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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE INTUITIONAL APOLOGETIC. FAITH'S DEFENSE FROM HER OWN CITADEL

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MAN has always lived in an age of tyranny. No sooner has he broken one yoke, than another is fastened upon him. And the irony of history frequently brings it about that the apostle of liberty becomes in turn the oppressor. The race, the nation, the religion, the individual which brought the message of emancipation and led captives out of their prisonhouse and flung back forever to the rear of civilization's march the shameless servitude of God—enslaved man to cloddish unrealities,—these heralds whose feet seem to have trod the mountains of eternal morning have in their turn put the heel of oppression upon the necks of the liberated.

Of this truth we all are witnesses. During the stagnancy of the middle ages man had no fit implement wherewith to assert effectively his intellectual sovereignty. But with the Protestant Reformation there came the discovery of his own resources and the consequent reinstatement of reason as opposed to blind faith. While thus instrumental in ushering in a new valuation of the individual as a thinker and as a man, the movement as expressed in science, philosophy, statescraft, and theology has also issued in a rationalism quite as intolerant and defiant as the old enemy against which it fought so bravely.

Before entering upon a criticism of this rationalism we should remind ourselves that the course pursued by rationalism has been a most natural, if not inexcusable one. As Hoffding points out (*Phil. Relig.* 319) after Protestantism was well established there was a reaction of the laity against the dogmatism of the theologians who insisted that they were the only ones who could decide what was true doctrine. This reaction was a movement "to overthrow the many little popes who had taken the place of the great one."

It would be too tedious to follow this movement in its

historic variations. Characteristic developments may be found in Germany, France, England and even in America. Its creed is tersely summarized by T. H. Green (*Prolegomena*), "All reality consists in intellectual relations." While A. T. Ormond, who is not of that cult, says: "Rationalism affirms as its central dogma that there is only one form of realization, which is thinking."

It appears that two lines of defense against—or shall I say attack upon?—Rationalism are available. In neither of these is appeal made to the historic documents of Christianity for proofs, for to some that would seem to beg the issue.

The first of these defensive instruments is a clearly conceived and adequately expressed criticism of Rationalism, a criticism logically and metaphysically secure in its basis,—in fact an appeal from Rationalism drunk with sense of its own power to Rationalism sobered with a sense of its own limitations. The second defense is a search for and exhibit of some principle which shall constitute a support of Faith as Reality independent of, though not in opposition to, the reasoned processes of the mind. It is this latter line of thought which we shall follow in the present discussion. The endeavor will be to set forth the intuitional bases of religious knowledge as a valid, though not complete, demonstration of the value and truth-content of experimental faith.

It would be aside from our purpose and in the end of small avail for us to review the history of speculative thought concerning the intuitions. Instead we shall begin with a defining and descriptive treatment, following this with a display of the results and advantages of the viewpoint presented.

First, then, let us select from the mass of proffered material those definitions which are authoritative, adequate, and appropriate to our theme and aim.

In Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1.568) INTUITION is defined as follows: "Immediate or direct apprehension, perception, judgment, cognition, and the results of such process. The root idea of this term is that of directness or *immediacy*, in contrast to

abstractive or representative knowledge or more frequently, to forms of knowledge which are mediated by a discursive process." The same work defines INTUITIONISM thus: "The ethical and religious philosophy which looks on the moral and religious natures as immediate organs of spiritual truth" (p. 570).

It should be noted that the position of the intuitionist does not involve a denial of the dependableness and worth of mediated thinking. That is admitted, as nearly every past apologetic testifies, but if protest there be, it arises in opposition to the claim of monopolistic supremacy made by the rationalist. The excellence of reason as a road to truth is cheerfully conceded, but we affirm that it is not the only way. The contrasting viewpoints of rationalism and intuitionism regarding religion may be seen from the statement that the intuitionist views religion as an *art* rather than as a *science*, as experience rather than as experiment. Superficially this might seem to imply a kinship with empiricism, but the likeness is scarcely skin-deep. As the earth is lower than the heavens, so great is the difference between the dust-beclouded empiricist and the twice-born intuitionist.

Following up the definitions already given we may gain a clearer notion of the nature and working of the intuitions in the religious sphere. An analogy may be found in the instincts of plants, birds, and animals to seek, and often infallibly to locate, their means of physical sustenance. Likewise the instinct of seasonal migration illustrates the perfection of result in the functioning of a process farthest removed from the rational. Similarly, the presence of the *God-seeking instinct* in man is significant not alone because of its existence,—of which theism has doubtless made the most argumentatively,—but also because of its contributions actual and potential to the treasury of belief. Let no one question the right to use these terms in this fashion, for fine distinctions between instincts and intuitions, and between various types of intellectual activity profit nothing in a discussion where technic is inferior to correct theory, and the facts of experience excel all else.

To state the point once more: We hold that man has the power to intuit spiritual truth, to know God as real and personal, without the interposition of a reasoning process; and further, that this view has the support of both experience and scripture.

The soul of man is gifted with the subtle capacity of recognition of another personality when contact is established. While this capacity varies greatly as to degree of cultivation and is likely to be perverted from its true function by unregenerate and gain-greedy men, it is one of the unforfeitable birth-rights of the race. Even the tiny infant, in which as yet reason has no place, shows evidence of the intuitive distinction of persons from things. Without pausing for argument it may be seriously questioned whether differences of sense stimulation can be made to serve as explanation. Certainly, when experience at the highest levels of the religious consciousness is the field of inquiry, nothing can break down the conviction that the impact of the Infinite upon the finite is apprehended as such without interruption or interpretation by Reason.

To be sure, the Reason may work into finished form the material provided by the Intuitions, but let it be remembered that the original debt as well as the final conviction are not to be accredited to Reason. Reflective thinking may produce a Philosophy of Religious Experience using data derived by Intuition, but we do not have to await the result of that process to be certain of the fact of God and our relation to Him.

While the religious consciousness of Jesus was unique, it was in an important sense representative. In the devotional aspect of his human life he reveals the possibilities of intimate fellowship with God. Now, who can imagine Jesus, with all the kenotic limitations that may be fairly assumed, as reasoning out the fact or mode of God's existence? We would say that He knew God, rather than that He knew about God. Reason gives *knowledge about* things, while Intuition makes us *acquainted with* things. A well reasoned system cannot guarantee personal knowledge of God. Correct ideas about something are not the

same as an experience of that thing. Jesus Christ is not merely an historical and theological figure as He is so often represented by criticism high and low, by heterodoxy and by formal orthodoxy; He is a present, living, working, communicating, Savior.

The superiority of Intuition as a source of certitude may be stated in a number of propositions: (1) It operates successfully upon the data of life, and not merely upon lumpish facts which constitute the ground where reason works. (2) The certitude at which it arrives is such as cannot be overthrown by argument. (3) Its sympathetic attitude,—one of its characteristic marks,—fits it for being the organ of approach to the areas of experience not submissive to rational treatment. (4) It keeps pace with progress, while reason is never quite contemporaneous with the problem it seeks to solve. It might also be added (5) that the relationship with Reason is supplementary and not contradictory, for because of the intuitions the Reason is enabled to go on from victory unto victory.

An illustration of the success of Intuition as demonstrator is afforded in the case of the doctrine of personal freedom. How establish the truth of the claim that man is free? When Reason undertakes the task we have abundant evidence of the antecedent probability and of the logical necessity of freedom, but very scanty proof of the fact of freedom. For the final accrediting of that fact we must accept the testimony of the inner consciousness, the certification of the Intuitions that we are free. It is a fact immediately known without the aid of reason, and reason can make it no clearer than it already is.

The question is sure to be asked, What about the relation of Faith and Knowledge? If Intuition as representative of Faith be instated as competent to certify truth, will not that tend to displace Knowledge as essential to the scheme of life? Waiving certain subordinate considerations for the present to the main inquiry we answer: No cancellation of organized knowledge is implied. That with its appropriate logical vehicle is left untouched, but in the accurate language of Dr. Ormond: "There may be con-

tent in the *pistis* that will resist the process of the gnosis" (*Bald. Dict.*, 1.369). Having remarked that Faith and Knowledge cannot be separated as various schools attempt, Prof. R. M. Wenley says: "Faith is itself a kind of Knowledge because it depends for its distinctive content upon the nature of the object to which it is directed," (which is simply another way of saying that faith is belief on evidence). "Knowledge is itself a kind of faith, for it depends upon the unrealized ideal of more perfect knowledge still which supplies the immanent principle of all intellectual progress" (*Baldwin Dictionary*, 1.370).

Thus we see that both Faith and Knowledge are nurtured at the ample breast of Intuition. The shame is, that having been rocked in the same cradle they should ever have been incited to enmity by narrow partisans.

The question will be asked: Will not emphasis of the Intuitions result in a Mysticism? To which the answer frankly comes: Yes, and without the mystical element there can be no Faith nor indeed Religion of any kind. The mind must be conscious of Something above itself which it cannot grasp. This consciousness to be productive of Knowledge and Belief must reach a point of intensity where the idea apprehended stands forth in clearly demarked individuality. A vague sense of the existence of the Transcendent will not suffice. Some have this low-grade experience because they have never cultivated the power of intuiting truth, they are primarily sense-minded. But those who by temperament and practice have developed a sensitiveness of the inner perceptions may claim the highest type of certainty. But the Intuitionist will be more than a mystic. He will seek to relate and unify all his activities. When the apostle Peter had his noon-tide vision on the house-top, he was for the moment a pure mystic. He had received an unreasoned communication and understood it not. He was certain of the fact and nature of his experience, however. But, notwithstanding his familiarity with symbolisms, he cannot interpret his experience apart from the whole setting of circumstance. The coming of the Gentile messenger provides the her-

meneuical background for the understanding of the vision.

Thus the safeguard against a closet mysticism is found in relating the materials provided by Intuition to the whole of life and particularly to the immediate time environment. There must be an incorporating act whereby the new content is made part of that all inclusive whole. If this act be difficult of attainment, it is because the intuitional increment is incongruous to the mass, or else we are misinterpreting the data. If the incongruity persist, one element or the other must yield. Saul of Tarsus could not reconcile his activity as persecutor with his vision. And the latter carried conviction and conquered, but not by logic.

We shall probably never know how much of truth we have missed because of the leanness of our intuitional life. As E. Hermann says, "Behind and around intellect there is consciousness, the soul. It is the nebulous matrix out of which the shining nucleus of intellect is formed and in which it lies embedded. It explains the intellect and leads it into its true kingdom. Not the little point of light, but the half-illuminated fringe around it, is the thing that matters, and our reversal of these values is due to a one-sided development of our life in which many of the most important tracts of instinct and feeling have been allowed to go dark. We fumble at the gates of reality because the keeper of the keys, which is Intuition, lies asleep" (Eucken and Bergson, p. 151).

For a somewhat different purpose, but in a spirit not foreign to our theme, Prof. Josiah Royce, in *Sources of Religious Insight*, has evaluated this element in discussing the significance of individual experience. This "inner light," says Royce, "may concern three objects: First, his ideal; second, his need; third, the presence or coming or longing for or communion with something which he comes to view as the power that may save him from his need—in a word, his Deliverer" (0.26.)

I do not think that Royce means to affirm that these are all purely intuitional as opposed either to the empirical or the rational. But he aptly characterizes the

status of the individual whose enlightening is describable in any of these phrases as a "triumph over our unreason" (p. 31), and its need he expresses as touch or intercourse with another. "Without ceasing to be personal and intimate, our experience must in some way come into direct touch with the very nature of reality" (p. 32). Again he says: "Unless in moments of peace, of illumination, of hope, of devotion, of inward vision you have seemed to feel the presence of your Deliverer, unless it has sometimes seemed to you as if the way to the homeland of the spirit were opened to your sight by a revelation as from the divine, unless this privilege has been yours, the way to a higher growth in insight will be slow and uncertain" (pp. 33-34).

George Steven in *The Psychology of the Christian Soul* exhibits the final conviction and lasting satisfaction of those to whom such experience has come: "He is present in the heart, in the conscience, in the events of our day or in the happenings of Nature now, just as he was to Christ His Son. Christ saw Him in the flowers of the field, in the flight of birds, in the faces of little children, in the anguish of a father over a lost son. To a religious man this is not mere work of imagination, but a true perception, an intuition, a direct vision of reality. It is surely not less real than the beauty of a landscape. The beauty is there, waiting to be perceived; and here in the mind is a power waiting to be awakened by the sight to a full knowledge of what beauty is. The day comes when it flashes on the soul, and the soul flashes to the sight of it; and from that day to that soul beauty is present in the world forevermore. It is so with the perception of God. In the world of nature, of history, in the secret movements of one's own soul, there is a Something deeper than beauty, more continuous, more compelling, which is *seen* by faith—that intuition of the spirit of man that there is a spirit in the world, moving and working for spiritual ends. Not everyone sees it any more than beauty. Thousands deny its existence, and count themselves modern and advanced because they deny it; yet those who have it once are unmoved by all denials of all

the world, for they have it as an abiding possession" (pp. 271-273).

This brings us to that which Hermann has called an *ideal dogmatic*, which holds, to quote the words of Grundtvig, that "the belief of the unlearned cannot be dependent on the testimony of the learned" (Hoffding, *Phil. Rel.* 319). As Pascal says, "The heart has reasons which the reason does not know." The method of Rationalism, even when administered by the most devout does not yield a satisfactory analysis of the facts of inner experience. Prayer, for example, while by no means irrational, at the same time cannot be reduced to logical terms. Because it is essentially mystical in character, the organ which deals with the mystical, viz., Intuition, alone can appreciate such experience. Fancy an attempt to reduce to syllogisms the heart history of a St. Augustine, or a Jonathan Edwards, or a George Muller!

Here is a point at which Dogmatic Theology might shift its emphasis. The sturdy defenders of orthodoxy have been so sure of themselves and of their arguments that they have glossed over the most unassailable of all. Some indeed have even despised the intuitional proofs. So Flint, in his great work on Theism (p. 85-86; note x. p. 355) virtually concedes that Reason is the sole weapon of defense against rationalistic attacks. This is as treasonable as it is illogical. Merely because the rationalist, like the lawyers of old (Lk. 11:52), have taken away the keys of knowledge and have themselves refused to enter in, is not a justification for their opponents committing the same folly. Can it be honoring to God to deny the supreme apologetic value of the witness of the Spirit? That spirit who witnesseth in the untranslatable eloquence of soul emancipation and enlightenment.

The victory that overcometh the world is not our logic, but our *faith*. A careful examination of the New Testament usage of the Greek words *pistis* and *pisteuo* shows that the intention is to emphasize not intellectual content but rather the feeling of trust and of loyalty. An understanding knowledge of the mystery of Christ's person is hardly possible for the believer, he gets lost in the

mazes of a theological problem difficult for the best trained mind; but he may have real fellowship with Christ without an analysis either of Christ's person or of the state of fellowship. Let no one mistake my meaning; I am not disallowing the method or results of the theologian, but the plain every-day Christian does not have to be a theologian to reach a comfortable certainty. Inexpert though he be, he may know Him in whom he has believed. Neither is scholarship a sure road to sainthood. By Systematic Theology shall no flesh be saved. Many are saved who have it and many who have it not.

Inge, in *Faith and Its Psychology*, discussing FAITH AS PURE FEELING, seems to reduce the value of the intuitions to the vanishing point. He quotes approvingly the declaration of Flint, "Pure feeling is pure nonsense," thinking apparently that the application of this dictum will leave the way clear for the overlordship of Reason in the religious realm. We agree that "Pure feeling is pure nonsense." For *Pure* feeling, as everyone versed in the terms of Philosophy knows, is an abstraction which has no existence. By the same principle, however, Pure Reason is pure nonsense. For no particular mode of consciousness can stand alone. In actual experience every act of the Reason involves non-rational elements, affective and volitional. Indeed each reasoning process has its roots deep in the fertile soil of Intuition. Thus we see that the argument against the working efficiency of the Intuitions on the ground that they cannot work independently of the other powers, is equally effective as proof that the Reason cannot so work.

The chief difficulty with intuitional experiences arises in attempting to make the necessary distinction between irruptions of the divine and those ultimately believed to be of diabolical origin. How, says the rationalist, can we test the spirits whether they be of God except by the use of the discursive intellect and by practical tests? To be sure, if we seek proof of a different sort, such tests as these must be applied. It will corroborate the work of the Intuitions to employ with due caution inductive and deductive criticism, and the criterion of social assimila-

tion. These tests need cause no grave apprehension, however, for when rightly used they respect the superior worth of immediate perception and handle the data reverently.

The prime certitude as to the source of the transcendent element in spiritual perception is within the perception itself. Manifestly, in the act of intuiting, to know and to know that one knows are mutually implicit and inseparable. Just as in sense perception, I cannot perceive without knowing that I perceive, so the soul that has learned to find its way in the upward path does not merely encounter the vague shape and voice of an unknown Someone, but the paracletic touch of a Person who is his Father.

There can be no mistaken identity for the child who maintains proper acquaintance with his Father. Such mistakes as the rationalist warns us of are likely to happen for the one who trusts in rational methods alone.

We are not advocating the abandoning of well reasoned presentation of the gospel. The preacher is not to be a retailer of homiletic delicatessen from which every vestige of argument has been extracted by some spiritual pure food expert of the mystic school. Let the man of the pulpit adduce reasons, cite proofs, expose fallacies, heap up a logical bulwark of unassailable proportions; but, in bringing to light the central conceptions of Christianity, we must remember that the Reason holds post-mortems, while Intuition is the maieutic attendant on the birth of souls and of their ideals.

Why should I have chosen to present this line of thought at this time? The problem which I have discussed has in its most intense and practical form come to light almost daily in my classroom where I meet with young people in whom all are most deeply interested. Again and again I have found earnest inquirers whose minds are wrestling with the unsolvable antinomies of the great doctrines of grace on the one hand and of the great facts of experience on the other. They are trying to rationalize religion in its every item. Their careful and long continued training by faithful pastors and parents has not only made them

familiar with the historic and doctrinal content of Christianity, but has given them a mental method which is predominantly rational. We who believe in the fundamentals of Calvinistic theology are likely to be rationalizers, because we have the most self-consistent and logically constructed system in the world. This method is most valuable, and yet it has its dangers. There is the constant tendency to throw out data not easily workable, as also the temptation to think our creeds, graven after the art of man's device, are infallible. Some of us would die for our theology, but not for our religion. I have endeavored to help inquiring students in their difficulties by exhibiting the plain facts of Biblical history and human experience in their relation to the point in question. No true doctrine can suffer from being compared with parallel facts. The reconciliation of truth with fact is not our responsibility. Often it is impossible. In such case there is no warrant for applying the rational test and abandoning the one which makes the least acceptable showing. That is lump-thinking; that is the crudeness of materialism, of a rigid physical realism crassly lugged into the spiritual domain. When a student says in response to a question that a certain event in Jesus' life happened because it was so foreordained, I approve the answer. But if one should say the event happened solely because of foreordination and refuse to credit any other factors as worthy of notice, I cannot approve, for he can never reach a sympathetic appreciation of the most wonderful of lives upon that basis. He is subordinating scripture to theology, dynamics to dogma.

In conclusion, the results and advantages of accrediting the Intuitions:

1. It affords escape from the onesidedness of intellectualism. Reason demands the definite. Each predicate must be differentiated. This is all very well if attainable. But knowledge may be certain even though the differentiating stage has not been reached. Though not intellectually satisfactory, it may still be satisfying. The best things do not readily lend themselves to the purposes of definition. Knowledge by Intuition is *whole*, not

chopped up into scientific morsels. It is unitary, undetached, personal.

Probably a majority of Christians rely finally upon this evidence. Pratt in *Psychology of Religious Belief* reports 56 out of 77 cases who rest their faith on immediate communion with God. They "believe firmly that they have been in immediate communion with God" (p. 245).

2. A profounder heart experience may be the solvent for intellectual difficulties. The method and message will differ in individual cases, but a fine repose, a modern quietism is typical. There will be a deeper appreciation of the deeper things. The eclipse of broad and deep aestheticism in religion since the days of the Hebrew Psalmists by a penumbra of rationalized and formalized conceptions must give way to the clear shining of a balanced appreciation of the beauty of the Lord whom we seek. For centuries, with luminous exceptions, the church has thought in prose; shall not her sons and daughters in these last days also rhapsodize in song?

3. This is deliverance from the optionalism of the ubiquitous pragmatist. While intellectual knowledge enables us to articulate with our immediate environment,—hence work, adjustment, progress; and while the intellect provides the will and emotions a basis in past experience and future estimations, the Intuition is present unprocessive, and does not offer options. It is harmonious with the latest word of Philosophy that the greatest truth can be solved only by life and action. Truth is not adopted tentatively, as a sort of working formula by the intuitionist. It is not an hypothesis to be abandoned when more light is available. The light is now here, and those who walk in it discover truth which abideth forever.

4. Intuitionism agrees with scripture. Indeed, on no other basis can we admit the possibility of conversion, of prayer, of revelation, of Inspiration. These would be nothing but theological myths, unless the voice of God can reach the soul directly. This denied, conversion is a psychic explosion, prayer an empty soliloquy, revelation an hallucination, and inspiration a state of abnormal elevation.

Goethe has said: "The main homage which a great man exacts from those who follow him is the ever renewed attempt to understand him." He might have added a pertinent word to the effect that an attempt to understand a great man if wrongly motivated or wrongly methodized will result in a dangerous misunderstanding of that man.

No man has exacted the homage of which Goethe spoke to such an extent as Jesus of Nazareth. But is Jesus understood? Are not his critics very largely working with the wrong tool? Can that God who makes himself known in Jesus Christ, but who of old revealed his truth not to the wise and prudent but to the child of faith,—can he today break through the encrusted mass of rationalistic scribism and reach the heart? Spiritual discernment must needs be dull, if it have no other tool save reason. As the endurance of Moses, so the perseverance and achievement of God's own in every age are sustained by a seeing of the Invisible.

"Now Faith is the substantifier of the things hoped for, a convincing proof of the things not seen."