



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

that we can perceive our responses only as they appear as images from past experience, merging with the sensuous stimulation. We can not present the response while we are responding. We can not use our responses to others as the materials for construction of the self—this imagery goes to make up other selves. We must socially stimulate ourselves to place at our own disposal the material out of which our own selves as well as those of others must be made.

The "I" therefore never can exist as an object in consciousness, but the very conversational character of our inner experience, the very process of replying to one's own talk, implies an "I" behind the scenes who answers to the gestures, the symbols, that arise in consciousness. The "I" is the transcendental self of Kant, the soul that James conceived behind the scene holding on to the skirts of an idea to give it an added increment of emphasis.

The self-conscious, actual self in social intercourse is the objective "me" or "me's" with the process of response continually going on and implying a fictitious "I" always out of sight of himself.

Inner consciousness is socially organized by the importation of the social organization of the outer world.

GEORGE H. MEAD.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

DISCUSSION

RELIGION AND THE DISCOVERY OF TRUTH¹

PROFESSOR STRATTON'S book is almost altogether concerned with the exhibition of the range of the conflict of motives, of feelings, and of ideas in religious life. In a final brief chapter, however, he argues in favor of the proposition that "religion is justified in taking part in the discovery of truth." I wish to make the following comments upon his defense of that thesis.

There are, we are told, four varieties of truth; and religion is concerned with all four of them. The worshiper, when his faith is at its best, does not only want to "believe usefully and in all consistency and with a just sense of relative values"; he wants also to believe that the ideal world exists not merely in someone's idea, but also independently of the thinker. Let the reader bear in mind that this fourth kind of truth is the one discussed by Professor Stratton and the only one with which I shall be concerned in these pages. It is often called objective truth, but he prefers the term *factual truth*.

¹ *A propos* of Professor Stratton's book, "The Psychology of the Religious Life." London: George Allen and Company. 1911.

I shall first summarize briefly our author's argument. We are reminded that although the scientist looks upon the universality of causal relations as rigorous and demonstrable at every point, yet "observation has found such causes only within narrow limits; and even these are discovered only by assuming in every observation the truth of the very principle which the observation seems to verify. Deep within us is the desire for causal explanation; and largely because we are ill at ease until this desire is gratified, we come at last to believe unhesitatingly in that kind of universe which alone makes explanation possible." Why should not religion enjoy the same privilege? The need of sympathy and of full companionship has as good a right to bring into existence its own great belief that the world is morally harmonious, as the need of explanation has the right to build an objective world held to be permeated throughout by causal relations. "There is something that tells us to connect and surround the fragments of experience in such wise that the whole will answer to the moral impulse. Shut within our little cell of self, we can not see that the whole *is* moral, more than we can see that it is beautiful or reasonable or that it furnishes a causal explanation of all we experience. . . . If we will not believe, there is no recourse; no one can demonstrate to us that morality runs through the universe any more than that causation runs through all. If accepted, however, the moral principles leads to a more spacious world, as does the causal principle."

So far my quotations from Professor Stratton's argument seem a straight-out defense of the right to believe whatever we feel the need of believing. But this does not represent fairly the author's position. He accepts the moral principle as only one "among several great guides to what is real." And he admits that under the leadings of that principle "there is room and demand for the utmost critical care." "The acceptance of the moral principle does not of itself reveal what, in all definiteness, that moral world is, but demands of us observation and critical cunning before we decide what is the concrete system of fact that meets this high demand for perfect comradeship."

There is nothing in these statements with which I would disagree. Nevertheless, for reasons which I shall now try to make clear, I find myself out of sympathy with Professor Stratton's attitude. The heart and the conscience have certainly a rôle to play in the search after truth. But man has not waited for the permission of the philosopher to accept the guidance of his moral needs in determining reality. Religious souls have usually done more; they have behaved as if the moral needs were not merely one of the guides to knowledge, but its only instrument. It is because of this wantonness of piety that the

dominant religious beliefs of the present, instead of harmonizing with and completing those of science, are altogether alien or antagonistic to them. The Ritschlian school of theology, for instance, in order to save "faith," claims in behalf of theology a complete divorce of science and metaphysics. The present conflict between science and religion is due chiefly, it appears to me, to a refusal on the part of the upholders of religious tradition to acknowledge the rights of intelligence.

Under these circumstances, why should the psychologist, writing on religion, be at pains to defend the right of religion rather than endeavor to indicate adequately the nature of the function of the moral promptings in the determination of factual truth? Professor Stratton would, it seems to me, have rendered a more needed service had he developed his bare statement regarding "the observation and critical cunning" that should be exercised when the moral principle is allowed a share in the guidance of intelligence. What mental activities are involved in the manifestation of that critical cunning? I shall try to answer this question by setting down the factors taking part in a discovery of objective truth, whether of the material or of the spiritual order, and indicating their respective functions.

1. At the root of the search for truth there is always, as instigator, a prompting, a need, a desire; for instance, a desire for orderly sequence, for beauty, for justice, for love, for power. Just as our need of order in the physical universe normally and rightfully leads us to *desire* the existence of fixed causal laws and a detailed knowledge of them, so the needs of the heart and of the conscience normally and rightfully prompt us to *desire* objects that may gratify them and a detailed knowledge of how the satisfaction may be best secured. Human needs, whatsoever they are, provide thus the *motive* for the search after factual truth and determine its direction.

2. The recognition of the gratification of the need, when it comes, is of course independent of the manner in which it has been secured; the recognition does not go beyond the states of consciousness themselves.

3. There remains the determination of the cause of the gratification. Is, for instance, the alleged object a real perception or only an hallucination; or is the exalted conviction of the man who thinks he has been in communion with God due to the action of an objectively real being? The impulses, the needs, the desires, have no legitimate part in determining the answer to either of these questions, beyond keeping one interested in the search. The needs may, however, thwart the inquiry by making impossible the free operation of the mind. The only way in which any advance can be made toward the discovery of factual truth, whether in matters physical or spirit-

ual, is by untrammelled intellectual criticism: by observation, comparison, discrimination, association, inference.

We reach thus the conclusion that the relation of human needs—whether the need of causal explanation, of logical consistency, of moral harmony, or of any other kind—to the discovery of the trans-subjective reality through which they may be gratified is expressible in the following propositions. All human needs have the same function in the discovery of factual truth: *they constitute merely demands and incentives*. It is the intellect which passes upon the validity of each proposition affirming, in the interest of any need, objective existence. The determination “of the concrete system of facts” qualified to meet the demands of the heart and of conscience belongs thus also to science.

Can those who would reject these propositions say why and wherein the rights of the intellect should be different, when the question is one of the satisfaction of the body, from when it is one of the satisfaction of the heart? In the first case, there is, for instance, a craving. The object desired may take a definite form—let it be some particular food or medicine. The desired food or drug taken, the body is satisfied. In the other case, the heart yearns for friendship or love; the object of the craving may here also assume a definite form; it may be a man, a woman, or a god. Presently the heart has found its satisfaction. The need as felt, and the gratification as experienced, are incontrovertible, absolute facts. It would be as absurd for science to challenge them as to challenge bare sensation or simple feeling. But it is otherwise when it is affirmed that one particular substance is the cause of the relief to the body or that the objective existence of a particular transhuman order of Being is necessarily implied in the moral comfort. Science is here, and in both instances equally, in its rightful province.

And what can be the intention of those who, when comparing the validity of religious and scientific propositions, remind us that science proceeds upon assumptions that can not be fully verified; that “scientific labor is always a sifting and a rearranging and supplementing of what the senses offer”? What of that? Do they imply that an equal freedom is refused to religion? That would be a preposterous implication. Would that religion were as careful in establishing its factual truths as is science! As a matter of fact, whenever it has been possible to put to an experimental test the scientific belief that causal relations hold throughout the physical universe, the belief has been verified. The only proper use that may be made of the fact quoted above is as a warning to religion that although it, as well as science, possesses the right to make hypotheses, it can not claim for them equal certainty with those of science until, when examined with all possible critical cunning, these religious hypotheses have been

found to fit the facts for the explanation of which they were devised. Does, for instance, the hypothesis of a righteous and benevolent personal God in direct communication with man and in control of the physical world fit the facts as the known physical phenomena fit the hypotheses of science? The only possible answer to this query is negative. The effort of William James to show scientific cause for the acceptance of the fundamental proposition of the historical religions (action of superhuman being or beings in human affairs) has only made more evident the insufficiency of that foundation.

An attempt is made at times to reinforce the argument under criticism by drawing an analogy from the common belief in the existence of other minds than our own. A rigid scientific method, we are told, would lead the investigator to the belief that his was the only mind in the universe. "Our friends that now are would then be for us mere bodies governed by curious laws of reflex or other physiological action." "Yet every sane mind rejects such a view. And why? Because the social, the moral instincts, are outraged by it . . . ours must be a world wherein there is mutual recognition, mutual regard. An ineradicable sense of the value of others requires that they too shall be real." "The enlargement of the universe according to the ways of religion is in the main but a further yielding to this rightful impulse." What a misleading analogy! Human beings are objects of sense to me: I touch, see, hear, them. They behave exactly as I do and respond obviously to my presence. These beings meet every scientific test of my belief that they think and feel as I do. But the hypothesis of religion, of an unseen being or beings acting upon man—whatever its worth—is far from meeting equally well the same test of objective reality. On the contrary, the more carefully the sequences of events are observed, the less convincing becomes the demonstration. So that there is no parity between the validity of the belief in the existence of sentient human beings and that in superhuman persons.

It is sometimes affirmed that science is threatening the very existence of religion. As a matter of fact, that which science is destroying is not religion, but particular religious beliefs, as, for instance, that in a Father who stands to man in the direct personal relation implied in Christian worship. The truth is that it is the heart which makes a stubborn war upon science, for it contests the right of the understanding to pass judgment upon propositions affirming transsubjective existence.

Under these circumstances it would seem that the task of the philosopher in religion is to initiate an honest search for means of gratification sufficient to the heart and acceptable to the intellect,

rather than to attempt a defense of religion in its disregard of the rightful function of the intellect.

If venerable beliefs give way, let it be recalled that one and the same need may be variously relieved. The diet a man thinks the only diet upon which he can live may not even be the best diet for him. So it is, no doubt, of those means for the gratification of the moral nature discovered by humanity in this the first part of its religious history.

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE.

JAMES H. LEUBA.

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

A System of Psychology. KNIGHT DUNLAP. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912. Pp. xiv + 368.

Dunlap's "System of Psychology" is a text-book to be used by the semi-advanced student as supplementary reading. The book treats practically the same topics as most of the similar texts with the exception of the last three chapters on the subconscious, the ego, and the occult. Great care is given to the definition of the terms used and we desire to call attention to a well-worked-out terminology which seems to be capable of consistent use.

There is no doubt that the book is written in an easy style. The influence of William James is very noticeable and it seems that the author has been inspired not only with the ideas of the "Principles of Psychology," which he calls the most important of all books in point of theory, but also with its style, for we noticed several mannerisms peculiar to the diction of William James. Dunlap believes that the data of psychology must be described in terms of theories which are more or less philosophical, and that an attempt to divorce the data from the theories would result in an uncritical acceptance of fragments of theories.

The philosophical view-point is emphasized to such an extent that the discussion of experimental results is almost entirely neglected. This feature of the book is, perhaps, less noticeable in the chapters dealing with sensation, but it is very pronounced in the discussion of the more complex mental processes. The text contains frequent references to every-day experiences, among which the well-known "inkwell which stands on the desk before me" plays an important part, but experimental evidence is rarely spoken of, and recent investigation is generally disregarded. The reader will be surprised to find in a text-book on modern psychology something on the transcendental unity of apperception and a short chapter on "Platonic Ideas and Matter." It is characteristic of the book that it gives three references on Platonic Ideas, while only two are given on association and one on concept and judgment.

The author does not undertake, of course, to offer first-hand information in an elementary text-book, and very likely it would be unjust to expect the possession of such information in all the fields of psychology