. Assertions and counter-assertions of this order are necessarily based on selective observation and run the danger of reflecting the anti- or pro-religious bias of those who make them. What actually are the facts for the case? It is important for Social Theorists, Educators, Religionists and for the students themselves to know." The report went on to give a detailed study of the religious life and views of young people. The instrument used in this study was the traditional, and far from perfect, device of the questionnaire. From the many very interesting findings which emerged

from this study I can quote but a few. For example, it was found that seven out of every ten students feel that they require "some form of religious orientation or belief in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life". Or again that only one in ten among women and two in ten among men declared definitely that they have no need for religion and only about 15 per cent deny altogether participating in religious activities or feeling some religious states of mind during the preceding six months. The strongest single psychological influence upon the "felt need" for religion was the intensity of religious influence in the student's upbringing. Another point which emerged was that the rarest of the twelve influences mentioned was sex turmoil, a fact that tends to discredit the derivation of religious sentiment solely from this root.

A third example I would take to illustrate my point is reported in a paper which appeared in the *British Journal of Psychology* in 1946—"An attempt at an experimental approach to the Psychology of Religion" and in it the Rev. A. T. Welford, a Lecturer in psychology at Cambridge, has reported a study in which 182 subjects were given four prayers of differing language and somewhat differing subject matter and asked to place them in order of preference. The four prayers used were: (a) Help us, O Lord, to strive hard to control ourselves and to help our fellows that our lives may be useful in this world. (b) Almighty and everlasting God, we beseech Thee that by the gracious gift of Thy Spirit dwelling in our hearts we may endeavour ourselves to follow after righteousness, and loving all men, may ever seek the path of charitableness, for Jesus Christ's sake. (c) Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour and further us with Thy continual help that in all our work begun, continued and ended in Thee we may glorify Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and (d) Teach us, Almighty Father, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.

In this study Welford was able to indicate how the preference for different types of prayers varied amongst groups of clergy, ordinands, churchgoers, non-churchgoers and various groups of children. It was interesting that the question of whether a prayer was expressed in old-fashioned or modern language, appeared to be an unimportant factor as compared with other factors such as the beauty and dignity of the prayer or its simplicity or the more affective aspects of its subject matter.

It seems to me not unreasonable to suppose that numerous questions facing us to-day in the Churches should be answerable by such an empirical approach. I have in mind questions such as, "What is the optimum age at which boys and girls should be confirmed, in order that it should have the greatest meaning for them at the time of confirmation and the most lasting significance in later life?" and, "At what age should we attempt to

introduce children in the Anglican Church to a liturgical form of worship? ” Or again, “ In the case of children between, for example, 11 and 14 years is a Sunday School or a Children’s Church most likely to produce, in a given locality, regular churchgoing at a later age? ” and again, “ In a given type of town or country district, what results are likely to follow the holding of a mission, and how often should such missions be held? ”

From the examples given it will be seen that the type and method of investigation advocated is of an essentially practical and applied nature and is not intended to consider such matters as the rightness and value of Christian institutions.

7. *Concluding Summary.* It will have become evident that I did not have any cut-and-dried answers to present in this paper, indeed, I believe that any attempt to present cut-and-dried answers would, by the very nature of the case have indicated failure on my part to grasp the contemporary situation in psychological research, which is in a state of flux and of rapid advances, at times followed by wild theorizing. Having made this proviso I would wish to maintain that (1) Insofar as psychology to-day as the science of the study of behaviour lays claim to the status of a science, it must, with that status, accept the scope and limitations of the scientific method. So far as any final decision upon the validity or value of any claim which asserts that in some way the truth and worth of religion comes from a contact of the natural order with some other order or world not in itself directly accessible to the common human senses, the Psychologist is in exactly the same position as that of any other human being prepared to study the matter seriously. I quote again from Bartlett, “ being a Psychologist gives him neither superior nor inferior authority.” (2) In his interpretation of the origins and functions of religion Sigmund Freud stepped out into the realm of excessive mythology. Moreover, his own theory of the origins of religious beliefs can be easily demolished starting from the principles enunciated by him in his theory of personality. (3) that emotion is a real and essential part of all of our profound and most significant experiences, whether they be religious or otherwise. There are, however, dangers in excessive emotionalism to be found in certain types of mass evangelism. (4) True conversions are a human and unifying process. There may, however, be several forms of conversion which are but immature escapism and which will not bear the fruits of a spirit-filled life. (5) We must be done once and for all with the fallacy, common even in some Christian circles, that mental illness is in some sense a detrimental reflection upon a person’s spiritual life. This is nonsense and the sooner we realize this the better. (6) There is, as yet largely unexplored, a real and definite positive contribution for experimental psychologists to make in the study of practical and applied problems arising in the typical parochial setting.

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OF THE

# VICTORIA INSTITUTE

AT

KING'S COLLEGE

THE STRAND, W.C. 2

ON

MONDAY, 27<sup>th</sup> MAY, 1957

R. J. C. HARRIS, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D., in the Chair

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## ANNUAL ADDRESS

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### HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW TRADITION

By

U. E. SIMON, M.Th., F.K.C.

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THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

# HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW TRADITION

BY U. E. SIMON, M.Th., F.K.C.

## SYNOPSIS

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1. Meaning and Derivation of the Word.
  2. The Empirical Approach.
  3. Traditional Conjectures.
  4. Apocalyptic Cosmogonies and the New Testament.
  5. St. Paul's Rapture (2 Cor. 12: 2-4).
  6. Paradise.
  7. The Heavenly Jerusalem.
  8. Evil Powers in Heaven.
  9. The Dissolution of the Present Age.
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DURING the two millennia, which the Bible covers, no specific Hebrew cosmology appears to have existed. The Hebrew view of the Universe merely reflects the general non-scientific milieu of the Near East, which no technical advance and no astronomical discovery disturbed. The flint that first engraved the Hebrew word for Heaven, *shamaim*, was directed by a mind whose cosmic information hardly differed, if at all, from that of the author of the last book in the New Testament, who wrote the Greek word *Ouranos*. Thus in the Old Testament a Deborah may sing "The earth trembled, the Heavens also dropped" (Jdg. 5: 4), and a St. John on Patmos in the New Testament may see "a door opened in Heaven" (Rev. 4: 1). This generally accepted world-view permitted of endless deviations. The Bible never presents us with a precise definition but with a large variety of endless shades of meaning. One could evidently believe anything about Heaven without being suspected of betraying the right faith. Only the fact that Heaven is a place does not admit of doubt; the vault rests upon pillars (Job. 26: 11), divided by the firmament from the waters and the world beneath (Gen. 1: 8; Prov. 8: 27 ff.).

An investigation into the origin of the word *shamaim* is disappointing; etymological enquiries do not always tell us what we want to know, names and words change their meaning, and origins lie hidden in the past. Just as the English word Heaven defies a simple explanation while its sound guards its secret (the alleged connection with "to lift" is but a guess), and just as the German *Himmel* probably never had the remotest connection with "to cover" (though it is a favoured conjecture sometimes



associated with the Greek *Oouranos*), so we also plunge uncertainly among various possibilities of origin.<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew *shamaim*—with which must be bracketed the Aramaic *shemaia*, the related *šmm* in Ugaritic, *šamu* in Accadian, *šmv* in old South Arabic—fails to reveal its origin and therefore has also given rise to many a guess. It has been conjectured that the Accadian *šamu* denoted a cover or a roof; on the other hand, the whole family of related words may have signified height at an early date. In Hebrew the words always appear in what looks like a plural ending. This, it is generally agreed, adds nothing to our knowledge and may even mislead us if we conclude that *shamaim* always denoted the layers of spheres of Heaven.

The ancient speculative regard for a word strikes a modern philologist as absurd, but it deserves some respect, for, however artificial the associations, they shed a great deal of light on the Biblical conception of Heaven as a place. The great Jewish and Christian expositors of Scripture were scholars and yet took an interest in unscholarly plays on words; paromasia was a time-honoured method of teaching essentials in non-academic circles.<sup>2</sup> Ordinary people could see with their own eyes that Heaven was a compound of fire and water, aglow with reds, pinks, and blues, full of wonders: did it not deserve to be called divine, to carry the name of the Lord? Thus the popular impression fills up the vacuum of linguistic obscurity. Imagination is stronger than semantics and grammar.

In the Midrash on Genesis (Gen. R. 4: 7) examples of interesting conjectures, amounting to inventions, can be found. By slight changes in the spelling of the word *shamaim*, or by the introduction of a new division of the letters of this word, the common form undergoes some strange changes: *sa-maim* means "laden with water"; *esh-umaim* equals "fire and water"; *she-maim* is a later form for "of water". Indeed, the linking up of water (*maim*) and Heaven (*shamaim*) is very ancient: e.g. in Gen. 8: 2 "the windows of Heaven were stopped and the rain from Heaven was restrained". When God speaks there is a "tumult of waters in the Heavens" (Jer. 10: 13), i.e. of the heavenly ocean. But the Rabbis go even beyond these ancient associations. They allude to *sammim* which suggest to them the different colours of paint of the chemicals which cause the glow of Heaven; they mention *shamam* to remind their pupils of the wonders from above; they speak of *shamim*, the weighing up of merits or sins, for Heaven is a place of judgment.

Before the conjectures, however, comes the direct experience by sight. Partly, at least, Heaven is visible from below, whereas to the other senses,

<sup>1</sup> Only with the Latin *Coelum*, which is akin to the Greek *Koilos*, and its derivatives, we are on safer ground. The notion of a hollow and a high place which covers the earth used to express what in general people believed about Heaven in pre-scientific cosmologies.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. G. Rashi, on Gen. 1: 8. See also A. Levene, *The Early Christian Fathers on Genesis*, pp. 135 ff.

except hearing, it is not known. But even the sight of men fails to penetrate the blue crust. The "inside" of Heaven would be unknown except for the special event when the Heavens are "open" to human discernment. This extraordinary experience belongs to the abnormal vocation and the privilege of prophetic seeing. It is, therefore, almost impossible to say whether such a vision can be classed with the normal process of perception. It varies according to the degrees of directness and only the recipient can measure and report the nature of his celestial contemplation. No doubt dream experience is the most common and lacks by no means in reality. The Heavens are obviously more transparent by night than by day. Jacob dreams when he sees a ladder set upon the earth whose top reaches Heaven and angelic traffic moves up and down. This dream experience not only shapes the inner life of Jacob but serves as the true type of religious experience which Jesus commends: after obeying their call his disciples will partake of the celestial vision. The "opened Heaven" is to become a conscious reality for them (Jn. 1: 50-51). Lest this be taken to be a metaphor one must recall Ezekiel's ecstatic vision (ch. 1) through which the visionary transcends his place on earth, by the river Chebar, so as to approach the "open Heaven". His vision is the *locus classicus* of celestial visions and assures the hearer by its very detail that the experience entails the seeing of abnormal things and creatures which pertain to the divine self-manifestation.

The extraordinary experience stresses the contrast with the normal state, when Heaven is a closed place. Then experience must be content with the knowledge of Heaven's existence without a perception of its real nature. Traditionally it becomes a hidden and mysterious place which excites a constant interest, just because it is both concealed and visible, always above men, unattainable, and eminently desirable. The Hebrews "consider" the Heavens; after a day's work they look up with admiration and ponder the size, structure, and meaning of this place.

The immensity of Heaven suggests to the beholder the plurality of the spheres behind the firmament. "The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens" (Deut. 10: 14; I Kings 8: 27) becomes the key expression and starting-point for speculative multiplications. The first popular division probably reckoned in terms of three Heavens. The Testament of Levi, before it suffered interpolations, tells of the first Heaven as a gloomy place where man's unrighteous deeds are seen and their punishment anticipated; the second Heaven contains fire and ice, ready for the day of judgment (3: 1 f.). In the third Heaven, God is enthroned and surrounded by his adoring angels (3: 4 ff.). But another tradition, defended by Rabbi Jehuda (b. Chag. 12 b), refers to Deut. 10: 14 literally and acknowledges only the existence of two Heavens, as if Heaven and Heaven of Heavens constituted two different realms. The Rabbis discuss the matter with noticeable restraint: the subject is not only elusive but

possibly also suspect. Yet the opposing Rabbi (Resh Laqisch) in proposing the seven Heavens has the majority opinion behind him. "The doctrine of the seven Heavens was prevalent in Judaism before and after the time of Christ" says Charles, for the figure seven always seems to have proved irresistible. The passage in the Talmud actually mentions the names of these Heavens—they are not found in the Christian tradition nor in the pseudepigraphical writings. The arrangement of the seven Heavens seems arbitrary and forced, "puerile in the extreme" according to Charles. The first Heaven is the *Wilson*, a word borrowed from the Latin *velum*=curtain. It covers the stars and is renewed every day. This curtain, though based on Is. 40: 22, resembles the notion of the cosmic mantle or the divine cloak;<sup>1</sup> it is not part of the Christian tradition. Ascending from this lowest Heaven we come next to the *Raqi'a'*, the firmament, on which the stars are fastened, then to the *Shechagim*, the place of grinding, a vaporous cloud, from which the Manna descends (Ps. 78: 23; 89: 7, 38); the fourth place is the *Zebul*, the eternal dwelling (I Kings 8: 13), indistinguishable from the *Ma'on*, the holy habitation of Deut. 26: 15, and from *Makon*, the place of I Kings 8: 39. The last name of all shows the ingenuity of the Rabbis. It is the '*Araboth* of Ps. 68: 5, which usually means deserts; but since God cannot very well ride "through the deserts" (E. T.) they conclude that it must be another name for Heaven.

Although the Christian tradition is free from these expositions it has its own difficulties. Jesus, Paul, and the early Church seem to have accepted the sevenfold cosmogony. The seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks of the Apocalypse (2: 1) are symbols of the early Christians' world-view in which Jesus figures as the light of the world in Heaven. This imagery is reminiscent of the candelabrum or *Menorah* of the Jews, itself a cosmic symbol of the light of the spheres. The numerical order in this connection presupposes respective degrees of both glory and virtue, and it is implied that there is an ascent from the lower to the highest sphere. Thus "the Father's house has many stations" comparable to the floors of a block of flats. When Jesus promises them this accommodation in the future (Jn. 14: 2) he knows that they will understand the meaning of being initiated into the order of the universe, for the floors of the house represent the corresponding spheres of Heaven. The picture of the hero who traverses one Heaven after another until he reaches God's own domain was well-known and popular. The Prophet in the Ascension of Isaiah advances in a manner similar to the Visionary of the Apocalypse. In the Ascension of Isaiah the Heavens are wholly without the taint of evil, probably because Christ has cleansed the Heavens. The distance between the Heavens is very great (7: 28). The seventh Heaven contains innumerable companies of angels and just men, awaiting the

<sup>1</sup> See R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, 1910.

exaltation of Christ and their own coronation (Ch. 9). A similar order is symbolically alluded to in Enoch (Chs. 24; 25) where the seven magnificent mountains illustrate the progression. 4 Ezra (7: 81-98) distinguishes between seven ways of confusion or Hell, and seven ways of rest and Heaven.

Much later a further revolution altered the spatial arrangement. It appears that the seven Heavens became a favourite and discredited theme of the heretics, and, as Charles believes, unnecessary for orthodox thought. Illogically, however, instead of simply abolishing or simplifying the divisions of Heaven, the Christians actually increased them to ten. The date of the original addition remains unknown. The tradition of the ten Heavens represents the blending of the traditional system with Pythagorean thought and may have been favoured also by the assumed existence of ten orders of angels. Possibly the passages in Is. 6, Ezek. 1 and 10, and Dan. 7: 9, 10, suggested this in the popular amplification of Enoch 14: 17 ff., which speaks of "ten thousand times ten thousand". But even in the Secrets of Enoch, the reference to the ten Heavens in chapter 22 is rejected by Charles as a late interpolation.

The importance of the numbering of the Heavens from a Biblical point of view focusses mainly upon St. Paul's somewhat casual reference to his own experience in the following well-known passage: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth) such a one caught up even to the third Heaven. And I know such a man . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4). The Apostle does not only retain the veil of the secret lest the glory of the mystical trance be lost through boasting: he confesses his own ignorance about the actual occurrence and his physical condition at the time. The vagueness recalls Ezekiel's simple and non-committal description: "the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the Heaven" (8: 3). Nevertheless, the Apostle mentions the number of the *third* Heaven though he does not make it clear whether the penetration into the third Heaven and into Paradise are one and the same thing, as is most probable. Unlike the hero of the third-rate Apocalypse of St. Paul (esp. chs. 21; 45) the Apostle is silent about the first and second Heavens. Yet, notwithstanding the obscurity "the condensed intensity of the narrative leaves little room for the play of fancy or exaggeration";<sup>1</sup> two things emerge with decisive clarity: there are degrees of Heaven and abnormal experiences, which when vouchsafed to some saints and others grant a momentary penetration into Heaven. The degrees of Heaven and the penetration are conceived of in spatial terms.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plummer, *2 Corinthians* (I.C.C.), ad loc.

Assuming, then, the third Heaven and Paradise to be the same thing (as in Apoc. Mos. 37: 5-6; 40: 2) it is still questionable whether St. Paul claims to have been translated to the highest or to an intermediary Heaven. The notions of Paradise—probably unknown among the non-Jewish Corinthians—are contradictory, although the term Paradise itself is of international usage. This Persian loan-word occurs in the Old Testament to describe the garden of Eden. It is a park or orchard: "I made me gardens and Paradises" (Eccles. 2: 5); Asaph is keeper of the king's Paradise (Neh. 2: 8). This enclosure is plainly on this earth. At the same time Eden-Paradise, as the garden of God, gained currency, not only through the story in Genesis but also in Ezekiel's utterances (28: 13; 31: 9). It is still on earth, but the unworthy are expelled from it. Even the school of Enoch (60: 8) retains the earthly Paradise, although Apocalyptic writers tend to think of it more and more as a place out of this world. In Isaiah 51, for instance, the consolation of Zion is not simply a return to the perfect garden but "her wilderness is made *like* Eden", a place of perfection. The comparison shows that already Eden-Paradise has been removed from this earth to a higher sphere. In the Apoc. Mos. (chs. 37 and 40) it is the place of transit for the just, who, with Adam, dwell there between Death and Resurrection.<sup>1</sup> In 4 Ezra (7: 36), it stands over against the furnace of Gehenna, with all its torments, for it offers endless delights. In Enoch (70) it is between Heaven and earth, at the remotest Northern corner of an unspecified Heaven (77: 3), or at the East, the gates of the Sun (42). The Syr. Ap. Baruch, whose division of Heaven into five or seven is very ambiguous, places it in the fourth Heaven (59: 8) or very high; within its domains there are the beauty of the living creatures, which are beneath the throne, and all the armies of the angels (51: 11). In the Talmudic tradition Paradise is not Eden, but rather a heavenly place of somewhat indistinct dimensions, suitable for mystic enquiry, with rooms or dwellings, commensurate with the record of men (b Chag. 14 b).

It is obviously not an easy task to explain St. Paul's account with reference to such a great number of potential parallels. Most commentators prefer the pre-Christian Testament of Levi (ignoring the later interpolations with the additional four Heavens), in which the hero ascends in his trance from a high mountain to the first Heaven of the sea, the second of brightness and height, and lastly the third of incomparable beauty. The first couple of Heavens contains armies, good and bad; these are set aside for warfare, retribution, and punishment. But the third Heaven is the highest and different, for it belongs to God (II. 5-III. 4). St. Paul has seen not only the immensity of the universe but has

<sup>1</sup> As also in the Secrets of Enoch, 8: 3-5; Paradise is "between corruptibility and incorruptibility"; the Lord rests on the tree of life in the middle during his visits there.

gazed upon the spiritual perfection of the highest realm. He does not report events in some intermediary sections of the universe nor does he wish to entice his converts with Gnostic speculations about emanations and spirits in the spheres. In his trance he has been made to follow the Messiah, the second Adam, to whom God has opened the gates of Paradise for the salvation of the Gentiles (T. Levi. 18: 6-10). So Irenaeus (Adv. Her. II, XXX, 7) confirms the general tradition that the Apostle to the Gentiles reached the highest Heaven; there he obtained the celestial sanction for his mission, with which, after all, his work among the Corinthians is concerned. To conform them to the will of God he has seen the height and perfection of all things as they will be at their final state.

It must be conceded, however, that St. Paul's restraint is inexplicable, despite the apologies, made for him by commentators, that the Corinthian context explains it. Would someone thus initiated, albeit in a temporary trance, really wish to be silent about the highest Heavens? Hardly so: and indeed, the Apostle declares himself that he is willing to glory "on behalf of such a man". He looks upon the entranced visionary almost as another person, of whom he can speak objectively and *without* restraint. This high estimate, on his part, of visionary and vision seems to confirm, from an unexpected quarter, that the third Heaven is Paradise and that both are the highest of God. It compels us to set aside even the evidence of Lk. 23: 43; there the penitent malefactor is almost certainly to "be in Paradise" as in an intermediary state, either as envisaged in Apoc. Mos. (chs. 37 and 40) or perhaps even as a place of punishment in Heaven. Places of retribution and even torment are in Heaven, according to some apocalyptic passages (e.g. T. Isaac, pp. 146 f.), and Hell and Paradise were neatly balanced, at least according to the Secrets of Enoch (7: 1-3; 10: 1-5). The Lukan word of our Lord, however, conveys consolation because Jesus will be with the dead man; even in Paradise, whether the place of judgment, or of waiting, he will not be alone. Jesus will remember him in that place, where in fulfilment of Daniel's vision the fiery judgment of the thousands (7: 9-10) must occur. Paradise oscillates in meaning between serene peace and final bliss on the one hand, and judgment on the other.

St. Paul's interest is not devoted to cosmogony but to this final state, already apprehended in the vision. At the end of the world this Paradise descends from Heaven to earth or it ascends from the earth into Heaven. Both ideas were common and popular. The moving and connecting impetus to this transport is the movement of the redeemed: "To him that overcometh (namely, in martyrdom), to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Apoc. 2: 7). It may be in earth or in Heaven, but it is certainly near the throne of God, for the tree of life which bears the fruit for the healing of the nations (Apoc. 22: 2) grows on the river-bank of the city of God. Even in this eschato-

logical picture Paradise remains the Park-garden of God, though it is no longer an intermediary clearing-house but the goal of the redeemed. It is not surprising that the final location in the tradition does not place it on earth but in the highest Heaven, following, in this respect, the highly individualistic account of St. Paul.

Heaven is, therefore, not only invoked for authority and adored for its awful majesty, but also looked upon as a happy place, albeit one of judgment. The blessedness of Heaven is no doubt inferred from the impression of light and purity. The firmament shines with brightness (Dan. 12: 3) under God's feet: the work of sapphire brilliance has the transparent clarity of the very Heavens. God's strength is in the skies, the firmament of his power, and is compared to the metal of a molten mirror (Job. 37: 18), the reflection of the superbly strong and blinding Light. Thus light and energy and matter together make up the pattern of the glory which men perceive in their vision of the sky. In that sense "the Heavens proclaim God's glory and the firmament shows his hands' work" (Ps. 19). The natural enjoyment of this daily unfolding of the beauty of holiness is universal and spontaneous and belongs to this world. But the apocalyptic protest balances this view by insisting that the real vision of the inner beauty of Heaven is barred to the ungodly and only the worthy victor in the strife sees beyond the natural spectacle. This supernatural Heaven is another place than anything known to men. It has grown out of the visible phenomenon. The heavenly Jerusalem is "above", with foundations of sapphire, pinnacles of rubies, gates of carbuncles, borders of pleasant stones and the Temple and its treasures. The felicity of Heaven consists in the faith that all these things exist already in their perfection.

The paradox between Jerusalem that is on the map of the earth and the heavenly Jerusalem is peculiar to the Christian conception of Heaven. The Jewish ideology, on the whole, hoped for the vindication of Jerusalem in this world and did not go beyond the picture in Isaiah 54: 11 ff.; even the equation Jerusalem=Paradise (as interpolated in Syr. Ap. Bar. 4: 2 ff.) does not invalidate the political expectation. Yet the notion of a cosmic city of God was also known in these circles: Adam, Abraham, and Moses had seen that imperishable city for which the godly are destined (4 Ezra 8: 52). St. Paul transcended the earthly conception by stressing the freedom of the exalted Jerusalem (Gal. 4: 24) at the expense of that below, and in *Hebrews* (12: 22) the decisive identification has been made: "ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . .", and that at a time when the earthly city had probably been sacked by the Romans. The end of all history coincides with the coming down of this heavenly Jerusalem (Ap. 21: 2), and it is this city after which the Christians seek, the sole abiding social reality (Hebr. 13: 14). There stands the throne of God (Apoc. 4: 2 ff.) with the

fiery chariot (Dan. 7: 9-10; b Chag. 13 a), the living beasts and the crystal sea. There the heavenly treasures are stored away which are absolutely safe (Mt. 6: 20) and rewards are received in recompense for earthly title-deeds (Mt. 19: 21); the capital for future living (I Tim. 6: 19) and the heavenly house of every individual citizen on earth (II Cor. 5: 1 ff.) is kept in readiness there, and from thence eternal life is bestowed (Jn. 6).

The spatial paradox between "here" and "there", which in its sharpest form is peculiar to the Christian tradition, decrees a corresponding temporal contract between "now" and "then". The two conflicting aspects of time—permanence and transitoriness—are held together in a strange dialectic, and Heaven provides the key to the puzzle of duration. On the one hand the Heavens were made to stand for ever, for the Old Testament view of the creation is not to be annulled. Thus God's faithfulness is often compared in the Psalms to the stability of Heaven, Sun, Moon, and the stars; men swear by Heaven as a permanent witness (Mt. 6: 34). The Heaven of the Christian tradition—in which the Father dwells and from which the Son descends and from whence the Holy Spirit is received—is unquestionably felt to be stable and permanent. On the other hand, the apocalyptic sentence of the dissolution of Heaven pronounces the instability of the whole universe: "The Heavens that now are, and the earth . . . have been stored up for fire" (2 Peter 3: 7). This tradition of the darkening of the sun and the eclipse of the moon and of the stars falling from Heaven, and of Heaven itself being rent and shaken, is as important in Apocalyptic thought as that of the stability of the universe. Indeed cessation defeats permanence, the Heavens tremble, lose their light, and melt away, notwithstanding their immensity, beauty, and strength. This great catastrophe precedes God's judgment (Mk. 13; cf. Assump. Mos. 10; En. 80; 83: 3 f.; 4 Ezra 5: 4; 6: 20; Sibyl. Or. III. 796 ff.), and this judgment, according to the Christian Gospel, follows immediately upon the appearance of Jesus Christ. The cosmic upheaval—"Heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up"—is the climax of the judgment at the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6: 12-14). Thus a definite Christian bias severs the idea of the end of the world from the common stock of chaotic events in the universe. The Parousia governs the dissolution of the age.

Permanence and instability became in apocalyptic thought the warp and woof of the cosmic fabric. On the one hand, "Heaven is my throne" (Is. 66: 1), the Father is in Heaven, the will of God is done in Heaven; on the other "all the host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll . . . for my sword has drunk its fill in Heaven" (Is. 34: 4-5). The permanence of Heaven derives from the perfect creation, i.e. the providential order "of the world and the things therein", is dissolution from evil and rebellion.



In most prophetic utterances of the Old Testament the moral problem concerns the present earth and has little or nothing to do with a celestial cataclysm. "Heaven and earth" belong together but they are not thought of as indivisible. Heaven is not only more immense and awful than the earth but also purer and eternal, because uncontaminated by the abuses practised on earth. The latter, though also reflecting God's glory, is often given into the hands of wicked men and after a succession of wars heads towards a violent end and desolation. But Heaven is not implicated. The Prophet as the moral analyst detects the moral evil in man and it is man's abode which must suffer from the divine vengeance in the first place, while the Heavens remain untouched. The historical sense does not normally include the non-earthly realm in such disasters. Yet it must be confessed that the darkness, even if caused by domestic politics, always borders on a more than purely historical plane and evokes apocalyptic interpretations. Typically, for instance, Jeremiah views not only the earth as "waste and void", but even the Heavens are without light and deserted (Jer. 4: 23). The Apocalyptic visionaries returned to the earlier belief that evil comes not only out of the heart of man, but is a power outside man. This outlook was bound to influence their cosmogony.

In the Bible the underworld plays no important part; it lies under the earth to which it belongs. Despite its distance from Heaven, *Sheol*, the dusty hole of death and decay, is still within divine control: "Though they dig into Sheol thence shall my hand take them" (Amos 9: 2), for "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there" (Ps. 139: 8). The subterranean depth belongs to the world of this earth. Sheol remained too vague a place to account for the origin of evil and to accommodate the consequences of the reign of sin. Even in the New Testament, although the fires of Gehenna endanger the wrathful, the adulterous, and the proud, and consume their souls and bodies, and although the gates of Hades would fain shut upon the failing Church, the world is not divided into Heaven, Earth and Underworld.

The Apocalyptic tradition exercises a surprising restraint with respect to the underworld and locates the seat of evil not on earth but in the universe. A paradox inevitably ensues, for God had excluded the waste and void, the slimy, inert evil when he divided the world into "Heaven and Earth", breaking "the heads of the sea-monsters . . . of Leviathan . . . cleaving fountain and flood" (Ps. 74: 13-15). His order and light ended the darkness of Chaos. Nevertheless, the forces beneath and behind the chaotic are still permitted to surge up, endeavouring to intrude into the spatial world. They enter the historical processes on earth and, in the view of the apocalyptic writers, transcend the earthly confines.

According to the Apocalyptics the unity of "Heaven and Earth" extends, therefore, not only to God's domain but also to the incursion of

evil. Since Satan and the fallen Angels were originally celestial dwellers, it is by no means absurd to speak of Hell in Heaven. The rebels' corner is above, and from the second Heaven, according to 2 En. 7: 1-3, or the fifth Heaven (2 En. 18), the Watchers spy out and attack the earth. From thence they introduce moral chaos and war and the forging of weapons (En. 7: 1; 69: 6). Thither the wicked depart to receive their recompense of torment. The passage in Daniel 7: 10 ("a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him") acted as a source for the notion of a celestial place of punishment. The law of correspondence decrees that there are always complimentary parts, Paradise and Hell, even in Heaven (b Chag. 15 a; Midr. Ps. 90: 3). In the Testament of Isaac the visionary sees mis-shapen animals in Heaven; these were once human beings and are now exposed to retribution as the prey of lions and demons and fire-flood. In the Gr. Apoc. Bar. (chs. 4-9), the seer visits the third Heaven where horrible serpents lie in wait for punishment. Here the underworld has arrived in force in Heaven.

Obscure as most of these passages are they explain why Heaven also lies under the sentence of dissolution. It is a place no longer wholly clean but implicated in revolt and in need of salvation. Hence the work of Christ affects the heavenly topography and the final manifestation of His Glory coincides with a cosmic cataclysm. Heaven becomes an area of peril and conflict before the Last Day, instead of being a place aloof and safe. The extreme Christian eschatology insists that Heaven must pass away so that its perfection may come. In the catastrophe no place is found for the present Heaven. Beyond lies the vision of the new Heaven, already existent in God and anticipated by hope in the Gospels. It is plainly a reality outside the present spatial universe and historical time. The last chapters of the Apocalypse reflect the eschatological hope that both the physical and spiritual constitution of the recreated universe neither need, nor provide for, the exigencies of the present age. This new Heaven is a "new place".

### ADDENDUM

IN the hope of furthering the work of the Institute, the Council has considered the possibility of making the Transactions available to a wider field of readers, and has decided that, as from January, 1958, the Journal shall be published in quarterly parts. It is sincerely hoped that this will encourage not only a wider interest in the activities and aims of the Institute, but that it will also promote a readier opportunity for the contribution of written articles and discussion, as well as book reviews. The present volume of the Transactions has omitted the discussions of the various papers which were delivered in 1957. These will appear, however, throughout the Journals for 1958.