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REV. C. T. COOK IN THE CHAIR.

RELIGION AND THE GOSPEL.

By THE REV. JAKÓB JOCZ, Ph.D.

SYNOPSIS.

The object of this paper is threefold :—

(1) It aims at an analysis of religion. The writer is aware that no simple definition is satisfactory. He therefore offers a description rather than a definition. He contends, however, that all religious forces have a common denominator and can be reduced to a few basic principles.

(2) It aims at a short analysis of the Gospel. The material for such an analysis is not religion but the Canon of the Bible.

The Bible reveals a clash between religion and the Gospel. That clash reaches a climax in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Taking therefore the Cross as a focal point, the Gospel appears to be the *opposite* of religion, not of false religion but of all religion. Seen in this light, religion reveals itself as man's word *about* God—whereas the Gospel is God's word *to* man.

(3) It aims at a juxtaposition of religion and the Gospel. The result is an indissoluble tension. The author holds this to be the position of the Christian believer. Some may seek a compromise, others may seek a clear-cut division, but such efforts are the result of a misunderstanding. Christian anthropology demands such a tension and the Christian faith presupposes it. The outcome of the tension between religion and the Gospel is faith in Jesus Christ.

THE subject is not merely of academic interest. It touches upon the essence of the Gospel. It is of importance both to the preacher at home and the missionary in the field. Every Christian worker knows that religion is the most formidable

defence he encounters in his task as an Evangelist. But it is seldom recognized that religion is always the most bitter opponent to the Gospel.

Christian preaching never takes place in a vacuum. From the beginning Christianity entered the field as a rival religion. It became involved with other religious systems and has evolved features, symbols and a terminology similar to other religions. Christianity as a historic entity is a religion. It has assimilated much of the pagan world and is exposed to the influences and trends of history. It is thus by no means a pure system, but rather an amalgam from a variety of sources. Whether we like it or not, Christianity is an eclectic system with a preponderance of Judaic and Greek elements. But it is the main purpose of this essay to show that there is an indissoluble tension between Christianity as a religion and the Gospel as derived from the New Testament. The tension between Christianity and Gospel, or religion and Gospel, is not accidental but genetic. This was the discovery made at the Reformation. Failure to recognize the difference between religion and Gospel has resulted in unfortunate aberrations in Christian theology. It is here that we come upon the basic error of the Roman Church.

The writer is indebted to Prof. Johannes Witte for his insistence that religion and Gospel are not to be equated. Unfortunately, his book *Die Christus-Botschaft und die Religionen* is almost unknown to English readers.

At this juncture we must, however, make it clear that we do not conceive it possible to separate empirically religion from the Gospel. The tension is an inescapable tension which we carry within us. It is part of our human limitation that absolutes are not possible in this world. All perfectionist and sectarian movements in the Church from the Donatists to the Quakers sprang from a failure to recognize this humiliating truth.

Our task is thus not to denounce religion but to encounter it frankly. If we encounter it as Christians we shall become aware of its fierce opposition to the Gospel. The function of theology may be directed towards a synthesis or else towards a humble acknowledgement of the fact. It is our contention that a clear recognition of the fundamental difference between religion and Gospel is of vital importance to the Church.

I. Religion.

We are now faced with the task of defining religion. Here we enter upon much contested ground. The term "religion"

covers a wide range of phenomena; it therefore cannot easily be reduced to a simple statement. No definition will ever do justice to all its manifestations.

Religion being one of the subjects where objectivity is impossible, all we can do is express a private opinion. It is obvious that views on the subject entirely depend upon a personal attitude and philosophical predilection. Happily, in our case, the subjective approach need not prejudice the value of our conclusions. The decisive factor is the measure one applies in the course of the investigation. Here the measure is not the views of an individual but an independent and outside value. Our task is to confront religion and Gospel. What we say about religion is said in the light of the Gospel. It is from underneath the Cross that we shall pass judgment upon this absorbing phenomenon.

The subjective nature of religion helps us to decide as to the method of our investigation. It is obvious to us that religion belongs to the realm of psychology. This is a new and recent idea. Since Kant, religion was held to belong to the sphere of logic. It was thought to have its foundation in pure Reason and to be explained by the Kantian Categories. This was the basis upon which Jacob Friedrich Fries built his philosophy. When Rudolf Otto wrote his *Philosophy of Religion* in 1909, he still worked on this principle. But his book *The Idea of the Holy* is already a departure from the rule. Here the analysis of the numinous is a study which properly belongs to psychology. Thus, William James's approach has carried the day, though we need not necessarily agree with his Psychological Empiricism.

To us, religion is a psychological phenomenon which can be studied like every other human experience. For this the gift of intuition is invaluable. It has been said: *pectus facit theologum*; we suggest that intuition makes a psychologist. It is the gift of intuition which helps us to link our purely subjective experience to that of other people. Thus by way of induction we are able to form an opinion of a more general nature.

(*a*) *The universality of religion.*

It is usual to give to religion a strictly confined meaning. We often speak of people as religious or non-religious. What we mean to say is that these people belong or do not belong to an organized religious group. But in fact religion has a much wider application. In our view all men are religious whether they like it or not. By this we do not merely mean to say that all normal

human beings are endowed with a faculty which makes religion possible, but that religion is a basic factor in the whole complex of human life. This may not necessarily manifest itself in the conventional forms of religion, but find expression in many other ways. We hold that all higher activities of the soul are ultimately of a religious nature. There is a religious element in all true philosophy, even in atheistic philosophy, as there is in art and music. We will find it easier to appreciate this statement with the help of the idea of the numinous. The awareness of the numinous, the mysterious, the ineffable is at the root of all artistic creation. Nobody is really an artist without that experience. The same applies to the art of philosophy. Kant knew something of the *mysterium tremendum* as is evident from his famous utterance about the starry sky and the moral law. The same applies to science. Newton knew of it when he likened himself to the little boy playing on the sea-shore with pretty shells " whilst the great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered " before him.

Religion is universal, because it expresses a universal need. John Dewey saw aright: " Religion is a universal tendency in human nature " because it gives expression to a universal impulse. That impulse is a desire for protection from the Unknown, and for harmony with the universe.

(*b*) *The psychology of religion.*

Emil Brunner has tried to differentiate between religion and religion. He denies " a common denominator " underlying all religious systems (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 237). This traditional view we find difficult to accept. Whether we explain religion in the context of community life, *i.e.*, as a social phenomenon as Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) does; whether we ascribe to it metaphysical significance; or whether we accept Ludwig Feuerbach's view of a purely psychological process is only of small importance to our case. We are convinced that there is a common denominator which makes it possible to reduce all forms of religion to a few main principles. Thus reduced, the basic element underlying all religion is the need for security in an unstable and ever changing world. Here we readily support Schleiermacher's famous definition that a sense of dependence (*Abhängigkeitsgefühl*) is the essence of all religion. We would add, however, that such a sense of dependence is not an *immediate* religious experience. but the result of an intricate process. The same applies to Hegel's definition that religion is a reconciliation of the finite with the

infinite. Both these statements in the last resort amount to the same thing.

Man's need of protection is at the heart of all religion. It is a need which penetrates his consciousness and decisively influences his personality. Because the need of protection (= survival) is a primary need, religion is and remains a basic need. To establish this we will now take recourse to Prof. Otto's study of the numinous.

No one will doubt that the experience of the numinous is basically a religious experience. Face to face with the numinous, the mysterious, the inexplicable, man undergoes an emotional reaction which, whatever form of expression it may take, results in the religious " shudder ". Organized religion does little else than to recapture that experience or prolong it. The experience itself depends upon a sudden awareness of the overwhelming weight of the outside world. No human creature endowed with normal senses can resist its impact. It bursts upon us through every pore of our skin and every nerve of our body. It comes upon us as threatening and terrifying infinitude. Its immensity, its indifference to the human lot, its brutal force, we cannot face with indifference. The struggle for existence is a struggle with forces unknown and uncontrollable even to civilized man. This is the meaning of superstition. The powers which move the universe remain nameless and mysterious even to the modern scientist. There is profound wisdom in Oswald Spengler's observation that man has an irresistible urge to give names to all that surrounds him. By so doing he means to reduce the mystery of the nameless and to gain power over it. Perhaps this is the meaning of Jacob's request for the name of the man who wrestled with him at the brook of Jabbok (Gen. 32 : 29) ? We are prepared to accept Lecky's remark that " terror is everywhere the beginning of religion " (W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, I, 17). But Lecky only corroborates the saying of Lucretius : *primus in orbe deos fecit timor.*

We have now reached a crucial point : what is the reality behind the religious experience ? Is it related to a power outside man or is it a purely subjective experience ? Or else, is it something of both ?

As is well known, Ludwig Feuerbach saw in religion nothing else than a projection of the human ego. We mention his name because he has made a lasting mark upon modern thought. The same applies to Auguste Comte, who viewed religion as a means of deifying mankind. Jacob Friedrich Fries takes a more orthodox

view. He comes near to Hegel's definition when he describes the religious emotion which forms the basis of faith as " the instinctive sensation of the Eternal in the Finite " (quoted by Otto, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 32). This is a view widely, if not universally, held in the Church. It has become axiomatic to regard all religious manifestations as evidence of the supranatural. Even an independent thinker like Emil Brunner accepts the view. We have been brought up to believe that in the religious phenomenon man comes face to face with the Ultimate. Modes and methods may vary, but in the end all religion pursues the same goal—the encounter between God and man. This is a view the writer intends to contradict. An analysis of religion has led him to the following conclusions :

(1) The religious experience of which the numinous is a basic element springs from an urge to name, *i.e.*, to explain the mystery of life and the universe. This is the driving force behind all cosmology from the most primitive to the most scientific. The same urge is the father of all philosophy. This is the reason why religion and philosophy are inseparable. Here we may legitimately draw attention to Kant's ingenious discovery of the Categories which forms the basis of Pure Reason. " Every reasoning being " says Otto, in an effort to explain the Kantian point of view, " *has* in himself mathematical as well as metaphysical knowledge, which he continuously if unconsciously applies " (*op. cit.*, 58). That knowledge Kant conceives as *a priori* knowledge not derived from empirical experience. Man has not only the need but also the capacity to reason. He has a " feeling for truth " or intuition which Fries calls " *Ahnung* " and Otto " insight," which helps him to become a reasoning being. His humanity requires an answer to the mystery of existence. But the question of the validity of human reasoning in relation to reality remains unsolved. Whatever we may think of Kant's epistemology we cannot accept his metaphysical conclusion, for it makes nonsense of the Christian meaning of revelation. If man has *a priori* metaphysical knowledge then revelation is unnecessary. Kant suffers from an internal contradiction. If " that which we know with certainty is not the laws of extramental realities as they are in themselves (*i.e.*, the laws of noumena), but only the laws of the impressions which the mind receives from these realities, or the laws of phenomena " (R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, II, 5 : cf. also Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 52), then our *a priori* " metaphysical knowledge " is of no value. It leaves the main problem whether " intelligibility

is consubstantial with being" (cf. Jacque Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 192) unanswered. In this case realist philosophy is deprived of its basis. It is here that we touch upon the weakest point in Thomistic and related thinking. There is a vast difference between man trying to name God and God naming Himself. Religion ultimately is a Promethean attempt to name God. Here we whole-heartedly agree with Johannes Witte: man, whether through religion or philosophy, can only recognize the fact of God (cf. Rom. 1 : 19), but has no means or grounds to say anything about Him; this he must leave to God Himself.

(2) Religion expresses a need to come to terms with the powers behind the universe. Man feels insecure and threatened by the Unknown unless he has found a means of propitiation. The desire to propitiate springs from a sense of incompleteness on the one hand and guilt on the other. To this we would add the awareness of separateness, loneliness and helplessness. Such feeling is overcome by a devious and complicated route; either æsthetically by an experience of harmony; or sacramentally by the employment of magic; or else mystically by an emotional experience of identification and union.

Whatever we may think of his books, Ralph Waldo Trine has given expression to a deep-seated religious need. Here St. Augustine's famous words spring to one's mind: "Thou hast created us unto Thyself, and our heart finds no rest until it rests in Thee." This too is a human need craving satisfaction. Conventional religion is one of the forms whereby it manifests itself. But basically, the other forms are *also* of a religious character. They all express the same craving. But whenever religion pretends to be more than the expression of a need, it leads to deception and therefore to idolatry. Of all forms of deception religious deception is the most subtle, for here man entrenches himself for his last fight. The deception is nothing less than self-deception; whereas man pretends to reconcile himself with God, in actual fact he only reconciles himself with himself. We are not surprised that Ralph Waldo Trine with his characteristic American enthusiasm failed to make the discovery.

(3) The third element in religion is the most subtle of all. It comes from an urge for self-assertion. This is a basic human need; life would be impossible without it. Just because it is the need of all men, all men are religious. It has been often recognized that religion is a subtle form of selfishness. The selfishness of the conventionally religious is only too obvious, though one would hesitate to go as far as Winwood Reade, who

said that " a sincerely religious man is often an exceedingly bad man " (*The Martyrdom of Man* [1933], 428). Selfishness springs from the law of self-preservation and in religion it takes a very subtle form. The religious man tries to take hold of God and use him for his own ends. Not God, but himself, is in the centre; and everything else is subservient to his needs.

At this point we come upon an interesting feature in our analysis. Religion does not only consist of an experience of the numinous. To become a religious experience proper, the numinous must be transformed into something else. The shudder of the numinous has a threatening effect. To become religion it must lose its " crazy and bewildering note " (Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 18). Hostility must be translated into friendship and the unknown into the known. Only thus can religion attain its end. For the ultimate aim of religion is personal triumph over the world outside. This comes about by a complicated psychological process; intellectually by means of rationalization (philosophy); emotionally by means of the æsthetic or mystic experience; or else sacramentally by means of magic (cf. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 211). Whatever the route the result is the same—a sense of victory over the great Unknown. Emil Brunner, who dwells on this point (*op. cit.*, pp. 41, 258 f.), fails to draw ultimate conclusions. It was left to Karl Barth to construct his theology by taking into full account the true nature of the religious phenomenon.

(c) *Anthropology.*

We have now reached the most crucial point in our discussion. Even on the assumption that the analysis offered above is a correct estimate of the religious phenomenon, there still remains the possibility that religion is more than a subjective psychological process. If we believe that God is the creator of man with all his faculties, then religion too is " implanted in mankind by the author of life," and represents, as Prof. Gowen says, " a biological necessity " (H. H. Gowen, *A History of Religion*, p. 1). It is a human faculty by means of which we reach out from earth to heaven and transcend our own limitation in time and space. All mysticism and every form of natural religion is based on this premiss. It forms the starting point of all metaphysics and is the foundation for Thomistic and kindred philosophies. The principle behind this view is a specific doctrine concerning man. The whole problem is anchored in anthropology. A right estimate of religion depends on our answer to the question concerning man's relation to eternity.

Immortality of the soul has become an axiomatic truth to most Christian thinkers. This is taken for granted to such an extent that only seldom do theologians take the trouble to substantiate it with argument. Here we come upon evidence of the deep penetration of Greek thinking in Christian theology. It would take us too far to search the genesis of this development, but a few outstanding facts must be mentioned.

Dean Inge rightly asserts that one cannot understand Platonist cosmology " unless we accept the tripartite psychology which makes man consist of spirit, soul and body." But he insists that the same is " at the root of St. Paul's religion" (*op. cit.*, p. 263). At first this appears a fair statement. The Apostle seems to be speaking of the soul in a similar connection. But on closer investigation we soon discover the difference. This becomes evident not only in the sharp distinction St. Paul makes between ἡ ψυχή and τὸ πνεῦμα, but also between πνεῦμα in reference to God and πνεῦμα in reference to man. Nowhere does he confuse the human spirit with the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit indwells man *only* as a guest. Immmortality, ἀθανασία, is thus not an inherent quality of human nature, but a gift conferred upon man and inseparable from faith in Jesus Christ. God only is immortal (1 Tim. 6 : 16) ; man's soul is not immortal ; for eternal life, man entirely depends upon God. The Bible knows nothing of the immortality of the soul, though it knows a good deal about life after death. But *that* life is never conceived apart from God, the source of all life. Man, as he is, is but dust and ashes. This is already signified by the remarkable passage in Genesis that man was hindered from stretching forth his hand and taking of the tree of life. A similar thought is expressed by our Lord in His answer regarding the resurrection : " He is not the God of the dead but of the living " (Mark 12 : 18 ff.). Life and death entirely depend on Him who holds human destiny in His hands. Liberal theology has stressed the *Imago Dei*, but has overlooked the fact that the Bible also knows man to be a fugitive from God, fallen in sin and given to evil.

Christian theology is not committed to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in the Platonic sense. This is now increasingly being recognized. The ancient Church was not unanimous on this score. Tatian, in his *Address to the Greeks*, holds the opposite view : " The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If, indeed, it knows not the truth it dies " (ch. 13). This is the

Biblical point of view, and especially that of the Johannine Gospel. At another place, Tatian explains that the soul can strive after union with God only when united to the Holy Spirit (*ib.*, ch. 15). Theophilus, who is already giving way to a non-Biblical conception (cf. *Autolycus*, ch. 19), regards man as made of a middle nature "neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either" (*ib.*, ch. 24). A somewhat similar view appears in Tertullian, who in opposition to Platonism accepts the corporeality of the soul (cf. *De anima*, ch. 5f.). He carefully distinguishes the human soul as "spirit" from the Spirit of God (cf. *ib.*, ch. 11; also *Adversus Marcionem*, ch. 9). But Tertullian was too deeply steeped in Greek thinking to overcome this enticing doctrine. This we say in spite of his insistence that Jerusalem has nothing to do with Athens and the Church with the Academy (cf. *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ch. 7).

In his *De resurrectione carnis*, immortality is already accepted by implication.

The "old man" who met Justin while the latter was still a Platonist, characteristically enough begins the discussion with the question of the immortality of the soul. In an encounter with a Platonist this is a natural starting-point. As long as Justin held to the Platonic view, the Christian message had little to offer. Eternal life, the goal of the Christian hope, could mean nothing to a man who already participated in immortality by virtue of his humanity. The Christian stranger, probably a Hebrew Christian, rightly argues that the soul created in time belongs to this world of decay and change and thus cannot be immortal: "For those things which exist after (*i.e.*, beside) God or shall at any time exist, these have the nature of decay, and are such as may be blotted out and cease to exist; for God alone is unbegotten and incorruptible, and therefore He is God, but all other things after Him are created and corruptible. For this reason souls both die and are punished. . . ." (*Dial.* ch. 5). Dean Inge, had he been present, would have asked "whether a life destined for eternity could have a beginning in time" (Inge, *op. cit.*, p. 295). This indeed presents a difficulty to the logician, but need not worry the theologian who accepts unconditionally the absolute sovereignty of God. Even Origen, with his addiction to Platonism, is very cautious on the subject of immortality. He speaks in no dogmatic manner and makes it plain that he is putting forward only his private opinion (cf. *De Principiis*, 2, 4f.).

Soul and body are created by God (*Contra Celsum*, 54ff.). Alluding to our Lord's own experience, Origen puts the soul as " something intermediate between the weak flesh and the willing spirit ". But Origen, like Tertullian, is too engrossed in Greek thinking. Opposing traducianism on the one hand and creationism on the other, he taught the pre-existence of the soul (cf. *De Princ.* 1, 7, 4). In this case, immortality was the natural correlative; this he argues with conviction (*ib.*, 4, 1, 36). His argument is interesting, for it touches upon what is called in German theology *der Anknüpfungspunkt*: the human soul is capable of partaking of heavenly virtues, and since heavenly virtues are incorruptible and immortal, then the essence of the human soul is also incorruptible and immortal. But what of the soul that refuses to partake of heavenly virtues? To this both Origen and Tertullian reply: the soul by virtue of its origin carries in itself " certain seeds of restoration and renewal ", it cannot fall so low as to become extinguished (cf. Tertullian, *De Anima*, 41). Here even Brunner seems to follow the traditional view of accepting the idea that a " relic " of the *Imago Dei* is still left in man as a reminder of his former state (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 354).

Thanks to Thomas Aquinas, the immortality of the soul has been raised to the importance of a dogma. His argument is purely speculative: no real existence can ever be annihilated; it is not possible for spiritual beings not to exist (*non est potentia ad non esse*), the human soul must therefore be immortal. Aquinas, though denying the soul's pre-existence, arrives at the same conclusion as Origen. The fifth Lateran Council of 1513 has condemned those taking an opposite view. Pius IX condemned the philosopher Anton Günther in 1860 on these grounds. Characteristically enough, Günther, who was described by a Protestant writer as " a solitary thinker and sufferer " (Karl v. Hase, *Handbook to Controversy with Rome*, II, 463), strove all his life for a Christian philosophy purged of pagan elements.

For Christian theology, the issue is of vital importance. The choice is between Platonism, Realism, and Thomism on the one hand, and the Bible on the other. Here Brunner has seen very clearly. The line of division between Idealism in its many forms and the Christian point of view must be drawn without compromise. The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul makes historical revelation superfluous. This doctrine ultimately ends, as Brunner points out, " in the identity of the human spirit and

the divine spirit, the human reason and the divine reason" (*op. cit.*, p. 353). Once we accept with Plotinus and his devoted disciple Inge that the "rational soul" constitutes a link between time and eternity (cf. Inge, *op. cit.*, 118), Christian revelation can only have a strictly limited and subsidiary meaning. If, however, we take the Biblical view, that soul and body, life and death, are always and at every moment dependent upon God, then the Incarnation appears as a miracle outside all human possibilities. Thus only is the Word spoken to us in Christ *totaliter aliter* from any other word religion can devise. That the Bible has almost nothing to say about immortality and so much about the immortal God deserves our special attention. The question which now arises must be faced in all seriousness: if the Bible is what it claims to be—a Word of God to man—what of the "truth" in other religions? Is the voice of God confined to the Canon or can it be heard elsewhere, as for instance in philosophy, mysticism, nature, history and art?

Here Prof. Witte's views are important. All that Brunner says on the subject is a reiteration, or shall we say affirmation, of Witte's position, though Brunner only casually mentions his name (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 218, n. 1). This is the more surprising, as Brunner is seriously criticized by him (cf. Witte, p. 278f.).

It is interesting to note that Barth, Brunner and Witte are agreed that man's inability to find God by his own effort is not a *primary* inability. There was a time when man could know God. Brunner calls it "primal revelation" or "revelation in creation" (cf. *ib.*, 60, 62, 73, 76f., etc.). They are divided, however, on the question what is left of that primal revelation in man after the Fall. Here Brunner shows remarkable indecision. On the one hand, he admits the demonic character of religion and calls it "the product of man's sinful blindness;" on the other hand, he holds on to the *Imago Dei* conception in spite of his admission of the seriousness of sin (cf. *ib.*, 53, 55, n. 11, 74, 354) and even defends certain aspects of Platonism (*ib.*, 355). This inevitably leads him to accept a progressive conception of revelation (*ib.*, pp. 134, 193, 195, 197, 199 f., etc.), and also a point of contact between Christian revelation and the conceptions and ideas of other religions. Barth and Witte are more consistent. To the question, what is left of "natural" religion in man, Witte answers: a dark foreboding that there is a God; but even this is not universal, as can be seen from Hinduism (*op. cit.*, p. 156). Barth is even more emphatic: there is no

"natural" knowledge of God (cf. *Dogmatik*, I, 2, p. 335); of himself man cannot know God (*ib.*, p. 328). This is no attempt on the part of Barth to deny all that is true, good and beautiful in religion (cf. *ib.*, p. 327). All that he does is to place these values in their right perspective—they are *human* values.

Here Brunner and Barth see eye to eye. To both of them, religion is an idol. Brunner explains to us that religion either "personalizes" God and thus makes Him finite by turning Him into a myth, or else it "dissolves Him into abstract speculation". Religion is the place where original sin breaks out in all its force and reveals man's self-seeking as the deepest motive (*op. cit.*, p. 264). This is also Barth's view. Barth contends that to know the true nature of religion man has to take his place underneath the Cross of Christ. Religion can only be recognized as what it really is from revelation (*Dogmatik*, I, 2, p. 329), and seen from there religion is nothing else but human speech (*ib.*, p. 330).

II. The Gospel.

Having described religion, we now address ourselves to the second task, which is to describe the Gospel. Here it must be noticed that the Gospel cannot be described apart from the Canon. Without the Bible the Gospel is suspended in a vacuum and deteriorates into a myth. The background of the Gospel is the whole Bible—the Old as well as the New Testament. The more we detach the Gospel from the O. T. the less is it anchored in history. But the Gospel removed from history loses its meaning as an unrepeatable act of salvation. Only with the Bible as its background is the Gospel a historic fact.

To elucidate the Gospel we thus turn to the Bible. Here we meet a God who is utterly different from the God of religion.

(*a*) *The Hidden God* (*deus absconditus*).

God in the Bible remains a hidden God. There is never an attempt to disclose His mystery. He remains the Unapproachable and the Unknowable. Nobody can see Him and live (Ex. 33 : 20). He never discloses His own Self, only His holy and eternal will. If Dean Inge is right in saying that the cardinal postulate of Platonism is "that the perfectly real must be the perfectly knowable" (*op. cit.*, p. 180), then the opposite is true of the God of the Bible. He remains an ever hidden God and a consuming fire (Is. 45 : 15; Deut. 4 : 24; Heb. 12 : 29). No

religious attempt can break through beyond the veil; no mystic ecstasy can remove the barrier; no philosophical depth can fathom the secret; no scholastic preciseness can define the Ineffable. The traditional *via negationis et eminentiae* is only a feeble admission of this supreme fact.

The heroes of the Bible never attempt to reveal God; they humbly acknowledge their ignorance. Moses only saw his "back" (Ex. 33 : 23); even the Seraphim in Isaiah's vision covered their faces in the presence of God's majesty (Is. 6 : 2). The Lord of hosts remains for ever the Invisible One who must not be likened to anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth (Second Commandment). The attributes by which God is described in the Bible do not reveal His Self, only His will and purpose. What Inge says about the "God of religion" (cf. *op. cit.*, 218) we strictly confine to the God of the Bible. Dean Inge's confusion springs from the conviction that religion and revelation are coterminous, which they are not. In the Bible we never meet God as He *is*, but only as he is *towards us*. This is recognized by Luther in a remarkable way. In *De servo arbitrio*, 222, he says: "Let God in His majesty and being alone. For as such we cannot have anything to do with Him, nor has He wished that we have anything to do with Him as such. But only in the measure that He is clothed and revealed in His Word, by which He presents Himself to us, do we have anything to do with Him. For the Word is His beauty and glory. The Psalmist praises Him as He is clad in the Word" (cited by Söderblom, p. 53, whose translation I follow). We venture to suggest that had Winwood Reade known this passage, he might have been less severe on Christian theologians. It is Karl Barth's great merit to have emphasized so consistently this almost forgotten aspect of Biblical revelation.

Biblical revelation is the revelation that God is a hidden God (cp. Barth, *ib.*, p. 32). This is the witness of both the Old and New Testaments. Barth never tires of reiterating that by revealing himself God shows himself as the hidden God. "Even in His revelation", says Brunner, "God does not cease to be clothed in mystery" (p. 47).

(*b*) *The Personal God.*

The God of the Bible is not a concept, an idea or a power, but a person. To speak of Him in terms of moral values is an

assumption foreign to the Canon. The Bible is not concerned with "truths," but with His sovereign and unalterable will. It is not enough to say, as Dean Inge does, that "Greek philosophy never emphasized the personality of God" (*op. cit.*, p. 217). The truth is that the God of the philosopher was never more than an idea, a logical necessity in the attempt to explain existence. Brunner's remarks are here most appropriate: "The God who is discovered through thought is always different from the God who reveals Himself through revelation. The God who is 'proved', just because He has been 'proved', is not the God in whom man 'believes'" (*op. cit.*, p. 43; cf. also *ib.*, pp. 44, 47, 409). The God of the Bible is a person throughout, so much so that anthropomorphisms are freely used to describe Him. Here we wholeheartedly agree with Buber, though his motives are different from our own: "In accordance with his nature the eternal 'Thou' cannot become an 'it'" (M. Buber, *Ich und Du*, p. 129). "I do not believe", says Buber, "in God's self-designation (*Selbstbenennung*) nor in God's self-disclosure (*Selbstbestimmung*) before man . . . I am that I am . . ." For as Buber has rightly seen it, "Man does not receive and he does not receive a 'content,' but a presence, a presence in the form of power. . . ." (*ib.*, p. 127). The Bible does not proffer "ultimate values" in the form of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, to use Dean Inge's vocabulary once again; it speaks of a God who remains strictly personal to the extent of embarrassment. He does not speak to "humanity", He speaks to *man*; and what He says is non-transferable, everyone has to hear it for himself. That is why the Bible is only a witness to the Word of God. The Word of God is not an "it" that can be printed, discussed and explained, but a Person Whom to hear is to obey and to obey is to hear. In Christ Jesus we meet God not on the intellectual, emotional or religious plane, but in the business of living. We meet Him there, too, only inasmuch as these spheres are part of the human life. In other words, we meet God existentially if we meet Him at all. But we meet Him only because He has already consented to meet us in Him who died upon the Cross. That this is the *only* place where God really and in all earnestness meets man is the foundation of the Christian faith. It is for this reason that we are forced to repudiate Söderblom's view. The Gospel is not inclusive, but *exclusive* to the highest degree. This narrowness is imposed upon us by loyalty to Jesus Christ. "Anyone who should happen to be

offended at this 'here only' must first inform us where else Jesus Christ speaks to us" (Barth, *Revelation*, ed. by John Baillie & Hugh Martin [1937], p. 68). It is not enough to baptize the pagan gods and to present them as Christian saints; they have to be uprooted and broken down if man is to surrender to Jesus Christ. Dean Inge asserts "that the knowledge of God can be attained only by the activity of the entire personality" (*op. cit.*, p. 196). But this is not what we mean by an existential meeting with God. To meet God existentially means to meet Him at the most undesirable point of our life, to meet Him inescapably. The god we seek is seldom the same as the God we meet in Jesus Christ; *our* god is usually the god of the mystic or the god of the philosopher. We must never confuse the god of our imagination (St. Paul calls him the god of this world) with the Lord of Hosts. To say with Pringle-Pattison, as Inge does, "the presence of the ideal is the reality of God in us" (*op. cit.*, p. 182), is a circumvention of the Cross and a frivolous denial of the stern reality of sin. The true meaning of revelation can only be determined in the context of these two facts: the fact of the Cross and the fact of sin.

(*c*) *The Speaking God.*

The Gospel is impossible without the assumption that God really addresses himself to man. He is a speaking God; this is the meaning of the Word becoming flesh. Both Old and New Testaments are witnesses to this astounding fact. The Law's "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not"; the prophets' "thus saith the Lord", Jesus Christ's "verily, verily, I say unto you", never refer to matters other than man's relation to God. Revelation in the Biblical context is a strictly confined conception. Brunner rightly remarks: "For Jesus Christ is mentioned where the *opus proprium Dei* is concerned, His action in revelation and redemption" (*op. cit.*, p. 320). It is most regrettable that the Bible was sometimes used as if it were a text-book for science. It does not teach any "truths", scientific or otherwise; it gives witness to God as Creator, Judge and Saviour. To hear what the Bible says requires no mystical sense, religious zeal or philosphical training. There is only one condition for hearing the Word of God: obedience. Obedience is inseparable from faith: "if anyone willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching. . . ." (John 7 : 17). Here "teaching" has no reference to the voice of our conscience or some mystical

intuition whereby we grasp " truths " beyond discursive reason of which Platonists speak. Christ's " teaching " does not concern absolute values of which we hear so much these days; it is teaching which concerns the true state of man and man's desperate need of salvation (cp. *v.* 14).

The Word as it comes to us from the Bible is always *verbum externum*, a Word outside us. Not our spirit, but the Holy Spirit of God is its initiator and interpreter. The word of the Bible comes to us by mediation, *i.e.*, *indirectly*. There is no *Anknüpfungspunkt* within us which makes it possible for us to hear. God Himself, by the operation of His Holy Spirit, as an act of Grace, creates the possibility. Thus Söderblom's difficulty concerning a " super-sensual reality " (cp. *op. cit.*, p. 102) is no difficulty at all. For in the first place, in the light of the Cross, revelation is not a " super-sensual reality ", but a historical fact; secondly, revelation does not depend upon human susceptibilities, but is a creative act of God. Hearing the Word of God is the *great event*, as Barth calls it, and it takes place only by a miracle.

The Word of God always relates to man's need for salvation. The Bible does not talk about butterflies and sunsets; it talks about sin and forgiveness. The moment we become involved in " truths " we become impersonal and are side-tracking the issue. Revelation, as we understand it, is not a quicker discovery of universal principles which man would ultimately find out for himself given the time, but the creation of a situation where God is suddenly heard as a speaking God and man in humble obedience listens.

But that the word spoken to *me* in Jesus Christ is a true Word of God remains an act of faith. There must always remain the possibility that I am mistaken. Faith without risk and venture is not faith. " Only eternity can provide an eternal certainty, whereas existence must be content with a fighting certainty " (Kierkegaard, quoted by Lowrie, p. 310). The Word which we hear by faith is not our word, it always remains an *alien* word: " *ponit extra nos . . . in promissione divina, veritatem, quae non potest fallere* " (Luther, quoted by Witte, p. 242). It comes to us as a challenge and a promise. It is an unexpected word and therefore utterly different from anything man can say. It is unparalleled, outside all human divination and without analogy. Neither religion, nor mysticism, nor philosophy can utter it.

(*d*) *The Saving God.*

It is a peculiarity of the Bible that the Word of God is tantamount to Salvation. The God of the Bible only speaks to save. Even His Judgment is Salvation. This is remarkably expressed in David's choice (2 Sam. 24 : 14) ; God's silence is the most terrible thing which can happen to man. Not to be judged by God any more is man's greatest punishment.

The Bible in the first instance knows of man not as a seeker of God, but as a fugitive from before His face. Adam and Eve's childish attempt to hide from God " amongst the trees of the garden " (Gen. 3 : 8) is a true picture of man habitually in search of a hiding-place from the justice of God. Francis Thompson's unequalled poem, *The Hound of Heaven,* is a poetical rendering of this basic truth about man.

" I fled Him down the days ;
I fled Him down the arches of the years ;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind ; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter."

Herein is revealed Thompson's Christian insight in that the God he speaks of in hot pursuit of man, does it not for the sake of vengeance, but for love. God seeks man not in order to crush, but to save, though He knows,

" How little worthy of My love thou art ! "

The Gospel begins with this astounding fact of God's love in spite of man's unworthiness : " while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us " (Rom. 5 : 8). But while the Cross is a word on behalf of man it is also a word *against* man.

Underneath the Cross man stands condemned in his totality. The Cross is not only judgment upon pagan man, but also upon religious man at his best. This is the amazing discovery Saul of Tarsus made. He made the discovery under a weight of evidence : that Jesus was crucified in the Holy City at the instigation of the priestly hierarchy and with the consent of the pious Pharisees ; that Paul himself had some considerable share in the persecution of the Church of God ; that sincere devotion to his religion made him an enemy of the Cross ; that his people's rejection of the Messiah had come about from a mistaken zeal for God—these were facts too startling to be overlooked. The fact that publicans and sinners entered the Kingdom of God while Scribes and Pharisees remained outside was too surprising

to remain unnoticed. From his own experience Paul knew that only after surrendering his religious position could he become a disciple of Jesus Christ. All the things he once gloried in he had to count as dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. 3 : 8). Only after abandoning his own righteousness which is after the Law and having no righteousness of his own could be receive the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 3 : 9).

But if Judaism with all its lofty ideals and profound spirituality became a hindrance to the acceptance of the Gospel, what of pagan religion with its crude idolatry and false ideals ? Here we come upon a great paradox : *the loftier a religion, the greater its moral achievement, the stronger is its opposition to the Gospel.* This is the secret of Israel's fall according to Rom. 9–11. The more man has of spiritual values, the stronger his entrenchment ; the surer his position, the greater is his independence and the more firm his resistance. This is indicated by our Lord's words : the first shall be last and the last first. Such is the tragedy of the pious that his religion becomes a snare to him. To overlook this amazing fact is to misunderstand the essence of Pauline theology.

The Gospel makes its stand on behalf of man while standing *against* him. The difference between religion and Gospel is the difference betweeen nature and grace. Nature and grace do not only belong to a different order, but stand in opposition to each other. The natural man is an enemy of God. Aquinas's much quoted sentence, *gratia naturam non tollit, sed perficit,* is an aberration of fact. The Reformers, by breaking away from this premiss, broke away from the whole system of Thomistic theology. The Gospel is the *novum* which does not just *assist* nature to perfection, it clashes with it. The Christian is the bearer of the tension between nature and grace. At no time is nature abolished, at no time is the believer only under grace. Here Luther saw with great clarity ; Christians remain both children of God and *homines naturales et impii.* They carry in themselves the tension between Church and world, faith and religion. While living in time and space yet with the promise of eternity there can be no escape from the dialectic of his position.

Here the division between Roman Catholicism and Reformation theology appears in all its significance. Like the Synagogue, the Roman Church knows of no dialectic. The path from earth

to heaven, though narrow, yet is straightforward. The link between time and eternity is warranted by the existence of the Church (Judaism substitutes " Law " for Church). Man works out his own salvation by means of his religious practice. Religion thus stands in the centre of Roman theology. Any stir of religious life is regarded as a sign of spiritual quickening. There is room for extraneous matter as long as it is given a Christian dress. Here religion has its inherent value from whichever source it comes. Every mystic adds to the inexhaustible store of religious experience. Icons, relics, amulets are acceptable aids as long as they promote religion. Visions, dreams, even superstitutions can be helpful. There is no antithesis between here and yonder, no tension between nature and grace.

The position of the Protestant Church is different. Here man stands in constant conflict with himself. W. Lowrie, describing the Protestant, speaks of his radical irreligiousness and worldliness. His Christianity puts him in a precarious position: " The Protestant walks on a narrow arête, with a dreadful abyss on either side ; it is a dizzy position, where no man can be confident of maintaining his equilibrium " (*op. cit.*, p. 80). His " irreligiousness " springs from the knowledge that God demands complete surrender, religion included ; his " worldliness " is rooted in the awareness of an indissoluble connection between him and the world. Protestantism properly understood is the protest of the Protestant *against* himself (cf. Lowrie, p. 50). It means repeatedly saying " no " to oneself while saying " yes " to God. But even this he can only do by grace. Thus, acknowledging the bankruptcy of his whole position, he makes the leap of despair—which is the leap of faith. The Gospel, the Good News, derives its name from the assurance that the leap of faith does not land the believer in a vacuum, but in the arms of Jesus Christ.

III. Conclusion.

The juxtaposition of religion and Gospel has revealed not only an essential difference but a dialectical tension. It is now left to us to draw final conclusions.

If Gospel is grace then religion is " works ". Religion is man's possibility. It is his instrument whereby he tries to save himself and to establish his position before God. The more successful he is religiously, the greater is his independence, the stronger is his resistance. The most remarkable example of this we find in Judaism. The Synagogue, which shows the highest form of religion,

is also the great opponent to the Gospel. Judaism requires no Salvation, the pious Jew saves *himself* by earning it. Here religion is the most noble attempt man can make, but with it also goes the greatest danger. The religious man constantly overlooks two fundamental facts : the infinite difference between God and man and the true nature of sin. In fact it is part of man's sinful condition which binds him to the abysmal difference between him and his Creator. Anselm's words to Boso are here appropriate : *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum* (*Cur Deus Homo*, I, 21). The point we should like to make is that this does not merely apply to the religious man outside the Church, but to the religious man within the Church as well. Like our fallen humanity we carry religion into our Christian state. It is part of the " infection of nature " which remains with us " that are regenerated " (Article IX) to the end. The same applies to the Bible. The Bible is both the Word of God and the word of Man. Here religion and Gospel are closely intertwined. It contains the story not only of God's merciful reaching out to man, but also the story of man's attempt to build the tower of Babel and to storm heaven. Here God and Baal, the Prophet and the false prophets, the religious multitude and the faithful few are seen in constant contest.

Turning to the New Testament, we find a similar picture. Our Lord's continued struggle with Scribes and Pharisees, High Priests and Sadducees is of the same nature. The Bible presents the spectacle of a lasting feud between God and idols. But we shall mistake the issue if we think that the Bible passes judgment upon false and hypocritical religion. It passes judgment upon religion *itself*; for the Gospel is judgment upon *religion*. The Gospel implies that man not only at his worst, but even at his best needs salvation. Had religion been able to save man, Christ need not have come ; had the most perfect religion been able to save man, Christ need not have been born a Jew. Had religion been able to save man by means of a compromise with the Gospel, then the Cross of Christ would stand as a sign of human error but not of human sin. The only conclusion we can legitimately draw is that the Gospel *is* the Gospel because it even finds the religious man in all his need and offers him salvation.

In the last resort religion is the counterfeit of faith. Barth rightly says that religion is infidelity (*Unglauben*), for it is man's faith in himself (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 343).

The Gospel is Good News because it brings salvation to publicans and sinners; but it is even more so Good News because it brings salvation to the religious man, delivering him from his self-righteousness before God.

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DISCUSSION.

Rev. C. T. COOK (Chairman) said: Our warmest thanks are due to Dr. Jocz for a paper of absorbing interest from beginning to end. Many of his statements will command the cordial assent of evangelical believers; and some of his other observations will elicit sympathy with his main intention, without necessarily carrying an endorsement of his particular line of argument. On the other hand, there are affirmations delightfully provocative to those upholders of traditional beliefs who have a zest for theological controversy.

From the outset one becomes aware that the thesis presented in this paper reflects the point of view of the "Theology of Crisis," identified with the names of Brunner and Karl Barth, especially the latter. Barthianism, as we know, is a reaction against the confident Humanism which has developed since the Renaissance, a belief in man's moral and spiritual self-sufficiency that has received a mortal blow as a result of two world wars and their aftermath. But we are compelled to ask whether Barth's rebound from Humanism has not carried him too far toward the opposite extreme. Barthianism is not easy to grasp. For one thing it confronts us with an entirely new set of definitions of familiar Biblical terms. Then again, as Dr. G. O. Griffith has pointed out, Barth's dialectic is largely the dialectic of paradox, and many of his assertions seem to be of the nature of shock tactics. His whole attitude is anti-metaphysical. I trust I am not unfair to Dr. Jocz if I say that I have been continually reminded

of these Barthian ideas while reading his paper. Again and again I have found myself challenging his confident affirmations and sweeping aphorisms; there are not only the questions he poses for us, but certain other questions to which his arguments give rise.

To begin with, we find ourselves challenged in regard to the primary question as to the nature of God (II (*a*)). Is He self-existent, as traditional Protestant theology maintains? Or is He, as an acute critic declares Barth believes, a God "wholly absorbed in His manifestations"? The answer to that problem will determine much of what follows.

Then, what do we understand by Religion? In his second paragraph Dr. Jocz tells us that "the main purpose of this essay is to show that there is an indissoluble tension between Christianity as a religion, and the Gospel as derived from the New Testament." It is not some particular aspect or perversion of the Christian religion that comes in for condemnation; he agrees with Prof. Johannes Witte that "religion and Gospel are not to be equated." Further, this is no academic question, for Dr. Jocz says, "it is our contention that a clear recognition of the fundamental difference between religion and Gospel is of vital importance to the Church." I, for one, find it exceedingly difficult to accept that sharp antithesis. Dr. Jocz, on page 80, states that objectivity in religion is impossible; religion is the product of various elements in the human mind. But can we agree that religion is entirely subjective? Does man's awareness of the supernal world rest on nothing outside of himself? For my part I cannot reconcile with many passages in the Bible the view that there is no such thing as a general revelation of God, as distinct from His special revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. On page 85 our friend expresses wholehearted agreement with Johannes Witte, that man, whether through religion or philosophy, can only recognize the *fact* of God, but has no means or grounds to say anything about Him; this he must leave to God Himself. But is that a correct inference from Roman 1 : 19, 20? Paul emphasizes the responsibility of sinful men for "holding down the truth in unrighteousness," but he adds that there is that which may be known of God, "*for God manifested it unto them.*" His "everlasting power and divinity," from the creation of the worlds have been clearly perceived through the things that are made. Further, he uses the

expression "knowing God" as proof that such men are without excuse.

On page 96, we are told that the Cross is not only judgment upon pagan man, but also upon "religious man at his best." Saul of Tarsus is cited as an example of religious man at his best. But is it a fact that every religious man is fighting against God? Are there not many who are responsive to such light as they have? What of Cornelius, who is favourably referred to by Luke as "a devout man and one that feared God, with all his house, who gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway"? Again, is Israel's fall, as described in Romans 9 to 11, a "tragedy of the pious," as suggested on page 97? Is not the explanation to be found in Romans 10 : 16 in the fact that it was not the piety of Israel but their *unbelief* that caused their downfall? Is it Dr. Jocz' view that religion is invariably "an escape into autonomy, in which man sets up his independence and defends himself against the Gospel"?

One would like to ask questions on other aspects of this thesis. For instance is there no revelation of God in history apart from a man's recognition of it and response to it? Take the Incarnation, the public ministry, the death and Resurrection of our Lord—are not these historic facts a Divine revelation in themselves, whether men accept Christ or not? Then, is the revelation of which our friend speaks to be equated with the Scriptures? Karl Barth seems to suggest that the Scriptures are the Word of God only as an instrument, a medium through which God elects to speak; they only become the Word of God to those who receive the Scriptures as a revelation. Have the Scriptures nothing to say to the unbeliever? I ask this question because of the sentence on page 96, "The God of the Bible only speaks to save."

One would like to inquire further on the subject of human nature. Our friend seems, along with Barth, to deny that the image of God is possessed in any measure by the unregenerate. But is it not the witness of Scripture that the image of God is not lost by the Fall? It is not lost but defaced, and can be renewed by the grace of Christ. Then, too, on page 89 there is the surprising assurance that "the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul makes historical revelation superfluous."

Obviously, there is no opportunity to say all that one would like

to say on these problems. However, Dr. Jocz has my gratitude for a scholarly paper which I have found most profitably stimulating, and not less so because it is difficult to see eye to eye with him on many points.

Mr. B. C. MARTIN said : I have found this paper most illuminating, but I am not quite sure whether I have the Author's correct meaning in the passage relating to the " Immortality of the Soul " on page 87. I do not think " immortality " and " eternal life " should be equated, but if the Author has in fact so equated them, I have no quarrel with the statement : " Immortality is thus not an inherent quality of human nature but a gift conferred upon man." In the Scripture cited (1 Tim. 6 : 16), " the King of kings . . . . Who only hath immortality," surely immortality in its *absolute* sense is referred to. God is immortal as to His whole Being and the very fountain of life, whether natural or spiritual. Man, on the other hand, is mortal as to his body but " immortal " as to his spirit. His spirit survives death irrespective of whether or not he has during his lifetime received the gift of eternal life. Any theory of *conditional* immortality inevitably presupposes annihilation if the condition is not fulfilled, which is clearly repugnant to the teaching of Scripture.

" Immortality " in relation to man would seem to mean " not subject to death," " enduring for ever " (which is true of his soul), without anything qualitative in it. " Eternal life," on the other hand, is essentially qualitative.

In this sense the unregenerate are immortal, as is shown in many Scriptures, particularly our Lord's discourse in Luke 16 concerning Dives and Lazarus. In 1 Cor. 15 : 53, St. Paul says " This mortal shall put on immortality," because the mortal *body* is in view. This is the privilege of the believer, that " He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies " (Rom 8 : 11).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. R. T. LOVELOCK wrote : This paper presents both a synthesis and a personal interpretation of the modern " Continental " system of theology, and I would like to thank Dr. Jocz for so clear and consistent a presentation of it ; I must confess, however, that I am as unconvinced by this paper as by the writings of Barth and

Brunner. It has been characteristic of the Teutonic mind in the past to concentrate entirely on one aspect of truth, and to present an entirely unbalanced picture by ignoring entirely the many other facets ; the human search for truth is itself a dialectic process, and the goal is only reached by the balancing of many differing factors ; truth is an organic unit, and like all living things, cannot be properly analysed by first taking it to pieces and considering each element by itself. By considering the antithesis between Pharisee and Gospel to the exclusion of many other contributory factors, this presentation has gone as far astray as did the earlier theory of the Tübingen School in considering the same clash of ideologies.

All human life is, and has been, a dialectic process, and if attention is focused entirely on any one aspect of that struggle the resulting picture will be distorted. This was the error of Hegel, and of Marx, and I would suggest that it is also the error of Brunner. The true dialectic which runs through the whole of human history is the primeval struggle between Good and Evil, and it was the steady progress of Good in the continuance of this struggle which formed the basis of the Kingdom (or Rule) of God—the Kingdom which was proclaimed in the Gospel (see Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*). It is not things in themselves which are good or evil, it is the use made by man which adds moral value to material entities. Kant appreciated this, but it was stated much earlier than his days by Epictetus—" Where is the good ? In the will. Where is the evil ? In the will. Where is neither of them ? In those things which are independent of the will " (*Discourses* 2 : 16). Man can turn all things to good or evil by his use of them—marriage and prostitution are carnal examples of this deadly power, and they are used figuratively by God to speak of the same tendency of man to use or abuse his religious faculty. In actual fact, man is so weak that even in the best of us there is much of evil in all that we do, and the existence of some element of evil in all human examples of religion is no demonstration that religion must always be opposed to the Gospel. We might argue, with the second-century gnostics, that, because all men were evil, there was an inherent evil in the flesh which could never yield good—our Lord came to show that this was not so, and that the human body could be used to the praise of God as a thing of good.

Jesus entered into Temple and Synagogue, partook of the religious life of His time, and it would be blasphemy to suggest that in his religion was any element antithetical to the word of God in the Gospel. He demonstrated what religion was intended by God to be, and it was viewing this demonstration which moved St. James to say—" Pure, unsoiled religion in the judgement of God the Father means this : to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from the stain of the world " (James 1 : 27, Moffatt). Dr. Jocz would tell us that " religion is a subtle form of selfishness," but that is only the imperfect human translation of its aspirations into narrower channels—the Christian life is a communal one in which the good of the family is sought, and it must be remembered that the writer to Hebrews says that the same eschatological outlook was part of the life of our Lord—" Jesus who, in order to reach His own appointed joy, steadily endured the Cross " (Heb. 12 : 2, Moffatt). Even the involved service of the Pharisee was based on the word of God through Moses, and it was only in so far as he had abrogated that Law by purely human accretions that he was condemned by Jesus when He said—" You have repealed the Law of God to suit your own tradition " (Mt. 15 : 6, Moffatt). In fact, St. Paul has told us that the earlier Jewish religion was a " schoolmaster " (pedagogue) sent by God to draw men to the fuller teaching in Jesus (Gal. 3 : 19–29).

Jesus was not only Son of Man—man as God intended him to be—in all his life He demonstrated how man was intended to use his faculties, and among them He showed man a true religion, and one which was in no way antithetical to God. The false element in religion, which has been examined, is man's contribution to a God-intended attitude of life, and the fault should be found with the evil inherent in man which discolours and distorts all that he does. If our attention is fixed on the positive element in the teaching of the Son of Man, we shall see the " all things good " which was the divine intention, and which will be the divine consummation.

Mr. Douglas Geary wrote : Dr. Jocz is to be congratulated on an excellent paper, and I am sure that all who are connected with preaching the Gospel have, at some time or another, come across the " fierce opposition " of religion (Barth's *Unglauben*) towards the Gospel (" Good News ").

I am pleased to see that Dr. Jocz has emphasized the division between Roman Catholicism and Reformation theology, because I feel that by taking these two theologies and comparing them, we can best see the difference between religion and the Gospel. When the fact of this difference is neglected or fogotten, a false conception of Christianity arises. As resulting from this false conception, we have with us the many errors which are so prevalent in the Church today.

Author's Reply.

The discussion raised by the paper "Religion and the Gospel" has revolved round three main issues: (1) *theologia naturalis*; (2) religion and false religion; (3) immortality of the soul. We will reply to the questions raised in this order.

(1) The Chairman found it impossible to reconcile "the many passages in the Bible" with the view that there is no such thing as a "general" revelation of God. He appealed to Rom. 1 : 19–20 in support of the usual view that God reveals His "everlasting power and divinity" outside the Canon. It occurs to us that Mr. Cook's view is the result of an unfortunate confusion of terminology. Not even Barth would deny that man, impressed by the spectacle of nature, is forced to conclude the "everlasting power and divinity" of God. But this is not revelation in any sense. This is a guess or a surmise. It is a pretty accurate conclusion with no further consequences. From the Bible we know that "revelation" is never in response to man's curiosity but to his need. It is not an impersonal word providing subject-matter for the intellect. Revelation in the Bible is always a pronouncement of judgment and an offer of grace. This we do not find outside the Canon of Scripture. It ill becomes a Christian theologian to talk about "general" revelation.

(2) Mr. Lovelock raised the question of false and true religion. We regret to have failed completely to impress Mr. Lovelock with our argument. Our respective use of the term "religion" is not just a question of terminology but is intimately tied up with our views on anthropology. To Mr. Lovelock, religion and false religion belong to the context of the dialectic process on the plane of history. Here man is always a *complete* entity, good or bad as the case may

be. Man may hold false religion and then revert to true religion, or *vice versa*. But this is not *our* view about man. To us, man is never a complete whole, but a constantly vacillating being. Truth and falsehood, life and death are in contest within him all the time.

" Religion " to us is not a set of views, true or otherwise, but a characteristic inward attitude which expresses itself in self-assertion before God. Mr. Lovelock's argument, therefore, that our Lord Himself participated in His people's " religion " is beside the point.

(3) A much more difficult question was raised by Mr. B. C. Martin. He tries to distinguish between immortality of the soul and eternal life. His argument is that whereas " immortality " is inherent in the human soul, eternal life remains the gift of God to the regenerate. Mr. Martin rejects the theory of " conditional " immortality because it presupposes annihilation which to him is clearly repugnant to the teaching of Scripture.

For ourselves we find it difficult to accept the subtle distinction between " immortality " and eternal life. Mr. Martin's interpretation of 1 Tim. 6 : 16 as meaning " absolute " immortality is unacceptable to us for the reason that " immortality " in itself is already an absolute. We do sympathize, however, with the view that eternal life is a much more positive conception. It may well be that our difficulty arises from our Greek conceptions regarding immortality and eternity. Here Professor Cullmann's work, *Christ and Time*, is of great value. Immortality, like eternity, cannot be conceived apart from God. Man apart from God is a mortal creature in *every* respect. Immortality of the soul is a foreign concept. Why should annihilation appear more repugnant to the Scriptures than everlasting suffering to the spirit of Jesus Christ ?

But we are aware of the tremendous problems involved and do not feel equal to arrive at a final conclusion. The last word about man's destiny is not with theology but with God. We conclude with a word of thanks to Mr. Douglas Geary for his encouraging note.