

THE 1966  
JAMES BACKHOUSE  
LECTURE

**SEEKING IN AN AGE  
OF IMBALANCE**

RUDOLF LEMBERG

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. M. Rudolph Lemberg, who died in 1975, was Head of Biochemical Research and Assistant Director of the Institute of Medical Research at the Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, London, a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science (whose Vice President he was in 1957 and 1958), and Professor Emeritus of Heidelberg University. He was a member of the Sydney Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

He gained his early experience at the Universities of Breslau and Heidelberg and worked as a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation at Cambridge. He received many honours, among them the Coronation Medal in 1953, the H.G. Smith Medal of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and the James Cook Medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales "for outstanding contributions to human welfare and science in the southern hemisphere." In Rudi's Britannica Australia award for Science it is stated: "Soon after his arrival in Australia in 1935, Dr. Lemberg turned his attention to the study of haematin compounds that are found in practically all living things. Few men have added more to our knowledge of these vitally important substances. The results of the first twenty years of his scientific work are embodied in his book, *Haematin Compounds and Bile Pigments*, of which he is the senior author. This and his later works have placed him among the world's greatest biochemists. The International Conference on Haematin Enzymes held in Canberra in 1959 was a tribute to Australia's status in this field and this was largely due to Dr. Lemberg and his colleagues."

Rudi Lemberg was deeply interested in the relationship between religion and science and wrote and spoke about this relationship. Until his death he retained a child-like gift of wonder which enabled him to share his joy in the world about him, in his scientific work and in his faith with people of all ages.

## *The James Backhouse Lecture*

This is the third in a series of lectures instituted by Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends on the occasion of the establishment of that Yearly Meeting on January 1, 1964. This lecture was delivered in Perth, Western Australia, on January 9, 1966, during the sessions of the Yearly Meeting.

James Backhouse was an English Friend who visited Australia from 1832 till 1837. He and his companion, George Washington Walker, travelled widely, but spent most of their time in Tasmania, then known as Van Diemen's Land. It was through this visit that Quaker meetings were first established in Australia. James Backhouse was a botanist who published full scientific accounts of what he saw, besides encouraging Friends and following up his deep concern for the convicts and for the welfare of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country.

Australian Friends hope that this new series of lectures will bring fresh insights into truth, often with some particular reference to the needs and aspirations of Australian Quakerism.

RICHARD G. MEREDITH, Presiding Clerk  
Australia Yearly Meeting

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## *An age of Imbalance*

About 50 years ago Oswald Spengler wrote a book entitled "Der Untergang des Abendlandes" ("The Decline of the West"),<sup>1</sup> which was much discussed in my early student days. To-day, the recognition that we are living in an age of crisis is so general that in itself it needs no stressing. The word "seeking" in my title shows, however, that my ideas to-day have no resemblance to those of Spengler. For "seeking" is exactly what would appear to Spengler senseless. Cycles of civilization according to him are born, come into maturity, and die, and this is assumed to be an unalterable historical law. I do not believe in unalterable laws in history as being comparable to natural laws. The all-important question for us is not what might happen, but what we, in the position in which we find ourselves are called upon to do in an obviously threatening situation.

I also believe that Spengler's and similar views misinterpret our present situation in two almost opposite directions. On the one hand, they fail to see the unique seriousness of it. It is a global crisis and not only a crisis of the Western civilization which may finally be resolved by others taking over where we have failed. There are no such others. Our civilization is - or certainly soon will be - the global civilization. Russia fully belongs to it, and science is bound to play in it an ever increasing role in the under-developed countries. There are - or certainly there soon will be - no "barbarians" untouched by our crisis from whom a new civilization might arise and flourish on a new basis, as it happened after the fall of Rome; barbarism is in the midst of our civilization. The under-developed nations of to-day have an intense longing for the blessings which our civilization, and in particular our science and technology, might give them. They only wish to share these blessings. A new "barbarism" could only come about in an atomic holocaust; this indeed may bring about in the survivors an unpredictable degree of barbarity, almost that of a new, non-human, biological species.

On the other hand, the prognosticators of doom exaggerate. There never has been a truly balanced age at any time, and once imbalance is recognized, forces are already set in motion to correct and counterbalance it. It was at the beginning of the decline of the Roman Empire that Jesus and Paul laid the foundations of the new civilization which arose in the second Rome, in Ravenna and Byzantium. This developed not only into the mediaeval culture and the cathedrals of Europe,

but finally into our modern civilization, including science, which is now spreading over the whole globe. With Teilhard de Chardin<sup>2</sup> I believe that "the ills which so afflict us are above all growing pains." Perhaps facing them with God's help enable us to see more clearly what we can and must do to help this growth along. Such an attempt was made as early as 1923 by Albert Schweitzer<sup>47</sup> 57 characteristically called "The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization." \*

[\*This chapter of my lecture was written before I had read these two books of Schweitzer. I was amazed to find that this great pioneer had seen 42 years ago, what is now not so difficult to see.]

Of the many causes of our present imbalance I shall mainly stress two which to me appear the central ones, and between which there is perhaps some connection. The first is that in an age of change and insecurity, of which the threat of the atomic bomb is only one, men seek frantically for all kinds of external security, thereby increasing insecurity. Neither a high standard of living in some nations, nor the greater care and protection which the welfare state offers have succeeded in making man feel secure. Nor has the greater security of our personal lives due to the increased domination over disease and greater communal help in natural catastrophes, or insurances apparently had this effect. This is shown by the growing number of psychiatric disorders and anxiety neuroses and their higher frequency in the richest countries and among the wealthy groups. Juvenile delinquency and the rejection of moral sanctions, be it in regard to property or to sex, have more to do with this feeling of insecurity than is often conceded. "If instead of deploring the alleged moral breakdown of the age in which we live, in the field of sexual morality, our mentors would begin to comment on the psychological climate created by the suggestion that we must accept as morally justifiable the obliteration of the world we know, the climate could become a great deal healthier" says MacKinnon in the book on "God, Sex and War."<sup>3</sup> There is a widespread feeling of life's meaninglessness, not only in our youth, but particularly tragic in youth which by nature should be optimistic and more daring than old age. Erich Fromm<sup>4</sup> claims that whosoever insists on safety and security as primary conditions of life, cannot have faith, and there is a disintegration of love in the West. The cause of this Fromm sees in the economic system: At the best, capitalism can foster only exchange fairness, not love, in human relations. Yet, a socialist system in itself would not necessarily put human relations on a better basis and if it suppresses the person under totalitarian rule, on a worse. The great hopes of the religious socialists in the German Weimar republic have not found fulfilment.

Art is a measure of the pulse of the period. It is not reassuring that so much of it is devoted not only to the disharmonious, but to the seamy, sordid and even senseless. There is an obvious imbalance in the increasing time for leisure and sport and the decreasing ability of many to make reasonable and truly re-creative use of it. The feeling of loneliness is only thinly veiled by noisy "Togetherness." Man is becoming more and more estranged from nature. Where the inhabitants of the cities about 30 years ago longed to escape from them into the wilderness, the blessings of which are nowhere richer than in Australia, many now almost fear nature and have become unable to enjoy it. Instead of bending nature with loving care to our needs, the developer and his bulldozer treat it roughly and the boundaries between the cities and the surrounding countryside become choked with rubbish. With pesticides and insecticides we destroy indiscriminately wildlife, birds and fishes and while the destruction here may not yet have reached the degree so vividly described for the United States by Rachel Carson in her book "The Silent Springs," it threatens us, too.

Some of those who cling to the old values, however, do it more out of inertia and social habit than out of real commitment. I believe that it could be a tremendous and perhaps a healthy shock, if the leaders of our churches could look into the hearts of their flock and weigh their true commitment. Personally, I have experienced the ignominious collapse of the German churches in front of the Hitler typhoon, with the exception of a few heroes most of whom found the martyr's death. I am not convinced that the Australian churches including our own religious society would weather a storm of similar intensity much better. Without a rejuvenation of a living faith alive in this world, a steadily growing number of people, and not the worst, will embrace science as their religion, and this not only in the communist countries, but equally strongly in the West and even in such traditionally religious countries as India and the Moslem world.

We find similar symptoms of crisis in the national and international spheres. The Western nations try to make the world safe for democracy, the Communist nations try to safeguard the revolution. Both together succeed in making the world thoroughly unsafe for everybody. Without a critical evaluation of what in their "way of life" is really worth preserving, they are ready to take up arms without any thought on whether or not taking up arms can really preserve what is valuable. "Individuals and nations alike, we deal indiscriminately with real and imaginary values."<sup>57</sup> Our democracy becomes increasingly dubious; true authority is more and more replaced by the tyranny of strong persons, factions or parties. There is a return to intolerance, witchhunts and indoctrination, not only in the totalitarian states. Fascism raises its head expectantly. Millions of graves of

innocent victims, Jews and non-Jews, have had little effect, their deaths begin to be forgotten. In the East, Russia and China are at loggerheads competing to make the world safe for revolution. In this competition the most radical and most foolish advice may finally get the upper hand. Western countries have contributed to this development by excluding China from the United Nations. To-day, India squanders the great moral heritage of Gandhi together with its slender material resources by going to war with Pakistan over Kashmir.

Thus in an age in which the shrinking of the surface of our globe by the rapidity of communications and by the increase of population pressures utterly demands collaboration and compromise, the nations arm against each other and insist on their outdated national sovereignty.<sup>6</sup>

We face a powerful and potentially destructive revolution of the rejected races, yet we shilly-shally on the rate of our concessions. We persist in the perpetuation of the cold war and East and West play out one under-developed nation against the other, instead of collaborating on the enormous problems of helping them to provide for their people a bare sufficiency of food, shelter and medical care. They in turn, immature and frequently unprepared for responsible government, make bad use of their new freedom. In their fight for independence they have been badly infected by our own virus of nationalism. Nobody really doubts that an atomic war cannot solve a single one of the problems except perhaps that of population pressures, yet all nations continue arming. We know that the greater the number of nations possessing nuclear arms, the more impossible it will become to prevent nuclear war, yet more and more nations want to get hold of them. War we know to be intolerable and senseless, yet peace appears equally impossible, unless there is a general revolution of thinking, a revolution of the mind, compared with which even the revolution of the rejected races is a minor phenomenon. We shall have to learn that what hitherto appeared impossible and Utopian, is not only possible but is absolutely essential for the survival of the human race on earth.<sup>7</sup>

This is closely connected with the *second* great cause of the imbalance of our age, perhaps the most crucial one, that between the possibilities of modern science and technology and our inability to use them for reasonable ends, the imbalance between what science can do and should do, and what it is *allowed* to do, again foreseen many years ago by Albert Schweitzer.<sup>57</sup> "The potentialities of science and technology for the benefit of mankind as a whole are almost inconceivably great; but the preparations which we are making for their use and development are pitifully small - Unless this increased control over material



power can be matched by a great moral and spiritual advance, it threatens the catastrophic breakdown of human civilization" (Russell Brain<sup>8a 8b</sup>). The solution of problems such as world hunger, world health and population control require little more scientific knowledge than we already possess, but they cannot be solved by science alone. Governments are not in the hands of scientists. Less than 3% of all Australian politicians (against 25% in Russia) have received any scientific higher education. C. P. Snow<sup>9</sup> speaks of the "two cultures." In his Presidential Address to the Royal Society, London, Sir Howard Florey quotes R. C. Woods<sup>10</sup> "Man steeped in the tradition of empirical investigation undertakes to compete with men versed in the dialectic whose scholarship is heavy with syntax and intrinsically barren of the scientific perspectives of even the social sciences. Men orientated towards the concept of change face men who by tradition are history-orientated." Or as de Chardin would put it, : "The mobilists who conceive the universe as a dynamically evolving one face the immobilists who conceive it as a permanent static one." What is required then, is the bridging of this gulf so that religion and science in harmony can determine a single culture.

I am a scientist, not a medical doctor, but I shall have to proceed somewhat like an idealized G.P. who first listens carefully to the variety of the symptoms of his patient. He sorts them out to find that some are secondary or unimportant, that some require further detailed study by specialists possessing greater knowledge than he has and that others are the really central ones, sometimes those which are not obvious. I shall have to leave the economic and political symptoms largely to specialists, although every citizen in a democracy has the moral obligation to learn as much as he can about them. I shall concentrate upon the parts of the illness which to me appear the central ones and with which I believe to have some familiarity as a scientist and as a Quaker. From this I hope every one of us singly, and the Society of Friends as a whole, may receive some message on what can be done to overcome the illness of our times and to prepare the intellectual, moral and spiritual revolution which is necessary.

### *What is science?*

In spite of the rapidly increasing information about scientific details and results in the press, by wireless and television many people know little what science really is. "How difficult to convey the scientific spirit of seeking which fulfils itself in the tortuous course of progress towards the truth. You will not understand the true spirit of science or of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront," says Eddington.<sup>11</sup> Instead of seeking we may speak of exploring. "In

the life of the spirit we may all start as seekers, but happy are we if we become explorers" (cf.<sup>49</sup>, Nos. 125, 136). Personally I have always felt as an explorer whether in the realm of science, of religion, or as a mountain climber and bushwalker<sup>55</sup>, and have enjoyed it, but I also value the strict and demanding discipline of quantitative thinking and of experimentation in science as well as the discipline of reasoning and living in religion.

The press unfortunately tends to romanticize the findings only and thereby it falsifies science. Every scientist knows, though for reasons of pride he may occasionally forget it, that he stands on the shoulders of numerous predecessors and that, at best, he adds only a few bricks to the enormous building which science represents. Yet he is pictured as a superman who with his own unaided force breaks through a so far impenetrable wall. This "magic of science" is a contradiction in terms. Both science and religion have historically developed out of magic, but in opposition to it. The first scientist was the man who first subjected a magical belief to the test of his own experience; and the first religious man was he who experienced God not as an inimical force in the universe to be placated but as a beneficial power which contacted him personally.

Science is a special way of seeking truth. It is not, as is often stated, inductive, but neither is it based on imagination alone. It is strictly disciplined and controlled imagination, subjected step by step to rigid impersonal testing. The initial imaginative step itself is based on a good deal of factual knowledge. "In science there is a sensitive give and take between thought and action, theory and practice. They are bound together by imagination in a living and lively relationship," says Kenneth Barnes in his Swarthmore Lecture.<sup>12</sup> The initial working hypothesis held on a provisional basis is then subjected to the complex process of verification and falsification (Popper)<sup>13</sup>, in which deductions from the hypothesis are tested. The good scientist tries himself to falsify his hypothesis, the bad one leaves it to his colleagues. Thus scientific falsehood is usually short-lived and only a fool will resort to it intentionally. For the scientist standards are set by his peers; the check is largely external, severe, but not entirely dependent on the character of the scientist, although it requires some strength of character to conceive and maintain a vision of something new and unexpected. For the artist and religious seeker the standards are more dependent on his character. Thus Galileo's decision not to sacrifice his life in order to establish a scientific truth was correct, while Jesus had to sacrifice His life to establish His truth.

Science builds gradually, slowly and accumulatively from the bottom, from the particular to the universal, until time is ripe for generalization by a theory

which later again will be replaced by a wider and more inclusive theory. It does not build from the top by authority, dogma and revealed final truth. Thus there is some similarity between the approach of Quakers and that of scientists. It is probably not by accident that the foundation of the Society of Friends and of the Royal Society of London was almost contemporaneous. We should not, however, overlook one difference. The most exact and exacting way for science to proceed is by experiment. In an experiment the scientist asks nature pointed questions and it is a large part of the ability of the scientist to devise questions so that unequivocal answers are forthcoming. There is one great difference between experiment and experience: If one experiment fails and a great many *do* fail - it can be repeated and a better question can be asked. Experimental supports for religious views are impossible. There are, however, also large areas in science which cannot be based on experiment, but must be based on a wide correlation of observed facts, e.g., geology. Experiential, not experimental religion is Quaker belief and there are many factors, qualitative even more than quantitative ones, which enter into experience.

Modern science is vastly different from the "billiard ball" universe which went as far back as Epicurus (300 B.C.), but which died in the 20th century with the quantum and relativity theories. One may even doubt, whether science deals only with the "material" aspects, when matter is now seen as condensed energy and physical reality as composed of events rather than of particles. Science deals with their correlation rather than with the "true nature" of particles and energy. Its determinism is no longer the causal determinism of the individual event, but the statistical "determinism" of - theoretically at least - uncaused events such as the breakdown of a radioactive atom. Those who readily poke fun at "mere abstractions" should remember that atomic nuclei, protons, neutrons, electrons etc, are such abstractions; yet they have led to atomic power and the terrifying reality of the atomic bomb.

It is another erroneous belief that scientific theories are subject to radical alterations. When Eddington first proposed hydrogen fusion as the source of energy in stars in 1920, his critics argued that this could not be so on the grounds of Newton's laws. Eddington answered: "We do not argue with the critic who urges that the stars are not hot enough for the process, we tell him to go and find a hotter place" (meaning, of course, hell). His critics were saved from this fate by modern quantum theory which showed that the factual was indeed theoretically possible. Any new theory must not only accommodate new facts, but also all the previously known ones; the old theory then becomes a part of the wider new one.

Thus there is no real destruction; the old verities become approximations, often perfectly satisfactory ones, in the new theory ("principle of correspondence").

Scientists have often been accused of destroying the wholeness of their subject by analytical dissection. There is, however, an obvious limit to what can be learned by contemplation of the undifferentiated whole, while detailed analysis has given us all our scientific understanding. It is difficult but not impossible after a far-reaching analysis to restore the whole by re-synthesis. To use an example from my own field of biochemistry. What would biochemistry be without a detailed knowledge of separate enzymes? We must know them before we can resynthesize the multiple enzyme systems on which important biological processes such as cellular respiration and photosynthesis depend, and gradually we learn to avoid the many pitfalls in their isolation.

Russell Brain<sup>14</sup> mentions four other prejudices: Firstly, the confusion of science with scientism, the philosophical theory that science is the only way to truth. Secondly, a confusion between science and technology, which are the fruits of science, the common mistake of politicians. The benefits of scientific discoveries can be made far more readily available to under-developed nations than the spirit of scientific research from which they grew and without which the fruits will wither.<sup>15</sup> Thirdly, the confusion between the scientist as man and citizen, and science as a method of finding truths, a confusion found even among scientists. The destruction has been pointed out by myself,<sup>16</sup> and is now supported by Castle<sup>17</sup> as well as by Brain. Towards society the scientist has not only the general duties as a citizen, but also those of a specially trained citizen. Such organisations as "Pugwash," the "Society for Social Responsibility of Science" or the German physicists and all the Scientists who subscribed to Linus Pauling's appeal to the United Nations, have tried to fulfil this obligation. Scientists have not escaped guilt in their contribution to the development of the atomic bomb, but everyone who has read Robert Jungk's book,<sup>18</sup> will see that it was tragic rather than wilful guilt. Finally, Brain mentions the fear of all too great controlling powers, not only over atomic energy, biological and genetic control, but worst of all, the control over the human mind ("brainwashing"), described by Aldous Huxley and Orwell. This fear is justified, but it is not the scientist himself in whose hands the danger of such control lies, but the politician, the government and at least in democratic countries, the general public of which the scientist forms only a part.

What then is the relationship between science and religion? Science is not without its own faith, faith in the rationality, intelligibility and cohesion of the universe, faith in its dynamic rather than static nature, faith that what we perceive is no mere illusion and that the object no less than the subject of perception is real and that patterns persist even when its components change. We believe that human and animal bodies are real despite the fact that its material perpetually changes in metabolism and that much faster than we had imagined. Similarly the centre of personality remains constant despite the continuous flow of perceptions, feelings and ideas. We can thus understand, why science could come to its full development only in Christian countries in which the reality and value of the person was accepted and not in Far Eastern countries in which, e.g. in the Buddhist religion, any permanence is believed to be a deceptive illusion.

We have no creed in science, but we are not lukewarm in our beliefs, as I hope the members of the Society of Friends too are not. Rejection of creed and dogma is not inconsistent with a living faith. Yet, like Castle,<sup>17</sup> I am suspicious of any attempt to introduce non scientific valuations, be they religious or aesthetic, into science, as some writers do who describe science as a religious activity. This can be accepted only in the sense that whatever man does in the spirit of genuine and disinterested enquiry is religious activity. However, a mathematical formula remains correct independent of whether it has been found by elegant or clumsy procedure, even though the man who established it by an elegant procedure is the better mathematician. Simplicity has been mentioned as an aesthetic value in science, but Whitehead,<sup>19</sup> said: "Seek simplicity and mistrust it." Did not the earlier astronomers prefer the circle to the ellipse as the course of the planets or the sun, because it was "more perfect"? No biochemist would agree that the complex interaction of metabolic cycles in living organisms is simple.

Sometimes there is a confusion between the so-called "natural laws" of metaphysicians and natural scientific laws. "I am sure that those who take this view have never understood what a scientific law means. What they would welcome, is not science, but pseudoscience" says Eddington. "The suggestion that the spiritual world should be ruled by laws of allied character is as preposterous as that a nation should be ruled by laws of grammar."

The scientist, as a scientist, deals with a part of the universe, that of quantitative regularities. The only values within the scope of science are truth and error as judged by logical consistency and conformity to fact.<sup>20</sup> In an often quoted

statement,<sup>16 17</sup> Einstein said: "Science can only ascertain what is, but not what should be and outside its domain value judgments of all kinds remain necessary. Religion, on the other hand, deals only with the evaluation of human thought and action, it cannot justifiably speak of facts and relationships between facts. If one conceives of religion and science according to these definitions, then a conflict between them appears impossible." Eddington,<sup>11</sup> qualifies this somewhat: "I am not able to agree entirely with the assertion made by the scientific philosopher that science being solely concerned with correct and colourless descriptions has nothing to do with significance and values. But there is this much in it: If we are to present science as a self-containing scheme, owing nothing to any judgments we may have formed by methods for which science does not take responsibility, then no doubt significances and values must be ruled out of its scope." I shall return to this later when discussing the position of man in evolution.

Have we then to accept dualism rather than monism, scientific or religious? Modern science knows the needs for a degree of dualism inside the field of one of its most exact branches, that of physics, i.e., in the complementarity of the theories of light as waves or as streams of particles. No scientist doubts that light is one and the same thing, yet certain of its properties can be understood by the one, others by the other theory. I believe that scientific, aesthetic and religious ways to truth are complementary (cf. also Oppenheimer<sup>21</sup> and Castle,<sup>17</sup>). We build the scientific world of mathematical symbols, the spiritual world out of direct, immediate experiences of our mind. There is a great tendency in man to unify everything, and it is a fine tendency, yet it has done much harm in what I have called "premature monism<sup>16,</sup>" scientific, religious or political.

Science cannot make the claim of being the only way into truth. Its contributions to our knowledge of the good and beautiful, important though they are, are only those of a hand-maiden. Modern musical instruments, paints and materials as well as theories on harmony, perspective and stress, are essential for symphonies, pictures and houses, but they do not constitute them. An increasing amount of scientific advice may be necessary for finding the best way to the solution of ethical problems in our modern world, but purely scientific ethics remain utilitarian and relativistic. This is often hidden by ethical values, naively accepted as self-evident and incontestable (have we forgotten Hitler who did contest them?). The ethical character is inseparable from the act itself, and different from a scientific experiment one's ethical decision cannot be suspended on account of insufficient evidence. The meeting of the I and the Thou (Buber<sup>22 23</sup>) in its immediacy is different from the meeting of the I and the It, the world.

Science deliberately accepts limitations by abstaining from value judgments and thereby gains its objectivity. There are, however, large realms in which valuations are essential, even as we shall see in the biological sciences, still more so in the human and social sciences. This does *not* mean that science has nothing to contribute in these fields, but it does mean that the problems encountered in them cannot be solved by science alone.

To give an example: Modern anthropologists studying the factual bases of different so-called primitive civilizations find that these work on a considerable variety of bases, some quite different from those we should accept. These anthropologists seem to be quite impartial, as scientists ought to be. But, when you read between the lines, you notice that they cannot help bringing in their own valuations - and this is as it ought to be. One-sided factual treatment of human relationships would require an impossible relativism. The observation of "what is" does not do away with the question "what ought to be" in human affairs.

One can discover similar intrusions of hidden valuations in Marxism, where the hatred of the exploiter contradicts the claim of Marx to give a scientific analysis while, in fact, it is based on the righteous scorn of a Jewish prophet. One can discover hidden intrusion of Christian ethics in the scientific evolutionism of Waddington.<sup>24</sup>

*Scientism*, the elevation of science into a religion, transforms science into pseudoscience and pseudoreligion. Study of the world as a physicochemical machine provides valuable insights, but does not imply acceptance of the dogma that the universe is nothing but such a machine. It might be of great advantage to all, if we could forget for a century the use of words such as "nothing but," "only," "merely," the hallmarks of the *reductive* philosophy of scientism, which often turn correct statements into absurdities; and on the other hand forego the use of the words "final," "ultimate" and "absolute," the hallmarks of *seductive* theology.

We must not here evade the difficult problems of chance, purpose and evil. Few modern people are prepared to accept the meaningfulness of every single event. A religion which maintains that every single event in nature is individually meaningful and an act of God (even the death of a sparrow) quite apart from raising insoluble moral problems, has little chance of survival in a world in which science has shown that dozens of human diseases, many incurable and fatal, are caused by unfavourable chance mutations in our genetic apparatus. I believe that evasive or moralising answers which some Christians give in such tragedies as the death of a child by leukaemia, estrange many people from our faith. They rightly

suspect that science, while having no complete answers, has yet more profound answers to offer. I do not mean by this the hope of cure which science may, but often does not, provide. More important is that scientists know that such evils are the inescapable price which complex and highly developed life has to pay for the good of its high development. Would man really prefer to his life of birth and death with all the potentialities which this involves, the immortal life of an amoeba which lives without individuality or possibility of development? This is as de Chardin puts it:<sup>25</sup> "A false interpretation of Christian resignation, together with a false idea of Christian detachment . . . leads to an accusation or even suspicion, which is more effective at this moment in preventing the conversion of the world than all the objections from science and philosophy. What insulates entire blocks of humanity from the influences of the Church is the suspicion that our religion makes its followers inhuman."

George Fox saw the ocean of darkness and death, but he also saw an infinite ocean of light and love flow over it. Though he wisely admonished us not to dwell on evil, I believe that had he lived today, he would have understood the importance of what science has contributed to our insight into the nature of evil, avoidable and unavoidable, and as we shall see later also to our insight into the ocean of light. For modern science knows that regularity and purpose can grow out of individual chance events and that the whole process of evolution depends on the interplay of chance and purpose.

Purposiveness in man is no mere "epiphenomenon," a word coined to deny its reality. Russell Brain<sup>8</sup> says with some irony: "I hope that philosophers will explain to me how my own mind - provided that they are unfashionable enough to allow me one - is to be explained in terms of one of its own ideas. - Are we characters in our own dreams?" Most of the leading neuro-physiologists from Sherrington to Eccles and Brain and some psychologists (e.g., C. J. Jung) are, or have been, dualists. "Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience; all else is remote inference" says Eddington<sup>11</sup>, though the inference need not be wrong. Any purposiveness in machines, even in modern computers, has been inserted into them by man. There is chance *and* purpose in the life of man. Even scientism, be it in the form of Marxism or Evolutionism, assumes without acknowledging it, a meaningful purpose, be it in society or in evolution.

Are we really sufficiently tolerant, if the scientist admits religious speculations without taking them quite seriously or if theologians treat science in the same way? Was not Galileo's fight, the tragic first estrangement between science and religion, directed against this pseudo-tolerance which has later kept



science and religion in water-tight compartments (cf. Gibson<sub>26</sub>)? Should it not be a task sympathetic to Quaker understanding to build a better bridge, a bridge such as Russell Brain describes in his 1944 Swarthmore Lecture<sub>6</sub>: "The bridge must be so constructed that the thinker can pass over it in thought to a richer religious experience and the intuitive moving in the opposite direction can bring his more direct knowledge to the inspiration of thought and action."

## *Evolution and Religion*

In 1861, the story of evolution, Darwinian evolution versus Genesis, became the second point of estrangement between religion and science in the fight between Bishop Wilberforce and Thomas Huxley, the grandfather of Julian and Aldous. Today, it appears possible that evolution may become the focal point of rapprochement in spite of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has repudiated Teilhard de Chardin. It is not more than a few years ago that in a scientific discussion on evolution the fact that man himself was a product of evolution was simply accepted without the realisation that this raised certain problems. Darwinism, the idea of the automatic selection of the fittest for survival by the environment, had been combined with the modern knowledge of the mutation of genes, the carriers of heredity. The knowledge of gene action was based on Mendel's early, simple, but shrewd observations on the properties of peas in his monastery garden, but modern genetics has become a great science and genes well-documented complicated chemical entities. This is still the governing theory, but it now appears that it is not in absolute contradiction to the long rejected Lamarckian ideas of inheritance of acquired characters. True to its scientific character, it finds no grounds for a preference of man over tiger, tapeworm, or tetanus bacillus; all of these life forms have successfully survived and all longer than man. "Orthogenesis," a direct purposive development of higher forms of life is denied by most biologists.

However, what cannot be really denied is that there has been an obviously growing complexity and increasing awareness amounting in man to self-awareness, of living creatures so that higher and lower forms of life must be conceded. Without this growing complexity the human brain and with it human self-awareness and learning would have been impossible. There has not been a unique and straightforward development in one direction only. Blind alleys and backslidings have occurred as in the evolution of religion, but a direction cannot be denied. Only recently, leading evolutionists, notably Julian Huxley, have pointed out that with the coming of man evolution has taken a new turn. Learning

and inventions have made man, to a large extent, independent of the naked biological necessities of environment. Other living forms, too, are increasingly subject to man's rather than to environmental selection. Thus, a major part of present evolution has become man's cultural evolution or as de Chardin calls it, the evolution of the noosphere, the sphere of knowing and learning.

It is a sign of the hour that Julian Huxley has written the introduction to Teilhard de Chardin's "remarkable book by a remarkable man," "The Phenomenon of Man."<sup>27</sup> This French Jesuit priest, noted anthropologist and co-discoverer of the Peking man, but also poet and saint<sup>25</sup>, has neither been accepted by his Church which forbade the publication of his books during his lifetime - he died in 1955 - nor by some of his fellow biologists who suspect "orthogenesis" (see above). However, as Huxley says: "He has forced theologians to view their ideas in the new perspective of evolution and scientists to see the spiritual implications of their knowledge. He has both clarified and unified our visions of reality. In the light of that new comprehension it is no longer possible to maintain that science and religion must operate in thought-tight compartments or concern separate sectors of life; they are both relevant to the whole of human existence. The religiously minded can no longer turn their backs upon the natural world, or seek escape from its imperfections in a supernatural world; nor can the materialistically minded deny importance to spiritual experience and religious feeling."

De Chardin's synthesis is unique in its width, comparable to that of the first chapter of Genesis. Evolution includes not only the physico-chemical development of the earth before life came, but also the development of human thought and invention, his spiritual development and the development of society. In this wider evolution man v stands at a unique point, in which the *divergence* of the living world filling all the corners of the globe with creatures specially adapted to their environment, the "biosphere" on the earth's crust, is replaced by - *convergence* towards a human spiritual unifying "noosphere" which is now also filling the surface of our planet. Science and religion are both activities of that noosphere. Mankind is no longer a Utopian dream, but inescapable necessity and reality. Modern man has become conscious of this movement of creative evolution which carries him along. "Our modern souls see and feel today a world such as in size, interconnectedness and potentialities escaped all the great men of antiquity." There is still fear of this metamorphosis—"we have only just cast off the last moorings which held us to the neolithic age." There are even "threats of strike in the noosphere," attempts of the immobilists to block the increasing union and planetisation of the noosphere. But unless we fall into the fatal error of

confusing the individual with the person and end up with impersonal millions in rank and file - Aldous Huxley and Orwell have foreseen this threat - the only universe capable of containing the human person is an irreversibly personalised noosphere tending towards a hyperpersonal endpoint. This omega-point is a goal of the future, but already it exerts its attraction in the strongly personal, yet hyperpersonal Christian message. Christian love is a new state of consciousness and also a necessary condition for the unification of the noosphere. Only the meaning which the omega-point gives to human endeavour can maintain the elan necessary for its growth. Evolution thus proceeds between God, the creator, the alpha-point and the omega-point which Chardin identifies with the cosmic Christ of John and Paul. "The kingdom of God is not only a big family, but a prodigious biological operation. Though frightened for a moment by evolution, the Christian now perceives that what it offers him is something great; man is not seen as the static centre of the world, as he long believed himself to be, but as the axis and the leading shoot of evolution, which is something much finer."

Scientists have raised the objection that this is no longer science. Perhaps Russell Brain is right when he says that at the foundation of an evolutionary theory of values lies an act of faith which cannot altogether be justified by reason. Theologians, even Tillich, have found him too optimistic. Does all this matter? De Chardin has had the great courage to unite his scientific knowledge and his Christian beliefs in a *new mythology* which may be destined to become the mythology of the 20th century, seeing creation and evolution as a meaningful whole. This may one day replace the hellenistic mythology to which so much of traditional Christian thinking has become bound, but which is no longer acceptable to modern man. We can, I believe, express the basic Christian experiences and the content of the Christian message in terms of this mythology, perhaps better than in those of the pre-scientific, hellenistic mythology which only some of us can translate into modern idiom. It will thus be more acceptable to present man. What we believe to be the nature and role of man in evolution will have decisive influence on our behaviour towards our fellow men and towards the challenge of our age. The optimism of de Chardin appears at first sight to be diametrically opposed to the pessimism of Schweitzer<sup>47</sup>, who accepted the impossibility of a rational "world-view" and took refuge in a mystical "life-view" based on the reverence for life. The difference is, however, more apparent than real. Schweitzer's rejection was that of a *merely* rational world-view, the only one that he then knew. De Chardin's world-view is not *merely* rational and, in my opinion, surpasses as a vision that of Schweitzer, as it unites world- and life-view.

## *A new reformation?*

The scientific revolution has freed the imagination of scientists from the tight medieval systems of thought. Do we still need a similar revolution in the field of religion?

The reformation of Luther and Calvin has remained incomplete. It has tended to replace the authority of pope by that of the Bible. In 1600, Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake. His conceptions were 350 years before a time where they could become acceptable. He believed in an ever loving, acting and self-effectuating God, immanent in an infinite universe to whom the mind of man can ascend by the study of nature and the interrogation of man's conscience. Although the Quakers knew nothing of Bruno, he must be thought of as one of our forerunners.

George Fox and the early Quakers took for granted the systematic theology of their time, but did not pay much attention to such "notions." They went along more or less successfully filling new wine into old skins. Thus, many Friends may not see the needs for new skins. They tend to underestimate, I believe, the importance of clear thinking in religious life, because they know rightly that it is not all-important. But I agree with Russell Brain who warned as early as 1944<sub>6</sub> that the Society of Friends is likely to suffer increasingly from one-sidedness if it stresses the intuitive and emotional side of religion to the exclusion of the rational.

Christian religion often fits experience into patterns provided for by its dogma which is couched in a language meaningless to most people today. If it continues in this way, it will force an ever-widening breach with science and with modern man and render itself less and less able to influence conduct and events. It will then offer an illusory refuge for the frightened. It is this religion which Bonhoeffer attacks and rejects.<sup>28 29</sup> To many opponents of religion it appears as if religion could be left with a steadily decreasing realm of what science has not yet learned to master, but about which it learns more every day, problems like the origin of life on earth or the origin of the human mind. God then becomes "the god of the gaps." Finally, nothing will remain of this master-magician, the god of supernatural miracles who arbitrarily interferes with the rules of his own creation, like a magic demon replacing causality. A book by the Sydney zoology professor, Charles Birch<sup>30</sup>, is a valuable contribution to this subject. Perhaps we must be grateful to scientific materialism if it destroys this god of the gaps.

This is what Goethe saw a long time ago:\*

"What were a God who pushes from outside only,  
Who runs the universe in a circle round his finger?  
It suits Him to move the world from inside,  
To harbour nature in Himself and Himself in nature.  
So that what in Him lives and weaves and is  
Can never His Power and His Spirit miss."<sup>31</sup>

\*Was war ein Gott, tier nur von aussen stiesse,  
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse?  
Ihm ziemts die Welt im Innern zu bewegen  
Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu hegen,  
Sodass was in ihm lebt und webt und ist,  
Nie seine Kraft, nie seinen Geist vermisst.

In his Swarthmore Lecture<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Barnes says: "The idea of Jesus as the fulfilment of a prophesy, a predestined sacrifice, makes nonsense of the Incarnation, precisely because it implies that He was never a freely acting responsible human being. It makes Him a puppet. This belongs to the thought-forms of magic, no longer our own." Modern protestant theology finds its way back to Jesus, the god-filled man, at work in *this* world, who was also the Christ in whom George Fox found his refuge. Jesus had considered himself the fulfiller of the Jewish Law, to extend its hearing over the whole dimension of human existence and to deepen it, "closing," as Buber puts it, "the Jewish cycle." One has to admit some justification of Buber's claim that Christianity later opened the cycle into a hyperbola, in so far as Christian re-erection of the hellenistic Greek dualism of the sacred and the profane had the result that Christianity did not find the last seriousness in the face of the tasks of the world and was tempted to a flight from them.

A similar insight lies at the basis of the new "secularism" of modern theology. As every revolution it may tend occasionally to overstress, but only spiritual blindness can fail to see the sincere seeking in it. It is by no means restricted to Protestantism, where it is led by Barth<sup>32</sup>, Bonhoeffer<sup>28</sup>, Bultmann<sup>33</sup>, Tillich<sup>34</sup> and Bishop Robinson<sup>35</sup>, but is found also in Roman Catholicism (de Chardin<sup>25</sup>, Maritain<sup>36</sup>, Russian Orthodox Christianity (Berdyae<sup>v</sup><sup>37</sup>) and Judaism (Buber<sup>22</sup>). By allowing the separation of the sacred and the religious spheres from the secular, the Churches have in fact resigned domination of the earth to purely secular interests and have, in general, been allied to structures of the past. They

have withdrawn into a religious seclusion ineffective outside the circle of the convinced, and not even very effective inside it. When it came to a real collision with secular powers as in Nazi Germany, the Churches were unable to prevent the interference of the political powers with their secluded domain (cf. e.g. Karl Barth<sup>38</sup>). "Our period has decided for a secular world. That was a great and much-needed decision. It gave consecration and holiness to our daily life and work" (Tillich). Perhaps one may say better that we hope that it will give this consecration. According to Tillich "Religion is not a special function of man's spiritual life, but it is the *dimension of depth*. It is the essence of religious perversion when worship becomes a realm into which to withdraw from the world, to be with God.<sup>39</sup> Buber's statement on worship (see p.44) is quite similar. To be religious in this sense is, in fact, to be disobedient (Bonhoeffer). To be Christian should be to be truly human, to undergo the real tension of being obedient in this world and to be open to the brother. All too often religion hides our brother and then "religion" can hide as nothing else can do the face of God (Buber). For the good religious people of His time, the Pharisees, Jesus was shockingly irreligious. Separation from and enmity towards life is part of the Manichaeian heresy (300 A.D.) which was officially condemned by the Church, yet has taken firm root in Christianity. For Bonhoeffer Jesus is the "man for others" rather than a mythological figure in a theological drama.

Much of this will have - or at least ought to have - a familiar ring to Quakers and we should rejoice that such voices are now heard in the larger churches where they will find a greater audience, except perhaps for the fact that most of the local churches are still about 100 years behind these theological leaders<sup>30</sup>. Have we not always insisted that our whole lives should be sacramental and that our faith should be a dimension of depth penetrating our workdays, rather than being a separate Sunday world?

I believe that "secularism" is a sound and necessary counterbalance to "religiosity," but it must not be accepted as a new idolatry. Not everything in life can become sacramental. Apart from this there remains what Tillich (cf.<sup>34</sup>) vol. III) calls "the ambiguities of life." There *is* a place for temporary withdrawal in quiet worship and there is a place for the Law. Moreover, while our work must be in this world and for our brother, it must be in a world which has meaning for us. Can the call of Jesus still be heard in a meaningless and godless world?

Superficially, Karl Barth appears to be on an opposite pole to Bonhoeffer, because he has sometimes overstressed the "absolute" difference between the realms of God and that of culture, but in fact there is much in common. Like the

prophets Barth fought against attempts to secure God by means of cult. Faith to him too is responding to a living God in the daily life of the world. If religious observances stand in the way of the immediacy of God's relationship, they are idolatry; thus Barth, like us, is suspicious of special sacraments.

It was Bultmann who first stressed the great influence of hellenistic Greek mythology, already noticeable in the synoptic gospels, on the development of Christian thought in the first centuries after Christ. Much of this, nature miracles, virgin birth, resurrection of a killed god, atonement by a scapegoat and outright witchdoctor manipulations, as in the story of the Gadarene swine, are the cosmology of a prescientific age which is no longer acceptable. Christian faith must be freed from it by "demythologizing." It is not clear to me whether this means that religion should be freed from any myths - if so I do not agree, nor did Barth and Bonhoeffer - or only freed from the error of taking a mythos as factual truth. In the latter sense the great religious personalities of all ages, the Jewish prophets, Buddha, Zarathustra and Jesus have been demythologizers. Life is too full of mystery to disallow poetical mythology. Bultmann shows that the mythological concepts of the Gospels hide from us the historical Jesus, but does it really hide what is essential in Him? And is the Christ of the message, the "kerygma," on whom Bultmann wants to concentrate, not veiled in the same way? H. J. Cadbury<sup>40</sup> says "I believe rightly that a Christ as a mere figure in the imagination drama of theology is as useless as a mere figure in history, unless the theology can be brought up to date. Why, if we understand what are our problems today should we bother to connect them even remotely with so arbitrary and fanciful a structure as traditional theology, why not with modern literature and psychology? The Society of Friends . . . did revolt from excessive bibliolatry and from the christology that concentrated on what happened in the first century. In its own way, it tried to reproduce in current experience biblical experience." This remains, indeed, I believe, our task.

The protestant theologian who probably is most influential is Paul Tillich. I do not find it essential to accept the whole basis of his ontological philosophy, but even without it there remains much to be profoundly grateful for. His thinking has influenced mine for more than a generation. Friends will best approach him by his sermons<sup>39 41</sup> rather than by his philosophical writings<sup>42 43</sup> or his systematic theology<sup>34</sup>, important and full of original ideas as these are. Modern man, according to Tillich, is no longer much concerned with sin and death, but much more with meaninglessness and this his existential anxiety must be taken seriously and has nothing to do with neurotic fear. God is not *a* supernatural being, apart from and distant from man, but the ground of man's and all being. To

understand this as meaning a realm below in contrast to heaven above is wilful misinterpretation. For Tillich as for Robinson, who is his interpreter, religion is of value only if it penetrates the whole of man's existence and becomes his ultimate concern. In contrast to irreligious existentialism, however, man is not alone in a meaningless world. God is the God who appears when the God of undoubted acceptance has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt. It is then that man can accept forgiveness and become a centred person. Man can even guess what God's task for him is in society at a given time in history (Kairos). Thus God is dynamic, not only static. Meaning in life cannot be anything less than personal.

### *Christian Humanism*

Differentiation between religion and humanism is not as clear-cut as some assume, except from that type of humanism, better called biologism, which considers man a mere animal and not an animal seeking meaning and God, able to transcend himself and able to question the power of his reason. The reductionist humanism of the first type cannot be reconciled with religion, but the second can. The authentic human being does not exist as an isolated monad, but in the encounter with his fellow men and through it with God.

There is a great deal of agreement between thinkers of different types of religion. Maritain:<sup>36</sup> "It is in vain to assert the dignity and vocation of human personality if we do not strive to transform the conditions that oppress these; strive to deal so that men can live worthily and gain their bread in honour. The human person is a member of society as a greater whole, but not to the whole extent of his being."

Tillich and de Chardin distinguish between individual and person. So does Berdyaev:<sup>37</sup> "I call humanism the recognition of the highest value in man in the life of the universe and with it the recognition of his creative vocation. The crisis of man and humanism which is connected with it cannot be resolved except on the basis of a new Christian humanism." Berdyaev warmly pleads for giving up the Manichaeism which divides the world into the good and the evil and finds the good and the evil only on one side, whether in the communist or in the "free" nations. Even atheism does not exclude man from humanist concern. Buber says: "When he too who abhors the name and believes himself to be godless, gives his whole being to address the 'Thou' of his life, as a Thou that cannot be limited by another, he addresses God. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the Eternal Thou." George Fox, I vaguely remember, said once: "Every man has a



word of God for you and is a word of God for you," and Albert Schweitzer: "Every man is an object of concern for us just because he is a man."<sup>57</sup>

Here is a statement of an Australian Anglican clergyman: "We have to recognise that it is required of us that we do not impose Christianity as a metaphysical formula. We must guarantee and fight for an open secular world in which we have no advantage over anybody else, and claim no rights over anybody else and in which we proclaim the Christian truth in the situation of complete equality with the neighbour assuming no right because we have the truth."<sup>44</sup> If we do this, we shall indeed remove a stumbling block which closes the approach to the truth of Christ for many a humanist who recognises that man must transcend himself (cf. e.g. <sup>45</sup>). So that Martin Buber's great hope may be fulfilled that now a dialogue may begin from open heart to open heart.

Should not we, the Friends, be in the best position to foster and keep alive this dialogue. It is perhaps not quite easy to speak a language equally acceptable to Christians bound emotionally to the traditional mythology of the New Testament and to those to whom the new language of the secular theology appeals or to Christian humanists who receive this new language with a sense of liberation. However, the early Friends 300 years ago were not afraid of accepting new symbols and found many of the truths which now reappear in new dress. In some aspects at least, Friends have made real what modern theologians are now recognizing as urgent needs: the universal priesthood of the believer, the equal role of men and women and the God who moves the world from inside. Friends should therefore be able to recognize these truths in their new form and to play the mediators. Should we not also be particularly sensitive to the fact that the new frequently appears scandalous? Have not early Friends, has not Christ himself, suffered for this?

It is true that the deepest can often be only inadequately expressed in words and inadequately grasped by unaided reason, but man is a rational being and we have to make our stand in the world of intellect. Have we been too anxious to endanger our unity in essentials by withholding too much from intellectual discussion? Is this perhaps *our* sin of seeking security?

### *Immortality and Eternity*

Modern man faces his death with less concern and many no longer believe in their individual immortality. This must not be confused with a disbelief in

eternity. Eternity is not an awfully long time, but a timeless dimension active here and now, under the aspect of which life should be lived here and now. Bonhoeffer calls it the "beyond in the midst of our life," a depth of reality reached not on the borders, but in the centre. In his "New Being" Tillich<sup>41</sup> says: "Resurrection is not an event that might happen in some remote future, but it is the power of the New Being to create life out of death, here and now, to-day and to-morrow. Where there is New Being, *there* is resurrection, namely the creation into eternity out of every moment of time. Resurrection happens now, or it does not happen at all."

I believe that our personal entity will be preserved only in the sight of God in our contributions, however small, to God's world, but will thus be preserved for eternity. Thus de Chardin raises the question of the survival of our achievements :<sup>25</sup> "Will not the work itself of our mind, of our hearts and of our hands, our achievement, what we are bringing into being - will not this too in some sense be eternalized and saved?" "Man ... by his fidelity must build, starting with the most natural territory of his own self, a work, an opus, into which something enters from all the elements of the earth. He makes his own soul throughout all his earthly days; and at the same time he collaborates in another work, in another opus, which infinitely transcends, while at the same time it narrowly determines, the perspectives of his individual achievement, the completing of the world. Creation still continues significantly - that is ultimately the meaning and value of our acts, the will to succeed, a certain passionate delight in the work to be done, form an integral part of our creaturely fidelity."

The mystic may have a direct experience of eternity, but even the sober historian must view history from the aspect of eternity or else remain a mere collector of documents and data.

We may be able to face our individual death with equanimity, but can we, should we face with the same equanimity the premature atomic death of the human race with all its strivings and potentialities? I feel that there is something wrong with a mentality which accepts this possibility and bases its acceptance on the belief in life after death. This attitude, e.g. of Jaspers<sup>46</sup>, appears to me disturbingly wrong.

### *The New Morality*

Albert Schweitzer<sup>47</sup> has convincingly demonstrated that a purely natural ethic is unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church has sought

security in its solid building of moral theology with eternal and absolute "natural laws," but again security has proved deceptive. Have these presumably immutable laws helped or hindered the solving of real problems, e.g. those of the population increases which make giving help to under-developed nations like pouring water into a sieve? Has the Catholic Church solved its own problems of poverty, immorality and ignorance in countries where it is all-powerful? Is divorce always wrong? Is man made for the Sabbath or the Sabbath for man? Is interference with conception always wrong? Even the Catholic clergy is no longer sure. Why is it wrong to kill an unborn child, but not to kill innocent people in a so-called "just" war? Have the churches played their role in attacking the great moral crimes of past and present age, exploitation, lust for power, pride and hypocrisy in the national and international field, or have they preferred to withdraw comfortably into the narrow field of sexual morality and alcohol? Or why does "live in sin" mean what it means? "Nowhere has the bankruptcy of the idea of sin been more evident than in the churches' ineffective pronouncements about sexual waywardness." (Kenneth Barnes)<sup>12</sup>. This type of morality can "hide for us the face of the brother"<sup>23</sup> or sister. This is the reason why the booklet "Towards a Quaker View of Sex" has been widely welcomed as a liberating act. It restored a sense of proportion and confronted the narrow moralists with the compassion of Christ who rejected the priestly attitude to sin, who embraced Magdalen and pardoned the adulteress. "Jesus knew that without the abundance of heart nothing great can happen. A religion within the limits of reasonableness is a mutilated religion. Calculating love is no love at all."

I have some reservations, however, against a purely situational ethics "with nothing prescribed except love" (Robinson, p.116).<sup>35</sup> Ethical rules are useful and they should be accepted in the sense of the preamble of our book "Christian faith and practice in the experience of the Society of Friends<sup>49</sup>," "not as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with the measure of light, which is pure and holy, may be guided ... for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth light" (1656). As Quakers we put our faith not in traditional judgments but in the accessibility of Grace and the Will of God in every situation in our own world.

*Mysticism and Quaker Worship;  
the Inner Light and Revelation*

One may ask: What then is left of religion? and answer in the same way as Buber:<sup>23</sup> Everything that really matters; the God who sends as He sent Abraham and who fetches His prophets wherever He finds them, and man who responds to His call in responsibility as did Jesus. Has not Jesus said that everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on the two commandments of loving God and the neighbour (Matthew 22, 37-40)?

The mysticism of men like George Fox, Albert Schweitzer<sup>57</sup> and Martin Buber has little to do with the esoteric mysticism of the Gnostics which is still close to magic, the claim that special insights become available to whosoever drowns his individual person in the undifferentiated whole. Rational mysticism transcends reason, but does not reject reason. It is the mysticism of *immediacy* which makes us begin our worship in silent waiting for the presence of God. This worship should never be divorcing ourselves from the world, and silence does not guarantee God's presence in our midst, but is only meant to make it possible.

This is what Buber says on worship:

"The real dealing of man with God has the world not only as its place, but also as its subject. God speaks to men in the things and beings which He sends into their life. Man answers by his actions on these things and beings. Every specific worship is in essence only the ever renewed preparation and consecration of his dealing with God on the world.

But it is the prime danger, possibly the most extreme danger and temptation for man, that something separates itself from the human side of the relationship, becomes independent, closes itself off and replaces the real relationship.

What gains such independence can be the form in which man consecrates the world to God, cult and sacrament - now they are no longer consecration of the lived workday, but its replacement; life in the world and worship run side by side, without connection. But the "God" of this worship is no longer God, it is imagination, the real partner is no longer present, the attitudes and postures of the relationship strike the empty air.

Or what makes itself independent can be the accompanying circumstances of the soul's relationship, devotion, meditation, ecstasy. What was intended to lead to proving oneself in the fullness of life, is cut off from it. The soul wishes only to be engaged with God, as if He desired that one should not exercise one's love to Him

on His world. Now the soul thinks that the world has disappeared between her and God, but with the world God Himself has disappeared, only the soul is there, alone. What she calls God, is only a construction, what she believes to be a dialogue is only a monologue with divided roles, the real partner of the relation is absent."

While the first warning probably concerns other Christians more than the Friends, the second should be taken to heart most seriously by us.

Dogma according to Buber is the most exalted form of invulnerability against revelation. "Revelation will tolerate no perfect tense, yet man in his craze for security props it up to perfectedness." True revelation is not teaching on the being of God, but the presence of God who speaks to man in the concrete and understandable language of his whole existence in living immediacy. Jesus' call "Be ye perfect as your father in Heaven is perfect" was a call to unlimited striving and so Quakers understood it, not the perfected perfection which C. D. Lewis<sup>50</sup> describes:

"One wooed perfection  
He's bedded deep in the glacier.  
Perfect and null  
The prince and image of despair."

Revelation can come to man only at the level of his own understanding. Has the Holy Ghost become a ghost in the edifice of the Church? It was one of the standard accusations of science against religion that religion was "anthropomorphic." What else could it be? Surely science is anthropomorphic, too. What was meant by the pejorative use of the term, was that primitive notions of man, hopes and fears shaped the picture of God in man's image and not man's highest and inspired notions by which he transcends himself. This growth of religious understanding is marvellously and uniquely described in the Bible and this will be its eternal value. "Within itself, the finite world points beyond itself and man points beyond himself. But when we make God a supernatural and absolutely transcending being, we make Him inaccessible."<sup>35</sup> Giordano Bruno said long ago: "Come assoluto, non ha che far con noi" (as absolute, He has nothing to do with us); this is true for theism no less than for deism (cf. Birch<sup>30</sup>). Can a religion really still be Christian, if it banishes God into a supernatural realm inaccessible to man?

I believe that the Quaker message of the Inner Light of Christ which shines in every man, may it be ever so deeply buried, is true Christian religion and true humanism. It was this power alone on which Jesus wanted to rely, foregoing all other kinds of power including supernatural power. The nature miracles reported in the gospels have misled us. We can accept them as impressions in the mind of the disciples of the unique spiritual power which emanates from Jesus which they put in the then familiar mythological framework. For me the power of His personality is better shown in the way in which He dealt with human situations, as e.g. with the accusers of the adulteress and the adulteress herself. What greater nature miracles could there be than that life found a place on earth (possibly only on earth in spite of the many billions of stars for so improbable an event it is); that man, who knows that he knows, came to be; and that man cannot only understand and master nature by science, but also mysteriously enjoy nature intuitively. How carefully Jesus tried to avoid imposing his authority by external means. Has the Church, have even the apostles done right on Jesus to claim an authority for Him which He did not wish to wield? Like a bold explorer He set out into uncharted seas away from the religious convictions of His time. For Friends, Jesus is neither a sentimental optimist nor a byzantine Lord, but the great friend of whom John spoke (John 15) and who, when George Fox found him, made his heart "leap for joy<sup>51</sup>," the man who lived in complete openness to the demand of God and his fellow men every hour. For us, He is inclusive, not exclusive. What could be nearer to our hearts than Sankara's, a Hindu's prayer:

"O Lord, pardon my three sins.  
I have in contemplation clothed in form Thee who are formless.  
I have in praise described Thee who art ineffable.  
And in visiting temples, I have ignored thine omnipresence."

There is a "Perennial Philosophy"<sup>53</sup> which was active before Jesus came. The Logos was with God at the beginning (John 1,1).

### *Overcoming imbalance*

I have emphasized two essential features of the imbalance of our present age, the failure to bring into harmony autonomous science and autonomous

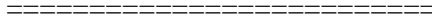
religion, with the result that major scientific advances are used for destruction and to the detriment of humanity rather than for its benefit and in its service, and that religion moves in a vacuum unable to influence human life and society. Secondly that the seeking after guaranteed security has in fact only added to insecurity. The apostle Paul also lived in an age of imbalance, but the call of Jesus made him face all its troubles and gave him the inner security which he called salvation. Albert Schweitzer gave up the far-going security which his manifold great gifts had given him in Europe to start his insecure venture of Lambarene hospital in the service to his African brothers.<sup>27</sup> This inner security of a balanced personality radiates from many great men and is never based on the withdrawal from human suffering. Instead of complaining about matter which drags us down, should we not rather look upon it, as de Chardin does, as the slope on which we can climb up a mountain, as a series of created things which are not so much obstacles as hand-and foot holds for our climb? "What would our spirits be, O God, if they did not have the bread of earthly things to nourish them, the wine of created beauties to intoxicate them and the conflicts of human life to fortify them."<sup>25</sup> The climber knows that the summit is there to be climbed, although he is not sure that it is climbable or whether he is on a possible route. Religion for the conscientious seeker is not all a matter of doubt and self-questioning - he knows that the mountain is there and whether he goes up or down. "There is a kind of sureness which is very different from cocksureness" (Eddington). I should describe it as the certainty to be engaged in a meaningful task in a meaningful world, which is true for science and religion alike. "We know by experience that life is not all seeking, not all doubt."<sup>56</sup>

Should we be sad that we live in an age in which God's challenge, the Kairos, has broken into time? Toynbee<sup>54</sup> has described how all great civilizations have grown by meeting such grave challenges. There is the challenge to restore friendly East-West relations, to take the bitterness out of racial relations by just dealings, to help the starving and the sick in under-developed nations for whose misery we share the blame. There is for us in Australia the urgent task to create friendly relations with our Asiatic neighbours and to make good past injustices to the Aborigines. There has rarely been a time like ours with so tremendous potentialities for creation and destruction.

If we are going to create rather than destroy, it must be on the basis of a new and unsentimental Christian humanism. Without sitting on the fence, we must utterly repudiate all kinds of the Manichaeian heresy, whether in the absolute division between matter and spirit and body and mind, which identifies matter with evil, or in its new more horrible form of dividing people into adherents of

God and of the Devil, where in our countries the Communists represent evil and in communist countries the imperialists. Only thus can we serve the unification of the noosphere in the spirit of love.

George Fox had on Pendle Hill the vision of a great people to be gathered.<sup>51</sup> I am convinced that an even greater multitude waits to be gathered now all over the world. It matters little whether they will be gathered as Friends, or under the banner of a truly reformed church. The time for this is not yet, the traditions of hundreds of years cannot be set aside in a few years, but unless humanity destroys itself first, this time is sure to come.



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