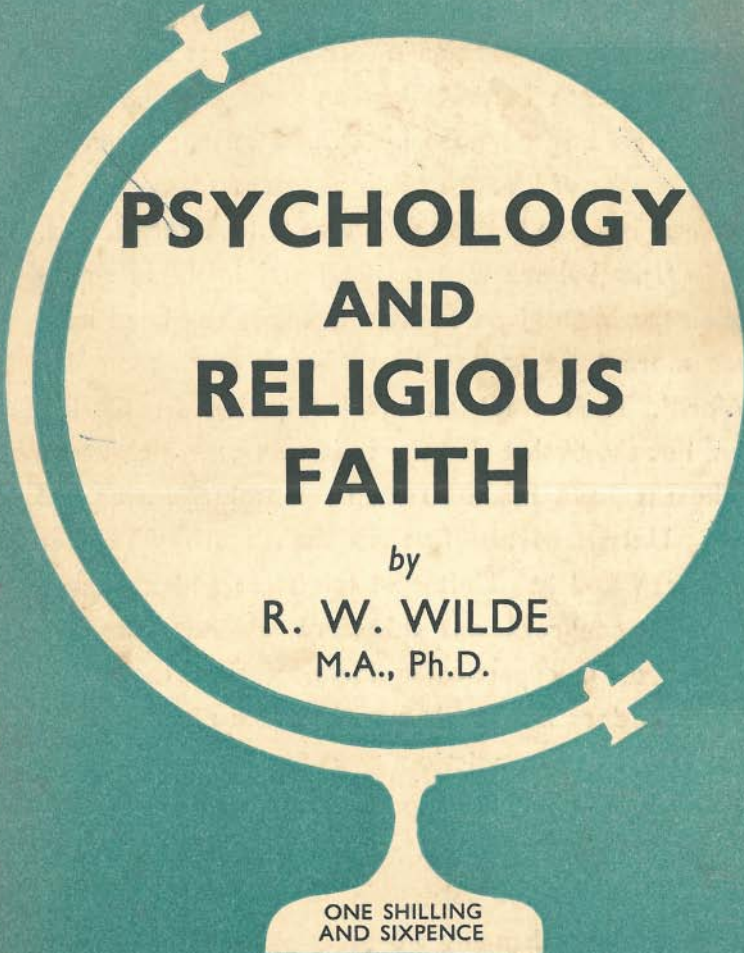


RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD:
UNITARIANS STATE THEIR FAITH

No. 16



**PSYCHOLOGY
AND
RELIGIOUS
FAITH**

by

R. W. WILDE
M.A., Ph.D.

ONE SHILLING
AND SIXPENCE

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RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Many men and women who realize that their lives are not worth living unless an eternal significance and an abiding purpose lie behind all the strivings and changes of life, are often alienated from religion because religion is identified with its outworn forms. Unitarians believe that no final and infallible revelation has been given to men 'but that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Word'. Their tradition and inspiration are Christian, but they value also the contribution which other religions have made to man's moral and spiritual life. Unitarians are free to seek truth wherever they can find it. Unitarian ministers and members of their congregations therefore are not asked to assent to any particular form of doctrine. This freedom does not result from any lack of faith but is rooted in the conviction that no discovery which man can make about the world can do anything in the long run but deepen man's sense of the glory of life. Only such a faith can face the tremendous problems of a changing world.

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Vision, Work, Service: A Book of Devotions (Allen & Unwin).

Health, Sickness, and Psychology (Oxford University Press).

Psychology: How it can Help You ("The Psychologist" Publishing House).

Religion in the Light of Psychology (Lindsey Press).

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AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

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I. The Coming of Psychology

§ I

In this little book we are to consider the bearings of psychology on religion and religious faith.

Psychology, as an independent science, is a very new thing. It is only for a little more than fifty years that it has existed as a separate field of scientific study. Yet already its tentacles have reached out everywhere, and it has laid hands upon almost every form of human interest and activity, investigating, probing, challenging. It has influenced our painting, our drama, our films (how it has influenced these!), our novels, our poetry, our business methods, our industrial processes and relationships, and our attempts to grapple with the problem of sickness, both physical and mental. It is not surprising that it has peered into our religion.

Indeed, in these days, when faith seems to be in decline, and when organised religion seems to appeal less and less to people, there are many who would tell us that, for the really intelligent, psychology has replaced religion and the psycho-analyst has taken over the role of the priest. Many look to psychology as offering hope of a new earth, if not a new heaven, as holding within itself the secret clue to human happiness and human wealth. As Mr. Gerald Heard has written: "Now psychology is the mode as once was religion. Myriads already look to it as a gospel, a power which may really set them free and keep them happy. . . ." Many people who would scorn to rely on the judgment of a cleric will swallow docilely anything emanating from a supposed psychologist.

I have written deliberately the words "supposed psychologist" at the close of the preceding paragraph. For, in literal truth, there are many pseudo-psychologists in existence, and not a few arrant charlatans. Not infrequently there appear in magazines and the more popular journals pronouncements, emanating from self-styled psychologists, that have but little substance in fact, and are often such as no authoritative psychologist could possibly endorse. Psychology has as yet no legal

status in these islands, and anyone who chooses may claim the title of psychologist for himself, with none to say him nay.

An elementary precaution, in reading articles and pronouncements of a psychological type, is to discover the precise standing of the author!

§ 2

But even among the really qualified and expert psychologists there are the widest differences and diversity of view and interpretation.

Psychology, as I have said, is, in its modern character, only some half-century old. It is little more than fifty years since the fledgling struggled clear from the parent nest of philosophy and took up an independent existence of its own. The very terms used in the science are not even standardised as yet. To read two text-books produced by different authors is sometimes to get the feeling that the two speak a different language and are discussing two vastly different things!

In truth, at today's level of knowledge, there is scarcely such a thing as psychology; there are only psychologies. Its students and investigators fall into a number of more or less distinct and separate "schools".

Just how many schools of psychology exist is a matter of debate, and partly of viewpoint. Professor R. S. Woodworth, a veteran American worker, in the first edition of his *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (published 1931), spoke of five. In the eighth and completely revised edition of that work, published in 1949, he lists eight major schools. Dr. William Brown, writing in 1924, could say that "in psychology at the present time there exist no less than nine distinctive and antagonistic schools". Professor William McDougall, ten years later, affirmed that "there is still no one science of psychology, but rather the psychologies of many schools".

All this is in no small measure unfortunate for the reader (as, even more so, it is for the serious student of the subject!). But facts are facts, and it is foolish to shut one's eyes to them. In view of the facts as we have set them down, it is idle to look for any one established psychological judgment on religion; we shall find, and must expect to find, a number of separate and even conflicting judgments.

To take but a simple illustration. There are authoritative workers, like Dr. William Brown and the late Professor McDougall (to name but two), who are themselves deeply and avowedly religious people. Equally there are other psychologists, like Professor J. H. Leuba and the late Professor Sigmund Freud, who are openly contemptuous of religious beliefs and practices, being assured that these are founded on nothing more than illusion and wishful thinking.

§ 3

A further difficulty arises from the fact that psychology was born and cradled in philosophy. For centuries it was simply a part of philosophical inquiry. And the fledgling still bears marks of the nest in which it was reared.

Truth to tell, it is exceedingly difficult to keep psychology all the time entirely distinct and separate from philosophy. There are places where the two impinge upon each other, and many a dim borderland of investigation where it is hard to disentangle them and separate them out.

But psychology is a science, and a science is one thing while philosophy is another. Our thinking is likely to become muddled when the distinction between the two is not clearly recognised.

Few psychologists today have any training in philosophy. Yet many of them do, at one time or another, leave the strict boundaries of science and invade the territory of philosophy. And what makes matters worse is that many of them do so without realising what they are about. Most men, says Professor Roland Dalbiez, occasionally "indulge in philosophical speculation"; but for a man to do so "without realising that he is doing so, is the worst manner of doing it".

Science is on safest ground when it seeks to answer the question What?—that is, to describe some process, some happening, some piece of behaviour. It is less secure when it goes on to try to answer the question How? It is least secure of all when it tries to answer the question Why? For if we push this last question far enough it brings us up against the ultimate problems of being, of the meaning and purpose of life, of the very nature of the universe within and without. And no one science, nor all the sciences together, are able to deal with

“ultimate” questions such as these. They belong to the realm of philosophy, and philosophy makes use of methods of reasoning and investigation that lie, in part, outside those used by science.

There is, of course, no law against a psychologist turning philosopher. Only in such a case he should know what he is doing (and his reader should know what he is doing). And, if he has had no training, and wields no authority, in philosophy, then he speaks there as a layman, and not as an expert. The fact that he is an authoritative psychologist does not make him an authoritative philosopher.

§ 4

At risk of being thought tiresome or footling, I must deal a little further with the question raised in the previous section. For, until our thinking on this issue is perfectly clear, we cannot profitably consider the bearings of psychology, and psychological pronouncements, upon religion.

Let me state categorically at this point the contention I am trying to urge. It is this. *You cannot prove (or disprove) the ultimate truth about anything by reference to science and scientific inquiry alone. Psychology, being a science, is not qualified to pronounce upon ultimate realities.*

Perhaps I can make the point clearer by means of an illustration. Here, let us say, is a man who contends that he has seen a ghost. Now a psychologist, simply as a psychologist, can neither prove nor disprove that that ghost was real. For think! psychology is the science of mental processes. But the mental process of seeing a ghost is precisely the same as the mental process of seeing a dog or a wheelbarrow. You may retort to the man who claims that he can see a ghost that you cannot see it. But that does not prove that the ghost is not there. It may only be that your eyesight is inferior to his. Or again, it may be that, although ghosts are real, they can be seen only by those with a certain special quality of apprehension, just as a colour-blind man cannot see reds or blues. But, simply by investigating mental processes alone, you cannot decide for, or against, the reality of ghosts.

To decide or debate that question, you need to draw on various kinds of scientific knowledge, and then to go on to con-

siderations that are, essentially and strictly, philosophical, lying outside the boundaries of science as such.

It is, of course, quite open to you to say: “I don’t accept the reality of your ghost. All my reading, all my reasoning, all my experience of life, lead me to disbelieve in the existence of ghosts.” That you are entitled to do. Only, let us be quite clear about it: when you do that, you are not psychologising; you are, in some measure at least, philosophising. You are really falling back upon your whole experience of life, your conception of the nature and character of the universe, as well as upon any scientific knowledge you may possess, when you announce such a conclusion.

Psychology as such is no guide to ultimate truth, the final reality and the Why? of things. In its own field it has done much, and is destined to do more. But it can not supplant philosophy, or deal with ultimate matters. There is no magic by which you can, simply by an investigation of a person’s mental processes, decide for or against the reality of ghosts.

§ 5

It was necessary to make this rather round-about approach to our subject. For, in considering the question of the bearings of psychology on religion, we had better be quite clear in our minds as to what psychology is, and as to the limitations that attach to it, as to all sciences.

It might be comforting, perhaps, if psychology were an infallible guide to the ultimate truth of things. But, in simple fact, it is not. If one science could pronounce on the ultimate realities, then there would be no need for philosophy at all. Just as, if all barbers were surgeons (as at one time in history they were), there would be no need for a separate class of surgeons.

All this ought to be a self-evident truth. It is elementary enough to be universally accepted. But, in practice, it is frequently overlooked or forgotten. People expect a science to do more than any science can possibly do. And sometimes a psychologist, having spent some years in the examination and investigation of mental processes and got to know a very great deal about them, suddenly launches forth with a denial of the reality of God, claiming to base his denial upon his experience as a psychologist!

The very fact that the psychologists are disagreed on such a question among themselves ought to give the ordinary man pause. For, after all, the material of psychology is open to every investigator. There are no sealed orders, no closed secrets. The same great basic facts are open to the investigation of every psychologist alike. But if one psychologist, having studied those same facts, announces that God is real, whilst another denounces him as a delusion in the human mind, then clearly they are using something more than the bare psychological facts in arriving at their judgments.

Actually, much of the differences between the various "schools" of psychology is a matter of extra-psychological reasoning. A good deal of the diversity of viewpoint really rests back upon philosophical, rather than psychological, considerations, although, as I have said earlier, not even the psychologists themselves are always aware of the distinction.

But now, having got our bearings—having, that is to say, recognised something of the nature, and of the limitations, of psychology—we can the more fruitfully and more safely go on to consider what has been said, in the name of psychology, about religion.

II. Psychology Attacks Religion

§ 1

In this present chapter I want to glance briefly at some of the psychological studies and pronouncements that carry with them a negative or derogatory judgment upon religion.

Actually, the earlier critical studies on religion were made, not by psychologists as such, but rather by anthropologists and sociologists. Thus, early in the 'seventies E. B. Tylor had coined the term "animism" to characterise the manner in which primitive men regarded the world around them. By animism Tylor meant the tendency to regard all existing things (even things we should consider as inanimate, like rocks and stones) as being imbued with a personal or semi-personal quality, and as being essentially "alive". Tylor's theory has been widely accepted since by students in this field. To Tylor also we are indebted for the notion that the idea of "soul" is first bred in

the human mind by experience in dreams—dreams, in which oftentimes the self seems to leave the physical body and to walk abroad discarnate: a view that is probably only a partial explanation of the origin of the belief in soul or spirit.

Twenty years after Tylor's promulgation of his theories there came a revision by R. H. Codrington, who, whilst accepting Tylor's notion that primitive man endowed all things in the world with an invisible "somewhat", argued that this somewhat is not usually conceived of as personal (as the animistic theory supposes), but rather as neutral and non-personal. To designate this indwelling power or quality, Codrington adopted the Melanesian term "mana".

The theories of Tylor and Codrington have been highly influential, and have been largely accepted by students of anthropology and of the psychology of religion. Although I have listed them here under a chapter headed "Psychology attacks Religion", there is really nothing in these theories that disparages or denies the fundamental validity of religious experience. I have included them here because Tylor and Codrington were comparatively early investigators, who both stimulated later study in the psychology of the religious consciousness, and (by their theories of animism and mana) greatly influenced later methods and conceptions.

§ 2

Also significantly influencing later research was the school of French sociologists of the first quarter of the present century, represented by such figures as E. Durkheim and L. Lévy-Bruhl. These workers and their collaborators stressed the *social* aspect of religion and of religious practices and beliefs. But, like many other experts and enthusiasts, they overdid their protestations, and read too many facts in the light of one single over-ruling principle.

Durkheim was a strong exponent of the idea of a "group mind".¹ The group mind was, it was held, at once larger and more powerful than the individual mind. "Collective representations",² wrote Durkheim, "are the result of an immense

¹ An idea that has worked much mischief in both thought and practice in recent history, and was in part responsible for the First World War.

² By "representations" Durkheim means here ideas.

co-operation which stretches out not only into space, but into time as well; to make them, a multitude of minds have associated, united and combined their sentiments; for them long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge. A special intellectual activity is therefore concentrated in them which is infinitely richer and more complex than that of the individual."

Religion, Durkheim held, is one aspect of the functioning of the group mind. Religious ideas come to the individual ready-made, so to speak; they are bequeathed to him by the immemorial experience and cogitation of the past. Thus, religion is not an individual product, and individual experience has very little, if anything, to do with it. Rather, it is a social creation. Away back behind the multiplicity of its forms and operations is the basic need to hold society together. God is not a real or existent personality: "society is the real God". "The reality which religious thought expresses is society."¹

Lévy-Bruhl introduced into the sociological study of religion the notion of "pre-logical thinking", a type of thinking—imaginative rather than logical, pictorial rather than factual—that is characteristic of primitive people. Primitive thinking, he asserts, is an irrational—mystical type of thinking. Out of such thinking or child-like imagining religion is born; it is not a rational, scientific or realistic attitude.

Ideas like those of Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl have had a permanent influence on later investigation into the religious consciousness. And doubtless they do enshrine partial truths. But to suggest that religion is "nothing-but" social experience, and God no more than the sum total of social demands and sanctions, is far too sweeping a generalisation. Were they this, it is difficult to see how progress could ever have come about. Yet progress there has been, and most frequently it has been brought about by those who stepped out in advance of the social ideas and sanctities of their time, dared (in Emerson's phrase) the gibbet and the mob, and heard a voice from God that was quite other than the dictates of the group-mind of their age and

¹ Incidentally, Durkheim seems to deny the reality of the individual soul, and to come near to a doctrine of materialism; but this is a point that is not of moment for our present purpose.

place. Religion certainly has social affinities and expressions, but is not simply the deification of social custom and usage.

§ 3

Turning now to more specifically psychological workers, we are confronted with J. H. Leuba's investigations and theories.

As early as 1896 Leuba (an American university teacher) had published his *Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena*, which marked him as a serious student and a keen investigator. Sixteen years later, in a new book, Leuba contended that the form and content of mystical experiences are a matter of suggestion. Just as the hypnotist "suggests" ideas to his subject, so the mystic's ideas are (unknown to him) suggested to him by others, or by the whole many-sided influence of the society in which he lives.

Later still, in 1916, Leuba was to publish yet a third work, *Belief in God and Immortality*, in which he presented a statistical study of the effect of higher education on religious belief, the implication being that the more a man knows, and the more educated he becomes, the less possible is it for him to hold on to any religious convictions. Briefly, Leuba showed (by his study of American university life) that students in the last two years of their college course had a weaker hold on religious beliefs than in the first two years of their course; whilst university teachers and professors in many cases had abandoned belief in God and immortality altogether.

Seventeen years afterwards (in 1933) Leuba was to bring his statistics up to date. Now he found close on one half of American university physicists disclaiming any belief in God; close on two-thirds of biologists and sociologists; and rather more than three-quarters of the psychologists!

Leuba is himself a complete sceptic. But his work has been painstaking and thorough and objective, and one must accept his results, so far as they go, as reliable. Yet his findings are very open to criticism. His method, in estimating the incidence of religious belief, was the questionnaire one, and the questionnaire is a very imperfect instrument of scientific research. In particular, the definition of the word "God" that Leuba provided for his subjects is, to say the least, highly debatable. If, he says, in answer to his question, "Do you believe in God?"

they should answer "Yes", they would mean by the assertion, "I believe in a God to whom one may pray in the expectation of receiving an answer. By 'answer' I mean more than the natural, subjective, psychological effect of prayer." Leuba goes on to state, somewhat naively, "I chose to define God as given above because that is the God worshipped in every branch of the Christian religion." I suspect that many present-day religious people, faced with such a query and such a definition, would, with Leuba's scientific majorities, feel constrained to answer "No"!

But even if Professor Leuba's statistics are taken at their face value, they do not necessarily mean what Leuba construes them to mean. Because many men of science are sceptics, that does not really mean that religious belief is necessarily incompatible with scientific knowledge. It may mean only that specialisation narrows down a man's interests, and makes him inaccessible to many considerations and influences that get through to those less specialised. Just as Charles Darwin confessed that many years of scientific study had robbed him of an earlier interest in and capacity for poetry and music. It is at least possible that many years of specialisation on physics or sociology (or even psychology!) may make a person insensitive to those very things that most suggest religious realities.

In any event, the truth or falsity of religion is not to be decided by a counting of heads, especially scientific heads. We have already noted¹ that science alone is powerless to pronounce on the ultimate truths of the universe.

§ 4

But most people possessing some little knowledge of psychology, and considering the attacks on religion from a psychological angle, would be thinking not of the French sociologists, nor yet of Professor J. H. Leuba. Their minds would go naturally to the Behaviourists on the one hand and to the Psychoanalysts on the other. It is to these that I must now turn.

Behaviourism, which was for some time the most influential "school" of psychology in America, was born in 1912. Its

¹ Chapter 1, § 4.

progenitor was the then Professor J. B. Watson, psychologist at the Johns Hopkins University.¹

We are not concerned here with the whole nature of Behaviourism as a psychological school or a psychological method (for it is both), but only with its impact on religion, its attitude to and pronouncements upon religious beliefs and practices. This being the case, we can put the matter in a nutshell by saying that, if Behaviourism be true, then religion is a sheer delusion. For such words as ideas, consciousness, soul, God, represent for the Behaviourists only fictions that have been entertained by human beings through many ages, but that have no reference to any factual realities.²

Watson writes in pungent and forthright fashion. Let me quote one or two detached passages. "The extent to which most of us are shot through with a savage background is almost unbelievable. Few of us escape it. Not even a college education seems to correct it." "Some of our greatest biologists, physicists, and chemists, when outside their laboratories, fall back upon folk lore which has become crystallised into religious concepts."³ These concepts—these heritages of a timid savage past—have made the emergence and growth of scientific psychology extremely difficult." "One example of a religious concept is that every individual has a *soul* which is separate and distinct from the *body*." "No one has ever touched a soul, or seen one in a test tube, or has in any way come into relationships with it as he has with the other objects of his daily experience."

A human being is, on the Behaviourist assumptions, only a complicated machine. He comes into life with a number of nerve-muscle "reflexes", and these, by conditioning⁴ become more complex and varied, so that a multitude of "conditioned reflexes" is being continually built up. But the only realities are material, physical things, meaning, in the human organism, nerves, muscles, brain. Consciousness, thought,⁵ will, purpose, self, are, for Watson and his disciples, so much moonshine.

¹ He has since abandoned academic life.

² Incidentally, it is a nice little philosophical problem as to how, on the Behaviouristic conception of human personality, a fiction can ever be conceived or entertained at all! But to discuss this would take us too far afield.

³ An interesting off-set, this, to Leuba's contentions.

⁴ Or, as ordinary folk would say, through experience.

⁵ Thought is for the Behaviourist only silent, internal speech.

Volition, desire, meaning, asserts Dr. E. B. Holt, one of Watson's most ardent followers, "are really movements of particles or of currents of energy in the world about him". The whole of human "behaviour" is just a matter of reflexes and conditioned reflexes. Man is a mechanism.

All this means that the individual is entirely at the mercy of his physical environment. "Whence come these differences in the machine? In the case of man, all healthy individuals . . . start out *equal*. . . It is what happens to individuals after birth that makes one a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, another a diplomat, a thief, a successful business man or a far-famed scientist."¹ "The situation we are in dominates us always and releases one or another of these all-powerful habit systems. . . . In general, we are what the situation calls for—a respectable person before our preacher and our parents, a hero in front of the ladies, a teetotaler in one group, a bibulous good fellow in another."² Religion is just the result of a mass of conditioned reflexes, acquired by the individual since birth. In one place Watson speaks, inconsistently enough, of religion's being "replaced by experimental ethics". But, strictly speaking, even ethics is, on Watson's basis, as unreal as religion itself. You cannot really speak of ethics or morals in connection with a machine.

But (again inconsistently) the Behaviourists have a strongly practical intention, and it is this, stated in Watson's forthright and virile language, that probably accounts for the popularity of the Behaviourists' tenets—although that popularity has declined in recent years, and Behaviourism is not what it was, either in theory or in influence. But listen to Watson on the practical ambitions of the Behaviourists. "Behaviouristic psychology has as its goal to be able, given the stimulus, to predict the response, or, seeing the reaction take place to state what the stimulus is that has called out the reaction." "The Behaviourist . . . wants to control man's reactions as physical scientists want to control and manipulate other natural phenomena."³

¹ I know no biologist, and no psychologist other than a Behaviourist, who would for a moment give countenance to this fantastic assertion.

² A swift dismissal of the whole age-long problems of ethics.

³ It was this last that Mr. Aldous Huxley so mercilessly exposed and pilloried in his *Brave New World*.

It is, as the Behaviourists see it, all a matter of pleasure and pain. You can train or "condition" an animal or a man into any series of reactions and habits if you make them pleasing enough in their effects. Equally, you can train him out of them if you make their pursuit or practice painful enough. Mr. Watson has not, apparently, heard of heroes and martyrs, and would certainly be hard put to it to explain how one Man once "set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem", whilst knowing pretty well that what awaited him there was torture and a cross.

Dr. Watson's system is only a new form of materialism, a materialism masquerading in psychological guise; and it is open to all the objections that philosophy, through the ages, has brought to bear against that doctrine. It is strange that, in an age when the physicists are reducing "solid" matter to a series of electric forces, a man speaking in the name of psychology should announce that muscles and nerves are the only (human) realities. If Dr. Watson is right, then certainly religion is a delusion, just as are all ideals, purposes, consecrations and sacrifices. A further point—and one that seems to have escaped the notice of Dr. Watson—is that his own theories and teachings are equally so much meaningless balderdash, if nothing is real save nerves and muscles and the push and pull on the organism of external forces. In a universe that is purely and wholly mechanical, intellectual theories are as negligible and unmeaning as all other things of the spirit.

Behaviourism is so naïve, and, to anyone with even a slight philosophical training, so innocent and untutored, that one could afford smilingly to pass it by, were it not for the fact that in some quarters the system has had an enormous vogue and has been hailed as the new gospel for a new age. As a whole system of thought it abounds in internal inconsistencies and intellectual blunders; whilst, as a psychological study, it fails to take account of (to say nothing of explaining) more than half of the most significant and indubitable facts about human nature.

§ 5

Yet the most serious challenge to religion has come (in spite of what I have said in the previous section) not from Behaviourism, with its crude adolescent materialism, but from

Psycho-analysis, the doctrines of the late Professor Sigmund Freud.

It is extremely difficult either to summarise or to criticise the Freudian doctrines within a brief compass. This is due in part to their very real complexity and many-sidedness; it is due also to the fact that Freud, like many another great thinker, made no attempt to put his teaching into systematic and sequential form. His writings abound in self-contradictions and internal incongruities, and much of the later theory is an almost total revision, and even a partial revocation of the earlier. However, since Freudianism is the most serious challenge framed from the side of psychology to religious ideas and principles, I must make some attempt briefly to state the Freudian doctrines in this connection.

To begin with, Freud is deterministic. He has no real belief in the freedom of the human will. True, there are passages in his writings where free will is almost assumed, and there are frequent appeals to rational common-sense. But Freud held, fundamentally, to a doctrine of "psychic determinism". Real freedom was only an illusion cherished in the human mind.

In the next place, Freud gave an over-riding and over-ruling place and significance to the instinct or impulse of sex. It is not strictly correct to say that he recognised no other instinct, or that his doctrine was (as many have asserted) a "pan-sexual" one. For, from the beginning, he did put other instincts alongside of the sexual ones, and in his later years he accorded an increasing importance to the impulse of aggression on the one hand, and to what he called an "instinct of death" on the other. But sex was, for Freud, the great source and origin and stimulus of all life and activity. This means that religion, among other things, is born in sexuality.

Even if this last were true, it need not alarm us. As Plato and Aristotle taught long since, the real significance of a thing is not what it begins in or with, but what it goes on to become. Science was born in crude primitive superstition; and so was philosophy; but we do not assess their value today simply by reference to their origins.

Yet to reduce religion wholly to a matter of sexuality is an absurdity. You might, as William James pointed out long ago¹ as well as ascribe the religious impulse to digestion, or eating,

¹ In his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, first published 1902.

or even breathing. "It is true", writes James, "that in the vast collection of religious phenomena, some are undisguisedly amatory—e.g., sex-deities and obscene rites in polytheism, and ecstatic feelings of union with the Saviour in a few Christian mystics. But then why not equally call religion an aberration of the digestive function, and prove one's point by the worship of Bacchus and Ceres, or by the ecstatic feelings of some other saints about the Eucharist? Religious language clothes itself in such poor symbols as our life affords, and the whole organism gives overtones of comment whenever the mind is strongly stirred to expression. Language drawn from eating and drinking is probably as common in religious literature as is language drawn from the sexual life."

In the third place, Freud ties up his teaching on religion with his notions of an Oedipus Complex. By "Oedipus Complex" he means that the small boy senses his father as a rival and himself desires sexually to possess his mother, whilst the small girl similarly desires sexually to enjoy her father. That, Freud insisted, is a universal human experience, a phase of life through which we all pass. True, the memory of it becomes submerged and forgotten, as do most of the memories of early childhood. But the emotional effects of it are not wholly lost. They survive in us as a sense of guilt. By this last Freud does not mean the shame and sorrow and regret that all normally moral people feel when they have done something that their better self cannot approve. Deeper than this, persistent, pervasive, a vague, irrational, ever-present sense of wrongness, almost a kind of deep if mild morbidity, attends on every one of us. This is all that survives, on the conscious level, of the once fully experienced Oedipus longings, our earliest sexual cravings. And no small part of the totality that is religion derives, Freud argues, from this sense of guilt.

But the sense of guilt is not wholly a personal matter; it is also racial. This brings me to the fourth point in this brief exposition of Freudian doctrines as they touch upon religion. Some of the guilt-sense that lives in us was not born of individual experience, but was passed on to us by way of heredity. Here Freud indulges in an interesting, if wholly incredible,¹ piece of anthropological speculation. Seizing on a dim hint in one of

¹ He himself says it is a "vision" and not even an "hypothesis"!

Charles Darwin's writings, Freud suggests that originally mankind wandered over the face of the earth in small self-contained groups. These groups comprised each an adult male; a number of full-grown females constituting his sexual mates; a further number of adolescent males approaching sexual maturity; and of course a number of infants. On a day, these younger males concocted a plot; desiring themselves to possess the adult females of the group, they murdered the ruling ancient, their parent, intending to assault his "wives". Immediately afterwards, however, they were seized with remorse; made a solemn vow never to molest these same females (that is, to seek sexual union within the same clan group); and later registered their penitence in a solemn sacramental meal, in which an animal, symbolical of the slaughtered father, was killed, dismembered and eaten—a meal that was afterwards observed annually, as the sacred "Totem meal". Moreover, they kept intact their solemn vow never to allow unions within the clan, and for ever after looked outside its borders for their sexual mates.

Out of this fanciful conjecture Freud claims to discover: (a) the significance of Totemism (which has played a part in many primitive religions); (b) an explanation of the rule of exogamy or restriction of marriages to mates outside the clan; (c) the roots of the Christian sacrament of Communion; (d) the origins of sociality itself: "the beginning at once of social organisation, of religion, and of ethical restrictions". Also arising out of this primal patricide came a profound sense of human guilt, a legacy that has been passed on for ever since, generation by generation, through the ordinary processes of heredity.

Finally, to complete the Freudian doctrines as they impinge on matters of religion, the mechanism of projection is brought in. The human mind has a tendency to "project" its own inner hopes, fears, desires and misgivings, on to outer circumstances, external happenings, other selves. As, for example, when a guilty man hears voices speaking in accusing tones within his own conscience, but attributes them to persons outside himself; or a suspicious man accuses others of being suspicious. Religion, Freud contends, contains a large element of such projection. Man stands appalled before the immensities

of the universe and the harshnesses and strains of personal experience. Longing for comfort, security, assurance, protection and peace, he "projects" these longings out upon empty space, to create and fashion there, in imagination, an almighty protector in the shape of a deity. Whilst the doctrine of immortality is only his projection of his desire to escape the last tyranny and defeat, which is death.

This idealised picture of a God gives to the believer, says Freud, all that an earthly father at his best can give, and all that an earthly father can not.

Religion, then, for Freud is a complex affair. All of the following enter into its composition and character: (1) the sexual impulses; (2) the Oedipus Complex and its resultant sense of guilt; (3) the primal human patricide, with its profound remorse, and its sacrificial commemorative meals; (4) the process of projection.

But of one thing Freud is completely persuaded: religion, however born or generated, is only a piece of fantastic and wishful thinking. It has no substance in the realm of actuality. It is an illusion, a thing of dreams and wishes, loneliness and the sense of guilt, born of the childish heart of man, and to be outgrown as rational thought and scientific attitudes increase.

A sentence or two from Freud's own writings may serve to make the matter clearer. "Religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis." "Psycho-analysis has traced the origin of religion to the helplessness of childhood, and its content to the persistence of the wishes and needs of childhood into maturity." "God is the exalted father, and the longing for the father is the root of the need for religion." "The truth of religion may be altogether disregarded." "Religion is an illusion and derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires." Theodor Reik, a German disciple of Freud, asserts that "religion is the source of repression and should be abolished. It is a symptom of human silliness and the etiology of psychic ills." Whilst Dr. D. Forsyth, one of Freud's most able English adherents, writes that "Psycho-analysis has severed its (i.e. religion's) very roots by showing that it belongs to the unreal and phantasmal, and that it carries all the marks of a child mentality." Most forthright of all is T. Schroeder, who writes: "Religion is ungratified sex desire: it is a perverted way

of getting the thrills properly available in love-making. When the morbid self-accusation has been outgrown, no Redeemer is needed or desired."

Formerly, in writing of the storming of religion's citadel by Psycho-analysis, one would have had to refer to the teaching of Professor C. G. Jung, a one-time collaborator with Freud, but for long now the head of a separate analytical school of psychology. In recent years, however, Jung has gone far in his theories, and has become a profound psychological mystic, claiming for religion an ineradicable place within the human mind, as old as humanity and as potent as life itself; and, whilst disclaiming all pretension to be a philosopher, he asserts that the very nature, constitution and contents of the human mind guarantee the place and fundamental truth of religion.

§ 6

The Psycho-analytic doctrines are, as I have said earlier, the most serious challenge to religion coming from the side of psychology. What can be said in answer to them?

To begin with, much of Freud's teaching, as outlined above, is in the nature of sheer riotous speculation, going outside knowledge that any human being can possibly possess. This Freud frankly admits himself. Moreover, in making such speculations, and taking such daring leaps of conjecture, Freud not infrequently left psychology and went over into the territory of anthropology, a field in which he was not, for all his genius, an expert, or even a serious student. It is always dangerous to pronounce on the materials of any science in which one has no training and no status. Freud took the risk; and he has not come through unscathed. There is, so far as I know, no authoritative anthropologist who would endorse Freud's teaching on the origin of Totemism and the nature of the primal human groupings. Totemism is not (as Freud imagined it was) universal among primitive human societies. While the Freudian conception of the origin of exogamy,¹ and of the structure of the earliest human societies, is, in the word of Professor B. Malinowski, an outstanding authority in this field, "fantastic." Freud's anthropology is imaginative rather than exact, picturesque rather than scientifically credible.

¹ i.e. extra-tribal marriage.

Even within his own field of psychology Freud is not immune from criticism. The notion of an Oedipus Complex, as a universal phase of human experience, has been widely challenged; only unquestioning adherents accept it in the sense taught by Freud; and even Freud himself occasionally wavered on the matter of its universality. Yet, if the thing be not universal, the Freudian argument falls to the ground.

Again, Freud's actual experience of religion was an extremely limited one. He was by birth and upbringing a Jew. He seems to have met with only a harsh, repressive and authoritarian type of religion, whose God certainly had some resemblances to the tyrannical over-lord of the primal-group fantasy—an arbitrary promulgator of decrees and unyielding upholder of his own sovereign rights. Yet, inconsistently, Freud also claimed that men's conception of God was a "projection" of their longings for a tender comforter and a benign father, who would ward off from them the hardnesses and tragedies of common experience. Doubtless one could find instances in plenty of a religion built up upon such premises and human needs. But what of a religion whose God is not, on the one hand, simply a stern law-giver and judge, nor, on the other hand, an almighty protector from the pains and vicissitudes of common life? When Luther faces alone a hostile Council at Worms, and says: "Here stand I, I can no other"; when Socrates insists on drinking the hemlock, although his friends have already arranged for his escape; when the Lord Christ goes to Jerusalem, scorning the way of safety and surrender—where is one to see in their religion only a craving for comfort and protection, and in their God only a projection of their own longings for an almighty father-guardian and warder-off of ills?

There is a further consideration. If Freud be right, then a thorough-going Freudian analysis ought to dissipate and annul any religious faith formerly existing in the mind of the patient who undergoes it. But this does not uniformly happen. Dr. William Brown, who, though not actually a Freudian, is a very sympathetic critic of the Freudian psychology, writing on his own protracted analysis, which lasted in all more than ninety-two hours, supplemented by many hours of self-analysis later on, declares: "My religious convictions were stronger than before, not weaker. The analysis had indeed a purifying effect upon

my religious feelings, freeing them from much that was merely infantile and supported by sentimental associations or historical accidents. But the ultimate result has been that I have become more convinced than ever that religion is the most important thing in life and that it is essential to mental health."

All this is not to deny that there are elements of real and permanent value in the Freudian psychology. But its teachings are not sacrosanct. Already some changes have been made in them by Freud's own disciples; many other aspects of them have been questioned by psychologists who do not belong to the Freudian school. One of the weakest parts of Freud's whole psychology is that where he deals with religious experience and beliefs. Here, he went outside the psychological field proper and delved into anthropological matters where he could not tread as an expert; from these he drew what are in some cases philosophical deductions, although he himself was wholly untrained and unversed in philosophy and philosophical thought; whilst, even within the narrower confines of psychology itself, he made large generalisations that were unsupported by any clinical or experimental evidence.

Even Professor J. C. Flugel, a staunch Freudian, is constrained to confess: "The trouble with psycho-analysis at present is that there is too much of the art about it, and too little of the scientific method that can be applied in experimentally controlled and repeated observations." Whilst Dr. S. H. Mellone points out how dangerous are generalisations even *on* the evidence, if that evidence is confined, as Freud's own evidence was, to pathological cases: "When conclusions derived from years of intensive study of pathological mental phenomena are applied, without further criticism, to explain the origin and history of religion, the results are extravagant and grotesque."

The Freudian psychology, which seems at first sight to be so vastly damaging to religion, turns out, on a fuller and more thorough examination, to be much less destructive than it claims.

Moreover, it is essential to have in mind what I have earlier stressed,¹ that psychology, which is a study of mental processes, cannot pass judgment on matters of external fact; least of all can it make pronouncements on the reality or otherwise of

¹ Chapter I, § 4.

ultimate things. Philosophy is still a necessary study, a valid instrument in the search for truth.

Religion, moreover, is concerned not merely with facts, but with values. But psychology (like every other science) has no place for values. Being a science, it is simply concerned with things as they are. To a psychologist, as a psychologist, a raving madman is as interesting as a scholar wrestling with some profound mathematical or astronomical problem; the lecherous thought of a profligate is as worthy of consideration as the aspirations of a saint upon his knees. All alike are comprised within the term "mental processes". Psychology's attitude here is simply the objective, neutral, detached attitude of all science. But life is not like that. In actual living, as distinct from scientific analysis, we recognise ends and purposes, ideals, strivings, values. Take these away, and you have only a distortion of life and of the man who is living it. It is because science knows nothing of such things that it must for ever remain a very partial and one-sided approach to reality.

III. Psychology's Defence of the Faith

§ I

I have borrowed for the heading to this chapter a phrase that constitutes the title to a book on the psychology of religion by Dr. David Yellowlees—a book in which the author suggests that "it begins to look as if religion might be, after all, not an infantile regression nor an illusory hypothesis, but the very crown and completion of life".

It is clear, in the light of what I have written earlier, that psychology cannot defend the faith, if by "defend" one means substantiate and prove the validity of religious conceptions and convictions. You cannot, that is, prove the existence of God by psychological investigation of the human mind. Indeed, in the preceding chapter I have indicated how strongly much of recent psychology has actually attacked religious notions and experiences. What I want to do in this present chapter is to show how the psychological study of religion, at the hands of other workers, has revealed aspects of religious experience, and of the effects of religious conviction, that certainly go some

way to suggest that in religion men do make contact with a Reality that is actual and potent.

Even the psychological opponents of religion have been constrained to testify to its enormous influence in the lives of those who accept it. Freud himself is compelled to bear witness to its power. It is, he says, "Of the three forces that can dispute the position of science" the only "really serious enemy". Professor J. C. Flugel, an avowed Freudian, asserts that "in spite of its basis in primitive infantile fixations . . . religion has performed a work of very great value". Whilst Dr. Ernest Jones, perhaps the most eminent of practising Freudian psycho-therapists in this country, admits that "in the history of the world, religion has proved perhaps the most powerful help to human weakness, to man's constant endeavour to cope with his own nature". Professor C. G. Jung, as we have seen, places the idea of God as among the elemental "archetypes", innate ideas in the human mind existing from the beginning, and not merely the result of reasoning upon experience. When we discuss religion, at least it is no weak and negligible thing with which we have to do.

But, for the strict Freudian and the Behaviourist alike, religion is an illusion. One is tempted to retort that it is an illusion that has lasted a very long time. True, mere longevity is not proof of validity. The Ptolemaic astronomy lasted a very long while, but in the end it was found to be mistaken. But through what uncountable ages religion has persisted! It is the most stubborn and obdurate of all human propensities, apart from the actual instincts and appetites, and sometimes it seems even to rival these in intensity and power.

Nor is it any adequate answer to say that religion is just a survival of pre-logical thinking, a residue from primitive man's aboriginal naïveté, as Lévy-Bruhl has suggested. Professor William James, in his famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*, has made hay of that argument. Religion could hardly have stood up to centuries of philosophical criticism, and the more recent attacks of psychology, if it were not associated with some very real and deep-rooted and persisting human needs and propensities, and if it were not based upon reflections and considerations immeasurably more substantial than the fancies and childlike imagings of primitive men.

§ 2

But this brings us back to the old bogey of "projection"—the notion that God is nothing more than the fantasy-object created or projected from human hopes and fears and longings. I have already dealt with this earlier.¹ Here it is perhaps not unfitting to admit that psycho-analysis has, in spite of its strictures upon religious persuasions, none the less done religion a very real service. It has not exploded religion; but it has shown up the weak points in its armour. As Oscar Pfister (himself a deeply religious man and a long-standing, though not uncritical, follower of Freud) has said: "Psycho-analysis gives no explanation of the content of truth in religion, although it eliminates neurotic forms of religion which do not hold their own against reality-thinking." Religion is not a neurosis; but there is a fair measure of neurosis to be found in religion. And "projection" does operate. The God of many people is "a very present help in time of trouble" and little more, so that they think of him only when trouble comes. All sorts of human motives, some of them not too worthy, can masquerade in religious guise: aggressiveness, self-display, cruelty, domination, self-pity, even hate—these and many another human impulse have been given expression through religious channels. It would be foolish to deny it: history would give us the lie.

Equally we may, I think, admit that there is not a little morbid-mindedness in religion. Sentimentality and effeminacy, too, often adhere to the "believer", and the saints are sometimes of a sickly and unhealthy hue. Even with religious people the common conception of sainthood is all too often a rather nerveless and flabby affair. All this, too, let us frankly admit.

Yet, if all the saints were neurotic and all the righteous feeble of frame, this would not of itself discount the truth of religion. By the same token you would have to throw out half of the world's artists and musicians, for these, too, are not distinguished by an over-robust physique. But no one discredits music because musicians are not all muscular giants.

I hope, however, to show in a moment that this is not the whole story concerning religion and health. Only, at this juncture, let us, as realistic people, register our gratitude to the

¹ Chapter 2, § 6.

critics of religion among the psychologists, who have exposed the weaknesses and unrealities that it should be our endeavour to overcome.

§ 3

But now let us come closer to grips with our immediate topic. Psychology, as I have said, cannot guarantee the truth (or the falsity) of religion. But it can pronounce upon the effects in the human individual of religious attitudes and practices. What can be said under this head?

Here I must put in a caution. We have a right to ask, we religious people, that religion shall be judged at its best. The defects we will admit; but you cannot get a right view of any human activity or propensity unless you consider it at its best. No one would think of estimating the worth of science by peering at some shabby fortune-teller in a back street, or of music by listening to the jangles of a barrel-organ. Equally, one should not try to judge the value of religion by reference to its distortions and monstrosities, its caricatures and absurdities. I mention this here because it is a point that is frequently overlooked or avoided; critics of religion have a tendency to compare science at its best with religion at its worst!

What are, then, the practical fruits of religion at its best, its effects upon those who practise it? Let us take the question first in sheerly physical terms, the effect of religion upon the human organism as such. Here the evidence is unequivocal. In spite of the fact that some of the saints have been and are neurotic, genuine religious experience and practice is much more commonly productive of health. It offers, as psycho-analysts admit, a solution of mental conflicts; it makes for mental stability and poise; and it sustains its possessor amid the shocks and strains of common experience. Religious faith produces what William James¹ called a "sthenic condition". It "overcomes temperamental melancholy and imparts endurance to the subject. . . . It is a biological as well as a psychological condition, and Tolstoy is absolutely accurate in classing faith among the forces *by which men live*. The total absence of it, anhedonia, means collapse."

¹ It is worth remembering that James was medically, as well as psychologically, qualified.

In recent years, psycho-therapy, or healing by psychological methods, has developed far. It is becoming increasingly recognised in medical circles that religion is a forceful ally in the fight for healing and wholeness. C. G. Jung (whose "practice" is probably vaster, more widespread, and more influential, than that of any other living therapist) makes no secret about the matter. He has never, he says, succeeded in curing any patient over thirty-five years of age unless he has been able to induce in him (or her) a religious attitude to life. "It is safe to say", he writes, "that everyone of them feels ill because he has lost that which the living religions of every age give to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."¹

There is, in short, a very close connection between religion and health.

§ 4

Next we must consider the effect of religion upon the emotional life.

In this connection also I cannot do better than quote the late Professor William James. Here are two passages from his justly famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*. "When one's affections keep in touch with the Divinity of the world's authorship, fear and egotism fall away . . .; equanimity follows. It is as if all doors were opened, and all paths freshly smoothed." Whilst the characteristics of the religious life include, he says, the following: "A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism. (And) An assurance of safety and a temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections." There would seem to be, as Saint Paul declared, "joy and peace in believing".

One is almost tempted to put to the critics the challenge propounded by Robert Browning:

Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can?

But we must beware of judging of the truth of anything simply by regard to our wishes. Yet this fact that religion at its best

¹ This is significant, coming from an anything but orthodox "believer."

makes for serenity of mind and heart, for equanimity and charity and generous feelings, is a legitimate piece of psychological deduction.

Here I must deal with a contention that is sometimes put forward by the sceptical on this matter. "What you attribute to religion and the effects of religion", they say, "is simply a matter of temperament. Some people are naturally cheerful; if you happen to find one such who is also religious, you straight away, without warrant or justification, attribute his cheerfulness to his religion. Some people are kind and easy-going by nature; if you come across someone like that, and he happens to be a religious person, again you claim as an effect of his religion what is simply a matter of his temperamental make-up."

Now admittedly temperaments do differ. Some folk are temperamentally morose, whilst others are temperamentally cheery. That is an undeniable fact. But when we talk of the emotional effects of religion we do not, if we are wise, have in mind just one specific quality or attitude. What we are really getting at is this—that the truly religious life blends into a unity a whole array of desirable emotions and attitudes. But on this matter William James has preceded me; let me quote again from him: "Single attributes of saintliness may, it is true, be temperamental endowments, found in non-religious individuals. But the whole group of them forms a combination which, as such, is religious, for it seems to flow from the sense of the divine as from its psychological centre."

There would seem, then, to be a close connection between religion, on the one hand, and generous, kindly, joyous, and equable emotions on the other.

§ 5

Finally, there are the effects of religion upon practical conduct. In this realm, too, religion comes easily out of the test. No one with any historical sense would wish to claim for religious people a monopoly of active virtue and practical serviceableness. But it is an undeniable fact that most of the world's ameliorative and humanising agencies are the direct outcome of religion, and the work of specifically religious people.

In this connection let me set down a passage from Dr. H. E. Fosdick. "I know the faults and follies of organised religion,

but I believe in the church. . . . In the darkest places on this planet, where else humanity would be helpless and sodden, you will find hospitals and schools and spiritual agencies. They are put there by the church. No other organisation has thought of such service in those desperate corners of the earth except the church, and the men and women who sacrificially are serving there are the church's gift. Show me an organisation that can reduplicate our Careys and Morrisons and Adoniram Judsons and General Booths, their compeers and successors, who have gone where life is darkest, where need is deepest, where work is hardest, before you ask me to give up the church.

"Do you want a man to sink his life in an Indian tribe or in the slums of New York, to run a hospital under the Arctic circle in Alaska, or a school in the jungles of Africa? Do you want a man to do that who has had bestowed on him all that modern civilisation can bestow—high heritage, culture, education? Do you want him to do it without hope of earthly reward, no money except bare subsistence, no comfort except what he can gain from an alien and inhospitable situation. Where will you look for that man? You will look to the church."

That comes from a robust and virile and modernist Christian, no soft and flabby sentimentalist. And it is, I think, historically valid.

On the other hand, unbelief is not distinguished for social service. There are, of course, many notable and worthy exceptions, and some who have disavowed all religious conviction have given themselves unstintedly to the common good. In not a few such cases, I suspect that their professed unbelief was in reality little more than an inability to accept traditional notions and inherited dogmas,¹ and that in the deeper levels of their personalities there existed far more "belief" than they themselves were aware of. But it is, I think, true that deep-rooted and complete unbelief tends towards sterility. It sets a man within a cast-iron, mechanistic universe, that cares nothing for his holiest longings and noblest aspirations; where he himself, in fact, is an alien and unwanted intruder; and where the vast cosmic forces will eventually crush him and all

¹ As, for instance, the younger Gosse, in Sir Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*.

things human beneath irreparable and witless ruin. Such a thought-scheme must inevitably take something out of the deepest heart of courage and hope and striving.

Faith, on the contrary, refuses to believe that the only realities are mechanistic energies; it believes that human longings and human strivings are not meaningless intrusions, but a clue to the nature of reality; and it senses behind the universe a great and compassionate Power who is a friend to man, indeed a lover and a well-wisher. And again, such convictions are calculated to arouse positive emotions and to release energies for heroic striving and generous human service. It is historically true that, whilst sheer and absolute unbelief has tended towards sterility, or towards dissipation of itself in argument, faith has set going the noblest and most far-reaching human service that the world has seen.

There would seem to be a very close relationship between religion and serviceable human character.

§ 6

We have now looked (all too briefly and inadequately) at the physical, emotional and practical aspects of religion, as these are to be observed in religious people.

This, I think, is as far as psychology can go. We cannot, as I have argued repeatedly in this little book, build philosophical conclusions upon purely psychological premises. But we are entitled to say this: that if, as some suggest, religion is an illusion, it is an illusion that bears strangely attractive and desirable fruit. Illusions, when we meet them in the pathological sphere, do not tend to issue out in positive and beneficent results, or the mental hospitals would be the most desirable type of human community. It would be strange, to say the least, if a thing rooted in error and founded on hallucination should breed physical health and nervous stability, encourage emotions noble and tender and expansive, and should be responsible for nearly all the world's most helpful and most beneficent practical service. If religion *is* so rooted and founded, then it is like no other form of hallucination known to psychological science.

But the last word must be with philosophy (in which term I include, for our present purpose, theology). Psychology cannot really touch that. It stands in its own right, pursuing its

investigations by its own legitimate methods. The classical arguments for God's reality are untouched by anything that psychology has discovered or said. ". . . nothing", writes Professor L. W. Grensted, "in the whole range of psychological criticism makes any difference whatever to the classical theistic arguments, as stated, for example, by Kant. So far as pure reason is concerned the situation remains unchanged."

Yet, for the genuinely religious man, neither psychology nor philosophy is really the last word. For the truly religious man "has hold" (as Plato put it) "of a Reality". He has entered into an immediate experience of God; in the silent watches he has communed with the Father of Spirits; in the mysterious deeps of his own personality he had met with a Personality that is wholly other and yet strangely and intimately near; and, like one of old, he will say: "I know whom I have believed." Such a one will not easily be persuaded (whatever psychology or philosophy may say or refrain from saying) that he has built his deepest life on unreality and nothingness.

UNITARIANS STATE THEIR FAITH

Do not accept accounts of what Unitarians believe, written by other people. Read what Unitarians themselves say about their faith.

A statement of the way in which Unitarians approach the spiritual and religious problems of to-day has been drawn up by a number of Unitarian ministers appointed by the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches and working together as a group.

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