The Modern Dilemma

I have read all the letters which came to me after my first talk. Some showed ~~xxxxxxx~~ misunderstandings which I hope are gradually clearing up as I proceed; some tend to cancel each other; I must say that all have been useful to me and I thank ~~you for them.~~ those who have written There are one or two points on which there is enough enquiry to make an answer desirable. One correspondent asks me whether the Communist could not say that there ~~was~~ is more Christian spirit in Communism than in our present ~~xxxxxx~~ system. I am quite willing to concede that point, for what it is worth, which is nothing at all: I am attacking communism, not defending the present system. That should answer the question of another correspondent who asks whether I think we are living in a Christian or in a Pagan world: my answer is emphatically, the latter. But I must point out, about communism, that we must take it as we find it, ~~as~~ and as we find it, communism means atheism for anyone who can think straight. That is not only true of Russia but everywhere. If you can invent a "Christian communism", by all means do; but I feel pretty confident that if you succeed it will turn out to be something so different from communism as we know it that there will be no point in calling it "communism" at all. For there is a world of difference between a philosophy which starts with this world and ends there and a philosophy which ~~xxxxxx~~ views this world from the point of view, so to speak, of the next. It may seem a paradox, but the Christian wants a better social order here just because he believes that the world is transient and secondary. And in Christianity there must always be a residue of Tragedy in this world and its satisfactions. There are very profound implications, in the terrible words: "Not as the world gives, give I unto you".

It is the transiency of the world which gives it its importance.

THE MODERN DILEMMA: XXIII.

I tried to suggest, last week, that the progress of science, of physical theory, could only be held responsible for the decline of religious faith insofar as its significance had been misunderstood. It may have diverted human emotions, and made men hold more firmly to what appear certainties of scientific proof than to what appear the unprovable assertions of religion; but even so, it has only concurred with other, more important causes. I now want to touch upon the effect of the progress of biological and psychological science upon conduct; and upon the effect of scientific invention upon social life. I say touch upon, because it is impossible to cover such vast ground thoroughly in the time of half an hour, even had I the detailed knowledge.

First of all, I do not propose to say anything sensational, or to indulge in any rhetoric of denunciation of modern morals; that attitude has already been well exploited in the press. I see no reason for supposing that morals are much worse than they used to be, or that young people are less virtuous than the old were. Manners, certainly have improved; and manners are a part of morals. It is likely that several generations can show a decrease of debauchery, of grossness and general beastliness: the growth of the feeling of humanity and humanitarianism, of social responsibility, has shown itself there. Many changes in social conventions we are sure have been good; some, such as votes for women, have at worst not done much harm. About public and industrial corruption I do not know; the forms vary from one generation to another, but the quantity may always be the same. In short, there seems to me no reason for worrying about actual conduct or misconduct: what is interesting, for our

the search for moral sanction, for reasons for behaving in one way rather than another, and for teaching one kind of behaviour rather than another, by earnest people who have given up Christian faith, and also by Christians who feel that traditional morality must be in some ways altered by the advance of knowledge. And this is why I wish to touch upon psychology.

Modern psychology or psychoanalysis received its impulse from work at the French school for mental disorders at Nancy, and from the great French psychiatrists Charcot and Ribot and Janet; but French psychology has for the most part confined itself prudently to the cure of cases, and left the more surprising developments to take place elsewhere. With the successes or failures of the several types of psychology in curing advanced cases of disorder, I am not here concerned. It is only when the psychologists tend to persuade us (1) that we are all ill in mind (2) that we all need to acquire something of their science in order to understand each other and ourselves (3) finally, that psychology will supply that guide and rule of conduct which the Christian faith used to give, and still gives to some; it is only when these three assertions appear, that the modern dilemma is engaged.

Now, to begin with, I do not deny any of these assertions out and out. Almost none of us, if any, is so "well", as he might be. There are, I know and believe, unexplored possibilities of physical, mental, and particularly spiritual development. And therefore psychology, which is interested and which awakens interest in these possibilities, is helpful. And I recognise further, that if you have not the Christian faith, if you are not prepared to live by it to the best of your ability and to study it throughout your life, and if

you are serious enough minded to want something to live by, then you must pin your hopes on psychology. For in one aspect, psychology represents a protest against the mere "outwardness" of some modern dilutions of Christianity, especially in Protestant countries. To maintain certain periodic observances, to attend church regularly on Sundays, taking a "sitting" as it is called, or if prosperous enough a whole pew, to give reasonably to a selected number of trustworthy charities, and to obey some decalogue of prohibitions; that used to represent, in English speaking countries, the whole duty of a Christian, except to be industrious and make as much money as possible. Now the human spirit does rebel against anything so sterile; and forgets, or does not know, that that against which it is rebelling is only a mutilatied part of true Christianity. It is right and important that people should investigate their own minds; that they should be fearless in searching out, and confessing (~~at least~~ if only to themselves) their hidden desires and motives, and that they should use this knowledge for self-improvement.

Psychology, in short, has very great utility in two ways. (1) It can revive, and has already to some extent revived, truths long since known to Christianity, but mostly forgotten and ignored, and it can put them in a form and a language understandable by modern people to whom the language of Christianity is not only dead but undecipherable.* (It is a mistake to suppose that people understand ~~things~~ ideas best when they are put most simply; they understand them best when they are put in the language they are familiar with, even if it is the language of Hollywood). (2) But I must add that I think it can do more than this, in discovering more about the human soul still; for I do not pretend that there is nothing more to know; the possibil-

* Jeremy: the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

ities of knowledge are practically endless. Psychology is an indispensible handmaid to theology; but, I think, a very poor housekeeper. And it is unfortunate that so many eminent psychologists of our day have been either indifferent or hostile to Christianity, and in either case not very well acquainted with it; and that they have deliberately tried to do without it.

I will mention two bad effects of psychology at its present stage. For the first, I can give a concrete example. A priest of my acquaintance, who was for a time chaplain in a prison, told me of a woman there who invariably reappeared, a few months after serving her sentence, for odds and ends of petty thefts and misdeeds - all of a trifling nature. When he tried to reason with her and show her that this line of conduct was wasteful and unprofitable, she replied with complacency and even pride, that she had been carefully examined by a doctor, who had told her that she had a "complex" which made her do these things. She spoke of a "complex" as if it had been a guardian angel; and indeed it did more for her than a guardian angel, because it absolved her from all responsibility and gave her a sense of dignity and importance. This is an extreme case, and may sound like a parody. But it does indicate the danger of the "deterministic" tendency of some psychology. Determinism means here simply: "I am not responsible for being what I am; when I was a small child something happened then to me which caused all the trouble; my parents were the guilty parties, and society in general is the guilty party now."

Now "determinism" is all very well as a guiding principle for the scientist in his researches; but beyond a point it won't work - like most other non-Christian principles. And this encouragement of irres-

ponsibility is related to another menace of modern psychology: a tendency to accept as the most real emotions those which are, or which may be, the most primitive. One school emphasises, or did at one time, sexual desire; and with its Oedipus complex introduced Original Sin in an original form. (To have to deal with Original Sin when you don't believe that there is such a thing as sin is rather a problem). Now so far as it went, this was a good thing. To know oneself, that is good, and it is a lesson in humility to learn how primitive we are. "Liberation", so far as it means complete self-knowledge, is a good thing; but it does not follow that all of our suppressed desires should be satisfied, and to talk of sublimating them is to put things upside down. "Sublimation" in effect means I think just substitution; and there is no substitute for anything. It means, in simple language, something like this. Suppose that my trouble is diagnosed as a suppressed craving for caviare. Well, that's something, to know what the cause of the trouble is. But I have not the money to buy enough caviare to satisfy the craving. I can however cultivate a taste for playing the flute or cross country running. - But in my own experience I have never been able to deal with any of my low appetites or vulgar tastes in this way. I have perceived their transcience, their unsatisfactoriness, and the horror of satiety which is far beyond the famine of deprivation; but I have never known a desire to be expelled by anything but another desire. And psychology seems to me for the most part to ignore the more intense, profound and satisfying emotions of religion. It must ignore their value, because its function is merely to describe and not to express preference. But if this is true it can never take the place of religion, though it can be an important accessory.

Here mention Alfred Adler —

I am far from asserting that it would have been better for the development of contemporary psychology had its researches, or its tentative conclusions, been controlled by the Church; it is probably very much better that it has been free to go its own way, make its own discoveries and its own mistakes. But a science of such indefinite limits, which has been so largely developed by men outside of any church, is likely to tend, as psy chology has, to usurp the functions of theology. With certain theories I am strongly in sympathy, because they seem to me to be fundamentally Christian; but for anything but religion - supernatural religion - to take the place of religion is highly dangerous. It is the same tendency as we have found in communism (and in the political field there is more excuse for it) and we find it also in the science of eugenics: the pursuit of the mirage of the Earthly Paradise - the illusion that we can be made happy and perfect by the application of legislation or force of the results of scientific discovery. Now eugenics, we must all agree, has already done a great deal for our material well-being: it has helped to provide us with a number of perfect animals and plants for various purposes, it has made wheat grow in climates which could not grow wheat before, and so forth. Furthermore, it will have, we hope, when more highly developed, much to teach us about the breeding of human beings. It can help us to deal better with those unfortunate members of the community who ought not to breed at all; it may even revise, to some limited extent, the Christian views of degrees of relationship in marriage. But I think the hopes of some eugenists have been set too high, and some have advocated what many of us regard as very dubious short cuts to the improvement of the race. A few instances will suffice. When we breed animals we know exactly

what we want; the specialist in such matters has a pretty clear notion of his "perfect" bull or pig or ear of corn: but what is our idea of the perfect human being? We can at best hope to arrest the propagation of characters universally recognised as undesirable. And even so, at least one eminent biologist - Jennings - holds that the proportion of feeble minded persons who are the offspring of feeble minded parents is very small indeed, and that every one of us has, so to speak, elements of imbecility in us, as well as of other undesirable characters, which may combine with similar elements in the other parent. But what is most obvious is the danger of the methods of improving the race advocated by some of those who are wholly emancipated from Christian morality.

It is however not only natural, but right, that when people have ceased to hold any Christian faith they should begin to question Christian morality; and I think it extremely difficult, if not rationally impossible, for any unbeliever who can think intelligently and indepentently for himself to remain attached to Christian morals. I am sure that I could not. But the mind does really abhor disorder; men and women must seek for some sanction for their behaviour; and when they no longer seek to act in accordance with a divine will, they must seek to act in accordance at least with some scientific law. It is so easy, too, to believe that the restrictions of Christianity are merely a barrier to happiness and a cause of misery; so easy, so natural, when we have some particular case of misery before our eyes. And, in the end, society has given up some greater good, which it could not appreciate while it had it, for some lesser good which turns out, when divorced from the greater, to be no good at all. Without the love of God there is no love at all. And so, finally,

We try to apply the 2nd part of the Summary of the Law - to love our neighbours as ourselves - whilst ignoring the 1st part - do you know what it is?

science lets you down.

There is certainly one department of science which most people will agree has let us down: I mean that of mechanical invention. It has even become a bogey employed to make our flesh creep: witness Mr.Aldous Huxley's latest novel "Brave New World", and some of the gloomy predictions of Lord Russell. Time was when every important invention was hailed almost like the arrival of a messiah. when we could be cheerfully assured that all the workmen displaced by machines could be found work again somehow by the very machinery which was taking their place. The obvious menacesof scientific invention are two. One is the social danger of machinery of comfort and pleasure to the consumer. There is the danger of mechanised pleasure - pleasure which gives the enjoyer less and less trouble to procure, and which requires less and less cooperation on his part, pleasure which can be enjoyed passively and stupidly. I do not know how much pleasure is enjoyed by the man who drives a car the machinery of which he understands no better than ~~he does~~ that of his own stomach, in a stream of similar cars along a monotonous road on a Sunday after noon. But one effect of the motor car has been to facilitate a tendency already discernable. Just as the centre of human life is the family, so the social unit is the village. One characteristic of London which makes it, to me, preferable to any other metropolis in the world known to me, is that it is still to a great extent, a collection of villages the borders of which touch, each retaining a local character of its own. Do not reply that a number of the London villages I have in mind are scandalously filthy and ought to be torn down; I know that quite well, and I am not simply indulging a taste for the picturesque slum. But when I see the tendency for

Shadwell, Stepney, Pimlico, Notting Dale, Hoxton.

the village to be replaced, not by the suburb, for which there is much to be said, but by an endless line of houses along a ribbon road over which passes a ceaseless stream of cars, I wonder what sort of organic unity can be left, what sort of local patriotism and activity fostered.

But from the point of view of the producer the situation is still more pernicious. It is now a commonplace of economics, apprehensible by the dullest of us, that the more machines you have the more destitution you will get. The more easily and cheaply goods can be produced, the less manual labour required, the fewer people there are who can buy them, because they have not the money which can only be got by xxxxxxx. But the weavers who wanted to destroy the looms were right only in a wrong condition of society. I do not want to see machinery destroyed, but only to repeat that a machine age requires a fresh economic theory, and a fresh economic theory requires a fresh viewpoint in morals, and a fresh viewpoint in morals ~~is needed in order~~ needs to get back to the foundations of morals. The old law said that those who will not work shall not eat; but it has no application to those who cannot, who have not the opportunity to work. Note that the very word "work" has altered its meaning in an industrial society. Truly, for me, "work" means work for the benefit of others and for the community as a whole; and such work includes giving pleasure or amusement to others. Nowadays, work means rather making money; either a little money by tending a machine, or more money by manipulating money. With such a doctrine of work, you will have, as the chief alternative, idleness; where the alternative should be leisure. And in the present state of society, we have an extraordinary muddle of social and moral values. There are those shall who feel socially

and therefore morally superior because they do not have to work: that is, because they are on a dole provided for them by the work or by the goodluck of their fathers and grandfathers. There are others who denounce such members of society, with great moral indignation, as parasites. Both points of view are wrong: there is no difference whatever between those who live on the income provided by their ancestors and those who live on the income provided by the State. They are all useful members of the community in so far as they can consume what the workers produce; the trouble is that they cannot, among the lot of them, consume enough, because they have not the money to pay for it; and as things are, the money is not there to give them.

One effect of industrialisation is that many of those who have work must work too hard or too long, and most of those who have no work must be idle. It is obvious that the machine must be, neither abolished nor prevented from further development and improvement, but controlled. I do not say that there is too much machinery; and perhaps before we reach that point we shall be too poor to build more. But we need to ask the question: what is machinery for? perhaps we have too much for some purposes and too little for others. In some ways, machinery degrades taste and sets up unnatural values: Of the majority of people who could afford either a motor car or a really fine painting (I assume that ~~xxxxxx~~ is a necessity) how many would choose the painting? A motor car is a greater help in keeping up appearances with one's neighbours than an oil painting is. And machine making is an industry with which art cannot compete; for the maker of machinery finds himself obliged to make as many machines as possible, not because they are needed, but to keep the fac-

tory going. Thus we make machines to send abroad to people who will use them in order to make for themselves things which they used to import from us.

Such instances could be accumulated indefinitely. Do not suppose that I think I have made any discovery, or that I pretend to be saying anything new: I am merely repeating what cannot be repeated too often. We have to-day a system, or lack of system, which Christianity cannot possibly accept. And we need a kind of economics which will ask the question Why? what is it Good to do? And to answer this question we must find out what is the meaning of "Good".

T.S.Eliot.

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THE MODERN DILEMMA - XXi.

by

T.S. Eliot

Sunday, 6th March, 1932, at 5 p.m.

I have been tempted to begin my contribution to this discussion with the words of Trinculo in The Tempest: "The folly of this island! They say there's but five upon this isle: we are three of them; if th'other two be brained like us, the state totters". I must add that I do not use this quotation in any invidious sense. But it had some relevance to my first thought when I began to prepare my talks: why should a person like myself, whose only reasonable notoriety is due to the composition of verses and jingles, in which I have some skill, be talking on this subject. I am not educated for anything else than verses, and I have little other competence. Why should I be invited to talk to you upon a subject which comprehends everything under the sun: I am neither an historian like Mr. Dawson nor a philosopher like Professor MacMurray. And also, why, except under some mad delusion of vanity, should I have the temerity to accept? If this were merely a personal query, I should not bother you with it; but it seems to me to have a direct bearing upon what we call the "modern dilemma". Lord Russell, speaking in another series of these talks a couple of months ago, warned us against the tyranny of the expert. This is certainly an injunction to be taken to heart; but I may add that the present is also very conspicuously an age of the amateur (at least in the field of discussion) and of popular expositions in book form. After all, Lord Russell himself is an expert in a department as confined, if perhaps more important, than my own; and on the subject

THE MODERN MIRROR - XVI.

By

G.L. Tilley.

Chapter XVI. Mr. Y Man.

on which he was talking he also is a kind of amateur. It seems to me that the reason why we care to listen to amateurs, and to read popular books of science and culture and history; and the reason why the amateurs like to talk and write, is that we are all in dumb revolt against the expert. I do not mean that we wish to remove him from his proper place, or that we wish to replace expert knowledge by mere enthusiasm - God forbid. But we feel that there is an art as well as a science of life; that the specialist is apt to exceed his terms of reference; that he can teach us how to put into effect a particular purpose, but not what purposes are worth having. We feel the need for a point of view from which we can see the world as at least potentially orderly; a point of view wider than the expert's can be, and a world in which we may accept our own tiny lives as having a justifiable place in an intelligible whole.

Here, surely, is a form in which the "dilemma", if we call it that, comes home to roost with everybody. With everybody, I mean, who is sufficiently sensitive and conscious. There are many people, I am sure, in every walk of life, who are perfectly satisfied with themselves and with what they are doing. Happy the man, but perhaps not always enviable, to whom never comes the thought, in a sudden if momentary paralysis, Of what use is my work? It is a thought which might come to the most brilliant or to the most necessary member of the community: to the speculative scientist, the inventor, the financier, the manufacturer and the unskilled labourer; it can come, I testify, to the man of letters. Of what use is this experimenting with rhythms and words, this effort to find the precise metric and the exact image to set down feelings which, if communicable at all, can be communicated to so few that the result seems

insignificant compared to the labour? Such thoughts have come to men at everyperiod of civilised history, I make no doubt; but they are especially natural in our own day. We have been told by many philosophers that the world has no design and no purpose; we have seen the revolution of peoples and the downfall of monarchies with very little apparent good coming of it; we see vast machinery for production, and destitution in the midst of it; we hear vulgarisation of taste applauded under the name of education; profligacy of manners acclaimed as an advance of civilisation; trifling amusements and unnecessary luxuries heralded as a rise in the "standard of living"; and there are at least two million among us who have every excuse for thinking that they are not wanted at all. We have better chances of health than our predecessors, we have immense opportunities for leisure, we are better informed, and I think we have just as good brains and just as much good-will; yet we seem at times to be labouring to perfect small parts - or at least to keep them going - of a vast machine which works very badly in performing some function which is unknown to us, if it have any function at all.

I believe that all our problems turn out ultimately to be a religious problem. Its most pressing form, probably, is the economic problem; but economic questions depend finally upon moral questions, as morals depend upon religion. Theology is, of course, the one fundamental science. But in putting the matter so bluntly I by no means suggest that the problem is simple, or its solution only a matter of godliness; if it were, I should advise you to turn off the wireless and sayyour prayers. I shallnot say much directly about Christianity; but in all that I say I shall speak from the point of view of Orthodox Christianity. At least, I aim at orthodoxy.

For heresy, which consists in emphasising one aspect of the mystery to the exclusion of the other, is a natural tendency of the mind; a complete living orthodoxy is, (except through the infusion of exceptional grace) almost impossible to the frail human being at every moment of his life; which is one reason why the Church is necessary. My point of view will be implicit throughout, but I am not addressing only those who share it, or those who might be converted to it. I feel, however, that my only slight hope of saying anything worth listening to is to present myself as a churchman, a writer of verses, and a literary critic; and to set the problems before you as they have affected me in my own narrow experience of living.

If you have any doubt that your problems and their solution must bring you to matters of religion, you have only to turn eastward - towards Russia. I know very little about Russia; I do not know whether the experiment being made there will turn out to be, in the worldly sense, a failure or a success. If the system can be made to work, and if the Russians can be adapted to it, or bred into the sort of beings who can flourish under it, that is their affair. But I should not like it any the better for that: for Russian communism is a religion, and a religion which is not mine. Of course, other and better qualified critics - among them Mr. Maynard Keynes - have remarked this fact before; and it is indeed patent enough; but the full implications do not seem to me to have yet come home to all. If you <u>like</u> the Russian religion, I cannot expect to make any impression upon you. But if you do not like it, then you must keep in mind that you can never fight a religion except with another religion. That is ~~not a very novel thought~~ no novelty either, but again, people do not seem to be very eager to act upon it. If we are incapable of a faith at least as strong as that which appears to animate the ruling class of Russia, if we are

incapable of dying for a cause, then Western Europe and the Americans might as well be reorganised on the Moscow model at once. And you cannot hope to conquer merely with election cockades; merely with British Conservatism or British Liberalism or British Socialism. Nor will you succeed in inventing another brand new religion to compete with communism. There can only be the two, Christianity and communism: and there if you like is your dilemma. For dilemma is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "a position which leaves only a choice between equal evils", and I fear that the majority of us do not want to choose either; at least, we do not want to go very far in either direction.

In speaking of Russian communism in this way I have one fear at the back of my mind, which I think I may as well utter frankly. I am afraid of exciting the approval of people whose approval I do not especially want. For those to whom communism means primarily inconvenience, discomfort, poverty and privation, and the absence of social seasons and fixtures, I have nothing of interest to say. Tothose to whom communism means barricades and machine guns, I can only say that the ends to be achieved by violence are what matter more than violence itself. With those to whom communism means forced labour and timber camps, I can sympathise; but must add that if we are to criticise conditions abroad we must first look well to conditions at home.

I have thought it best to put the problem from the very start as a religious problem, instead of leaving that to develop later. For I knew that some of you would foresee what I was coming to, and say to yourselves: "This solution is merely that we should go to church regularly, and communicate at least once a year, and repeat the creeds and respect the bishops". And this criticism I wished to forestall: that is not what I mean at all. I am not here concerned with the conversion of the world to Christianity, but

with the organisation of the world in a Christian way, which is quite another aspect. The former would no doubt, when complete in the individual as well as in the mass, bring about the latter; but that is a state of affairs which has never yet been known; whereas during a long period of time Europe was in fact organised in a Christian way. It was certainly a very imperfect way of being imperfectly Christian. I do not want to be classified as a "mediaevalist". To erect a Christian state, a state among Christian states, we should need now a very different temper from that either of mediaevalism or of ordinary conservatism. We are in many ways in a position of advantage over our mediaeval ancestors: we are more humane, cleaner and have better table manners; we may be less saintly than some, but we are less beastly than others; we have material comforts, hygiene, machinery and invention, which we do not wish to dispense with but to manipulate wisely. The forms of social organisation in Christian states in the middle ages provide much from which we may learn, but little that we can exactly reproduce. We are more civilised than our ancestors, though we ought to be a great deal more civilised than we are, and they have perhaps more reason to be proud of what they did with their talent than we have. Because, instead of preserving, affirming and refining their spiritual organisation of society we have progressively secularised it, until our values are at war with each other and with life itself.

Now the Christian organisation of society is an ideal towards the realisation of which non-Christians can co-operate. What must no doubt deter many people of goodwill at the outset, when they hear such a phrase as "the Christian organisation of a society", is the fear of losing their liberty; the bogey of domination by some ecclesiastical hierarchy either

fanatically sincere or hypocritically self-seeking. They are repelled by the harsh necessity, which they fear may be imposed upon them whether they see its necessity or no, of the Christian doctrine of marriage; their imaginations may even begin to play about history-book memories like "pardons and indulgences". Well, it is possible that in some respects we have now too much liberty - or, I would say, too much licence; it is possible that very few people have a true notion of what true liberty is; but the kind of organisation I have in mind should give more liberty than we have now; more freedom of choice, more opportunity for all to obtain the real goods of life. I have no expectation and no desire to enforce the non-Christian to obey rules of life in which he cannot believe; I should only wish to persuade him, by practical reuults, that that rule of life is better than his own, if he has any.

For indeed, we live in a world in which true liberty declines. Life becomes more precarious too, without the freedom which makes precariousness tolerable: I mean the freedom and opportunity for adventure. If we have an income above the barest subsistence, we must give a fourth or a fifth to the State. A shift in the exchanges, and those of us who should travel can no longer afford to travel; at any moment, in a modern state, your food may cost you more or your wages may be worth less. The man with a job is in terror of losing it; and of those without a job he is the least unhappy who can most readily resign himself to apathy. We have comfort without grandeur, and amusement without recreation (remember what the word "recreation" means!) If we have liberty, what is it that we have liberty to do? The Russian must resign his liberty in favour of the Russian state, or in favour of a phantom world-state; and in return, = I understand, he is assigned a certain extent of licence. I should prefer to resign my liberty,

if I must, in favour of something better than that; but the Russian at least resigns his liberty in favour of something. You can point, of course, to the abuses of Calvinism in Geneva; or of pre-war Russia, or even eighteenth century England; or if you like to the Inquisition. These and others were evils of definite times and places; the world has changed in some respects for the better; and no one could impose such tyranny upon the British people to-day; there may be danger of other, more insidious forms of tyranny. One reason - among others - why I am sure that the Russian form of communism would fail in England, is that I do not believe that any class in this country could endure such minute control of their lives - though it is astonishing how much control they can endure. The only result would be, not the Russian kind of order, but chaos - which, I take it, nobody wants. I think that the kind of state I have in mind would help to free us from the tyranny under which we suffer at present: a tyranny without purpose and meaning, the tyranny of what are called natural forces, or economic laws.

To the baser minded, in the modern world, liberty, as I have suggested, tends to be tantamount to mere licence. The more intellectual experience more refined temptations: some of them are those, sometimes among the most gifted and the most conspicuous, who value so highly what seems to them intellectual liberty that they refuse to believe in anything. For that is a definite refusal. And in their own interest, being what they are, they are right; for to have a passionate conviction about anything is like falling in love: it is not merely to risk being ridiculous (and such people are afraid of being ridiculous, though nothing makes a man more ridiculous really than the fear of ridicule); it is to surrender onself to something, to surrender liberty, the liberty of thinking irresponsibly.

If I meant by trying to accomplish nothing at all, but the trouble is that I have certainly [illegible] of [illegible]. You can solve, of course, to the extent of [illegible] in general or in present India, or even [illegible] [illegible]. If you live in the [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] evils of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] world has [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The chief liberty of man, however, is the liberty to choose what master he shall serve. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Towards any profound conviction one is borne gradually, perhaps insensibly over a long period of time, by what Newman called "powerful and concurrent reasons". Some of these reasons may appear to the outside world irrelevant; some are purely personal; and each individual, perhaps, has some reasons which could concern, some influences which could have influenced, no one but himself. At some moment or other, a kind of crystallisation occurs, in which appears an element of faith not strictly definable from any reason or combination of reasons. I am not speaking, mind you, of conversion to Christian faith only, but of conversion in general; there are some interesting remarks on the subject of conversion in a book by the great French novelist Stendhal entitled On the Subject of Love. In my own case, I believe that one of the reasons was that the Christian scheme seemed to me the only one which would work. I hasten to add that this is not a reason for believing; it is a tenable hypothesis to maintain, that there is no scheme which will work. That was simply the removal of any reason for believing in anything else, the erasure of a prejudice, the arrival at the scepticism which is the preface to conversion. And when I say work, I am quite aware that I had my own notion of what the "working" of a scheme comprehends. Among other things, the Christian scheme seemed the only possible scheme which found a place for values which I must maintain or perish (and belief comes first and practice second) the belief, for instance,

in holy living and holy dying, in sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity. And it is in favour of the Christian scheme, from the Christian point of view, that it never has, and never will, work perfectly. No perfect scheme can work perfectly with imperfect men; if the Russian scheme ever comes to "work" perfectly with what I call imperfect men, then to me the Russian system will be condemned by its very efficiency. You can eliminate the difficulties of the individual by eliminating individuality; original sin, by eliminating sinners. but no system that continues to repeat, and must repeat, the words be ye perfect, can be expected to work perfectly. Nor can a system which respects free will, the right of the human being to choose whether to serve sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness.

The subject cannot be continued, I regret to say, without tackling the old conundrum of "Religion and Science". I accept the catchword as a point of departure; but I am not prepared to let pass either the word "religion" or the word "science". I dislike using the word "religion" in that vague way; for me religion implies the orthodox faith and the apostolic succession. And I dislike using the word "science" in that vague way; for me science is a vague term covering various "sciences", one of which, by the way, is theology. So I propose to treat

1. The Christian faith in relation to speculative physics.
2. In relation to speculative biology.
3. In relation to practical biology. Speculative biology and practical biology are probably divisions which no biologist would accept; but I am concerned to distinguish for instance, the problem presented to Christianity by the theory of evolution, and the problems presented by the modern science of eugenics, which are not the same thing.
4. In relation to economic science. Perhaps for our time this is the most pressing problem of all. Ours is the age

of the economist; an age in which all of us, including many professional entertainers like myself who would prefer to devote their attention to the one or two jobs for which they feel fitted, are somehow compelled to think about economics. But at present every Christian, and especially the Christian layman, who leaves far toomuch of the intellectual burden to his spiritual advisers, must be concerned with the realisation of a Christian view of social and economic organisation. It is the only alternative to communism. To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey ... I should like even at this point to quote a few words from a writer whom I greatly admire:

> "Consumption absolute is the end, crown and perfection of production; and wise consumption is a far more difficult art than wise production. Twenty people can gain money for one who can use it; and the vital question, for individual and for nation, is never "how much they make?" but "to what purpose do they spend?"

These are the words of one whom I condider amon$ the greatest of English economists; as a writer, even greater than Adam Smith, the Scot; it is John Ruskin. Ruskin has not been altogether happy in his succession; and public problems have changed their outward appearance since his time; but I do not think there is any better introduction to this part of our problem than Unto This Last.

This is something like my programme for my three following half-hours. Meanwhile, I should like you, if you will, to think over what I have been saying so far; and if you feel that my approach is mistaken, or my analysis inadequate, there is time for you to write to me, and for me, if I am convinced, to alter the construction of my next talk.

THE MODERN DILEMMA (22)

by

T.S. Eliot

For Sunday, March 13th, 1932 at 5.0 p.m.

Last week I was concerned chiefly, in a general way, with the "dilemma" of Christianity and communism. But the "dilemma" which presents itself to more people is the supposed dilemma of religion versus science. If my first dilemma Christianity and Communism is real, as I firmly believe it is, then it follows that the second dilemma Religion and Science is a phantom. For if the real dilemma is between one religion and another, we can hardly have, on top of that, another dilemma between Religion and Science. Too many dilemmas would certainly spoil my broth, and I hope at least to raise the question in your minds, whether the conundrum "religion or science?" has any more meaning than the famous riddle which vexed Alice: "Why is a raven like a writing desk?"

The immediate response will be, I dare say: "You are juggling with words. The sense in which you call communism a religion, if justifiable at all, is not the sense in which Christianity is a religion. Science is only in conflict with the traditional religions such as Christianity Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and the sects of India; it is perfectly in accord with a religion (if you call it that) which denies the 'supernatural'". That is to say it is perfectly in accord with communism.

Well, to begin with - in the hope that I have put this reply to myself fairly - science can hardly be in accord with communism until it is in accord with itself. Not only the various Christian divisions, but all of the great religions I have named, are in accord on something: they all accept what we call the supernatural. But nowadays science, by which

we must mean various eminent scientists, does not seem to be in accord on any religious question. Two or three eminent mathematicians and physicists whom I have in mind hold widely divergent views; two or three psychologists, equally eminent in their own profession, differ just as widely from each other; and there is no manner of concord between the conclusions of physicists and psychologists.

And secondly, if you say: "but if you call communism a religion, it is a scientific religion in that it denies the supernatural and is solidly based upon what is observable in this world", then I must say that the term "scientific religion" is just nonsense: the moment the emotions are engaged upon a goal to be reached, an entity to be adored, we have leapt a chasm separating religion from science. What, for instance, is "propaganda" - something highly developed, I understand, in Soviet Russia, and also highly developed, though often for less creditable purposes, in Western Europe and America? It is merely the art of manipulating what we might call, in "scientific" terminology, the "lower religious centres". Once everybody has had a thorough grounding in "science", it will become impossible to wheedle anybody into any course of action: for science can never tell us what is ultimately desirable. "The dictatorship of the proletariat" is a fine politico-religious phrase. It seduces the multitude, because it persuades each, qua individual, that he or she will get something out of it. That is not a religious sentiment. It seduces the few to genuine sacrifice, by giving them religious satisfaction; for the proletariat becomes then a synonym for God. And there are only two ultimate motive powers: the love of God and the hate of God; whichever you have, you are a believer.

To sum up: anything which requires genuine self-sacrifice tends toward a religion. To many people, the

"supernatural" means merely miracles. But when you see the meaning of "supernatural" more fully, you may still find it hard to believe, but you will see that there is nothing else in which to believe.

We have yet to attack the subject of the destructive influence of scientific enquiry upon religious belief. The influence of scientific advance upon the popular mind, in the last few hundred years, has undoubtedly been very great; but why and how this influence has been exerted is by no means a simple problem. A tendency towards belief in a mechanistic, as contrasted with a religious universe, is present in the work of two men who were certainly not aware of this implication of their thought. Francis Bacon and René Descartes in the Seventeenth Century were pious men, or at least assumed the appearance of piety; and they would have shrunk from the conclusion that they were preparing a world with no God in it. It was not as scientists, but as philosophers theorising about science, that they influenced belief. And here is what I think you will find everywhere: that no scientific discovery influences people either for or against revealed religion, except in so far as there already exists an atmosphere either favourable or unfavourable to religion. In the case of the individual scientist there are two influences: (1) he may find that an acceptance of revealed religion, or as the case may be, a rejection of it, is for himself at his moment of time the most convenient state of mind for the pursuit of his investigations; (2) he may employ his scientific knowledge in support of an emotional state which he probably shares with many other people. My old master Josiah Royce, now mostly forgotten but a great philosopher in his day, wrote a paper which I wish I might read again,

in which he instanced the frequent occasions on which philosophical theory has anticipated and prepared the way for scientific discovery. My own contention is, that mankind is usually prepared to interpret any scientific discovery that may come in one way rather than another. It is generally assumed that any scientific discovery must have some important bearing upon our conception of the universe; not merely the physical universe but the spiritual universe as well; and ultimately upon our conduct and our emotional life. It very often does, but chiefly because we take it for granted that it will. The assumption is very rarely challenged; nevertheless, I see no reason for accepting it.

One of the simplest and most obvious examples is the Darwinian hypothesis. Darwin demonstrated a number of very important and indubitable facts; but the theory of natural evolution was already in the air. It is, of course, as old as the hills, or at least as old as Greek philosophy before Socrates; but it was advanced particularly in the eighteenth century by the French journalist Diderot, who had a faculty for lucky, and sometimes unlucky, anticipations. Its moral aspect is clear in Tennyson's In Memoriam. Nowadays nobody still imagines that the actual discoveries of Darwin and later biologists disprove Christianity; why should people at the time have supposed that it did? The answer is that they wanted to. There was, I suppose, a considerable amount of unintelligent opposition on the part of religious people, as there usually is; the religious people, many of them, concurred with the advanced and liberal people in believing that The Origin of Species was damaging to the Christian Faith. The literalness of the Book of Genesis was all that was in question; and that - which had been very pleasantly called into question by Voltaire a century before in his commentary on that Book - was hardly important. Though some of us

nowadays are inclined to believe that in the Book of Genesis may be concealed most profound truth. When, again, the great anthropologists of the nineteenth century brought to light the folklore and religious practices of primitive peoples and ancient civilisation, men were at first horrified or pleased by what seemed another way of undermining Christianity. Later, it was discovered that the existence of parallels to Christianity in remote places and remote times could be used equally well to defend as to attack Christianity, just as Sam Weller's friend the pieman could make a pork pie or a veal-and-ham pie out of the same innocent material.

How then, has it come about that religious faith has altered and weakened since the middle ages, until it is no longer the rule and standard of social as well as individual life, but a mere extra, like French and Music, which a minority of people treat themselves to? To answer this question satisfactorily I should need not only a great deal more time than I have, but infinitely more detailed knowledge. I can only call it dogmatically a progressive spiritual deterioration. Yet it seems a deterioration which in some unfathomable way - for here we touch on the deepest mysteries of suffering and sin - was necessary: necessary at times that humanity should worship false gods and demi-gods, though how to square that with the salvation of individual souls I do not know. Better to say, perhaps, that even the wisest of human beings is so muddleheaded, without God, that he cannot destroy an evil without destroying some good or grasp at some good without grasping at some evil; the wheat never grows without the tares. We needed free enquiry; we needed an atmosphere in which the several sciences could flourish and develop; we needed invention and machinery. Had we - I mean our ancestors for twelve or fifteen generations, and we must bear the responsibility for our ancestors, for we are of them and they are in us - been better men, we could have got all these advantages without giving up the good things

that we have given up: I say, as I said last week, the belief in holy living and holy dying, in sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity, asceticism - the belief in Tragedy: not pagan Tragedy, but Christian Tragedy. If we (using "we" as I have just used it) had been good enough, we could have had the benefits of science, invention, medicine and hygiene, and all the good things that the last three hundred years have brought us, without giving up any goods. But there seem to be times when the bath water gets so bad that if we are not clever enough to remove the baby first, then the baby really has to go too. The actual question is: now we have gained these benefits, are we worthy to use them?

If what I suggest is true, that it is not science that has destroyed religious belief, but our preference of unbelief that has made illegitimate use of science, then it clearly follows that we should be ready to decline politely any support which a more modern science may offer to religion. This is the peril of our own brief moment. The sort of people who are swayed now to believe that "after all, there is a something" are exactly the same mob which was swayed to believe that after all, there isn't anything. Please understand that I am not criticising the attitudes of the eminent scientists themselves; nor am I criticising their more popular books, which even I can understand in part, and some of which I have read with pleasure and I hope profit. I am only criticising an uncritical attitude on the public towards these writers and their books, an attitude shared, I am sorry to say, sometimes by theological writers who ought to know better. What are we to make of the sympathy with religion avowed by several distinguished scientists? As autobiography of interesting men, such work is itself of great interest; as an admission of the limitation of science it is invaluable. It goes to show that outside of their

learn etc.

special field men of science are just ignorant men like ourselves, with no better clue to the mystery than we have. And that makes them all the more likeable. If they proceed to erect some positive theological scheme of their own, they are indulging an eccentricity, and become a little comic, though not so comic as I should be if I tried to improve upon the quantum theory in physics.

But it is clear that the popular attitude of hailing modern physical science as a support of religion is very misguided. To remove an obstacle is not the same thing as to raise a support. It is just the same old superstition of science: you are continuing to make the natural sciences the key to ultimate truth, though the key now unlocks a different door. For to most of us science is at best a faith, and at worst a superstition; most of us do not know any more science than we should have done had we lived three thousand years ago. We do not understand Einstein's views any better than we understand those of St.Augustine or St. Athanasius. I dare say that we are impressed by the certainly impressive practical results of scientific enquiry; but engineering and plant-breeding are no clue to ultimate truth; and the genius and ingenuity which have gone to build up the machinery by which I am speaking to you are no guarantee that what I am saying is worth listening to.

The history of the last two hundred years does, I think, bear out my contention that the movement away from Christianity came before scientific discovery, and merely made use of it; so that what we want to do now is not to make use of it but for another purpose ~~but~~ in the same way, but to see that we must dispense with it. And that would be a great benefit. For if we understand that religion has nothing to lose and nothing to gain by the progress of science, then we are at every moment prepared

to give up some cherished belief, such as the belief in the movement of the sun round the earth, which we had previously thought belonged to religion and now find belongs only to science. There are certain dogmas which cannot be given up; it is possible that we still hold some beliefs as part of our faith which really belong only to immature science. We have had superstition in religion and we have had superstition in science; we can do without both.

What I wish to insist upon is not so much that speculative science cannot cure our maladies of thought and will, but the other aspect: that the advance of scientific knowledge is not the cause of them. Not, at any rate, the rational cause. It may, incidentally, have disturbed our scale of values and often made us mistake the means for the end; but in my opinion mechanical invention has affected our inner as well as our outer lives far more than the free enquiry of natural science. But even mechanical invention, though its unrestrained exploitation by the human race which has not yet proved itself adult enough to be trusted with the control of such engines is perhaps the immediate cause of our actual difficulties - even mechanical invention is secondary. What really makes the difference is not reason at all, but desire.

It is very difficult at this point to avoid obscurity and misunderstanding. I do not mean that either belief or scepticism is essentially irrational. The intellectual case for Christianity is very strong indeed, and one which demands a great deal of study; and to be quite fair, there is a good case to be made out for atheism as well. But it is not hard thinking which causes such a thing as the gradual drift away from Christianity during the last few centuries, ~~but chiefly~~ in fact following a line of least resistance. Many people tacitly assume, that if the Christian faith had been true, Europe would have stuck to it; and the reason why the majority of people, in

the most civilised countries, have drifted away from it, must be that it is not true. But this belief goes together with another crude faith, the faith that progress in enlightenment and civilisation is something automatic, that to improve from generation to generation is natural to man; and when doubt is cast on this belief that things will get better just of themselves, people are apt to fall back into despair. But civilisation is a much more complicated thing than that. We know perfectly well that at various times and in various places civilisation has been more highly developed, in some of its most essential values, than it is now. At nearly every stage in history we can discern that something is being gained, and something being lost. As the world goes on, therefore, the word "civilisation comes to mean more and more: because it means all the things that we have gained, and want to keep, and also all the good things that we have lost, and want to regain. We want all true goods at once, and to preserve them in equilibrium.

But to preserve such a very delicate balance is very difficult. For at any moment the good and bad are so inextricably mixed, that, as I said above in other words, we are almost forced, with our limited intelligence and vision, to give up some good in order to abolish some evil. The gradual desertion of Christianity is partly accounted for, in Britain at least, by our absorption in discovery and invention; and still more by the economic and social changes induced by discovery and invention. Among these too, there came great benefits; yet moral and religious development has always been in the rear. The lives of little children in the middle ages, being lived mostly in farms and villages, and in their families, were probably more precious and their existence was more tolerable than they became when the factory was introduced. It only dawned gradually upon people in power - and many do not seem to realise it fully even now -

that what seemed a good way of making money and a beneficient way of producing a profusion of cheap goods was also a profound alteration and disturbance of spiritual life. They did not even appreciate the fact that it was not helpful to the future of the nation that the children should work for more hours a day, and under more hideous conditions, than could be imposed upon any adult workman to-day.

It is also curious to observe how much of the decline of Christianity has been due to the earnest efforts of pious and zealous people, aiming at the greater happiness, the greater freedom and even the greater piety of the people; and how progressively the result has been merely to make them indifferent to Christianity. At each step of renouncing something that seemed obsolete or false they took a step also away from the permanent and true; and at each step they thought that they were nearer to true Christianity, and finally to true religion in general. There was a great deal, certainly, which it was desirable to give up; a great-grandfather of mine, a ~~plain~~ simple clergyman in the middle of the Eighteenth century, incurred disfavour jeopardised his ~~career~~ living by suddenly announcing in public that he could no longer believe that the souls of infants dead without baptism would burn in eternal fire. But in the Nineteenth century the real history of the popular theology of England is written in its literature and fiction. In the novels of Dickens and Thackeray, Christianity survives, chiefly as the more amiable aspect of the Eighteenth century church; in those of George Eliot, chiefly as an austere moral code, tempered by high humanitarianism, divorced from the supernatural faith which would justify it; with Meredity and Hardy it has vanished altogether, and is replaced by uneasy individual groping in the dark.

I am afraid that my talk to-day may have sounded too abstract, and perhaps not coming to any clear point. But at the back of my mind I have always something definite: the strain, the bewilderment and the resentment in the minds of some of those younger people with whom I have had contact. It is not enough just to say that they have no belief; for if you can turn your eyes to the other world, you must all the more, while you are here, want to make this place a fit place of preparation for it, not only for yourself but for others. The supposed conflict between science and religion is no great or necessary part of the difficulty. To get at its essence you have to study the minds of the few rather than those of the many: it is not at Hyde Park that we should look, but at those who might appear to the world to have no reason ~~to be~~ for so- content, and who are yet dissatisfied.

to a practical politician.

THE MODERN DILEMMA - 24.

by

Mr. T. S. Eliot

Sunday, 26th March 1932 at 5 p.m.

It may well have seemed to you, that in what I have been saying hitherto, I have done no more than comment on a few of the obvious troubles of our time. Or it may have seemed that I have nothing to propose except a "return" to Christianity; and that those who neither believe nor want to believe had best turn elsewhere. So I have this afternoon the most difficult part of my task: to try to pull the various threads together, and to make impossible, if Ican, any misunderstanding of my meaning.

I believe that there is a "modern dilemma" only in the sense that it is particularly modern to be conscious of it. There is no one tangible cause of our present situation; and there is no one point in the present situation upon which you can put your finger and say: "this is the one thing wrong and this is the way to put every thing right". For people differ very much in their opinion as to what is wrong, and therefore it is not surprising that they should differ in their theory of the cause and in their prescriptions of what to do to put things right. It is not even as if we could point, in any department of life, to a steady and unmitigated deterioration. On the contrary, human history shows us such a confused and confusing mixture of good and evil, that as I have said, in every change there are elements of good and evil; every change has two aspects; and people do not even come to universal agreement as to what is good and what is bad; or for the sake of what good it is worth while putting up with what evil. Nevertheless I think we can say that the present situation is the result of diverse and uncoordinated and uncontrolled developments, most of which perhaps are fundamentally good so far as they go, or

were the only way of improving matters in their time. The result of concurrent movements has been the movement away from Christianity, which is for me the fundamental evil. I do not deny that in the process we have gained many goods which, human nature being so limited as it is, might not have been won in a Christian society. All the same, we have got to a disorderly condition in which life seems to have lost all meaning and value. It is the despair of this condition which communism sets out to cure. It seems to me that that cure is worse than the disease; indeed, I take it as a symptom of the disease itself; or if you like, as a temporary stimulant which will turn out in the end to be a narcotic. Communism is the opium of the people.

I have already made it quite clear that I do not propose to cure the world merely by individual conversions. In a plague epidemic, it is good that doctors should save every individual life that they can, but the epidemic is not going to be stopped in that way. In the end it is the individual soul that is the unit of value - and in that, I think, we differ radically from communism and any other Religion of Humanity. Those, by the way, who hold the religion of communism might do well to study the attempt of a brilliant French freethinker of the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte, to establish a Religion of Humanity, and take warning from his ingenious follies. It is the mass of individuals with which we are concerned: not the "mass of humanity", or "the masses", but the mass of individuals, each with his own precious differentiations, his eccentricities and hobbies, his own peculiar way of making the best of life; innumerable individuals, for no two of whom life has quite the same meaning; and no two or more of whom can be really united except in the love of God. The Christian view of society is if you like a paradox, for it is an organism in which each part has an equal value to the whole; but out of this paradox you can escape only into anarchism on the one hand, or the opposite heresy, communism,on the other. And that gives you a further paradox: for anarchism and communism respectively, in

suppressing half of the value of life, suppress the whole.

I conceive then, not of conversions one by one to the faith, but of a kind of mass-conversion - by which I mean just the opposite of what is meant by a revival or a mass-meeting. In this mass-conversion you start at the other end, because you do not hope to convert the world to complete Christianity, but cherish the more modest hope that every individual will be a Christian so far as he is anything. Only a Moses could lead the people the whole way, and even to him they cried out, as you would cry too:

> Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

No, the world I have in mind would merely be Chriatian so far as it was anything. And when I say "the World", I mean the individuals in it, and I mean their social life, their economic life, their science, their values in this world. The last thing I want, however, is to revert to any mediaeval or early Christian society. For one thing it is impossible, with all our machinery and all our knowledge; for the other, it is undesirable. Yet I admit that our aim is almost more difficult than the impossible; for it is to try to realise the state of affairs which we should have attained, had we gained all the good things we have gained and at the same time kept all the spiritual good that we have lost. And this means that we cannot simply pick and choose, by historical study, the good things out of the dust-bin of the past and polish them up as fresh as new. For if we had kept them then, they would have been living in us, in, that is our ancestors for all the generations between any period we call "the past", and ourselves; they would not be quite the same as what we inspect through the telescope of history. Our task, then, is not antiquarianism; it is just the permanent task of

making the permanent truths live in us in our own brief and particular moment of time.

In the notion, the ideal I may even call it, of a world which shall be Christian so far as it is anything, lies a very profound difference with communism. It implies the freedom of choice, and the freedom to be a very imperfect Christian indeed. It accepts the fact of a world in which the majority of Christians will be very imperfect Christians indeed; it tolerates them and finds a free place for them. I am quite well aware - at least it is mentioned again and again by credible report - that the actual members of the communist party in Russia are a small minority; and I shall be reminded that non-communists are tolerated so long as they show no inclination towards another regime. But at the same time, it appears that the communists hope, by their methods of education, their censorship, their pressure towards the dissolution of family life, to breed the whole nation into communists in a few generations. This method of conversion is more scientific, but just as barbarous, as the forcible methods of Islam in the middle ages. Now, you cannot produce a Christian wholly either by forcible conversion or forcible breeding. Those methods have been tried, of course; and are hardly likely to be tried again. Nor are we likely to adopt the methods of the missionary, who, having succeeded by a deception in baptising a whole negro tribe, then laughed at their simplicity in supposing that they were still heathen. The non-Christian would suffer no disabilities, in what I mean by a Christian society, from which he does not suffer at present; nor, except in the Church, would any avenue of preferment be closed to him.

My notion differs from that of the missionary whom I have just mentioned, in that I should begin at the other end. I would have the consequences of Christian thinking - thinking by genuine Christians - in the practical departments of

of life pursued courageously and offered to the public. You may be indifferent to Christian belief and dogma, but you do at least want sound economics, sound politics, sound biology and psychology: and as for education, you ought to want either a wholly secular education, or the alternative of sound Christian training, not the poor substitute offered to so many schoolboys. Do not think that I am proposing that clergymen should necessarily be detailed to occupy themselves with these subjects, or that free scientific enquiry should be hindered, or the results mutilated to fit in with orthodoxy. But the Christian, seeing how every science, when there is no religion, tends to become a little religion itself, and feeling, as he must if he is really sincere in his faith, that Christian theology is the science which relates and gives meaning to the several sciences, must try to follow his religion out to the bitter end.

In nothing more than in constitutional theory, or the theory of politics, and in economics, is this need greater. It is a common complaint and one of long standing; I have heard it from the young and recently from correspondents; I even heard it and considered it when I was young myself: that a Church - or, I should say, Churches, for the grievance includes not only the Church of England, but Rome, Presbyterianism and most sects - Churches which have proved so pliant to various forms of government, and so indifferent to the root causes of social injustice and oppression - are unworthy to speak in the Name of Christ, or, if they are worthy, then Christianity is condemned. And the craving, which exists in nearly all of us, for some religion which shall demand a better society on earth, drives many towards Communism. For even a perfect organisation of society, without a religion to transfigure it, is destitute of energy, hope and ecstasy; and a perfect religion which has no relation to the affairs of this world, lacks reality. The first thing to do, to convert people in the mass to being "Christians so far as they

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of this world, leave nothing. The Christ thing to do, is
several people saying we are being "Christian" as we are

are anything", is to convince them that the Christian faith really has something to say on these matters; and that at least a few Christians would be prepared to take their stand for a Christian world, however different from actual society that world may turn out to be. To remove in short, the ancient prejudice that Christianity is, or has become, merely the parasatic supporter of things as they are. I want to quote at this point from a letter from a young man, who I think has put on paper what many feel;

"It has always seemed to me (he says) that the objection to religion is that it provides people with an escape from the organisation of society and from all materialistic problems, and that it also offers them an unreal consolation for material injustices that could be altered, and often too, for injustices to other people and to the lower classes of society which would seem intolerable if it were not for this escape into a sentimental dreamland."

He is wrong of course, in confounding "religion" with the history of the churches during the last two or three centuries; in assuming that the sonsolation is unreal and in refusing to recognise that for the individual, when he can do nothing about the injustices to himself or to others, this "escape" as he calls it is right and proper. I quote him because I think many others feel the same way. He continues

> "All the words you use, "chastity, humility, austerity", convey to me (and hundreds of other people like me I think) the feeling of staying in an old schoolroom chapel, unheated by a metal stove and doing nothing but be as consciously miserable as possible. All these words are associated too deeply with our education and our childhood."

There, I think, we are up against something very serious; the power of association. It is so difficult to talk to people about things of which they have no knowledge, when they have been made

are anything", is to convince them that the Christian faith really has something to say on these matters; and that at least a few Christians would be prepared to take their stand for a Christian world, however different from actual society this would turn out to be. To remove in short, the ancient prejudice that Christianity is, or has become, merely the sympathetic supporter of things as they are. I want to quote on this point from a letter from a [illegible] which he [illegible] paper that many recall:

It has always seemed to me (as above) that the objection to religion is that it provides people with an escape from the organisation of society and from all materialistic problems, and that it also offers them an unreal consolation for material injustices that could be altered, and often too, for injustices to other people and to the lower classes of society which would seem intolerable if it were not for this escape into a celestial dreamland.

He is wrong, of course, in connecting "religion" with the history of the churches during the last two or three centuries; in assuming that the consolation is unreal and in refusing to recognise that for the individual, when he can do nothing about the injustice to himself or to others, this "escape" – he calls it – is right and proper. I quote him because I think many others feel the same way. He continues:

"All the words you use, "sanctity, humility, charity," convey to me (and hundreds of other people like me I think) the feeling of escaping in an old [illegible] from those", [illegible] by [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as possible. All these words are associated in my mind with our education and our childhood."

Here, I think, we are up against something very serious: the power of association. It is no difficult to talk to people about things of which they have no knowledge, when they have been made

sordidly familiar with the names for the things. When they have heard repeated so many words belonging to Christian theology, and have never heard anything of Christian theology itself! I am not nearly so frighened of communism as I am of the "Christianity" that many Englishmen have learnt at school; that Christianity which is merely one of the finishing processes of that over-produced commodity, the gentleman.

So I always want to say to such people: "Because you have never seen real Christianity in theory or in operation, because your early years were enveloped in a Christianity which I can hardly describe as much better than an imposture, an imposture associated with all that was most unpleasant in your early youth - and I am quite well aware how unpleasant early youth can be, or how few sensitive men were happy in it: do not suppose that you are in a position to judge the Christian faith. I have more right to judge Marxism on insufficient knowledge than you have to judge Christianity on insufficient knowledge. For I judge Marxism simply because I know, from its own evidence, that is is incompatible with that in which I already believe; but you, I am sure, became a Marxist because you previously did not believe in anything. I sympathise with your desire to believe something; but unless you are content to be a mere creature of environment, you are not yet in a position to deny the truths of Christianity. We are all partly creatures of environment, for good or bad, and of heredity and heriditary environment. But consider this. Suppose yourself existing a hundred, or two hundred, or any number of years ahead, and suppose that by that time communism had long since become the established religion, the established government and the established society. Is it not quite likely that if you were to be born into such a period you could be brought up into the same imposture, the same claptrap, the same diluted, adulterated and standardised sentiment, the same parroting of words which have lost their meanings, as afflicted the childhood you remember? The words would be different, because they would come out of communist theology and not out of Christian; but they would give you the same nausea and aversion from communism that you now have from Christianity. I should not like to think that then you would become a Christian, or anything

So I always want to say to such people: "Because you never knew real Christianity, in theory or in operation, because your early years were involved in a Christianity which I can hardly describe as more better than a caricature, an [illegible] associated with all that was most unpleasant in your early youth — and I am using mild terms here — unpleasantness youth can be, or how few sensitive minds [illegible] in life, I cannot suppose that you are in a position to judge the Christian faith. I [illegible] to judge Marxism on insufficient knowledge than you have to judge Christianity on insufficient knowledge. For I judge Marxism simply because I know, from its own evidence, that it is incompatible with that in which I already believe; but you, I am sure, became a Marxist because you previously did not believe in anything. I sympathise with your desire to believe something; but unless you are content to be a mere creature of environment, you are not yet in a position to deny the truths of Christianity. We are all partly creatures of environment, and none of us can be entirely and exclusively environment. But consider this. Suppose yourself existing a hundred, or two hundred, or any number of years ahead, and suppose that by that time communism had long since become the established religion, the established government and the established society. It is not quite likely that if you were to be born into such a period you could be brought up into the same [illegible], the same [illegible], the same [illegible], adulterated and standardised sentiment, the same parroting of words which have lost their meanings, as I believe has happened [illegible]. The [illegible] would be different, because they would come out of communist theology and not out of Christian; but they would give you the same hatred and aversion from communism that you now have from Christianity. I should not like to think that then you would become a Christian, or anything

else, simply by reacting from communism as you knew it. I am perfectly aware, in these matters, that we have not to do simply with intellectual conviction, but with the whole man and his desires. I dare say that you, and people like you, have no desires, no aspirations, which cannot be fulfilled in a communist society. You will have no doubt your own "chastity", your own "humility" and your own "austerity", for which you will use different words, and which will give you different rules of behaviour than mine. If you are in the majority, well for you. But in that event, I only hope that I, and my like, may be allowed to expiate our intransigence quickly with our blood; and in any case we shall expect little sympathy, either from the pagan society into which we and you were born, or from the communist society which you hope to construct. Mr. Middleton Murry, in a little book The Necessity of Communism - I do not think that it is actually published until next week - pictures a gentle advance into communism, which, like every programme offered to British voters, involves no violence or great discomfort - "the inevitability of gradualness" again. We are to leave Egypt, but he assures us that the route will not take us through the desert. The Church - by which I think he has in mind primarily our Anglican Church - is to be tolerated, as the persons of retarded development who will continue to patronise it will be tolerated. But for my part, I prefer to hope that I shall be untolerated, intolerant and intolerable."

That ends my little piece of parenthetical oratory. But I must add and repeat, for your own benefit, first that I do not wish to be named among the usual antagonists of communism. I have tried to make clear, throughout, that I and any who agree with me are now in what is called a "hopeless minority"; we loathe communism

also, simply by moving from communism as you know it.
I am actually saying, in these matters, that we have not
to do simply with intellectual speculation, but with the
whole man and his destiny. I dare say that you, and people
like you, have no beliefs, no assumptions, which cannot
be fulfilled in a communist society. You will have no
doubt your own "morality", your own "humanity", your own
"culture", but they will be different ones, and
which will give you different ideas of behaviour than mine.
If you are in the majority, well for you. But in that
event, I only hope that I, and my like, may be allowed
to explain our intransigence quickly with our blood, and
in any case we shall needs fight against, either from
the power society into which we and you were born, or from
the communist society which you hope to construct. As
Hugh-Jones says, in a little book The Necessity of Communism -
I do not think that it is actually and immediately such a
"question of life and death" as he makes it out to be, but
like very generous offered to humanity, involves
no violence or great disorder - "the inevitability of
gradualness" again. We are to have peace, but be warned
that the route will not take us through the desert.
The church - by which I think he has in mind primarily
our English church - is to be tolerated, as the potential
of national development who will continue to exist
it will be tolerated. But for my part I prefer to hope
that I shall be understood, intelligent and intolerable.
That made my little sense of responsibility
necessary. But I must end now. For your own benefit,
first that I do not wish to be named among the usual
suspicious for communism. I have tried to make clear,
throughout, that I and say who agree with me are now in
what is called a "hopeless minority"; we loathe communism

and we loathe the world as it is, and if this is the dilemma, if these are the only alternatives, then our strongest objection to communism is that it is a waste of time, of brains, of resources, and a great provocation to still more humbug, to change over from one bad system to another.

At this point you must be prepared for a disappointment. My advantage is that I was prepared from the first for your disappointment, and can perhaps tell you why you must be disappointed. Many of those who have had the patience to hear me out, must have been expecting me to produce some nice little recipe for setting things right; and I suspect that half of you have anticipated eagerly the moment when you could say: "So that's all it comes to! as if we didn't know that that particular scheme hadn't been refuted long ago !" Of course I have my own preferences, in the economic and other plans which are offered, but I am not going to tell you what they are.

I have avoided any expression of my views on the importance and significance of the kingship, on the merits of aristocracy and democracy, and many other matters. For I did not wish to complicate and distract my main line of thought by anything not quite vital to the present issue. For you might say: I object firmly to some of the things in which he believes, and I am therefore inclined to believe that he is wrong in his main thesis." If, for instance, I had been giving elementary instruction in the Christian faith, it would have been a mistake for me to have tied it up with an exposition of the philosophy of the greatest philosophical teacher of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas. For it might have led you to believe that the whole truth of Christianity depended upon the validity of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas - an impression which, I suspect, some of his modern apologists have sometimes given. Similarly, I am not going to commit my belief in the possibility of a Christian society to any practical scheme put forward at the moment, and still less to any of my own invention. If you want schemes

and as Jastrow says, "and in this is the difference. If there are the only alternatives, then our responsibility to communion in turn is in a sense of time, or duration, or endurance, and a great preservation would mean turning, be change over from one body to be another.

At this point you must be prepared for disappointment. My warning is that I was prepared from the first for your disappointment, and can perhaps tell you why you must be disappointed. Many of those who have had the patience to read my mss. may have been expecting me to produce a new light, "ways for detecting things." Just, and I suppose that half of you have anticipated exactly the moment when you could say, "Truth all it comes to!" as if so claim't know that particular phenomenon had been related long ago in Jr. Or you may have your own preference, in the tomatoes and other things which are of great, but I am not going to tell you what they are.

I have avoided any expression of my views on the in questions and eight-tenths of the writings, on the merits of anthropology and economics, and many other subjects. I did not wish to complicate and distract attention from or thought by anything not quite vital to the argument issue. For you might say, I object simply to one of the things in which he believes, and I am therefore inclined to believe that he is wrong in his main thesis." Yet, for instance, I had been giving elementary instruction in the Christian faith. It would have been a mistake to make believe this is up with an exposition of the philosophy of the practical philosophical reason of the Church. Dr. Thomas Aquinas. For it might have led you to believe that the truth of Christianity [illegible] upon the validity of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas - an impression which I present some of his modern apologists have given. Similarly, I am not going to commit my faith in the possibility of a Christian society to any sociological scheme put forward by the moment, but will leave to any of my own interests. If you have read

for the nationalisation of the Bank of England, for a currency supported by securities instead of gold, for bi-metallism, for the regulation of imports, for Empire Free Trade, for an Anglo-American or Anglo-Scandinavian hegemony, for the distribution of token money, for the revival of folk-dancing or craftsmanship, for the four-hour day, for the United States of Europe, for community singing, for autarchy, for marketing boards, for purchasing committees, for scout movements or pilgrimages, you will not get them now. My whole purpose has been to stimulate the belief that a Christian organisation of society is possible, that it is perhaps now more than at any previous time possible; to encourage the search for it and the testing of all offers of reform and revolution by its standards.

When I undertook to contribute to the discussion on "The Modern Dilemma", I was not aware that my own share would fall into the latter part of Lent, or that my last talk,and the last of the series, wouldfall upon Easter Day. I have taken heart by persuading myself that most of the listeners who have persisted to the end must have been really interested, and that on this day of all others, those who were not really interested are sure to have dispersed for golf and motoring. On the other hand, it is all the heavier responsibility,,and one which I have felt quite inadequate to bear. If I have left you unsatisfied, I can only say that I have expressed convictions only where really convinced, have expressed only the thoughts which were already in my own mind, have discussed with you only what I had already discussed with myself. I know that many will say, with the leper: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? - So he turned and went away in a rage." I think also of the words of

for the nationalization of the Bank of England, for a currency supported by commodities instead of gold, for bi-metallism, for the regulation of imports, for [illegible] free Trade, for an Anglo-American or Anglo-Scandinavian hegemony, for the distribution of token money, for the revival of folk-dancing or craftsmanship, for the four-hour day, for the United States of Europe, for community singing, for [illegible], for marketing boards, for [illegible], for a [illegible] movement or pilgrimages, you will not get them now. My whole purpose has been to stimulate the belief that a Christian organisation of society is possible, that it is perhaps now more than at any previous time possible, to encourage the search for it and the testing of all offers of reform and revolution by its standards.

When I undertook to contribute to the discussion on "The Modern Dilemma", I was not aware that my own share would fall into the latter part of Lent, or that my last talk, the last of the series, would fall [illegible]. I have taken heart by persuading myself that most of the listeners who have persisted to the end must have been really interested, and that on this day of all others, those who are not really interested are sure to have dispersed for golf and motoring. On the other hand, it is all the heavier responsibility, and one which I have felt quite inadequate to bear. If I have left you unsatisfied, I can only say that I have expressed convictions only where really convinced, have expressed only the thoughts which were already in my own mind, have shared with you only what I had already discovered for myself.

I know that many will say, with [illegible] [illegible] not these [illegible] [illegible], better [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Pascal, to be recalled even, and perhaps especially, on the day of the Resurrection: "The Christ will be in agony even to the end of the world." For sin and evil-doing we cannot abolish; but we can surely labour towards a social justice in this world which will prepare more souls to share not only here but in the Resurrection.
