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ON THE

COMMON AREA OF THOUGHT

IN THE

DIFFERENT SIGNIFICATIONS OF THE ENGLISH WORD

"RELIGION."

A PAPER

READ BEFORE

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BY

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ON THE COMMON AREA OF THOUGHT IN THE DIFFERENT SIGNIFICATIONS OF THE ENGLISH WORD "RELIGION."*

SOME words are bandied about from mouth to mouth so frequently, that the significations attached to them by the different speakers can rarely cover the same areas of thought, and, on plotting them down mentally,

* When the Paper was announced the subject was stated as simply "Religion," as I wished to avoid a long explanatory title, and thought that I had sufficiently limited my purpose by the Paper itself. But the course of the debate upon it showed that I was mistaken, and that it was thought I wished to "define" religion. My argument was, that all the senses in which the English word was used had a common area of thought, and hence that other systems of thought and action, not usually considered to be forms of religion, but having that common area of thought, might be also justly called religions. I likewise expressly stated, that all such systems of thought and action contain other areas of thought much larger than that which is common to all; but of course the nature of the inquiry excluded these. Unfortunately most of the debaters dwelt on the area of thought in their own special use of the word, which was *not* common to all others, and which naturally chiefly engaged their own thoughts. But they thus missed the object of the Paper, which was not to define "religion," but to inquire into the actual use of that English word. The Committee having requested me to print the Paper, it appears exactly as I delivered it, with the exception of a few footnotes which refer to the debate.

they will be found to have little or no common area, but to show very large outlying districts, which seem to have no possible relation to one another. This is more or less the case for every word in every language that is in common use. But it is of course more especially the case with words which were originally conceived without any approach to strictness in the delimitation of their connotation, and which, involving much consideration, and not a little acquaintance with various habits of thought, are generally used without any attempt to stricter definition, but, on the contrary, with the utmost laxity of thought. To this category belong all words bearing upon moral and social subjects, on which there has been the widest diversity of opinion. What is right, just, true, has been disputed for more years than we should find time to reckon up in one evening's meeting, and will, no doubt, continue to be disputed with the same impossibility of arriving at an agreement. To these we may pre-eminently add the word *religion*, with which I propose to trouble you to-night.

The etymology of the word is quite lost; that is, we know that it is formed from the Latin *religiō*, but we can give no satisfactory origin to this Latin word. Some say it was from *re-ligere*, "to collect again," and this Professor Max Müller favoured, in his recent Hibbert lectures. Others say it is from *re-ligāre*,

"to bind again," a derivation which Auguste Comte adopts and enforces. "In itself," says he, in the beginning of his positivist catechism, "this word indicates the complete *oneness* which distinguishes human existence, personal as well as social, when all its parts, both moral and physical, habitually converge to a common end. Thus it would be equivalent to *synthesis*, if this word were not almost universally limited to the intellect, whereas religion embraces the sum of human attributes. Religion, then, consists of *regulating* (*régler*) each individual nature, and *binding again* (*rallier*) all individualities. These are but two different cases of one problem, because a man differs from himself successively, as much as he differs from others simultaneously, so that fixity and commonness follow identical laws." So far Comte. Puff's interpretation of the meaning of Lord Burleigh's nod was nothing to this. The *re-ligāre* or *binding again* seems to be lugged in neck and crop, to support a theory certainly very far indeed from the minds of those who first used the word *religiō*.

It would be interesting, but lengthy and laborious, to investigate all the words in Greek or other languages which we translate by *religion*. The word *θρησκεία*, used in the well-known definition of "pure and undefiled religion," in the Epistle of James, i. 27, is of very uncertain origin also, and the definition of

religion given in the passage alluded to, namely, simple charity and spotless morality, is not generally accepted. It is not my purpose to attempt such a research this evening, or to criticise the various definitions of religion which have been given by various writers, of which the two preceding may serve as samples, and both of which would, to most persons, seem to lack the very essence of the whole. My inquiry is directed towards the discovery of that area of thought, to use my opening illustration, which is common to the various connotations of the English word *religion*. I do not inquire what A or B thinks religion *ought* to mean, nor what is the precise sense which, after Socratean questioning, A or B would own they attached to the word *religion*. I merely want to know, if possible, what are the conditions under which A or B would acknowledge that Y or Z had a religion or were religious. These conditions are at first sight widely different. A or B would talk, no doubt, of the religion of the Jews, the Brahmins, the Buddhists, the Confucians, the Christians of every grade, the Mahometans of all sects, the Parsees, the Asiatic, African, Armenian, and Polynesian races. I cannot say whether an ancient Latin, or Greek, or Goth, or Celt, would, had he known these various forms of so-called religion, have labelled them with the same name as he employed for what A or B

would call his own peculiar form of religion. This is indifferent. My object is to find what it is in these various and intensely diverse systems that induces A or B to call them forms of religion in English. I assume that the same word is not usually applied to objects which have nothing in common, and which do not even suggest some common thought. And I want to know what that common something or analogy or thought may be. Possibly it may turn out that some things, not now usually considered religious, have as good right to be called so as others which *are* so called without hesitation.

Now we may begin by exclusion. If all the forms of thought and feeling that I have just cited be entitled to the name religion, it is clear that anthropomorphism, which, although it characterises many does not characterise all, is not what we seek. We must at once draw a distinction between theistic and non-theistic religions. But when we have got so far as to admit of a non-theistic religion, we find that the common basis must be sought in the thoughts and feelings of man independently, but not exclusively, of any theistic assumption. Except to the Berkleyite, however, whose philosophy appears to me out of place when I am addressing an assembly of individualities which the mere fact of my speaking to them proves that I believe to be something different from my own

sensations of vision—except to these strict idealists, whom I designedly leave out of consideration, it is not sufficient to consider man by himself. We must view man in relation to his surroundings. That is, we must look for the common ground we seek in man as viewed in relation to his environment. By regarding the subject in this light I came to the following notions, which I will first state laconically, in order to guide the hearer while I endeavour to explain the meaning which they convey to me. Of course there is the disadvantage of using phraseology which must be imperfectly understood when first heard, but this seems a less disadvantage than presuming upon the hearer's bearing in mind a rather complicated statement, and being able at its conclusion to apply it to the results produced. It is all very well in a novel to keep the *dénouement* concealed while we are tying the *nœud* as hard as we can. In such a short paper as the present I prefer beginning with the end.

The common ground, then, on which the term religion is applied to all the very various systems of thought previously cited appears to be this: they all assume a theory of the universe, and they all base human conduct upon that theory. Religion then is a word used to imply a theory of the universe and *consequent* conduct. A theory of the universe, independently of its effect on conduct, is mere philosophy or science.

A theory of conduct independently of a theory of the universe, by which conduct is influenced, is mere morality or sociology. It is in making conduct *dependent* upon the acceptance of some theory of the universe that I seem to find the common ground required. All this is a very bald statement, and no doubt in the minds of most of those who hear me grave doubts as to its correctness have already arisen, some of which at least will probably remain undispersed when my paper is concluded, and I shall, I hope, have the advantage of hearing them stated.

"The Universe of Thought" is a logical phrase, signifying the sum total of all that is thought of in the propositions under consideration. If we extend this term to the sum total of what has ever occupied the thoughts of any individual, we have his extreme horizon of the universe, and practically this horizon has to be further limited to the portion concerning which any man is conscious at any time of having thought, as the real horizon is often limited by hazy atmospheric conditions. Where thought is not recorded in writing, or in set forms of words which can be preserved by the memory of certain men who take the part of books, as in the case of the Indian Vedas and doubtless many other documents, this individual horizon of the universe is very limited indeed. In modern times, when every student forms

a record, the universe of thought must be extended to the sum of all individual universes in time past and present. Even then, however, we have no difficulty in recognising that the universe of mankind is a very minute fraction of what we may term the absolute universe. Yet it is only from the small portion known to the individual or to the race that any theory can be deduced.* The word *theory* has a somewhat pretentious sound. But it merely means a *view*, and most generally only a small set of very disjointed views can be formed at best. The man of no record, reduced to his individual experience and individual memory, has a very narrow, insufficient view of things, and he

* These words seem to me to exclude very decidedly any notion that "a theory of the universe" implied a theory of the "absolute" universe. Yet even this was misunderstood in the debate, and it was somehow supposed that a man must know everything before he can frame a theory of the universe. A boy who throws a stone a second time to hit an object has framed a theory of the universe which would astonish him if he could work it out into more detail than idle stone-throwing. The child that put her book in her lap, closed her eyes, and prayed that she might know her lesson, had formed another—hardly so well founded as that of Hogarth's mad musician, who puts his book open *on* his head, that the music may get *into* his head more directly than through the eyes. The man who attributes any value to kissing the calf-skin cover of a book in court has another theory. All these are very narrow individual theories, but they are quite enough to influence conduct, and hence to form systems of thought and action having the "common" characteristic of all so-called religions.

naturally judges of them by himself; he animates or he anthropomorphises. Ignorance makes theory very easy. But with every step in knowledge it becomes more difficult. It is not long before there grows up a set of men (variously named, but equivalent to our priests) who transmit theory, whose business it becomes to maintain theory, and whose subsistence and honour depend upon keeping up a particular theory. These take various forms under various circumstances, but at first certainly the child receives a certain ready-made theory from his parents. It saves him the trouble of thinking, and he adopts it.

It would be crude speculation for me to attempt to assign the origin of different theories of small universes of thought extending from individuals to families, tribes, and nations, and the mode in which that theory is by some increase of knowledge, frequently in an individual, or some unexpected circumstance happening to a race, some war, some immigration, some peaceful contact with thinkers of other tribes, seriously and even completely modified. It is enough that we all know the nature of some of those theories, though of the greater part we shall ever remain profoundly ignorant, because it is as impossible for the modern mind to think itself back into the ancient theories which grew into it by processes we cannot conceive, as it is for the adult to figure to himself the

reasoning of the infant, or for the human being to imagine the conceptions of the brute. Whenever we attempt to depict them we use words implying thoughts which the others never possessed, and deceive ourselves with counters. But so far as I can imagine, from any accounts I have studied, one very early theory is that of animation, which was especially associated with motion independent of the observer, as in rivers, seas, clouds, sun, moon, planets, and stars, wind, thunder, lightning, and rain, or with actions ensuing after the observed presence of objects and hence attributed to the human-like action of the object. Professor Max Müller thinks fetichism necessarily implied some power behind it, and hence could not be original. But it need not have implied any thing but the human-like action of the object itself This I conceive to be the basis of Auguste Comte's conception, and wherever human-like action was assumed he seems to have recognised fetichism. I do not know whether we are really free of this even now—whether the greatest thinkers have worked themselves entirely out of its power for every conception they have; but certainly by far the greater number of thinkers are entirely under the influence of conceptions which in themselves seem to be nothing more nor less than the attribution of human-like action to what is non-human, and often non-ani-

mate. How few even of so-called philosophers—certainly none who are Christians—recognise in all its aspects the latest and most advanced theory of the universe, namely, the invariable and unconditional relations under which every event occurs! We continually find the intrusion of something called "will," which is merely human-like.

A theory of the universe is not formed in idleness. If man never wanted food or shelter he might never have speculated, or have had the experience on which to form speculations. But he has to provide, and for this purpose to contrive, which implies crude speculations on so-called cause and effect—in short, a theory of the universe. The object of this theory is dimly seen to be prediction, and the requisitions of family government and tribal war lead to the necessity of extending predictions to the actions of human beings. At the present day the theory of invariable and unconditional relations is apt to break down in many minds at this very application to moral actions, on which men were from the first led to speculate by the necessities of government. And this early speculation seems to be the foundation for that extended theory of the universe which is implied in the phrase of "moral government," a mere transplacement of human government. Originally a very crude conception, it has been nursed up into something almost

tangible, and it might be hard to find any one, even among sensible and well-educated Englishmen, who is not to a very material extent under the influence of this conception, which is the backbone of Christianity as it is presented to the modern mind.

A real acceptance of the theory of moral government, which rigidly rewards the good and punishes the wicked, is a very advanced theory of the universe. It implies some conception of goodness and wickedness, other than the acceptance or rejection of some one particular theory of the universe—the characteristic of most forms of the Christian theory itself, which is apt to regard the "Jew, Turk, infidel or heretic" as much more suitable for everlasting punishment than the staunch upholder of the popular creed, however immorally he may live. Two other theories seem to be more general, and intrude in various forms on all others. These may be termed "fear" and "favour," neither of them particularly well reconcilable with any advanced notions of moral government, but both as theories greatly influencing conduct and action, and hence touching the very centre of the common area of religious thought; both, however, based upon a theory of animation, mostly rising to anthropomorphism. These two last views I distinguish thus: animation consists in attributing human-like action to what is not human, although, as for trees and

animals, it may be living; anthropomorphism consists in attributing not merely human-like action, but actual human form, thoughts, feelings, powers, chiefly greatly exaggerated, without subjection to the common physical and physiological laws under which the human form is alone known to exist,—to those imaginary beings that are supposed to sway the natural environment on which the thinker's whole existence depends. It is quite inessential to the conception whether there be one or many such anthropomorphic beings, but oneness is an advanced stage of the theory. "Fear" and "favour" then come into play exactly as in the usual arbitrary and despotic government of chiefs. The overwhelming atmospheric and terrestrial phenomena over which man has no apparent control whatsoever—the whirlwind, the hurricane, the storm, the earthquake, the volcanic eruption, the flood, the thunderbolt, the epidemic, the drought, the famine, and what is readily connected with them, the eclipse and the comet—are generators of "fear." The theory is that things are under the control of despotic power, which must be pacified, and can be pacified by the voluntary sacrifice of a part, and by cringing acknowledgment of superiority. How much of this remains even in the Christianity of enlightened England need scarcely be noticed. Some writers have gone so far as to found all religious feelings upon "fear," but that

seems to me far too limited a view. The sense of "dependence," which others prefer, is properly only the preliminary to the feelings of "fear" and "favour," which are inseparably bound up together, "fear" seeking relief by relying on "favour." "Mediation" is the direct expression of "favour," and, of course, has been highly cultivated because it gave power to the mediating class—the equivalent of priesthood. In professed Christianity only one mediator is admitted, who himself represents a sacrifice, made to appease an angry governor of the universe; but practical Christianity admits of hosts of secondary mediators, the saints, and the priests, the whole function of whom is to obtain "favour," by prayer, by adoration, by doing what is supposed to be acceptable to the supreme governor, as explained by their living representatives.

But "fear" and "favour" require only animation, not anthropomorphism, and much less one supreme head, to form the link connecting a theory of the universe and corresponding conduct, in which, in my view, is situate the common principle of all that we call religion. The first region in which "fear" and "favour" find their proper action is of course actual existent life. Whole systems of religious thought thus based probably exist without reference to anything else but present existence, and it is not necessary to

refer to any other but the well-known case of the ancient Jews. But their action is enormously extended by the growth into the theory of the universe, of a conception, that present life is only one link in a vast chain which extends further than can be conceived both ways. We have thus to deal with three states: pre-existence, existence, and post-existence, of which the first and last are mere theories, but are often wound into the whole mental condition of human beings. Here in England, and among Christians generally, pre-existence is generally looked upon with some wonder as a Pythagorean fancy, forgetting that in the main figure of Christianity this very pre-existence is a principal characteristic. But in India it is still apparently an essential part of many creeds. Post-existence is of the essence of Christianity, and also of Buddhism, which admits of no supreme extra-mundane power. In later times the various theories of post-existence—hell, purgatory, paradise among Christians, metempsychosis and nirvâna among Buddhists, the vaguely felt power on the present of ancestral spirits in China, and in numerous barbarous tribes—need no more than this passing allusion. But all of them form admirable levers, admirably manipulated for the doctrines of "fear" and "favour," and thus strengthen the link between the theory of the universe and corresponding practical con-

duct, on which I believe the conception of religion to rest.

But if you are inclined to admit with me that the term religion is now usually applied to such a connected theory and practice, may not the term religion be also aptly applied to cases which present the same sort of connection, although the name religion is at one time withheld by the great body of those who call themselves religious, and is at another refused by those who yet would be entitled to it on the view here advocated? Auguste Comte's "religion of humanity" claims to be a religion, but its claims are not allowed by Christians, and perhaps other theists, because it expressly avoids the conception of a deity. But it has a theory, intended for, and believed by its founder to be, the most complete theory of the universe that can be formed, embracing all that is known, or rather was known, to Comte himself, and much which was "subjectively" imagined by him as a foundation for future knowledge. Whatever may be thought of the execution of this grand theoretical work of Auguste Comte's (to which I personally desire to express my own great obligations), and however much it now may need to be supplemented and corrected by such men as Herbert Spencer and Huxley, who have risen to the requisite height whence mankind and mankind's thoughts and works

may be "surveyed," as Johnson has it, "from China to Peru," yet it must be owned that no anterior theory of the universe exists which will bear comparison with it. In working out the second part, the practice, and the connecting link, the cult, he may not have been so happy. I am one of those who were dazzled with it as it came out, but who have subsequently, as their eyes got used to the new light, seen what they believe to be grave defects, in the midst of magnificent suggestions. But, putting criticism aside (which I only for the moment admitted, lest my position with respect to Comte's work might be misunderstood, and my hearers should imagine my paper to be merely a positivist essay in disguise), certainly the "religion of humanity" possesses that common ground of all religious systems, a link connecting theory and conduct, a link to which Comte gives great prominence, and which he enforces by a variety of proposed rites, ceremonies, and customs, intended to keep alive the feeling of the influence of theory on practice, and make it a part of the life of every human being.

Now, to take the modern Secularist, as he calls himself (a term to which, as being distinctly ecclesiastical, I have personally a very strong objection), who avows that he has no god and no religion, does he form a correct estimate of himself? I think not.

The Secularist has no god, at any rate nothing approaching anthropomorphism, and perhaps avoiding pantheism. But he certainly has a theory of the universe, and that theory in intention represents the best science of the day, and hence only differs from positivism in so far as we may have advanced on positivism, or, at any rate, altered our views. The Secularist claims also to be moral, to have an ethical theory which is based upon higher grounds than the Christian. Upon what grounds? Clearly on no other than his theory of the universe. The sanction that his moral rules have is, that they are in conformity with that theory; that they are its practical embodiment; or that they are logical deductions from that theory, especially of the part relating to man's nature, development, and social state. I am not one of the body that calls itself Secularist, and I may not clearly understand its views, but if they amount to what I have stated, then I feel that Secularism is a religion; it has its theory, it has its practice, and it grounds its practice on its theory. It does not build temples, but it erects halls of science; it does not preach sermons, but it delivers lectures on the most vital subjects of human thought, and it enforces its arguments by an appeal to the best results of science. What it advocates may or may not be in accordance with those results. That is of

no consequence for the present argument. What the preacher advocates is often little in accordance with his professions or his text-books. But it always is so in intention, if the preacher is worth his salt. It is enough that it makes the rule of conduct an offshoot from its theory of the universe, especially that part which deals with social man, but not intentionally neglecting the rest. And this, in my view, makes Secularism a form of religion.

It may perhaps be asked in the course of the following discussion what my own views may be, as I am neither a positivist nor a secularist, and although the individual views of a single man are worth very little till they have been closely scanned by many others, you will perhaps allow me briefly to anticipate the inquiry. I profess to have a religion in the sense laid down. In one sense, certainly very far from anthropomorphic, I might term my religion theism, but if I had to coin a word I might perhaps select homalism, for a reason which will appear presently. My theory of the universe is that of modern science, which I briefly express, as applied to all phenomena, vital or other, to be the acknowledgment of unconditional invariable relations, coexisting independently, each having its full effect, the compound result being due to all (as in the second law of motion), but each brought into action by

secondary variable conditions (as usual in mechanics). Both of these conceptions are derived from Comte. Between all these relations there is an agreement, or consensus, which we all feel, producing a smoothness or evenness in the result, making it homalous (ὁμαλός) as opposed to anomalous (ἀνωμαλός), whence I get the term homalism, on which however I lay no weight whatever. This consensus is to me the representative of the deity of monotheisms, seeming to me to be that aimed at in such forms of religion. In this sense I use theism in relation to my own form of religion.* Conduct is of course intentionally formed

* My right to do so was much contested in the debate. It was in view of such contestation that I coined the word "homalism." Certainly if "theism" involves either an individual personality (like a man), or even a collective personality (like humanity), it would be wrong to use "theism" thus. But I do not see that it does. I inquire into the objective rational antecedents of the notion "deity" among the greatest thinkers who now use the term, excluding low orders of thought entirely. The foundation of omnipresence and omnipotence I find in the universal presence of irresistible invariable relations. The foundation of the notion of "unity" I find in the perfect accord with which these relations act, whence flow the higher notions of design, final cause, and wisdom, although these are generally personified. I take, then, this accord or "homalism" as the central point in the conception of theism, and in calling my own form of religion in this sense "theistic," I seem to be merely seeing the principle which the ordinary views veil. I have called these "rational" as opposed to "sentimental" antecedents of the notion of deity. The latter are essentially subjective, differing extremely with the constitutions of individual

upon the best scientific knowledge I possess on social and human relations. But what is the link, the sanction to this conduct, the only claim which the whole theory could have, on my view, to be considered a religion? This is supplied by a sense of duty which requires us to endeavour so to dispose the secondary variable conditions as to bring into action those constant relations which science shows will produce what science again points out to be the most favourable results to the race.* The strictly religious element is

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men, and they cannot be so easily reduced under the sense of "homalism." It seems, however, to me that they have no other real foundation. But this cannot be developed in a footnote. The notion of "infinity," as applied to deity, is merely part and parcel of the notion of the invariable unconditionality of relations, and does not require special notice. Naturally, most of the speakers, on the spur of the moment, thought and dwelt on their own notions of deity, or of the impossibility of deity, and professed not to understand what I meant. It was scarcely possible from merely hearing such a brief compendium once read, that they should have entered into the long series of thought from which it arose, but which was necessarily not even indicated. Perhaps this footnote may give some notion of its character.

* Although some of the speakers said that they approved of what I said respecting the sense of duty, yet no one inquired, so far as I remember, whence I derived it. I had purposely omitted the point from the dry bones of my statement, because it required too long a treatment. The sense is greatly subjective, and varies much in different individuals. In some it is so strong that the voice of duty is to them the best representative of the voice of the deity and proof of his personal existence. But putting this aside as not applicable to humanity, which has at most a

then this *conscious*, as opposed to the usual *un*conscious, co-operation in the work of the universe. I am fully aware how impossible it is in a few sentences to furnish anything like an intelligible view of what seems to me the ideal form of religion in view of the present state of our knowledge of all parts of the cosmical and human problem. What I have said must be merely taken as indications, which would require a treatise properly to elucidate.

If my paper is not already too long, I should wish to anticipate some objections which may be raised on the score of omissions. I have made no allusion to that sense of the infinite on which Professor Max Müller laid so much stress in his recent Hibbert lectures, as the source of religious conceptions. He modified his first statements in subsequent lectures, till the feeling for "infinity" seemed to me to amount to not much more than the feelings for "externality," that is, something which is not oneself. I do not

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collective and at the same time an eclectic conscience in the minds of its best representatives, the objective sense of duty is an offshoot of the social part of the above theory of the universe. Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to the hymns bearing my name in the South Place Chapel collection, as giving in poetical language the theistic view which I entertain, and my three printed discourses there delivered on *Truth*, *Speculation*, and *Duty*, as containing an explanation of those hymns (there reprinted) from the point of view here indicated.

find in this feeling the germ of religion. But at the same time I do not profess to assign or even to indicate the source of religious feelings. That lies beyond the scope of this paper, and I wish to avoid it altogether.

Another objection might be urged to my apparently giving the chief weight to the intellect and but little to the feelings. In fact, however, all theories of the universe are at first rather the result of feeling than of thought, that is, they are usually formed upon some extremely imperfect inductions, the steps of which are very vaguely known, and which are jumped at suddenly, by what is known as "the logic of the feelings." It is possible and even probable that most of the early theories of the universe were merely subjective imaginings due to the feelings of their framers. There is, however, another side to this objection. Those who raise it are usually thinking of a personal God, that grand benevolent being with whom they delight to converse, and consider that to strike Him out of the definition of religion is to deny the action of the feelings altogether. But I do not. I admit this theory of the universe as well as every other, and all I bargain for is that every other should not be rejected for the sake of this one. I am as little inclined as Lessing's Nathan the Wise to define "true" religion. I have merely striven to point out what

appears to me the common points of resemblance in all systems of moral thought which we usually term religion, and to show that, in consequence, others not usually included in the term have a full claim to be so denominated.

POSTSCRIPT.

I avail myself of an unfilled space to reply to one or two other objections which were raised in the debate or privately communicated to me on my leaving the room. A good friend of mine asked if I should call a man religious whose theory of the universe led him to the conclusion that there was nothing worth having but sensuousness in this life, and, in accord with this conclusion, regulated his whole conduct on the plan of "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" "because," said my friend, "if you would, I would not." Certainly, if such conduct was actually founded upon that theory, such a man would be as much entitled to be called religious as any Christian, though he would also certainly, as Christians are to the majority of the so-called religious that do not profess Christianity, be simply detestable. I am confirmed in this view by a great Christian writer, who has used words implying that such a view constitutes a religion: "*walk*," that is, practise religion, "so as ye have us for an ensample," says Paul, "for *many walk*, of whom I have told you often . . . *whose God is their belly*" (Phil. iii. 17–19). Religions are not necessarily good and holy things to those who do not hold them, nor do they necessarily lead to what moralists hold to be the highest morality. Religious wars and fanaticisms in general are well-known examples. But they are religious. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was distinctly religious. The "Bulgarian atrocities" had a similar origin.

One of the debaters considered religion as especially the pursuit of an ideal—of course, a moral ideal—which its pursuer was

impelled to realise, and to which he sacrificed everything else. So another said religion was nothing if it did not force a man (mentally, of course) to do a thing which he knew to be right whether he liked it or not. It seems to me that both of these views could be held without any objective theory of the universe coming consciously into play, and that especially the latter might be entirely subjective. If such be possible, neither the one nor the other would, simply because he held such views, come under the name religious. The first might be called an enthusiast, the second a strictly conscientious man. But most probably, if it was worth anything, the ideal would be the outcome of a theory of the universe, and the directing conscience would act in accord with such a theory, which very easily, and indeed in all laudable cases, overlooks the individual good in the good of the race.

In the lowest forms of animal and vegetable life it is extremely difficult to say whether a living, moving, multiplying organism is animal or vegetable. We know a man, a whale, a herring, an eagle, an oak, a fern, very distinctly. But what are the moving organisms of putrefaction? So there are great forms of religion for which we have no hesitation in using the word, but there are low, vile, wretched, offensive forms to which we hesitate to apply a term that has been always noble to our own feelings. Yet they may be as strictly religious after all as that which we ourselves cherish.

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