

Mission to Belize Vesper Outline

I. A Universal Element of the Human Condition?

A. Blaise Pascal: All humans suffer from a God-shaped hole in the heart.

B. Simone Weil: When we reflect upon our condition, we all experience a grace formed void in our souls.

C. Augustine: Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.

D. Maggie Ross wrote, "*We try to fill up that ghastly hole in the pit of our stomachs that is really in our souls. We try to fill it with food, with power, with sex Here's the stark truth: only God can fill our deepest hunger. Getting married can't. Developing friendships can't. Saying funny things at parties can't. Unraveling your past with a therapist can't. Adding 20% to your income can't. Winning the lotto can't.*" [The First of Your Life: A Solitude Shared.]

II. A Universal Pattern of Religious Experience?

A. From William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) at page 393."

"...there appears to be a certain uniform deliverance in which religions all appear to meet. It consists of two parts: 1. An uneasiness; and 2. Its solution. 1. The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand. 2. The solution is a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers."

III. A Universal Solution to the Augustinian Restlessness?

A. From Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (Harper Perennial, September 5, 2000) at 8-9

This awareness of himself as a separate entity...that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness...all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison...The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. . . .to achieve union."

B. From Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (1954); Toward a Psychology of Being (1968); The Further Reaches of Human Nature (1971):

[Maslow's complete list of self-actualization needs included: transcendence, unity, wholeness, goodness, beauty, completion, simplicity, meaningfulness, playfulness, justice, and order. See Motivation and Personality (1954); Toward a Psychology of Being (1968); and The Further Reaches of Human Nature (1971).] Likening the hierarchy of human needs to a pyramid, psychologist Abraham Maslow found that humans restlessly seek to move up the pyramid of needs, satisfying first the base-level physiological, safety and security needs, then the mid-level love and belonging needs, and then the higher-level esteem and approval needs. Finally, Maslow concluded, our ultimate human needs, our ultimate needs of "self-actualization," can be satisfied only as we crest the very summit of the pyramid, only as we experience transcendence, unity, and wholeness in what Maslow would go on to describe as "peak experiences."

IV. Augustinian Restlessness, The Quest for Unitive Experience, and the Illusion of the Self in the Axial Age Religions (other than Christianity)

A. Kabir (India, 1398-1518) and the Bhakti Movement in India

"So long as man clamours for the I and the Mine, his works are as naught; When all love of the I and the Mine is dead, then the work of the Lord is done."

B. The Buddha, Anguttara-Nikaya, IV:353

"Thinking on there being no self, he wins to the state wherein the conceit "I am" has been uprooted, to nirvana, even in this life."

C. Radhakrishnan, 1969, 105

“The divine consciousness and will must become our consciousness and will. This means that our actual self must cease to be a private self; we must give up our particular will, die to our ego, by surrendering its whole nature, its consciousness and character to the Divine..

D. Bhagavad Gita (3:25 – Bolle 1979, 45)

“Fools are wedded to cultic work. A wise man should act as they do. But unattached. Envisaging the totality of the world.”

E. Mahatma Gandhi (1968, II 754)

“[I seek to] reduce myself to zero [as an active instrument of God or truth (Sat).]

F. Buddhism (Edward Conze 1975, 20-21)

“Those who look to Buddhism for startlingly new and unheard of ideas on the problem of self will find little. Those who look for advice on how to lead a selfless life may learn a great deal. The great contribution of Buddhist ‘philosophy’ lies in the methods it worked out to impress the truth of not-self on our reluctant minds, it lies in the discipline which the Buddhists imposed upon themselves in order to make this truth into a part of their own being.”

G. Islam (Badr al-Din Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallah al-Zakashi (Ayoub 1984, 25).

“Those who hear in [the Qur’ran] the words of the Truth [God], they become annihilated before Him and their attributes effaced.”

H. Sufism (Seyyed Hosein Nasr 1980, 37-38)

“Sufism uses the quintessential form of prayer, the dhikr or invocation, in which all otherness and separation from the Divine is removed . . . Though this process of transforming man’s psyche appears gradual at first, the dhikr finishes by becoming man’s real nature, and the reality with which he identifies himself. With the help of the dhikr . . . man first gains an integrated soul, pure and whole like gold, and then

in the dhikr he offers this soul to God in the supreme form of sacrifice. Finally in annihilation (fana) and subsistence (baga) he realizes that he never was separated from God even from the outset.”

I. Rudolph Otton in his comparative study of the Shankara and the works of Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart:

“The self (atman) comes into sharp conflict with that which we are accustomed to set up as self, as ego – “I” and “mine” . . .or “I sayer” as Eckhart puts it. The Ahnkara is the erroneous act by which possessions, relatives, friends, body, senses, will and action and the self, and wrongly calling them “my senses, my body, my possessions.” Yet it is that faculty by which I regard myself as individual separate and different from others. All this does not belong to the true self but to that ‘ego’ which, in true self-knowledge, is brushed aside as alien and false.” [1932] 1957, 80.

V. Augustinian Restlessness, The Quest for Unitive Experience, and the Illusion of the Self in Christianity.

A. Jesus in the Gospel of Mark 8:35

“For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.”

B. Paul in his letter to the Galatians 2:20

“It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”

C. From the Theologia Germanica (Century), Chapter I:

“Now when that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” But when doth it come? I say, when as much as may be, it is known, felt and tasted fo the soul. [For the lack lieth altogether in us, and not in it. In like manner, the sun lighteth the whole world, and is as near to one as another, yet a blind man seeth it not; but the fault thereof lieth iun the blind man, not in the sun. And like as athe sun may not hide its brightness, but must give light unto the earth (for heaven indeed draweth its light and heat from another fountain), so also God, who is the

*highest Good, willeth not to hide Himself from any, wheresoever He findeth a devout soul, that is thoroughly purified from all creatures. **For in what measure we put off the creature, in the same measure are we able to put on the Creator; neither more nor less.** For if mine eye is to see anything, it must be single, or else be purified from all other things; and where heat and light enter in, cold and darkness must needs depart, it cannot be otherwise.*

*But one might say, “Now since the Perfect cannot be known or apprehended of any creature, but the soul is a creature, how can it be known by the soul? Answer: This is why we say, “by the soul as a creature.” **We mean it is impossible to the creature in virtue of its creature-nature and qualities, that by which it saith “I” and “myself.”** For in whatsoever creature the Perfect shall be known, therein creature-nature qualities, the I, the Self, and the like, must all be lost and done away. This is the meaning of that saying of St. Paul: “When that which is perfect is come” (that is, when it is known) “then that which is part” (to wit, creature-nature qualities, the I, the Self, the Mine) will be despised and counted for nought. So long as we think much of these things, cleave to them with love, joy pleasure or desire, so long remaineth the Perfect unknown to us.*

D. From Miscellaneous New Testament Passages

Scripture Passages:

Galatians 2:19-20

19For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 6:1-11

1What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2By no means! **We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?** 3**Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** 4**We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too**

may live a new life.

5If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. **6**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— **7**because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9**For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10**The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **11**In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:

1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, **2**because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. **3**For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, **4**in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, **who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

5Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6**The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; **7**the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. **8**Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

9You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. **10**But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. **11**And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. **13For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,** **14**because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15**For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." **16**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **17**Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Ephesians 2:

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2**in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3**All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. **4**But because of his great love for us, **God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7**in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9**not by works, so that no one can boast. **10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,** which God prepared in advance for us to do. **Ephesians 4:**

22You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23**to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24**and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **26**"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27**and do not give the devil a foothold. **28**He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with

those in need.

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 2:

9For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10**and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. **11**In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, **12**having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14**having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. **15**And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1 Corinthians 15:

20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21**For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. **22**For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23**But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes,

those who belong to him. 2 Corinthians 4:

7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is

from God and not from us. **8**We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; **9**persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. **10**We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. **11**For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. **12**So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, **14**because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. **15**All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18**So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

VI. Christian Theological Reflection

Miroslav Volf explains this reality well in his book, *Free of Charge*:

"...Christ is our substitute. But how can that be if only the culprit can bear the liability for sin and not the innocent? Writing to the church in Corinth, the apostle Paul made a puzzling statement about Christ's death: "One has died for all," he wrote, "therefore all have died" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Since Christ is our substitute, after reading, "one has died for all," we'd expect him to continue, "therefore none of them needs to die." Had he written that, he would have expressed the idea that theologians call exclusive substitution. According to this view, Christ's death makes ours unnecessary. As a third party, he is our substitute, and his death is his alone and no one else's.

"But that's not how the Apostle thought. Christ's death doesn't replace our death. It enacts it, he suggested. That's what theologians call inclusive substitution. Because one has died, all have died. As a substitute, he is not a third party. His death is

inclusive of all....What happened to him happened to us. When he was condemned, we were condemned. When he died, we died. We were included in his death...To be in Christ means that the tree from which Adam took the forbidden fruit and the cross on which Christ died stood in one place, that the old self- the old Adam – died when Christ died. (pp. 147-48)

“Luther used a metaphor from the world of inanimate objects to describe the transformation of the self in union with Christ. When fire heats an iron, the iron glows like fire. But though the iron glows, it’s not the iron’s heat. Remove the iron from the fire, and the iron will grow cold; keep the fire on, and the iron will remain hot. So it is with the self whom Christ indwells. It takes on Christ’s qualities and becomes Christ like. It doesn’t start being and living on its own as Christ was and as Christ lived, as the “What Would Jesus Do?” bracelet suggests, for instance. Rather, the soul is and acts like Christ because Christ is present in it and lives through it. (pg. 150)

As we have discussed before, Luther illustrates this reality through the analogy of marriage:

Concerning Christian Liberty by Martin Luther (1520):

The third incomparable grace of faith is this: that it unites the soul to Christ, as the wife to the husband, by which mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul are made one flesh. Now if they are one flesh, then it follows that all they have becomes theirs in common, good things as evil things; so that whatsoever Christ possesses, that the believing soul may take to itself and boast of as its own, and whatever belongs to the soul, that Christ claims as His.

If we compare these possessions, we shall see how inestimable is the gain. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation; the soul is full of sin, death, and condemnation. Let faith step in, and then sin, death, and hell will belong to Christ, and grace, life, and salvation to the soul. For, if He is a Husband, He must needs take to Himself that which is His wife's, and at the same time, impart to His wife that which is His. For, in giving her His own body and Himself, how can He but give her all that is His?

And, in taking to Himself the body of His wife, how can He but take to Himself all that is hers?

John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin.* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1959), p. 39:

In I Corinthians 15:22, 45-49 Paul provides us with what is one of the most striking and significant rubrics in all of Scripture. He comprehends God's dealings with men under the twofold headship of the two Adams. There is none before Adam; he is the first man. There is none between Adam and Christ, for Christ is the second man. There is none after Christ; he is the last Adam (vss. 45-47). Adam and Christ sustain unique relations to men. And that history and destiny are determined by these relationships is demonstrated by verse 22: 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive'. All who die die in Adam; all who are made alive are made alive in Christ. In view of this comprehensive philosophy of human history and destiny and in view of the pivotal and determinative roles of the first and last Adam, we must posit constitutive ordination on God's part to these unique relationships. And since the analogy instituted between Adam and Christ is so conspicuous, it is surely necessary to assume that the kind of relationship which Adam sustains to men is after the pattern of the relationship which Christ sustains to men

Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*:

The Apostle Paul gives us his own definition of the Christian life in Galatians 2:20. It is "no longer I, but Christ." Here he is not stating something special or peculiar -- a high level of Christianity. He is, we believe, presenting God's norm for a Christian, which can be summarized in the words: I live no longer, but Christ lives His life in me.

Martin Luther, *LW 31:368*: "Surely we are named after Christ, not because he is absent from us, but because he dwells in us; that is, because we believe in him and are Christs to one another and do to our neighbor as Christ does to us."

Therefore, as Paul Tillich suggests, sin can best be understood as separation:

I should like to suggest another word to you, not as a substitute for the word "sin", but

as a useful clue in the interpretation of the word "sin", "separation" . Separation is an aspect of the experience of everyone. Perhaps the word "sin" has the same root as the word "asunder". In any case, sin is separation. To be in the state of sin is to be in the state of separation. And separation is threefold: there is separation among individual lives, separation of a man from himself, and separation of all men from the Ground of Being. -- Chapter 19 of *Shaking the Foundations*, “You Are Accepted”

St. Augustine:

Sin comes when we take a perfectly natural desire or longing or ambition and try desperately to fulfill it without God. Not only is it sin, it is a perverse distortion of the image of the Creator in us. All these good things, and all our security, are rightly found only and completely in him. --*The Confessions of Saint Augustine*

How does this metaphysical reality compare to the practical or physical reality of our daily lives? According to Volf:

“The unspoken assumption is that the old self is not quite yet dead and the new self is not yet fully alive. Taking off the old and putting on the new is an ongoing process of dying and rising...True, from Christ we have received the gift of redemption, medicine against sin and death. Yet the stain of sin will remain until the end of our lives and the end of human history – until that day when Christ will give us yet another gift, the gift of eternal life in a world of perfect love,” (pp. 59, 93).

Paul echoes this claim:

2 Corinthians 4:

7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **8We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. 12So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.**

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18**So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

How, then, do we embrace the reality of Christ in our lives?

According to Volf:

“Christ’s indwelling presence has freed us from exclusive orientation to ourselves and opened us up in two directions: toward God, to receive the good things in faith, and toward our neighbor, to pass them on in love...Since God creates the self to be indwelt by Christ, that self will be fulfilled only if it draws the living water from the wellspring of love’s infinity and passes it on to its neighbors. When loving truly, the self moves outside of itself to dwell with God and neighbor, and only then is it truly at home...It is as we serve our neighbors – our family, friends, and acquaintances – that the dam holding the flow of gifts is lifted and the life of God continues its intended flow...God’s gifts flow to others above all when the community scatters, having been nourished by God’s presence...” (pp. 52-53)

Martin Luther, *LW 31:371*: “[The Christian] lives not in himself but in Christ and in his neighbor...He lives in Christ through faith, and in his neighbor through love,”

Martin Luther, *LW 31:371*: “Good things flow from Christ and are flowing into us. He has assumed us and acted for us as if he had been what we are. These good things flow from us on to those who have need of them so that we should lay before God our faith and righteousness that they may cover and intercede for the sins of our neighbor which we take upon ourselves and so labor and serve them as if they were our very own.”

Martin Luther, *WA 36, 57*: “The love of God does not find but creates, that which is pleasing to it. The love of man comes into being through that which is pleasing to it...This is the love of the cross, born of the cross, which turns in the direction where it does not find good which it may enjoy, but where it may confer good upon the bad and needy person.”

Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*:

For a Christian, Jesus is the man in whom it has indeed become manifest that revolution and conversion cannot be separated in man's search for experiential transcendence. His appearance in our midst has made it undeniably clear that changing the human heart and changing human society are not separate tasks, but are as interconnected as the two beams of the cross. Jesus was a revolutionary, who did not become an extremist, since he did not offer an ideology, but Himself. He was also a mystic, who did not use his intimate relationship with God to avoid the social evils of his time, but shocked his milieu to the point of being executed as a rebel. In this sense he also remains for nuclear man the way to liberation and freedom.

“Sometimes at that moment [of despair] a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: 'You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you...’” -- **Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations***

From William James, *The Letters of William James*, "Letter to Henry W. Rankin" (June 16, 1901) at pages 148-150.

Written after James had delivered 9 of his 10 Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh University:

"Now, at the end of this first course, I feel my "matter" taking firmer shape, and it will please you less to hear me say that I believe myself to be (probably) permanently incapable of believing the Christian scheme of vicarious salvation, and wedded to a more continuously evolutionary mode of thought. The reasons you from time to time have given me, never better expressed than in your letter before the last, have somehow failed to convince. In these lectures the ground I am taking is this: the mother sea and fountain-head of all religions lie in the mystical experiences of the individual, taking the word mystical in a very wide sense. All theologies and all ecclesiasticisms are secondary growths superimposed; and the experiences make such flexible combinations with the intellectual prepossessions of their subjects, that one may almost say that they have no proper intellectual deliverance of their own, but belong to a region deeper, and more vital and practical, than that which the intellect inhabits. For this they are also indestructible intellectual arguments and criticisms. I attach the mystical or religious consciousness to the possession of an extended subliminal self, with a thin partition through which messages make irruption. We are thus made convincingly aware of the presence of a sphere of life larger and more

powerful than our usual consciousness, with which the latter is nevertheless continuous. The impressions and impulsions and emotions and excitements which we thence receive help us to live, they found invincible assurance of a world beyond the sense, they melt our hearts and communicate significance and value to everything and make us happy. They do this for the individual who has them, and other individuals follow him. Religion in this way is absolutely indestructible. Philosophy and theology give their conceptual interpretations of this experiential life. The farther margin of the subliminal field being unknown, it can be treated as by Transcendental Idealism, as an Absolute mind with a part of which we coalesce, or by Christian theology, as a distinct deity acting on us. Something, not our immediate self, does act on our life! So I seem doubtless to my audience to be blowing hot and cold, explaining away Christianity, yet defending the more general basis from which I say it proceeds. I fear that these brief words may be misleading, but let them go! When the book comes out, you will get a truer idea."

From William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) at pages 377, 386, 388, 391, 396, 398, 401 :

[377]"Summing up in the broadest possible way the characteristics of the religious life, as we have found them, it includes the following beliefs: 1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance. 2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end; 3. That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof - be that spirit God or law - is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world. Religion includes also the following psychological characteristics: - 4. A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism. 5. An assurance of safety and a temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections.

[386] In spite of the appeal which this impersonality of the scientific attitude makes to a certain magnanimity of temper, I believe it to be shallow, and I can now state my reason in comparatively few words. That reason is that, so long as we deal with the cosmic and the general, we deal only with the symbols of reality, but as soon as we deal with private and personal phenomena as such, we deal with realities in the completest sense of the term.

[388] It does not follow, because our ancestors made so many errors of fact and mixed them with their religion, that we should therefore leave off being religious at all. By being religious we establish ourselves in possession of ultimate reality at the only points at which reality is given us to guard. Our responsible concern is with our private destiny, after all.

[391] The resultant outcome of [religious feelings] is. . . an excitement of the cheerful, expansive, dynamogenic order which, like any tonic, freshens our vital powers. . . .we have seen how this emotion overcomes temperamental melancholy and imparts endurance to the Subject, or a zest, or a meaning, or an enchantment and glory to the common objects of life. The name of faith-state by which Professor Lueba designates it is a good one. It is a biological as well as a psychological condition, and Tolstoy is absolutely accurate in classing faith among the forces by which men live. The total absence of it, anhedonia, means collapse.

[396] Let me then propose, as an hypothesis, that whatever it may be on its farther side, the more with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its hither side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life. . . .the theologians contention that the religious man is moved by an external power is vindicated, for it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the subconscious region to take on objective appearances, and to suggest to the Subject an external control. In the religious life the control is felt as higher; but since in our hypothesis it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling, the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not merely apparently, but literally true.

[398] Although the religious question is primarily a question of life, of living or not living in the higher union which opens itself to us as a gift, yet the spiritual excitement in which the gift appears a real one will often fail to be aroused in an individual until certain particular intellectual beliefs or ideas which, as we say, come home to him, are touched. These ideas will thus be essential to that individuals religion; which is as much to say that over-beliefs in various directions are absolutely indispensable, and that we should treat them with tenderness and tolerance so long as they are not intolerant themselves. [398] . . . [W]e have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and

objectively true as far as it goes. If i now proceed to state my own hypothesis about the farther limits of this extension of our personality, I shall be offering my own over-belief. . . .

[401] I believe the pragmatic way of taking religion to be the deeper way. It gives body as well as soul, it makes it claim, as everything real must claim, some characteristic realm of fact as its very own. What the more characteristically divine facts are, apart from the actual inflow of energy in the faith state and the prayer state, I know not. But the over-belief on which I am ready to make my personal venture is that they exist. The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have meaning for our life also; and that although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points, and higher energies filter in. By being faithful in my poor measure to this over-belief, I seem to myself to keep more sane and true. I can, of course, put myself into the sectarian scientist's attitude, and imagine vividly that the world of sensations and of scientific laws and objects may be all. But whenever I do this, I hear that inward monitor of which W. K. Clifford once wrote, whispering the word, bosh! Humbug is humbug, even though it bear the scientific name, and the total expression of human experience, as I view it objectively, invincibly urges me beyond the narrow scientific bounds. Assuredly, the real world is of a different temperament - more intricately built than physical science allows. So my objective and subjective conscience both hold me to the over belief which I express. Who know whether the faithfulness of individuals here below to their own poor over-beliefs may not actually help God in turn to be more effectively faithful to his own greater tasks.

© The Congregational Church of New Canaan