

progression in men's thinking, whereby, outgrowing both supernatural and metaphysical modes of explanation, man would at last come to the positive or descriptive mode. Comte observed, moreover, that if we were to make a cross-section of any period we would find all three stages of explanation employed as standards at the same time since wherever a positive procedure is difficult, because of the complexity of the subject, or prejudice, or emotion on the part of the thinkers, we might expect to find relative retardation.

The analysis of mind presents precisely such difficulties, but now, at last, men are beginning to say that this most stubborn of ghosts must make room for what is valuable—a description of consciousness as a unique relationship which may maintain on occasion between a living organism and its world.

ETHEL E. SABIN

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

A GLIMPSE INTO MYSTICISM AND THE FAITH STATE

THERE have always been mystics and always will be mystics, according to Bertrand Russell in his essay on "Mysticism and Logic," and their experiences play a part in both religion and philosophy.

Now the ordinary man will ask, what is a mystic and how can he be accounted for? The mystics themselves claim that they exercise a mysterious faculty of the mind, common to all men to be sure, but not ordinarily used, at least not in the practical affairs of every-day life. Such an assertion is not only a challenge to one's scientific curiosity but also to one's desire to reach these rich and deep experiences of life. Certain modern philosophers, notably James, Royce, Eucken, and Bergson assign a very high place to the mystical state of knowing, or intuition, as furnishing new and valuable truths in philosophy, while the mystical faith state supplies the groundwork of all religion. James says, "The truth of truths might come in an affirmative form," while this paragraph from Dodson sets forth the view of Bergson.

The implication is that so far as we do know what anything is, what we are, what life is in us and in the universe, what God is, we know it through insight and not through reasoning. The philosophical view of the world would be that of the man in whom both of these complementary powers of the mental life were well developed. His intellect would look out and ask questions about the material world, questions which the intellect, using scientific methods, can answer. The same intellect would also look in and ask questions about the heart of life, both of self and of God, and instinct, developed into intuition, would give a satisfying reply.¹

¹ Dodson, *Bergson and The Modern Spirit*, p. 130.

Of late the mystics have not only tried to impart to us something of the nature and content of their experiences, but they have attempted to describe and analyze the process of attaining the mystic state. After giving a number of quotations it is the purpose of the writer to "accomplish the impossible" and discover enough of the mysterious faculty to give it a psychological classification. The effort will probably end in failure but at any rate she will have registered her conviction that it is susceptible of such classification, if not now, sometime in the future when we have reached a fuller knowledge of our more elusive psychical processes. The first extract is taken from Russell:

There is, first, the belief in insight as against discursive analytic knowledge: the belief in a way of wisdom, sudden, penetrating, coercive, which is contrasted with the slow and fallible study of outward appearance by a science relying wholly upon the senses. All who are capable of absorption in an inward passion must have experienced at times the strange feeling of unreality in common objects, the loss of contact with daily things, in which the solidity of the outer world is lost, and the soul seems, in utter loneliness, to bring forth, out of its own depths, the mad dance of fantastic phantoms which have hitherto appeared as independently real and living. This is the negative side of the mystic's initiation, the doubt concerning common knowledge, preparing the way for the reception of what seems a higher wisdom. . . . The mystic insight begins with a sense of mystery unveiled, of a hidden wisdom now suddenly become certain beyond the possibility of a doubt. The sense of certainty and revelation comes earlier than any definite belief. The definite beliefs at which mystics arrive are the result of reflection upon the inarticulate experience gained in a moment of insight.²

The above quotation deals more with the philosophic type of mysticism while the next from Addison is of the religious type.

The Mystic, that he may see God, get any the least glimpse of him, must prepare himself, and having stripped from him everything that would hinder of sight, hearing, touch, even thought, then he comes to the next and most important step of all, that which stamps him, as soon as he takes it, as a Mystic, different in this respect from other creatures; he sits down in this utter nakedness and in silence and without effort at last waits for God to speak in the still small voice, or to show himself in some vision or to give some touch upon his heart by which he may be known. It is the concentration of all the powers upon "one point." It is the "inward look." In quiet and in silence the soul now attends intently. By concentration all the little sounds have been stilled. The efforts of recollection to bring the mind and heart and will into harmony have succeeded and so relax. The soul is at peace. The busy thoughts are hushed, the unruly will is silenced. The attitude is that of listening. No longer is it content to do. It finds its satisfaction in being, and its being becomes one great receptivity. It can say now, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" and not mistake heavenly sounds for earthly. It is in the ante-room of the Presence. The next move is God's.³

² Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 8, 9.

³ Addison, *The Theory and Practice of Mysticism*, p. 208.

Addison gives the following account by the old German mystic Boehme of attaining the mystic state which seems to presuppose a great degree of piety and faith as already possessed.

Cease but from thine own activity, steadfastly fixing thine eye upon one point. . . . For this end gather in all thy thought and by faith press into the center, laying hold upon the word of God which is infallible and has called thee. Be thou obedient to this call and be silent before the Lord, sitting alone with him in thine inmost and most hidden cell, thy mind being centrally united in itself and attending his will in patience and hope.⁴

This outburst from Saint Augustine, on the other hand, describes a soul who is still in bondage as it were, but has a vision of what awaits him:

Who can disentangle that twisted and intricate knottiness? Foul is it: I hate to think on it, to look on it. But for Thee I long, O Righteousness and Innocency, beautiful and comely to all pure eyes, and of a satisfaction unsating. With Thee is rest entire, and life is imperturbable. Whoso enters into Thee, enters into the joy of his Lord: and shall not fear, and shall do excellently in the All-Excellent. I sank away from Thee, and I wandered, O my God, too much astray from Thee, my stay, in these days of my youth, and I became to myself a barren land.⁵

In studying these descriptions we find that certain points stand out pretty clearly and those of the preliminary stage are to be considered first. All mention that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present condition either in respect to knowledge or the spiritual state. Russell speaks of the "doubt concerning common knowledge"; Addison, of "bringing the mind and heart and will into harmony." It is Saint Augustine out of his real suffering who voices this dissatisfaction most strongly, and Addison in another place has spoken of this lack of harmony within oneself as preceding the great desire for union with God, which is the first step in the mystic state itself. From the feeling of insufficiency and distress the mind concentrates on the thing it desires, be it a truth or a spiritual state.

The first striking characteristic of the mystic state itself is a belief in insight, or intuition, or in union with God. There is hope, confident expectation that relief or revelation will come, "an awakening of the soul," to use a religious expression. This is in the nature of a mediating state between the preliminary struggle and the second stage which is that of stripping the soul, clearing the mind, and leaving it as nearly as possible empty, open, and receptive. This seems to be the crux of the whole matter from a psychological point of view and is the necessary sequence of the preceding struggle in which there was intense concentration.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵ *Confessions of St. Augustine*, Bk. II., Par. 18.

A third characteristic is the inner nature, the inwardness of the state. It is as if it came from the inner depths, the subconsciousness of the individual. With this is coupled a fourth distinguishing mark, the feeling of spontaneity, the experience seeming to come quite without connection with anything previously in the mind. The fifth peculiarity is a conviction of the validity, the certainty, even the infallibility of the ideas or experiences. Lastly, there is the unitive state denoting a condition where life can be perceived and felt as a whole and where the truths dealing with the unity rather than the diversity of the universe and humanity and God can be known, "intuited."

The mystic states are accompanied and followed by feelings of relief, joy, satisfaction and a sense of power and love, with a desire to carry out one's whole life in harmony with the new experience. To be quite accurate in any analysis the two states of religious and philosophic mysticism should be quite definitely separated, although having so much in common. However, in this preliminary sketch it has seemed advantageous to treat them together.

The first point to be noticed is the great difference between the preliminary or preceding stage and the mystic state itself. All mystic writers emphasize the necessity of great desire; at least the Christian sacred writings are full of it and James very acutely says: "Things reveal themselves soonest to those who most passionately want them, for our need sharpens our wits. To a mind content with little, the much in the universe may always remain hid."⁶ The longing is the culmination of a great struggle between two sets of ideas or habits of conduct in which there has been the greatest mental activity, for nowhere do the psychical processes entail such effort as in the making of decisions. So keen does the strife become that one is ready to make a decision in any way if only it will bring relief. Hence the seeking of the opinion of others or the resort to fortune telling or the flipping of coins. The individual inclined to piety naturally turns to God in prayer and feels that he can get the truest result by a cessation of all activity and a stillness and receptivity which can only come by complete relaxation. The following account of the mystic processes of Wordsworth described by Caroline Spurgeon and quoted by Addison gives us the clearest account of how one who is accustomed to enter the mystic state sets about it. The great struggle is not there, but there is nevertheless the relaxation of the will.

He found that when his mind was freed from preoccupation with disturbing objects, petty cares, "little enmities and low desires," that he could then reach a condition of equilibrium, which he describes as a "wise passiveness," or a

⁶ James: *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 176.

“happy stillness of the mind.” He believed this condition could be deliberately induced by a kind of relaxation of the will, and by a stilling of the busy intellect and striving desires. It is a purifying process, an emptying out of all that is worrying, self-assertive and self-seeking. If we can habitually train ourselves and attune our minds to this condition, we may at any moment come across something which will arouse our emotions, and it is then, when our emotions—thus purified—are excited to the point of passions, that our vision becomes sufficiently clear to enable us to gain actual experience of the “central peace subsisting forever at the heart of endless agitation.”⁷

Now if relaxation can be shown to be a predominating state of the mind, the opposite of attention, to be attained either through sheer weariness of strife and tension or by training in ridding consciousness of all ideas and emotions, it would seem that this state might be the mysterious faculty referred to, the inner organ or eye, just as attention is the predominating state of all that goes by the name of reasoning processes. Hitherto the writer has considered the opposite of attention to be vacuity, indifference, or distraction, following James in this respect, but a closer analysis seems to show that they are merely imperfect forms of attention, intermediate between attention and relaxation. If we compare the vigorous, directed action of the body with the aimless activity when there is a state of comparative rest and these with the state of complete relaxation which only comes in deep sleep or by an act of the will, we shall perhaps see how these states may exist in the mind. The normal form of consciousness is to be diffuse, exhibiting varying and discontinuous states, while the concentrated, tense condition focusing to a point is the exception. Likewise the complete state of relaxation is rare and has never, so far the writer knows, received the consideration from scientific psychology which its importance calls for.

In popular writings and especially in the literature on faith healing in all its forms we find much said about relaxation and the part it plays in the health of the mind and the body. Dr. Cabot describing the methods of the well known Emmanuel clinic says: “The patient is put in a comfortable chair in a quiet room, where he is told to relax himself and try to go to sleep, *etc.*” preparatory to receiving the suggestions which are made to him. On another page Dr. Cabot says:

When persons go into a house of worship, put themselves into time-honored, habitual position, relax themselves, turn away their minds and their attentions from all outside cares and thoughts, and make themselves so far as they can receptive to the truth that is to be spoken to them and by their own lips, I do not see how we can fail to see that something is going on akin to what I have called suggestion in the relaxed condition. I do not mean to be understood to say that that is the whole of prayer. I mean that it is the human side of prayer. . . . I

⁷ Addison, *loc. cit.*, p. 167.

am thinking of prayer as the opening of the man's soul to God, the opening of himself to the sources of his power. There are powers, as we all know, that we have never drawn upon. We need to open our selves to those powers.⁸

Thus if it is the relaxed condition which is necessary for healing and if it is the relaxed condition which is necessary in true sincere prayer, we see how it is that prayer is efficacious in all kinds of healing, whether by drugs, by manipulation, or by suggestion. We have the authority of James that it is thus useful. He says: "If any medical fact can be considered soundly established, it is that prayer often contributes to restoration to health, and should be encouraged as a therapeutic measure." Bruce from whom the foregoing extract is re-quoted says: "By so praying they produce in themselves a pleasurable emotional state, which contributes directly to recovery by easing the strain of worry, anxiety, and self-centeredness incidental to illness."⁹

Now if from our study of mysticism and the faith state it seems that there is a predominant state to be called relaxation—not the negative form of attention, but its positive opposite—it still remains to be seen whether it explains the other peculiar characteristics. To that end some sort of workable definition of relaxation must be attempted. It is the fixing of the mind on one thing, but by a process of surrendering ideas, letting them fall away, as it were, so that the whole field of consciousness may be free from opposing forces. It differs from attention in that the latter holds its idea in a focus against a field of opposing ideas, thus creating a feeling of strain, while relaxation is accompanied by a feeling of relief and ease. Instead of effort there is a condition of expectancy, or hope that the thing fixed upon will come and will bring satisfaction, though consciousness may be very vague as to what this may be.

Identifying then relaxation with the stripping of the soul, the laying of it bare and open, would not any idea which entered the field of consciousness appear to come from the subconscious, from an "inner depth," "a power above," according to the preconceived theory of the matter? Would not any idea coming thus without association with other ideas, since the field is empty, carry the feeling of spontaneity with it to a marked degree? Before giving a citation from Eucken let it be understood that the writer does not say that relaxation with all its accompaniments is all there is to religion, but that the work of religion is done while the mind is relaxed in the sense given above. He says:

But there is a further and more specific manifestation of religion; for it is the function of religion not only to infuse a sense of the whole into the work

⁸ Cabot, *Psychotherapy and Its Relation to Religion*, p. 49.

⁹ Bruce, *Nerve Control and How to Gain It*, p. 197.

of life, but by foregoing all appeal to the medium of work, to realize the Whole through direct communion, thereby unsealing the sources of a deeper life.¹⁰

Again, is not the fact of the field of consciousness being empty, expanded, accountable for the conviction of certitude, of infallibility, since any idea or experience coming into the mind unchallenged, wastes none of its force in maintaining itself against ideas opposed or at least irrelevant to it? Again one does not wish to be misunderstood and say that ideas coming in this way may not have especial power and a greater chance of being correct than ideas coming in some other way. They may come from the World Mind, from God, but, from the psychological standpoint merely, the fact of their coming in an affirmative way with all the impressiveness of occupying consciousness entirely alone, might give them this infallibility, or feeling of it. Bergson says somewhere, that incomplete and fugitive as intuition is, it is in each system what is worth more than the system itself and what survives.

The last characteristic, what the mystics call the unitive state, the power to know the complex flux of life as a whole, to unite the divided self into one harmonious personality, may also be accounted for psychologically by the state of mono-ideism which prevails when all other ideas have fallen or been driven away. The idea of eternity, of one space, of one God, of the Absolute, one gets hold of in these unitive states, but as James points out, as soon as reason starts to work we know them as parts, we posit something beyond and outside, something to make a relation, for relating, associating is the prime function of logical knowing. As soon as two or more ideas come into the field, above the threshold, there must be this business of relating going on, and so the world appears plural. Absolutism and mysticism go together by nature it would seem. Absolutism is the cause and the result of mysticism, in that the soul in its longing for unity induces the mystic state in which the world appears a whole.

Although this paper is largely made up of citations, it seems impossible to forego this one from the Hindu philosopher and poet Tagore:

Knowledge is partial, because our intellect is an instrument, it is only a part of us, it can give us information about things which can be divided and analyzed, and whose properties can be classified, part by part. But Brahma is perfect, and knowledge which is partial can never be a knowledge of him.

But he can be known by joy, by love. For joy is knowledge in its completeness, it is knowing our whole being. Intellect sets us apart from the things to be known, but love knows its object by fusion. Such knowledge is immediate and admits no doubt. It is the same as knowing ourselves, only more so.¹¹

¹⁰ Eucken, *The Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 125.

¹¹ Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 159.

But for all these extracts quoted, the writer must say the theory that mono-ideism was better attained through a process of relaxation, a surrender, a dropping away of ideas, than through a process of concentrating ideas, bringing them to a focus, had its inception in a rather intimate acquaintance with a mystic of the old type, a woman who believed she had "second sight," who believed that she had messages from the spirit world, who knew God face to face. She was kind enough to try to describe her mental processes and always it was freedom from unworthy or unkind thoughts, freedom from worry, a desire to do good and to be good which was necessary for the complete state of relaxation into which she entered when she desired to use any of these special gifts. Many a time as she went about her work of healing, for she was a masseuse by profession using "magnetic" or "faith" healing as the situation demanded, the writer has seen her drop into the relaxed state.

And still it is all mysterious even though we classify and name it, as are all the processes of consciousness for the matter of that. But it is the real thing, an experience which comes to all men at times in a vague and imperfect form, and to a few men in its perfection. But it is given to but few men to be geniuses in any line and the most of us are content to plod along with our second rate faculties and powers.

LUCINDA PEARL BOGGS.

URBANA, ILLINOIS.

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Syndicalism and Philosophical Realism. J. W. SCOTT. London: A. & C. Black. 1919. Pp. 215.

Speculations in politics and social science, no less than in philosophy and psychology, have no doubt been vitiated by an extreme "intellectualism." Mr. Graham Wallas, whose position is on the whole anti-intellectual, has given an important warning against going too far in the opposite direction. He asserts that "the loose anti-intellectualism which now threatens to take the place of the old intellectualism may prove to be infinitely more dangerous in the twentieth century."¹ Mr. J. W. Scott's *Syndicalism and Philosophical Realism* is a vivid portrayal of the close connection between the iconoclasms of revolutionary socialism and certain anti-intellectual tendencies in contemporary philosophical thought. The relation between the general ideas put forward by philosophy and the events taking place in the social and political world is one exceedingly difficult to determine. In this book we have the general thesis

¹ *Great Society*, p. 43.