

RELIGION REWRITTEN.

PREFACE, on religion and science.

When a former Archbishop of Canterbury says that the Protestant Churches, which includes the Church of England, are approaching “meltdown”, and may be given their “last rites” any day, it is time to take notice, and accept that he is probably right. After all there have been enough warnings in the last 150 years; and almost all of them ignored. The only public debate about the limitations of religion was after the publication of Charles Darwin’s Origin of the Species. It was immediately recognised that this book undermined the prevalent attitude that the account of the creation described in Genesis was literally true, as opposed to its being a delightful allegory. The heated arguments that followed led to the public debate between Bishop Wilberforce and Thomas Henry Huxley. Darwin was a devout Christian, and a most self-effacing man, who listened to any criticism of his theory. But Huxley won the debate for him. In the early 1900s Professor Eucken, professor of philosophy at Jena, was writing, that though Christianity was much the best religion the world had known, the clergy of every denomination had led Christianity down the cul-de-sac of confusing reality with appearances, from which it would take a hero to extricate it. In the 1920s and 1930s Professor Eddington, who did so much to make Einstein’s Theory of Relativity known and popular in this country, openly admitted in his lectures he was a Quaker; and would surely have entered into an amicable controversy on the impact of Relativity on conventional religious belief? In the 1940s Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit loyal to his Order, was writing that science had shaken all ancient religions to the core, and they must adapt to modern knowledge or perish, particularly they must accept the abyss of Evolutionary time; though his works were only published after his death, because publication was forbidden earlier. In the late 1940s Carl Gustav Jung, who was a great admirer of England, wrote an open letter to English

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theologians inviting a conversation about his discoveries concerning the Psyche; but I understand even Archbishop Temple did not bother to reply. No-one could say that the C.of E. has not invited the trouble it now finds itself in. And it is almost inconceivable that anyone, like myself, could do anything significant enough to avert catastrophe, if that is what is on the cards. It would be like attempting to stem the incoming tide.

But what heed should the Church of England have paid to these warnings? Modern science has not only transformed the face of society, it has radically changed the way we think. So it should have recognised that modern science had shaken all ancient religions to the core, that its life was in peril, and that the intricacies of Jewish thought of 2000 years ago, no doubt fascinating to scholars, were unlikely to solve our problems today. It should have jettisoned any idea of the permanence of substance, or of thought, recognising that atomic physics had disposed of the permanence of substance; and Einstein's postulate that in space-time no frame of reference is better, or worse, than any other has virtually disposed of the permanence of thought. In Einstein's cosmos there is no room for absolute space or universal time. As Sir Edmund Whittaker expressed it in his excellent book, *Space and Spirit*, "the Universe is continually trying to straighten itself out". If it is straightening itself out in the spiritual world as well as in the physical, then there is no room for permanent thought either. Creeds should have been seen as working hypotheses; and Christ's three years Ministry and one weeks Triumph and Passion should have been welcomed as the consummation of countless ages of cosmic, geological and biological Evolution. Maybe it would have been asking rather a lot; but if the alternative was terminal decline?

However the time for recommending that has gone. Instead I re-affirm that this is a spiritual world. The alternative is to de-couple religion from social life, from political life, and from war. That I refuse to do.

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In this book, I point out first that from my own experience the agonizing decisions of life render the theories of mathematical physicists and of evolutionary biologists irrelevant, when it comes actually to making a decision. For however correct their theories, and almost certainly they are correct, these theories are impotent to help make responsible and honourable decisions. They are as impotent to help as are the dogmas of conventional religious belief. And just consider the nightmare that would ensue, if those, who suggest that the concepts of responsibility and honour are illusions, were to obtain political power.

Secondly I translate the agony of decision-making from private to public life, starting with the Greek dramatists, and culminating with Jesus, who believed rightly or wrongly that he had to make the supreme sacrifice in order to save the world.

Thirdly I show, by virtue of a theory of consciousness, which I created or discovered, how human thought and human decision making are always seamed with error and misunderstanding; with the result that we all have to live by faith, the religious and the irreligious alike! To be precise my theory gives an insight into Jung's clinical experience, which he freely admitted he did not have, when he admitted in *Psychological Types* that a theory of thought was a "seven sealed book"*. My theory turns over the first pages. "Luck is inseparable from War", said Major-General Carl von Clausewitz, "and you need to plan so as to take advantage of good-luck if it comes your way, and plan so as not to be thrown off balance by bad-luck. Even acts of faith should be intelligent acts of faith". And what a wretched life it would be without adventure or the taking of risk; if one were the slave of Health and Safety, or of Political Correctness!

Lastly, having considered some of the surrounding circumstances of Jesus' life, as they are supposed to have been, I consider the thoughts going through the mind of anyone who, like him, believed he had a vocation to save the world in a spiritual sense. Essentially what I do is assume that the truth of science, and the truth of war, have equal validity to the

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truth of religion, and then see what is left of the religion that Jesus Christ inaugurated. Quite a lot is left actually; all its main features are preserved.

Things can always get worse; particularly if the Rule of Law is allowed to collapse. Yet mathematical physicists and evolutionary biologists seem incapable of suggesting how you run Society so as to prevent this happening, or even to suggest a motive for trying to prevent this happening. Most of them say the world is mechanical, and it is futile even to think of influencing its progress. Yet the Rule of Law, which I have spent my life helping to administer, is designed to protect the weak from the strong, to reverse Natural Selection and Survival of the Fittest, to reverse the Natural Order of things, which science describes and sometimes extols. And most of us think the Rule of Law is one of the most precious ideas ever devised by Man to raise us out of tribal barbarism.

Those who doubt this are always welcome to the experience of War – which however horrible has at least two redeeming features. It winnows terribly reality from illusion; and it reminds us with brutal and cogent persuasiveness that morale or spirit is supreme. It does not need Napoleon Bonaparte to remind us that the moral is to the physical as three to one; every soldier knows it. That is so, even if mathematic physicists and evolutionary biologists refuse to accept what every soldier, from private to general, knows very well.

So this is a spiritual world from start to finish. And those who deny the freedom of the will, and the spirit of man to exercise it, do little more than mutilate their own minds. The job of science is to provide a mechanical description of the Universe, that approximates to our experience of it. But that does not mean it is an adequate description; because this is a spiritual world from start to finish.

*see page 88 of the 1971 Edition.