

unconnected with a first of all things, consequently with the Divine, is instantly annihilated, because the prior must be continually in the posterior in order that the posterior may exist. (AC 5116)

Something shall now be said about the vegetable kingdom, and its soul, which is called the plant soul. By the plant soul is meant the tendency (*conatus*) and effort to produce a plant from its seed progressively even to new seeds, and thereby to multiply it to infinity, and to propagate it to eternity; for there is as it were in every plant an idea of what is infinite and eternal; for a single seed can be so multiplied during a certain number of years as to fill the whole earth, and can also be propagated from seed to seed without end. This, with the wonderful process of growth from root into a sprout, then into a stalk, also into branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, even to new seeds, is not a natural but a spiritual power. (AE 1203)

The forms of the animal kingdom, which are called in a single word animals, are all in accord with the flow of spiritual substances and forces. . . . This animal form derives its *conatus* to such things from the First from whom all things are, who is God, because He is Man. This *conatus* and consequent determination of all spiritual forces can be given and exist from no other source, for it is given in things greatest and in things least, in first things and last things, in the spiritual world and therefrom in the natural world; but with a difference of perfection according to degrees. But the other form, which is the natural form, and which is the form of all plants, has its origin in the *conatus* and consequent flow of natural forces, which are atmospheres and are called ethers; and in these this *conatus* is present from that determination of spiritual forces into natural forces, which are ethers, and through these into the materials of the earth, of which plants are composed. (AE 1208)

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## DUALISM AND REVELATION

ALISON GLENN \*

In *Religion Without Revelation* Julian Huxley asserts that religion without revelation not only can but does exist. Certain social organs, he claims, which cope with the problem of man's destiny and which orient man's ideas and emotions and construct attitudes of mind and patterns of belief and behavior in relation to his destiny, can be and properly are included under the title,

\* This paper was originally prepared by Miss Glenn, a former student at the Academy of the New Church, for a course in philosophy at Dickinson College.

religions.<sup>1</sup> Certain of these are exceedingly primitive and involve magic rituals, while others are highly developed and claim rationality. Haitian voodoo, neolithic fertility religions, Marxian Communism, Roman Catholicism constitute religions to Huxley. They all are concerned with one central function—that of man's maintenance of his position and fulfillment of his role in the universe.<sup>2</sup>

Admittedly, Huxley's position is one of a scientist. Religion for him is colored by this fact and becomes subject to the scrutiny of the scientific method of investigation. His dealing with religion is fresh; his acceptance is on the basis of empirical evidence. God as a spiritual creating force in such a system is superseded by the concept of evolution.

Huxley's naturalistic philosophy is more than adequate as regards its consistency and coherency. I can find no disagreement in the scientific manner with which he proceeds or the conclusions at which he arrives as based on this method. Nor can I disagree that a part of man's experience is an aspect of the naturalistic and should survive scientific scrutiny. It seems, however, that Huxley has erred where he first began. His basic premise, that we live in a monistic world, seems incompatible with true reality. It is here, at the very start of Huxley's philosophy, that I would like to part ways with him, for the evidence that we live in a natural world only, where all power is intrinsically bound up with creation, does not seem satisfactory. It will be my point, therefore, in this paper, to represent the universe as a dualistic one and to point out from there, contrary to Huxley's theory, that revelation is a vital and necessary part of a true religion, and further, that it is essential to man's very existence. Involved in such a discussion of the spiritual as well as the material, of a God in a spiritual world as well as man in a natural world, of spirit as well as matter, will be a consideration of the relationship of these and of the place of revelation in such a system. Involved also will be the concept of man's freedom, for if revelation is to achieve its purpose, man must possess the freedom to accept or to reject it.

Before we embark on our exploration of a dualistic world, let us consider further such a monistic position as Huxley's and observe some of the consequences which arise. By so doing, we may perhaps more fully appreciate later the salvation of a dualistic

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *Religion Without Revelation*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

world presided over by a supernatural God. Huxley sees the chaos apparent around us to be the result of a lack of unity, an insufficiency in the possession of any powerful intrinsic driving force within our western idea-systems.<sup>3</sup> He sees the need for increased factual knowledge, which will withstand scientific scrutiny, as essential to progress. This factual knowledge will come, not from revelation, but from the natural world around us, and will add to Huxley's theory of evolutionary development as that which can guide man to bigger and better achievements.

But the fact of biological progress does show that our ideals and efforts, our whole scheme of values, are not merely isolated flames burning in the darkness of a universe which is neutral or hostile to the effects of its working. It shows, at least as regards the course of events for the several thousand million years during which life has existed on this planet, that the cosmic forces have worked in such a way as to produce a movement that has been not only the most successful movement in evolution but that also chimes in with our sense of values and our idea of the direction in which we ourselves desire to move.<sup>4</sup>

A conflict arises, from Huxley's viewpoint, between religion (in the theological sense) and science which should be all-pervading. This conflict is not unique with Huxley. It is one which has existed from the time when discoveries leading to new scientific progress began to attract the attention of a society which had formerly occupied their minds almost exclusively with religious thoughts. The conflict has been waged over several aspects of medieval theology with which newly-founded science disagreed. The first controversy came over the authoritarian procedure which had characterized the medieval approach to religion. The church fathers standardly accepted the practice that doctrinal issues would be ultimately resolved by finding appropriate clerical support. The same was true of Biblical interpretations. A second locus of controversy was centered in the matter of epistemological procedure. The medieval Catholic thinker followed Aristotle in beginning with general assumed principles and drawing conclusions deductively from these. Third, the Bible played a most controversial role in the theological-scientific dispute. Clerical opinion was that the church possessed an absolute interpretation of the book. If, therefore, science found a contradiction to some Biblical tale, the Church would somehow have to reassert, for example, that the Bible was

<sup>3</sup> Huxley, preface.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Bertocci, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 165.

a mere poetic account. This did not satisfy science at all. Finally, one of the oldest points of conflict was the so-called Copernican revolution. Both Luther and Calvin are recorded as having rejected the new discovery concerning the sun and its planets as unscriptural.<sup>5</sup> It is not difficult to see how science may have been forced to deny theology on the basis of such medieval conceptions as these. The objections, however, were largely with matters of church organization and approach to truth rather than with religious truth itself. It is important to distinguish this difference between a religion as an organization and religion as a body of truths. Science, with its naturalistic approach, seemed here to have been tying itself into its own knot, for the very fact that it did not acknowledge the spiritual prevented it from making the distinction properly called for.

Science proceeded along its naturalistic way until it came to effect a real clash. Those philosophers who grounded their arguments solely on scientific procedure disclaimed the existence of any God at all on the basis that He could not be empirically observed. All religious doctrines, science insisted, should be abandoned as sheer dogmatism.<sup>6</sup> It is to this extreme position of denying God that Huxley holds. For him, "the sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a supernatural being is enormous."<sup>7</sup>

We see then that Huxley holds to a naturalistic world. We may define this "natural" as meaning whatever domain is open to efficient employment of scientific method.<sup>8</sup> But is there not more to life than this? Certain philosophers would think so. Kant, for example, criticizes the purely empirical position for not being critical enough of its own premises. He goes on further to say that the monistic viewpoint, which sees only natural substance, forgets the mind that does the thinking for man; if it thinks, it must have a nature of its own, he asserts. Those who fail to realize this forget that knowledge is both form and content.<sup>9</sup>

The dualist view depends on the belief that what we call mind cannot be reduced to material atoms. Thoughts, emotions, and

<sup>5</sup> Donald Wells, *God, Man, and the Thinker*, pp. 418-422.

<sup>6</sup> Bertocci, p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> Huxley, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Class notes, 2/14.

<sup>9</sup> Class notes, 3/9.

mental states generally, are not physical existences.<sup>10</sup> Descartes, the father of dualism, advocated that the world consisted of two radically different kinds of things, mind and matter. He carried materialism to its furthest possible limits, and stopped only when it became absurd to go any further. The inner mind in human beings he considered as non-physical. For him, religious implications were involved, but they do not necessarily have to be. Consciousness, for example, could be entirely non-material and yet not survive the body. The two might simply end simultaneously; yet religious implications concerning the immortality of the soul have come to be associated with belief in a non-physical conscious mind. This is a main reason why the modern scientist has come to reject such an idea. Anything which in any way "smells of religion" cannot possibly be "scientific." Belief in a non-physical mind does not necessitate belief in a life after death. It does, however, leave the possibility of such a survival open (and therefore provides for freedom).<sup>11</sup>

Bertocci attempts to explain dualism to us from an epistemological approach. At the moment we try to relate an experience to other experiences (of the natural world) or to say anything about it, the connection between the knower and the object may "leak." When the knower tries to *think* out the *meaning* of the experience, a twoness is involved. The object and the observer are different—a twoness—and the possibility of distortion and error must enter the knowledge situation when the knower tries to think out such a meaning. We can never know that our thinking "locks in" an object. We cannot be sure that we are experiencing "things as they are," yet this does not mean we do not know something dependable about them.<sup>12</sup>

We find further that what we call matter, life, and finite mind are not to be considered part of God or the continuous overflow of His Being. Were we to consider God, ourselves, and the world as ultimately one unified being, we would have to forsake the reality of creative individual experience. If we go to the opposite extreme and say that God is not the only ultimate Being, we place a chasm between God and the other Being.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Walter Stace, *Religion and the Modern Mind*, p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 169, 170.

<sup>12</sup> Bertocci, p. 945.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 450.

If we ponder this metaphysical problem of monism and dualism, we understand why the hypothesis arose that God was the Creator of everything other than Himself. All that is not God depends on God. But if God did not create the world "out of" Himself and if not "out of something other than Himself," how did He create it?<sup>14</sup> Some say, "Out of nothing." Many just do not know. I cannot attempt here to give any answer. Nor does space permit us to consider all the possibilities which have occurred to men. The fact remains, however, that creation has occurred, and we remain faced with the question of its ultimate nature.

We find in Otto evidence of a belief in the existence of an epistemological dualism. There exists, says Otto, a qualitative difference between absolute dependence and ordinary feelings of dependence which we experience as beings in nature. Even more than a mere feeling of dependence, we possess what he calls a "creature-feeling," which he defines as "the emotion of a creature submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures."<sup>15</sup> Otto would consider it an error to view this as a rational inference from the experience of dependence. "Creature-feeling," he maintains, is the first effect of another feeling-element which has reference to the numen, the "wholly other."<sup>16</sup>

To such philosophers as these and to many others, life seems to exist on two planes. Dualism appears to be a logical conclusion from the thoughtful observation of experience *and* its meaning. "Experience, to be religious, must be put into a context of meaning."<sup>17</sup> How can this meaning exist, I wonder, if that experience which seems to relate to religion is made equal to any other natural experience? What gives an experience its meaningful quality if there is nothing from which the experience can derive or to which it can refer out of the ordinary, above the plane of its own reference? Granted, something natural may give a sort of meaning to some other thing natural because of its setting, time of occurrence, etc. However, this does not seem to be meaning in its fullest sense; it is what we might call "circumstantial meaning." What of a deep, lasting, dependable meaning? Such can be given

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Class notes, 2/14.

by a belief structure. The ultimate value in a belief structure gives a coherent religious structure.<sup>18</sup> Would it not seem that a belief in something absolute, something dependable outside of man, would give the highest satisfaction in this regard?

This brings us to the subject of revelation, for what better way could be conceived of furnishing man with a dependable belief structure? Revelation, says Feuerbach, is connected with the idea of the existence of God. It is "God's attestation of his existence, the authentic testimony that God exists."<sup>19</sup> He goes on to tell us that revelation is the only true proof of the existence of God. God's word is the criterion of existence and non-existence. Belief in it is the culminating point of religious objectivism. Subjective conviction of the existence of God becomes an external, historical faith. The existence of God, considered simply as existence, is an empirical, external existence. There is no certain proof for such a conception. Revelation, then, dispels doubt, for God's conceptional existence is converted into a real existence, a fact.<sup>20</sup>

The proof of revelation may come as one feels it to affect his immediate experience. A solemn assurance and tranquility can be gained, which is unlike anything else in life.<sup>21</sup> The solution of some conflict which can be found through revelation and the experience of the ensuing order and felicity is enough to convince someone of the importance of faith in revelation from God to man.

We might note here Allport's distinction between two types of revelation. One is called "functional revelation," and this seems to be more common than is "cognitive revelation." In other words, more people report a gain of strength and power from revelation than an insight into any clarifying knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

Mascall takes us into a consideration of revelation as the sole significant source of our knowledge of God. He uses revelation in the "strict and proper sense" of Christian theology—the unique self-disclosure of Himself given by God to the Jews and culminating in His personal incarnation in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth—a revelation which is recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and which is preserved and mediated by the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, p. 204.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Gordon Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*, p. 139.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

Christian Church.<sup>23</sup> If God exists, he says, there is undoubtedly a secondary sense which the Word may bear as indicating the part which is played by the action of God in all of man's experience of Him and His works, for He would not display himself merely as a lifeless object before the gaze of men.<sup>24</sup>

We have now brought up the idea of the Bible as revelation, so let us further consider it here. There are many seeming contradictions within the Bible. There are many miracles which occur in opposition to what we know to be the scientific order which exists in the universe. For these reasons, many scientists and philosophers alike have deprived the Bible of any Divine authority and have taken the stand of refusing to see it as Divine revelation. Is this a legitimate action? I do not believe so. Certainly, for men of knowledge, used to thinking by logical methods, it would be difficult to accept passages which seem inconsistent with their experiences. Is it not possible, though, that there could be some deeper revelation which could explain these inconsistencies? Certainly, for those who recognize the duality of the universe, who acknowledge the spiritual as well as the natural, the possibility could occur. Why, if we live in a world where all of our experiences have a duality, could not the same thing be true of revelation? I believe that it is. I believe that a spiritual revelation has been given by God which not only completes the two-fold existence of external revelation in the form of the Bible, but which at the same time makes clear the apparent inconsistencies within the literal sense. What Adolf Harnack, a leading Biblical analyst, says might apply here. He distinguished between what he called the "kernel" of the New Testament and the surrounding "husk."<sup>25</sup> Both the exterior and the interior portion are necessary if the seed is to flourish. In the same way, both the external or natural sense and a spiritual, more interior revelation are necessary if truth is to flourish. I believe that there is such a revelation in that given by God through Emanuel Swedenborg.

What can this mean, for we have noted that meaning is important to life? It can mean that an acceptance of revelation *may* be compatible with an understanding and appreciation of the scientific aspect of life, that literal revelation can be interpreted consistently,

<sup>23</sup> Eric Mascall, *He Who Is*, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Wells, p. 320.



and most important, that a spiritual basis for life can exist which allows for and furthers scientific growth in a *rational* way. Indeed, we can see a system to a dualistic universe, where God does have a place, and where natural life, in relation to spiritual, fits in—where both aspects have a necessary and purposeful existence for the completion of each other. We read that “serious problems of the coherence of the Old Testament within itself and within the secular historical data make it unlikely that any rational interpretation would be possible under the thesis of divine inspiration.”<sup>26</sup> I submit that such a rational interpretation is possible.

There is nothing less attractive to a philosophical mind than the notion of a revealed truth. For philosophy is reasonable examination, and must resist the claim of any doctrine to exempt itself from criticism.<sup>27</sup> Revelation must be scrutinized in the light of all we know about it and the rest of human experience.<sup>28</sup> No form of belief is capable of functioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide an ultra-rational sanction for social conduct in the individual.<sup>29</sup> From this it logically follows, says Ducasse, that “a rational religion is a scientific impossibility, representing from the nature of the case an inherent contradiction in terms.” There is an “inherent antagonism between religion and philosophy.” This will always prove true if by a rational religion we mean one whose every precept is subject to empirical investigation in a natural world. There is, however, the possibility of a religion, revealed by a rational God, which serves as a link between the two aspects of a dualistic universe. From a consideration of a world wherein external creation exists, but wherein a spiritual resides, we can rationally conceive the existence of a spiritual world also. For the completion of the whole, as with the kernel and the husk and with all of nature, is here mirrored. Is it not consistent that each aspect of God’s creation should be an image of the whole structure of his universe, that each entity should experience both the external and the internal for existence?

Where, then, does revelation come into such a system? At the risk of becoming too deeply involved in my own unique theological position, I would like to quote from Emanuel Swedenborg. “There

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Basil Mitchell, *Faith and Logic*, p. 84.

<sup>28</sup> Bertocci, p. 90.

<sup>29</sup> C. Ducasse, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, p. 123.

can be no conjunction with heaven (the spiritual world) unless somewhere on earth there is a church where the Word (Bible) is, and where by it the Lord is known; for the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, and apart from Him there is no salvation.”<sup>30</sup> “It has been given me to know by much experience that by means of the Word man has communication with heaven.”<sup>31</sup> These quotations are from what I believe to be a spiritual revelation from God, one which does not replace the Bible, but which completes it. This is the spiritual revelation to which I earlier referred, which can illuminate and clarify apparent Biblical incongruities. It is a revelation which is thus “cognitive” as well as “functional.” It is the Bible seen in a “secondary sense.”

What proof is there of the authority of such a revelation? I answer, “None.” For if there were absolute proof, man would be forced to accept God. And many could not be happy this way. Man can be happy only when he chooses in *freedom* what he will believe and do. Forced obedience, forced worship, heaven as a required destination, would be a mockery of the Divine love. Man must have choice whether to follow God or his own will, in order that the choice, and his resultant life, may be felt as his. This choice, to be a true alternative, should constitute a rational doctrine. This, I believe, is true of the Swedenborgian revelation from God. In *The Doctrine of The Sacred Scripture* 115, it is suggested that human reason can see things apart from revelation; but the words, “investigate the matter from rational light,” mean from an affirmative search for truth beyond nature and the senses, not from reasonings based on these. We must remember to look to revelation with a receptive mind, remembering that belief is a matter of man’s will as well as his intellect.

Thus religion will always be a matter, not of proof, but of faith. In spiritual revelation, God gives man truth beyond that which can be discovered in nature, so that man may respond to the Divine purpose. The “leap of faith” is a reality, and the man of religion who claims to have avoided it is merely placing himself on the plane of natural reason and has delivered his argument into Huxley’s hands.

Huxley sees only half of man. Because the other and essential half is beyond the sight of the senses, he refuses to acknowledge

<sup>30</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 104.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, No. 113.

the possibility of its existence. We might say that, because of Huxley's one-sided view of reality, he deals only with a world of effects and says they are causeless (except insofar as man's mind has interpreted made-up causes). But there is no effect without a cause, and there is nothing in the effect that was not in the cause. Nothing new can be added to what was before. The scientific humanist foolishly bases his hope on a human morality which he says the human race has developed out of nowhere. Thus, he claims that an *amoral* cause (evolution through chance) produced a moral effect, a "moral animal."<sup>32</sup> Morality without religion is a looked-for effect without its necessary cause, the development of mind out of matter and purpose out of blind groping. There is no more truly *unscientific* concept than that, and science leaves human morality, and its ethical desires to reject the merely animal predictions, without explanation.<sup>33</sup>

As long as Huxley and others like him maintain a scientific humanist position, all that we may say about God is irrelevant to their argument. As Huxley himself said, "Gods are among the empirical facts of cultural history. Like other empirical facts, they can be investigated by the method of science—dispassionate observation and analysis, leading to the formulation of hypotheses which can be tested by further observation and analysis, followed by synthesis and the framing of broad interpretative concepts."<sup>34</sup> He tells us that Gods are born of a past need for man to rely on something for the phenomena that cannot be explained. But now, he implies—given time and discoveries—we can explain all phenomena in physical terms of self-developed order and even chance—hence there is no need for a God whom man has created in his own image.

As long as these premises are accepted, the argument is unanswerable. "Evidence" of God found in nature can be countered with a different interpretation. Du Noüy could not "prove" God empirically any better than Paley could. Nature can only confirm religious faith. The roots of it must be from another source of truth. Revelation in such a "religion" as Huxley's does not have a place. As long as man continues to believe that he can understand truth from himself and can guide his own life, God is not

<sup>32</sup> Lecture, E. B. Glenn.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Huxley, p. 49.

necessary. However, true religion begins by man's recognizing of his dual reality and by his assuming that he needs a higher authority from which he exists and to which he may turn. The fact that man esteems God as "creator" implies a purpose; the fact that He is "redeemer" implies that man's mind has strayed from that purpose and that from himself alone he cannot return to it. Thus man worships God "whose wisdom created, from love, and whose love seeks to redeem man,"<sup>35</sup> through that expression of His wisdom which we have as revelation. As the Lord said to his disciples:

"Without Me ye can do nothing."<sup>36</sup>

and as John said:

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Lecture, E. B. Glenn.

<sup>36</sup> John xv. 5.

<sup>37</sup> John iii. 27.