
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Lord's ministry, to His poverty and humility, but above all to His temptation and His utter obedience. The ideal for a true life, which had preceded reflection on the mysteries of the faith, found confirmation in the ministry of Jesus.

All the problems raised by the *kenosis* in the Incarnation occupied the Russian religious mind. But this is not the most interesting feature of their thinking about *kenosis*. They carried the idea up into the divine life itself. The pre-mundane *kenosis* consists of the mutual love of the divine hypostases. The Fatherhood is the image of love which does not desire to possess within and for Himself. It reveals His love in the spiritual begetting of the Son. This is a self-emptying which is at the same time a self-realization.

The Sonship is already an eternal *kenosis* in that the second hypostasis makes Himself the Word of the Father. He becomes poor and sacrificially silent in the bosom of the Father. If on the side of the Father there is self-negation in the begetting of the Son, the Son is emptying Himself when He accepts the passive state of the One who is begotten. This mutual sacrifice is not a tragedy because it is overcome by the bliss and joy of this accepted mutual sacrifice. And, finally, the triumphant cognition and witness in God of Himself and His only-begotten Son is the procession of the Holy Ghost. The passive character of the procession is in harmony with the sacrificial kenotic love.

This survey is in accord with the purpose of these Notes, which is to give an account of what is going on in the world of religious thought. It is a matter of great interest to know that, so far from Russian religion before the War being dumb and lifeless, a very definite movement was at work, dominated by one idea, which appears not only in theology but in literature, in the works of men like Dostoevsky, the idea of *kenosis*. The idea was absorbed from the Gospels. But when reflection on it began to be made, it became the ruling and inspiring idea in theology. It explained creation, which was a kenotic act. It explained the coming, and also the whole ministry, of Jesus. And it explains the very nature of the inner life of the tri-une Deity. Much Russian theology seems abstract until we realize that what it is working with, and trying to understand, was something so real to these thinkers that it expressed their ideal for daily living.

Aldous Huxley—Cosmology and Ethic.

By the Reverend David Cairns, M.A., Bridge of Allan.

Aldous Huxley has won the attention and the respect of the discerning public because his wit and his limpid style display to the best advantage a philosophy of life which cannot be ignored, and because his keen imagination has penetrated right to the heart of some of our problems of to-day. Perhaps his creative powers are not great, he has hardly given the world one striking or memorable character: it is often difficult even to remember the names of the men and women who saunter through his novels. Nor yet have these vigour of action or plot—many of them seem like one long house-party of desultory and sometimes brilliant talk, punctuated by amorous interludes and marked by growing tedium. There is in his works little of that enthralling vitality and enjoyment of human character and action, that love of life and men, that exuberant laughter with them and at them that marks the greatest novels. How is it, then, that Huxley deserves the place which the modern world has given to him as a writer? The answer is that it is as an essayist and philosopher that he excels, even in his novels. In nearly all of them there appears at least one figure who is merely put there to express a point of view. Huxley has not much power of painting a character from outside, but he has an uncanny capacity for getting inside his characters, and seeing the world through their

eyes. Even in Lilian Aldwinkle, in *Those Barren Leaves*, you feel that it is Huxley in petticoats who speaks to you, though this prosperous, ridiculous, unsatisfied amorist is one of his most objective and objectionable creations.

His characters live in an atmosphere of culture and wealth, a world with every advantage save a definite discipline and goal. Hardly anything could be more different from Huxley's writings than a book like John Allan's *Farmer's Boy*—a story of working people on a Scottish farm, a story sometimes a little crude, but written with love, and rightly so, for these people are lovable in themselves. The gusto with which this book was written is in tremendous contrast to the depressing atmosphere of Huxley's novels, in which even beauty has lost its divinity. If Allan rightly loves the people of whom he writes, one might say that Huxley rightly hates the people he writes about. At any rate, his reaction of nausea is an eminently healthy one. And that is why his sexually unpleasant passages are not so corrupting in their tendency as they might be. There is far too much awareness of the hopeless slavery of such a life of unbridled freedom, and far too much of the headache of the morning after.

He has seen with penetrating clearness what some professional philosophers have not seen, that in a world, where the final realities are space-time patterns, there can be no sufficient reason why men should discipline themselves in the face of moral temptations, or should devote themselves to the pursuit of scientific truth or beauty. The result of such a cosmology of materialism will be, as it has always been, a growing ennui, which ends in complete disillusionment as to the value of anything. Spandrell, in *Point Counterpoint*, is a man who manages to get some thrill out of life so long as he can regard it as rebellion against God. But when the murder, which he and Illidge commit, disappoints him by giving him no sense of demonic grandeur, all the value of life disappears for him with the disappearance of the God against whom he is in rebellion. His last action, before going out to meet the revolvers of the Fascists whom he has summoned to take their revenge on him, is to invite Rampion and his wife to the house, in order to *prove* to them that there is a God by playing on his gramophone Beethoven's 'Hymn of Thanksgiving' in the quartet, Opus 132. Thus, if the materialist philosophy is right, even crime loses its point for the criminal, as does virtue lose its attraction for the saint. And that not because God punishes or rewards, but because the whole dignity of life depends on the validity of moral issues. But if the materialist philosophy were true, men would be able to lose themselves in an amoral pursuit of pleasure and happiness. And this is precisely what Huxley's people are unable to do. How often they surprise themselves in the middle of some debauch by the appalling consideration that they cannot sink their humanity, cannot forget in the satisfactions of the moment the fact that there is a part of them which remains awake and is miserable! How ghastly is the picture of the mechanized State in *Brave New World*! How thoroughly we sympathize with the Savage, who, unable to escape, hangs himself from the landing of the staircase in his own house! And not only in this novel is the oppression of the atmosphere almost intolerable—most of Huxley's characters are living in hell, only the most of them do not at first realize it. It is probable that Huxley himself did not at first realize it, but now he sees that it is slavery at the mill in Gaza. And the recognition that it is this, is itself a proof that the image of God cannot be wholly obliterated from man, that therefore man is meant to live for other ends than gratification, that there is consequently a meaning and plan in the world. This might be called Huxley's argument from moral experience.

But there is also an argument to the same conclusion from æsthetic experience. In *Point Counterpoint* there is an account of a performance of music by Bach at the house of Lord Edward Tantamount. 'Pongileoni's blowing, and the scraping of the anonymous fiddlers had shaken the air in the great hall, had set the glass windows looking on to it vibrating, and this in turn had shaken the air in Lord Edward's apartment on the farther side. The shaking air had rattled Lord Edward's membrana tympani, the interlocked malleus, incus, and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea, a vast number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edward ecstatically whispered, "Bach!"' We see here at least a dawning incredulity as to whether the mechanical explanation of the way in which music is heard can tell us everything. Is there not, the writer seems to ask, some reality in the universe other than the space-time configurations, a reality about which the music of Bach seems to tell us?

Certainly Huxley saw, as long ago as *Those Barren Leaves*, that it was absurd to reject the claim that morality expressed more than individual

preference or social sanction, and yet to seek truth for truth's sake, or art for art's sake. There he makes Francis Chelifer write :

'Religion, patriotism, the moral order, humanitarianism, social reform—we have all of us, I imagine, dropped all these overboard long ago. But we still cling pathetically to art. Quite unreasonably ; for the thing has far less reason for existence than most of the objects that we have got rid of, is utterly senseless indeed, without their support and justification. Art for art's sake ; halma for halma's sake. It is time to smash the last and silliest of the idols. My friends, I adjure you, put away the ultimate and sweetest of the inebriants, and wake up at last completely sober—among the dustbins at the bottom of the area steps.'

In short, Huxley has made clear as no other writer of our time, that life is hopeless, pointless, and fatuous, unless there be a meaning in the universe itself. If science gives the complete account of reality as being nothing more than a space-time network, there remains no such thing as obligation or beauty, or in the end, truth ; and therewith science's claim to represent an objective reality falls to the ground.

The main aim of this article is to discuss the question whether the meaning that Huxley claims to find in the universe is itself a logically satisfactory one. Or does his own cosmology in the end break down, being unable to save life from meaninglessness ?

Although it is here impossible to trace the development by which his views have reached their present state, it is worth while quoting a very honest and significant passage in *Ends and Means*, which shows us that Huxley as a younger man accepted along with many of his contemporaries the 'Philosophy of Meaninglessness' for two reasons. He says, 'The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom ; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. The supporters of these systems claimed that in some way they embodied the meaning, a Christian meaning, they insisted, of the world. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt : we could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever.' He goes on to say that 'By the end of the twenties a reaction against this philosophy of meaninglessness had begun to set in—away from the easy-going philosophy of general meaninglessness towards the hard ferocious theologies of nationalistic and revolutionary idolatry.' Sickened equally by the results of the philosophy of meaninglessness, and by the poisonous fruits of the philosophies which 'reintroduced meaning to the world, but only in patches'—Huxley saw that only if the whole world had a meaning could human life have significance and dignity, only then could a real ethic be found and believed in.

Huxley's history has thus shown that a man's ethical beliefs cannot be considered as independent from his cosmology—his beliefs about the nature of the universe. In *Ends and Means* he suggests both an ethic and a cosmology. Now the question arises for us, What is the relation between the cosmology and the ethic of any particular thinker ? The answer is, that it ought to be, but is not always, a logical connexion. Each ethic presupposes a certain cosmology, and each cosmology implies a certain ethic. But men are not wholly logical—not even Huxley is wholly logical—and it is thus possible that a man may have an ethic which belongs to a quite different cosmology from that which he professes. The position here to be developed is that Huxley's ethic is very much nearer to the Christian standpoint than his cosmology, and therefore from our point of view very much better. It is, in short, an ethic which can only be valid if a theistic view of the universe is the right one. Huxley's cosmology, on the other hand, is by no means able to support his ethic, and it is only by means of erroneous arguments that he succeeds in seeming to connect them. Such a lack of acumen seems strange in one who is so acute a thinker, and it is probable that he will not long be able to remain in the position which he has taken up. For in spite of his modest disclaimer at the end of *Ends and Means*—'The knowledge and the abilities of the author are narrowly limited'—it is clear that he has both courage and insight enough to prevent him from being permanently blinded by prejudice.

Huxley's own ethic in brief is an ethic which sets high value upon disinterested love and awareness. But the word which he uses to describe his own ideal man and 'the ideal of the free philosophers, the mystics, the founders of religions' is 'non-attached.' 'Such a man is non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts, to his craving for power and possessions, to his anger and hatred, his exclusive loves, to wealth, fame, and social position, non-attached even to science, art, speculation and

philanthropy.' This non-attachment has always been associated in the teachings of the philosophers and the founders of religions with attachment to an ultimate reality greater and more significant than the self, a spiritual reality underlying the phenomenal world, and imparting to it whatever value or significance it possesses. 'Non-attachment is negative only in name; the practice of non-attachment entails the practice of all the virtues, charity, courage, generosity, and disinterestedness.'

For nearly thirty centuries, says Huxley, there has existed a very general agreement about the ideal goal of human effort. From Isaiah to Karl Marx the prophets have looked forward to a golden age when there will be liberty, peace, justice, and brotherly love. Hitler and Mussolini and Nietzsche and the Marquis de Sade are among the few who do not agree as to this being the ideal goal or end of moral effort. But when it comes to the means to be taken to bring about this end, there is a tragic degree of dissension among moralists. Men who agree in hoping for a day when the lion will lie down with the lamb are found employing means employed by Nazism and Fascism. Communism, too, has its knuckle-dusters, its secret police, its militaristic education of the young, its concentration camps. Huxley's argument is that your means really control the nature of your ends. If you try to seek brotherhood by force, you will find that you achieve anything but brotherhood. Force and hatred breed force and hatred; big dung-beetles breed little dung-beetles.

Many of the most valuable pages of the book are given to discussing the best way to break the vicious circle of hatred and tyranny in which we find ourselves to-day. How are we to secure a world which respects human freedom, making individuals intelligent and responsible citizens of the world, and not mere mechanical dolls wound up and set going by a Totalitarian State Authority? It is not my plan to enter here into a discussion of the suggestions put forward in *Ends and Means* for attaining this result. But these proposals are eminently worth consideration and investigation.

Having referred to Huxley's ethic, let us go on to examine his cosmology, and the way in which he claims to derive his ethic from it. He believes in an impersonal and amoral Absolute. In the mystical experience we attain to union with this Absolute. Very little is said about the mystical experience. Huxley is confronted with the difficulty of showing how his ethic of love and non-violence can be deduced from his cosmology. This is the crucial point in his book, where, in my opinion, the argument breaks down. The link by which he tries to join his cosmology to his ethics is this. Virtue is the essential preliminary to the mystical experience. 'God is not good, but if I want as full a knowledge of God as it is possible for human beings to have, I must be as good as it is possible for human beings to be.'

How can this position be justified? The argument runs as follows. The Universe is essentially one, but there are in it superficial diversities. Goodness is that which makes for unity; evil is that which makes for separateness. Separateness is attachment, attachment to the desires of sex, to ambition, to fear. If a man be attached to any one overmastering desire or ambition, then he cannot realize the unity which lies beneath the diversity.

What are the weaknesses of the position? Firstly: Huxley, holding the cosmology which he does, has no logical right to define goodness as that which makes for unity. As a matter of experience we know that goodness does lead towards unity, while evil makes for separateness. But the facts of experience will not fit in with Huxley's cosmology, they point, in fact, to a quite different world view—to a theistic cosmology. Both we and Huxley would be agreed that real love is good, defining real love as that frame of mind in which I take responsibility for my neighbour, seek his good for his own sake, sink my interests in his. Sin is that which divides us from communion with each other. But this definition of love is only consistent with a cosmology which holds that God is good, that sin is a contradiction of His nature and consequently of our own, since we are created in His image.

But, of course, Huxley has not this theistic cosmology behind him, and so when he says that goodness makes for unity, he is really asserting something quite different from us. He has at the back of his mind a conception of reality as amoral, and therefore he is trying to define goodness in terms of something other than goodness—as that which makes for unity with an amoral reality. But there is no shadow of justification for such a definition. If the final reality is beyond good and evil it must be indifferent to goodness. But if it is indifferent to goodness it must be below it. In that case we are justified in asking why the saint is nearer than the libertine to a God to whom all moral issues are indifferent. Why should non-attachment to lust clear my eyes for the vision of such a God? Why should the mystical approach to unity with him not be through the unbridled release of the sex-instinct, or through a kind of

sex-mysticism like that of D. H. Lawrence? Huxley and his character Calamy have discovered that *as a matter of fact* the way to God does not lie in this direction. Let them build upon this discovery and find out what are its cosmological implications. They are agreed on the fact that 'Only the pure in heart shall see God.' The inference must be that God is purer than man, and that impurity blinds men.

Secondly: If Huxley's view is right, all that sin can do is to prevent awareness of a unity which is present, constant, and unbroken beneath. This means that sin is really no more than a mistake, a failure to see a unity which persists unimpaired between the soul and God, whatever wrongs are committed. This error is typical of a certain type of idealism which has an ancestry as old as Plato. But sin is really more than this. It is the actual rupture of fellowship with God, which cannot be restored without an act of forgiveness.

Thirdly: This cosmology, if believed in by a logically consistent man, will lead to a selfish and individualistic ethic. The ethic consistent with pantheistic mysticism is an ethic of salvation by disentanglement. It does not really, as Huxley maintains, entail the practice of all the virtues, but degrades every virtue into a means for attaining to the enjoyment of the mystical experience. Do not the virtues, when thus degraded, become on a par with the devices used by the Yogins for attaining their mystical experiences?

Jesus, says Huxley, taught the ethic of non-attachment. This is a dangerous quarter-truth. Jesus taught that love to God and man must come first, and that all other loves and desires must take second place. He never taught that perfect non-attachment casteth out fear. Huxley's main emphasis is on non-attachment, although he says that along with this there must be attachment to a reality conceived as greater and worthier than the self. Jesus would turn such a statement on its head. His first command is not negative but positive—'Seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' And anything which might in any way resemble non-attachment comes with Him a long way second. To picture the Cross as an example of non-attachment would, for example, be to show oneself without any appreciation for ethical realities whatsoever. In a true ethic of non-attachment there is no place at all for Jesus' ardent love for men.

But, of course, Huxley's ethic is not an ethic of non-attachment. It is nothing so poor or negative. *Eyeless in Gaza* comes to an end with the determination of Antony Beavis to go forward, in spite of threats to his life, with his plans for addressing a meeting on the ideal of non-violence. The ethic expressed in such a decision is fundamentally inconsistent with a cosmology of pantheistic mysticism.

India is the classical case of a country which, through the ages, has put into practice the ethic of non-attachment. What have been the large-scale ethical consequences of the pantheistic mysticism of India during the last three thousand years? The result has been the drafting out of her more eager and spiritual minds into seclusion from active life in hermit sanctuaries, and the removal of these men from contact with the peoples whom they might have done so much to raise ethically and religiously. The results have been disastrous to the nation. Here is true non-attachment: By their fruits ye shall know them!

But, it will be quite fairly objected, what an indictment of Christianity might be compiled by some writer who would give a broad outline of the history of Europe during the last two thousand years! Surely it is not fair to judge of any system except by the life and teaching of its best exponents. Do not the great pantheistic mystics preach love and benevolence?

In answer to this objection it may be illuminating to quote a passage from Rudolf Otto's *Mysticism, East and West*, which contrasts the ethical teaching of Sankhara, one of the noblest pantheists, with that of Eckhart, the Christian mystic. Otto says, 'It is because the background of Sankhara's teaching is not Palestine but India, that his mysticism has no ethic. It is not immoral. It is amoral. The Mukta, the redeemed, who has attained unity with the eternal Brahman, is removed from all works, whether good or evil. Works bind man. The redeemed leaves all activity, and reposes on eternal oneness.'

With Eckhart it is entirely different, Otto goes on to say. For him the Divine Being is conceived as essential righteousness, for it has within it the God of the prophets and the Gospels. And thus to attain to unity with God the soul must act as God acts. Eckhart is too much influenced by Christianity to advocate the cessation of all doing and willing. The conclusion to be drawn is, that where the Pantheistic mystics advocate a noble morality their ethic is inconsistent with their cosmology.

Fourthly: Can such a world as Huxley depicts be said in the last resort to have any meaning at all? It is one of his claims that his system has restored meaning to the universe as a whole—a more satis-

factory meaning than is ascribed to it by the Christian cosmology. I should like to ask him what he means by 'meaning?' Has he reflected sufficiently on this matter? Can there be meaning in the universe without there being purpose? Are not value and purpose correlatives? And can a universe whose final reality is impersonal be said to have any meaning or purpose or value whatsoever? Not only ethical values are destroyed if God be described as impersonal and amoral. The disappearance of ethical values might not in itself be fatal to Huxley's cosmology, if æsthetic values were left. For these values might be realized in the world, thus giving it a meaning. But if the final reality be impersonal, the whole can no longer be said to have any value at all. For value presupposes a personal subject for whom it is valid. In so far as there are persons within reality there may be meanings within reality, but if there be no ultimate and absolute Person there can be no constitutive value or meaning in reality itself as a whole. Huxley could not say that God looked upon the Universe and saw that it was good, for to do this would be to presuppose that God was personal. With his denial of personality to God the whole attempt to give meaning to the universe as a whole collapses finally.

The Christian cosmology, on the other hand, maintains that God is good, and that He is least inadequately represented as Personality. Therefore there is, we maintain, a Divine purpose behind the world, though it cannot yet be clearly seen, our vision of it being as yet blinded by sin. The goal of human life is to work with God. Not union, in the sense of absorption in God, but communion with Him, is the end for which man was created. Love is of the essence of God's nature, therefore men should love, being created in God's image so that love appeals to their highest nature. Here and here alone is an adequate cosmological basis for Huxley's ethic. He has, it is true, for the time being rejected the Christian cosmology, but his reasons for doing so are singularly inadequate, and not any more likely to satisfy him permanently than his grounds for accepting a pantheistic mysticism as the basis for his ethic.

Literature.

THE INDWELLING GOD.

The Indwelling God: A Historical Study of the Christian Conception of Divine Immanence and Incarnation, with special Reference to Indian Thought, by Principal E. C. Dewick, M.A. (Milford; 10s. 6d. net), is an important book, its value consisting not so much in its positive conclusions as in the review it gives of the place that divine immanence has held through the centuries within the Christian Church, as well as to some extent in the chief non-Christian religions. Principal Dewick admits at the conclusion of his study that there are many problems associated with his subject which remain unresolved, but he has undoubtedly rendered a considerable service by his careful and balanced survey of the place that this particular conception has held and should hold in Christian teaching, a service all the more valuable in view of the neglect into which it has fallen because of prevailing tendencies in theology at the present time. One reason, probably, why he himself is not inclined to share in this neglect is that he has lived and worked in India, a land, as he says, where these issues 'are not merely academic but vital, and are presented to the Christian Church as a challenge by the great indigenous tradition of Hinduism.'

It is, indeed, rather striking to note that the important book recently published by Dr. H. Kraemer on 'The Christian Message in a non-Christian world,' a book which is strongly influenced by the anti-immanentist tendencies of to-day, is the work of a man whose mind has been steeped in the study of the religion of Islam. It need not surprise us if in each case the experience gained has helped to create a more sympathetic understanding in the one case of the conception of an immanent and in the other of a transcendent God. In the contrast that one finds between these two books there are, no doubt, other elements as well contributing to the outlook of the authors. There is, for example, the fact that Principal Dewick is an Englishman and an Anglican while Dr. Kraemer is a Dutchman and a Calvinist. Principal Dewick