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Religion in Human Life

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SINCE this article is concerned with the moot matter of religion, I should perhaps begin by making clear my own point of view and my reasons for coming to the conclusions that I have come to. My first awareness of religious strife came from my grandfather before I left Vienna at the age of ten; he had been an agnostic from his medical student days, and he laid the foundations for my own later attitudes. From my parents I received no religious training of any kind. By the time I was sixteen, I was already reading the *philosophes* and imitating their violent anti-clericalism and bitterness toward all religion. This period continued, largely under the stimulus of and acquaintance with Ernst Haeckel, until I was about 25. At this point I was already going into the field as an ethnologist. It did not take long to discover that to the primitive mind religion was of paramount importance. If I wanted to understand the Indians of that period I simply had to study its values for them. Moreover, my constant field trips brought me into contact with dedicated men of all faiths who were certainly deriving neither money nor renown by being missionaries to a group of Indians on a remote reservation. They lived as other members of the community did, in poverty, and they remained with their charges through pestilence and famine. One day it occurred to me that both the Indians and the hardy souls who were trying to convert them to Christianity had some inner strength that I lacked. Nor was I unique in this lack. I began to wonder how many scientists would undergo for their science the years of poverty that the priests and ministers willingly accepted for their religion.

Here clearly was a phenomenon of both primitive and civilized life that warranted study. So I began to collect information about native religions on the same objective basis upon which I assembled data on basket-weaving, social organization, hunting, or any other aspect of primitive life. Moreover, through my reading I discovered that no group of people had ever been found who did not have a religion of some kind. Since religion is a universal manifestation, it must have some value. I found also that despite the immense variations in the outward observances, the inner glow and the function of religion in the group were identical from one form to another. The Catholic priest, the Mormon missionary, the Eskimo shaman, the African witch-doctor, and the Protestant clergyman were all alike in their sense of inner conviction, in their intense desire to help others, and in their dependence upon some force outside themselves that gave them courage. Fanatic, ignorant, or rigid they might be, but they were men of faith. I cannot say that I have become a religious man as the result of my study, but I have become an informed one; and I have seen too

Professor Lowie died on September 21, 1957. This article was found among his papers.

much to believe now in the dicta that I accepted in my youth. I no longer doubt that religion has a definite place in human life.

My position towards religion as a cultural phenomenon springs directly from my conception of anthropology as a *science*. Since it is a science it must take cognizance of values because these form an essential part of its subject matter; but it must treat these values objectively—that is, it must refrain from judgment. Thus, an anthropologist who is studying West African fetishism must stick to what he can see and hear for himself and what he can find out from informants as to the meaning of fetishism to them, but he must not judge it in terms of his own religious standards. Probably my own lack of religious training was an asset rather than a drawback, because I could not condemn any form of worship merely because it differed from mine. I could only view it as a human manifestation worthy of scientific investigation. This same point of view should certainly be extended to include the religions of one's own day. Yet I have known anthropologists who accorded a benevolent understanding to the Hopi but denied it to Catholics, Mormons, Buddhists, or Mohammedans. This dichotomy of viewpoint strikes me as ridiculous and completely unscientific. In short, I will study as many religions as I can, but I will judge none of them. I doubt if any other attitude is scientifically defensible.

To a modern intellectual, religion is probably the most unfamiliar subject in the world. He cannot, of course, remain wholly ignorant of its role in the past, but the sentiments of such men as St. Francis of Assisi, George Fox, or John Wesley are utterly remote and unintelligible. For many people the religious issue is intertwined with an adolescent revolt against parental authority or with a struggle for intellectual freedom. For others it has become a symbol of restriction, repression, and reaction. To still others it is either just plain mumbo-jumbo or a narcotic. The former attitude is well illustrated by Voltaire's statement that religion began when the first knave duped the first fool. Marxians have their special brand of the second attitude: that it is an opiate with which exploiting capitalists lull the masses in order to fleece them with impunity. Most if not all of these attitudes are based upon a profound ignorance of what religion is and does.

While it is true that religion has lost ground during the past century, it has never ceased to sway the lives and fortunes of millions. And even if open allegiance to a church has become more rare as the decades have flowed past, the moral strength of religion has continued to influence people. During World War II many people either found religion for the first time or else returned to their former church for comfort and strength to bear the fears and pressures brought about by war. It should never be forgotten that all religions thrive on adversity. It is probable that the common attitude of indifference and apathy is caused primarily by too much prosperity.

The indifference is not confined to one church or to one country, as may be seen from the following two examples. In Italy the vast majority of the population is Catholic. Some of the people are certainly devout, but these come predominantly from the peasant class. The others—excluding a handful of free-

thinkers—are passive in their Catholicism. They have their children baptized by the Church; they are married and buried by the Church; but they seem to go through life without religious feeling or spiritual experience.

The situation is much the same in Protestant Sweden, where the people are overwhelmingly Lutheran and the king is constitutionally bound to profess the evangelical creed. But when one glances through a brief survey of Swedish life, one finds a good deal about the iron and match industries, about timbering and handicrafts, and about sports, but strangely little concerning the officially dominant faith as a force in shaping human lives. In the newspapers the sporting page, though shorter than in American dailies, is easily three times as long as the half-page or less that has to do with church or religion.

It was not of course like this in medieval Europe. Art, scholarship, philosophy, education, and crafts of every sort were all permeated by the Church. And the earlier crusades bear witness to the dynamic power of the Christian faith among the people. This all-pervasive character of religion has almost vanished from contemporary life, but in the days of my field work I found it still alive among the Indians whom I visited. For instance, when the Choctaw played an inter-village game, the performance started on the previous evening with 12 repetitions of a ceremonial dance by the players. The tribal prophets continued their magic rites throughout the night, and during the game itself the conjurers were almost as conspicuous as the players. The most matter-of-fact features in the daily routine of any primitive people are likely to be linked with magical observances, prayers, chants, or sacrifices. In New Zealand a Maori recited sacred spells when he began to build a canoe, when he launched it, when he planted his crops, when he harvested them; even when he taught a youngster to weave, he muttered a charm to increase the learner's receptiveness. During their farming period the Apinayé of Northern Brazil sang daily songs in honor of the sun. The Eskimo firmly believed that success in sealing hinged upon the favor of a powerful sea goddess. And so forth ad infinitum all over the savage world.

The field worker's business is always and everywhere to understand the true inwardness of the beliefs and practices of the people he studies. He is not content to record that infants are suffocated, aged parents abandoned, or enemies eaten. Unless he can also recover the accompanying sentiments, he has failed in his task. It is one thing if a parent throttles his newborn child from sheer brutality, another if he kills it because the mother died in delivery and a nurse cannot be found, and still another if his tribe has a superstitious fear of twins. And the field worker who consistently sees human civilization as one indivisible whole cannot logically apply a sympathetic attitude to Australian infanticide, Eskimo abandonment of old people, or Tupinamba cannibalism, and a prejudiced attitude to Catholics, Baptists, or Methodists. The touchstone of his anthropological conscience is whether or not he treats the communicant of some other faith than his own with the consideration he professionally metes out to an Indian medicine man or an Eskimo shaman.

In my own field experience the Hopi of Arizona and the Crow of Montana both impressed upon me the integrating power of religion, but from two in-

structively antithetical angles. The Pueblos illustrate ceremonialism par excellence, with a profusion of outward observances and paraphernalia. What first of all amazes the observer among the Hopi is the incredible amount of time consumed by their religious activities. Apart from an infinitude of minor performances there is a fixed calendar of major festivals lasting nine days each. While there is a slight variation from year to year, the average amount of time devoted to religious ceremonial is one day in three. In the Hopi village of Walpi, for instance, the "year" starts with a nine-day initiation of youths into adult status. At the winter solstice there is a celebration in honor of the Kachina spirits, impersonated by mummers. In January the people play shinny as a magic fertility rite; moreover, several fraternities and sororities prepare the characteristic Pueblo offerings, such as feathered sticks to be smoked and prayed over before they are deposited in caves, springs, or other appropriate places. Follows the Bean festival, with secret planting of the vegetable, distribution of beans and of seed corn, burlesques, masqueradings, and a legion of other ritualistic rites. After a period of spirit-impersonating dances, March ushers in the drama of the Water Snakes, with suckling of serpent images as part of a fertility ceremonial. In April, there is the first corn planting "for the Kachina"; in May, the Skeleton God is represented and ritualistically slain; in June, prayer-sticks must be made for the sun; in July, the Kachina spirits have their farewell ceremony. In August comes either of two festivals in regular alternation, the famous Snake Dance or the Flute Dance. In September and the early part of the fall the several feminine organizations perform, and in November youths are once more initiated.

Not all members of the community participate in the series in equal measure. Large portions of the esoteric rituals, the prerogative of special organizations, are barred to nonmembers; and within a fraternity the functions of the priest differ from those of the rank and file. However, even the outsider is affected by the solemnity that invests the community during the whole of a festival. Further, in a sense, everyone's welfare is involved, for whatever may be the special objects of major ceremonials, they are all meant to bring rain. As my interpreter quaintly put it, "The Hopi have no streams to irrigate with, so they must perform their ceremonies." These expert farmers who make a go of corn-growing where many White agriculturists would despair nevertheless believe unshakably in the indispensableness of ritual for gaining their ends. By wheedling the spirits, by mimicking whatever is associated with showers, they expect to wring rain from the powers of the universe. Now they offer their feathered sticks, now they draw pictures of clouds dropping precipitation, now they whirl a board through the air to simulate thunder.

The heavy display of fixed ritual in Hopi supernaturalism does not readily yield up its meaning from the worshipper's point of view. Literally thousands of pages in print about Pueblo ceremonies have until fairly recently left the reader almost wholly in the dark on this crucial point of the subject. As late as 1942 appeared Sun Chief's autobiography, which tells at least how one believer felt about it all.

Among the Plains Indians there was also some emphasis upon ritual, but it

was overshadowed by the importance of the subjective thrill in visions, auditions, or particularly vivid dreams. The contrast between the Crow and the Hopi corresponds roughly to that popularly conceived between an established church and lay evangelism. However, if there were a ritual of however simple a nature it was observed with the same punctilio. I shall not readily forget the ceremonial opening of Flat-head-woman's sacred bundle. First he divided live embers into two heaps, strewed incense on both, then alternately lowered each end of the bundle toward the nearer heap. With muttered words of prayer he opened the bundle, its cloth wrappings being carefully folded back on the sides without disturbance of their relative positions. When possibly ten coverings had been gradually unfolded, nothing was visible but a large bunch of feathers. Flat-head-woman next combined the two heaps of embers, strewed more incense on top, then carefully arranged the feathers and extracted from among them, as the sacrosanct core, an arrow. This bundle was holy only because it had been revealed to the original owner (within Flat-head-woman's lifetime) by the Seven Stars. The arrow-spirit subsequently visited the first visionary's brother, Hillside, in his sleep. Hillside passed the bundle on to Flat-head-woman, who had never had a vision of his own; but after receiving the sacred bundle he began to have visions, seeing stalks of grass flying like arrows. For years he continued to receive revelations from the arrow-spirit. On one occasion it forbade him to throw ashes out of his lodge or to strike the lodge when removing snow from the tent cover. At another time it ordered him to visit the site of the original arrow revelation, where he was to find an eagle's feather in the cleft of a rock; and he found it.

The Crow, then, no less than the Hopi, attach extreme significance to things that we should regard as trivial. Both tribes insist upon a stereotyped procedure without the slightest deviation from the rules, lest you come to harm. Yet there is an immense difference between the tribes, for all those subjective experiences which are submerged in Hopi ritualism form the very warp and woof of Crow religion. The Crow Indians and their neighbors continually amazed me by their ever-recurring, face-to-face communication with the superhuman. It is such direct intercourse with the divine that is most distinctive of religion at its peak. As a veritable tyro I met Red-shirt, the Shoshone medicine-man, who told me about his own death and resurrection. He had died, he said, because he had eaten salmon contrary to his familiar's orders and thus forever lost that spirit's protection. Fortunately, the Sun appeared to him in a dream, telling him he would die but promising resuscitation. This happened about 1880, and Red-shirt pointed out to me the spot where his tribesmen had built a special mortuary shelter for him. And now comes an illuminating detail. After his soul had stepped out of his thigh and taken a few steps forward, something suddenly descended clear through it, and it began to go downwards—not upwards, according to the general Shoshone belief. Red-shirt mistrusted the other Shoshone shamans no less than the Christian missionaries: Did he not have the direct evidence of his senses that the soul descended after death instead of rising? They were only guessing, but he *knew*. This adventure, though the most impressive in Red-shirt's career, was by no means the only one. Traveling at

night on one occasion, he saw an Indian approaching; the face was invisible, but he was wearing a striped vest. As the figure got close, however, the stripes turned out to be bare ribs. Red-shirt fled from the specter, whom he headed off from pursuit by pronouncing a spell of exorcism: "You are only a ghost, leave me alone!" Then the figure wheeled about and vanished into the ground.

This type of experience was reported to me wherever I went in the Northern Plains. The Stoney Assiniboine attached great importance to dreams. A man to whom a certain animal appeared in a dream would not kill or eat the flesh of its fellows. Only very young Stoney's dreamed of spirits, who would instruct them for several years and then depart for good. Jim Crack may be cited as an example: his benefactor, a dwarfish human, had taught him how to pursue every kind of game, so that Jim grew up to be a great hunter, after which his guide was seen no more. In Montana a blind Assiniboine recounted to me a series of personal revelations. Once he had been taken in a dream to a tent with a sun design on the cover; an old woman seated inside ordered him to decorate his own tent in the same manner and promised him that he and his family would enjoy good health. He did, and they did! On another occasion he received the right to doctor the sick. This was to be done in a special kind of painted tipi, the model being exhibited for his guidance; in it the practitioner was to be bound hand and foot and an invisible spirit would announce whether or not a cure was possible, and if so, would untie the doctor. Still another time my informant was shown a procession of Fool Dancers and bidden, on pain of premature death, to conduct their ceremony at least once a year. In 1908 he was still obeying this injunction, although total blindness had forced him to rely on the aid of a proxy.

It would be an exaggeration to say that every phase of a Crow's life was tintured with religion, but it is literally true that every situation of strain or stress fused with the native concept of individual revelation. Thus, the young man who has been jilted goes off at once to fast in loneliness, praying for supernatural succor. An elk spirit may come and teach him a tune on a flute, as a means of luring the maiden back. The young man plays his tune, ensnares the haughty girl, and turns her away in disgrace, thus regaining his self-respect. Similarly, a wretched orphan who has been mocked by a young man of family hastens to the mountains to be blessed by some being, through whose favor he gains glory and loot on a raid, and can then turn the tables upon his tormentor. A woman big with child fasts and in a vision sees a weed which she subsequently harvests and through which she ensures a painless delivery. A gambler who has lost all his property retrieves his fortune through a revelation; and by the same technique a sorrowing kinsman identifies the slayers of his beloved relative and kills them. These are all typical instances, amply documented in personal recollections of informants and in traditional lore, showing the intrusion of religion into the frustrations of everyday living.

Out of this general atmosphere blossomed the notion that all conspicuous success in life is due to visions and revelations. Contrariwise, failure is interpreted as equivalent to lack of superhuman favor. As one informant put it: "All who had visions were well-to-do; I was to be poor, and that is why I had no

visions." Such a man could still, however, tap hidden resources by borrowing a talisman—or a replica of one—from a more fortunate relative or friend. By its means he often managed to get a start, and later he might begin to have revelations of his own.

The question now arises as to how the ethnographer should appraise this faith in the reality, the paramount value, of visions. A casual estimate might suggest that the visionaries are all mystics or fools, but after several years' acquaintance with them, I am certain that they are neither. Every young man automatically went out to seek a vision, and those who claimed success were precisely the leaders of the tribe. The question still remains whether or not these men were intentional or unintentional frauds. My interpreter, a baptized Christian who was keenly aware of the inherent improbability by modern criteria of visions, thought otherwise. As he said, "When you listen to the old men telling their stories, you've just *got* to believe them." And in this impression I concur. Whatever the narrator's experiences may have been, he himself conceived them as being as he represented them.

But it is not necessary to rely upon subjective impressions, since there are at least four bits of evidence to suggest that the speakers were sincere. First, why should they lie to a white man, when they perfectly well knew that the more flamboyant their story the less likely I would be to believe it? Therefore, a pretense of wonderful experiences would serve no useful purpose for them. Second, among their own people, the rise to kudos through a vision required a good deal more than the palming off of a convenient hoax. Normally, the aspirant for a vision would go to the mountains, refrain for four days from food and water, and mutilate himself, to convince the deities of his sincerity. These offerings of flesh are not figments of myth, for I have seen the mutilated fingers and the deep scars on back and chest. Even with such austerities, there were many who never succeeded in getting a vision. I doubt that sheer mountebanks would lacerate or starve themselves. Third, even assuming that a man's desire for status drove him to self-mutilation and the fabrication of a dream or vision, he would be no better off than before, because it was only the *demonstrably successful* healer or war leader who achieved a following. Until the revelation was backed up with results, and unless it were, the would-be visionary was held up to endless ridicule. A deliberate imposter would, therefore, be far more likely to lose prestige than to gain it. And fourth, the man who received power through a revelation also received usually at least one and perhaps more life-long and onerous restrictions. One old man of my acquaintance had not ridden a horse since the day of his vision thirty years earlier, for the spirits had forbidden him to do so. He had trudged on foot. Although the ownership of horses had great prestige value, he had sold the one he owned at the time of his vision and had never owned another. He would gain military renown by killing an enemy but not by the much simpler method of stealing an enemy's horse. Another Indian had been forbidden to eat eggs and was a constant nuisance because he would not eat anything unless he personally supervised its preparation, lest the cook slip in an egg without his knowledge. And a third was forbidden to touch salmon, one of the Crows' few delicacies; on one occasion he ate a mixture of pre-

pared fish without knowing there was salmon there and attributed the following eleven years of rheumatism to his unwitting breaking of his taboo. So a vision was not an unmixed blessing, and a man could hardly hope to derive benefit from a fake.

The role of religion in the life of either community or individual has already been at least implied. A living faith serves to integrate the individual's behavior in society, to give him confidence in meeting the crises which life inescapably brings, and to introduce into his existence a stable central core in the light of which he can assign values. These same purposes are served by the religion of those more sophisticated than my Indian informants, although they may not show the basis of their integration in so clear a fashion. Religion should also provide the basis for ethics. It should enter into everything an individual does, every judgment he makes, every point of view he develops. It is admittedly true that religion is not the only integrator; the impulse may come from immersion in art, music, education, or science in the case of those who have the necessary abilities for such absorption. For the average citizen, however, religion is still the most available source of integration. This fact not only justifies its existence but also explains its universal appeal.

Perhaps it might be well to take a momentary look at what has happened in modern times to societies that have deliberately set about exterminating religion, at least in so far as they could. The Nazis are a case in point. It did not take Hitler long to discover that the churches and the clergy were his implacable enemies. Priests and ministers insisted upon doing what they considered right, they criticized him openly, they tried to rally their congregations to oppose him, they helped enemies of the state to escape, they harbored the persecuted. Hitler could not put his policies of suppression, incarceration, and extermination into effect until he had eliminated the clergy, who would not do as they were told and would not keep their mouths shut. Moreover, they were upheld by a power that he did not understand but which he feared. During the ten years of his dominance the one effective resistance that he could not completely eliminate came from organized religion. One main purpose of his "youth" groups was to bring up a generation that lacked the Christian virtues of compassion or mercy. The Soviets are attempting the same combination of repression and education of children without religious scruples. One *modus operandi* that has been used in totalitarian countries for the suppression of religion has been to carry away from each village as hostage one small child; thereafter, if any member of that village were caught at a secret religious gathering, if any gave aid to a member of the clergy, if any were seen saying his prayers, the child was killed. It is hard to imagine that in a country of even lukewarm Christianity such a method could be used. There are many people who might like to see the extermination of all religion, but perhaps they might take a closer look at what happens when religious attitudes are destroyed: the accompanying ethical standards also disappear, and one is left with a society not only without religion but also without restraining virtues. It is extremely doubtful that a nation can keep its ethics after it loses its religion.

For the last century at least much has been made of the conflict between

religion and science and of the eventual and desirable substitution of the latter for the former. Perhaps before taking sides in this controversy one should consider to what extent the two systems of thought actually do contradict and interfere with each other. As soon as one stops to think, it is clear that there are vast bodies of scientific facts and principles that have never been challenged by any religious group—the ontogeny of silkworms, the expansion of mercury by heat, the predictability of an eclipse, the distance of the moon from the earth, the chemical constitution of water, the antiquity of man, the distinction between tame and domesticated animals, the germ theory of disease, the laws of gravity, and so on. In fact, the points upon which there is conflict are extremely few when compared to the sum total of scientific knowledge.

Perhaps the basic difficulty in seeing the relation of religion and science is that the majority of people do not know in the least what a science is, much less what it can and cannot do. The man-in-the-street commonly regards scientific facts as eternal truths—things that cannot change. Nothing could be more incorrect. To take a very simple example: in my chemistry class I was taught that an atom was an absolutely indivisible particle of matter, but now it seems that it is not; and the theory of light waves, as expounded to me in my college days, has long since been amended. And so on, in every field of science. The layman seems to think that because a scientific theory is derived from experiments it *must* be true; such a theory is true only until further experimentation shows wherein it must be altered. A theory is only a hypothesis that will have to do until a better one comes along. There is nothing fixed about it. Another misconception arises from the notion that science is independent of the social and economic pressures of the environment. Quite the reverse is true. Thus, the very problems that are attacked at a particular stage in history are selected by irrational considerations or outside economic pressures, rather than in the light of eternal fitness. This statement explains why classical Greece was so sterile in useful inventions. It was certainly not because of any dearth in acute thinkers or of any ineptitude for experimentation. The reason is to be sought rather in the predominant ideology, which exalted speculation over utilitarian application. Further, the social scheme allocated manual work to slaves, of which there was an ample supply. The tone-setting classes thus had no urge to minimize human effort by labor-saving devices. Those who were mechanically gifted accordingly lavished their ingenuity upon clever but useless toys, such as wooden pigeons that flew by compressed air.

Still another erroneous notion that one often hears expressed is the idea of the scientist as a person who dwells in an ivory tower, remote from the common pressures of mankind, and reaches his conclusions by the exercise of pure reason. This notion, made familiar by various forms of mass communication, is mostly poppycock, as may be shown by taking at random a few samples from the history of science. Ideally, of course, a scientist should be a man who is uniformly critical, willing to follow proof, and insistent upon the application of reason, but unfortunately he is a man like other men, with the same dependence upon tradition in his field, upon his own prejudices, upon his own social

milieu. Thus we find Tycho de Brahe, one of the foremost observational astronomers in the history of the science, piquing himself above all upon the accuracy not of his observations but of his horoscopes. History shows us again and again the whole guild of scientists rejecting epoch-making discoveries and advances that did not fit in with their traditional ideas. The scientists of his day branded Harvey as a charlatan for announcing his discoveries about the circulation of the blood, they martyred Semmelweiss for expounding the cause of child-bed fever, they ridiculed Boucher de Perthes when he declared that man had been a contemporary of extinct animals. These examples are taken from previous centuries, but the ability of a scientist to free himself from tradition and to embrace novel ideas has not increased greatly. Moreover, even a well-balanced, objective scientist is frequently mistaken in his conclusions, not because he does not reason but because he does not yet have all the facts he needs to reason with. Thus, a generation or two ago Lord Kelvin estimated the age of the earth at a figure absurdly low in the light of subsequent research.

To return to the original argument, there are of course points upon which science and religion collide, and the intensity of the clash naturally varies with the circumstances. Medical science is intransigent against religious cults that reject vaccination. Religious leaders may be equally determined to resist the principle of birth-control. Both sides have argued endlessly and to no great profit about Christian Science. Medical men have attacked it as being both useless and dangerous. Its defenders can point to much good that has been done for individuals. Probably both sides are right; they are simply talking about different people and different problems. If a man is a diabetic, he will not be cured by Christian Science, and the period during which he tries to effect a cure by such means may postpone medical treatment until it is too late to do much good. But if a man has a psychosomatic condition, he cannot be cured by a doctor's prescription because the sickness in his body is only a symptom of the sickness in his emotional life. There is a chance that Christian Science can cure him; there is no chance that a pill can. I am reminded of a cousin who was unemployed, depressed, and down to her last hundred dollars, of which she spent fifty for a "course" given by a complete charlatan who actually sent her nothing but form letters, all encouraging her to have faith in the future. Everyone, including myself, thought she was out of her mind, but we were all wrong because the man cured her. She returned to work and remained emotionally adjusted and useful throughout the remainder of her life. This sort of thing illustrates one point about human nature that is often not recognized: that what the average person wants is a workable solution, and he does not in the least care how many mistakes have been made in the computation.

There is thus no warrant for the notion that Science consists of a body of doctrine established once and for all time in the realm of Pure Reason. At any particular stage science is a sportsmanlike adventure in ferreting the truth out of a coy universe. And it is by no means the only method of approach. When we compare what is now known with what was known, say, four hundred years ago, there is every reason for good cheer. But even today research is not wholly

a matter of a earnest striving, specialized training, innate capacity for observation and deduction; it is the result of all these and of human frailty working under the handicap of a despotic heritage of traditional prejudice. The result is admittedly our best possible instrument for controlling physical environment and for formulating ideas of the material world. But it does not at all follow that it is soul-satisfying, or that it can serve as a basis for moral action.

If we keep before us the attitude of the man in the street, we shall understand why he can never be satisfied with science as a substitute for religion. That eternal striving for the truth without attaining it, which Lessing lauded as the highest good, has no appeal whatever for the generality of mankind. What the normal human being wants is peace, security, and relaxation. And he can never find these things in that dynamic, ever-growing, ever-disturbing thing that we have found science to be. In ringing words Ernst Mach has defined its nature: "The scientist's highest philosophy consists precisely in bearing an incomplete world-view and preferring it to one that is apparently complete, but inadequate." This is precisely the scientist's philosophy, but most people are nonscientists, and it is of them that I am speaking. The contrast is well expressed by Goethe's oft-quoted quatrain:

Wer Wissenschaft und Kunst besitzt
Hat auch Religion;
Wer jene beiden nicht besitzt,
Der *habe* Religion.

Whatever one may think of the snobbish flavor of these lines, they adumbrate an essential psychological truth. If a man's being is *wholly* absorbed in intellectual and esthetic pursuits, his interests may assume for him the place of spiritual guidance; without immersion in such activity, man had better rely upon the traditional faith. What an average man wants above everything else is security. But does science supply this? The answer is "No." That complete world-view that science explicitly renounces is precisely what the layman craves. In this perilous universe he is forever beset with dangers beyond his control. He wants at all odds to survive, and here science leaves him in the lurch—not everywhere and always, but often enough to make him keenly sensible of its imperfections. If he is dying of an incurable disease, it cheers him little to be told that medical science has made great strides in the past decades and that a remedy will almost certainly be found a hundred years hence, and probably sooner. Instead of running eagerly toward the latest scientific discovery, the average man is likely to wish the discovery had never been made, because it has proved so upsetting to his security. Science has achieved remarkable results, both practical and theoretical, but it has not made man a superman; so long as the enormous chasm yawns between man's rational control of nature and his biologico-psychological drives, there will still be room for belief in a Providence that grants not mere comfort, but security—not mere probability, but certainty. Religion and science thus perform different functions in the life of man, and it is not necessary that either should interfere with the other.