

tion which enabled Him to enter into religious experience though withdrawn from the human limitations of time and space. And it presents itself with the character of necessity, to those at least who accept the broad evidences of the activity of the Supernatural in human consciousness. Without it we cannot explain either Christ's prediction or St. Stephen's vision: with it, we have the fact which gives full significance to them both (*cf.* John vi. 62, xvi. 10).

Again, we must note that the Christ of Faith who thus passes from the mind of St. Stephen to that of St. Paul exhibits in the experience of both those two "notes" which mark the Jesus of Synoptic history—the note of supernatural authority and the note of complete humiliation and meekness. These two ideas provide, indeed, the contexts in which nearly all the Synoptic allusions to "the Son of Man" appear.\* Our Lord seems to have chosen the title† as the best available for connoting that paradox of Divinity in Humanity which lay at the root of His consciousness; and it is of significance that precisely the same paradox should be found on the lips of the two first witnesses who knew Him by faith alone.

E. G. SELWYN.

### GOD AS PSYCHOLOGICAL REALITY

THOSE of us who are philosophically inclined and are interested in the mutual interactions of psychology and religion are always finding ourselves faced by the problem which has become crystallized in the somewhat clumsy formula, "the objective validity of religious experience." This is the question of whether the mental experiences of religion, whose value we recognize, can be taken as indications of the existence of a real Being who is their source. For most of us, indeed, if they cannot, they must lose all their value. Unless the God of our religious emotions is real, we have been in our religious moments only the victims of a pitiable self-deception.

Some writers, however, consider that it is possible to evade this problem by the adoption of some formula which is designed to conserve the usefulness of religious conceptions while denying to them any reference to real objects. This is not a new method in thought, but it has received a new impetus from one of the founders of a school in psycho-analysis—Dr. Jung, of Zurich.

\* *Cf. The Teaching of Christ*, p. 149.

† Professors Lake and Foakes Jackson follow Wellhausen and Wrede in believing that our Lord did not call Himself by this title, but that it was given to Him later. I have discussed the formidable difficulties of this view (as they seem to me) elsewhere; *cf. op. cit.*, pp. 138, 139.

Since there are many earnest (but not, I fancy, very clear-minded) religious believers who appear to welcome Dr. Jung's evasion of the problem of the reality of religious objects, I propose to devote this article to a brief examination of this evasion, in order to see whether it can be regarded as philosophically or practically satisfactory.

Dr. Jung makes a distinction between *actual truth* and *psychological truth*.<sup>\*</sup> He claims psychological but not actual truth for religious belief. The test for the psychological truth of the religious symbol appears to be the pragmatic one. He says: "It is *psychologically true*, because it was and is the bridge to all the greatest achievements of humanity." The distinction is explained as follows: "True reality is one that is relatively universally valid; the psychologic reality, on the contrary, is merely a functional phenomenon contained in an epoch of human civilization."<sup>†</sup> He considers that there is a positive mental disadvantage in the belief in the objects of religious experience as *true realities*. "It is a positive creed which keeps us infantile and, therefore, ethically inferior." The course of moral autonomy would be for man to be able without compulsion to "wish that which he must do, and this from knowledge, without delusion through belief in the religious symbols." He does not desire a simple abandonment of the religious symbol, but a change in attitude towards it. The "psycho-analytic cure for belief and disbelief" is that we should "keep the beauty of the symbol, but still remain free from the depressing results of submission to belief."

The position here adopted is not merely that his psychological method leads Dr. Jung to believe that the reference of religious experience to a real object is philosophically unsound, but that this reference to reality destroys its value in mental economy. This value he believes was originally the control of the libidinous forces of instinct—a control which has been accomplished so effectively that these forces are now hidden from our consciousness, and we hardly know against what it had to protect us. "For enlightened people, the so-called religiousness has already approached very close to a neurosis."<sup>‡</sup> The mere removal of the religious control, however, may easily lead to a return of the old licentiousness, which Dr. Jung considers is already happening in our larger cities. Hence the necessity for a psycho-analytic cure of disbelief as well as of belief.

\* *Psychology of the Unconscious* (English translation, London, 1915), p. 262 and note 42 on p. 529.

† This sudden change from "actual truth" and "psychological truth" to "true reality" and "psychologic reality" does not make for clarity of thought, but possibly Dr. Jung owes the confusion to his translator.

‡ *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

The *moral autonomy* for the sake of which belief must be got rid of is a conception which is not made sufficiently clear. Presumably, if the objects of religion were real no moral autonomy would be gained by believing that they were not, or, if it would, no intellectually honest person could gain moral autonomy at the price of a false belief. So we are led back to the philosophical question of the soundness or unsoundness of the reference of religious experience to real objects.

It is clear that the unreality of religious objects cannot follow immediately from any results of psycho-analytic treatment of religious experience. Though psycho-analysis may show (if, indeed, it can) what are the psychologic roots of a mental fact, it does not follow that it has not also roots in reality. Dr. Stekel gives an account of a young man who invented a device for lighting lamps at a distance and became rich by his invention. Psycho-analysis showed that his desire to light lamps at a distance was a symbolization of his desire to light a love for himself in the heart of a girl who slept in a neighbouring room. The invention, however, was a real one. Pfister has suggested that the eloquence of Demosthenes resulted from the common mental compensation of stutterers for their deficiency, but it remains an actual and not merely a psychological truth that Demosthenes was eloquent. So the belief in God may be a mental compensation for the harshness of this world, or (as Dr. Jung maintains) the organization into a system of the "regressive reanimation of the father-and-mother imago"; yet it may well be the case that the God whose reality compensates for this world and who is the object of this filial love belongs to *actual reality*.

Is the distinction between psychological and actual truth really a useful or a valid one? Its recommendation is that it should make possible retention of all that is valuable in the attitude of religious faith without any assumptions as to the objective reality of its objects. Perhaps it may do so for minds prepared for the *metapsychological* point of view by the acquirement of the habits of mind resulting from a prolonged study of psycho-analysis. But of what value can it be to the uneducated devotee who prays because he believes that a God as really existent as himself hears his prayer? We may bewilder him by explaining that although there is no God it is exactly the same as if there were, provided only that he retains the same attitude towards a non-existent deity as he previously adopted towards the God in whose existence he believed. If we make him believe us, we shall not leave him praying. His mind has not been so sophisticated that he can blur the distinction between existence and non-existence. If his God has no reality outside his

own mind, he knows that his prayers are useless, and that he would be more rationally employed in addressing petitions to a stone which, although unconscious, is at least real. So the formula of *psychological reality* proves to be useless just where it is most wanted. The educated man who may be able to accept it has little tendency to relapse into primitive licentiousness when the control provided by religious faith is removed; the uneducated worshipper, who may have no other cultural control than his religious faith, will not be able to keep the latter by a rationalization which asserts the psychological reality of its objects.

Perhaps we can claim more and assert that there is a presumption in favour of the reality of the objects of religious experience to be drawn from the fact (if it be a fact) that the religious adaptation to the world is a valuable one. Our practical test for a real thing is that we must behave in a different manner with respect to it and to an imaginary thing. If a real chair stands in our way, we must make movements in order to avoid it or we shall bark our shins; not so an imaginary chair. I propose to express this difference by calling our behaviour towards a real object an *adaptative reaction*. In terms of behaviour, what we mean by asserting the reality of a thing is that our reactions towards it must be adaptative. A person who makes adaptative reactions towards imaginary objects or who fails to make adaptative reactions towards real ones is insane. He has lost his sense of reality.

A man who keeps up the religious modes of behaviour is making adaptative reactions towards the object of religion. If we ask him to keep up these adaptative reactions and to believe that they are a rational mode of behaviour, but not to believe in the reality of the object towards whom they are addressed, we are asking him to do something which pragmatically has no meaning. His belief in the reality of God is his belief that adaptative behaviour towards God is reasonable. The oneness of these two beliefs is the product of an intuition found dependable in the external world—an intuition founded on the observation that objects towards which he must adopt adaptative behaviour are the same as those towards which other people must make adaptative behaviour. If it be admitted (as apparently Dr. Jung admits) that the ends of the organism can only be attained by adaptative reactions towards the objects of religion, then this fact suggests that these objects possess the same kind of reality as those of the outside world.

R. H. THOULESS.