

CHAPTER 1.

It may seem a bold undertaking to rewrite religion, which has obsessed mankind for thousands of years, and slowly evolved from primitive forest gods to the more sophisticated idea that the spirit of God lurks in the depths of the Psyche, and you ignore Him at your peril. But in fact such a re-think and a re-writing is long overdue. I share the view that modern science, and the modern mind which it engenders, has shaken all the ancient religions to the core. The two great scientific thoughts today are, firstly that science sees Nature as ordered but evolving (which is Newton and Darwin), and secondly that in the world of space and time no mental frame of reference is better, or worse, than any other (which is Einstein). Theology may postulate eternal truths; but in the absence of cogent reasoning to explain why they should be regarded as exceptions, the modern mind says that the odds are they evolve like everything else. And Goethe's view of theology was that it was created by intelligent men for their contemporaries; had it been the work of God, it could not have been understood by men; but being the work of men, it did not reveal the inscrutable. And of course it evolves. Although there is no obvious or serious objection to the Creator breaking his own Rules, again the odds are that He does not. Furthermore, although in our society there may be fairly general agreement that certain actions are morally good, and others morally bad; we must not be surprised if other societies do not agree on the labelling. Again it needs cogent argument to explain why everything is not relative, when no-one is ever likely to prove, or disprove, the existence of God. And even if you could prove the existence of God, why should he not change His mind, and undermine your attempt to show that moral truths are absolute?

It was Teilhard de Chardin who first taught me that modern science has shaken all the ancient religions, especially those narrowly bound to untenable myths, or steeped in a pessimistic and passive mysticism. Biologist, palaeontologist and Jesuit priest, in his best known and wonderful book "The Phenomenon of Man" he traces the ascent of man from the

RELIGION REWRITTEN, a reconciliation with science and war.

humble amoeba to homo-sapiens, and suggests the hypothesis that the golden thread in evolution lies in the complexification of the central nervous system in living creatures, and in the cerebralisation of Man. And then, in his last Chapter, he attempts to reconcile his Christian beliefs with the knowledge his study of science has given him; and he says in terms that science has shaken all ancient religions. Indeed his view was that most were doomed, and only Christianity would be able to adapt itself to the new knowledge. I am more empirical, and prefer to wait and see. Although Sir Julian Huxley in his glowing Introduction, says he cannot go the whole way with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, clearly he goes enthusiastically most of the way. These scientific hypotheses have been with us for more than a century now; and perhaps there should be added to them the idea of Carl Gustav Jung that every society has a “collective unconscious”, which the demagogue is able to manipulate for his own, and usually sinister, purposes. The success of Lenin and Hitler in moving the masses with speeches, which to the uninitiated may have seemed little more than drivel, bears eloquent testimony to the reality of what Jung was talking and writing about. The Christian may prefer to cling to the Jewish thought processes of 2000 years ago, and talk about sin being expiated by the sacrifice of a scapegoat or sacrificial lamb; but he can hardly complain or be surprised when other people say his Church is out of touch with modern thought.

So a re-think is long overdue; but why should I have the temerity to attempt it? Quite simply because I am in possession of a theory of consciousness; and other people are not! And this enables me to make sense of the mental or spiritual world, in a way that others find more difficult. Why am I in this privileged position? Because I invented, or discovered, or created this theory of consciousness; when others more intelligent than I had failed. How was that possible? I have no idea, but I did; so let us leave it at that! When one is in a position to do something, and one knows and has good reason to know that no-one else is likely to be

able to do it nearly so well, is there not a duty to do it for the sake of society? And is not this an imperative duty, irrespective of the opposition which one knows will greet one's efforts.

Cardinal Ratzinger recently spoke, with good reason, about the intolerant secularism that was striding across Europe. It was a striking phrase, capturing vividly the menace and the evil of the attitude of mind he was denouncing. As Pope Benedict, one of the first things he said, presumably to help define his pontificate, was that Mankind had lost its way. Both remarks needed saying; and it is much to his credit that he made them. Secularism knows its own mind, even if false; whereas your standard archbishop of Canterbury, through the need to conciliate and compromise with many and varied conflicting interests, is so firmly wedded to sitting on the fence that he lacks the conviction of a leader, and so cannot hope to inspire conviction in others. And "truth" goes by default; because as Pushkin cynically observed, "The public would much prefer a single edifying lie, to a host of small irritating truths".

So if there is any truth in religion, it is time someone proclaimed it in a way intelligible to the ordinary man. That means proclaiming it in the idiom of modern thought, and in modern English, being willing to leave behind the venerable concepts of our incomparable Liturgy, in which we are greatly blessed. And that means first denouncing the false myths with which we are fed all day, and every day; the chief of which is that everyone is equal.