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# Archbishop Temple and the "Cartesian Faux-pas"<sup>1</sup>

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AS A RECENT fellow traveller of theologians I have become increasingly aware of the marked disrepute in which the name Descartes has been held by many contemporary theologians. I have heard it said that Descartes' general philosophical position represents one of the great stumbling-blocks to Western thought and that his oft-repeated *cogito* stands as one of the most inept, if not foolish, bits of thinking ever recorded in the history of ideas. The basis for this judgment, I have found, though not always clear to those who proffer it, is often admitted to be located in Archbishop Temple's well-known lecture, "The Cartesian Faux-pas."<sup>2</sup> For indeed, I am reminded, it is here that the good Archbishop refutes the *cogito* once and for all and declares Cartesian thought a philosophical "disaster area."

There is no question that Archbishop Temple felt that Descartes' thinking marked a major step backward, rather than forward, in the history of philosophy. Pointedly, he asserted: "If I were asked what was the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe I should be strongly tempted to answer that it was that period of leisure when René Descartes, having no claims to meet, remained for a whole day 'shut up alone in a stove.' "<sup>3</sup> But whether or not Archbishop Temple offered adequate justification for such a claim, whether or not he succeeded in invalidating the *cogito*, remains a different and a philosophically significant issue. And, surely, in view of the Archbishop's wide influence, it is time for philosophy to attend to this issue, to take another close look at his lecture, and to speak out.

As one who is *not* convinced of the soundness of Archbishop Temple's repudiation of Descartes, I propose, in this paper, to re-examine in detail the specific section of his lecture which involves an analysis and denunciation of Descartes' procedure of doubt leading up to the *cogito*. My basic thesis will be that Archbishop Temple fails, here, to see the force of Descartes' argument, fails to understand the nature of Cartesian doubt, and, because of this shortcoming, not only fails to show the invalidity of the *cogito* argument, but also provides a basis on which one is able to suspect the adequacy of his general assessment of Descartes. I shall begin by outlining what I take to be the fundamental contentions of Archbishop Temple's

1. I am indebted to the Church Society for College Work, whose post-doctoral faculty fellowship allowed me to pursue this interest among many others.

2. This lecture appeared in *Nature, Man and God* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1949), pp. 57-81.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

intended refutation of the *cogito* argument, and, having done this, shall proceed to a critical scrutiny of these contentions.

1. *Archbishop Temple's argument.* Dr. Temple begins with a concession. He readily concedes that he *shares* the conclusion to which Descartes arrives. "When I doubt," he says, "I cannot doubt that I doubt; even though I should doubt all else, I could not doubt myself as the subject of that doubt; that as a matter of psychology is true."<sup>4</sup> But one is quick to see that the concession is intended, mainly, to set the stage for subsequent criticism, and that, indeed, it is already pregnant with the *first* objection.

(i) "... that, as a matter of psychology, is true." The psychological truth of the *cogito* granted, Archbishop Temple's initial critical contention is that, contrary to Descartes' insistence, he cannot really doubt everything except himself. "I cannot really doubt the earth or the stars, or (above all) my friends." In fact, he submits, "I cannot find ... any greater *psychological*" assurance about the existence of myself than about the existence of a great deal else." And because there seems to be "*no* reason to regard the assurance at which Descartes arrived as *more than psychological*."<sup>5</sup> Archbishop Temple feels that he has already shattered the essence of the Cartesian argument. In other words, Temple is arguing that, from a purely *psychological* point of view, there is as much "felt" assurance for the existence of other things as there is for the existence of myself; and that because, in Descartes, there is no criterion for the *indubitable* other than a thoroughly psychological one, Descartes' view that all can be doubted except the doubting "I" falls to the ground.

(ii) Archbishop Temple admits, however, that there *appears* to be also "a certain logical cogency" about the *cogito* argument. He notes, for example, Mr. Boyce Gibson's reminder that "that which is thought is always exposed to metaphysical doubt; but that which thinks is the condition of metaphysical doubt itself." But, Dr. Temple is quick to assure us, this kind of contention does not actually carry us very far, "for it is impossible to think without thinking something." That is to say, even though "the subjective function of thought can be properly and usefully distinguished from every object of thought taken separately," yet "it cannot be isolated from all objects of thought whatsoever without ceasing to exist." And because, *on his interpretation*, Descartes' argument rests on the possibility of this isolation, Temple concludes that "the appearance of logical cogency is illusory," and he reaffirms his insistence that the assurance to which Descartes is entitled is only *psychological*.

(iii) The third and final part of Archbishop Temple's argument aims at destroying the authenticity of the alleged Cartesian doubt. The procedure in which Descartes involves himself, asserts Temple, is "purely academic doubt"; and "academic doubt is in itself only an extension of nursery make-

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes in this subheading are taken from *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 64-66.

5. The italics are mine.

6. The italics are mine.

believe." Genuine doubt, he adds, "arises from an apparent collision between one actual element in experience and another": it does *not* take the form, "Let us pretend that we do not know that there is a stove, a chair, a house, for example, and let us see if we can prove any of these things."<sup>7</sup> But Descartes' doubt, Archbishop Temple maintains, *does* follow this latter form, and, as such, is not authentic doubt, but a kind of "intellectual pastime"; for Descartes "was really as sure of the stove as of himself."

2. "*Existential*" vs. "*logical*," "*psychological*" vs. "*theoretical*" doubt. Prior to my critique of Dr. Temple's preceding objections, I should like to set forth a distinction which will permeate my subsequent argument—a distinction between what might be called *existential* (or *psychological*) doubt on the one hand and *logical* (or *theoretical*) doubt on the other hand.

By *existential* doubt I mean the actual psychological state (or attitude) of "inclination to disbelieve."<sup>8</sup> That is to say, *existential* doubt is the actual experience of "being inclined to disbelieve." Moreover, (a) this doubt is involuntary (i.e., it is not brought about by an act of volition) and (b) it does not *depend* for its existence on logical grounds or reasons for doubting (i.e., it may persist even in the absence of logical reasons or grounds for it).

In contrast, by *logical* doubt I understand the deliberate, structured, theoretical process of providing reasons, i.e., logical grounds, for which a chosen or given matter,  $x$ , may be subject to doubt. That is to say, in contradistinction to *existential* doubt, *logical* doubt (a) is voluntary (i.e., it is brought into being by deliberate volition) and (b) is dependent for its existence on logical grounds or reasons for doubting (i.e., it could *not* persist, or even exist, in the absence of logical reasons or grounds for it). With Professor Merrylees, one may say that *logical* doubt involves the "perception that . . . there are reasons for regarding a [given] matter as doubtful,"<sup>9</sup> but this "perception" or "awareness" is *not* to be identified with the psychological state of "inclination to disbelieve." *Logical* doubt, the willed "academic" process of giving reasons on the basis of which a matter,  $x$ , may be doubted, may or may not be conducive to the actual experience of "feeling inclined to disbelieve  $x$ ," i.e., to *existential* (or *psychological*) doubt of  $x$ . *Logical* doubt can exist independently of *existential* doubt, and neither logically nor causally necessitates it.

One example may serve to illustrate both the distinction and the need for the distinction which I have been attempting to draw. Although, in fact, I have no inclination to disbelieve the existence of the external world, I find that, qua philosopher, I am able, at will, to give logical grounds or reasons (e.g., the fact of disagreements in perceptual claims) for theoretically calling into question its existence. That is to say, even though I do not

7. Follows closely Temple's point but involves a reformulation of it.

8. I am grateful to C. J. Ducasse for this expression. See, for example, his contribution to "A Symposium on Meaning and Truth," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 4 (1944), p. 319.

9. W. A. Merrylees, *Descartes* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1934), p. 3.

have *existential* (or *psychological*) doubt of the external world, I am able, upon volition, to entertain *logical* (or theoretical) doubt concerning its existence. This example suffices to show that *existential* and *logical* doubt are separate and distinct species of doubt, are able to exist independently of one another, and are *not* to be identified with one another.

In passing, it must simply be pointed out that, on the basis of the above distinction, it is possible to entertain *logical* doubt concerning that towards which one feels what might be called *existential* (or *psychological*) certainty (i.e., concerning that towards which one feels complete *inclination to believe*), and *existential* (or *psychological*) doubt concerning that for which there is what might be called *logical* certainty (i.e., concerning that the denial of which would involve a self-contradiction).

3. *Descartes*, and "*logical doubt*." Given this distinction between two types of dubiety,<sup>10</sup> I wish now to argue that the doubt about which Descartes' procedure is involved, is *logical*, and not *psychological*, in nature. This argument will serve as the foundation from which I shall attempt to show the numerous faux-pas committed by Dr. Temple in his well-known endeavour (summarized above) to delineate "the Cartesian faux-pas."

A number of statements made by Descartes in both his *Discourse* and his *Meditations* seem to make unambiguous the *logical* nature of Cartesian doubt.

(a) In part three of his *Discourse* he asserts: "More especially did I reflect in each matter that came before me as to anything which could make it subject to suspicion or doubt, and give occasion for mistake. . ."<sup>11</sup> Here, clearly, the doubt which Descartes has intended is not *psychological*; it is rather a doubt which involves a deliberate attending to the possible grounds for being able to doubt any given matter; i.e., it is *logical* doubt.

(b) In part four of his *Discourse*, he says: ". . . I thought it was necessary for me . . . to reject as absolutely false everything as to which I could imagine the least *ground of doubt*, in order to see if afterwards there remained anything in my belief that was entirely certain."<sup>12</sup> Here, again, the doubt in which Descartes was engaged involves a willed resolve to locate reasons for doubting. And the implication quite definitely is that in the absence of reasons for doubting a given matter, *x*, there would be no doubt regarding *x*. To impose such a requirement on doubt is, in the terminology of this paper, to be talking within the framework of the *logical* species of doubt.

One might want to object to my interpretation, here, on the ground that it employs the English translation "the least ground of doubt" rather than the French expression "*le moindre doute*" or its literal equivalent "the least doubt." But even a cursory examination of the full text, whether in English or in French, would justify the use of "ground of doubt." For it is because

10. I do not, for a minute, think that this distinction exhausts the types of doubt.

11. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, translated by E. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (London: Cambridge University Press, 1931), Vol. 1, p. 99.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 101. The italics are mine.

"our senses deceive us"<sup>13</sup> and because "there are men who deceive themselves in their reasoning"<sup>14</sup> that Descartes allows himself the prerogative of following the path of systematic doubt.

(c) In the first *Meditation*, that is, in the meditation concerning "things which may be brought within the sphere of the doubtful," Descartes makes evident his deliberate attempt to find rational grounds for doubt. ". . . If I am able," he says, "to find in each one [of my 'former opinions'] some *reason to doubt*, this will suffice to justify my rejecting the whole."<sup>15</sup> With this thought in mind, Descartes goes on to maintain, again, that "proved" instances of deception by the senses represent a substantial basis for "doubting" sense reports.<sup>16</sup> Hence, once more, it is clear that Cartesian doubt is intended as *logical*, not *psychological*, in nature.

(d) Finally, Descartes' statement of procedure in the second *Meditation* merits careful note. "I shall proceed," he says, "by setting aside all that in which the least *ground of doubt* could be *supposed* to exist, just as if I had discovered that it was absolutely false; and I shall ever follow in this road until I have met with something which is certain. . . ."<sup>17</sup> This quote shows again the element of *structured resolve* in Descartes' doubt, shows again Descartes' intention to provide theoretical reasons for doubt, and is once more in support of characterizing Cartesian doubt as *logical*.

Many other quotations could be offered in support of the present contention, but, I believe, only at the expense of being redundant. From the few listed above, I think that one can say unhesitatingly with Professor Alquié of the Sorbonne that, in Descartes, "*le doute ne peut se constituer qu'en s'appuyant sur des raisons*," that is to say, "doubt can only be constituted on the basis of reasons."<sup>18</sup> And, surely, it is only on the basis of such an interpretation of Cartesian doubt that the extreme dimensions of his process of doubt can be understood. For example, Descartes is not, as some of his readers would have it, displaying a wobbly grasp on reality when he calls the existence of the external world or the truth of mathematical propositions into question; nor is he, *existentially*, in doubt about these matters; nor is he experiencing an "inclination to disbelief" the truth of "two plus three equal five." Rather, he is, as Professor Merrylees so well points out, offering plausible reasons on the basis of which one might *theoretically* call both of these matters into question. Granted the state of psychological (or existential) certainty which we seem to enjoy regarding the existence of the external world, yet is it not true that all of us have, at one time or another, been deceived by our senses? And if our senses have on some occasions

13. *Ibid.*; or, according to Gilson's text, ". . . à cause que nos sens nous trompent quelquefois" (*Discours de la Méthode*, Texte et Commentaire, Paris, 1925, p. 32).

14. *Ibid.*; or, according to Gilson's text: "Et pour ce qu'il y a des hommes qui se méprennent en raisonnant . . ." (*Discours de la Méthode*, p. 32).

15. *Ibid.*, p. 145. The italics are mine.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 149. The italics are mine.

18. Ferdinand Alquié, *Descartes, L'Homme et L'Œuvre* (Paris: Haitier-Boivin, 1956), p. 77. The translation is my own.

deceived us, might it not be that they deceive us always?<sup>19</sup> "How do I know that [God] has not brought it to pass that there is no earth, no heaven, no extended body, no magnitude, no place . . . ? . . . how do I know that I am not deceived every time that I add two and three, or count the sides of a square . . . ?"<sup>20</sup> Descartes is involved in the theoretical process of providing reasons for doubt; he, clearly, is engaged in the process of *logical* doubt.

4. *Archbishop Temple's "faux-pas."* Adopting the perspective afforded by the preceding contention, I proceed to criticize and to answer the three parts of Archbishop Temple's argument outlined at the beginning of this paper. In so doing, I hope to make evident Dr. Temple's misunderstandings regarding Descartes' type and procedure of doubt.

(1) The first part of Archbishop Temple's argument, I maintain, fails to distinguish between *psychological* and *logical* doubt, and fails to comprehend the logical nature of Cartesian doubt. To say, for example, as Dr. Temple does, that he cannot really doubt the earth or the stars or his friends, is not, as the Archbishop seems to think, to give a pointed refutation of Descartes' argument—especially given the fact that Temple is speaking at the psychological level. For, as I have tried to show above, Descartes' doubt has to do *not* with a psychological state or attitude, but with a voluntary, structured, theoretical giving of "reasons for doubting"; and it is entirely possible to have *logical* doubt of this nature in regard to that about which one feels psychologically (or existentially) certain. In other words, Archbishop Temple's confession of his feeling of psychological assurance regarding the earth, the stars, and his friends does not preclude the possibility of Descartes' *logical* doubt of them; rather it points to Temple's misinterpretation of the kind of doubt in which Descartes is involved.

Archbishop Temple's misinterpretation of Cartesian doubt comes out further in his treatment of the *cogito* itself. When he affirms that Descartes' assurance of himself is no more than psychological, and that, qua psychological, it is no more certain than "a great deal else," he is missing the force of Descartes' argument. For Descartes is still speaking within a framework of *logical* doubt. His whole point is that although he can engage in logical doubt of the existence of earth, stars, and even friends, he cannot exercise similar doubt in respect to the existence of himself. For any attempt to look upon one's own existence as being open to *logical* doubt (for instance, on the grounds that the senses are deceptive) turns against itself, contradicts itself, and, hence, destroys itself, by affirming the existence of the very being who is trying to subject his being to *logical* doubt. Or, as Professor Merrylees puts it: "Whatever the nature or cause of my thought, so long as I think I must be. Every attempt to regard my own existence as open to *logical* doubt only serves to enforce the indubitability of the proposition: 'I think, therefore I am.'"<sup>21</sup>

19. Merrylees, *Descartes*, p. 2.

20. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, p. 147.

21. Merrylees, *Descartes*, p. 11. The italics are mine. See, also, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, pp. 101, 156–157.

That is to say, Descartes' assurance of himself is more than psychological. It comes with the realization of the *logical contradiction* involved in any attempt to call the existence of himself into question; it shows the point at which *logical* doubt breaks down; it is a logical emergent from a procedure of attempted *logical* doubt. As such, Descartes' assurance of himself is, to use an expression implicit in the central distinction of this paper, a *logical*, not simply a *psychological* (or *existential*) certainty.

(2) In the second part of his critique, as we have seen, Dr. Temple appears to catch a glimpse of this logical force of the Cartesian argument. But he rather hurriedly declares his "glimpse" to be illusory, and, by the end of this part of his argument, he reiterates his allegation that Descartes' self-assurance is only psychological.

Not only does Dr. Temple's procedure, here, repeat the misinterpretation indicated in the preceding subheading, but it is hasty and logically questionable. Having admitted a seeming logical cogency about Mr. Boyce Gibson's dictum (i.e. "that which is thought is always exposed to metaphysical doubt; but that which thinks is the condition of metaphysical doubt, itself"), the Archbishop purports to do away with this appearance of cogency by noting that "it is impossible to think without thinking something." But I submit that Temple's point does not, in any way, destroy the Cartesian contention which Professor Boyce Gibson is trying to represent; indeed, the two assertions neither are, nor are shown to be, mutually exclusive. For, granted Dr. Temple's view that all thought involves an object of thought, it does not follow, nor is it shown to follow, that the indubitability of the reality of the "that which thinks" logically entails, at any given time, the indubitability of the reality of the object of thought. It may well be, for example, that even though I cannot entertain *logical* doubt of my own thinking self without affirming it, even though I have "logical assurance" about the existence of myself as a thinker, I may, yet, be able to doubt *logically*, and, in fact, be sensually deceived by, the *object* of my thought. Given Descartes' and Boyce Gibson's contention that doubt implies a "that which doubts," and, also, my related assurance of my own existence, Dr. Temple's point, that all thinking involves thinking something, does not logically entail, for instance, that my thinking (indubitable though it may be) of pink elephants guarantees my assurance of their actual reality. But the Archbishop's criticism takes for granted such an entailment, and, in so doing, not only commits a logical *faux-pas* but also leads to absurdity.

Moreover, Dr. Temple's subsequent statement, that "the subjective function of thought . . . cannot be isolated from all objects of thought . . . without ceasing to exist," and that Descartes' argument rests precisely "on the possibility of such an isolation," involves a markedly questionable and unsupported interpretation of Descartes. Assuming that the first part of this statement is a repetition or elucidation of Temple's earlier point (viz., that "it is impossible to think without thinking something"), I believe that, from the perspective of the Cartesian argument, it is unobjectionable. For

there is, in Descartes, no contention to the effect that thinking can be done *in vacuo*, independently of some object of thought, and in isolation from any thought referent. On the contrary, Descartes seems, always, to conjoin thinking with objects of thought,<sup>22</sup> whether or not these "objects," initially, can be shown to have external reality. For example, after defining himself as a "thing that thinks," that is to say, a thing that doubts, understands, imagines, feels, perceives, etc.,<sup>23</sup> he makes it clear that the thinking or perceiving is of certain things, "since in truth [for instance] I see light, I hear noise, I feel heat."<sup>24</sup>

But it may be objected, as Descartes himself anticipates, that these phenomena may be "false," that I may be dreaming, that "the things which I perceive and imagine are perhaps nothing at all apart from me and in themselves."<sup>25</sup> "Let it be so," says Descartes. "Still it is at least quite certain that it seems to me that I see light, that I hear noise and that I feel heat. That cannot be false; properly speaking it is what is in me called feeling; and used in this precise sense *that is no other thing than thinking*."<sup>26</sup>

In other words, the fact that, at one point in his argument, Descartes himself admits that objects of thought may be only subjective, may be nothing apart from him, may be only imaginative, may have no external reality, must *not* be construed to suggest that thinking is possible, for him, without thinking something, or that thought can exist independently of any thought referent. To make such an inference would be to commit the kind of misinterpretation against which Descartes himself seems to be warning.

Hence, for Dr. Temple to maintain that, divorced from all objects of thought, the subjective function of thought would cease to exist, is *not* to express a view incompatible with Descartes'. Contrariwise, what is inconsistent with the Cartesian conception of thinking and, therefore, objectionable as a basis for criticizing Descartes, is Dr. Temple's undemonstrated conclusion that Descartes' argument turns on the possibility of isolating these two factors.

Finally, two other points may be made briefly concerning the section of Dr. Temple's argument under scrutiny here. First, having denied that the soundness of Descartes' view turns on the possibility of divorcing thought from a "something thought," I wish to state, as an alternative, the contention already implied in the immediately preceding subheading (1), namely, that Descartes' argument rests, in general, on what I have chosen to call "logical doubt" and, in particular, on the impossibility of entertaining logical doubt regarding my thinking being, myself as thinker, the existence of me as thinker (or however you want to say it), without affirming, and, indeed, establishing the logical indubitability of, what I am trying to doubt.

22. See, for example, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, pp. 101, 102, 144-160.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

24. *Ibid.*; see also p. 158.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 153. The italics are mine.

Moreover, as I have attempted to suggest above, this indubitability to which I allegedly arrive is *not* claimed to be of thinking *in vacuo*, or of thought apart from any object of thought, real or imagined.

Secondly, let me just repeat what I have tried to show in part 3 of this paper and what underlies my whole critique of Archbishop Temple's argument; namely, that it is *not* the case, as Temple concludes in the second section of his argument, that "the assurance to which Descartes clings is psychological only," but, rather, that Descartes is preoccupied with the giving of "reasons for doubting," and the kind of certainty which emanates from a procedure of *logical* doubt dependent on reason is more than psychological; it is, to repeat the suggested terminology of this paper, a kind of *logical* certainty.

(3) The final part of Archbishop Temple's argument also stems from his failure to understand adequately the nature of *logical* doubt. One may certainly agree with Temple that the doubt in which Descartes involves himself is "academic" rather than "existential" (or "psychological"), but such an agreement does not imply acceptance of Dr. Temple's subsequent assertion that "academic doubt is in itself only an extension of nursery make-believe." Or, to put the matter another way, one may surely admit that Descartes' procedure takes the form of a structured resolve to try to doubt everything, and that, as such, his doubt is (to use the expressions of many of his interpreters) "deliberate," "methodical," "theoretical," "voluntary," "exaggerated," "hyperbolic,"<sup>27</sup> etc.; but, again, such an admission does not, in the way Dr. Temple suggests, require a dismissal of Cartesian doubt as a kind of light and insignificant 'intellectual pastime.' Nor are there any grounds, except by definition or philosophical fiat, to assume that all methodical, deliberate, and theoretical doubt lacks genuineness and authenticity. The fact that Descartes' logical doubt does not evolve spontaneously "from an apparent collision between one actual experience and another" shows only that it is *different* from the existential and practical doubt to which Dr. Temple restricts seriousness and significance; it does not show that Descartes' process of doubt is but a pleasant, though deceptive, form of intellectual game-playing and self-entertainment.

Descartes is painfully concerned with the so-called problem of certainty. The fact that he "was really [in the sense of "existentially" and "psychologically"] as sure of the stove as of himself" does not lessen this concern; for he realizes that many views and beliefs in regard to which he previously felt existential sureness turned out to be false.<sup>28</sup> It is, indeed, in view of this predicament that he resolves to doubt everything, that he deliberately seeks *reasons* for doubting everything, that, in short, he engages in *logical* doubt. Despite what Dr. Temple suggests, this process, for Descartes, is an extremely serious one, not exercised "merely through want of thought or through levity, but for reasons which are very powerful and maturely

27. See, for example, Alquié, *Descartes, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre*, pp. 76-77.

28. See part two of *On Method* and *Meditation I*.

considered,"<sup>29</sup> not aimed at self-recreation but at the very possibility of certainty.

My re-examination of Archbishop Temple's critique of the *cogito* argument permits me to conclude, I believe, that Dr. Temple fails to understand the nature, force, and turning-point of Descartes' doubting procedure, and, because of this failure, does not succeed in offering a philosophically acceptable refutation of Descartes' argument. To express the matter somewhat differently, I should want to say that Dr. Temple's attempt to demonstrate "the Cartesian faux-pas" involves him in a number of "faux-pas" of his own, which, in turn, has the consequence of arousing philosophical mistrust of his general evaluation of Descartes' philosophy.

According to Dr. Temple's view, Descartes, by adopting the "individual consciousness as the starting point of the whole process of thought,"<sup>30</sup> initiates a stultifying *subjectivism* in the history of philosophy. Indeed, it is this error of assuming that "... in knowledge the mind begins with itself . . ."<sup>31</sup> that Temple calls the "Cartesian 'faux-pas.' " But if the analysis of this paper is sound, neither Dr. Temple's characterization of Cartesian philosophy in terms of a subjectivist "faux-pas," nor his thoroughly negative evaluation of the impact of Descartes' position on the history of philosophy and theology, can be accepted without serious reservation. For it is the contention of my paper that at least two assumptions on the basis of which Dr. Temple formulates the Cartesian "faux-pas" and attacks Descartes' philosophy are inaccurate, namely, (1) that Descartes' procedure of doubt and concern for certainty operate within a psychological, not a logical, framework, and (2) that Descartes' argument in support of the *cogito* is contingent upon separating the "subjective function" of thought from all objects of thought. If, as I have argued, each of these assumptions involves a misinterpretation of Descartes' position, then the very foundation on which Archbishop Temple claims to build his polemic against Descartes falls to the ground. And if these data for Dr. Temple's argument are unwarranted, then the thesis which he advocates on the basis of such *data* must be called into question. It is true that *logically* the denial of Dr. Temple's *data* (*p*) does not entail the denial of what he calls the "Cartesian 'faux-pas'" (*q*),<sup>32</sup> but, clearly, if my repudiation of the data is justified, then Temple's thesis and general position regarding Descartes' philosophy stand in need of acceptable grounds and support. This being the case, theological and philosophical admirers of Dr. Temple should be reluctant to assume that the Archbishop has *established* the subjectivist "faux-pas" of Cartesian philosophy, or that an appeal to *Nature, Man and God* is sufficient to demolish any Cartesian styled theological or philosophical position. For, clearly, Archbishop Temple has not made his case!

29. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, p. 148.

30. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 82.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

32. To argue from the denial of *p* to the denial of *q* would be to commit the logical fallacy of "denying the antecedent."