

Faith

Faith I understand as belief in a religious doctrine.

A religious doctrine goes beyond the ^h sphere of the human good to be concerned with ~~hand~~ man's stance in the universe. Hence belief in such doctrine involves the exercise of vertical liberty, of the liberty that chooses, not among objects within a horizon, but between different horizons. Faith, then, though it is belief, is an ~~united~~ exceptional type of belief. By his faith the existential subject is determining his horizon and thereby affecting the totality of his interests, his beliefs, his learning, and his development.

In its most authentic form religious doctrine expresses ultimate concern, a being-in-love without conditions, reserves, qualifications, and therefore other-worldly at least in the sense that only idolatry would bestow such love on anything within this world. But ultimate concern has to be differentiated from other concern, it has to develop in its own manner, and the means for its self-expression have to be developed.

We already have spoken of the global expression of ultimate concern along with proximate concerns. So it is thought that primitives ^{first feel} project religious experiences into ^{transitory} deities and demons of the moment, that only later ^{distinct} do different experiences ^{coalesce} come to focus on single ^{personal} deities and demons, that as religion permeates the whole of life so each of the many functions of man's annual round of duties has its occupational god, while technical and cultural developments are ~~attributed~~ attributed to the gift of culture heroes.

See Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955. II, 199 ff.

But while the primitive is moving toward fuller differentiation and development and away from global ^{religious} expression, we may perhaps expect the opposite phenomenon in times of social and cultural crisis and breakdown. Then the accepted modes of religious expression, whether because they are not understood, or because they are antiquated, or ~~but~~ because they are compromised by decline, may only excite revulsion, and this revulsion may be all the greater, the fuller and the purer ~~is~~ is the ultimate concern that seeks expression. So one can understand truly religious men speaking in favor of a religionless world and truly other-worldly men arguing for secularization. However, in my opinion at least, it is one thing to understand another's stance, and another to work out a policy. Ultimate concern can genuinely feel impelled to iconoclasm. But a long-term policy has to aim at updating religious expression and freeing it from its involvement with decline.

Besides global, there is specific religious expression, and it may assume quite different forms. It may be an imperative commanding love of God above all and love of one's neighbor as oneself. It may be narrative, the story of the ~~the~~ religious ~~community's~~ community's origins and development. It may be ascetic and ~~system~~ mystical, teaching the way towards ~~total~~ other-worldly total love and warning against the pitfalls on the journey. It may be theoretical expounding the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, his intentions and his purposes. It may be two or more or all of these. It may fuse all in an organic balanced synthesis, or it may take some one as basic and employ it to manifest and interpret the others.

It may remain unchanged for ages and it may develop and ~~and~~ adapt to different social and cultural situations.

Specific religious expression may become technical. A message becomes a doctrine. The doctrine is integrated with a culture by a theology. Message, doctrine, and theology have their histories, exhibiting man's success and failure in meeting the challenge of a demanding religion. But today's task is a special one, for today theology has to be renewed. It was encapsulated in classicist culture. It has to be transposed to modern culture.