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(Lv 3), so that the ceremonial meal acquired a eucharistic meaning independent of propitiation. The three main ideas of the placation, the ritual removal of guilt, and of substitution, derived from the New Year rites, no longer were efficacious merely for the physical well-being of the community. They now began to acquire a more lofty connotation, while another class of offerings designated *minḥah* were in the nature of gifts given in recognition of the sovereign claims of God on the nation of His choice. These appear to be quite distinct in origin from those arising out of the royal ritual.

Finally, there is the infinitely loftier conception of redemptive suffering which finds expression in the Servant Saga embedded in the later portion of the book of Isaiah. In these poems of uncertain date

the doctrine of representative suffering emerges in the Servant who bears the sins of the people vicariously. No explanation is given why sinners should be forgiven because an innocent man had suffered, but, nevertheless, it was recognized that sin had to be atoned for, and the sufferings of the righteous Servant were compared to the guilt-offering (*āshām*) (Is 53<sup>10. 5. 8</sup>). Something had to be done to remove the consequences of sin, and one of the functions of the Servant was to restore the captivity of the exiles and to renew their prosperity (Is 49<sup>5ff.</sup>). But it was the deeper problem of vicarious atonement that lay behind the conception of the Suffering Servant, and it was this which received a new solution in the perfect self-offering of God in Christ.

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## Why Mr. Aldous Huxley is not a Christian.

BY THE REVEREND DAVID CAIRNS, M.A., BRIDGE OF ALLAN.

IN recent years it has become quite the fashion for men and women of letters to give the world a statement of their religious beliefs. Two of them whose writings are of particular interest on this subject are Mr. F'Anson Fausset, and Mr. Aldous Huxley, both of whom have rejected Christianity and accepted a form of mysticism. In a previous article in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES I tried to show that Mr. Huxley's mystical cosmology failed to provide a basis for his ethic, which was really very similar to the Christian ethic, and could not really stand unless based on the Christian, or at least a theistic cosmology. In this article I propose to discuss the grounds given by Mr. Huxley, mostly in *Ends and Means*, for his rejection of Christianity. The grounds which he gives are four in number.

The first is that the experience of all the profoundest mystics contradicts the belief that God is personal. He says, 'Those who take the trouble to train themselves in the arduous technique of mysticism always end, if they go far enough in their work of recollection and meditation, by losing their intuitions of a personal God and having direct experience of an ultimate reality that is impersonal' (*Ends and Means*, 235). There are, he says, some mystics who have been much under the influence of the Christian tradition, who have clung to the tenets of the Christian Faith, and have not therefore

ventured out beyond the harbour into the deeps of mystical experience. They have clung to a devotion to a personal Christ and the historical accidentals which the teaching of the Church has imposed on the mystical experience. But certain more daring souls have struck sail and ventured beyond the harbour. There terrible storms have assailed them, and only after many days of storm have they reached calm waters and peace again. For they have realized in the mystical experience that God was not good, was not love, was not personal, and at first the discovery was terrible to them. It seemed like plunging over the abyss, like losing hold of everything on which they had placed reliance. It was the entry into nothingness, the dark night of the soul. Only later did they learn the true peace of union with an impersonal God, only later did they realize that beneath these tossing waves there were the calm depths of the ocean.

Now it seems that Huxley is here making assumptions which beg the whole question. In assuming that these mystics have the profoundest insight into truth he takes for granted without examination a whole cosmology. This cosmology holds that Reality is to be found outside of history, that myself and Reality are essentially one, and that by neglect of the historical I attain to Reality, and find it by plunging into the recesses of the self. By 'the

historical' I mean that whole world of things, events, and above all, persons, with which I meet in the course of my life. According to Huxley's rather naïve assumption, reality is not to be found here, but in mystical recollection and meditation.

It will be rightly objected that there are at least two kinds of mysticism—the first, a mysticism of the self, such as is here criticised; and the second, a mysticism of external intuition, whereby I see the One in the Many, and go on to assert the reality of the One and the superficiality of the Many. But it may well be maintained that Reality, whether it be in ourselves or without us, is historical and individual, it exists as a One *in Many*, and to neglect its given individuality, its objectivity, its historicity, is nothing less than to run away from Reality. It may be claimed that to seek refuge in this type of mysticism is a refusal to take responsibility, that it is nothing better than the two-gramme doses of *soma*, the delightful narcotic with which the inhabitants of the Brave New World indulged themselves. To assert that History, the given, can never decisively reveal Reality, is merely to assert a prejudice, and if you were to expound this theory to a psycho-therapist, his answer might well be—'This may be the profoundest mysticism, but to me it sounds uncommonly like regression.' It is the rejection by the individual of the time-process, history, the created world. It might be worth the psychologist's while to trace a connexion between Nirvana and the mother's womb.

There is one point in Huxley's writings, where he, or at least one of his characters, comes very near to realizing the possibility that there is an alternative to the pantheistic mystical point of view. It is to be found in *Eyeless in Gaza*, 564. 'God—a person or not a person? Quien sabe? Only revelation can decide such metaphysical questions. And revelation isn't playing the game—is equivalent to pulling three aces of trumps from up your sleeve.' He goes on to say that it depends on the way your mind works whether you believe God to be personal or impersonal, he cannot think of Him as personal, and anyway it makes no difference to ethical action.

But the question of the personality of God is not thus indifferent to ethical action, as we have seen, and as Huxley himself admits in *Ends and Means*, though his conclusions are that a finer ethic results from belief in an impersonal God, a conclusion the exact contrary of ours. And the personality of God cannot be thus flippantly decided by individual preference as men choose a blue or a green tie. And why should revelation be ruled out of court *a priori*? Is it not the *a priori* denial of it that is

unfair, like the pulling of *four aces* of trumps from up your sleeve? That there is Revelation can only be decided in the particular case, when a particular claim is made that *this* is Revelation. At this point Huxley seems like a man standing on the top-step of a diving board, one foot hanging over the edge, and apparently unconscious that there is any drop before him, unaware that at any moment he may be swimming out of his depth. Why is it unfair to be asked to believe in Revelation? He would not be asked to believe without grounds. A man of Huxley's acuteness, having got so near the edge, may well soon take the plunge—not into the dark night of the soul, but into the waters of Christianity!

When Mr. Huxley says that all the *profoundest* mystics have believed in an impersonal God, one has the feeling that this does not necessarily mean very much at all. Possibly no more than just the fact that these mystics are the ones with whom he feels himself for the moment most in sympathy. And he chooses some strange companions. When he accepts the revelations of Marie Lataste rather than the words of Christ as to the nature of God, one feels inclined to ask upon what grounds is this done? Perhaps the answer would be given that this girl's experience is taken merely to confirm that of countless mystics. But may I imitate Mr. Huxley's example and repeat to him his maxim, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Is it not probable that one who had the ethical insight of Jesus would be more likely to have the truth about God in his teaching than Marie Lataste in hers? With Huxley's strictures on Christ's character I have yet to deal. But he seems to me perilously near the error of Edward Irving and his friends, who believed in 'speaking with tongues' and received anything that was said 'in the power' without exercising upon it their moral judgment, without judging it by its fruits. That an experience came in a mystic trance is no criterion of its value. It must be subjected to ethical and rational tests, as William James discovered after his experiments with laughing-gas, during which he became converted to Hegelianism, and wrote down in mystical raptus the divinely inspired words 'Nothing is Nothing, all is Othing!'

The second ground on which Mr. Huxley rejects personal theism and Christianity is that person-worship always leads to intolerance. With all that he says about the worship of Hitler or 'Father Divine' having a corrupting influence on the character of the worshipper it is easy to agree. And it is unfortunately too true that in the past Christians have a sullied record of persecution. The attempt

to propagate Christianity by force rests upon a fundamental misunderstanding of the Christian Faith. The temptation to do so was one of the temptations which Christ resisted at the beginning of His ministry. He believed that it was a temptation from the devil, and called Peter 'Satan' when he tried to move Him back to such an ideal from the way He had chosen for Himself. The Roman Church with its inquisitions and persecutions has utterly failed to understand this fundamental fact of the Christian Faith that it cannot be propagated by force. So, too, did the Reformers, though their successors have since seen their error and repented of it. For before building the monument to the Reformers at Geneva, they set up a tablet to Servetus, who should have been treated with love, and not burnt at the stake, however wrong-headed and foolish he may have been.

It is, moreover, relevant to point out that peace, liberty, justice, and brotherly love, are the aims which Christendom would have set before itself all through the two thousand years of its existence, if it had been true to the spirit of its Founder. That it has not always done this is to its shame, and is due to the way in which Christians have avoided the moral challenge of Christ. We do not need to take all Huxley's indictment at its face-value, but we must confess the treason of Christians to Christ. And we must emphatically deny that these shortcomings are due to defects inherent in His character, or in His view of God as personal. His whole teaching is that men should be pure and merciful and kind because God is these things. And how an educated man like Mr. Huxley can be so ignorant of the Gospels as to assert that Christianity teaches the opposite, passes my understanding.

It is, however, true that literalist views of Biblical inspiration have led to a pernicious misunderstanding of Christian Ethics. But be this as it may, such an Ethic is a radical error and misunderstanding of the Gospel; it is devil's work, and turns Christianity into its contrary. And it is preposterous to say that it is the natural fruit of belief in a personal God. It is the fruit of human sin and obtuseness and stupidity.

According to Mr. Huxley on the other hand the fruits of mysticism are always love and peace and toleration, while those of Christianity are persecution and intolerance. Can it be shown that the mediæval mystics ever uttered any word of protest against persecution? Did they not approve when the Albigenses and others were hounded out of existence? Does Mr. Huxley not know that Hinduism sent the early Buddhists to the stake,

impaling them for their faith, and forcibly expelling Buddhism from India?

What are we to make of this statement from Otto's *Mysticism East and West*? 'The variety of different types of mystical experience can result in estrangement and conflict. It was the Mystics who warred against the Mystic ibn Mansur al Hallaj, and helped to bring him to the cross, while he himself, from the standpoint of another type of experience, fought against the mysticism of his day' (p. 40, trans., Macmillan, 1932). How are we to account for the fact that Eckhart, whom Mr. Huxley admires, was acclaimed as a forerunner by Hegel, whom he hates? That Eckhart's works are constantly appearing in new editions in Nazi Germany, and that Rosenberg has acclaimed him as 'the Creator of Aryan Religion and the Incarnation of Odin'?<sup>1</sup>

This persecuting side of Mysticism is only natural, for non-Christian mysticism strips God of all moral attributes, and asserts that the way to union with Deity lies through the exaltation of one or other trait in human nature or society—the self, race, sex, the State. Or, else, reacting from an uncritical affirmation of the world or some element in it, mysticism becomes so negative in its attitude to the world that its devotees do not trouble to stand up for human rights at all, and allow persecution free course while they pursue their communion with the All.

If we use the criterion 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' taking up Mr. Huxley's challenge, we shall see historically an overwhelmingly strong case may be made out for Christianity over against pantheistic mysticism in its record of service to man and his freedom. In spite of its dreadful sins and mistakes, historical Christianity has given us nearly all the freedom we possess, and most of the toleration and mercy. And is not the decline of respect for Christianity one cause of the regression to barbarism which Huxley so justly notices? But if we compare the teachings of Christ about God, and the teachings of non-Christian mysticism, we can be left in no shadow of doubt as to which cosmology the ethic of Huxley demands if it is to be valid.

The third ground why Huxley rejects Christian theism is that the character of Christ is imperfect, showing both faults of omission and commission. The usual examples are given of Jesus' sins of commission. It is asserted that He used violence in

<sup>1</sup> Letter by Professor F. M. Powicke in the 'Times Literary Supplement,' 18th July 1935, quoted in *Is Christianity Unique?* p. 81, by Dr. Nicol Macnicol.

the Temple. Let us leave undiscussed the question as to whether Jesus might have used physical force in the Temple without incurring moral stigma from His action. But this very story is often cited by Christian pacifists as an instance of the victory of *moral* force against overwhelming physical odds. It is also claimed that the scourge used by Jesus was only used against the cattle in the Temple. This incident is therefore surely most uncertain ground on which to build a moral condemnation of Jesus as a man of violence. Then, as we might expect, the story of the Gadarene swine is cited. Mr. Huxley here takes up a point vehemently debated half a century ago by his relative T. H. Huxley and Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Huxley asks if it was not a sin in Jesus to destroy the herd of Gadarene swine as the narrative of Mark tells in the story of the healing of the demoniac? (Mk 5<sup>1-20</sup>).

Now there are two possible ways of interpreting this singular story. Either we may take it as the story of the cure of a madman, or, like the Gospel writers, we may believe in real 'possession' by evil spirits. The former view is held by many convinced Christian believers, who find no difficulty in holding that Christ, in all matters of merely scientific diagnosis shared the beliefs of His contemporaries. On this view the headlong flight and death of the swine must have been caused by the panic induced by the contortions of the lunatic. Phenomena of this kind, it is well known, are incidents in psychotherapeutic treatment. It would be as unreasonable to blame Christ for this, as to blame the healer for the destruction of property caused by such unhappy victims of mental disorder in the process of treatment. It may be safely assumed that this, or something like this, is Mr. Huxley's own view of the story, behind the narrative. His argument is therefore a pure *argumentum ad hominem*, addressed simply to those who hold the more conservative view of possession. It is very difficult to believe that he himself finds any moral turpitude here in the Jesus of History.

On the other view of real possession by demons and their actual entrance into the scene, it has been pointed out by Christian scholars that Christ in the matter is reported by Mark as having merely given permission to the evil spirits to enter into the flock. That the lawless spirits wreaked their anger as they did by destroying the flock, lay outside his sphere of action, and might even be recorded as an attempt to take vengeance on Him who had driven them out, by getting Him in turn eliminated from the region, as actually happened. Whichever view we take, it is surely clear that Mr. Huxley is, here

as in the other case, on exceedingly precarious ground.

It is true that argument on the matter of Christ's sinlessness is not easy. The Christian has two lines of argument. He can point to the general impression made on him by the character of Jesus and His claims. There is the ethical standard set up by Jesus for Himself and others in the Sermon on the Mount. And yet, in spite of this tremendously high moral standard set by Him, Jesus seems to have had no sense of guilt. Then there is the universal belief of His disciples that He was sinless, from which we may infer that in all His three years intimacy with them He never once confessed sin to them, nor did anything that shook them in their absolute conviction that He was without sin. The whole argument on this side is cumulative, but it is necessarily in part an argument from silence. For the man not committed to faith it would be enough to prove one glaring instance of sin or of consciousness of sin in Jesus to destroy the whole Christian argument. And in spite of all the arguments, in spite also of the stories cited by Mr. Huxley, I submit that this has not been done.

As to faults of omission in Christ cited by Mr. Huxley, it seems that he has mistaken the nature of the Bible. It is not meant as a symposium of all beauty, truth, and goodness, in spite of its many passages of superb beauty. Jesus, to win Huxley's obedience, would have to be a kind of Admirable Crichton of all the arts and virtues—the perfectly balanced genius, a greater Goethe, without Goethe's exasperating self-complacency and limitations. But is that possible, or desirable? One sees here a God-man constructed in Mr. Huxley's own image, without his limitations or ethical imperfections. But what good would such a Jesus have been to the world?

There is a Christian doctrine called the kenosis-doctrine, which would be worth Mr. Huxley's while to study. This doctrine maintains that, in order to become true man, Christ had to accept limitations of knowledge and power. He became a man as other men. He did not know beforehand the date of the end of the world. His aim was not to instruct mankind in relativity or geography. He may have been mistaken in his belief about the authorship of the 110th Psalm. But He did know what the Father had committed to His charge—the mission given Him to win back the world to God. And He did know one thing important above all others—that, apart from obedience to God and love of Him, all human gifts were tainted. We believe that He made possible the new way of life for men,

by coming to them across the gulf from God. And this not even Goethe or Sankara did.

Call the character of Jesus one-sided if you will, Christians maintain that only in this amazing new life is the true place of the arts to be seen. The fact that Christian or imperfectly Christian influences have sometimes failed to foster culture and art is no more damnatory of Christ than is the fact that beauty and art have sometimes held a man back from obedience to the will of God a proof that beauty and culture come from the devil. God is the source of all truth and beauty, but above all things there comes obedience to His will, and sometimes such obedience may cause an impoverishment in the æsthetic quality of a man's life. But in the end, we believe, the harvest will be richer. This does not mean that religion may use second-rate art in order to capture a temporary popularity, or that in the service of God a man or a church should fetter free inquiry. But it does mean that sometimes the call of God may come to a man to serve others practically in some other way, rather than by taking up the intellectual or artistic way of life, and that God's will is always to be obeyed.

Mr. Huxley's fourth ground of objection to the doctrine of a personal God is that it means a curtailment of personal freedom. Of all his objections this is the most weighty—a vital concern is here at stake. The problem here touched upon is one of the most crucial problems of theology. What is the real meaning of freedom? What is the real nature of persons, and how do they attain to it? This is the crucial problem of philosophy and consequently also of politics. Here even those who do not agree with the theology of Principal John Oman will realize that the main thesis in all his work is of central importance. This thesis is that God never compels the soul by an irresistible grace or authority, but so helps it that it finds its own true freedom in a willing response to His love. Here Roman Catholicism on the one hand and strict Calvinism on the other, fall grievously short. The alternative placed before man is, as Professor Leonard Hodgson

says, not that between obeying God and obeying the dictates of a rebellious reason. It is the choice between obeying God from the highest motives and obeying Him from a lower motive—because He is the God who wields the big stick. And if one believes the truth in the Bible, not because it is the truth to which the Holy Spirit within us bears witness, the truth which shines by its own light, but because the Church demands that one should believe it—it is no longer the truth which one is obeying, but the big stick, the fear of damnation.

In spite of the tyrannic domination of persons which is exercised to-day by different forms of the community, it is still a generally accepted truth in progressive modern philosophy that only in free fellowship with persons do persons come to possess and exercise their personal being. Personality is self-transcendence in communion with other personal beings. And is it too much to ask Mr. Huxley to believe that persons have their personal being and freedom in the last resort because of their relation to a personal God who will not force Himself upon them, and loves them into being and perfection, and redeems them from their misuse of freedom by His suffering. Outside of this there is no real guarantee of personal freedom.

We cannot but be grateful to Aldous Huxley for the charm of his style and also for that very clarity of vision which at times makes him such depressing reading. But it is necessary to point out that the polemical position taken up in *Ends and Means* is much more vulnerable than it seems on a first reading. To change the figure, the picture of Mr. Huxley rejecting Christianity and trying to get motive power for his ethic from a pantheist cosmology is like nothing so much as the spectacle of a man who has driven away his pony and harnessed his dog-cart to a clothes-horse, and now stands up in the driving seat lustily cracking the whip round its wooden ribs, believing that at last, if he but chirrup to it industriously enough, it will gallop forward carrying him and his belongings out of the morass in which they are embedded.