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Reel
153

Box
54

Folder
391

The intellectual, the emotional, and the ethical in religion, 1931.

349

THE INTELLECTUAL, THE EMOTIONAL AND THE ETHICAL
IN RELIGION

BY

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There are three facets to all religion, the intellectual, the emotional and the ethical. They are the three strands that are woven into the one chord. Or perhaps you may say that they are the three streams which run into the one main channel of religion. All three are vital and essential elements of religion.

From time to time attempts are made to reduce religion to one or the other of these elements, to give a purely rationalistic interpretation of religion, or a purely emotional, or a purely ethical interpretation of religion. Whenever that is done, religion always suffers. Religion is always impoverished by such an attempt and frequently religion is driven into a blind alley by certain enthusiasts who insist upon defining religion in terms of one instead of all three of these elements.

Thus for example, when there is an over-emphasis on the intellectual element in religion, there is the danger of reducing religion to a sort of a metaphysical speculation, a cold, abstract, wordy philosophy, lacking warmth and poetry, the propelling power which comes with religion which is also based upon experiences and not excessively upon thought. Whenever that is done, whenever the attempt is made to rationalize religion with an exposition of these

two other dangers, religion is in danger of dying of inanition.

To be sure, religion is a philosophy. Religion is a system of thought. But it is more than that. It is a faith. It is a hope. It is a feeling of dependence upon a wise and benevolent deity; a feeling that goes far beyond the boundaries of a mere intellectual idea.

On the other hand when an attempt is made to reduce religion to sentiment or to emotionalism there is the danger of driving it to a sort of an unbridled mysticism which becomes the seed-bed of all kinds of superstition and all forms of obscurantism. Religion has in the past suffered a great deal from this emotionalism and sentiments driven to sentimentalism. When a feeling is uncorrected and unrectified by an idea, when you permit a feeling to run riot without holding it within the boundaries of a thought, within the discipline of an idea, that feeling becomes of personality, frequently even of character. And so many weird sects arose in nearly every historic religion. They didn't last very long. For a time they stampeded masses of people. And these sects most always were motivated by some unrestrained religious, passionate emotion which carried the believer off his feet, as it were, and darkened his reason. These sects like the Holy Rollers, and in the earlier days the . Judaism had such sects, Mohammedanism had such sects. That too, is not good for religion. Nor is it good for religion when it is reduced to a system of morals pure and simple; to an ethical formalism, without reference to a basic philosophy upon which this ethical code is to be built and without

taking cognizance of the emotional or devotional or prayerful side of human life. This spells the doom of religion, just as in the long run it spells the doom of morality itself. That's why the ethically cultural movements have never survived. They are abstract ideas, pure and simple. They lack the dynamics of the emotional religion. They lack the basis of the intellectual religious philosophy.

Now the great historic religions of mankind, whether it be Judaism, or Christianity, or Mohammedanism or Buddhism for that matter, manifested themselves in all these three phases and have therefore survived. These religions were at the same time, thought, feeling, action; an idea, a mood, a way of life. They resisted being monopolized by one interest.

Judaism, for example, resisted strenuously any attempt at rationalization, any attempt at being defined as a pure, intellectual set of ideas which can be readily proved and scientifically demonstrated. For Judaism sensed very early that the source of religion is not the mind, and in the second place that the mind is inadequate to explain reality. Judaism always placed a high value upon the intellect, it employed the intellect to correct, to modify, to rectify some of the religious intuitions but it never reduced faith to intellectualism. Judaism always maintained, as science maintains today, that the ultimate reality is unexplainable. "Canst thee by searching find me out? My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways." There is a gulf that separates the finite from the infinite, the created from the Creator, and the mind is not the bridge which can connect these two.

Even Maimonides, the greatest of Jewish rationalists, who maintained that the intellect is man's supreme quality, who tried to harmonize philosophy with religion, faith and reason, even he, in his "Guide to the Perplexed" actually gave twenty-six proofs for the existence and the unity of God. Even Maimonides, the greatest of Jewish philosophers concludes by saying that the essence of divinity must forever lie outside of mankind's comprehension; that God can not be known and can not be defined. You are not warranted in describing any attributes to God. The most you can say is that He exists. You may describe Him negatively; you may say what He is by things which He is not.

Judaism, to my mind, displayed a wonderful foresight in not basing its authority upon the mandates of logic or reason. For many centuries later, mankind discovered that its intellect is in reality a very faulty instrument for discovering truth; that it operates only in the physical sphere of physical phenomenon. It can go so far and no further. It can not explain everything. In fact, it can not explain anything which concerns the real essence of substance or essence of the real problem of origin and destiny.

But the intellectual element in Religion cannot be ignored. Religion is as much an answer to the questions which the mind of man propounds as it is a satisfaction for the spiritual hunger of the human heart. Man has always sought to understand the universe in which he lives, to fathom its genesis, to probe its meaning and its destiny. Man has always attempted to define his own position in the universe, his own relation to

the things about him, to co-relate, as it were, his world of values to the world of cosmic values.

If it is true that primitive man was driven to religion by fear, as some maintain, although I question it, - it is true that primitive man was driven to religion by fear, it is true also that thinking man, from the dawn of his reflective life was driven to religion through religious conviction, by postulates of his mind, by the cures which he inevitably was forced to posit. As soon as man began to think, he began to think about his world, about the universe in which he lived. He began to ask himself why, whence, whither, how? And he tried to answer these questions to the best of his ability and knowledge. And the answers to these questions fall into two categories, - religious and non-religious, - the spiritual and the material things. (quote Hebrew)

"Lift up your eyes and see, who created these?"

That's a normal question for a thinking man to ask himself. And Seneca writing to one of his friends in his famous letter on "The First Cause" says to his friend who has been criticizing him for wasting a lot of time on such speculations:

"You will reply: what pleasure do you get from wasting your time on these problems, which relieve you of none of your emotions, route none of your desires? So far as I am concerned I treat and discuss them as matters which contribute greatly toward calming the spirit, and I search myself first, and then the world about me. And not even now am I, as you think, wasting my time.

For all these questions, provided that they be not chopped up and torn apart into such unprofitable refinements, elevate and lighten the soul."

As I read this please keep in mind Chapter thirty-eight of Job which I read to you this morning.

"Do you forbid me to contemplate the universe? Do you compel me to withdraw from the whole and restrict me to a part? May I not ask what are the beginnings of all things, who moulded the universe, who took the confused and conglomerate mass of sluggish matter, and separated it into its parts? May I not inquire who is the Master-builder of this universe, how the mighty bulk was brought under the control of law and order, who gathered together the scattered atoms, who separated the disordered elements and assigned an outward form to elements that lay in one vast shapelessness? Or whence came all the expanse of light? And whether it is fire, or something even brighter than fire? Am I not to ask these questions? Must I be ignorant of the heights whence I have descended? Whether I am to see this world but once, or to be born many times? What is my destination afterwards? What abode awaits my soul on its release from the laws of slavery among men? Do you forbid me to have a share in heaven?"

Almost the exact questions propounded by Job and by the way, the questions which all the modern phycisists are asking themselves.

"In other words, do you bid me live with my head

bowed down? No, I am above such an existence."

And when men ask themselves these questions, and they began asking them thousands and thousands of years ago, and by the way, the answers which they gave to these questions are just as valid and just as good and just as true as the answers which we are likely to give to these questions, - the most satisfying answer which they could give was that there is a Divine Mind in the universe which created it and which rules it; a Divine Mind which stands in some moral relation to mankind.

The opposite explanation of the universe is that it is just a thing, mere blind matter in senseless agitation. The materialistic answer is clearly no more scientific and no more logical and no more helpful than the first.

And so religion is the answer to the intellectual questions of men. Decidedly it is a philosophy and a philosophy which is much easier to hold in the year 1931 than it was in the year 1831 or 1881.

The nineteenth century, which saw in a sense, the beginnings of the great physical sciences, was dominated by a deterministic, a materialistic point of view. The law of Causation ruled all things. Nature could therefore move along one road only to a predetermined or predestined end. All things were predetermined. The whole universe was a mechanical model, a machine. That was true not only of the inanimate world but of the animate world as well.

In this universe constructed by the nineteenth century scientific engineers there was little room for free personality, free will, for God. Scientists of the nineteenth century were sure that they could explain everything by physical causes and given enough time, they could trace everything to some material origin. Twentieth century physics, however, has dealt a death blow to the materialism of the nineteenth century. It was discovered that certain phenomena of nature, like gravitation and radiation could not at all be explained on the basis of mechanics. Scientists appeared who demonstrated that nature does not move smoothly and continuously along the line of cause and effect. Cause and effect use the processes of nature, move by jumps and jerks, incomprehensible and unexplainable. The law of Causation has given way to the law of Probability. There is room in the universe, according to the latest scientists, for chance, for choice, for free will, for personality on the part of man and the whole universe can only be explained in terms of thought.

In fact at the hands of the scientists of the first part of the twentieth century, the whole world of matter has been reduced to a world of radiation, of waves of light. The whole universe is light, bottled up waves of light for radiation which is matter and unbottled waves which is radiation of light. Everything is reduced to a sea of light. "Creation" to use the words of Jean is "quote Hebrew " "Let there be light". And of course there is but one step from this to the position of the religionist thousands of years ago: "God is the light of the world." "Quote Hebrew " "And the light dwelleth in Him."

Professor Jeans in his remarkable book "The
Mysterious Universe" states:

"There is a wide measure of agreement, which on
the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that
the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality;
the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a
great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder
into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought
rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter -
not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms
out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts."

This is not taken from the Bible. This is taken from
the writing of one of the great scientists of our day, who summarizes the
great scientific thought of the twentieth century.

"The new knowledge compels us to revise our hasty first
impressions that we had stumbled into a universe which either did not
concern itself with life or was actively hostile to life. The old
dualism of mind and matter, which was mainly responsible for the supposed
hostility, seems likely to disappear, not through matter becoming in
any way more shadowy or insubstantial than heretofore, or through mind
becoming resolved into a function of the working of matter, but through
substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation
of mind."

That's the story of the Book of Genesis. God, whose mind
created the universe.

of the univer

in so many
and so the

The religious man thinks

rise to prayer, religious meditation, to songs, to hymns, to sacrifices and to martyrdom. This phase of religion gave rise to the psalms and to all the great devotional literature of mankind. A religion which misses that is really no religion at all, but a theosophy, a text-book affair. It does not enter vitally into the lives of men and women, helping them, consoling them. A religion without prayer, without devotional literature, to me, is unthinkable, in a sense meaningless. It is this side of religion which gave rise to customs, ceremonials and poetry to human life.

"quote Hebrew " "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want." That's the emotional side of religion. "The Lord is my Shepherd" is one thing. For the Lord to be the primary cause of the universe is quite another. But I am not the universe. I am just a simple man who suffers pain and disillusionment and I need a God to enter into my life. "quote Hebrew "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." God will wipe away all fear. Lighten my darkness, lift my burden. This intimate relatedness to Divinity gives rise to the real religious experiences while the other gives rise to religious speculation.

And lastly of course, there is the ethical side. And this ethical side gave rise to the prophets and then to the thinker and the philosopher. The ethical side of religion takes ideas and sentiments and molds the conduct of men by them. If there is a God and God rules the universe there must be laws in the universe, laws applicable to

determine not only the physical but the spiritual and the ethical of man as well. The laws are sometimes hard to discover just as the laws of nature are hard to discover. We needed a Galileo, a Kepler, a Newton and an Einstein to discover the laws of nature, just as we needed a Moses and a Hillel to discover the laws of the spiritual world. But the laws are just as real, just as indispensable. The great spiritual universe-builders of mankind were the prophets of Israel.

The truly religious man, my friends, to sum up then, to my mind, is the man who has thought out for himself a religious philosophy, who has the spiritual answer of the cosmic problem. But that is not enough, that only makes him a religious thinker. The truly religious man is also one who uses the religious medium for the expression, for the release of his emotions, adoration, gratitude, osculations of hope. He is reverent, he is devout and he is pious in the profoundest sense of the word. His religion makes him sing. His religion will stand by his side in hours of sorrow and defeat as well as in his hours of triumph and happiness; a man who by his sentiments, his feeling, is a religious man. But even that is not enough. The truly religious man is one who enters the arena of life, equipped with a religious idea and a religious feeling and who acts and lives in such a way as to give evidence of his religious convictions and religious thoughts, a man of uprightness, of integrity, of honor, of love of his fellowmen, seeking justice, endeavoring to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth.

That man who has all three or who seeks all three, that man is the truly religious man.

4. Ind. always resisted extreme rationalization. -
for it seemed that (1) reason & R. is not entirely
the mind, man (2) Ind. is inadequate to explain
reality. - Place high value on I. as means
of connecting and rectifying man's rel. aspira-
tions and conditions - but never regarded I. as
derived rel. from Ind. -

(1) "Canst Thou by searching find me out?"

(2) "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your
ways, my ways" - In cannot bridge just
bet. finite & infinite, bet. created & creator.

(3) Esse (Maximus) - ^{who maintained that being is the first principle} rather than esse - attempted
to harmonize faith with phil. & faith with reason.
and who addressed 26 proofs for the existence,
unity & incorp. of God - concludes
that essence & divinity must forever lie
outside humanity's comprehension - That
God cannot be known or defined - that no
positive attributes can justly be ascribed unto
Him - except that He exists -

(4) Ind. displayed remarkable foresight in not
viewing itself to the world as a system of phil.
speculation & reasoning - that - doubtless that its authority was solely on
the mandates of logic & reason - For centuries
later mankind discovered that its intellect
is ^{really} is a faulty instrument for discerning truth - that
its operations are limited to the sphere of phenomena
never - that it can go no far our further - that
it cannot explain everything - in fact, nothing
which concerns the real essence & substance -
and the real problems & origins & destinies.

5. But the intell. element in R. could be opened.

R. is as much an answer to man's intell. queries as to a satisfaction of the hunger, his heart.

Man has always sought to understand his universe, to find its general origin - to probe its meaning & destiny.

He has always attempted to define his own position in the universe - to correlate his world, values to the world, universal life - to formulate a cosmic view of all life.

- Primitive man may have been driven to R. by fear, the unknown - But with the dawn of reflective life, man was driven to R. by his intell. questings of things - p. 174, 116
2d ed. (1921) p. 118 - Man will question - Seneca p. 453
"in the first place"

(1) Seneca And mystery is no less great to-day

It is to-day that we ask: "What is 'Mysterious Universe' - Planets (Berk). Telescope - far-flung, and known by light-year; other 500 m. m. revealed - eyes - seemed before

6. And most satisfying interpretation & explanation has been Rel. one - Diver mind created & seeks universe and stands in several relations to mankind -
- The opposite explanation is only the alternative - is less satisfying & less logical.

(1) Easier to-day to hold this Rel. view, 19c.

Early days, modern sc. - sc. that was dominated by a mat. determ. phys. view. being, causation ruled all things. Nature could: move only along one road to a predetermined End. - All things are predetermined. The universe was a mechanical model - a machine - Things animate & man used as instruments.

20 c. physics has dealt a death blow to this materialism, the sc. Eng. sec., 19c. It was discovered that certain phen., like radioactivity & pair production defy all purely mechanical explanations.

Planck appears and demonstrates that nature proceeds by jumps and jerks and not continuously by smooth operations, cause & effect. The law, causation gives way to the law of probability. — There seems to be room in the physical world for chance & choice — for life, for consciousness, for free-will.

✓ — In fact the whole world, matter is reduced to waves — bottled-up waves which is matter — and unbottled waves — which is radiation & light. Every thing is reduced to a sea of light — Quanta in very truth, to quote Jeans is — γ h ν —

✓ There is but one step from this to further of Rel. "for is the light, the waves" $(\gamma h \nu)$ $(\gamma h \nu)$ — "and the light dwelleth in Him."

✓ — There is that in universe — Jeans' nature seems very consonant with the rules of pure mathematics ... The universe seems to have been designed by a pure mathematician."

(Just p. 158) Rel. anticipated all this -

- gives us poetry & Religion
7. Emotional - derives from personal Experience. When a man thinks of his God not as a deity - neither as a personal being - but as Father - Friend - Protector or Shepherd - one with whom he can commune - who is interested in him - then there comes a confidence, a strength, an inspiration, which the mere intellect. rel. will never experience.
1. 187 is - He is God -
 2. "God will remove away all tears". lighten my darkness - In my despair I cried unto Thee.
 3. The E. in rel. will lead to prayer - to song - to hymns - to ceremonies, poetic ceremonies - to scripture, to worship.
 4. It is the poetry of religion - It gives us the Psalm - all mag. rel. poetry & worship.

8. Ethical - yielded to Prophecy -

- (1) Tales, ideas & sentiments and rules conduct by them. It is the unwritten inspiration of Rel.
- (2) Man's destiny is to know if there is a god - and god rules the world - then there are eternal laws as there are in the sp. world, man - as there are laws in the physical world, nature. Man's destiny is to live in accord with these eternal laws - of justice, goodness & truth. He must discover these laws - as Physical laws - just as Phys. laws had their Galileo, Newton & Einstein - so sp. laws had their Moses - Isaiah -

their sustenance - Zoroaster - their journey - etc.

(3) Greatest sp. wisdom - wisdom was prophetic,
moral - we have a fair structure, these
sp. virtues - enough to turn by prophetic truth.

~~the~~

7. The truly rel. man will use rel.

(1) In his phil. & life -

(2) As an exist. outlet for adoration, gratitude,
friendship and hope -

(3) As the living impulse, his private conduct
and social responsibilities.

