

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATIONS

Margaret Masterman

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by

MARGARET MASTERMAN (BRAITHWAITE)

Edited by

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P R E F A C E

This Book contains a selection of religious pieces written, or given as lectures by Margaret Masterman who died in 1986. None has been published except "Elementary Christianity from an Advanced Point of View", Section III, which appeared in *Theoria to Theory*, Volume 7, No. 4 in 1973. In addition to the pieces here Margaret also wrote four articles on "Theism as a Scientific Hypothesis" which were published in *Theoria to Theory*, Volume 1 (1966-67). Some copies of this volume are available on application to Dorothy Emmet.

She gave two lectures on "Integrity in the Religious Quest" which were published in *The Modern Churchman*, Volume 20, No 4; Volume 21, No4. Her **Gore Lecture**, entitled "The Eternal Logos", given at Westminster Abbey in 1978, is included here by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter.

We have put together this collection for circulation among Margaret's friends and colleagues. We wish to thank the Beatrice Hankey Foundation for a grant towards the production and printing expenses, and also members of the Cambridge Language Research Unit (of which Margaret was a founder member), especially the Director, Bill Williams and the Chairman, Frank Knowles, for a great deal of practical help.

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INTRODUCTION

An Address at a Memorial Service
for Margaret Masterman
on May 19th 1986

Margaret Masterman's religion in its maturity was shaped by all kinds of influence—including a good deal from some of the less conventional bits of Cambridge Anglo-Catholicism. She said in later life that the genius of Catholic Christianity is in the level at which it trains its own critics. She might well have had her own case in mind: she had at times that kind of anti-clericalism that is the particular genius of Catholic Christians. She retained throughout her life the conviction that the Christian Eucharist was, to use a favourite word of hers, the most significantly deep of religious actions. But she believed too that what the Eucharist spoke of was a judgement upon the moral and intellectual frivolity of institutional Catholic Christianity, in which liturgy had become an end in itself, priesthood a means of power and psychological manipulation, and prayer a formal mental exercise.

For her the Christian Eucharist spoke of some pivot of transformation in the human world that went far beyond the piety of an in-group and the incestuous empty prattle of theologians chatting to each other; and what it spoke of was the Logos, the Word of God—a concept familiar enough to Christians but, by her, given a new and distinctive slant and placed at the very heart of her metaphysical vision. As a scientist, a philosopher and a student of religion, she obstinately refused to evade the question of why Christianity should be thought to be true or important. In a world of plausible competing models, all of them experientially serious, what she had to say about the Logos of God was central to her response to this question. What, she asked, is distinctive in Christianity? A mystical state, she suggested, which confronts, overcomes and neutralises the terror of extreme pain and death in an active affirmation, even joy—what she called the passionistic condition, exhibited by the early martyrs, by the Carthusian monks slaughtered by Henry VIII, and by many in our own gallows-haunted century. She was especially struck by accounts of something like this state in Arthur Koestler's *The Invisible Writing* and in *The Woman Who Could Not Die* and by the remarkable Russian writer Iulia de Beausobre. We are not short of examples, but, she argued, we should not know how to recognise and define

this state were it not for the figure in whom it was acted out in paradigm, the crucified Jesus.

Jesus begins by acting out something rather different: the celestial God-like figure, the Warrior King, the shaman, healer and guru, but he turns out to be appallingly human and unheroic and uncelestial. He faces death in extremity of dread and yet commits himself to this death and horror in confidence, and so achieves that supreme transformation we call Resurrection; something imperfectly understood by us and yet something we allegorise or spiritualise at our peril. In Jesus then, Margaret argued, there breaks through the possibility of a union with energy that transfigures death and pain and may transfigure the body's dealing with it.

What should we call such a power but divine? It creates, and liberates from any condition that is merely part of the way of the world. It is, to use another favourite image, a fundamental rhythm in things. It is not all we mean by God, but it is decisive for what Christians mean by God. The Doctrine of the Trinity is a set of rules for so speaking of God that the passionistic element embodied in Jesus remains central. The fundamental rhythm that we call the Logos, the Word of God, the rhythm of Jesus' death and resurrection, the force of passionistic prayer and action, this qualifies decisively both the indescribable divine source of all, the Father, and the shared Spirit of the believing community. This, and no other, is the Catholic Faith, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed which Margaret loved, and more bluntly in the Fourth Gospel—"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God".

This remarkable rediscovery of the Doctrine of the Trinity, classically worked out in a lecture delivered at Westminster Abbey some years ago, is Margaret's chief legacy to Christian reflection: complex, tantalising and incomplete, but a bold and profound proposal. And it was also through this that she was able to crystallise her critique of institutional Catholic Christianity. If this is what Jesus discovers and makes possible, what is the Church supposed to be except a passionistic society, that is, a society that trains its members for a mysticism of active risk and redemptive suffering? And it should be doing so not only by educating people in the techniques of asceticism and in contemplation in the proper sense of these much abused and trivialised words, but also by a relentless assault on the secular power mechanisms constantly at

work in its own life. We regularly learn more about the Church from the "church-like" group that may have no theological language, but which manifests that commitment to risk and to the reconstruction of authority, than from the average suburban congregation. We can certainly understand more of the kind of training needful and the kind of sacrificial compassion striven for if we look at Mahayana Buddhism for which Margaret had an intense feeling, considering it to be the nearest theoretical approach to the Christian discovery. She rightly believed that our age is one in which the capacity for transformation, sacrifice and compassion were for the most part being bred out of Western and North Atlantic humanity. In her last major essay, still unpublished, she further explored the insights of Iulia de Beausobre about the "insect man" of mass society (the image comes from Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov), about the false and diabolical asceticism of the human surrender to totalitarianism, and about the redemptive "Alyosha Way", the path of Dostoyevsky's hero, joyfully accepting human solidarity out of compassion, and ready for mortal conflict with State and Church. If you refuse to train Alyoshas, Margaret concluded, you will find yourself training insect men more and more efficiently and more and more widely, until organised cruelty becomes the accepted and central method for doing anything.

Belief in the Logos was Margaret's commitment to what others have called the "spirituality of resistance", and, at the end of a period that has seen the world's so-called super-powers so manifestly engaged in organised cruelty by aggression, by technocratic and bureaucratic indifference and incompetence, these words have special weight.

Margaret's Christianity was visionary, turbulent and idiosyncratic; but in conclusion it must be said that it rested on a fundamentally simple conviction that change and forgiveness and newness are possible. She understood a great deal herself about offering and needing forgiveness, and that part of her witness will always remain a clear and sobering memory for her friends, who join in thanking God not only for an idea about the rhythms of the world, but also for the acts and life that fleshed it out. The Logos itself, after all, is no theory. It became flesh and demands to go on being made flesh, in those like Margaret touched by its grace and truth.

Rowan Williams

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SKETCH OF A CONTEMPLATION

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The following are extracts from a notebook full of notes which were written by Margaret Masterman, during the late Summer and Autumn of 1962, for Sister Hilary, of the Society of St. Margaret, who was at the time Sister Superior of Neale House, Cambridge.

"A LIVE CONTEMPLATION, NOT A DEAD ONE"

The tension between the humanist scientific world and the traditional Christian world, in the twentieth century, is exemplified and symbolised by describing concretely two groups of people, namely, the group of Sisters in their house at the top of the garden at Neale House; and the group of scientists in their house (9, Marion Close) at the bottom of the garden. The first group is given the name of "the monastics", and the second group is given the name of "the humanists", or, "the scientists".

It is always alleged that humanists and monastics, if left to themselves, will always tend to make friends; and that there may come to exist quite an area of practical agreement between them.

The practical point upon which there is, however, no hope of agreement, is that of the value of ritual and liturgy. It is proposed to explore this point of tension further.

Having gone from one distant mountain to another by an alpine path marked "difficile" by the Club Alpin de France, we are having, as far as our feet and legs are concerned, a quiet day off. I am thus going to try rather sleepily, to make two points to you, which other people won't.

I. to describe what you called "a live contemplation, not a dead one";

II. to describe this contemplation, which, to be interesting or relevant to everyone's present predicament, has to be down to its Christian core, in such a way that it is at the same time seen to be the root, or core, of the 20th century "post-Christian" "scientific humanist" world, as well as of the best of the earlier Christian monastic world.

All this means, of course, going right down to the root of everything; separating the basic core of everything we discuss from its accidental shell; a terrific thing to take on.

My first point is that there is currently... a complete deadlock... between the humanists and the monastics on the question of the value of ritual and liturgy.

The monastics want to keep the ritual (and sacraments) at all costs. At the cost, for instance, of having the ritual and sacramental system so grip the monastic world—and derivatively, so grip the Christian world—that it gets more and more separated from every other world, and becomes more and more quaint and picturesque—and more and more trivial—every day.

The humanists, seeing only these currently bad fruits of the ritual and sacramental systems—fruits which are actually there but which the monastics have made up their minds not to see—have made up their minds to sweep the whole system away as detestable and to build the new civilisation without it. At all costs. At the cost, for instance, of building mental hospitals instead of monasteries, at the cost of having *Ersatz* rituals grow up instead of the old ones; at the cost of abandoning all attempts to see what was behind it all and why the monastics wanted it; at all costs.

Thus, in the current monastic-scientific-humanist struggle (that which is typified so strangely by the life and buildings at the top and the bottom of the garden at Neale House; now joined by a causeway) it is the whole cultus—rites, ceremonies, sacraments, the lot—which is failing to carry over into the new civilisation.

You yourself have found out that this is so, during the last two years, on your pulses, but you almost certainly knew it to a certain extent before. Asceticism the humanists know quite a lot about already from such practices as mountain-climbing, camping, Do-It-Yourself activities, dieting, athletic training, sailing in small boats. Penitence and humility they are, to quite an extent, open to learn; if only because they value personal relationships very highly and want to keep them straight; contemplation itself they are now becoming interested in: viz. the very widespread interest in Yoga, and (the Christian form of this) the current incredible success of the Philokalia in English, which is, after all, a most difficult book. But the cultus—no. They think—they really do think this—that on the "by their fruits ye shall know them" criterion the whole cultus and creeds have failed; and therefore they are not going to have them in their civilisation except as something picturesque which can be put on the T.V.—like ballet, or the final of the Women's Singles at Wimbledon, or Beethoven symphonies, or Navaho dances, or the Test Match.

In this situation—this is my second point—and given the two aims with which we started, there is only one thing to try for:

(a) to get a criterion acceptable to humanists (acceptable also to Christians, but above all to humanists) for distinguishing between good and bad cultus i.e. between good and bad ritual (in my wide sense of "ritual", "ritual" being already, in the study of Animal Behaviour, a scientific word).

(b) to see contemplation (our live, but infused contemplation) as the creating force behind this ritual, giving it life and change; as, similarly, behind art or science or anything else.

Here I want to make the point that a "live" contemplation (an infused one, not a natural "creaturely activity", as the Quakers say) makes for ritual flexibility and adaptability and innovation, not for stereotypy and fixedness.

In a word, it is because contemplation is flagging in the Christian world that the cultus has got into the state in which it is. The Christian monastic world is like a lizard which can't breathe because it can't change its skin. Thus it is a deeper contemplation and a live one, not the current vegetable quietism disguised as contemplation, which is needed. The humanist iconoclastic drive won't put this right (the last Reformation, seen from this angle, merely substituted new rituals for the old ones, and so will the humanists, though they don't think they will now.)

(Here follows an account of several incidents, with names attached which show the easy and natural relationship which had grown up between the groups, one at the top and one at the bottom of the garden; including one incident where a visiting scientist, coming from behind the Iron Curtain, was taken aback by a relationship which everybody else, on both sides, assumed as normal.)

It comes to this. Put scientists and monastics together, and give them half a chance, and the scientists will uncontrollably make friends with the monastics; you won't be able to stop them. And conversely monastics, if you give them half a chance, like scientists, and become easily attracted themselves to doing science. There is a certain tenacity and toughness, together with a strong vocational bent, in the scientists, which prevents them from being what Sisters, in particular, most dread: monastic hangers-on. And then, face it, Sisters love being stood up to. The very last thing that they want, in fact, either inside their communities or in their friends, is any trace of that damp sort of quietist meekness which both they, and their devotional little books,

in theory preach. Quite the contrary, they don't mind in the least being argued with; and they like people above all who will try out something new. And so... it isn't anything really to wonder at... you helped us with the roof and fed us and warmed us (and rebuked us) and dried us out.

In short, that scientists and monastics get on, if you give them half a chance, is something that you and I know about. They get on so well, that the scientists don't really want the monastics, definitely don't want the monastics to cease to be monastics—and the monastics definitely don't want the scientists to cease to be scientists.

So, inevitably, the two vital questions begin to be asked:

(a) (by the scientists) Is there, after all, something behind all this ritual and liturgy, since our friends the monastics seem so to hold to it? What is gold, in this, and what is dross?

(b) (by the monastics) Can it be that this more vigorous, more creative, and, in a way less self-controlled ideal of life of the scientists is higher, in some ways, not lower, than the present monastic ideal? And if so, what is it that is higher? What is gold, in the scientists' contemplation, and what is dross?

THE HILARY PRINCIPLE OF LENT-KEEPING, OR OF RELIGIOUS ASCETICISM

Sister Hilary's contribution to the discussion was her informal teaching of the Christian contemplative life, as given to the scientists. This was embodied in four principles, which are set out successively in the course of the argument; together with a fifth, which began to be made explicit only just before her death.

The first of these principles is given here.

This principle is: you have got so to deal with your body and soul and nervous system that, whatever it is that they are at present most discontented with or griping at, that same thing is what they become most devoutly thankful for.

Thus, if you are a business man, fed up to the back teeth with eating at banquets, you have got so strong-mindedly to deprive yourself of food between the banquets (the best and simplest way is to eat nothing whatever except at the banquets) that you become grateful for anyone who will ask you to another banquet and give you something to eat; and thus you will spread your genuine enjoyment at what is being given you all round you.

Similarly, if you are a Civil Servant or Diplomat, utterly worn out with cocktail parties, you have got to practise so strong a solitude-and-silence (which will require the discipline, and watching, and all sorts of things, because this is a hard change-round) that your body feels devoutly thankful to be allowed to put its clothes on and relax anywhere, much more in a warm room at a cocktail party.

You can build up the special cases of this kind of things for as long you like. If you are the mother of a family who just can't face Christmas, deprive yourself of food and pleasures until the thought of a square meal at Christmas seems delightful. And so on. And so on. There are two or three general points to be made, however. One is that all this presupposes that this beneficent psycho-physical change (what I call the Ascetic Change) can occur. The second is that at the end of it you will get what I call—not too seriously—the Ascetic Vision; i.e. you see the world suddenly as a beautiful and rather holy place, and yourself as a stuck-up fool for not appreciating it (the same thing which happens sometimes after having a day in retreat, or going to confession; but more so). The third is that you also, in the end, get some insight into any changes in your life that really can, or really should be made; for many people allow themselves to be mortified by

circumstances far too much, and then get inert about it and call this charity.

So much for the Hilary Principle of Lent-keeping. Further than that there is no point in pushing yourself, for you just wear yourself down; less than that is no good, for you only become tantalised and over-strained, and an unsatisfactory state of mind sets in in which (I quote you) "the worst part of keeping Lent is that one is never really allowed to keep Lent".

However, it now remains to put this principle (a) into its scientific humanist and (b) into its traditional Christian settings.

(a) In part, the humanists have known about this principle all along; and there are references to it in current popular literature. The classic account is at the beginning of Erskine Childers' The Riddle of the Sands, where the blasé stuck-up young attaché from the Foreign Office comes, complete with wardrobe, on what he fondly thinks is a smart yachting holiday, but which turns out to be an ascetic and, in the end, highly exciting enterprise on (I think) a 30-foot cutter. There is an account, in this, of the blasé hero's sudden change of vision and of heart, when he realises how much less good a man he is than his once despised friend for whom he is now crew, and how near he himself has come to losing all capacity really to live. There is also a comparable account in one of Leslie Charteris's Saint books (mixed up, though, with a lot of crude sex) in which a spoilt New York beauty is taken by the Saint for an extreme walking-and-camping holiday in the Austrian Tyrol, in the course of which, she quite literally thinks she is going to die, because of the hardships he makes her undergo, but at the end of which she suddenly realises that she is now free of all comforts and all possessions, and that she has for the first time in her life realised what joy in living can be.

(b) However, the humanist notion is that you must get away from ordinary life—into sailing, into camping, into pot-holing, into Himalayan climbing—before any of these beneficent changes can come to you. What the Christian contemplative says to the humanist is, "You needn't get away. There's no need to be continually dreaming of an unattainable holiday. This good can come to you, if you have enough courage (and some know-how) where you are, sur place; and it is so that it should come to you (because it is a change that takes time), that Christian tradition has set up and crystalised the ascetic-cum-penitential seasons of Lent, and also Advent". And this (given the current over-pressure and over-strain of contemporary life) is such extremely good news to many humanists that you often get humanists who keep Lent on the Hilary Principle without believing in God—

these humanists being in sharp contrast with Christians who don't, but do believe in God.

As soon as you put the whole thing this way, moreover, you can see the connection (at last) with the procedures which Christians currently dish out for keeping Lent; i.e. going once more in the week to Mass, and/or no meat Wednesday and Friday, and/or no sweets and/or no cigarettes, and/or a horror called a Devotional Book, and/or parties coming all the time for half-days in retreat so that one can never get into chapel, and/or penitential psalms and/or twice as much Office, and/or.....

But once you've got a grip on the Hilary Principle, it becomes clear that all these things (e.g. no toffees on Friday) are, in fact, procedures to build you up and increase your courage for the real effort and signal the message "Lent is going on now". One or two (e.g. long Office for monastics who have been scamping Office) may be part of the essential effort; in the main, though, they're a kind of obligato accompaniment to Lent, but not Lent itself; as any study of the Christian classics—once you've grasped the real idea—will immediately show.

What I want to say now is that all this talk about Lent-keeping has suddenly given me a general notion of what the relations between the new, humanist contemplative tradition and the older, Christian tradition might be.

The relation goes like this:

(1) The humanist's refusal to accept anything on authority and their insistence on trying out everything for themselves, and their continual asking of the question, not, "Is this done by the best monastics?" but, "Does it, in fact work?"—all this makes a strong impact on the older and now largely inert tradition, and rather sharply puts the standard up. I don't think the Hilary Principle of Lent-keeping is the whole story about Christian asceticism, yet it does cut considerably deeper than the set of principles one is currently dished out (e.g. fish and/or eggs on Wednesday and Friday).

Thus we begin the interaction between the two traditions by exchanging a now largely inert Christian contemplative tradition for a partial but lively humanist contemplative tradition.¹

¹ Most people think (as I once thought) that the contemporary pattern of monastic-humanist interaction, where this exists at all, is that everyone has his own speciality: the humanists know about philosophy and mathematics, the monastics about plainsong: the humanists can use power-tools, the monastics can pray, etc. This is just what I now think is not the truth about this matter.

This, I think, is what is genuinely annoying for the pious; to have the humanists, who have been irritating them in every possible way for years, suddenly breeze in and beat them to contemplation on their own ground.

Until this first changeover is made, i.e. from pious inertness to humanist vigour, we'll get nowhere; for it is the inescapable first stage in substituting a live Christian contemplation for a dead one.

(2) However, once this changeover has been made, then the real Christian contemplative (the real one) gets his chance. For he can then explain to the now-trying-quite-hard humanist just what it is that might help his humanist contemplation to become deeper, more fundamental and more complete. To put it aphoristically, the humanist can always out-contemplate the pious; but the real Christian contemplative can always out-humanist the humanist, in the end. Take the Lent business. It is not the case, actually, as you know, that the Hilary Principle of Lent-keeping gives the whole truth about Christian asceticism. What it gives is a genuine start: and in a form that breaks down pseudo-distinctions between Habit-wearers and scientists. It gives the soul a chance to stabilise itself; to strip itself for St. John of the Cross's Big Night without getting involved in a lot of unnecessary twilights of dither, scrupulosity, nervous strain and self-pity; for in this century we go through, and wallow in, a lot more desolation than we need. It is also generally teachable (see the humanist literature on it). But of course, there is still the "dark sea to be crossed" (Philokalia), the Big Night to be gone through, the natural self to be completely killed, before the unitive life, the flowering of the soul, can come and the great graces can be obtained. And the much deeper asceticism required for this—some of which I think—I hope—you have been seeing me through—this is a more fundamental kettle-of-fish altogether. But it is not—as I think—generally teachable; it is, on the contrary, highly individual: something blessed but awful has to get a grip on you and take hold (though it feels at first the very opposite of that, i.e. utter frightfulness and abandonment). And one can't imitate it or help oneself to it. As you know, every time, in a scientific spirit, I endeavoured to repeat the experiments of the saints (merely to save myself, as I thought, from becoming morally worse and worse) you came down on me like a ton of bricks and stopped it and chewed me up, so that I first blew up and then burst into tears. From this I inferred that this second stage of contemplation was a thing which has to explode individually inside one (and indeed I had known really that this is so, for years). But joy does seem to come in the morning—and the great graces, even a touch of which is altogether more than one bargained for. This is what the real Christian

contemplative has to say to the crying-out humanist: "This is finite: it will come to an end. Joy, and what a joy, will come in the morning". And I think you'll find that, without any doubt, the humanist will listen, if it is a real Christian contemplative who says this to him.

I have taken the asceticism case first. But the same double pattern of humanist-Christian interaction can be traced in, for example, the growth of contemplation itself, and in that of penitence; and, in my next go, I will outline the pattern in these two cases also before coming back to the question with which we started: "And what of ritual and liturgy?"

But I have the sensation that we are now getting deeper into this whole thing.....

(Indoor by fire.)

It will be recalled that in the reporter's notebook which I have already sent you, a two-stage pattern of interaction as between monastic contemplatives and human contemplatives rather unexpectedly emerged.

This was:

(i) that the vocation of the humanist contemplatives is to swarm in upon the monastic contemplatives and put their general standard rather sharply up, in every field, in order to turn the currently largely dead (quietist) Christian contemplative tradition into a humanist and therefore live one.

This vocation which the humanists have is, of course, an extremely difficult vocation to fulfil without giving rather fundamental offence. It is the knowledge that this is indeed so which makes sincere but inexperienced humanists... so easily go black in the face and start making remarks about priests; i.e. they know they have this prophetic vocation to fulfil, but owing to the fact that clerics deride them and the monastics won't listen to them, they can't fulfil it. And they can't do anything else till they have fulfilled it (this is part of what is meant by saying that it is a vocation) and so they are in a block; they don't know what to do.

The moment that they meet a monastic who discerns this vocation, and says to the humanists: "This is your vocation, in fact, isn't it; and that you have this vocation, and can't escape it, this is what is causing all the trouble", the humanists' faces immediately

clear; and when it comes to detailed ways and means, they instantly become far less unreasonable than might have been supposed.

(ii) The Christian contemplative has got to move in on the humanist and deepen and centralise his now live-because-humanised-right-through (Christian) contemplation, no matter what this costs, so as to lead him to fruition, i.e. to the Visio Dei.

This vocation—even more costly than the humanists'—usually makes your monastic contemplative, when he discerns it, behave in a way not dissimilar to the way I have described the sincere young humanists behaving when faced with their vocations, i.e. like the prophet Jonah when he should have gone to Nineveh and when he went to Joppa. For consider what this is going to cost the contemplative:

(a) He has got to come right out into the humanist world (and in the course of doing this to receive home truths about himself, his community and the present state of the Christian religion right, left and centre), and learn an entirely new set of "post-Christian" manners and customs and a new, and at first, rebarbative humanist viewpoint.

(b) His conscience will have to become, in a new way, re-awakened. For he is going to be faced with the humanists' urgent requirement that, if he (she) isn't yet a fully-fledged contemplative saint, he (she) should without delay now become one... and this whether, humanly speaking, he (she) is capable of it or not.

(c) He is going to be utterly humbled by receiving, long before he is ready for it, the humanists' entire confidence and obedience. For there is nothing more simple, childlike and docile than the scientist once committed to any fundamental scientific enterprise—though I know that very few people will believe me when I say this is so. And this is shattering for the man who has to receive it. I have not myself been in such a position, but I can discern what it must be like by drawing on the experience of maternity. For there is nothing so shattering as the utter confidence your children have in you, their utterly inadequate and completely unworldly parent.

(d) In the direction which he gives under (c), he is going to have to be not gentle but unbelievably tough. Otherwise the humanist, who is right up against it, and unprotected by any tradition, or system, or enclosure, and who, because of this lack of all other protection, has had to give himself over into the care of the Christian contemplative as his one hope, is just not going to win through. This toughness—this absolutely necessary and vital therapeutic toughness—is going to get

the religious contemplative in trouble with everybody; both with his community, and also with other, non-comprehending humanists (especially those of the Aldous Huxley everything-has-to-be-sweetness-and-light type).

So I will characterise that which the contemplative has to give to the humanist, as opposed to that which the humanist has to give to the contemplative, merely by citing various odd remarks which occur to me and which I think of as points together giving the graph of your joint calibre:

..... Sister Emily of the Community of the Epiphany, when asked if she was dying: "Yes, I am, but I intend to enjoy every minute of it."

..... Sister Agnes Marion, Sister Hilary's predecessor, when asked to define discipline: "Discipline is what frees you to do what you really want to do."

..... Father Barton's opening remark, when Sister Emily introduced him as "the simple saint": "Oh, are you Margaret Masterman? I am so delighted to see you. I can trace what happened in symbolic logic up to Jevons and Russell, but I get awfully bogged down in Stebbing."

..... Your own reaction to your operation: "Say a thanksgiving for me; Oh, say a thanksgiving for me."

THE HILARY PRINCIPLE FOR PROMOTING CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Sister Hilary's principle for promoting creative activity was, in effect, that something of the rhythm of the monastic day should be introduced into the life of scientific research.

This provoked the riposte from Margaret Masterman: "Surely, if to become more monastic in this way is to become more creative, monasteries themselves should be the most creative places in our civilisation: which, notoriously, they are not".

An attempt is made to re-envisage the monastic rhythm, not in terms of actual monastic rules and activities, but, on morphological analogy, as rhythmic pulsations of a form of fundamental growth. This attempt is very scrappy and unsatisfactory, for the arguments in favour of thinking that there could exist such a fundamental form of growth are all dependant upon another publication² which Margaret Masterman had written, and Sister Hilary had read.

I now think we need one or two strong assumptions.

(i) Religious contemplative growth is indeed growth, "growth" here being taken in a scientific sense. In fact, in an extension, but a fair one, of the D'Arcy Thompson Growth and Form scientific sense.

(ii) All growth tends to occur in rhythmic pulsations.

(iii) Seen essentially and insofar as it consists of a daily or weekly rhythm which everyone undertakes together, not insofar as it is a set of penitential or social interactions between the members of a face-to-face group of people, the contemplative monastic life is such a corporate rhythmic pulsation: nothing more, nothing less. To the individual it feels (or should feel) like the constricting bands of the chrysalis feel to the larva which is dissolving and melting its old form in order to grow into the new imago, or form, of the butterfly: a protection, both from cold and from the light, a constriction placed at just the right growth-points, i.e. something to push against; a structure or framework, dictating the limits of the new development; an enclosure, destined itself to split and shrivel and fall away, however, eventually, as the new form gets less thick-skinned and less tender.

All this is fine, provided it is realised:

(i) That if there is to be pulsation, there must be some real growth causing it.

(ii) That to justify the chrysalis, you've got to have the butterfly. (Otherwise, you'd have been much better off with a good old humanist grub, crawling about and investigating everything everywhere.)

(iii) The new imago (i.e. the emergence of the great fruits of the Spirit) is going to split and shrivel up the chrysalis. There's no point in continuing to pulsate all the time once you've grown; you've got to fly off, and lay eggs, and do all sorts of other things.

(iv) No sensible butterfly would set up and worship its own chrysalis.

Let's get back from this general background thought, "The monastic rhythm is nothing more (or less) than a rhythmic growth pulsation", to our immediate theme, i.e. the detail of what you and I have found out at Neale House.

The Hilary Principle of Lent-Keeping doesn't look like a pulsation at first; but it is seen to be one as soon as you realise:

(i) that there are different orders, and depths, of growth-pulsations;

(ii) that the Hilary Principle of Lent-Keeping usually works out as the establishment of some rather extreme daily rhythm; a weekly rhythm, possibly, but more likely a daily one.

Now let's have a look at the second principle we've discovered, namely: the Hilary Principle for Promoting Creative Activity.

This says:

If you have a creative task in front of you which, humanly speaking you can't do (e.g. writing a paper for publication, or understanding some difficult mathematics) get the hours of work down (e.g. two goes of two hours) but the level of creativity up: by gardening, and/or sleeping, and/or having some other change of occupation between the two goes of work, and above all, by establishing and maintaining silence, for the greater part of the day.

Now what, in effect, is Hilary doing here? She is putting the monastic habit of establishing a two-phase daily growth-pulsation at the service of the humanists, who badly need it, since they are in a situation in which, like it or not, they have got to manifest some of the

² The Psychology of Levels of Will, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1948

larger gifts of the Spirit, in short order (e.g. supernatural power of learning mathematics, basic scientific insight, etc., etc.). And you know, and we know, how extremely well, in practice, this principle does work: dramatically well, in fact, when we really do it.

So we get to this picture of the rhythm of the humanist-Christian monastic life:

(i) It is to be described not accidentally, in terms of a set of activities, but essentially, as an overlapping series of contrasting pulsations.

(ii) It presupposes the Hilary creative principle.

There is as such no point in having a monastery at all unless you are creating something; unless, that is, you are faced with a task which, humanly speaking, you can't do.

That's a thought, isn't it?

Which leads to the question: what are the fruits of the Spirit?

Well, in Hinduism, the fruits of the Spirit are metaphysical "realisation" (theoria): mathematics (abstract); philology (abstract and general); ritual dancing; active good works. Also one or two trick gifts, like fire walking; and many other rumoured gifts of a parapsychological kind.

In Chinese Taoism, the characteristic spiritual gifts are poetry, and contemplative silk-painting and pottery, and ideographic writing done standing and with a brush.

In Zen Buddhism, add: Zen archery, Zen flower-arrangement, Zen swordsmanship (i.e. sabre-fencing with no guard and no shield).

In Christianity you get, theoria, healing and hospitals (a recreative activity), music (very marked), a supernatural gift for government and social legalisation (which produced social democracy, trial by jury, Christian socialism, and so on), and you also did get illuminated writing, art and architecture.

In scientific humanism, you get... (All right, you've heard this before. The point is, you get an almost endless list of worthwhile and supremely difficult tasks.)

I would add to this list:

(a) making any fundamental adaptation of life;

(b) learning a genuine new skill....

I know what you're thinking though: "The fruits of the Spirit are love, peace, joy, patience, gentleness, goodness...."

So they are, among the fruits of the Spirit: namely among those moral and spiritual fruits of the Spirit which make for living together in love, rather than living together predatorily, or in hate.

But these don't exhaust the great fruits of the Spirit (see St. John of the Cross): my goodness, no.

THE POST-HILARY PRINCIPLE OF VALIDATION OF SACRAMENTS THROUGH JOY

(This principle was first outlined to Sister Hilary in two sentences in a pencilled letter which was put on her bed on the Octave of All Saints (November 8th, 1962), and of which she very strongly approved; but it was not further discussed, since the section which here follows, through being delayed by one post, just failed to reach her before her death. That it should have been written less than thirty-six hours before her death, in full expectation that it would be read and understood, shows how great her supernatural vitality was.)

As I wrote you, Hilary, on the octave of All Saints' Day, in that last letter I wrote to you and which you liked so much, I think I've got the essential idea I've been chasing through all this manuscript, namely the basic answer to the question, "In what, when it comes to questions of actual ritual, liturgy and sacraments, are the humanists requiring of the monastics in the first step of the two stage humanist-monastic interaction which I've postulated early on?"

It is this:

What the humanists are really saying to the Church (which is almost totally different from what they appear to be saying) is:

No joy, no ritual.

i.e. Ritual, liturgy and sacrament (the lot) are humanistically justifiable (i.e. "valid") if and only if they experientially produce ecstatic joy.

To make this clear I shall now have to define "ecstatic" in a sense wider than that given in the Oxford English Dictionary.

By "ecstatic joy" I mean "joy which makes one hold one's breath; joy which is 'out-of-this-world'" (in the colloquial sense); not "joy experienced in a swoon or trance with concomitant suspension of the senses"—though I would include this latter also in my definition of "joy".

Points which have to be made are:

(i) Humanists are absolute suckers for even a flick of this joy. They just can't resist it. They fall for it as soon as they see it.

Why else (if this is not the case) do they play for themselves long-playing records of Bach fugues before they sleep; or buy for themselves the whole set of Solesmes records of plainsong; or worry about the aims and defects of action-painting; or learn by heart the most ecstatic poetry; or see and/or dance or become critics of near-ecstatic ballet; or go damn-near into actual ecstasy to run the four-minute mile; or ecstatically learn to play in an orchestra or hit the target (like the Zen Buddhist archer)?

(ii) This humanist requirement puts the standard up—drastically up—from what monastic magical and metaphysical conceptions of sacraments require of them.

It doesn't at first look as though this was the case; but on investigation it can be shown that it is so. If I wasn't in a hurry to write this to you, Hilary, to catch you before your turn and take-off for heaven, I would go more into detail into this.

(iii) I maintain—as against the humanist—that this joy is in principle behaviouristically and scientifically observable (though sophisticatedly and indirectly). It is ineffable—but also observable (if you see what I mean).

That is to say: in almost any situation you like to name, I could distinguish genuinely joyful from pseudo-joyful or non-joyful behaviour.

And here, perhaps, is the moment for me to say, Hilary, that it is only your illness and suffering and coming death—this sort of passion which has been shared by us both, though it is you, not I, who are central in it (and I, as of now, couldn't possibly imitate your behaviour)—it is only this which has made me have this insight. For in the last month, as you, who have been so staggeringly directing my soul, so very well know, I have been learning ecstatic joy the hard way. Thus I now know, that in a case of bad illness, this, i.e. what I sketched out below (and provided, of course, it's genuine), is joyful behaviour:

And this is unjoyful behaviour:

"Poor darling, it can't be many weeks now."

or, a certain Look on the Face when visiting the patient.

But, in the face of death, this is joyful behaviour (always only granted, of course, that it is down to the bone unforced and genuine):

"When you hear that I am dying, ring the bells; and start saying the little Alleluias for Easter."

(Life of Little Placet: in your Library)

And when you're released from the body, and have leisure from talking to God, drop in down the garden and see the new improvements; for you haven't been down, you know, for a considerable time.

I think you thought of me—and therefore, in present circumstances, came to me—today in chapel, just before None. I saw nothing, but somehow, suddenly you were with me.

Love,

Margaret.

CONCLUSION: A FEW ADDITIONAL REMARKS ABOUT THE POST-HILARY PRINCIPLE

Before bringing this to an end, I want to say a few things about what I have called the post-Hilary Principle; namely, the Principle of Validation of Sacraments Through Supernatural Joy.

(i) Most people will think that, by making the criterion of validity of a sacrament an interior human state with concomitant observable behaviour, I am blurring the distinction between the "supernatural" and the "natural".

Nothing is further from what I am trying to do. The distinction between what the contemplative saints of every race and tradition call "what is supernatural" (or "what is realised") and "what is natural" (or "what is achieved by effort") is just about the best-attested "cut" in the whole spread of psychological literature; provided, of course, that the humanists can sufficiently overcome their prejudices to admit the testimonies of the contemplative saints into the accredited corpus of psychological literature.

All I am saying is that, on the assumption that what the saints call "supernatural" is as real—genuinely, scientifically real—as what they call "natural", to that extent it can be subjected, though with difficulty, to investigation, detailed description, observation and comment.

(ii) I have been asked not to use the word "valid", as being a word that is likely to give offence. But not to use the word that gives the offence, this is precisely to evade discussion of the problem.

It is because the humanists think that the monastics have either a legalistic criterion, or a magical one, or both, of when there is and isn't a sacramental change taking place that they refuse to participate in sacraments. That, and the fact that they find the Mass morally detestable, because they (correctly) think that it is a kind of human sacrifice.

(iii) It is correct that my criterion of sacramental "validity" substitutes a many-valued logic for a two-valued one; for it is no longer the case that a sacrament, like a switch, is either valid, or not valid.

My thought is this: for the joy to tend to set in, and thus the change to occur, not only must there be general and real participation (theologians have always said this) but also there must be no moral shock to the participants: no moral, or spiritual, or intellectual shock.

To the extent that any aspect of this shock is genuinely present, to that extent the sacrament ceases to be valid. To be morally shocked, of course, (or in any other way shocked) is not the same thing as to be personally crossed; i.e. what happens to the boy when he suddenly finds that he is not going to be allowed to sing the solo. But it can happen; and it is now happening, almost universally and very painfully. When the democrat, for instance, is genuinely shocked at the downgraded way in which Christians ritually treat women; when the internationalist is shocked at the Christian failure to cross the inter-denominational barrier, or to break the colour bar; when the scientist is shocked at the absence of any acceptable abstract or scientific scheme of interpretation of the pictorial language and action; yes, and when the conservative theologian, with a respect for authority, is shocked because the authorised thing has not been done in due form by the authorised person; when the whole ceremony is not lit from within by the interior contemplation, because the people who participate (schoolboys, perhaps) are hating it all, or when the people are indifferent, or fearing one another, or despising one another; to that extent the sacrament isn't valid because the sacramental joy just can't occur (or, more accurately, the very tendency to its infusion is replaced by its opposite, as St Paul said). That is why it says in all Christian literature that sacraments must be individually and socially prepared for; that the participants must understand what's really happening behind the symbolism and must approve of it; to use St Paul's phrase again, they must "discern the Lord's Body". And I add that, as well as the general participation, there must be manifested equality, as well as a generally-shared dignity and balance; that it is the humanist contribution to the sacramental vision to say that, indeed, this must be so.

It may well be that, on this high criterion of sacramental action, hardly any sacrament throughout the world is fully valid (that is why the humanists, in saying what they are saying, are putting the standard up); indeed that no form of sacrament will be fully valid over the whole earth until we all fully respect one another and love one another though every now and then, *ex gratia, dat Deus incrementum*. Well, that may be, or it may not. But there is a converse; where there is true supernatural joy, there there is a sacrament. And it may be that, if we could discern this matter rightly, the whole world itself is such a sacrament; heavy with death, but resonating also with sacramental joy.

At any rate, it is a very great deal more likely that no body, and *a fortiori* no Church, has got a fully valid sort of sacrament, than that one lot has got its sacramental switch always guaranteed at 1, and all others, except by extraordinary intervention, always at 0, and that the

Quakers, by rule, haven't got any sacramentalness at all; and so on, and so on. According to me, on the contrary, sacramental joy (like cheerfulness) keeps on breaking in; though there are some occasions when you're more likely to get it than others. And I think that's the more general, and the more hopeful, as well as the the humbler view; it will make as all stop tearing at one another, for we none of us fully understand, or are fully worthy of this thing.

The joy, of course, is a penitential joy, not a natural one; it is ineffable; it is an open-eyed joy, not a veil over reality; and it is also a warm, delighted and loving joy. But that follows from all I've said before.....

And now, Hilary, I have fulfilled my promise to sketch out the outlines of a humanist-Christian contemplation. I am afraid, though, that my initial search for the constituent elements of it has yielded more and more, to the identification of these elements with your four principles. And yet I don't know that, even intellectually, this is so wrong. Praying-by-interior-silence, and creative activity; two aspects of the same infused basic tendency. Asceticism, and penitence-by-openness-and-obedience; again, two aspects of the same complementary tendency. And the whole flickered over by sacramental joy. Not such a bad analysis, for a start.

Happy Hilary, pray for us!

THE HILARY PRINCIPLE OF RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE

This section, together with the two which follow, were written for Sister Hazel of the Society of St. Margaret, Sister Hilary's successor.

This Principle says that Religious Obedience consists in being natural and open and forthcoming, not in being servile and in "giving no trouble"; and more particularly, in being open with the person who is nearest to you, rather than concealing your life from them, while opening it to someone else, of your choosing, who is further away.

This, evidently, Hilary has taken over and developed from the humanists, though it is also concordant with her own views on the subject.

This is the heart of it; that true religious obedience is founded upon openness, upon listening to the other man, and upon consciously shared co-operation; not upon a forced, exteriorised, rigid, military submission of conduct, compensated for by behind-the-backery evasions and a stream and tissue of lies.³

This I will call forced submission of conduct, on the military model; and I will maintain that it has almost nothing to do with that supernatural virtue which alone enables people of different sorts and backgrounds to live together in freedom and in love.

The connection is that the first (the forced submission of conduct) is a lazy form of the second (i.e. of the virtue). Forced submission of conduct is what supernatural obedience deteriorates and drifts into when the true interior contemplation behind has withered or gone. This being so, it is important to see that once the supernatural virtue has been watered down into the forced submission, there is nothing else to do, monastic though you be, but evade and tell lies. The very size and rigidity of the community machine requires it; in the armed forces, for instance, the official mechanism is so stiff that it is only the accepted evasions, lies, tricks and shifts which cause the machine to be able to work at all. If you like to put it that way, supernatural religious obedience, applied to daily life in the national armed forces, consists in not being too stuck-up to do the evading and lying—as well as the exterior submission—so as to make the system work at least as far as it can. In such a situation, this is actually the highest form loyalty can take. But, of course, morally this is a very bad state of affairs indeed—one which all the time pours money unnecessarily away and in the end loses wars; and so it is nothing short of a disaster

³ Small lies, granted: nevertheless, lies.

when it sets in, as it now so widely has, among the monastics each one of whom, at the beginning of his or her monastic life, volunteered for the task of learning true supernatural obedience; for among the contemplatives at least, the *Ersatz* form ought to be completely unknown.

In contrast with this, the heart of the supernatural virtue lies in getting to a state in which you cease to be afraid. You cease to be afraid either of yourself, or other people, or of the world itself, sufficiently for you to allow the man nearest to you (who, because you have ceased to be afraid of him, has ceased to be your enemy) to know your weaknesses and your faults.⁴ After all, he sees them already; why hide them from him?

Thus supernatural religious obedience is not an act of weakness; it is an act of courage.

It requires, of course, the establishment of an antecedent common language and standard, as between you and the other man, on the whole subject. Suppose (to take the always cited classic case) that you are an alcoholic who has come in drunk. It is no good your superior seeing clearly, and stating, that you are completely soused (i.e. that you are positively in the pre-pass-out stage) if you persist in maintaining that you are only a little bit lit.⁵

In cases of difference of opinion, then, when this virtue is practised, the choice of words has to lie with the other man, not with yourself, since he represents the whole ordinary exterior world. It does not follow, though, from the fact that you have to accept his terms, as a matter of practice, rather than your own, that you can never have anything out with him, or that you have to become servile, either in act or opinion. Rather the reverse; even a touch of the servility due to fear makes the practice of this supernatural virtue completely impossible.

Actually what nearly always happens, especially between strong characters, is exactly the opposite of what you, humanists, might think, i.e. that the superior so much spends his time making excuses for the fault-committor that he has a struggle to keep any right to accuse him at all; and that is why this supernatural virtue breeds such love.

⁴ Above all, the man immediately above you, not only a distant confessor.

⁵ See on this William James's *Principles of Psychology*. See also the formula for admission to *Alcoholics Anonymous*: "My name is X and I am an alcoholic" (and no other word is to be substituted for "alcoholic" here).

Now for the 64,000 dollar question:

If this virtue is so simple and so blessed, why don't we all practise it? Why do humanists, who already have more than an inkling of what's in it, have to go, for instance, dangerously mountaineering together before they will corporately allow what is already evident to become known? And why, of all people, do monastics, as of now, not practise it? Why do their Chapters of Faults, in particular, always tend to go formal, and—as one very nice monastic once devastatingly said—"have nothing to do with charity"?

I think this is because of an overhang, in Anglican monasticism anyway, of Victorian severity; and also of Victorian prudery, which goes with it. And my next point is this: the humanists have blown both Victorian severity and the Victorian prudery (and secretiveness) to blazes; and that is how they have produced a state of affairs which could put the monastic standard of openness and mutual co-operation right up in the first stage of the humanist-monastic interaction.

The humanists have said, "What the hell? What does it matter what anybody knows about me?"

They are often accused of having blown all mortal standards to blazes with Victorian ones. But, this is false; humanists are extremely morally sensitive. (See on this, for instance, the novels of Angus Wilson.)

It has always been presupposed, you see, that you can't practise anything like supernatural religious obedience without two conditions antecedently having been fulfilled. These are:

- (i) the antecedent attaining of a complete integrity of conscience and practice; this is a rare gift even in contemplative communities;
- (ii) the antecedent setting-up of a situation (e.g. in an enclosed life) which restricts the matters on which the conscience is normally exercised to trifles; i.e. to small matters, outside comment on which will cause only minimal fear.

What the humanists have said (in effect) is: In a world with the Bomb in it, and with the hammer-blows to pride of doing scientific research, and with the multiple humiliations of holding down a job, of being psychoanalysed—in fact, of merely living in the middle of the 20th Century—why draw the distinctions between integrity and non-integrity of conscience, and between what is and what is not a trifle?

What, *sub specie aeternitatis*, does it matter if, given that you are a psychotic (or a criminal, or a sexual pervert, or what have you), everybody knows that you are. We're all babies, and beasts, and criminals, and primitives under the skin. And as to religious obedience in contemplative monasteries being concerned with trifles, dash it, the whole of life is concerned with trifles. What is worth quarrelling with your wife about, as X once said, except trifles? The great things, e.g. adultery, divorce, abandonment of children, are end-results; they are never fit matter for quarrels. It's the trifles which have gone before and which have built up these end-results, which are worth quarrelling over; and, after the divorce, what you do with the furniture.

So you see, it's currently the humanists, not the monastics, who have the openness and the general orientation for this great contemplative virtue; and who therefore (that is, if they once put themselves to it) can practise a light degree of supernatural religious obedience as it should be done, without a sense of "forgiveness" or strain. And so you get, for instance, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Neurotics sine Nomine, the penitential standard of which puts many monastics to shame.

"If the humanist can out-live, out-think, out-pray the normal monastic, the true religious contemplative can always out-humanise the humanist."

There is, as you know, a higher and more purely supernatural degree of religious obedience than anything the humanist novelists have so far conceived of. But it is purely supernatural: i.e. it is a grace: i.e. it can't be faked, and so it is no good trying for it (in fact, it's absolutely fatal to try for it) until the grace to see what it is has been given you first. This is the kind of very supernatural obedience in which, in stages:

- (i) The contemplative so comes to have closeness to, and confidence in God that it ceases to matter to him much whether he's rebuked justly, or treated fairly, or not. Suddenly his touchiness recedes; and it becomes too much bother to fuss.
- (ii) He discovers (the hard way, for no other way is valid) the irreplaceable maturing power of misfortune, including the misfortune of being denigrated and misunderstood.

The pearl of great price is so great, you see. Anything that gives it to you is worth it.

(iii) He discovers experientially the redemptive power of the same on the world, and so comes to be thankful for it and to seek it (though never artificially to cause it).

Now this is all right, in fact whatever the humanists may say it's supremely all right, as long as this obedience is really an infused grace. But as soon as its not absolutely down-to-the-bone genuine, it messes up one's relation with other people. For instance, on occasions when one should be telling a friend who is hurting one's feelings and not realising it, to come off it and shut up and not be a prize ass, one assumes a dying duck expression and Bears It Patiently. (It was to avoid this, at all costs, that you, Hilary, always wanted misunderstandings between people cleared up at once, even if it took time and energy to do it; you had no place at all for pseudo-supernaturalness.)

The second danger of trying to force this grace, in the monastic manner (i.e. the manner of imitating ancient monastic customs without ever really seeing what they're for) is that the thing is not really done by consent, or sincerely, and so you get into the militarism outlined above.

The third danger is that it leads to bad exercise of authority. Superiors should not get away with bad decisions unquestioned.

Nevertheless, when all is said, the shape of Mount Carmel hasn't changed; we've got to get to the top, not get stuck on the col; and in the last shattering devastating climb (e.g. in the last month) only the true religious contemplative—the one who knows, from his or her experience is what it's all about—can possibly see the scientific humanist through it.

THE HILARY PRINCIPLE OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYING WITHOUT EXTERIOR RESOURCES

And now I want to explain to you the fourth and last Hilary Principle, namely, the Hilary Principle of Contemplative Praying Without Exterior Resources.

It is this:

(1) The heart of contemplative praying lies not in using words, but in building up inside yourself an interior silence which can withstand shocks of all kinds; and this a skill which can be learnt as well as a grace that is given.

(2) If there are not to be words, or not many words, the body itself must be used instead of merely the tongue to help build up and establish in people an interior contemplation without words, or with a minimum of words.

Now with regard to (1), to say something like this is part of the common heritage of Christendom, and not not in the least peculiar to Sister Hilary.

Hilary, however, did not leave this building-up process to chance; she made sure that it occurred—no matter what the cost to herself or to the person she was teaching.

With regard to (2), Hilary saw that it is words which are the trouble with homo contemplans in the 20th century; and she was therefore prepared, to a far greater extent than most religious teachers, to short-circuit them as much as possible.

She was confirmed in this course by her affection for, and intimacy with, the Cambridge Young Friends; and by the whole history of What Happened About Yoga.⁶

In recommending both (1) and (2) Hilary was quite aware that she was acting, in a sense, as a humanist, i.e. using the 20th century methods to put the standard of current monastic contemplation up.

She was also, however, directly building upon and carrying further the work of her predecessor at Neale House, Sister Agnes Marion, who had been—among other things—an athlete before she

⁶ See Appendix.

was professed, and who had produced a down-the-garden situation within which Sister Hilary could operate.

Let us take each of these two matters in turn, beginning with the second. The whole account of what happened about yoga is inserted in an Appendix, since this is a matter about which it is essential to be exact and detailed, not general and vague. The gist of this was that, we having started, down the garden, experimenting with yogic exercises at other people's request and for accidental reasons, we did indeed find the greater power of relaxation which these give, strengthened and controlled by building-up of interior silence, though they did not replace the essential interior action.

We are not clear, however, that if the exercises had been undertaken in order to gain this benefit, i.e. for an interested motive, they would have had equally good effects; and that there is no other Christianly-derived tradition of silence-in-exercise, or silence-in-dance, which would do as well. I think there is no further comment I can here helpfully upon this second part of the Hilary Principle.

I will therefore confine myself to describing, as best I can, her teaching of the first part, i.e. the building up of an interior silence which could withstand shocks and strains as a learned skill, as well as a grace that is given.

This is Hilary's main teaching, which, as things turned out, fell into three parts.

(i) The way to learn to keep silence is by keeping silence.

This, though it does not sound it, is a revolutionary suggestion.

(ii) Interior silence must be built up and tested, not in situations of maximum peace (e.g. in retreat) but in situations of maximum unpeace (e.g. an epidemic, a Government Department, a factory, a home with small children, a research meeting).

(iii) When this discipline is being learnt without the protection of community or enclosure, temporary states of basic unbalance must be allowed for and withstood.

(iv) The atmosphere of greater realism, and therefore of greater hope, which Hilary brought to the whole teaching of interior silence (the very foundation, after all, of all true Christian life) lay in two things:

(a) She did not think that this art was easy to learn, or that it would teach itself. She did not say, for instance, as so many Christian teachers do, in a hope-for-the-best manner: When you find yourself in distracting circumstances, send up short affective prayers, like arrows, to God;⁷

(b) According to her, the heart of the whole matter lay in gaining an adult and objective sense of what was and what was not necessary conversation; i.e. in order to learn when and how not to talk, you had first to learn when and how to talk.

It is a matter of experience that this faculty cannot be learnt, nor the difficulties of learning it be sufficiently explored, without the people who wish to learn it being first made to live for stretches of time under a rule according to which they are allowed to talk when really necessary, but not when not.

This rule Hilary was prepared to produce by instituting a really quite strict rule of silence down the garden, which latter spread, for down-the-garden inhabitants, to various aspects of life up the garden as well.

The strong-minded signed notice, which she wrote out three times so that a separate copy of it should hang upon a board in each down-the-garden room, sufficiently shows what was in her mind:

"I. Exterior silence shall be kept in order that interior silence may grow, and in order that people can get on with their work without interruption.

II. Contacts requiring conversation must be made beforehand.

HILARY, S.S.M."

Nor did she confine herself to exhortation. She expected to be told of breaches of silence, whether necessary or not, after Vespers; and (what was worse) "in quite a natural way". With regard to breaches of all other rules, Hilary took a "don't worry and don't fuss" attitude⁸; though she could be stiff on particular things for particular people. But on this matter, of being told about all breaches of silence, whether necessary or not, she was particular, and expected to give some time to it. Moreover, it was easy for you to see from her reaction, and she

⁷ Just try sending up arrows of any kind anywhere in a really fierce research meeting. Just try it.

⁸ In sharp contrast with her predecessor, Sister Agnes Marion, for whom rules were rules and no nonsense; but who was in her own way no mean healer of souls.

from yours, whether a given breach of silence was really necessary or not (for it is a humiliating feature of the situation that it is easy enough to distinguish necessary from unnecessary conversation, looking backwards; the trouble is to distinguish it looking forwards, as it were).

You will say, "All this is esoteric; it required the special surroundings of Neale House; it is not for most people".

Nothing could be further from the truth; Hilary could have taught interior silence in a factory, or a battleship. What concerned her, you see, was not much silence you actually kept, but how sincere was your effort to distinguish necessary conversation from unnecessary, and to suppress the latter; and whether you were really prepared to learn this art or not.

And I suppose you could say, if you wished, that it was not for everybody. It was not for lighthouse-keepers, certainly; nor for solitary widows, nor for crofter shepherds roaming over the Highland hills. But consider the actual conditions of life under pressure in the 20th century. Are you really going to say that this is not what we need?

(iii) We are not yet at an end, though, of our account of this matter; for those who would learn to pray by interior silence have to contend with worse things than work-tensions and interruptions and normal tempers (though these, in combination, can be quite bad enough). As everyone who has attempted this practice knows, the sting of silence-breaking is not circumstances, it is sins. When you are in a good state, i.e. in the middle of a retreat, you can stand no end of interruptions and shocks without basic interior disturbances; but when you are already in a bad state, or very overtired, you can't. And every now and then a situation arises (and this doesn't only happen to one kind of person, or to one kind of temperament) in which fault piles on fault and disaster, until suddenly there sets in that total state of interior treachery, in which the whole personality swings into being the opposite of what it wants to be. And here I am not talking about fierce and prolonged temptations, nobly borne, which mature your soul because you do not ever consent to them (see the lives of the Saints); but of the same temptations, ignobly borne, to which you do consent, and which consequently cause a reversal of the whole personality; for this is the situation that in fact mostly occurs and on which the lives of the Saints are unaccountably silent. Such a state as I am describing is not only one of basic instability, and therefore of mental illness; it is also dangerous; if prolonged, dangerous to life itself; and even if temporary, dangerous in that it sets up a psycho-physical tension such

that the person who is in this state cannot either work or think or sleep; and above all, he should not handle tools.

This is the state about which St. Catherine of Siena said that, however slight the exterior cause which provoked it, or the exterior signs which accompany it, as soon as it sets in the soul must immediately ascend the judgement-seat of its conscience and deliver sentence with severity upon itself; in other words, the soul must not wait for things to put themselves right, it must act. All the Saints themselves describing this state, have said the same thing (and casual readers of their work have thought their remarks exaggerated); half an hour is too long for the person to be in this state; 24 hours is already far too long. The theological way of putting the matter is that, as grace goes deep, so does the devil—though not so deep; a humanist would probably call it an episode of temporary mental derangement, or of irrationality. It is precisely to minimise these swings that contemplatives with disciples to teach have built cloisters; to keep the plant in an even temperature, as it were. But when naked contemplation is what is being taught, and under conditions of pressure, with no protection through monastic rhythm, and no physical isolation, to think that you won't get these basic swings, and that they aren't dangerous—this is to kid yourself about the whole nature and depth of the problem.

And when you learnt that even these basic swings are finite (i.e. that the soul, if it and the body are radically enough dealt with, swings back); that these states of unbalance, though they may grow more frequent, also grow shorter; when you find that you have ceased to be so utterly terrified of them, and that they are starting to compensate themselves, either by the relaxation of sleep or of tears; when, in the end, they turn into only traces of what they once were (or perhaps the truth is that you grow tougher about them), then indeed the "dark sea" is starting to be crossed; there is then some real hope of coming out on the other side; for the worst that can happen is then ceasing to occur.

There is one additional thing. Someone will again say that this whole affair is luxurious and esoteric, even if it does not presuppose a teacher. Yes, it does; so does mathematics. And (as also in the case of mathematics) although doubtless it is a serious matter to be wanting to learn a thing of this depth and to be without a teacher, and although there is indeed a very serious shortage of teachers, it remains true that a really strong-minded demand often creates supply. For instance, in the very town of Cambridge, from the religious and theological end of which essays of extreme gloom have recently been pouring, to the effect that "there is not one prophet more; no, not one is there amongst us who understandeth any more", in order to find someone of the

calibre of Hilary actually operating all anyone had to do was walk along the road. And it was not the case—though it might easily have been—that people did come but, finding Hilary at a moment when her mind was set on gardening, failed to discern her quality.

This didn't happen ; because they never came.

APPENDIX

WHAT HAPPENED ABOUT YOGA

What happened about Yoga was the following. We were in an Epiphany Philosophers' Retreat in the Mill in Holy Week, the overall plan of the retreat having been worked out beforehand at Neale House by Sister Hilary. Into this, on the Wednesday, walked Robert Thouless, the psychologist, with Duhamel's book on Christian Yoga; the most disturbing thing, actually, he could possibly have wrought. Moreover, he arrived also with a strong tendency to say that this was the goods; all other contemplations were but shadows. This forced Ted Bastin and me (working independently, because we were both in silence) to face the matter, and see what should be done; we felt that we must do this, retreat or no retreat. I did this with a sense of hypochondriac nightmare, in the Mill Chapel, very early on Good Friday. I don't know when Ted did it. The result was, that when we came out of silence on Holy Saturday, after the first evensong of Easter, and the matter of Yoga came up, Ted, without comment, stood on his head, while I, outwardly calm but inwardly enduring physiological agony, sat in various Hindu-like positions on the floor. This brought a new respect into Robert's tone.

We then brought the whole matter back to Sister Hilary, and it became clear both to her and to us that, given the current widespread interest in Yoga, we ought to go into it and, if possible, see what was in it; although Sister Hilary, like me, had a strong initial reaction from it.

Thenceforward, and with Sister Hilary's full consent, yogic exercises began to be done in Neale House Chapel (you weren't allowed to stand on your head, but anything else was permitted); and later we were introduced by Robert Thouless to the Swami Onamanda Puri (author of the The Boy and the Brothers), who became a very firm friend of ours and taught us a great deal which we could not otherwise have known. As compared with most Anglicans, therefore, we now know a considerable amount about this whole field. As compared with the real Yogi of course, we know nothing. Except, of course, on the hypothesis which is outlined below...

With regard to the new use being made of the chapel, Sister Hilary justified her action in terms of two traditions of the Society of St. Margaret:

(i) a tradition, embodied in a rule, that Sisters should be free, in general, to take whatever devotional attitude they found to suit them (though no one had, as yet, envisaged them standing on their heads);

(ii) the tradition of J.M. Neale's strong interest in all things Eastern (though Neale had never actually studied Hinduism, so far as I know). These two traditions were jointly held to justify the matter.

In any case, the Sisters were in a weak moral position to protest, for at any time they themselves prayed from the comfort of low-seated, well-built, raised-floor wooden stalls, while leaving their friends to get on as best they could with much too high Ercol chairs, wobble-inducing hassocks and thin strips of haircord over an asphalted concrete floor. Clearly therefore, they had only themselves to thank (as we were continually rebuked by Sister Hilary for pointing out) if the said friends abandoned the Ercol chairs altogether, and took to praying in Y-positions on the haircord.

To return to Yoga. There are two things which Christians investigating Yoga should know:

(i) The genuine, ancient and authentic Hindu contemplation (rajah-yoga) is a totally different thing from Y-exercises (i.e. the Tantric, magically-based set of theories and practices currently called Hatha-Yoga). These last, in recent centuries, have largely obscured and supplanted the older, authentic tradition, something in the same way that one might say that, in current Catholic Christianity, the mediaeval magico-mechanistic tradition of salvation based on frequent performances of sacraments has largely obscured the older, deeper, Philokalic, fathers-of-the-desert contemplative tradition.

These two things, in Yoga, are so very different from one another that I have called the first "Hindu contemplation", whereas I have called the practices connected with the second "Y-exercises". Authentic Hindu contemplation (metaphysics apart) is indistinguishable, in broad outline, from that of St. John of the Cross. For instance, the phenomenon which St. John of the Cross called "the arising of the Living Flame of Love" is the same as what the ancient Hindu contemplatives called "the arising of Kundalini"; it is a basic and abundant arising of vitality, which permeates even the body itself, and which the ancient Hindu contemplatives thought of as a Goddess, though St. John of the Cross thought of it as a flame. The very thought of trying to induce such a phenomenon artificially (as the Y-practitioners now everywhere suggest) fills the Swami with revulsion and horror, as it would also have done St. John of the Cross. But when people take to designing funiculars up Mount Carmel they will try

anything; drugs, trances induced by rhythmic pulsations, mechanistic sacraments and magic Y-exercises... there is no stopping them. Whereas what you really have to go through beforehand, to get up there, is death itself (the death of the natural self which is 99% of the sting of actual physical death, as Hilary's triumphant and physical death has shown). So until death itself changes its nature, this won't either. And if humanists start saying that, even so, contemplation is just a trick (namely, a trick to combat the fear of actual death by facing the psychological essentials of death beforehand) well, they can say this if they like, but I think the facts are against them. I think the facts show that contemplation, and all the great supernatural gifts which go with it, is something far more fundamental than that; namely, *homo sapiens*, who has degenerated into *homo sedens*, building up again and maturing into *homo contemplanus*.

There is another interesting Christian-Hindu correlation, namely the Sobriety of the Philokalia, and which is the same as the active habitual contemplation of Augustine Baker, with the essential rajah-yogic praying in which "the breath enters into the heart". This conclusion was reached jointly by Hilary and myself. Hilary hated the word "yoga"; but had to admit the Christian word "sober", as for instance in the phrase "a godly, righteous and sober life", was so lapsid in use that it would not be any more understood.

(ii) That's the first thing about Yoga. The second thing to know is Y-exercises (magic apart) were designed to be something preparative and penitential; something designed to stop you being literally, as well as metaphysically, stiff-necked. But the Hindu contemplatives were as reticent about penitential matters as Christian contemplatives are; and so the whole original penitential orientation has been lost. Y-exercises were probably also (as they had to be) self-preservative; i.e. the breathing part helped to keep you warm in the Himalayas; the visceral part was and probably is, a good general preventative against disease. The hibernating part enabled you to survive when, e.g. buried alive or when executed by drowning, or, less extremely, through periods of prolonged starvation; and the "heart-stopping" part (which is essentially connected with the tongue-elongating part) could be used, and probably was used, as a "death-shamming" technique. A recent investigation of 80 yogin (reported in *The New Scientist*) has shown conclusively that the heart doesn't really stop, but that you can't feel the pressure-points. Consider how useful such a technique would have been in a Nazi concentration camp, to enable a prisoner to be no longer guarded through being treated as dead. All these last, however, were extras; the penitential preparative aspect of the real thing; it was something you put the novice through before he really got started, and

which, because of its considerable physiological interest in its own right, gradually came to monopolise the whole yogic scene.

Incidentally, the notion that ancient Hindu contemplation got out of the great desolations somehow, and was not penitential, is plain nonsense. It was the most penitential, most macerating contemplation ever known. (See, for instance, the non-enthusiastic remarks of the ancient Chinese upon it. The ancient Chinese were, as it were, the C. of E. of the ancient Eastern world. They liked an Establishment; they had a strong sense of morals; they liked things done decently and in order; and, above all, they liked to wear clothes.) The Hindu contemplation was so macerating that St. John of the Cross himself, with his strong emphasis on love, and his physical care of the sick and dying, would have been mild compared with it.

What happened when I actually tried it.

I had two advantages, I now think, in trying out Y-exercises, which I was initially quite unaware of. The first was that I could play the flute; and to play the flute, even very badly, requires holding your breath for really quite a long time. The second was that I naturally have a certain amount of control over my viscera. The result is that the prospect of Y-type breath-holding exercises and what you might call visceral bubble-blowing exercises didn't frighten me; and for that reason—namely that I knew I could be good at them—I didn't feel any interior call to go far into them. So I went into them just far enough to make sure that I had indeed an aptitude for them; and after that I left them on one side.

Far otherwise, however, was the case with me when I came to relaxing the more normally exercised muscles of the body; namely those of the neck, back, hips, shoulders, knees, ankles, feet. I was knock-kneed, I was crooked-ankled, I was physically ungainly and ungraceful I couldn't touch my toes, I turned out my feet when I walked, I could only genuflect on one leg, and that with difficulty, I walked heavily, I couldn't walk far, my back got tired all the time—the whole shooting match. I therefore took it for granted that I would be wretched at Y-exercises, and started doing them only because I felt I ought to know what they were.

All I did—and still do—was to say the Christian monastic Seven Offices "Y-wise", with one or two other practices thrown in, such as occasionally touching the toes (and, when stiff from Office-saying, stretching backward as well as forward from the various cross-legged positions). I conflated these efforts both because I was too pressed with doing research to have time to practise two religions in serious

rather than in parallel; and also because I found I became cynical and sceptical about office-saying—and gabbled—if I didn't do something physically of a painful and strong-minded nature to make me say an office affectively and keep me awake. I therefore had my mind on office-saying, not on Y-exercises; and it was at first with hardly more than academic interest that I noticed that my hitherto unrelaxable muscles, including the hip-muscles, were indeed, with the months, beginning to relax.

This interest deepened into a startled surprise, however, when I discovered

- (i) that I had gone light on my feet;
- (ii) that I could now turn my knees out, and my feet in;
- (iii) that I could now genuflect on either leg as required;
- (iv) that I was being totally cured of rheumatism;
- (v) that I could walk twice as far as before, without ill effects;
- (vi) that my tennis performance had gone up by a class.

Add to this that

(vii) the hitherto unattainable business of throwing off anxieties, worries and/or black moods when entering chapel now became an almost controllable matter;

(viii) that other spiritual goods, earlier gained, began to come back to me;

and you will see why, though I shall never be any great shakes at it, I was unable to avoid the conclusion that I had been a success for Y-exercises in a rather big way.

I asked myself why this could possibly be; and it seems to me that only two explanations were possible.

(i) That the Y-claim that practices hitherto thought of as those of Christian contemplation were indeed replaceable by physiological devices was true.

This I did not believe. I revere ancient Hindu contemplation very much, but not, to that extent, Yoga (stripped of magic) is a non-

competitive and non-jerky (i.e. "motion-free") fundamental athletics very strengthening and rejuvenating, and—more important—much of it can be practised at any age; strongly conducive to the development of interior silence; a thing definitely to do and to know about; nothing more. Moreover, it takes literally years to make muscles relax; and there is a ordering, which must not be transgressed, in the relaxation of them. Moreover again, I had not done enough of them to justify any version of the Y-claim. Why then had it all had such good effects on me when other suppler and far more suitable people than I had tried it and failed?

(ii) It seemed to me that there could be only one plausible explanation; because (bar the special business of relaxing the hip-muscles) I had been doing nearly all of it before.

Being, as I had been for a long time, what you might call a Philokalic Character, I had been absorbing something which was also the essence of Yoga without knowing it—only, through ignorance, I had omitted to sit like a lotus on a floor.

From this I evolved the great Masterman Principle:

The proper course of a Christian, when confronted with the challenge of Yoga is not to cease to be a Christian, but to learn to sit on the floor.

Incidentally, I am so strong for the merits of Christianity as opposed to Hatha-Yoga, that I even think that the Early Fathers did sit on the floor.

Consider the following series of sketches:

1. Very Superlor Early Father on Byzantine Seat
Donated by Flous Widow.



2. Assistant Early Father on Large Stone
Vacated by V. S. E. F.
on arrival of Flous Widow.

3. Normal Early Father on Flatter Stone
(and even such stones were exceedingly rare in the desert).



4. Very Junior Early Father on no stone at all;
all available seats, stones and sacks having
been bagged by his superiors.

What else could he do but assume the Lotus position and tuck his feet, soles up, under his skirt - if only to keep the hot desert sun from scorching his calves?

BUT OF COURSE, THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN JUST SITTING ON THE FLOOR.

ELEMENTARY CHRISTIANITY FROM AN ADVANCED POINT OF VIEW

...the first step in the process of evolution is the development of a sense of unity. This is the first step in the process of evolution, and it is the first step in the process of evolution. It is the first step in the process of evolution, and it is the first step in the process of evolution.

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ELEMENTARY CHRISTIANITY FROM AN ADVANCED POINT OF VIEW

I. Explanation of the title.

My title was taken from the title of two books written by the mathematician Felix Klein, during the period from 1907 onwards, with the titles: Elementary Mathematics from an Advanced Standpoint; Arithmetic—Algebra—Analysis and Elementary Mathematics from an Advanced Standpoint; Geometry.⁹

From these books it becomes clear that there are two methods, not one, of examining the elementary basis of any field from an advanced point of view.

The first consists in establishing some yet more elementary notion (say, that of ordered couples) the operation of which is then deductively developed until it is made to give the more complex operations (say, those of addition and of multiplication) which had been thought to be the most elementary operations in that field until that time. Felix Klein uses this method considerably, in his consideration of geometry; but he does not use it in his consideration of what he calls "the three great A's: Arithmetic, Algebra and Analysis."

There is, however, a second, more general, less formal method of discussing any elementary form of anything from an advanced point of view—in which Klein, in fact, discusses Arithmetic, Algebra and Analysis. Here he does not expound these fields systematically, with the aid of just one other, more basic and more general set of ideas, but informally, with the aid of several other sets of ideas, and also with the aid of illustrative analogies, some abstract, some concrete; but all taken from outside the field which is being commented on, as this field has been envisaged up till now. Klein's reason for proceeding in this way was threefold; firstly, to help teachers of elementary mathematics to make use, in their teaching, of more general, more profound and more novel mathematical ideas; secondly, to do this in such a way as actually to help the children learn; and thirdly, by throwing new lights on old subject-matter, to force reconsideration of

⁹ F. Klein,

1) Elementary Mathematics from an Advanced Standpoint: Arithmetic - Algebra - Analysis, translated from the third German Edition by E.R. Hedrick and C.A. Noble (Dover Publications, New York, 1924) [First Edition, 1907]

2) Elementary Mathematics from an Advanced Standpoint: Geometry, [ibid. First Edition, 1908]

the question of what elementary mathematics, at its basis, really is—as opposed to what it has historically been held to be.

His book was written in his old age, not long before he died; the whole tone and approach of it is exceedingly attractive; in it one of the world's great mathematicians looks, with total sympathy, at the needs of real teachers and real children. Moreover, Klein was quite unaware that he was writing a classic. He thought that he was only informally presenting lithographed lectures, too fragmentary and disconnected to be publishable. "For it is a far cry from the spoken word of the teacher, influenced as it is by accidental considerations, to the subsequently polished and readable record. In precision of statement and in uniformity of explanations, the lecturer stops short of what we are accustomed to consider necessary for a printed publication." But it is precisely this variegation and informality, born of an attempt to deal with a real-life situation, which alone could have enabled Klein to achieve his aim. If everything he said had had to be polished and finished, he could never have started. And his genius was such that this innovative method of presentation, in his hands, became a philosophical approach in its own right; a philosophical approach which, by presenting sufficiently deep new methods of teaching an old subject-matter, in the end forced reconsideration as to what the nature of that subject-matter really was.

Of course, the new ideas on which Klein drew were ideas which many other people held besides himself. Of course, too, there was agreement between himself and his double public (i.e. the public of the Universities, with their new ideas, and the much more conservative public of the schools) firstly, that there was such a subject as elementary mathematics, and secondly, that it was a good thing to teach it in schools, and thirdly that there was an accepted way of doing this. And it might be said that these facts, and, as well, the actual nature of the immediate situation which he was dealing with, would prevent this philosophical method of his from being applicable to any other teaching situation, and to any other field of study. And—critics would add—if there is one field of study more than any other to which such a philosophical approach as this could not possibly apply, it would be the totally vague field of study consisting of an old and now greatly variegated religious tradition; and in particular it could not and should not be applied to the now increasingly discredited tradition of Christianity, which, in the sense required, has not got any foundations, and which, in any case, is soon going to cease to be taught in any schools.

As against this, I shall maintain that, on the contrary, in the case of any modern culture based on an old religious tradition, such an

approach as this has got to be tried at all costs. For here also you have got a double public, both among those within the tradition, and also, in another way, outside it. For (turning now to Christianity) there is now admitted to be an increasing discrepancy between what is still taught to children, in parishes and in schools, and what adult Christian people, when questioned by their children at home, are prepared to accept; and so within the Christian tradition itself you have, as Klein had, a stereotyped method of presenting the foundations of the the subject, with regard to which there is need "to impregnate the material which the schools teach with new ideas derived from modern developments of science and in accord with modern culture"; as also a need to "induce teachers... to renewed use of independent thought in determining the best way of presenting the material of instruction." And when it comes to the world "outside Christianity", namely to the whole twentieth-century scientific and humanist world, a comparable situation exists but in a much more acute form. For here also there is now a double public: the older public of scientific humanism, which includes most teachers; and the newer and growing so-called "public of the occult".¹⁰ And here the situation is reversed; for it is the scientific-humanist teaching on the religious vision which is now being criticised as being stereotyped and unperceptive, and overlimited; and it is the younger generation which is insisting on more open and more profound ideas, which, they say, they have derived from participating in various Middle Eastern and Far Eastern esoteric traditions and practices, and which should be used possibly to "impregnate" and possibly even to replace the humanists' picture of reality and of man. And though, as yet, this pressure to reconsider the whole basis of known fact has not yet forced the scientific public to reconsider the more particular religious tradition of Christianity, this is less because the so-called "occultists", who are exerting the pressure, do not consider Christianity to be true enough, than because they do not consider it occult enough: they do not consider it to have an adequate mystical base.

In any case, when confronted with such discrepancy of viewpoint, there is, philosophically speaking, only one thing which can be done; and that is, if possible, first to determine some foundations which would be agreed to exist as between the two publics, though taken from one public: and then to re-examine these agreed foundations in terms of ideas taken from the other public. And, if the special case of Christianity be in question (as opposed to the hypothetical general case of the totality of all religions and of all

¹⁰ The use of such words as "occult", "occultist" and "esoteric" is something for which the user ought to apologise, since they are currently smear words, used to characterise any religious or spiritual tradition which the speaker who is describing it does not understand. "Occult" really only means "deep", in most of its contexts.

mysticisms, as is taken by Theodore Ros in After the Waste Land) then it is, evidently, from within the heartland of Christianity that these foundations must be initially looked for—whereas it is in terms of ideas taken from other fields and other faiths, that these same foundations must be re-examined.

So: if, generalising and re-applying Klein's second method, we face the problem of examining foundational, or "elementary" Christianity from an "advanced" or wider point of view, the first question to be asked is: are there any foundations which traditional Christians would admit as genuine and central Christian foundations, and which scientific humanists (together also with members of other non-Christian faiths) would also consent, on any terms whatever, to re-examine?

To determine methods of re-examination of any known foundations, in any subject, is not so difficult, once you have got the foundations.

The cardinal question here, the disputed question, is, however, whether there are in fact, or can be, any such foundations.

II. The search for the simple normal human sense of truth is a spiritual exercise.

"What is truth?" said Pilate. What indeed?

The object of this section, and the next, is to characterise that anything-but-simple and by-no-means-always normal human capacity for gaining general or particular knowledge, which I call "the simple normal human sense of truth". I want to say that, for humans, this is primary: kill this in yourself, and you kill the spiritual heart of yourself.

However, many people do not agree with this. For whereas, in earlier centuries, it might be held by opponents that the Catholic Church, in a known and agreed world, was straightforwardly asserting non-facts to be facts, now the philosophic disagreement between Catholic philosophers, from the point of view of humanist-scientific philosophers, is that the Catholics are operating with a special sense of truth, within which you cannot properly define a "fact" any more.

As a matter of fact, there are several variants of this "special" sense of truth, not all of them religious and not all of them Catholic.

1) There is, first, Lonergan and Rahner's neo-existentialist "horizon-bound" sense of truth, which is expounded, among other places, in Lonergan's Insight.

2) Then there is the current British-based nihilism about the possibility of there ever being any general religious sense of truth, horizon bound or not (Wittgensteinian neo-fideism). It goes with this that "every sentence has its own logic". It goes with *this* in turn, that any form of anyone learning, in the religious sphere and in the ordinary sense of "learning", is impossible.

3) Then there is the current "subjectivism" (usually associated with Feuerabend) about the possibility of attaining truth in science. This is often parodied as saying, "In science, what is true is what concords with current fashion—or with the views of your professor" or, (alternative statement) "truth is what is accepted within our culture circle".

4) Then, (in Protestant theological circles), there is the Bible-based, self-authenticating sense of truth, (argued for philosophically by Torrence in his Theological Science). The only novelty about Torrence's Scottish fundamentalism is that it is in fashion because he supports it with scientific subjectivism on the one hand, and by

Wittgensteinian neo-fideism on the other. Its overall argument has been parodied by saying, "Theology is in a mess: science is in a mess: therefore theology is like science".

5) Lastly, there is the current quasi-legalistic "Denzinger-bound", also self-authenticating, but this time Catholic-based sense of truth, in terms of which universal revealed truth consists of the list of papal pronouncements given in Denzinger.¹¹ By manipulating statements within these pronouncements, one against another, it is possible to carry on a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* activity which Karl Rahner is a past master at, but which I think that a computer could, in principle, also play, and which I therefore propose to call the Denzinger Game.

* * * * *

Now these various "horizon-bound" or otherwise over-subjectivised senses of truth are held by serious people. To examine them all properly, in a closely-argued way, would take a book to itself.

Why do I not make this detailed examination, and write this book?

For two reasons. The first is that not one of these subjectivist or horizon-bound senses of truth does justice—they don't, any of them even try to do justice—to what is really going on, day in, day out, at the level of nitty gritty, in real science, where a quite different sense of truth operates. Therefore, everyone who starts a car, or who turns on an electric light, or who takes an antibiotic for a bacterial infection—who performs, in fact, any actual applied scientific act, which depends on other people, in workshops or in labs—having got down to this does so in answer to the dictates of a quite different, much more profound and ordinary sense of truth than the subjectivist one: a sense of truth which says that cars start, electric switching circuits work, and antibiotics cure. Of course, there may be particular and immediate troubles: this particular car may not start, this particular switch may have shorted, your special bacteria may have become resistant to your special antibiotic—and there are other, more philosophic troubles about the nature of scientific "theory-laden-ness" to be contended with as well. Nevertheless, to lose or decry this fundamental and basic sense of truth, so that either you do not ever start a car, turn a switch or take a medicine, or, if you do, you cannot philosophically justify doing so, this is to lose or decry your fundamental sense of reality; it is, one way or another, and however

sophisticatedly, to go into a dream. And this is both dangerous—for a person—and (as I keep on saying) for our culture, lethal: for what is cultural schizophrenia itself but a deep corporate dream: a dream so strong that it is obscures, even for philosophers, the underlying human sense of what real reality is?

So, these many current philosophic attempts to decry the ordinary search for truth, in our time, are to be resisted on this, if on no other ground: namely, that they increase, rather than combat the schizophrenia. For they do not spring from outflows of spiritual alertness, or high courage, or curiosity; the whole tone and method of presentation of them shouts aloud that they spring, on the contrary, from spiritual despair. Either you shrug your shoulders and decide that, for you, deep truth is anyhow unattainable (so why not dream?); or, genuinely desiring some form of contemplation which will stretch, exercise and satisfy your whole man, you are still faced, even in this day and age, with cramping forms of spiritual authority which will not let you even try to attain it, except on their terms. So the brightness goes out of your eye, and from your heart: you grow old before your time, and you despair. And then, of course, if you are a philosopher, you centre your professional life on magnifying the re-examination of some quite genuine but ancient philosophical difficulty about the nature of truth, in order to reclothe this old difficulty with a new gloss, in an up-to-date and more articulated form; and you do; but so what? Of course, the philosophical difficulties about truth are really there. Of all the great and ancient philosophical difficulties, the ones about truth are the ones which have always most evidently been there though, before modern philosophy started, we did not sufficiently know how to formulate them. And yet, in spite of this fact, and during the same historical period, our whole conception of the outer and inner worlds has been changed, yes, even within the Curia; and it has been changed by people who did not know about philosophic difficulties, and who therefore were not deterred from the really daunting enterprise of finding out more about what real reality was like.

Moreover, we must go on with this enterprise. It is therefore for those Christians who have not lost their basic courage and curiosity and who are prepared to stick by their own basic sense of truth and see where it leads (even if does not, in the end, lead to anywhere) that I am now writing. I do not care how few there are of them: it is still for them that I am writing. Of course, when I say "those Christians", this is too narrow, because there are many similar people in other religions; but I say "Christians" because I shrink from keeping on asking non-Christians or anti-Christians to keep on looking at the present state of corporate Christianity. What I am really trying to say

¹¹ H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, translated by Roy J. Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition as *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*.

is that this search for deep truth, by extension of ordinary methods, which have so far led only to practical truth, is itself a contemplative—a "divinely-centred", if you like such terms—spiritual enterprise. It is not just an ordinary enterprise. To start with, it makes everything more difficult, whereas the aim of ordinary enterprise is to make everything easier. Philosophy, pre-eminently, becomes more difficult, in that it has to take account, not just of single prototypic and banal "commonsense" facts, but of extraordinary, variegated, and frighteningly whole ranges of fact. Science becomes more difficult (far, far more difficult); and it is worth remarking that it was pretty difficult before. It becomes more difficult because it has really to reform itself, sophisticate itself, stretch itself, become self-conscious about itself, if instead of reiterating only slightly differing solutions to slightly different problems in a stereotyped manner, if it is really to attain a greater depth of vision than it has now. The philosophy of science likewise becomes more difficult, because it now has to take account, not only of what differing sorts of scientists actually do, but also of what they might do, and of what they ought to do. This enterprise must be thought of not as a step-by-step philosophic exposition, but as a philosophic Pilgrim's Progress, in which the first step, not the last, is to go through, and also, somehow, to get yourself out of, the Slough of Despond; and thenceforward to make sure that you do not go back there. This is a form of Progress, moreover, the way into which is not only narrow (though I cannot actually define the nature of the narrowness) but also utterly daunting; and in which "the way" is not not really a way, because there isn't yet a way; so you don't know, obviously, if you will ever arrive.

There is an especial difficulty, in all this, for theologically-minded Christian exponents, and for preachers. It is that, whereas for philosophers and for philosophers of science, the strangeness, and the vagueness, of the notion of accelerating and proliferating revisions within science derives from the fact that, in proposing these, too many too large intellectual steps have been taken far too fast: with theologians, whether Catholic or Protestant, the difficulty is that nothing said here connects with their thought at all: moreover, the thought of scientists tampering with science, in defence of mystical truth and mystical religion, seems to them, more even than it does to the scientists, mere megalomania.

For such, before they can even start disagreeing, there is a vast amount for them to do in moving towards understanding; but they have got to change: they really have got to change. And they have got to stop closed-system-based shadow boxing. It is no good whatever, for instance, some Catholic professor at the Gregorian College, riposting in answer to me that all this which I propose is just a new

variant of the Monoalethetic Heresy; or for Barthians, operating from an Edinburgh-based universe of discourse, saying that I have just not made the initial "leap of faith". What these same men, these same theologians, have got to do is to rouse up, and re-examine, in detail, the nature of revisionary metaphysics, (taking all the great metaphysical systems of the world, East and West, as within their subject-matter) and compare and contrast this, in detail, with the early stages of the process of making revisions within sciences. And as a starting-point for the starting-point of doing this, they have got to re-examine—and stop for-goodness-sake limiting the scope of, or deriding—the relevance of the simple normal human sense of truth.

Let us now present a summary analysis of the simple normal human sense of truth. The ordinary normal sense of truth rests upon three conceptual props, and upon one deep act of faith.

The three props are:

1) *A fact is a fact*; isolated facts can be established by a process which everybody understands.

This is the principle of *factual atomicity*; which, though it may seem obvious to the ordinary man, has been the subject of three enormous, overlapping and proliferating philosophic controversial literatures.

The first of these literatures emphasises the admitted unreliability of our general mechanisms of perception to the point where ordinary factuality only seems to exist very rarely and as a limiting case.

The second of these literatures so emphasises the practical difficulty of verifying or testing anything in any precise kind of way that it finishes up by substituting "what is accepted by the general consensus of (scientific) opinion" for "what is true in fact".

The third of these literatures so emphasises the concatenatedness of any statement which anybody makes about anything with an infinite class of other inter-concatenated statements which would be relevant if anybody could manage to state them, that to try to establish isolatable, propositional truths no longer looks sensible.

Seen against these controversies, the principle of factual atomicity seems by no means obvious. Nevertheless, in order to live, we have to assume it, however much, in order to do philosophy, we may have to doubt it. And one philosopher, whose honesty was affronted by the difference between what philosophers set forth in their printed papers

as being the nature of philosophic truth, and the quite different ordinary sense of truth which they constantly manifested in their ordinary lives, made a whole philosophy out of this one principle of factual atomicity; namely G.E. Moore in his Defence of Common Sense.¹²

Thus, if I say, "Is there any ham left over from yesterday?" somebody can go into the larder and find out whether there is, or whether "no, there is not, we finished it all up and something else will have to be got for today's supper". To establish this fact, I do not have to ask my helper to brood on the metaphysical depth of the nature of larders, or on the niceties of what constitutes ham, or on exact methods of measuring how much of the remaining ham constitutes some being left. My question is atomic, (in the sense that it comes to an end); and the verification process is atomic, (in the sense that it is a definite action of looking in the larder which also comes to an end). Nor is it the case (as philosophers often misguidedly believe) that this double establishment of cut-off (cut-off of the question in speech, and cut-off of the action of going and looking in the larder) is achieved by "keeping everything vague". Nothing is vague; we get our supper perfectly all right. What is cut off, by convention and by the necessities of living, is the amount of information which is agreed as relevant for the immediate practical purpose in hand.

Thus (looked at philosophically) the establishment of factual atomicity is a daily achieved human triumph, due much more to the basic general fact, (experienced right from the moment of birth by babies) that maternal and other actions come to an end, than to the much more superficial general fact that pieces of language, in conversation, can also be caused, if you wish, to come to an end. It is a human faculty to be cherished, not lightly discarded. And it is relevant also, with complicating factors, to fact in religion.

In science, it is also cardinal, but more sophisticatedly so. Since science normally deals in extreme situations, it has to make a very few atomic facts, established by crucial experiments, go a very long way, since the extreme situation is usually very difficult and expensive to establish or simulate or set up in the first place. But this does not affect the general principle; far otherwise. Without the prior establishment of this general principle it should be evident to all

¹² Many people think that, in this philosophy, G.E. Moore was defending the view that the world is as it is shown to be in ordinary language, thus cutting out the possibility of revision by science. This is not so; what G.E. Moore was defending was the possibility of finding out that some one fact was true at a certain time without at the same time trying to establish the truth of everything else at some other time—the possibility, if you like, of making both a perceptual and a conceptual "cut-off", for practical purposes, from the totalities of the whole "worlds" of experience and of thought.

philosophers of all sorts that there could be no experimental science at all.

The second conceptual prop of the ordinary sense of truth is:

2) *What is like is like* (until it is shown to be unlike).

This is the principle of *inter-factual analogy*.

It also is the subject of two huge overlapping literatures, one on the nature of analogy, and one on the nature of universals. But here—in order to cut through a lot of philosophic complexity—I want to lump together both the ordinary human classifying principle (which classifies together aspects which are very like one another) and the ordinary human experimenting principle (which, when scientific experiments are repeated, allows the two closely similar experiments to establish facts which are so very like that they count henceforward as the same fact) and the more ordinary analogy-drawing principle, which discerns likeness between two apparently differing facts or ranges of fact which may well not have been considered to have any likeness to one another before; but which turn out—if the analogy holds—to have had the likeness all the time, as further tests show.

The reason why I want to make the ordinary human faculty which is thought to perceive "universality", or sameness, depend on a yet more basic human faculty for perceiving similarity, is that only this assumption can account for what really happens in experimental science. Here, by the nature of the case, no experiment can ever completely repeat any other experiment, if only because it is performed at a different time, and by different people. But, for each science, and by gradually established conventions, conditions of permitted variation are established, within which experiments differing only irrelevantly (i.e. according to the conditions) are counted henceforward as being "the same experiment". Within sciences, (hopefully) called "hard sciences", the conditions of permitted variation between experiment and experiment are very close. But, within the "soft sciences" including, among these, medicine, the elements of variation-judged-to-be-irrelevant have to be allowed to be greater and more obvious, until, in "way-out sciences," they occupy almost the whole picture; that is, it is difficult, in such sciences, to establish any elements of true repeatability at all. (And yet they are still sciences, differing only in degree, in this matter, from the hardest sciences; a truth which is at last beginning to be realised.) And, in ordinary life, the whole coherence of our whole system of perceptions rests upon the capacity to perceive similarity between perceived objects which are not, in fact, all that similar to

start with. The sun looks different at sunrise, at sunset, at midday; the water-jug looks quite different in sunlight and in shadow; yet we speak about "the sun" and "the water-jug". So, the establishment of interfactual analogies, or similarities is, like the establishment of factual atomicity, a hard-won human skill, not lightly to be abandoned or cast on one side.

3) The third conceptual prop of the ordinary human sense of truth consists in the capacity to ask, "What would it have been like if this had not been so?" This capacity establishes the principle of *factual truth-possibility* called by philosophers the possibility of propositional truth-value, since philosophers (understandably) do not like to be confronted with "untrue facts". But in real life, and also all the time in real science, what were thought to have been well-known and well-established facts turn out, in the end, to be non-facts; and though afterwards, with hindsight, it is of course always possible to say that the alleged facts were not really facts at all, but falsehoods, this does not help you with the next case—where, again, you are confronted with people swearing black and blue that something or other (say, in a medical advertisement) is a known fact. So facts can melt; their "factualness" can both become less probable, and also vanish; and it is sensitiveness to this process of having what you really had thought to be facts vanish on you, on further investigation, which accounts for the extreme scepticism, deepening easily into despair, which pervades every seasoned scientific laboratory and every technical institute. Some facts do get established, in the end, in spite of everything; and that is just about the best that you can say.

It will be evident that this third principle, which opens up the possibility of doubting alleged facts, is also a very hard-won human skill, which must be treasured; especially in the face of any invitation to blind credulity; and treasured more especially, of course, by any scientist. In addition to maintaining, and, as far as possible, living by, the normal sense of truth, the ordinary man, (and especially, again, the ordinary but consistent scientist) also makes a fundamental act of faith. (I stress this, because religious people often think of non-religious people as having no faith, whereas what is really going on here is a conflict between two deep and differing faiths).

This act of faith is not an act of faith in the *existence* of, or in the *usefulness* of, the normal sense of truth, since both of these, by people of this faith, will be taken for granted. It is in the *pervasiveness* of the normal sense of truth; in its applicability even to fields to which, at first sight, there might be reason to think that it could not possibly apply. It is an act of faith in the human centrality of the normal sense of truth; an act of faith also in its inescapability. ("How can it be

replaced? What other sense of truth have we, which we could replace it by?")

I stress the nature of this scientific act of faith, because, as is well known, it is not by any means an act of faith which everybody makes; and perhaps surprisingly it is not an act of faith which every scientist makes.

The capacity to use and develop this sense of truth is nonetheless one of the deepest things within us. This assertion, moreover, which we all intuitively feel to be true, is supported by the fact that this sense of truth normally comes to its peak—often a heroic peak—in very young men and women.

At the moment, both among philosophers of science and among sociologists of knowledge—let alone among "hermeneuticists" and among philosophers of religion—there is very great cynicism and despair about the possibility of our ever being able, in these days, actually to use this deep and divine capacity to achieve any real or disinterested advance in knowledge.

That this despair is premature and this cynicism misguided, however, becomes evident as soon as one goes from "the disquiet of the world" into the much cleaner and more disinterested atmosphere of an actual good scientific laboratory. There everybody knows, all too well, that truth is truth, and that it cannot be tampered with. The computer program does not work: the microprocessor does not do what it was designed to do: the antibiotic earth does not kill the bacterium: the result given by the mathematical deduction does not fit the known facts. And the manifestation of extreme emotion, when the crucial experiment or comparison is going on, by the designer of the experiment or the constructor of the theory, this is a well-known and accepted scientific phenomenon. Of course, the scientist is under strain, and needs to be supported by his friends; for, if the experiment does not work, or the comparison does not hold, his whole vision, his whole life-work, is liable to be "shot down in flames"; and that this might indeed happen was one of the risks he took on when he committed himself to the vocation of becoming a scientist.

By contrast, the world of religion is still in the 18th Century. Within Christianity, in particular, and this in spite of the fact that the science of the Renaissance actually developed from within Western Christianity—a totally inadequate attention is still given and a totally inadequate honour paid to this deep human capacity—this "star" by the light of which science, at its best, still lives; insofar as scientists fulfil their real vocation of pursuing truth. In this matter, therefore

(though not in certain others) science spiritually leads; theology, and, above all, Canon Law, are about two and a half centuries behind. And yet, at Rome, at the Second Vatican Council, though the rights of the individual conscience were (at last) within Catholic Christianity again freed, and thus restored to the state in which they had been throughout the early Christian centuries, the human being's concurrent right to develop and individually to use his "simple normal human sense of truth", this was not freed. And the result of this is, as nearly everybody perfectly well knows, though they do not say it, that Catholic Christianity—and with it, because of its predominance, all Christianity—has become, on the world stage, a spiritually truncated and inadequate ascetic discipline, because it can no longer integrate and bring to fruition all the deep powers of the human personality. The vocation of scientist is plainly not recognised, not even as a dissident form, (for the dissident theologian Hans Küng is most noticeably not a scientist). The Pope himself, who is also the empiricist Husserlian philosopher Karol Wojtyła, has indeed apologised, in the name of the Church, to Galileo—four centuries late. But where are the Vatican leading-edge centres of way-out non-materialist science, exploring all the relevant areas which official science is both not funded to explore, and also is afraid to explore? Where is the scientific Holy Office, calling scientists in question, summoning them to Rome and, generally, bringing them to book, for failures in integrity, acts of cruelty, deficiencies of courage, and blindness to claims of faraway compassion? The Society of Jesus has indeed produced one fundamental scientist (Teilhard de Chardin, who had a much better long-run scientific sense than most people think) and it took Pope John XXIII to act to stop him being posthumously anathematised—which would have required, among other things, the exhumation and public burning of his body, on a site in upstate New York.

Such a state of affairs will not do; it plainly will not do. And, in particular, it will not do with a genuine empirical philosopher of considerable originality, in the Papacy, (Karol Wojtyła, stop irrelevantly persecuting Hans Küng et al., and put your mind to this). And therefore, both because this state of affairs will not do, and because my own vocation as an applied philosopher and scientist required it; and also, acting on behalf of the Christian-based society of the Epiphany Philosophers—the members of which should not be held responsible for any of the views here expressed—I have, for many years past, tried to embark on what has now emerged as the present project; namely, that of exploring foundational, or elementary, Christianity from a normal-truth-based, or advanced, point of view.

III. What is unique in Christianity¹³

What is unique in Christianity, seen from an advanced point of view, is that it is the Universe seen under a passionistic aspect. It is the Universe mystically seen, of course—the *Visio Dei*, if you like—not the Universe mechanically seen. ("Universe" is almost certainly the wrong word here, since it sounds like the name of the first overall map in an infinitely stretched-out celestial Atlas.)

But the fact that the Universe is mystically seen does not mean that it is not scientifically seen; though it does involve realising that we are still in the stone age of science: that our current mechanistic scientific systems are far more superficial, partial, and limited in application than some scientists and philosophers think,¹⁴ and that we still have no clue—probably in terms of laboratory science only the beginning of the beginning of a hint—as to what the fuller Universe could be really like. (And still the concept of "Universe" is too small: it is the wrong word here.)

All the great mystical traditions have attained a mystical vision of what is ultimate, though under different names (Tao, Nirwana, Blessedness, *Visio Dei*); and any "mystical science" ("science" being taken here in its fully modern sense) which may be created in the future will have to start from the simplifying assumption that they are all talking about the same thing—and all the more so as the mystics from all the traditions state in identical terms that what is there is far beyond anything which can be talked about.

Nevertheless, it is still Christianity, and Christianity alone, which makes explicit, and stresses, this passionistic aspect. That this is so—once you state it—is of course not novel. What is novel is the insistence that the fact that it is so can be investigated scientifically; that what we have here is a situation "ripe for science", instead of a situation totally recalcitrant to all science, as is always said.

The second thing which is novel is the insistence that, in spite of the simplifying assumption, mentioned above, that all the mystical visions are ultimately of the same reality, there is still something

¹³ Published in *Theoria to Theory* VII iv

¹⁴ For instance, it is still not widely understood that what the molecular biologists mean by "cell" is "extended protein synthesis system": or that, except in a very commonsense way, the kind of atomic foundations which the molecular model requires are just not there: that (in fact) the molecular model falls flat on its face as soon as it is extrapolated outside itself. As for the "atoms are made of particles, molecules are made of atoms, cells are made of molecules, humans are made of cells, societies are made of humans" affair, this is not serious at all, it is (at best) a fun-thing: just where it is required that it should scientifically stand up, (i.e. at every joint) it lets you down: a century from now we shall pretend that we never thought of it.

unique to Christianity, namely, the fact that its vision sees the mystical Universe under this "passionistic aspect". The study of Christianity, therefore (as opposed to the general study of all mystical religions) is largely the study of this passionistic aspect; and the many current misunderstandings of Christianity are misunderstandings of this aspect.

The Passionistic Aspect

Human passionistic action is action resulting from a state in which a human being is totally relaxed, fearless and joyful (and therefore supremely effective) in circumstances which would normally inspire ultimate horror, terror or collapse. It will be maintained throughout this essay that this passionistic state, which is probably the deepest human state of which we have any observational knowledge, is sui generis: that the passionistic state cannot be explained away in terms of anything else.

The Passionistic Version of the Macrocosm-microcosm Hypothesis

Any abstract metaphysical exposition of Christianity would have to combine a detailed knowledge and analysis of the passionistic state (the analysis itself could be psycho-physiological) with some fairly extreme version of the microcosm-macrocosm hypothesis—though I find it difficult to imagine what this version might be. It is clear, though, that framing the hypothesis would require passing from consideration of passionistic action, this being considered as a static state, to consideration of a dynamic life-death-resurrection passionistic process: and of its possible pervasiveness throughout the Universe.¹⁵

This passionistic microcosm-macrocosm hypothesis, like all such metaphysical extrapolations, would have the well-known philosophically and morally undesirable characteristics of inter-relating human society directly with the cosmos.

It is worth remarking, however, that it does *not* equate passionistic (redemptive) action, or the passionistic (life-death-resurrection) process:

¹⁵ Any such hypothesis, by its nature, will be highly metaphysical and extrapolatory, since it will extrapolate from the living to the non-living Universe, i.e. in the contrary direction from the mechanistic microcosm-macrocosm hypothesis, which extrapolates the other way round. But at any rate the passionistic extrapolation, unlike the mechanistic one, does not try to dress itself up as straight science, and then fail scientifically at every point where, if it were scientific, it would be most needed. The passionistic extrapolation is extreme revisionary metaphysics, not science; and it would be ridiculous to put it forward as anything else. But it is not, just for that reason, plain silly; and, as I keep on saying, it could have remote scientific revisionary foundations, at various indirect places.

(i) with the evolutionary process in itself, as, say, Teilhard de Chardin does. (For otherwise: the "redemptive" "self-sacrifice" of some particular species or of some cell-group, might cause it to disappear altogether, rather than to evolve.¹⁶)

(ii) with the "self-transcending" process in itself: far less with that form of it which consists of a depersonalising regression into the group mind, where there is no longer any individual merit or guilt, and where the individual gladly and suicidally sacrifices himself (or butchers others) for any or every known bad human cause.

(iii) with the human masochistic sexual perversion, as in Freud.

If you want to construct a mechanistic molecule-based metaphysic, do so by all means; if it helps your thought, and if you want to, go straight up from a protein synthesis system to human society. But if you want to obtain, on the contrary, a revisionary science-based all-inclusive metaphysic for the human race to live by, then, for goodness sake, go downwards starting from the most free and compassionate and evolved individual state and type of action which we know about, before descending to the primate, organism, cell, molecule, or wherever else, conceptually speaking, you want to go: refuse all substitutes.

Special Characteristics of Passionistic Action

(a) Passionistic action is, by its nature, creative, original, regenerating, enheartening, and therefore (when its effects are conceptual) *revisionary*; i.e. its operation changes one state of affairs into another, seen by hindsight to be a much better, state of affairs. Suddenly the stereotypy is sloughed off, and men say, "Good heavens, what were we afraid of? Only of death? Why, that is like being afraid of your own shadow."

(b) It is therefore politically *revolutionary* (in some sense, but often over a very long timescale).

(c) It is, by its very nature, *egalitarian*. (In principle, anybody can attain it; because, in its essence, it is an unforced surmounting of the fear of death: and everybody, without exception, has to die.)

¹⁶ On current theories of evolution, this cannot happen. But, in fact, at the cellular level, it does happen; so those mechanists who think that human beings, human societies and organic species are just large bunches of extended protein-synthesis engines, housed in plastic containers and jostling competitively with one another for survival, are refuted, at the cellular level, by the known behaviour of cells.

(d) Passionistic action is also, by its nature, *dynamic*. It is dynamic action, but springing from a very deep unitive source, which is introspected as a combination of love, glory, blessedness, and, even in the midst of conflict, of Sabbath rest. The natural self is annihilated; but only to make place, so that the deeper Self can emerge.

When passionistic action goes wrong, therefore, it goes very wrong; because it becomes daimonic. ("Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!")

(e) Passionistic action is supernaturally *combative*. (Hence the predominance of images of war in Christian mystical literature.)

In its true form, it wars strongly, but pacifistically; "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers"—unless it deteriorates or remains immature, in which case it becomes plain pugnacious. In this last case, you get such things as religious wars, duals of chivalry, and crusades.

The non-Christian prototypes of passionistic action, in this century, are

(i) Arthur Koestler—both at points in his own life, and also, in some of his real-life studies, and in two of his novels;¹⁷

(ii) the Yaqui *bruyo*, whose pseudonym is Don Juan Matos, and who has been chronicled by Carlos Casteneda as a "Man of Knowledge".¹⁸

Don Juan it is who urges and teaches his pupil Casteneda to follow, mystically, "the way of the warrior"—in which, though the sorcerer, or passionistic warrior, feels himself to be the possessor of unlimited personal power, he pays back the debt to other living creatures, which he has incurred by killing and hurting them, throughout his life, for his own purposes, by the final, willingly given gift of his own body. Unless, therefore, he has been killed earlier, under torture, by his enemies, he goes alone, to his chosen place, does his death-dance, and dies.

Jesus of Nazareth (who, don't forget, was also a hillman, not a townsman) was just such a warrior, and his death-dance was the Mass. His three temptations, moreover, as he himself relates them, in

¹⁷ *The Invisible Writing*, esp. pp. 429 ff. See also *Arrival and Departure*; and, of course, the end of *Darkness at Noon (Le Zéro et l'Infini)*. Also, especially, the essay "In Memory of Richard Hillary" in *The Yogi and the Commissar*.

¹⁸ See *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way or Knowledge* (1969); *A Separate Reality* (1971); *Journey to Ixtlan* (1973). Also *Theoria to Theory* IV iii.

the narrative, are exactly the first three of Don Juan's Four Enemies of the Man of Knowledge. These four are physical fear, certitude, lust for dominion, and the self-pitying abdication of old age.

(f) Passionistic action, particularly as Christ exemplified it, is *regenerative*. Christianity is a healing religion: in fact, of all the great religions, it is still *the* healing religion, since all Eastern religions, founded on a metaphysic of reincarnation, tend to have doublethink about the urgency of restoring anyone's deteriorated body, as opposed to helping him to die well and so obtain a good new birth.

(g) Passionistic action, in the Christian form, is by its nature predominantly *social*. Although Christ himself came alone out of the Nazareth hills, the Christian family-based groupings of the first three centuries operated socially, in crowded towns; their sphere of operation—and of martyrdom—was within human society.

In this, Jesus of Nazareth contrasts sharply with Don Juan Matos—for whom other human beings, if they are not fellow sorcerers, have become, on the whole, mere shadows. According to Casteneda, Don Juan lost both his parents by massacre, in war, his wife, by illness, and his son, by industrial accident. Sorrow nearly killed him, but, instead, he became the pupil of another *bruyo*; and, like his master, first a hunter and then a warrior, and, in both, a solitary. He sees the Universe as a "multi-verse" (which, in the end, will also probably turn out to be the right way scientifically to see it). He is clairvoyant, and he thinks that we see nature in the inert materialistic way that we do only from the force of social habit. His habitual interaction with the forces of nature, and with what, for him, are the living spirits of plants and animals, and his developed sense of the nature of the supernatural warfare match those of any early Greek Christian Desert Father. But, if the whole human world disappeared (and particularly, if the whole white world disappeared) Don Juan Matos would not greatly care.

As opposed to all this, Christianity is socially redemptive; and (except for the Greek Fathers themselves and their direct imitators) both Hell and Heaven are to be looked for in other people as well as in oneself. The Greek Fathers themselves, (who were in some ways very like socially more compassionate Yaqui sorcerers) sharply separated the sinners whom they dealt with from their faults. For them, sinners were sick men, devil-possessed, to be pitied, treated, and cured; though they hurled anathemas about like children, and (being Greeks) loved controversy for its own sake. But the Coptic monks were not Greeks; as every reader of Charles Kingsley knows, they killed Hypatia. And it was this second kind of conduct, not the first, which

became the ecclesiastical norm; with the result that the medieval Church took to the Inquisition—which is felt by everybody who has really studied its literature to be an appalling parody of a potentially high ideal.¹⁹ Anyone who disagreed with the magisterium was "raving", "possessed" (they sometimes were); and the cure of the patient was achieved by burning him alive. (We now give our mental patients insulin coma treatment, neurosurgery, electric shock convulsions and aversion therapy, which are the same sort of thing, but not quite so much so, and scientific.)

It follows from (a) to (g) above, that a "Church", by its nature, to qualify as a "Church", will have to be a "passionistic society". Any such society, however anti-passionistically labelled, will be in fact such a society; and no non-passionistic society, however passionistically labelled, in fact will be such a society. (This is not quite what the Gospel says; but it is what the Gospel comes out at.)

This passionistic slant, then, is what is mystically unique to Christianity. The other thing that (contrary to what is said in most textbooks) is conceptually unique to Christianity is that through it have emerged both modern science and modern democracy.

What is common between Christianity and other mystical religions is that all of them are to be thought of as emerging from a common mystical "root" or thrust, or basic tendency, in man.

If there is to be any future "science of the soul", Christianity, like other religions, must be thought of as springing from a common mystical "root", or drive, which is available to all human beings. It has its own slant, granted; but it is a slant which "tints" an antecedent common mystical trend. As the history of various Protestantisms shows, any attempt to analyse passionistic Christianity in isolation from its mystical base (let alone to practise it non-mystically) can be disastrous; for then all the earlier stages of mystical development, which precede, and therefore secure the authenticity of, the true passionistic state, are missing.

However, what is this common mystical trend?

It is currently in vogue—and indeed quite possibly right—to analyse mysticisms comparatively starting from a Hindu-based theory of religion, not a Western one.

¹⁹ Unlike the Nazi concentration camps, where there was no ideal. These last were just mass slaughter houses for cattle, who were, in fact, people.

However, at the moment, such outstanding comparative religionists as John Moffitt²⁰ and Ninian Smart²¹ both start from the Hindu norm.

On their analysis, and in Moffitt's form, mystical development is thought of as having four main trends (which Moffitt calls "Voices") each of which gives rise to its own practices, type of metaphysics, and cult.

These are:

(i) *The way of supernatural illumination and knowledge*

In Moffitt, this is called "The Voice of Intuitive Wisdom", and it corresponds roughly to, though it is wider than, *Rajah Yoga*.

(ii) *the way of devotion to, and adoration of, a God of transcendent love*

In Moffitt, this is called "The Voice of Devotional Self- Giving". It corresponds roughly to Ninian Smart's *Bhakti*.

(iii) *the way of physiological athleticism*

In Moffitt, this is called "The Voice of Conscious Discipline", and it corresponds, though very roughly, to Patanjali's *Hatha Yoga*.

In this way the induced supernormal transfiguration of the body itself triggers off the concurrent transformations of heart and mind.

(iv) *the way of disinterested altruistic action*

In Moffitt, this is called "The Voice of Service and Human Community".

In this way (which corresponds, but again, only roughly, to *Kharma Yoga*) the divine is seen, not primarily as immanent (inside oneself) nor as transcendent (i.e., as the ground of the whole universe) but primarily in a third, normally unnamed, way, that is, in other people.²²

²⁰ *Journey to Gorakhpur: an Encounter with Christ beyond Christianity*. (1972).

²¹ "What is Comparative Religion?" *Theoria to Theory* I ii.

²² The reader should be warned that the hypothesis set out above is a simplification of what is actually in Moffitt. But such simplification is inevitable, because Moffitt himself is simultaneously trying to set out (at least) two incompatible points of view. With part of himself he straightforwardly desires to refound any future theory of comparative mysticism on a modern version of the old fourfold Hindu theory, not on Trinitarian Christianity. With another

Ninian Smart (judging from his key article in *Theoria to Theory*) though concurring with this kind of analysis, would probably wish to simplify it yet further. For Smart, the fundamental distinction is between Moffitt's first way (which Smart calls "Yoga") and Moffitt's second way (which Smart calls "Bhakti").²³ Associated with the first way is the third (for there is a Hindu saying: "No *Raja* without *Hatha*"). Associated with the second way is the fourth (probably on the Christian assumption that there is no love of God without love of your neighbour). Either the first or the third, or the combination of them, tends to produce solitaries. Either the second or the fourth, or the combination of them, tends to produce men and women who live in normal society. The solitaries tend to be apophatic; to want to go behind all conceptualisations of the ultimate, whether personal or non-personal. The devotional mystics tend to believe straightforwardly in a personal God, and to talk about Him, and to require everybody else to believe in Him and talk about Him also.

This Smart-Moffitt exposition, granted, is oversimplified. Nevertheless the message which gets over to, say, the superficial reviewer (who will certainly ignore the endless back-peddling) is that, of these four Hindu "ways", only the second is really theistic, and therefore available to be practised by Western seekers for contemplation; though, particularly in this century, Westerners could now also practise the fourth. Lack of the first and third "ways", however, keeps Western mysticism permanently cramped and truncated.

Now, all this may be so—though you could argue that, to a certain extent, the first and third "ways" had been practised inside Christianity by some of the Greek Desert Fathers. What I want to say here, though, and what neither Smart nor Moffitt seem to have noticed, is that none of these four "ways" is the passionistic "way" of the self-sacrificial receptive warrior: this last is a fifth "way": the Hindu "incarnation", like Rama-Krishna, who, in the course of following the practices of *Bhakti*, takes on his disciples' *karma*, and

part of himself, he is afraid that this may annoy the Catholic Magisterium—which indeed it may. Moreover, he realises that very few Hindu or Buddhist mystical teachers exemplify just one of the four ways, in a pure manner, to the total exclusion of the other three; and he tries to use this fact to convince a candid reader that Christianity, in fact, manifests all four ways through its various saints and mystics—though without ever saying so. The resulting book, which should and could have put forward a fundamental hypothesis for consideration, becomes a muddle; partly because Moffitt does not realise what it is to put forward a hypothesis, as opposed to developing a theology.

²³ See *Theoria to Theory* 1 ii. The key ideas in this article in fact came from Söderblom, to whom Ninian Smart should have, but did not, give a central reference. Söderblom drew this distinction in his Gifford Lectures, *The Living God* (London, 1933). See especially Ch. II, "Religion as Method: Yoga" and Ch. IV "Religion as Devotion: Bhakti."

thereby gives himself cancer, of which he dies, is the nearest thing which Hinduism has to this fifth way, but it is not the same thing. There is no supernatural battle here; death and hell are not thought of as despoiled; captivity is not led captive; there is no ultimate triumph; the whole conception is much more passive, and quite different.

What is genuinely comparable is the Mahayana Buddhist idea of the Bodhisattva, the Buddhist "incarnation", who, having attained Nirvana, comes down again, through love, from "heaven", to redeem souls from the seventh and lowest Buddhist hell, which only he can do. (Compare the sentence from the Apostles' Creed: "He descended into Hell".) Notice too that this redemptive Bodhisattva idea, which is not in early Buddhism, arose after the early Buddhist ideas had been filtered through a culture of (Tibetan) hunters and warriors, i.e., of hill people. But even here, there is no supernatural battle and no redemptive sacrifice; only Buddha Metreya, the predicted Buddha of the future, who will come from the West and be the eternal exemplification of redeeming love and compassion.

So, my contention is that the Christian passionistic prototype, even more than the Buddhist one, will not straightforwardly map on to any prototype just derived from the "way" of Bhakti. Neither is it true, as Moffitt sometimes seems to think, that if you bunched together all the differing metaphysics generated from the four Hindu "ways", you would get something like the Christian conception of the Trinity. You wouldn't. Like it or not, the whole Athanasian conception of the Trinity has the passionistic slant. The second *persona* is that of which the narrative of Jesus of Nazareth was an "icon"; the third *persona* is the continuing passionistic spirit of *Christ* (of Christic passionistic action in the world, if you prefer something more abstract). Even the ultimate and ineffable *persona* of the "Father" is still of a father who could beget such a son; though this last fact has caused theological trouble. The Christian Trinity is indeed like the Buddhist Mahayana Trinity; indeed uncannily like—once you realise that you have to allow for the Christian passionistic slant. But neither can be straightforwardly got from, or indeed be mapped back on to, the four Hindu "ways"; and this creates a big difficulty in trying to refound a scientific comparative religion on the four Hindu "ways", on the ground that they are the most basic forms of human contemplative goal which we know of, and, moreover, that their practices are susceptible of direct observation, and that the physiologically differing effects of these practices can also be subject to test. The two forms of the Bhodisattva prototype, or "way", are much less susceptible to direct physiological test, but they are there; and (in the hills, and

among the older faiths) their counterpart always has been there, right from the beginning of man.²⁴

To say this, though, is not to deny that the Hindu base can be used (somehow) to refound comparative religion: and to say that the passionistic idea originally came from other faiths is not to deny the element of genuine novelty in Christianity. The Christian missionaries to India, for instance, who, while awed and dazzled by the depth, variety and sophistication of Hindu mysticism, yet felt that, in spite of Christianity being possibly much more primitive, it yet had something different and unique, an element of "revelation", or of "discovery", peculiar to itself, were in fact right. This new element was not the message of Christ's first, prophetic period; "inside your self there is the Self". ("The kingdom of Heaven is within you.") For this first message, this announcement, if you like, is just what is in common to all mysticisms. No, the Christian revelation, the "discovery", was: "there is in the Universe, the possibility, the hope, of supreme, self-sacrificial, redemptive action (of efficacious passionistic action, if you like). The regenerative effects of this are so great as to be, over the short run, unimaginable; and it is the operation of this which is the only true path to supreme glory. ("I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.") This is what gave substance to the old, initiatory "mysteries"; this was the extraordinary first-century Christian prescription (backed by Christ's resurrection²⁵ and by the hope of his return) for dealing with all-pervasive and rampant evil. And this, on any book, was really a discovery. It was a totally counter-intuitive and non-obvious statement about the basic nature of the mystical universe—and this whether Jesus of Nazareth consciously realised the full nature of what he himself was doing, or not. It was a discovery, moreover, which, in the first centuries, and for reasons which are still largely unknown, had an incomprehensibly strong credibility about it; it made supreme sense. But, right or wrong, that credibility has since faded; this is a discovery in the validity of which people no longer believe, and the true nature and depth of which they can no longer understand.

²⁴ See, on this, Gary Snyder's contribution in *Conversations: Christian and Buddhist*, edited and compiled by Dom Aelred Graham, Harvest Books, 1968. On p. 78 *et seq.* Gary Snyder correctly says that we now no longer understand the depth and power of the older, hill-and-forest "nature" mysticism; but he also fails to show that he is aware of the basic sacrificial and self-sacrificial slant in it.

²⁵ The dolts who say that Christ could not possibly have resurrected—that he never went into Maha-Samadhi, that he never subsequently resuscitated, that he never projected any subsequent apparitions (and that's not probably the half of it), but that it was only a Great Big Beautiful Spiritual Experience, are, at last, being overtaken by the progress of parapsychological investigation and research. But it has taken this, and also the emergence of the counter-culture, to make people see that the right question to ask about Christ's resurrection is not: "How could he possibly have resurrected?" but "All right, the man resurrected: so what?"

What Christianity is saying might still be right, though. And, in its sphere, it is the only contender; for what other way is anyone suggesting of dealing with all-pervading, rampant evil? So, however old the source from which it comes, it still might be the human race's supreme and ultimate mystical intuition. On the other hand, opponents might say that it was, on the contrary, only the last vestigial insight left behind from older, much more primitive sorcerer-based cults, which "took on" because it happened to re-emerge inside ("modern") first-century Greek and Roman society; an insight which we, being now more "civilized", have now outgrown. (That is where the controversy now is.)

Anyhow, the Byzantine mosaic-makers knew that this discovery was novel, and knew also that it came out of, and must be seen against, the cosmos represented by the older symbolisms. So, in their domes, they superimposed the glorified Christ on the Jewish Tree of Life, or on the cosmic Mystic Rose; their mosaic message was metaphysical, as well as visual; and they themselves knew exactly what they were saying.

In this self-labelled, "civilized" century—which, even technologically, is still in the Stone Age, and mystically is far more primitive than anything which has been seen for at least five millennia—for the depth and efficacy of the redemptive battle for ever waged by the Eternal Passion to be taken seriously, there has got to come about a scientific change. The central point of this change, if it ever does occur, will grow from a revisionary scientific reinvestigation of the nature of death. Don't forget, passionistic Christianity does not teach that the Divine Warrior, when his body dies, is himself annihilated, but that, in some sense, he enters into his glory. So this creed does not show a road only to self-annihilation, but also shows the passionistic Self's path to life under the dimension, or mode, of eternity. The question is what does all this mean? Does it mean something parapsychical? (Don't forget, we have been hoaxed once by being told that the resurrection of Christ was just a beautiful metaphorical dream, when it is now clear that it was, on the contrary, something very scientifically interesting indeed.) So what of death itself? Do we really know what it is? Organ transplant work has made the old medical dogmatic view of the nature of clinical death disappear in a single decade. Is it so obvious that the mystical insights about the nature of death are irrelevant to a revisionary scientific estimate of it? So, some mechanists don't like our doing this: they think any revision of our current view of death to be scientifically impious. So what? Evidence is piling up that the crude, limited, commonsense view of death is clearly wrong; and if we genuinely had a new view of death we might also gain, I suppose, a new view of

life, and a new view of love, and of compassion (let alone a new view of such things as ageing, which is coming anyway); and, in the end, even a new view of the redemptive blessedness of passionistic glory.

The only thing is that the reinvestigation, though revisionary, must also be, in the modern sense, fully scientific. It must not produce a science-fiction or occultist view of death, but a scientific one.

There is one last thing: passionistic Christianity, by its very nature, is a redemptive mysticism, not a condemnatory one. The metaphysical idea behind it is that the continuing action of the "Eternal Passion of Christ" redeems souls from the lowest Hell; not that it puts them there. How the mediaeval world, starting with such an idea, got stuck finally with a primitive, eternal, irredeemable, retributory Hell (even if the danger of landing finally in this was mitigated by the counter-possibility of getting into Purgatory) is hard to understand. But the underdogs of the Middle Ages had a very great deal to put up with, and, because of this, lived, I think, in a state of semi-continuous rage. They therefore wanted their corrupt Popes, their oppressive bishops, their perverted judges, their torturing rulers, their massacring, looting and predatory robber barons definitely to fry alive somewhere, shrieking in torment, for ever and ever; and never ever, be able to get out. (And some underdogs in the early centuries probably also concurred with this; moreover, Christianity inherited a Jewish judgement.) But this desire was the direct converse of the operation of the martyrs, who embraced, thanked and regarded their executioners,—who often became their successors; and, that being so, it can be taken as read that it was the converse also of the essential message of early Christianity. A modern Russian saint, the Staretz Silouan,²⁶ when confronted by this contradiction, said yes, he supposed maybe you had to believe there was Hell, but you definitely did not have to believe that there was anybody in it. "For," said he, "Love could not bear that." He was quite right: Love can't.

There is one last argument to be set up, one last thing to be done. Christianity, among the mysticisms, may be the way of the redemptive warrior, and therefore may be (by comparison with Hinduism) analytically primitive. But it is irrefutable that it has given birth to modern science; and indeed to the idea of modern democracy. Both of these, moreover, are sophisticated and non-obvious modern ideas to which the four yogas, as usually taught, are inimical. The detailed case for asserting all this must be made at another point. Roughly, the case turns on the central fact that (all unknowing) the Church was midwifing modern scientific development, with its built-in claim to exclusiveness and universality; and that this alone explains

the comparable claim to exclusiveness and universality—the triumphalism, if you like—of the mediaeval and modern Catholic magisterium. But there is a lot more to it than that.

It is cardinal here, though, to realise that science is a Christian creation; because it is through having been steeped for years in these same scientific ideas that I have now used them, via some very putative revisionary science of the future, to present elementary Christianity from an advanced point of view. For if my claim here is right, this form of presentation is also a Christian enterprise: time will show that revisionary science has itself come out of magisterial Christianity—even if this evolution has been in spite of, rather than because of, the explicit action of the magisterium.

²⁶ See *The Undistorted Image* (1958), by Archimandrite Sophrony, p. 38.

The first part of the paper discusses the historical background of the church and its role in society. It then moves on to discuss the current state of the church and its challenges.

The second part of the paper discusses the theological foundations of the church and its role in society. It then moves on to discuss the current state of the church and its challenges.

The third part of the paper discusses the practical implications of the church's role in society. It then moves on to discuss the current state of the church and its challenges.

The fourth part of the paper discusses the future of the church and its role in society. It then moves on to discuss the current state of the church and its challenges.

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A CONCEPTION OF A CHURCH

The problem is to conceive of a church, not as a mere building, but as a community of people, as a living organism, as a social body, and as a spiritual body. The church is a community of people, a social body, and a spiritual body. It is a living organism, and it is a social body. It is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body.

There is a lot of talk about the church, but there is very little that is new. The church is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body. It is a living organism, and it is a social body. It is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body.

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All these things are true, but they are not the whole truth. The church is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body. It is a living organism, and it is a social body. It is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body. It is a living organism, and it is a social body. It is a community of people, and it is a spiritual body.

A CONCEPTION OF A CHURCH

The problem is to conceive of a corporate mystical or religious body, whether a monastery, a collection of families, or a specialised vocational group—anything, and in any religious tradition which you like to name—which is not such that, like any other social corporate body, it gradually becomes more and more rigid, and its customs more and more stereotyped and unable to change, until, in the end, it is so at odds with general society that it becomes vestigial, and finally dies.

There is a lot of sociological literature about such bodies, all of which assume that, though they last longer than the individuals, they do indeed, in the end, deteriorate, age, fall apart and collapse. Moreover, in the religious worlds especially, and in the Christian ecclesiastical world pre-eminently, we see this process of senescence and collapse accelerating, in front of our very eyes. Moreover again, we have learnt (the hard way) how rich, how restrictive, how grasping and how vicious, senescent religious corporate bodies can become. For the older they are, and the more their membership dwindles, the richer they get (since they can sell their now functionless surplus property which they acquired, when they had a function, though being given it as a gift—they can sell this, and their other financial assets, at the top of the market.

All this we currently see and it is agony to see it: for, on the one hand, the salt, having lost saltiness, is totally useless for anything else whatever: and, on the other hand, our whole general secular society has gone insipid through a fundamental lack of this same salt. But the problem is: can we even conceive of any alternative? Because, if we could understand and conceive of such a thing—that is, of a spiritually self-rejuvenative corporate body—then the fact that we might not be able fully to identify or create even so much as one small instance of the kind of religious mystical society which we have imagined and desired—this failure would become just part of ordinary human frailty. Whereas, if we cannot even imagine our ideal: if, sociologically and scientifically speaking, (i.e. from the "advanced point of view") we cannot even think how it could be possible for mystical corporate self-renewal and regeneration to take place, then, as ordinary twentieth-century human beings, we are in a desperate position, and, as well, a Christian claims, (right or wrong) that the corporate Christian mystical body, i.e. "the (Catholic) Church", (or, in Orthodoxy and Protestantism, any local church founded within the tradition) is capable of just such spiritual renewal: and if that claim is false, so that both any small unit church, and, even more, the composite unit consisting of the whole Catholic Church itself, is

bound to tend to become Simone Weil's cruel, primitive and predatory "social beast". Then elementary Christianity, in any form whatever, becomes just as much plain false as it does if the gospel story itself can be shown up as basically dishonest and scientifically untrue. Granted, basic "advanced" Christianity need not totally depend on these two claims, (i.e. the claim of the gospel story to be veridical, and the claim of the church to be self-correcting and self-rejuvenating). It may depend, as indeed I think it does, on something different and, mystically and scientifically, far more ultimate and important, namely, that cardinal passionistic strand running through the whole universe, the nature of which mankind, taken as a whole, has not even begun to probe. But, if, when re-examined from an advanced point of view, what is examined is to turn out still to be Christianity, it has got to concord with, and not to be confronted by, what Christianity once was. Otherwise, though it may indeed be something very good which is revealed by the re-examination, that something won't be Christianity. It could be something else, and better, which Christianity, (though mistaken in itself) has yet opened the way for and made possible; or, alternatively something which a regressive and obscurantist Christianity has tried, consistently, for two millennia, to block, but which it has not, in the end, succeeded in blocking: or what have you; anything, but not Christianity as we normally know it now.

Now of course the first task, for any empirically-minded philosopher or scientist, is to discover the truth about all this; not to prop up the Christian or any other official apologetic. I will therefore explain at once why I want to promote serious discussion of this mystical-group-renewal possibility: why I think that any form of Christian faith (or indeed of Buddhist faith, or of any other faith) which does not concern the possibility of, and consciously try to attain a corporate power of, this self-renewal, self-correction and self-rejuvenation—in the limiting case, this capacity of a corporate rebirth: in fact, any such group which totally loses its plasticity is going to become a worldwide mischief-maker and menace, and should indeed be stopped. It is that, both in mystical and in social religion, if you do not progress, you regress: If you do not allow yourself fully and openly to develop all the potentialities of your powers and to become fully stretched, all these same powers will contract and go bad on you, so that you become rigid and soured, to the final point of both becoming yourself, and causing the whole environment around you to become, mentally ill. And this principle holds for corporate bodies as well as for individuals. Religious institutions, especially in exile, cannot allow themselves to grow old: for, if they do, they concurrently become senile.

Let us look further then at the current situation and what is being said about it, narrowing the discussion down to the particular case of Christianity. Two main points of view are thought to be possible here. One, which is discussed below, takes its cue, one way or another, from the findings of different brands of sociology, and says, "All religious institutions grow old and die, just as societies". The other, faced with these sociological findings, takes refuge in eschatology, and says, "Even though, at some future point in time, the Church should become so reduced that there should only be a handful of a Christians left, scattered round the world, yet we know that, at the end of the world, there will be a Final Victory".

I do not agree with or hold any version of this second attitude, because I do not think that any form of reference to the *Visio Dei* should be used as a *Deus ex Machina*; i.e. as a sort of knock-down argument to distract attention from an otherwise failing credibility. Such argument is rather like sending up a Guy Fawkes Night firework, the underlying purpose of which is to distract the children's attention from the fact that in real life, and out of doors in Britain on the evening of November 5th, it is normally not only dark, but also damp, dirty and cold.

But, if both of these views of the matter are to be rejected, then we have got to think really very hard what the truth of this matter might be. And that we have no fixed point to start from—if we reject the conventional sociological analogy—this, as I said, is what constitutes the problem.

The most easily accessible texts on the applications of generalised scientific thinking to analyse corporate Christianity are those given in the bibliography of Alan Watts' polemic study *Behold the Spirit*.²⁷

In general, humanist thinking on this subject is not very high grade; by comparison with the efforts of modern sociologists, whose thought is, in intention, precise, even if it is also frivolously trivial and only marginally relevant, the thinkers in this literature are vague, gutsy, and, in the bad sense of the word, Germanic. But they are the only extant thinkers; and so, in starting from literature, one must make do with them.

There are also two flanking literatures:

²⁷ A. Watts, *Behold the Spirit: a Study in the Necessity of Mystical Religion* 1974, 1971 (Vintage Books, N.Y.)

a) that concerned with the non-functioning of untrammelled popular government, such as Robert Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy;²⁸ and

b) that concerned with promoting creativity and flexibility in industry, such as The Management of Innovation, by Burns and Stalker.²⁹ Neither of these literatures is concerned, of course, with the corporate effects of mystical behaviour as such. There is, however, a psychiatric literature on the customary ritualisation and stereotypy of social behaviour, of which the best-known exemplar (and the best) is Eric Berne's The Games People Play,³⁰ which is indeed relevant, and will be referred to again. And then there is good old Max Weber's study of the "routinisation of charisma",³¹ where, on the one hand, the routinisation is of a nineteenth-century Prussian-like autocraticness, and, on the other, the charisma consists of ultra-romantic, nineteenth-century daimonic proneness to ecstasy.

By and large, however, in the search for a modern text to start from, one is forced back on Watts, because at least he does—however badly—centrally consider the subject. Moreover, he is prepared to throw light on it by developing not only legal and political, but also biological analogies; and I am convinced that the key clues to understanding the root-interplay of the corporate "forces", or "drives" making towards particularising stereotypy and towards rejuvenative plasticity do not lie either in sociology or in the study of law; they lie in cell biology. And it is physiology, biology and parabiology, depth-psychology and not psychology and parapsychology, which are most directly relevant for achieving greater scientific knowledge of contemplative mystical development; for "the deepest unconscious of all is the body".

So, we start from Watts; and this in spite of the fact that Watts has a talent amounting to genius for staying blind to the implications of what he quotes. Moreover, morally speaking, it ill became him—by republishing his study 25 years after he first wrote it—to continue to recommend a push-over form of narrowly dogmatic Anglo-Catholicism from which he himself (see the new preface) on his own showing subsequently walked out.

²⁸ R. Michels, The Iron Law of Oligarchy. (Images of Man. The Classic Tradition in Sociological Thinking, selected and edited with an introduction by C. Wright Mills, New York, 1960, pp. 233-261)

²⁹ T. Burns and G.M. Stalker, The Management of Innovation. (Tavistock Publications, 1961).

³⁰ E. Berne, M.D., The Games People Play. The Psychology of Human Relationships. (Penguin Books, 1964)

³¹ From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology Translated, and Edited with an Introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. (London, 1948); see especially XI. The Social Psychology of the World Religions. pp. 267 - 301.

There are two forms, in Watts, of the view of Christianity as mortal. The first is taken from Spengler's Decline of the West (N.Y., 1926). In interpreting Spengler, Watts first equates Christian culture with Western Culture, and then divides it into four stages.

These are:

- 1) Thesis (a corporate concretely-mystical childhood);
- 2) Antithesis (corporate rebellious adolescence);
- 3) Crisis (corporate materialistic maturity);
- 4) Synthesis (regressive and decadent corporate return to a second religiousness in old age).

...(Spengler) is always anxious to prove that nothing of great profundity can come out of a Second Religiousness. For him, old age is simple decadence—not the flowering of wisdom." (Watts, p.32) Thus Watts accepts Spengler's general account of the ageing process in Christian mysticism with this proviso: that the Second Religiousness, or stage of corporate old age, which he thinks is just beginning to set in within Christianity, is, for Watts, not a final stage of regressive and senile corporate decadence, but, on the contrary, a final stage of supreme corporate holiness and insight. But, on either interpretation, the stage of the Second corporate Religiousness is final—or rather, pre-final. It is followed, in the due course of nature, by its ultimate death.

Actually, this schema of Spengler's fits the history of Christianity extraordinarily badly; that is, unless the point of origin of purely Christian culture is postdated, so as to make it start, say, after the Black Death (1348), i.e. in the Middle Ages. (See, on this, Watts, p.25.) And even then, even if we thus read history, it still remains impossible to use the Spengler schema with any assurance, in order to answer the question: "If Christian culture started in 1348, where are we now?" since we cannot know what further readjustments of history we have got to make in order to make the schema apply to Christianity as it is now in this century, in any way at all. Watts tries to get round the obvious difficulties by abandoning thought altogether in favour of a more-than-clerical rhetorical outburst. For not only does he break from Spengler (at the crucial point) in order to go into a kind of paean of prophetic praise of the Second Religiousness (see also above). He also sounds a loud and braying theological trumpet (on pp.26-27) to the effect that Christianity, unlike any other religion ever known, is not culture bound. For "in all probability there will be many Christian

cultures, following the late Graeco-Roman and our own, all exhibiting the genius of Christianity in differing ways like so many varied jewels adoring a crown..." etc etc.

So much for the general, quasi-sociological conception of the rise and fall of religions, according to which any religious institution, such as the Catholic Church, is clearly mortal: it will, in the ordinary way, grow old and die. There is also a more "interior" (i.e. more poetic) Eastern European conception of Christian development, found in Solovyev and other Eastern European writers. According to this, the development of Christian spirituality falls into three periods, corresponding to the three personae of the Athanasian Trinity. These are:

- 1) that of the "Father" (in the Old Testament period);
- 2) that of the "Son" (in the Christendom period);
- 3) that of the "Holy Spirit" (in the period of world diffusion and dispersion of Christian ideas, starting now).

So far, so good; the analysis fits, far more simply than that of Spengler: as with Marxism, we can predict up to the present—but what is supposed to happen after this third period is finished? Does this view presuppose that the end of the world will then come?

There are, of course, other conceptions again of Christian development: there is, for instance, the current Catholic (Denzinger-Rahner) conception (much more terre-à-terre, but still open to the Spengler type of analysis) which will be later discussed. And outside Christianity, there are other conceptions which might, I suppose, be adapted to explain the Christian case. There are, for instance, as is well known, very ancient metaphysical cyclic conceptions of the place of religious societies within the eternal cyclic pattern of stages of change in the Universe; there is, moreover, Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophist vision of the stages of evolution of individual and corporate human consciousness. And I suppose that it might be claimed that outside Christianity the problem of the permanent authority of the corporate mystical body to which everybody is supposed to belong does not exist to anything like the same extent—since no other tradition claims such permanence or such authority for any concrete institution—only for the "Perennial Philosophy" itself. And this—it might be said—is yet one more reason why Christianity should be got rid of as soon as possible. But in fact, and in daily life, and especially in matters of concrete detail, such as diet, every mystical tradition is being constantly confronted by the problem posed

by increase of stereotypy within the corporate body, during a period of catastrophically fast change in the world outside. And I believe that, in the end, there are only two kinds of mystical corporate bodies:

- a) those founded upon the evident overt spiritual (or caste) ordering principle, i.e. upon the evident overt spiritual inequality of man; and
- b) those founded upon some kind of passionistic principle; upon the covert capability for passionistic action presumed to be inherent in all men; upon the equal potential for passionistic action within man. Both sorts of mystical institution can (and do) claim varying degrees of authority and permanence; but it is the second sort, founded as it is upon a deep and hidden principle of transformation which has to be presupposed to exist on faith, and the faculty for which will therefore continually tend to fade out and get lost or forgotten, which needs explicitly and self-consciously to face the need for self-correction, self-rejuvenation, and corporate re-birth.

Since it is evidently necessary to start somewhere, I am going to start by making the assumption that a Christian group, at its inception, like any other religious group tends, for good or evil, to become rather more close-knit than groupings within more diffuse mystical traditions, whose orderings are immutably (but peacefully) based on physiology/ethnology or caste, and whose norm is of a secularly slow rate of spiritual progress spread out over an indefinitely long sequence of lives. I confess that in moments of lowness I am myself strongly attracted to this second, more effortless ideal—provided, that is, I am not instantly required to believe in it scientifically; for there is nothing that makes one, in desire and dream, more basically pacifistic than the obligation, in real life, to engage in a continual spiritual warfare, and, moreover, to make sure that the warfare stays spiritual.

But this "Long Path" mysticism is not the mysticism of Christianity. Seen from the comparative-religion point of view, Christianity is an extreme "Short Path" religion, and moreover, in ideal, also the only fully democratic one: since it holds out the possibility of attaining sanctity to everyone without distinction of race, sex, physical-health-and-strength, situation, education, class or caste—and, in addition, asserts that this can be done within the compass of one single life-time. And therefore, since Christians have this "let-us-be-up-and-doing" mystical obligation upon them (but it is a mystical obligation), they tend, when they take it seriously, to form themselves into groups—not just stray groupings of Christians who have met largely by chance—which, when things at the corporate mystical foundation go wrong, tend to develop the unscrupulous or bloody-minded corporate faults characteristic of commercial or

political close-knit groups everywhere; i.e. they end by doing harm when it was their initial purpose to do good.

As is continually pointed out, there is no limit to the world-wide evil that such groups can cause, because, since they are mystical groups, their foundation goes so deep; their operation is a perversion, therefore, of the mystical ideal itself. ("If the light that is within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness".) In other words, mystical Christianity is not only subject to erosion caused by stereotypy; it can also, quite easily, deteriorate into daimonism. Indeed, you might go so far as to say that Stalinist Communism, Hitlerian Nazism and late-Victorian Imperial Britain were, in part, all different daimonic distortions respectively of Russian Orthodoxy, German Protestantism-Catholicism and Britannic Anglicanism: and that, if personally I think that, of these three, the first two were much the worst, and the last one much the best, that is merely because I am myself both Anglican and born in Britain. In the most extreme purely ecclesiastical case, namely that constituted by the mediaeval triumphalist Catholic Church at its worst, groups tended to turn into gangs, high ecclesiastical officials to take to (in our eyes) plain criminal gangsterism, and the whole Curial organisation comes quite near to being a sort of Mafia: making big money, in a con-man manner, by commercializing the sale of sacred privileges and tricks: putting the Black Spot on people: ruling by *Lettres de Cachet*...

Be all that as it may, what is much more sure is that many people in Protestant countries still think that such a group as the (Catholic) Society of Jesus ("those Jesuits") is just such a menace of this kind. There is also, at the other end of the scale, the extreme Protestant group, which is also organised according to a military metaphor, namely, the Salvation Army: though they always get a much better press than the Jesuits do—and deserve it. But, sacramental ceremonial apart, and ignoring prejudice, there is not, passionistically speaking, all that difference between these two: and, face it, they are both centrally typical of contemporary mystical³² Christianity. For the Jesuit priest, about to go abroad, says his final Mass in the Chapel of the Martyrs; while a Salvation Army hymn begins:

*My life must be the broken bread,
My love the wine outpoured....."*

³² I am here throughout using "mystical" as the counter-culture uses it, i.e. approbatively, and in the wide sense; not derogatively—though also in a wide sense—as the humanists use it; and not narrowly or technically, as in the many differing ascetic theological senses. I mean it to mean rather what St. François de Sales meant by "devout", in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

So the question remains: are they a menace? In so far as they are, what makes them a menace? And what contrary tendency can make them, on the contrary, something which we very highly prize?

Currently, you get two main types of corporate small-scale surface-situation, throughout all brands of Christianity. The first, the locally active, but spiritually marginal, does not easily become daimonic (except, I suppose, in Ireland); what the individual members frequently do, though, is to become exceedingly lowered and depressed, through lack of sufficient spiritual contact and support; while the minister or priest, upon whom far too much depends, in the typical case either walks out and takes to earning his living some other way, or else stays and breaks down. So you have these; and secondly, you have the much tighter groups and organisations of all sorts, consisting of cells, bands, leagues, guilds, sodalities, communes, communities, what-have-you. Two examples of these have been given; a third, which clearly shows the potentiality of such for good or evil, would be the politically very powerful international Catholic society, *Opus Dei*.

These, then, are the two main types of corporate Christian surface-situation. But now you have to reckon with Christian mystical depth. For contrary to what most people, and especially those in the counter-culture, think, there is still very great mystical depth hidden in Christianity, the information-structure of which, in this century, humanists and hippies alike no longer know how to uncode; and they therefore constantly misjudge the Christian mystical situation, often in exceedingly crass ways. Where Christianity has regressed is conceptually; Christians have both lost their curiosity and, as well, just can't think, so that excuses for intellectual evasion are made on all sides to the point where Christianity just comes to look like a primitive religion on a very large scale. But this faith has regressed to being conceptually primitive far more widely than it has become mystically shallow. The mystical depth is still there.

All right: granted the peculiar and complex nature of the current set-up, what is the effect of this depth? We have fully faced up to Christianity at its worst; what about Christianity at its best?

My hypothesis in this section is that, because of Christianity's basic passionistic orientation and attitude, any Christian group with a good and deep mystical foundation is capable of, and liable to the onset of, a process which I will call passionistic inversion. I will further assume that it is in this process that its capacity for self-rejuvenation also lies. And I will explore this process, i.e. try to get the feel of it rather than accurately describe it, by drawing not on

sociological but non-mammalian biological analogies. And I will uncompromisingly say that it is so far as any Christian group knows how to detect the onset of, and how to go through, this process, that it alone ultimately qualifies to have the name of "church". Because, if it does not know this, and therefore, even intermittently, cannot achieve any complete passionistic inversion, then, by that refusal, it throws away its own claim to universality and to immortality: it becomes subject to the ordinary sociological laws of growth-maturation-and-decay which apply to any tribe, to any group, or to any culture.

Two things need immediate explaining here: "universality" and "immortality" are metaphysical words, but I do not mean to use them here transcendentally or portentously. It is just that there is, in the biological universe, much more indefinite longevity and capacity for virtual immortality than those who only observe mammals normally become aware of. Plants, in principle, don't die. A tree, for instance, may die because it is cut down; it may die because it becomes infected with some disease; it may die because it is struck by lightning; but it does not just die, as a mammal does, because of the completion of its biological rhythm and the turning off of its biological clock; because, in plants, the meristem continually renews itself. And cells, in principle, differentiate, divide; though the sequence of cell-divisions tends to proceed progressively more slowly. So, even in biology, there is more than one prototype of growth. It is not obvious, when we are trying to describe mystical change, that we need start by extrapolating from the mammalian growth-pattern of Spengler. St. Paul, a townsman who had no interest in plants, compared the mystical church, indeed, to a human body. But Jesus of Nazareth, an evident countryman, compared it to a vine; one of the most near-immortal plants we know of. All I am trying to say here, then, is that a "church" the members of which can both discern the nature of, and also so act that the church can achieve passionistic inversion—which, mystically, is an exceedingly deep thing—can quite likely thereby gain access to much deeper sources of self-renewing growth: that the corporate body can, quite likely, thereby tap, or draw on a much deeper, richer, type, or "layer" of growth than the ordinary mammalian: and that such mystical growth might be more like that of the cells in a plant meristem than that of the cells in all the rest of the plant, which differentiate and die. But I am not trying to say, against the facts, that plants, and passionistic churches, don't die, or that they are transcendentally or automatically protected against changes or disaster: that they can't die. Neither am I here trying to discuss, or analyse, or imagine, that deeper growth and more complete immortality yet, the existence of which individual mystical seers say that they discern; i.e. the wholly eternal life, "out of time"—which from that very fact is strictly speaking indescribable. I am not trying to

discuss it; and, my goodness, neither am I trying to decry it. Growthwise, it is already clear that the universe lies in layers; and the lower layers are something the scientific existence of we are now, at last, beginning to suspect, but the nature of which only in the most indirect manner shall we be able, over the centuries, to investigate. No, all I am saying here is just that the normal sociological picture of all this is too superficial and too small scale, too short-term, and as well I am saying that sociology's and psychiatry's usual conventional conception of the "deep shape" of a corporate mystical group, such as a passionistic church—founded as it almost always is on some half-formed notion of Freudian masochism—is just not right.

So we must invent another one. But there are one of two caveats.

I should like to make clear that these caveats are part of my argument; not moral warnings to individuals or groups of people to change their lives. The very last thing that is intended is that individual churchwardens, secretaries of Women's Institutes and hospital ward-sisters should start saying, "O dear! Am I regressing towards a lethal stereotypy?" Such people (as also, in the end, all people) are of such worth that no philosopher or scientist can hold a candle to them; the latchet of their shoes we are not worthy to unloose. No, what I am trying for, in this whole essay, is an increase in self-consciousness. Not only is the rest of the world totally failing to understand Christianity; but also highly passionistic Christians are failing to understand themselves, and the result of this is that, though the individual Christians, (like most people, in this century) are far more spiritually advanced than they think they are, yet, through lack of understanding (because they are bewildered, and just don't know which way to turn) the corporate result is still less than Christianity.

The first caveat results directly from the definition. If the corporate power of exhibiting this passionistic quality which I have called "church" is thus restrictively defined, it will not always be present; and especially, evidence of this capacity is liable to be deficient in the headquarters of institutions which are officially labelled **The Church X...** Thus you can get, among others, "churchiness" (social ground in which the quality of passionistic church has not yet begun to gel); "quasi-church" (social ground in which this quality has only partially developed); "pseudo-Church" (social ground in which a parody of it has developed: say, a wild self-sacrificial daimonism, instead of a self-sacrificial love); and "anti-church" (the kind of spiritual mafia which I was discussing earlier).

The second caveat is the converse of the first. It states that the corporate passionistic quality of "church" can develop in societies or

groups the members of which remain to the end unconscious of the fact that they have themselves been passionistically sanctified. The most spectacular and complete case of this which I know is the account of the transformation of the men in a Japanese-held prisoner-of-war camp, and reported in Miracle on the River Kwai. But another case—if Arthur Koestler's reiterated testimony on this is correct—is the Bolshevistic Old Guard, and the group of dissidents who have succeeded them; for if Soviet Communism is ever liberalised from within, it will be because of them and of what they have done. In all sorts of unexpected times and places, the interior drive towards the passionistic inversion can take hold; and, by comparison with this basic and (I hold) cosmic tendency, such matters as whether crucifixes are held up, or liturgies celebrated is, by comparison, regional, transient and trivial.³³ At the same time, the more modern and limited fact, that Christianity, when compared to other mystical traditions, has both tried to become explicit about, and to exhibit, passionistic action, this fact, though currently unpalatable, is really very important: it must be. For, but for Christianity, we should just not have known what, in the concrete, and in the detail, were the nature and stages of passionistic action.

³³ Note to Catholics: No, I am not meaning what you think I am meaning about the Mass. The transformation of the elements in the Mass may indeed be (as St. Thomas Aquinas, using his own prescientific language, profoundly saw) a parapsychic fact; it is not, however, and no Catholic ever said it was, a straight empirical fact. And I am here trying, however badly, to highlight empirical facts.

THE ETERNAL LOGOS:
THINKING AT THE BOUNDARIES OF THOUGHT

THE ETERNAL LOGOS:

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Gore Lecture, Westminster Abbey, November 30th 1978

"I feel that the practical neglect of the Doctrine of the Trinity has been the great cause of the decay of Christendom. The Church, the Sacraments, Hagiology, I had almost said Mythology, have filled the minds of devout people, partly for good, partly for evil.

Fr. Benson of Cowley, 1875

"(Benson) is saying the vital means of access to life have been constricted or blocked... But the failure is less a moral flaw than a failure of vision."

Martin Smith of Cowley, 1977

(Quotation supplied by A.K. Clarke, 1978)

The Nature Of The Proposed Enterprise

This present half-century, and, in particular, this present decade, requires the emergence of a new kind of philosophical activity. This new activity is that of engaging in profound metaphysical speculation, in order to gain some greater and newer light on older, metaphysical "deep things", while remaining philosophically self-conscious about what you are doing when you are doing this. So, to engage in this new type of philosophic activity, you have to think in two ways at the same time; because you have to think both about the nature of the "deep things" of reality themselves; and you also have to observe yourself thinking about these same "deep things".

Obviously, this is difficult. But it is also necessary. For only by doing this can we bring back together the two now rapidly diverging current philosophic trends of our time, so that each enriches and illuminates the other, instead of, as now, each destroying, or, at the least, lessening the value of the other.

On the other hand, "grass roots philosophy", which originated mainly twenty years ago among the young people of the counter-culture, is now spreading everywhere, and is gaining in depth and sophistication month by month; it cannot possibly be ignored any longer by the academic establishment. And that fact must, in the end,

affect the thinking which is done in such a place as this Abbey. For the objective of the counter-culture's "grass roots philosophy" is nothing less than an attempt to "Westernise" ancient Eastern metaphysical ideas in order to form a new basis for comparative religion. And, granted always that the new basis for comparative religion has not been established yet nevertheless, if and when it does become established—if you like, in so far as it succeeds in establishing itself—it will, by its nature, supersede doctrine-based theologies deriving from particular faiths. For—as is already, in some Universities, starting to occur—comparative religion will then become the primary study, and that of the doctrinal basis of any one faith both dependent on it, and also secondary to it.

This is one contemporary philosophic trend: deeply metaphysical, and far more interesting, by its nature, than over-abstract academic metaphysics, but liable to deteriorate easily into fantasy or science-fiction.

The other current philosophical trend comes from within professional philosophy and, more particularly, from within the philosophy of mathematics and the philosophy of science. It consists in the study of conceptual frameworks; and its aim is, not by general discursive discourse, but by establishing exact techniques of analysis and by constructing mathematical models of fundamental forms of thinking, to enable thinkers to become self-conscious about the kinds of thinking which they themselves do. The new development of this already traditional philosophical capacity is one of the intellectual glories of this whole century; and when you consider as well the enormous concurrent development of non-numerical mathematics and its effect on our notions of science (the result of which is, that to say that science is only about measuring things is now to be totally out of date, and indeed to assert an almost abandoned idea); and, further again, when you consider the worldwide practical application of this same conceptual framework construction in designing and using computers and micro-processors, it becomes clear that, in achieving this new and fundamental increase in self-consciousness, the philosophers and mathematicians have led us into nothing less than a kind of fifth-century B.C.: namely, into a period which will be remembered as one of supreme intellectual excellence as long as any kind of culture lasts.

Nevertheless, this second philosophic trend also easily deteriorates into making oversimplified and emasculated models instead of real ones.

So, the general suggestion which I want to make in this lecture is that we make a first effort to combine the excellence of these two trends. I cannot, in one hour, do much: it would take a whole three-year course of study, starting with a year on the foundations of differing Eastern systems of metaphysics, really to make an adequate start on this. But I think I can make a start on making a start. And, partly because I am lecturing within the precincts of this Abbey, where both my own metaphysical roots, and those of my father, Charles Masterman, originally belonged,³⁴ and partly for deeper reasons, which will emerge at the end of the lecture, I am going to make a start on this from within a Christian setting, not an Eastern one, by thinking about the Christian doctrine of the Eternal Logos.

There is the stronger need for doing this in that consideration of the doctrine of the Eternal Logos has all but vanished from the Christian world,—to such an extent that it makes one exceedingly unpopular even to suggest bringing it up for reconsideration.³⁵ To re-

³⁴ My titular family connection with the Abbey consists in the fact that, as the records will show, I was christened in St.Faith's, by Dean Armlitage Robinson, sometime in the summer of 1910: that my parents were married in St.Margaret's, I think in 1908; and that a generation earlier, as I believe, my maternal grandparents were married in Henry VII's chapel. But the real connection is that my father, Charles Masterman, for a time lived here: he was one of "Gore's young men". And only a few weeks ago an unpublished fragment has come to light among his papers which both describes Gore preaching and the intellectual excitement of Gore's stand about the necessity and primacy of philosophy in understanding Christianity; and also the strong stand being taken at the Abbey and St. Paul's in those days against the black social evils of that time; and lastly, what it felt like to go on a holiday with Gore.

My own connection with Gore was that, at the age of 20, as a Cambridge undergraduate, I read his *Bellef In God* trilogy, and thought there were gaps in the argument—as indeed there are: and I wrote him a fierce letter to tell him so. He replied: "Delighted to hear from you, come to tea instantly", which I did: we made friends, and, later, it was through coming to supper with my mother and myself that he caught the cold from which he eventually died.

So, in spite of the fact that the ecclesiastical world is not my world: that two weeks ago, for instance, in company with some computer specialists, I was whirled round and round the Abbey on a Sunday and it was all nothing to do with me, and nothing to do either with any scientific professional in this century—yet in another way it is right that, only two weeks later, it should be I who gives the Gore lecture here: since the argument of it concludes, from my side, the argument which Charles Gore and I left unfinished 45 years ago.

Charles Gore, I hope you're listening: astrally.

³⁵ I have found, by experience, that to suggest that the Athanasian doctrine of the Eternal Logos should be reconsidered in this century immediately alienates very nearly (though not quite) everybody I meet. The philosophic world, if it hears about this at all, will say, "Your general suggestion of making philosophic models of deep trends of ancient mystical and metaphysical thinking, this suggestion is indeed a timely and good one; but, in order to exemplify it, must you retreat into the most primitive and obscure part of one particular, now widely discredited, faith?" My acquaintances from the counter-culture, if they have heard rumours that I was here now to meet them, would either just not come or, having come, would plain walk out, saying "Christian propaganda again: we thought as much". About the Anglican and Catholic professional worlds I know, from personal contact, much less: but from what I read, and judging from recent Synod decisions, they seem to me to have become Arians almost to a man, and I myself, hidden within the computer world, must be about the last Athanasian left in the Church.

My reason for this feeling of neo-Athanasian loneliness, though, is easier to refer to than philosophically to describe. For we are now confronted, within Christendom, by a set of regressive and superstitious deteriorations which are worse, by far, than anything that Arius

state the matter theologically, Athanasian thinking has vanished; Arianism has invaded Christendom to such an extent that it has now become the norm. Now, one reason for this disappearance of the authentic and deeper tradition is that Athanasian Trinitarian thinking is held to be, by common consent, difficult thinking; and it is precisely over this matter of elucidating and illuminating the nature and scope of difficult forms of thinking that contemporary philosophical skills and practices can help so much. So not only are there broad cultural reasons for bringing these skills to bear so as to model and re-analyse comparatively all metaphysical foundations; there are current urgent Christian reasons for doing this as well, within Christianity.

These current urgent Christian reasons are twofold; or rather, for me, two stand out as more important than the rest. As soon as you begin looking at Christianity from a little further off—that is, from a comparative religion standpoint, instead of from a doctrinal one—it becomes clear that it is just because it has generated this kind of Athanasian "Trinitarian vision" that Christianity differs from the other contemplation-based world faiths. In an earlier publication³⁶ I have argued the case for saying that, in another variant, Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism possesses this vision also. But broad and large, in its extreme and corporate Christian form, this Athanasian doctrine is quite certainly unique: and also highly original, as I hope to show. And therefore, just because it is original to one faith as against other faiths, it is the kind of metaphysical doctrine which has got to be right

himself ever thought of. Arius, after all, denied the existence of the Eternal Logos as being anything distinct from the nature of the deified hero, Christ. But he did not deny, as well, the existence of the ineffable Godhead. Now we have Christians who deny both Logos and Godhead; and who have therefore only male, white physical characteristics left to give them the configuration of Divinity. Instead, therefore, of divinising humanity's potential by drawing it up, in imagination, to the infinite, omnipotent, unknowable Godhead, they "squash down" the Godhead in their minds in order to identify it with the physiques and characteristics of the heroes and heroines deified by the folklore of some region or century.

In the Greece of the Fathers this led to a concrete polytheism. In the 19th century it led to what was in practice idolatrous worship of the white British or, in this century in Nazi Germany, of the "Aryan" race. Now what is rampant is the most primitive superstition of all, since it cuts deep enough to exclude half the human race from spiritual equality. For Christian worship of the physical characteristics of a Mangod, with no balancing conception of the Eternal Logos to universalise it, or of the unknowable Godhead to spiritualise it, is causing all those Christians who do not share the Mangod's physiological characteristics, (or rather, do not fully share them), namely all women, to be considered both liturgically and in practice, inadequate in body, spirit, mind and soul.

This deterioration into superstition is half the story. But what causes, above all, neo-Athanasian loneliness is that the remedy for this state of affairs is not what the liberals think it is. For the right thing to do is not to "squash down" Divinity yet further by saying, "And anyhow the whole Mangod thing is only folklore". The right thing to do, on the contrary, is to recover and develop a full, mystically-based Christian metaphysics, to form a complete and proper Christian conceptual background to the contemplative life; and to combine this with intensive and prolonged investigation of the fact "at the limit of experience and of experiment", in order to give the metaphysics a scientific foreground.

³⁶ Margaret Masterman, *Integrity in the Religious Quest*, Modern Churchman's Conference, 1976, Lecture II, (*Modern Churchman*, Vol.21, No.4 1978).

or wrong. Otherwise, unless it really asserts something which is important and true, if what it asserts differs from what all other faiths assert, when seen against a comparative religious background, there is no reason for asserting it at all. Just because of its uniqueness, this innovation will go by default and vanish—as, indeed, it is already, within Christendom, tending to vanish—unless somebody makes a successful attempt to see what lies behind it.

So, my first reason for re-examining Athanasian Trinitarian thinking is because of its profound originality. The second reason is that it is the only form of statement of Christian doctrine which either explains or justifies Christianity's claim to be inclusive and universal. For the common, popularised, (Arianised) form of this claim—to the effect that Yeshua of Nazareth was the whole world's only "Divine Incarnation," that he was not only "an incarnation", but "the Incarnation", in the sense in which an incarnation works miracles, heals the sick, trains disciples, forgives sins, raises the dead and himself or herself is judged to have power over life and death, this claim is quite demonstrably untrue.³⁷ No one fact about the human being Jesus of Nazareth was unique; though it is also true that the facts about him quite likely are facts. For, outside Divinity Faculties, evidence for the essential veridicalness and good faith of the Gospel documents is now piling up on all sides, so much and so fast, that the counter-culture now speaks of "evidence up to the level of that of the Christian gospels". But this very evidence which shows that the Gospel events could have occurred shows also that every fact about the human being Yeshua of Nazareth has at least one counterpart: and therefore destroys Christianity's claim to universality. What, by its very nature, and in the strong sense required, is unique and universal—that is, of course, if it connects with reality at all—is the Logos. It is not such things as Yeshua's return from beyond clinical death, nor even the stunning subsequent apparitions of his resurrection; nor the general development of Christianity en gros; nor the phenomenon constituted by the lives of saints and martyrs: none of these have the kind of uniqueness which the claim requires. What does have it is the assertion of the eternal Logos, and of the Christian apprehension of that Logos. For, by the nature of the case, the Logos is one and universal, and it is the only thing peculiar to Christianity which is also universal: so that if reality is such that there is in fact no Logos, and that the Christian apprehension of its existence is therefore a hallucination, Christianity's claim to universality is false.

³⁷ Margaret Masterman, *ibid*, Lecture 1. (*Modern Churchman*, Vol. 20, No.4, 1977). See also, on this, John Moody, *Life after Life*, (1974) which is a study of accounts given by a number of people who, by the use of new techniques of resuscitation, have been brought back from beyond clinical death: i.e. have "resurrected".

So I think there is urgent reason to re-examine this deep piece of thinking. The question which now arises is not only what would it be like to examine it; but also, (the heart of this matter) what would it be like, metaphysically, philosophically, scientifically, for the doctrine of the eternal Logos to be true?

What it would be like metaphysically would be for the statements which elucidate it to point so strongly to some deep feature of reality that exploration of this could then proceed further, even if the initial metaphysical statements were "against common sense".

What it would be like, philosophically, would be for these same statements to become sufficiently comprehensible and coherent for it to be possible to construct some sort of simulation, or "model" of what the doctrine says, so that this model could be substituted for ancient credal statements, such as those in the Athanasian Creed, which consist only of a long string of apparent paradoxes.

What it would be like scientifically would be for a sufficient similarity to emerge between some real features of the doctrine, and their effects, and some real situations which can occur under certain circumstances within science, and their effects, for the scientific situation to throw light on the metaphysical one. For the emergence of such a similarity would help us to see—and it is the only thing which would help us see—what it would be like for the Athanasian doctrine to evolve and develop further, within the climate of contemporary thought.

Let us take the last requirement, the scientific one, first. The scientific circumstances which cause the kinds of things to happen which also, in the third to fifth centuries, produced the forms of thought of Athanasian Trinitarianism, are those of a science which is in an "explanatory crisis". An explanatory crisis is the conceptual crisis which occurs when, within the field of any science, thinking gets to the very boundaries of thought itself. When this same situation sets in, in fundamental exploratory metaphysics, though everything there is far looser than it is in actual science, nevertheless, the very fact that there is a looser counterpart here of explanatory crisis as it occurs within a science makes what is happening in the metaphysical case far easier to understand; it is clear, for instance, that the counterpart of an explanatory crisis was what Athanasius was struggling with, and that he and his successors were not just stringing paradoxes together for the fun of it.

Next, and to make clearer that all this is so, a coherent and comprehensible model has got to be made of what Athanasius was in

fact saying,—which means here, of course, what he really meant;³⁸ though such a model, being metaphysical, will be far further off from empirical reality than a scientific model would be. I have made such a model. It is in the handout.

Once we have seen here what is happening to thought in crisis: and when we have seen further, with the help of the model, what can be done to push the boundaries of thinking just a little further back, then we can use more colloquial and descriptive forms of exposition to assist us, in the light of the model, to apply it to look again, and in more detail, at facts in the world. We will need, of course, to take a long hard deep look at the world, not a superficial one; a look guided, Athanasianwise, by the Gospel narrative, but not, this time round, wholly dominated by it. For we would at that stage have to ask, "If reality, contrary to accepted appearances, is indeed subject to the rhythmic or arrhythmic effects of the action of an eternal Logos—in so far, that is, (thought being here in crisis), that we can succeed in thinking at all about this Logos—what kinds of traces could this eternal action leave?"

As I have already complained earlier, it must be evident that I have not got time, within one lecture, to do all this. The study of the nature of an explanatory crisis within a science would, in itself, occupy a sizeable sequence of seminars. The elucidation, also of the mathematical model of the Trinity which you have before you, in the hand-out, and its similarities and dissimilarities with the actual thought of St. Athanasius, could likewise, without excess of the time

³⁸ Athanasius did not think of himself as an innovator, but regarded himself as thinking about the Nicene Creed, which he took to be the most satisfying and acceptable attempt to word what he found in the Scriptures.

"The Nicene Creed was not, for him, something to be accepted and then given no further thought, but to be the basis of the most searching reasoned reflection.

"He had to give an answer, not only to the Arians, for whom the Son was a creature, but to those who said that the human Jesus was an illusion, a necessary representation of a human being but with no substantial existence; and to those who said, on the other hand, that he had existed from all eternity and entered the world from this pre-existence, which was co-eternal with the Godhead.

"Athanasius on his side asserts uncompromisingly the reality and normality of the human Jesus, who exhibited 'flesh and blood and a soul in pain and agitation and distress'. 'But in that body which was circumcised and carried about, and which ate and drank, and laboured, and was nailed to the tree, and suffered, there dwelt the impassible and incorporeal Word of God.'" (*Letter to Epictetus*). The complete union of the two is cardinal to his thought. "Those who divide the Word from the flesh say that there has not taken place any redemption from sin." (*Letter to Adelphius*) This is his ground for the offering of worship to Jesus Christ.

"He uses 'Son' freely in two ways: as a 'picture' description of the Eternal Logos in relation to the Father: and of the 'new man', taken up into total union with the Logos, Jesus Christ.

"He is quite aware of immense ranges of activity which belong to the Logos, as 'maker of all things'. But his concern is with the redemptive work, directed to the human race." (Note contributed by A.K. Clarke, 1978. A.K. Clark has been my consultant on contemplation, neo-Platonism, the Greek Fathers and the classical languages; but should not be held responsible for any of the views here expressed.)

being spent on it, occupy another sequence of seminars, so that, to start with, I have got to assume that you who are here already know the ordinary forms of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Things here and now being as they are, I will have to rush rapidly through, or, alas, more likely, skate rapidly over, both these matters, to keep time to give some sort of final description of what the actual effects of the action of the Logos, on the world as we observe it around us, might be.

A Mathematical Model Of A Piece Of Thought In Crisis

In current philosophy, discussion in general of what science gets like in times of crisis is associated with a seminal book, published in 1964, called The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, by Thomas S. Kuhn. But long before this, in 1927, the physicist P.W. Bridgeman wrote a philosophic book, The Logic of Modern Physics, which examined the nature of the conceptual and experimental crisis with one particular science, namely physics, in far more detail than Kuhn ever did, and far more philosophically. The argument of the book is a tangled one,³⁹ since Bridgeman digresses all the time to muse, fascinatingly, upon the conceptual and experimental shocks which were battering to pieces the whole physicists' world. Nevertheless, when the argument of the book is re-constructed, the central notion of it comes out as that of an explanatory crisis; and of the signs when you can know, in any science, that an explanatory crisis has begun to occur.

³⁹ P.W. Bridgeman, The Logic of Modern Physics, London, (Macmillan), 1927.

The reason that the argument of this book is tangled is that it goes in reverse. Thus Bridgeman starts, (p.viii) with the notion of extending experience to its utmost limits, and therefore having to extend also the limits of our thinking, while remaining open always to the possibility of being confronted with totally new experience. After several digressions into the theory of relativity and the thought of Newton he then (mis)identifies "meaning" with verifiable experimental description, notes (p.7) that this identification will bring physical speculation to a full stop, and softens, without modifying, his position, which he reasserts on pp. 30-32. His assertion that, at the limit of experiment concepts become hazy, is on p. 16; that they fuse, on p.20; that they split, on p.21; each insight arising out of discussion of one case. Unsurprisingly, therefore, having started thus, he reasserts the tendency of concepts of fusion (p.24), to haziness, (p.25), to "become relativised or context-bound (i.e. to split) (pp.25-29). He then, starting on p.33, discusses the variability of our concept of explanation, when thought is in crisis, without ever having created the idea of thought being in crisis; and notes again that, if all significant statements are to be referred back to experimental descriptions, not only new physical speculation but also, and especially, further extrapolation of mechanical hypotheses become inadmissible, from now on; since such extrapolations merely push thought further and further into crisis. And then AT LAST, starting on p.42, he gets to establishing the notion of an explanatory crisis, with which, philosophically speaking, his whole trend of thought should have started, though without ever properly saying what such a crisis is.

All this happens because Bridgeman is an experimentalist, who thinks by gaining insight into individual physical situations. (Always go to the writings of the experimentalists, when you want to get to know about science). But the accusation, made by many, that Bridgeman was also a dyed-in-the-wool materialist, is totally false. Listen to this (p.46 et seq. and also pp.206-208): "It is difficult to conceive anything more scientifically bigotted than to postulate that all experience conforms to the same type as that with which we are already familiar, and therefore to demand that explanation use only elements familiar in everyday experience. Such an attitude bespeaks an unimaginativeness, a mental obtuseness and obstinacy, which might be expected to have exhausted their pragmatic justification at a lower level of mental activity..." I believe many will discover in themselves a longing for mechanical explanation which has all the tenacity of original sin.... nevertheless, just as the old monks struggled to subdue the flesh, so must the physicist struggle to subdue this sometimes nearly irresistible, but perfectly unjustifiable desire".... (A mechanical explanation is an attempt to make the universe simple.) (But) "This is perhaps a particularly favourable epoch in the history of physics to urge the essential complexity of nature..."

Such an explanatory crisis begins to occur, says Bridgeman, when two things happen at the same time: when, first, experiment has reached its utmost limits, either in the sphere of the very large or the sphere of the very small; and, as well, when the fact which are coming in at these limits of experiment, are so different from the customary experimental facts, which have proved true, up to now, of the physicists' ordinary world, that our whole vision of the ordinary world breaks down. In such a situation, says Bridgeman, when we try to push out our customary ways of thinking (which, of course, for him were mathematical ways of thinking) to cover the new, totally unexpected situation, the following conceptual phenomena occur:

- 1) Concepts which should differ from one another collapse on top of one another, so that they come to mean the same thing:
- 2) Relations which should contrast with one another fuse with one another, so that the whole physical picture becomes over-simplified:
- 3) When an attempt to correct this state of affairs, by reconnecting the now over-simplified structure with detailed experiment, the reconnected concepts "split in two", so that you do not know any more which of the two resulting concepts gives you the right meaning—or indeed whether either of the two do:
- 4) The whole experimental application of the structure becomes hazy. You do not know what an object is any more, what an environment, or field, is any more. All you can do is give largely colloquial descriptions of extraordinary experiments, the result of which do not fit in with anything else which you have thought to be true up to now:

In Short, An Explanatory Crisis Has Set In.

Bridgeman's recommendations for getting out of the crisis, and which founded a whole new school of philosophy of science, called Operationalism, have turned out, a generation later, not to work. They were that, until new concepts turned up, all thinking should stop: for, since the crisis had shown that extrapolation from the old concepts just would not do any more, the only "meanings", by which Bridgeman meant, the only genuinely significant remarks, which could survive in physics as it had then become were detailed descriptions of actual physical operations: and therefore, from now on, all other forms of physical argument should count as meaningless. Now this was too drastic, in that it forbade anyone who was suggesting a new physical development, or exploring a new physical analogy, to so much as open his mouth: and physicists just would not put up with this. But with hindsight we can see that there was indeed some sense in it for

now, fifty years later, the whole current new theory of black holes in the universe so drastically shaped by "experiments" which have been carried out, through the years, by space-travellers, that gravitation is now considered a merely local accident, and the unit of motion is now an astronaut in free fall.⁴⁰

Now I think that it can be assumed from the start, once we move from Bridgeman's physics to Athanasius' metaphysics, that what Athanasius was confronted with was a metaphysical counterpart of just such an explanatory crisis; and that his greatness consisted in having been the only man of his time who was aware of the extent that this was so. For consider what was happening to his concepts: Father, Son, Paraclete, these were all separate concepts; and yet they were all falling on, and fusing with, one another. And the contrasting relations between them, of identity, equality, primacy: were these relations really in contrast, or were they, on the contrary, the same relation? Moreover, when Athanasius tried to repair this situation, by reiterating different versions of it in his writings, one after another, in paradoxes, his concepts split. What are you to do, for instance, with all the meanings of such a concept as "persona"—"aspect", "mask", "person", "personification"? Lastly, and in spite of his central attempt to "nail down" by application of his whole vision to reality by welding it, as it were, to the sequence of facts about the human Yeshua of Nazareth, in fact the whole application of the whole thing kept going hazy—each new type of haziness producing a new Council—until the whole question of what really applied to what largely ceased to make sense any more; and understanding of the whole underlying Athanasian metaphysical trend in Christianity—that is, of Christianity's own peculiar Mystery, faded away.

I want to revive it: and, if we are to take our cue from Bridgeman, what is to be done? What is to be done—that is, if Bridgeman's advice is to be followed—is that, the whole situation being extraordinary, we should wait for new concepts in which to describe it to appear, instead of uselessly continuing to try to extrapolate from the old ones. And the thing I want to say now is that, contrary to all expectation, and a millennium later, some new concepts in which to describe, at least in part, the Athanasian vision, have appeared.

My reason for saying this can be seen by looking at the handout. For, in the early nineteenth-century, there appeared in Nottingham, right outside the mathematical establishment, a very great philosopher and mathematician, George Boole. And not only, as is well known, did George Boole found modern mathematics; as well, as is much less

⁴⁰ Christopher Clarke, *Black Holes*, (*Theoria to Theory*, 12, 4); Christopher Isham, *Quantum Gravity*, (*ibid.*..).

well known, he was a religious contemplative with a great devotion to the Trinity: indeed, he wrote a sonnet to the number Three. Moreover, according to mathematical tradition, when he perceived, when going on a walk in the fields, the whole analogy between algebra and logic upon which the great generality of Boolean algebra is founded, he is said to have cried out—as he also did again when he was dying—"Thy Word, O Lord, is established for ever in heaven," which signified for him the ultimacy and excellence of mathematical truth.⁴¹

The story is a long one: but, to cut it short here, the very general relation upon which Boolean systems are founded, and which has turned out to be fundamental equally in mathematics, in reality and in computing, is the "partial ordering" relation, otherwise called "the inclusion relation", or, "the relation of being greater than or equal to", which, to an extent, pictures the interconnections, (I say "to an extent" because you cannot picture a full Boolean algebra in a geometrical diagram) between the nodes in the Trinitarian schemata which are in the handout. And—this is my point—this very same relation was the relation discerned by Athanasius and the others a full thousand years earlier: "equal to the Father as concerning his Godhead: inferior to the Father as concerning his Manhood". Moreover, the Early Father apprehended also, though for mystical reasons, not mathematical ones, that this same relation was fundamental in reality—which indeed it has now turned out, and in more ways than one, to be.

So working from within a situation of thought in crisis, which had arisen because the facts which this thought was trying to describe were at the very limits of human experience and experiment, and so quite different from the sorts of facts which we in our day-to-day experience ordinarily meet, the Early Fathers evolved what was, in fact, a fundamental new conceptual relation to give the most general description they could of those same facts: namely, that of being "greater than or equal to". And now, thanks to the mystical vision of another (and also Trinitarian) Christian contemplative, the kind of system can be constructed which the handout shows.

⁴¹ William C. Kneale, *Boole and the Revival of Logic*, *Mind*, N.S., vol. CLVII, No. 226, April 1948. See also the reference of *Theoria to Theory* 3, 1 at the bottom of the handout. The Catholics make a claim that the Christian magisterium can never fail, because, when it errs, God will always send another supernatural revelation, to correct it. Well, yes; if they will also admit that, in order to do this, the Spirit, by passing alike both the Curia and the clerisy—not to mention the mathematical establishment of the University of Cambridge—caused at once the mantle of St. Athanasius to come to rest, and also modern mathematics to be founded by, a self-taught Anglican mathematician, George Boole.

The Rhythm And The Arrow: The Concrete Action Of The Eternal Logos In The World

However, in this century the question still arises as to how to develop neo-Athanasian insight further; and above all, since, through having made the schema, we are now in ultra-abstract metaphysics, how to perform the counterpart of reconnecting the schema with the facts. And here again, with science again in mind, we can see that several things have to be done. The first is to face that these facts in question both are and always will be at the very limits of experience. The second is to get new and dynamic analogies to describe them—in other words, not only to rely, for a neo-Athanasian description of reality, just on the defining relation of one static, though indeed also fundamental, mathematical domain. And the third is to keep on bearing in mind, from first to last, that, in describing these facts, we are always going to be working from within a situation of thought in crisis—which means that the new analogies are as liable to go wrong on us as the old ones were, unless we are very careful indeed not to push them too far.

To take an example: if, starting from the schema, we say that we are going to try to develop the sub-lattice with points S,W,C,E, what are we going to say that these points are? Are they components, are they trends, are they strands of reality, what are they? We are thrown right back into a state of thought in crisis, where everything means the same as everything else. So we have got to make a fresh start in our thinking, by using a more suggestive analogy.

I shall suggest that we use the analogy of a rhythm: and, to supplement that, the analogy of an arrow. But before that, returning for the last time to Athanasius, it is necessary to remind ourselves of two things. The first is that (obviously) Athanasius' thinking was only in part particular to himself, and his fellow Trinitarians: since they were Bishops in what was then a deeply contemplative community. The second is that the "facts right at the limit of experience" which he was dealing with, were not only the prototypic Gospel narrative facts. In his century particularly, they were, and were known to be, potentially eternal and universal facts. For not only had he a strong (though turbulent) mystical tradition on which to draw, and a high metaphysical neo-Platonic climate of thought within which to think, but also a number of contemporary reports of extreme facts to handle, from which he could generalise, and which he could also send out people to investigate. For this was the time when there was becoming established within Christendom a positive "laboratory of extreme facts", comparable to those in the Gospels, reports of which kept

coming back to Alexandria from the hermitages of Egyptian and Syrian deserts.

We now in this century, are in a situation which is curiously both like and unlike his. Intellectually, medically, and yes, in some ways politically, we have progressed beyond him: mystically and spiritually, our culture has fallen back far below the level of his. But we have now in the world the counterpart of the Egyptian desert, in the Zen monasteries of Japan, for instance, and in the hermitages of Tibet and the Himalayas; and in the scientists, such as John Lilley, of the counter-culture;⁴² not to mention such Christian places and people as the Catholic Carmels, and Thomas Merton, and Mount Athos. And, nearer home in the West, to increase our self-consciousness, we have our own great novelists.

More than one of these, as is well known, has been preoccupied with what they would probably call "redemptive self-sacrificial activity". But the man who has devoted his life to this, both because experience of it was forced upon him, and later by predilection, is that prototypic novelist and metaphysical scientist of our century, Arthur Koestler.

As a novelist, and also as a social force, Koestler's pre-eminence is universally acknowledged: as a scientist inquiring into the depths of the nature of man, he is grossly underrated. This is partly because, whereas he thinks he is a theorist, talking of holons and suchlike, he is in reality a heaven-sent observer, experimentalist and investigator. But the underrating of Arthur Koestler's work is also partly due to the fact that people just cannot bear to face up to the truth of what he says. Again, as in the case of George Boole, the story is a long one: but, again, cutting it short here, Koestler, in my view, not only states, but also establishes, three points about human states and actions at the limit of experience. The first of these is that the ultimate state of redemptive self-sacrifice is not a state of dereliction, but a state of joy. ("Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross..") Secondly, that the social and political impact of action which genuinely arises from this ultimate state of joy—shown in circumstances, such as under torture and just before judicial execution, in which it would seem impossible to have joy—is, and on a deep level, universal and world-shaking. Such action, is the only "pure" and basic agent of real social change for the better; and, when total, it procures for its originator a "total glory".⁴³ In Koestler's own

⁴² J. C. Lilley, *The Centre of the Cyclone* (Paladin, 1974)

John Lilley was an established scientist who subjected himself to total sensory deprivation coupled with L.S.D., thus both stimulating, and also very nearly incurring, the process of death.

⁴³ The three works in which Arthur Koestler centrally considers this matter are:

case—and Koestler would not put himself high on the list of the world's redeemers—it made him write, working from one death-cell, one concentration camp, and one prison, his key novel, *Le Zéro et L'Infini*, which, among many other world effects, played a big part in making a French Government fall. In Yeshua of Nazareth's case—well, to get a basis for comparison, ask the conservative Rabbis of Mea Shearim who, even now, will only refer to him as "that man". In Solzhenitzyn's case—and so we go on.

The third point which Koestler, I think, has established—and which such counterclaims as that in Sargent's *Battle for the Mind* do almost nothing to shake, since Sargent himself plainly just "has not been there"—is that this redemptive, world-shaking, "passionistic" action and joy cannot, when you really investigate it, be reduced to anything else. It is ultimate, and it is *sui generis*.⁴⁴ And this strong

(1) the second version of his autobiographical account of the contemplative experiences which he had when under sentence of death; *The Invisible Writing*, (1954: Danube edition, 1969).

(2) his first novel written in English, *Arrival and Departure* (1956: Danube edition, 1966.)

(3) his essay on the posthumously published letters of the airman Richard Hillary.

But preoccupation with the central theme of the existence of evil and how, at the deepest level, to combat it shows through all the work written in his maturity.

In *The Invisible Writing*, the sequence of inner events started with a new peace which he found when he accepted that his condemnation, this time, had been just. In the death-cell "I had hours of acute despair, but these were hours, and in between were entire days of a newly discovered peace and happiness.... the craving for justice is more than a product of rational considerations.... It is rooted in layers of the psyche a pragmatic or hedonistic psychology cannot penetrate...."

This new type of experience was led up to by Koestler recalling, in his cell, Euclid's proof that the number of prime numbers is infinite. This "filled him with an enchantment,".... "a deep satisfaction that was aesthetic rather than intellectual".... "And then, "... I suddenly understood the reason for this enchantment: the scribbled symbol on the wall represented one of the rare cases where a meaningful and comprehensive statement about the infinite is arrived at by precise and finite means.... The significance of this swept over me like a wave..... This wave had originated in an articulate verbal insight; but this evaporated at once, leaving in its wake only a wordless essence, a fragment of eternity, a quiver of the arrow in the blue. I must have stood there for some minutes, entranced, with a sudden awareness that 'this is perfect, perfect'; until I noticed some slight mental discomfort nagging at the back of my mind—some trivial circumstance that marred the perfection of the moment. Then I remembered the nature of that irrelevant annoyance: I was, of course, in prison, and might be shot. But this was immediately answered by a feeling whose verbal translation would be: 'So what? Is that all? Have you got nothing more serious to worry about?—an answer (as) spontaneous, fresh and amused as if the intruding annoyance had been the loss of a collar-stud. Then I was floating on my back in a river of peace, under bridges of silence. It came from nowhere and flowed nowhere. Then there was no river and no "I". The "I" had ceased to exist...."

⁴⁴ *Arrival and Departure* is the story of a young revolutionary who, with a record of heroic resistance to torture behind him, has a breakdown once he gets to neutral territory, and arrives on the couch of a woman Freudian psychoanalyst who convinces him (and the reader) that his so-called "idealism" is only a projection of sex-ridden, guilt-ridden early childhood experiences. So, he abandons idealism; he decides to save himself while he can, and to sail for America and a secure, comfortable future. But, the night before leaving he has a dream, of a rusty crusader who presents him with a cross which he takes, knowing that by taking it he "offers himself for sacrifice." So, at the last moment, triggered by the sight of an old comrade, he walks off the ship, and offers himself to the British authorities for a second, dangerous mission, on which the reader is given to think that he will be killed, but will create

assertion of Koestler's also reminds us of the Athanasian credal statement, to the effect that in such states it is not Divinity which is humanised but humanity which is divinised.

In this century, however, we must not only go back, we must also, like Koestler, go forward; and try to look at the world in depth, as it really is. And it is at this point also, therefore, that I want to look at it with the help of the analogies of the rhythm and of the arrow.

There are, also, lesser analogies which we can use to think about aspects of this matter dynamically. One such is the analogy between mystical development and biological growth; ("contemplation is a biological activity, but it is growth, not sex.")⁴⁵ Also it is necessary to become self-conscious about what it is to use an analogy not statically, but dynamically.⁴⁶ But we need to go further towards the boundaries of thinking than this, because we need to think not about any merely human activity but about the Eternal Logos. And it is for that reason that I suggest we use the analogy of a rhythm. Imagine a totally fundamental, unbelievably strong, creative-and-recreative (i.e. redemptive) irregularly acting, (i.e. tessellated) rhythm. It has to be irregular, because its action manifests itself more in some places and at some moments and in some people than in others; and it needs to be separated from any connection with astronomy. For we are not talking

an underlying legend of heroism and glory. And from that moment of self-oblation, and for the first time in the story, he feels an acceptance and peace. The first time he had set out in ignorance of his reasons; this time he knew them, but understood that reasons do not matter so much. They are the shell around the core: and the core remains untouched, beyond the reach of cause and effect.

"He remembered his dream.... That had been the night of decision, when the other had won his victory—the other in his coat of mail, carrying the invisible cross. It could not be seen in the dark, it had lost its shape and substance, but although beyond touch and sight, it was there, he carried it with him in the hollow of his hand...."

⁴⁵ See, on this, scattered publications in *Theoria to Theory*.

⁴⁶ The suggestion being made here is that, as within widened science, so also within a mystically-based metaphysics, new insights should be gained, and knowledge of new facts brought to light, by a dynamic use of analogy. This suggestion is more original than it looks. Within metaphysics, and, in particular, within religious metaphysics, it is already known, granted, that all thinking is by analogy; but the analogy is all static analogy. Image is piled on image, and analogy on analogy; moreover, the shapes of the various analogies are then examined, so that you get 4-point analogies, 6-point analogies, 8-point analogies, and so on. But the analogies never move: they remain inert and stay put; they may be inspirational, but they are never investigative or predictive, or illuminative of any field of fact other than the field of fact from which they came. Consider the analogy of human paternity, when applied to God. You can develop this by saying, "God is our Father, therefore all men are brothers." But since you can "verify" this only by looking at the sameness of all human physiology, it becomes in the end, because it will not "move", not to mean much more than that human beings have indeed a common physique,—thus proving Bridgeman right.

Contrast this with the dynamic analogy between contemplative progress and a great spurt of psycho-somatic growth. This analogy, unlike the paternity one, "moves": you can find out all that is known about generalised growth seen as D'Arcy Thompson saw it, as "at once a process and a force", and then "move" what you know to see how much that is true about developmental growth is true of mystical growth; and this leads to the "discovery", or at any rate, the "bringing to light", of some very interesting facts indeed.

about a comparatively minor rhythm which has a solar, or a lunar, or some such cause; but of a basic rhythm which is itself a cause; and therefore we must abstract the conception of this rhythm from that of rhythms caused by solar system astronomy; I do not find it difficult, in imagination, to do this; partly because I think that the idea of rhythm is far more fundamental scientifically than we, as yet, realise.

However, the bare analogy of rhythm (and especially when stretched thus far) is not enough, because we are here talking about something corporate, not just something which irregularly manifests itself in individuals. So we superimpose upon the analogy of rhythm the analogy of the arrow: "an arrow flying down to and piercing and redeeming, the very depths of corporate evil in its fullest form—and corporate evil in its fullest form is absolutely lethal".⁴⁷ As soon as you superimpose this second analogy upon the first, the originality of what I suppose I should now call "The hypothesis of the existence of the Logos" becomes plain. For the thinking of that world which believes in the Logos not only believes in the existence of real evil, but also in the existence of real corporate evil; and further, it asserts that corporate evil, which occurs when evil is embodied and fixed and crystallised by stereotypy and custom until it is rendered near as nothing unalterable—this evil, as well as being evil in its fullest form, is evil which is deeper and more lethal than any evil which can be caused by, or perpetrated by, any one individual, however perverted or degraded he may be.

It is into this that the redemptive arrow of the Logos has got to go, to pierce it and to kill it and to redeem it; for, (as the Buddhists saw) this is the manifestation, in time, of the seventh, lowest hell: the hell of an accepted, common, basic, perverted schizophrenia...

As soon as you can attain this deep vision of the action of the arrow of the Logos, a great many consequences follow, which I myself can only with considerable tentativeness suggest. The first is that, by its very nature, the action of the corporate Logos, whether it manifests itself within the action of one individual or many, never supports the structure of the culture within which it occurs: on the contrary, it pierces not only right down into it, but also right through it, pointing the way to the shape or the culture which is to come. In other words, the action of the Logos, (i.e. of the sub-lattice dominated by point S on the schema, not of the whole lattice) though always supernatural, is also always subversive (and suddenly the whole Gospel narrative lights up). It is, recurrently, the middle road between two extremes; the extreme of callous revolutionary terrorism (see the

⁴⁷ Personal communication from A.K. Clarke, May, 1978, which I extended to bring in the corporate arrow, both social and mystical, of Arthur Koestler.

Gospel again); and the extreme of clerical, and bureaucratic, so-called "liberal", conformist apostasy; (i.e. the apostate state of having been once idealistic, but now having become soured—while remaining at all stages quite comfortably off; of sympathising easily, though privately, on the one hand, and on the other, when it comes to helping, not wanting to know; "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites...")

Here I can only cloudily discern and therefore faintly hint that, according to circumstances, it seems to me, the action of the Logos has stages. At its primitive stage, it takes practitioners physically away from their culture: Abraham leaves Ur, the fifth-century Greek and Egyptian Fathers make for the desert; the Pilgrim Fathers leave for America; and so on (and many die). At stage two, where the practitioners cannot just drop out of their culture and move away, you get a head-on clash: an individual, earth-shaking Passion, or a corporate one: where "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; and, of course, there have been many, many non-Christian cases of this, and anti-Christian cases (see Koestler on this), and there will be many more; for this is a world phenomenon. And, don't forget, for the action to be shown to have been supernatural, there has to be some counterpart of a resurrection: the new culture has, spiritually, got to get started: the improbable church, "the Logomorphic society" has got to be seen to be founded; the "peaceful state" of Quaker Pennsylvania has got to become established; and so on...

So much for stage two: but what about stage three? Stage three occurs when people have heard of the Logos: when they have paid lip-service to it, and when, to an extent, they have been genuinely impressed by it. What are the signs, what is the evidence, of the presence of the Logos-action then?

From this point on, I, as a philosopher, have no further knowledge than you of the action of the Logos. It seems to me that, as Christians, we all of us need to take Bridgeman's advice and follow Koestler's example, and familiarise ourselves with these new facts at the very limit of experience until we become thoroughly familiar with them; and that does not only mean the facts of the Gospel narrative.

I just don't know, though I badly want to find out. Let us speculate. Well, people with mental illness, and especially schizophrenics, get better. ("The blind receive their sight, the lame walk"; and indeed, increasingly often people do also get physically healed.)

The spiritual and social hierarchies are reversed, and do not underestimate the struggle of the last three Catholic popes to reverse them, as well as the genuine struggle, in Britain, to create a compassionate society; and what this has cost;⁴⁸ and the danger it is in now.

Then, people are suddenly seen to be friends, who were before thought of as inferiors: as inside a circle of colleagues, who were before thought of as, by their nature, outside.

Broad and large, about the action of the Logos (at stage three) you can say this: "The action of the Logos can be discerned, every time there is the genuine supernatural lifting of a limitation." (And I am assuming here that you fully know what is meant by "supernatural").

I don't want to go on about the action of the Logos at stage three. I want to conclude, as I began, as a philosopher, by re-stating the point which I earlier made, of the originality of embedding, within a corporate established religion, the hypothesis of the existence of the Logos. What it comes to is that Christianity has its own principle of corporate supernatural self-destruction built into it: and it is the only world religion which has this. Hence the "anxiety", the "guilt-riddenness", the "confusion", the "essential instability" of Christianity: all the things which more placid faiths reproach it for. Hence also the claim of the indefectibility of the Church: because, in so far as it is defectible, the Logos within it will pierce it, kill it and redeem it (and I think something like this is happening now). Of course, the action of the Logos is not confined within Christianity, nor, a great deal of the time, visible within it; as Dostoyevsky pointed out, Petrus may, and often has, become Caiaphas. The supernatural privilege of becoming incorporate in the Eternal Passion is a grace: it is (notoriously) not achieved by pietistic conventionality.

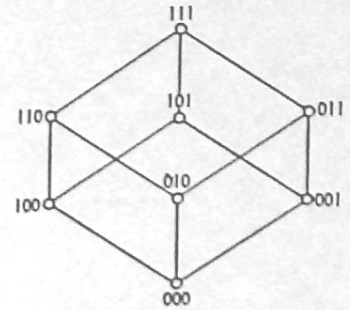
But, if it is there, Christianity is alone among faiths in the extent to which it has apprehended that it is there. And what a thing to apprehend!

It is as though, when building a high-rise building, you incorporated into its basement the very package of explosive which, if ignited, could totally destroy it in its present form; and then trained all the inhabitants of the building to be fire-raisers. What other faith, corporately speaking, does this?

⁴⁸ My father, Charles Masterman, once said to me when I was fifteen and we were walking along the road from the National Liberal Club: "You can get through any reform provided you remember that each reform costs one man his career". And the initiation of the Welfare State which was made, from his plans, after his own death, cost him his.

I am proud of this fact: and therefore I profess this faith, and not another.

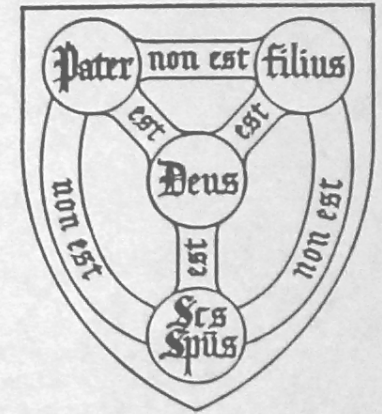
TRINITARIAN SCHEMA MAPPED ON A BOOLEAN LATTICE.



In this Lattice the Inclusion-Relations are:

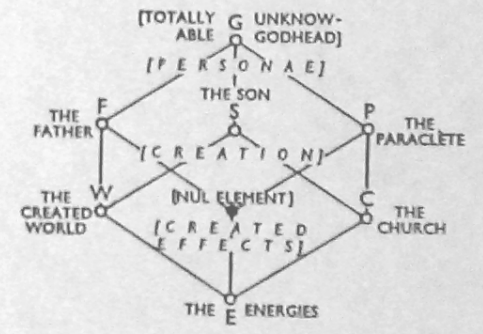
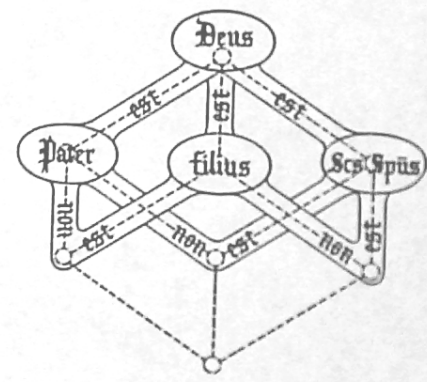
- 111 \cong 110 110 \cong 100 101 \cong 001, 100 \cong 000.
- 111 \cong 101 110 \cong 010, 011 \cong 010 010 \cong 000.
- 111 \cong 011, 101 \cong 100 011 \cong 001, 001 \cong 000.

where: $A \cong B$ is to be interpreted as: - A is greater than and/or equal to B.



1. Hasse Diagram of the Boolean Lattice of 8 Elements.

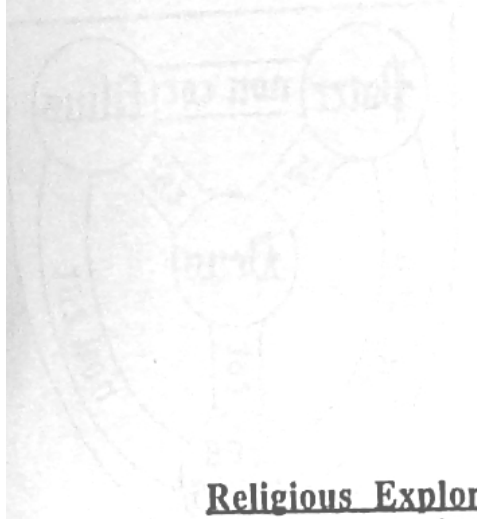
2. Trinitarian Schema from the Church of the Holy Trinity, Blythe, Suffolk.



3. The Schema in Diagram 2. Mapped on to the Lattice in Diagram 1.

4. Metaphysical Interpretation of Diagram 3.

For further exposition see Theoria to Theory, Vol. 1, No 3.



Religious Explorations contains a selection of religious writings by the late Margaret Masterman (Braithwaite). The volume has been compiled and printed for private circulation to her friends and colleagues as a memorial to her personal and challenging Christian philosophy.

