

Wells is at his best, perhaps, when he wanders furthest from the clatter of forthright and current events. What he has to say about the causes of the present world depression will certainly be challenged by the majority of competent economists, though he brings up Keynes as his authority, but what he has to say about the different kinds of minds that enter into the general mentality of mankind is pungent, instantly convincing and enormously exhilarating. Here, indeed, is the Wells without a peer—the publicist beyond all other publicists, the master psychologist of them all. When he gets upon such subjects his great skill at writing is apt to deceive. The thing seems too facile to be profound. Worse, it is not only facile; it is amusing. We are used to a more decorous dullness in the learned; we have come to believe that every professor must be a pedagogue, and hence an ass. But Wells, though he has no chair, is a professor too, and one of the subtlest and most sagacious in the whole fraternity. There are few men on earth today who know more than he does, and even fewer who can make what they know seem interesting and important. To be sure, some of the things he knows are probably not true. But that fact cannot be brought against him fairly, for truth is something very new in the world, and no man can say that he has a really reliable stock of it.

### *Quod Est Veritas?*

WHAT IS THERE LEFT TO BELIEVE?

By Herbert Parrish. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 277 pp. New York: *The Sears Publishing Company*.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH, by Paul Elmer More. \$4. 8½ x 5½; 312 pp. Princeton, N. J.: *The Princeton University Press*.

HAS SCIENCE DISCOVERED GOD? Edited by Edward H. Cotton. \$3.50. 8½ x

5½; 308 pp. New York: *The Thomas Y. Crowell Company*.

JESUS THROUGH THE CENTURIES, by Shirley Jackson Case. \$3. 7½ x 4¾; 382 pp. Chicago: *The University of Chicago Press*.

THE GREAT AMPHIBIUM by Joseph Needham. \$1.75. 7½ x 4¾; 180 pp. New York: *Charles Scribner's Sons*.

WITHIN, by Thomas L. Masson. \$2.50. 7½ x 4¾; 325 pp. New York: *The Sears Publishing Company*.

THE GROWTH OF THE IDEA OF GOD, by Shailer Mathews. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 237 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

SOCIAL SUBSTANCE OF RELIGION, by Gerald Heard. \$3.50. 8½ x 5¼; 318 pp. New York: *Harcourt, Brace & Company*.

A RABBI TAKES STOCK, by Solomon Goldman. \$2.50. 8½ x 5¼; 247 pp. New York: *Harper & Brothers*.

AS A JEW SEES JESUS, by Ernest R. Trattner. \$2. 7¼ x 5½; 232 pp. New York: *Charles Scribner's Sons*.

SINCE CALVARY, by Lewis Browne. \$3.50. 8½ x 5½; 443 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

SCIENCE REDISCOVERS GOD, by Donald Campbell Macfie. \$3. 8¼ x 5¼; 275 pp. New York: *Charles Scribner's Sons*.

EVOLUTION & THEOLOGY, by Ernest C. Messenger. \$2.50. 8½ x 5¾; 313 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by T. R. Glover. 7¾ x 4¾; 233 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Ernest F. Scott. 7½ x 5; 197 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

THE DEVIL IN LEGEND & LITERATURE, by Maximilian Rudwin. \$3. 9 x 5½; 354 pp. Chicago: *The Open Court Publishing Company*.

THE STORY OF THE DEVIL, by Arturo Graf. \$3. 8½ x 5½; 296 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

With perhaps two exceptions all of these authors show a bias in favor of supernaturalism: either they are theologians expounding the arcana of their trade or pious laymen arguing that those arcana

are somehow superior to the demonstrable facts of the laboratory. It is curious to note that the theologians, who might be expected reasonably to strut and spout a bit, show a far more modest and engaging spirit than the laymen, and are at least ten times as persuasive. I pick out two volumes at random, and set them side by side. The one is "What Is There Left to Believe?" by Dr. Parrish, an Anglican priest and a lecturer on theology; the other is "Has Science Discovered God?" a symposium by a posse of scientists headed by Dr. Robert A. Millikan, Sir Arthur Eddington, Dr. William McDougall, Dr. Edwin G. Conklin and Sir Oliver Lodge. The difference is enormous, and instantly apparent. Dr. Parrish presents his ideas simply, clearly and in a modest spirit, confessing frankly to dubieties when he has them, but yielding nothing of his basic *credo*. He is fair to his opponents, and does them the honor of assuming that they are intelligent, and deserve to be answered in a rational manner. Now turn for contrast to the tome of Millikan and company, and for example to an essay entitled "A Biologist's Religion" by Dr. Conklin, who pursues that art and mystery at Princeton. Thus:

No one can furnish scientific proof of the existence or nature of God, but atheism leads to fatalism and despair, while theism leads to faith and hope and love. . . . Science cannot solve the great mysteries of our existence—why we are, whither we are bound, what it all means. Faith alone assures us that there is a definite purpose in all experience. This knowledge makes life worth living and service a privilege.

This, remember, is not a quotation from the late William Jennings Bryan, or from Aimée Semple McPherson, or from Bishop Manning, or from any other such comic character; it is from the professor of biology at a great American university.

What could be more puerile? What could be more completely ridiculous? I'd like to have from Dr. Conklin a list of the other biologists who subscribe to his rubbish. And another list of those who, *disbelieving* in it, are plunged into "fatalism and despair", and hold that life is not worth living, and find it impossible to serve their fellow men. While he is at it, let him also send me something else, to wit, a clear statement, fetched out of that theism which leads to "faith and hope and love," as to "why we are, whither we are bound, and what it all means." I'd like to know precisely what "the definite purpose" is "in all experience." On this point, indeed, I have always yearned for light—so far in vain, but certainly without anything properly describable as despair. It would be immensely satisfying to receive a clear answer from a man trained to scientific exactness of exposition.

Dr. Conklin's thesis is so weak, alas, that he finds it quite impossible to stick to it. What I have quoted with blushes for him is from his last page; on an earlier page he admits naïvely that "neither Mark Twain nor any other philosopher of despair could avoid the instinct to work for human betterment." Certainly there is a discrepancy between this and the idea that only faith—in what? in whom?—can make "service a privilege." It might be well for Dr. Conklin to recall briefly a man of his own trade who had no faith whatever and yet labored through a long life for the enlightenment and betterment of the human race—a man who laughed at all the divinities, beginning with the Yahweh of the Old Testament and running down to General William Booth of the Salvation Army, and yet never yielded to despair, a man who confessed openly that he did not know and could not

imagine "why we are, whither we are bound, and what it all means," and yet did a man's work in the heat of the day and was probably more responsible than anyone else for enabling Dr. Conklin to do his. I allude, of course, to Thomas Henry Huxley. How he would have snorted over the stale camp-meeting bilge of the Millikans and Conklins! How he would have yelled with rage to see the logic of the backwoods evangelist invading the laboratory!

Dr. More, also a Princeton pedagogue, gives almost as sad an exhibition in "The Catholic Faith", though he is much more competent as an arguer. He has been one of the leaders of the New Humanist movement in literary criticism, now falling into decay, and gives away, somewhat innocently, its animus, which was and is mainly theological. Unless I misread him, the Inner Check which the sophomore Taines and Coleridges were lately talking of so shrilly is simply a check on logic, that godless art. One pursues the facts for a certain space, and then one suddenly hauls up and returns to the International Sunday-school Lessons. Thus Dr. More himself first proves elaborately that "the revelation, if revelation there be, in the Bible" is of a most "imperfect character", and then proceeds placidly to swallow it. But not, of course, all of it. There are parts of it that gag him, and there are implications of it that gag him yet worse. For example, he simply cannot get down the infallibility of the Pope, and so he finds himself a Catholic, not in the sense in which Archbishop Cannon and Cardinal Hayes alike use the word, but only in the sense in which it is used by High Church Episcopalians. Even so, his rejection of the papal claim seems to be grounded less upon a logical process than upon an instinctive fear of what he calls the Demon of the

Absolute. He prefers the twilight, where nothing is clearly defined, and even the awful truths of Holy Writ take on a pleasantly vague and literary character. The late Cardinal Newman, it appears, was an almost perfect Humanist, in the Harvard-Princeton sense, when he wrote "Lead, Kindly Light", but then "his courage failed him, and in his anguish for the perfect light he bowed down to the Demon," which is to say, to the Pope. Dr. More will have nothing to do with His Holiness. He plainly likes the style and appellation of Catholic, but he wants it to be understood that he is not that kind.

I am always shocked, reading the works of pious intellectuals, to discover how little humor they have. Dr. More exhibits that lack very painfully in a chapter discussing the relations between Buddhism and Christianity. It is full of solemn and approving quotations from the Buddhist scriptures, most of them sheer nonsense. I offer as an example the following from the 115th *sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya:

From Ignorance spring the Factors of Mentality,  
 From the Factors of Mentality springs Consciousness,  
 From Consciousness springs Name-Form (mind and body),  
 From Name-Form springs the Sixfold Seat (the five organs of sense and the central organ),  
 From the Six-Fold Seat springs Contact,  
 From Contact springs Sensations,  
 From Sensations springs Thirst (craving, desire),  
 From Thirst springs Attachment,  
 From Attachment springs Becoming,  
 From Becoming springs Birth,  
 From Birth spring Old Age, Death, Pain, Lamentation, Sorrow, Trouble, Despair.

It is obvious that all this is no more than a banal juggling with words, signifying nothing. It has no sense as psychology, it has no sense as philosophy, and it is even

idiotic as theology. That New Thinkers should mouth such grandiose hooey is perhaps understandable, but that it should be soberly set forth and discussed by a professor at Princeton is surely most remarkable. Dr. More seems to be a glutton for it. A few pages further on he embellishes his book with another dose, this time the Eightfold Path to the Cessation of Sorrow:

1. Right opinion (otherwise translated views).
2. Right purpose (intention, aspirations).
3. Right speech.
4. Right action.
5. Right employment (means of livelihood, *Wandeln, vita*).
6. Right endeavor (effort, *Mühen, sforzo*).
7. Right mindfulness (*sati*, otherwise translated memory, conscience, attention, meditation, contemplation, insight, thought).
8. Right collectedness (*samâdhi*, meditation, ecstasy, *Einigung, Konzentration, raccoglimento*).

It is interesting to hear from Dr. More that right opinion is "otherwise translated views", but he neglects, unfortunately, to tell us what difference there is, if any, between opinion and views. Nor does he explain what the difference is between right action and right employment, or between right purpose and right endeavor. Nor how conscience and attention, by any conceivable aberration of translators, may be made equal to the same word, whatever it is in the original. Nor, indeed, what all this pompous rumble-bumble is about. Does anyone seriously believe that right speech can produce a cessation of sorrow? It should be added in fairness that Dr. More, as a good "Catholic", rejects Buddhism at the end, thus departing at last from the New Thinkers. He has an "admiring reverence", for its founder, but believes he failed because he missed hearing about "the dogma of the Incarnation."

Lacking that dogma, the religion he devised at such pains and with so brutal a torture of words remains no more than "the most convincing argument that truth to be clearly known waits upon revelation."

It is pleasant to leave this mooniness for the clearer thinking of the professional theologians. Dr. Parrish's perspicuous and perspicacious "What Is There Left to Believe?" I have already noticed briefly. Dr. Matthews in "The Growth of the Idea of God", Dr. Case in "Jesus Through the Centuries", and Dr. Scott in "The Kingdom of God" present interesting, dispassionate and well-informed accounts of the development of Christian doctrine. Dr. Glover in "The World of the New Testament" attempts successfully a useful historical reconstruction, and the three rabbis, Messrs. Trattner, Browne and Goldman, make ponderable contributions to an understanding of the position of religion in the civilized world today. There is merit, too, in the two studies of the Devil legend by Messrs. Graf and Rudwin, though neither is a theologian. And there is an instructive example of theological casuistry at its best in Dr. Messenger's "Evolution and Theology."

Dr. Messenger is one of those learned priests who have actually read the Fathers, and what is more, read them attentively. He gathers from his studies that there is really no reason why any Catholic, however pious, should doubt the main facts of organic evolution, even including the evolution of man. He holds, of course, as a dutiful son of Holy Church, that the creation of the soul was something else again—that it is impossible to imagine it developing out of the lowly psyche of orang-outang, baboon or gorilla. But when that concession is made to revelation, there is nothing left to upset a biologist. Adam was not confectioned by Yahweh as a sculptor

confects a clay model; on the contrary, he plainly developed out of the primordial slime by slow and painful stages, and there is nothing contrary to faith or morals in holding that, in the earlier of those stages, he was something less than human. The manufacture of Eve out of Adam's rib gives Father Messenger rather more difficulty, but he is still not quite daunted. Nor is he indisposed to admit that there may have been men before Adam, and that *Homo neandertalensis* may have been one of them. At the end, unfortunately, after filling 280 pages with impressive arguments that human evolution is probably a fact, he remembers that he is a priest, and resorts to caution. After all, no one knows precisely what Holy Church thinks on the subject. It has reprimanded a few scientifically inclined clerics for going too far, but it has never formally repudiated Darwin. But on some near tomorrow one of the Sacred Congregations at Rome, manned by Italian gentlemen hostile to Modernism in all its forms, may issue a blast against the evolutionary hypothesis, and so make believing in it a dangerous matter *post mortem*. Father Messenger therefore advises every good Catholic "to suspend his judgment on the matter at the present moment." But what he thinks himself is made very plain.

The remaining tomes are unimportant. Mr. Needham's "The Great Amphibium" consists of four lectures delivered before lay Bible students in England, and is far more literary than theological. Mr. Macfie's "Science Rediscovered God" is an effort by one who "does not believe in the theory of continuous evolution" to reconcile science and what remains of Christian theology. "Within", by Mr. Masson, is a sort of text-book of the New Thought, more frank than Dr. More's, but even more dubious. In one place Mr. Masson un-

dertakes to advise a friend who has succumbed to the filthy, immoral and un-Christian vice of smoking. He says:

We have no power in our human wills. When we understand that fully and that all power comes from God, why, then it is quite easy to stop smoking, for the reason that you cannot function from the Spirit and also smoke. The two things don't go together. To stop smoking cigarettes, therefore, Love God. The more you love Him, the sooner smoking will depart from you, and this without any backing and filling on your part.

Mr. Masson used to be editor of *Life* and later on was a member of the editorial staff of the *Saturday Evening Post*. His book seems to be intended quite seriously. I commend it as auxiliary reading to Dr. More's students at Princeton.

Finally comes Mr. Heard's "Social Substance of Religion". Mr. Heard sees religion as a sort of mediator between the sharply selfish interests of the individual and the larger interests of group and race. What he calls "charitic love" has always "ranged outward," he says, "desiring to embrace the infinite." This charitic love has been most evident in such sectarians as the Moravians and Quakers, but it will increase in the general population as man goes forward. "If," says Mr. Heard

a sound basic unit is first founded, if the individual is shown the first step out of himself (and it is certainly the most difficult), we may build up a hierarchy of wholes, a real feudal system of intense loyalties, not imposed, but built up by the imperative overplus emotional needs of each group for a wider compass, as inevitable and as natural, once the process has been soundly started, as are the precipitations of crystals, or the coral animalcules' accumulated rise of reef toward the surface of the sea.

It may be so, but I am constrained to add that I find myself doubting it.



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