

Yesterday afternoon I asked myself what had I best do today. For some years now I have been expressing my opinions on a variety of topics. But one may wonder where my questions come from, what relation do they bear to one another, is there any clue that will enable you to grasp what has been going on.

The simple and straightforward answer is seems to be some narrative of what seem to me to have been the significant events. By "seem" I wish to suggest that the present talk is not the outcome of research into my heaps of paper. It is simply a matter of telling what started me off and then what happened next and next and next.

What started me off were the courses I had in philosophy at Heythrop in England (1930-33) and in theology in Rome (1936-40). The course in first-year philosophy on logic was clear and distinct on deduction: for deduction was a matter of proceeding from necessary premises to necessary conclusions. But the treatment of the complementary process of induction, of advancing from the particular to the universal, lacked any equally convincing account of the fact or the possibility of induction. Yet without that fact or at least that possibility where did deduction obtain its necessary premises? Of course, one could argue that one must have some necessary premises, otherwise one would be a sceptic. But this necessity of necessary premises did not determine which precisely were the necessary premises or just how one arrived at them.

This may appear to be a sheer leap into scepticism, so I had best endeavor at once to remove that appearance. The appearance no doubt is there, because we have begun, as have many down the ages, by adopting a logical view point, seeing the necessity of necessary premises if there were to be necessary conclusions, but not adverting to fact that the real issue is not premises or conclusions but a necessary starting-point. The starting-point that is needed is the intelligence that God has given us, the reasonableness he has given us, the good will that ~~will~~ embrace<sup>s</sup> truth and avoid<sup>s</sup> error. In brief, the needed starting-point is not an unknown or an unobtainable. It is what we already are by nature and can perfect with careful upbringing.

What I have just named the necessary starting-point also is in fact the conditions of the possibility of method. Without intelligence we could not ask intelligent questions; without reasonableness we could not accept reasonable results and reject unreasonable results, without good will we will be tempted to avoid unpleasant truths and to be awayed by the attractions of what is easier or simpler or more commonly accepted. And note, please, that I am nnot appealing to the infallibility of human intelligence, or human reasonableness, or human good will. We are, as my tutor in mathematics once very gently remarked to me when going over my handing of a problem, 'Well, a wise man makes mistakes, but he does not make them twice.' Method does not mean that infallibly, on your first try, you will get things right. It simply means that, down the centuries, if men and women keep working at their problems, they may hope eventually to turn a corner, see things in a new light and, at times, even succeed in clearing up a number of long.outstanding and unsolved problems.

Finally, to make amends for my apparent disregard of Aristotle, let me refer you to his Metaphysics, look up in index the passages that contain proper names, and discover that Aristotle not infrequently reviewed on an issue the various opinions that had been proposed by his predecessors. And in these cases his own opinion would be a matter of selecting the opinion he found the most reasoanble, either as it stood, or as improved by some addition of his own.