

CAMBRIDGE HAS TWO ANSWERS.

CHAPTER 9.

So what is the answer? Newton I believe was right; and his opinion was that God compelled the heavenly bodies to obey the Laws which He had prescribed for them. Newton saw that there was no reason for matter to behave consistently, and indeed it doesn't; in outer space the movement of particles is utterly chaotic, and it is only when large numbers of them are gathered together that they behave as though governed by causal Laws. Expressing it in more modern language, Dr. Broad, the Cambridge philosopher, in his book "Mind and its Place in Nature" written in the 1920s, in discussing a mechanistic view of matter, and what he calls "Emergent Vitalism", insists at length that a complicated body will always have properties which are different from, and which are entirely unpredictable from, the properties found studying its simpler components. Whatever one calls it, this is an incontrovertible fact, he says, of which one has to take account. **Complexity changes the Rules.**

Dr. Broad's colleague Professor Whitehead, in his essay on Immortality, expresses it rather differently. He contrasts the world of Mortality, in which we all live, with the world of Immortality, in which we also all live. Each world, he says, is meaningless without the other; and indeed these two worlds are simply abstractions from the real world all around us; so inevitably and necessarily they inter-relate with each other. The mortal world is the world of activity, creation, of forming relationships and of decay. The immortal world is the world of values, which are eternal; and though he did not say it of good and evil. If you try to live exclusively in the one world or the other, you do so at your peril, because you are attempting to live an unnatural existence. No doubt it is right that a few people should lead a contemplative life, and it is right to remember the highly civilizing influence of the monasteries in the Middle Ages, before they became corrupt. They were societies without aggression, in a very aggressive world. But it is not a life to be recommended to many. However the results of trying to live entirely in the Mortal world are visible all round us; the worship of money, the obsession with Rules and Regulations, the inability to tell the difference between right and wrong, the inability to tell the difference between a victim and an aggressor, are all rapidly turning our beautiful country into a hell on earth, unless somebody does something to stop it. The trivial becomes important, and the important becomes trivial; which is what you would expect if the world of values is ignored.

So my answer is to turn Whitehead's "Immortal World" into **a view of Nature and the Universe created by God**, that permeates every nook and cranny of ordinary life; and since the culture in our country is a Christian culture, it means that here it must be a Christian

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view of Nature and the Universe, if it is to do any good. Not perhaps ideal; but better than the alternatives. And since the clergy of the C.of E. have proved even at this late stage incapable of producing such a synthesis, perhaps the less attention we pay to them, the better.

But the problem of accepting immortality, when it is offered to you, centres round the problem of “self” and “selflessness”. If you want to get on in this world, my experience is that you have to give “self” limited freedom, whilst keeping it on a short rein. To give “self” unlimited freedom, rubs everyone up the wrong way; and you make too many enemies. Yet without a healthy ambition, you will miss opportunities for advancement either for yourself or for your plans, through a too scrupulous desire not to get mired in the evil of a situation you do not fully understand. On the other hand, in your dealings with any God, who is real to your imagination, “self” has no place. So if you think you are furthering God’s purposes in cooperation with Him, whether this is true for you or simply a great fantasy and imagination in your mind, “self” just becomes the steely will necessary to effect what you have in mind. It is not there to advance “your” purposes. As General von Seeckt said, “Will without spirit is blind; spirit without will is impotent”. Without “will”, nothing gets done.

Sometimes of course you have to defend your own corner; but my experience is that usually the results are bad, because you have not been true to yourself. And other people see this without difficulty, even if they have no intention of subscribing to your beliefs or habitual conduct. And once people realize you are attempting to be selfless, they will at once try to take advantage of you; and you have to be doubly vigilant not to give away too many opportunities. So in the world of affairs, attempting to cooperate with any real or mythical God, puts you at a considerable disadvantage.

Yet no God would contemplate taking into His confidence anyone who wanted to remain independent of Him. Once you allow Him to get His hands on you, you are his for life. Jesus himself was emphatic about this; once you put your hand to the plough there is no turning back. Or there was his symbolism about building a tower, and being unable to complete it. You want to do your calculations before you commit yourself, and not afterwards. And suppose you are committing yourself to a fantasy? From which there is, so far as you can see, going to be no escape? No wonder sensible people hesitate. You only have to listen to clergymen preaching the modern gospel that “love solves all problems”, to realize that no-one in his senses would subscribe to that doctrine; and how right you would be! It is a suitable gospel only for potential martyrs; and I think I have only ever met one.

In other words, if you want to cut a figure in this world, it probably pays dividends to disparage the idea of immortality, and shut your eyes to any problems the next world might

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have in store for you until later on in life. However the price you pay, if my theory of consciousness is correct, is that your outlook gets progressively narrower; you get locked not into a single frame of mind, but into a single family of frames of mind. You cease to have the adaptability which evolution seems to have, or which any God must undoubtedly have, or which is essential in an army commander. General Rawlinson, who was the army commander both at the Battle of the Somme, when things went badly wrong, and also at the titanic tank battle at Amiens, which brought Germany to her knees, is reported to have been in the habit of saying, "What sort of a war are we going to have today?" In other words, every day might bring in a different sort; and at Amiens he certainly brought a new form of warfare to the Germans. Similarly in Court, I was always prepared to improvise and develop new skills. This narrowing of outlook may not matter; you may get to the top of the greasy pole with only a limited imagination. It may only be when you have to accept, in advanced old age, that you are staring death in the face, that you find time to regret your limited imagination; because you will not have the faintest idea what to do about it. Narrowing your view of life down to success does have its drawbacks.

It is at this stage that my Theory of Consciousness comes into the picture. The assumptions you make at the threshold of life, in your early 30s, underlie and probably soon unconsciously underlie your conduct from then on. The pressure of life probably prevents any fundamental reassessment, until retirement. And so these unspoken and probably unconscious assumptions mould all your thoughts and actions from then on. There is nothing wrong with this. If you are to achieve anything in life of significance, the pattern of your career must be set in early manhood, when with a fair amount of experience behind you, you are on the threshold of your career. But it might be objected that if there is any truth in my symbolism that **every attitude of mind has its own logic**, it reduces life to a shambles, because we all believe whatever we want to believe? And certainly it is quite easy to get into the attitude of St. Thomas Aquinas, of assuming that God exists and then proving that he does exist. But as Sir Edmund Whittaker says in his excellent book "Space and Spirit", these are only persuasive proofs, not rigorous proofs; and probably St. Thomas was fully aware of this. However it is equally easy for the biological evolutionist to assume that God does not exist, and then prove, to his own satisfaction if to no-one else's, that God does not exist. But again this is only persuasive proof, because he has forgotten that Complexity changes the Rules, and has indulged in the wildest induction in thinking that the Rules of primitive beginnings apply to situations of near-infinite complexity. He should remember that David Hume proved

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conclusively that induction is logically indefensible; and is legitimate only when common-sense says it is legitimate.

So are we all lost in a world of “make-belief”? Do our unspoken and probably unconscious assumptions invalidate all our thought processes? No, because in the practical world of affairs, your conduct and its underlying assumptions either result in success, or you find they fail and you have to readjust. This is why Jung reflected in *Psychological Types* that the big transformations overtaking mankind were never brought about by intellect alone. They are brought about by certain ideas working, and other ideas failing. Nothing is more explosive than a valid idea; but it has to work in practice. This in part explains the limitations of academic thought; so often reading academic philosophers, the examples they give to illustrate their ideas are absolutely trivial. So much so, that it detracts from the persuasiveness of their argument. The practical person may find it much harder to come up with an idea; but when he does think of something which is pre-eminently successful, depending on the conditions it may prove devastating. And my original idea is that a Theory of Consciousness, and an understanding of the relevance of the assumptions underlying any attitude of mind, enables you to bridge the gap between an indwelling with the Creator, and an indwelling with fellow man (or woman), and so enables you to live an effective life in the world of affairs without any disloyalty to either. The clergy of the C.of E. would call it an attempt to serve two masters, an impossible compromise; my legal colleagues would say it was “fairy-tales”; but I think one can disregard both opinions, with impunity. This idea is what my first book, “Man’s Relationship with God”, is all about.

The relationship of God to man, and man to God, is far too delicate ever to be reduced to formulae. So much is in the play of the imagination, that the cynic says it is all imagination. It is impossible to pin it down even in one man; absurd to suggest there is the same relationship for one man as for another. For every man and woman it is different. So their concept of immortality too will be different; and also their relationships with each other. So it is that almost inevitably immortality, either in a literal or metaphorical sense, is rejected. Besides it is not something which you can accept; you can submit to immortality, but not self-consciously accept it. Anything which you accept must be mortal, or limited in time. Eternal things are too precious to allow people self-consciously to accept, or to reject them. You cannot choose to fall in love; or if you do, it is a travesty of the real thing. So the only chance of getting immortality accepted is if those who believe in it demonstrate by their conduct, how much it means to them and what their way of life is like. Jesus of course realized this, when he set his face towards going to Jerusalem, and as his disciples saw – to

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inevitable death. Nowadays one is not in Britain faced with death; but heartbreak can sometimes be worse; not worse than torture, but worse than extinction.

I think we all know in the depths of our psyche that immortality without God, is the most appalling fate that can overtake anybody. After one had got over the novelty, what would one do for the rest of eternity? Wagner in his Flying Dutchman had an intimation of this. Even if the earth lasts for another few billion years before life becomes extinct, it is all pointless without God. So the suicide bomber is right to this extent, that death and extinction are infinitely preferable to an eternity without Him. I think dimly and obscurely he grasps that only God can turn eternity into heaven; and any eternity without Him, whether for king or beggar, is sheer and utter hell. Extinction is infinitely to be preferred; but you may not get it.

But the Second World War has taught us equally clearly, that you have to keep the secular world going; it is no good thinking “love solves all problems”, because it doesn’t! You have to steer between Scylla and Charybdis; and if you do not preserve a certain sense of humour, your navigation may not be up to it.