

W THE PROBLEM OF FAITH AND REASON  
With special Reference to Robin George Collingwood

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by

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts, University of Nairobi, 1991.

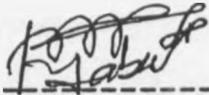
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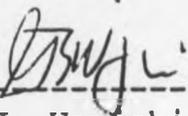
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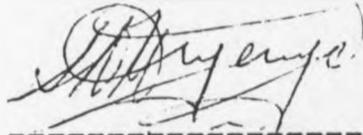
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents.

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## ABSTRACT

The initial chapter of this thesis embraces a deliberation on the aim, method, justification and significance of the research. Besides, it includes the views of certain eminent philosophers of the past concerning the issue at hand, that is, the problem of faith and reason.

Subsequently, I have endeavoured to explain the various significations of "faith" and "reason" in chapter two and three, respectively, and with a view to clarifying their meanings further. Chapter two lays emphasis on the non-religious aspect of faith while chapter three exemplifies the role played by reason in logic. Here reasoning is defined as a process or an activity of the mind in which there is a transition from the premises to the conclusions. Chapter two deals generally with faith in absolute terms, that is, faith as a genus of the different species of faith.

In analyzing the concept of faith and reason, I have used deductive logic mainly. My approach to this issue is deductive rather than inductive. And in chapter four I have supported the view that faith and reason are natural and necessary mental states. This is also the view of Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943), an English historian, archaeologist and philosopher of no mean achievement. But I have also criticised the author's association of reason with emotion in his classification of the different aspects of reason. I have argued, instead, that emotion and reason are opposites.

But in chapter five, I have moved on to the discussion of the various arguments for the existence of God because they have a special significance and relevance to the problem of faith and reason. All of them try to show, in one way or the other, that faith in God is justifiable. They purport that

the existence of God can be proved by the use of reason in combination with faith. Chapter five demonstrates the way religious men have applied reason in order to understand, or to rationalise belief in God.

The point is that these arguments can be used to show that faith and reason are compatible ideas because in them faith and reason have been combined. Perhaps, it would be more accurate to call them explanations, rather than proofs, of God's existence because, in the final analysis, they do not establish God's existence beyond any reasonable doubt, particularly to a person who is not already a believer. May be only a real encounter between the atheist and God could possibly convince the former of the latter's existence. Now, I have considered three different view concerning the possible proof of the existence of God. First, that God's existence can be proved; secondly, that God's existence can not be proved and thirdly, that God's existence cannot be disproved. And I have settled for the view that it can neither be proved nor be disproved.

The third view consists of a double negative or a negation of the negation, that is, "cannot be disproved". Of course, this does not mean that God's existence can be proved, which is the first statement. Rather, it means that God's existence is self-evident to the extent that no evidence can disprove it. But my position in this thesis is not just that God's existence can not be disproved. Rather, my view here is that God's existence is a matter of faith. And as such, it transcends the limitations of any proof by rational inquiry. My view is summarised in the second statement above, that God's existence can not be proved because it is above reason. And this statement is positive rather than negative.

Finally, Chapter six tries to reconcile faith and reason with respect

to the problem of evil. Here, I have stated that the problem of evil purports that it is quite unreasonable to believe in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient and all - good God when evil is still a factor in the world.

However, I have argued at the same time that the problem of evil does not destroy faith in God completely because there are some other ways of explaining away the problem of evil without necessarily resorting to atheism. For instance, what is reasonable for the unbeliever may not necessarily be reasonable for the believer, let alone for God.

My conclusion concerning the problem of faith and reason is that both of these are interdependent characteristics of the mind. As such, they are equally significant for cognition. But more specifically, my thesis is that it is secular faith which is as indispensable as reason in the universal sense. For one can be rational but still lack religious faith. However, none can do without non-religious faith and remain rational.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

There are at least three categories of people; firstly, some who believe in God; secondly, those who do not believe in God and lastly, many others who suspend judgement concerning the question of the existence or the non-existence of God. These are theists, atheists and agnostics, respectively.

Theists are convinced that it is reasonable to believe in the existence of God whereas atheists think that it is quite unreasonable to believe in God's existence. But the agnostic claims to be neutral concerning the existence or the non-existence of God. He maintains that the most reasonable position to be taken with regard to the issue of the existence of God or His non-existence is to admit that we do not know whether God exists or not. For there is no sufficient evidence for drawing either of these extreme conclusions.

The term "agnostic" was coined in 1869 by a British scientist, Thomas Huxley, (1825-1895). He used it to describe a person who does not affirm or deny the existence of God. Generally, the term "agnosticism" refers to the suspension of belief in anything for which there is insufficient evidence. But the so-called sufficiency of evidence is really an abstract notion, for it is difficult to tell when the available evidence should be considered satisfactory. There is no gauge for detecting the adequacy of evidence.

Though believers may declare that it is not the case that God's existence cannot be proved, sceptics may still charge that if God's existence could be proved then there would be no cases of atheism and agnosticism. However, believers insist that God is real and that atheists and agnostics have simply

missed the point, otherwise they would also become believers like others.

## **STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Certain philosophers may fall into the temptation of treating the problem of faith and reason as an anachronism by relegating it to the past, particularly to the medieval and the scholastic epoch. However, this thesis shows that their position is mistaken since the problem in question is still a fervent issue in philosophy even today.

There is also a tendency amongst agnostics as well as atheists to pose as the only ones who are rational and to dismiss theists as religious fanatics who claim to know what everybody else does not know. However, many believers also tend to regard the non-believers not only as irreligious but also as irrational people who do not know what is right for them. The former take the truth of religious propositions for granted but non-believers are intent on questioning the authenticity of such statements on the basis of reason. For them, religion or faith, is opposed to reason as the two sides of the coin. But believers contend that faith is either in accordance with reason or else it transcends the limitation of reason. Hence the problem of faith and reason.

This study is the outcome of two things; First, my dissatisfaction with the various ways in which the issue of faith and reason has been treated previously. Secondly, this study springs from a personal difficulty which I have always had in choosing between relying on faith or reason or both as ways of knowing.

Faith is commonly defined as "an attitude of belief which goes beyond the available evidence",<sup>1</sup> and reason has been defined as a "capacity in man to

draw logical conclusions".<sup>2</sup> But both of these terms have a variety of other senses as I have endeavoured to show in chapter two and three. Thus the quotations above only serve as operational definitions.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The first task that I have set to do is to clarify the various meanings or usages of the terms "faith" and "reason". Having done this, I hope I will have removed any confusion regarding their significations. The ultimate goal is the reconciliation of the defenders of faith and the proponents of reason. Secondly, I wish to establish the possible relationship between the concepts of faith and reason. This should lead me, in turn, to conclude whether R. G. Collingwood is mistaken or not in advocating what he called the "Rapprochement between faith and reason".

## **JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

The ideas of faith and reason are often misunderstood and confused with each other so much so that some religious people have taken it upon themselves to accuse the advocates of reason of their little faith and in so doing, they have themselves faced the counter-charge that they have sacrificed their ratiocination at the alter of faith. It is in the light of such misunderstanding and confusion regarding the meanings of these concepts that this study should be justified.

The problem of faith and reason also borders on the relationship between theology and philosophy as well as on the connection between religion and science. It is for this reason that I hope that this study will serve as a

source of information regarding these matters.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

I shall operate under the general theoretical framework adopted by R. G. Collingwood in his discussion of the problem of faith and reason. This is the theory of "the overlap of classes".<sup>3</sup> According to this conceptual framework philosophical concepts like faith and reason do overlap like the species of the same genus. Hence Collingwood's theory of the "rapprochement between faith and reason".<sup>4</sup>

## **HYPOTHESES**

Basically, there are a couple of hypotheses which I plan to test for their validity or invalidity as the case may be. These are: First, faith and reason are related concepts; Secondly, faith and reason are mutually exclusive concepts. Now, as shown in chapter four, the first hypothesis can itself be subdivided into four different hypotheses, namely; that faith is a subset of reason; that reason is a subset of faith; that reason and faith mean the same thing and finally, that there is an area of overlap between faith and reason.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The theoretical nature of the topic in question compels me to conduct my research mainly in the library. But more specifically, the method which I have adopted for my discussion of this topic is conceptual and analytic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A French Mathematician and Philosopher, Blaise Pascal (1623-1666) admitted the agnostic position - that it is impossible to understand whether God exists or not by rational means. According to him, if one believes in God and it happens that He exists, then one stands to gain the divine gift of eternal life. However, if one believes in God but He does not exist, then one has nothing to lose. Similarly, if one does not believe in God and it turns out that God is real, then one will have to forfeit the reward of everlasting life in addition to being subjected to the penalty of eternal suffering in hell, as some Christians believe. But since an eternal life is better than an eternal torture, Pascal concluded that it is also better to believe in God than not believe in Him.<sup>5</sup> This famous argument has been called Pascal's wager in honour of its originator.

Nevertheless, this Wager tends to treat belief in God as a bet and the believer as a gambler with something at stake, thereby reducing the substance of belief to a quasi-frivolous affair, for the believer is portrayed here as somebody who is out for a selfish personal gain, as a reward for his belief. One should believe in God because it is right to believe in Him and not for any ulterior motive. A genuine believer is sure of God's existence even if he cannot convince others about the truth of his belief. He has the conviction that he stands to gain the reward of eternal life for his faith in God. It does not occur to him that he might have to lose the spiritual boon of eternal life. In other words, the believer is assured of God's existence and the fulfilment of divine promises in the future.

Nonetheless, belief in itself is not a guarantee of eternal life. Belief as a mere intellectual assent to religious propositions may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the acquisition of the divine gift of eternal life. In any case, Christians believe also that those who do the will of God will be rewarded with the gift of eternal life on the Day of Judgement.

A modified version of Pascal's Wager was given by William James (1842-1910), the American Psychologist and one of the principal founders of the philosophy of pragmatism. Like Pascal, James argued in "The Will to Believe" (1896), that it is better to believe than not to believe in God. He held that belief in God is preferable to disbelief not only because it leads to everlasting life in the hereafter but also because it has beneficial consequences in the practical lives of believers here and now.

James argued that belief has the effect of improving the quality of life among believers. By this token, a religious life is thought to be much happier than a non-religious one. But the fact that one is religious does not seem to be the sole criterion of happiness. Even a non-religious person could be happy. Indeed, there are so many religious men who lead very miserable lives while a good number of non-believers seem to enjoy a happy life. Unfortunately, the concept of happiness may mean different things to different people. For instance, a reasonably rich family may consider itself unhappy but it might be regarded by a poorer family as being happy. Indeed sometimes the rich may suppose that the poor are happier than themselves and the poor may think that the rich are happier than themselves.

As a pragmatist, James was anti-rationalist. For him, rationalism meant the same thing as intellectualism, which he defined as the "refusal to believe

in anything concerning which evidence has not yet come in".<sup>6</sup> The author was opposed to the rationalistic tradition which purports that we ought to follow the dictates of reason always and we should not be guided by emotions or feelings while we make decisions. On the contrary, James contended that the will has a legitimate right to intervene in the justification of belief in the "religious hypothesis" even in the absence of evidence in support of God's existence. He defined a hypothesis as "anything that may be proposed to our belief".<sup>7</sup> He was persuaded to think that the existence of God, as a religious hypothesis, is a matter of faith which cannot be left entirely up to reason to decide. In the case where there is no sufficient evidence for the existence of God nor counter evidence for God's non-existence, James argued that the will needs to intervene and help to decide in favour of the existence of God:

Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions whether it is a genuine option that cannot by its own nature be decided on intellectual ground; for to say under such circumstances, "don't decide but leave the question open", is itself a passional decision -just like deciding yes or no, -and is attended with the risk of losing the truth.<sup>8</sup>

James' pragmatic idea of truth is markedly opposed to most people's opinion about the truth. One would expect what is true to be true for all time and in all places. But James was against the absolutist view of truth. For him, what is true is what is better (because expedient or useful) for us to believe. The truth of an idea is based on its expediency or its value. And the truth of an idea must be verified in experience. If the idea is found to be

workable then it is said to be true.

The pragmatic idea of truth is said to be capitalistic to the extreme, for it lays emphasis on the profitability of ideas. Yet whatever is useful or useless for one person, generation or community may not necessarily be useful or useless for a different generation or community. One can conceive of an idea which is true but useless to some people. Thus the usefulness or uselessness of an idea is not the right criterion of truth. Even though belief in God may yield good results in the practical lives of believers, this is no justification for saying that it is true.

James was convinced that the agnostic is as much of a non-believer as the atheist himself because there is no possibility of genuine neutrality with regard to the issue of the existence or non-existence of God. The agnostic cannot stand on the fence concerning this matter. Since the agnostic does not acknowledge the existence of God, he is an unbeliever. He cannot pretend to be indifferent in this issue. We cannot assume that the agnostic is a believer simply because he does not deny God's existence. His silence concerning this question must not be interpreted as consent to the proposition that God exists, rather, it must be taken as a dissent from the view that God exists.

In Basic Issues in the Philosophy of Religion (1972), Keith E. Yandell devotes the last chapter of his book to the discussion of the problem of faith and reason. For him,

Religious faith is an exhaustive interpretation of men and things in which they are regarded as created and providentially sustained by a being worthy of complete devotion and obedience ---. Neither deductive proof from premises which are self-evident or empirically well

supported, nor support via probability arguments, can vindicate this or any other interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

Yandell argues that no proposition of religious faith should be called into question by reason because such statements can not be comprehended by the faculty of human reason due to the latter's limitation; statements of religious faith transcend the bounds of reason.

But according to John Locke, faith and reason are not in conflict with each other.<sup>10</sup> Even though Locke admitted that genuine faith must depend, in the final analysis, on rational justification, he also suggested that there are certain matters of faith which human reason is incapable of comprehending because of its finitude. For him, these propositions of religious faith include, for example, the doctrines of the rebellion of some angels against God and the Trinity.

And in Beyond the New Theism, A Philosophy of Religion (1975), Germain Grisez tried to demonstrate that God's existence can be proved through rational argumentation; "I think that it is necessary to reason from the world towards God."<sup>11</sup> The author held this position in spite of four opposing views which try to show, in one way or the other, that it is quite unnecessary to reason from the world towards God. These are as follows: first, that God's existence is self-evident; secondly, that the existence of God can only be known through a religious commitment; thirdly, that the reality of God can only be accepted through His self-revelation; and lastly, that the only way to understand God's existence is to familiarize oneself with the meaning of the word "God" as Saint Anselm pointed out in his ontological argument for the

existence of God. Grisez rejected these views and argued that faith is not incompatible with reason.

The issue of faith and reason has also attracted the attention of Antony J. Lisska in Philosophy Matters (1977). The author traces the origins of the debate concerning this issue back to three theologians viz., Tertullian (165-220), St. Augustine (354-430) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

The first approach to the issue of faith and reason was developed, according to Lisska, by Tertullian, the second by St. Augustine and the third by St. Thomas Aquinas. It was the former who said Credo Qua Absurdum Est ("I believe because the propositions of religious faith are absurd").<sup>12</sup> For him, these propositions were absurd not in the trivial sense of being funny but simply because they could only be understood through a blind leap of faith on the side of the believer. The same view was supported later on by Martin Luther (1483-1546) during the Reformation as well as by the nineteenth-century Swedish Philosopher and the founder of modern existentialism, Søren Kierkegaard. As Christians, these writers believed that only God could make the propositions of religious faith intelligible.

As a great man of faith, St. Augustine too, took matters of religious faith for granted. He first accepted them as true before subjecting them to the rigorous scrutiny of rational inquiry. For him, where reason happens to contradict divine truths, faith should preponderate. St. Augustine subordinated reason to faith. St. Aquinas, for his part, argued that God's existence could be established through the use of rational arguments as evidenced by the Five Ways in his cosmological proof (see Chapter Five). He argued that there is no conflict between faith and reason.

But in *The Ways of Philosophy* (1979) Milton K. Munitz wrote that faith is just but one of the three methods for establishing the existence of God. The others are the method of rational argument and the method of religious experience. The method of rational argument is exemplified in its classical form by St. Anselm's ontological argument and St. Thomas Aquinas's cosmological argument.

Nevertheless, Munitz distinguished between two things, that is, between the use of rational argument to prove the existence of God and a similar use of the argument in proving the legitimacy of the method of faith. But the method of rational inquiry could as well be used to evaluate the method of religious experience as well as the method of rational argument itself. However, to use reason to justify faith implies that the two methods are not mutually exclusive ways of establishing God's existence.

Those who insist on the method of religious experience say that it is needless to try to prove the existence of God through rational argumentation though they do not deny the applicability of the method of religious experience for establishing the existence of God. In fact, some men of faith regard any attempt to prove God's existence as blasphemy. For them, such an act amounts to casting doubt on the divine existence.

Finally, R. G. Collingwood defined faith as a religious attitude of mind "which accepts without criticising, pronounces without proving and acts without arguing"<sup>13</sup> and reason, as a scientific "habit of mind which aims at criticising before it accepts, proving before it pronounces and arguing before it acts."<sup>14</sup> If these rhetorical definitions are anything to go by, then faith and reason

are clearly two distinct ideas, for as the author has shown above, what the one is, the other is not. However, he thinks otherwise since he maintains that this is only superficially so and that faith is, at bottom, associated with reason in such a way that neither of them can do without the other. As Collingwood himself has put it, "faith cannot exist without reason,"<sup>15</sup> just as much as "reason, conversely, cannot exist without faith,"<sup>16</sup> and "faith unaccompanied by reason, therefore, is no true faith."<sup>17</sup>

These then are some of the views of the writers who have had occasion to address themselves to the problem of faith and reason, either explicitly or implicitly. Yet the debate concerning the role of faith and reason continues which means that the problem of faith and reason remains unsolved. And this thesis is my contribution to the on-going debate.

## NOTES

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14. Collingwood, op. cit.
15. ibid., p. 143.
16. ibid., p. 144.
17. ibid., p. 134.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WHAT IS FAITH?

The term `faith' derives from the Latin word `fidere' which means `to-trust'. Ordinarily, it refers to the act of trusting in somebody or in something. We can say that anybody who has faith in any other person or in anything else, for that matter, has a steadfast belief or confidence in the reliability, the strength or goodness of that person or that thing. One who can be trusted thus is a trustworthy person. Unlike an untrustworthy person, he is worthy of trust. For he is reliable and honest at the same time. As a faithful person, he can be relied on to say the truth and to do the right, save for common mistakes like forgetfulness; in any case, to err is human. No wonder then that most people should prefer a trustworthy person to an untrustworthy person. On the contrary, very few people are prepared to bank on an untrustworthy person for anything since he is liable to be a conman. An untrustworthy person may be mistrusted for various reasons. For example, others may distrust him on account of his habitual failure to keep his promises in so far as the payment of debts and taxes is concerned. When I say, for instance, that `I have no faith in doctor X', I mean that I do not trust him and that my lack of trust in him is a result of his dishonesty or my suspicion that he might not live up to my expectation of his reputation as a doctor.

Nevertheless, `faith' is a word which has several shades of meaning. Sometimes it may be used to mean hope, optimism or expectation. In these three cases, `faith' refers to positive thinking. According to Napoleon Hill, faith is one of the most powerful, positive emotions besides the emotions of hope,

desire, sex, romance, enthusiasm and love. He says that

Faith is the `eternal elixir which gives life, power and action to the impulse of thought... Faith is the starting point of all accumulation of riches! Faith is the basis of all miracles and mysteries which cannot be analyzed by the rules of science. Faith is the only known antidote for failure! Faith is the element, the `chemical' which when mixed with prayer, gives one direct communication with Infinite Intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, Hill underscores the singular importance of non-religious faith as a powerful driving force behind any meaningful success in life. In this case, faith is seen in terms of a confident attitude or approach to life, a kind of weltanschauung, that is, a world view.

One who has faith has no doubt whatsoever in his mind that he will achieve the goal of his desire, hopes and wishes in the near future. As an ambitious person, the man who has faith may carry himself as if he is already in possession of his target. For this reason, others may scoff at him as a day-dreamer or a lunatic. They may think of him as a wishful thinker who is under the wrong impression that he can make things to take place in the way he wants them to happen by simply believing that things have already occurred as he wants them to be although they have not yet come about in the real sense.

The men who have this kind of faith usually have an obsessive desire to make their dreams to come true. As Hill would put it, they have a burning desire to succeed, an earnest yearning for great achievements in life. It is not unusual to catch such people unawares as they talk to themselves on a

journey and on account of their preoccupation with a problem which they are anxious to solve.

As far as Hill is concerned, faith does wonders and miracles for those who possess it. For him, faith is the motive force behind all types of progress. There is really no task on earth that can ever be accomplished without an element of faith. All things are possible through faith, so some people believe. Alternatively, nothing is possible without faith. There is nothing which can be achieved without a measure of faith. As James Talmage has rightly acknowledged.

Faith is the motive principle that impels men to resolve and to act, without its exercise we would make no exertion the results of which are future; without faith that he may gather in the autumn, man would not plant in the spring; neither would he essay to build did he not have confidence that he would finish the structure and enjoy its use; had the student no faith in the possibility of successfully following his studies he would not enter upon his courses.<sup>2</sup>

Everything is wrought through faith, no matter how negligible<sup>3</sup> that faith may happen to be. One succeeds or fails to obtain the object of one's aim depending on the magnitude of one's faith. He who has much faith succeeds much better than he who has only a little faith. By the same token, it follows that if one has no faith at all (which is obviously impossible since everyone needs at least some faith) then one cannot do anything at all. The success or failure of somebody to do something is directly proportionate to the degree of his faith. The foregoing case is only a hypothetical one. Besides, it has been taken to its logical absurdity since nobody can afford to do without faith. It

is the degree of faith which differs from one person to another. Again, as Talmage has observed,

Remove man's faith in the possibility of any desired success and you rob him of the incentive to strive. He would not stretch forth his hand to seize did he not believe in the possibility of securing that for which he reaches. This principle becomes therefore the impelling force by which men struggle for excellence oftentimes enduring vicissitudes and suffering that they may achieve their purposes. Faith is the secret of ambition, the soul of heroism, the motive power of effort.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, if man had no faith that the universe will continue to be as it has always been, he would probably lose hope in life and give up the will to continue living. For instance, let us assume that a person has no faith that the ground before him is hard enough to support his weight. If this is the case, he would not dare to take even the first step to walk on the ground in front of him. For he would have the fear that he might sink deep into the 'boggy' ground. Furthermore, had I no faith in the strength of this chair and its ability to hold me above the floor, I would most certainly decline to sit on it lest I fall down. So, faith in the general sense is applicable to all activities, including the simplest ones like the one I have just stated.

In fact, Hill says that he spent twenty years investigating the secret behind the success of such people as Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), doctor Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922), Henry Ford (1863-1947), John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) and Thomas Edison (1847-1931) and came up with a formula for success which involves the cultivation of faith as one of its most important ingredients. He was convinced that such men managed to acquire wealth and

fame through a combination of factors such as hope, imagination, determination, persistence, organized planning and faith itself. But faith per se does not guarantee one's success. If one has to achieve anything one has to back one's faith with action. As many Christians believe, "faith without works is dead" <sup>4</sup>

Hence the difference between faith and belief. Faith minus the necessary determination is tantamount to mere belief. Yet "it is obvious that faith is not a mere belief but an existential attitude" <sup>5</sup>. Though one may have a belief, say in God, but lack faith in Him, it is impossible for anyone to have faith but lack belief: "One cannot have faith without belief; yet he may believe and still lack faith".<sup>6</sup> This distinction between faith and belief is made on the understanding that belief is merely an intellectual assent to a proposition whereas faith is a practical belief. Belief is a passive acceptance of a proposition but "faith is active and positive, embracing such reliance and confidence as will lead to works".<sup>7</sup> Thus, the concept of faith has a wider scope than belief.

However, the difference between faith and belief is only a slight <sup>7</sup> one. In fact, sometimes these words are used interchangeably as if they were synonyms. Indeed, any discussion of faith which excludes belief is bound to be incomplete. Faith in its religious sense must be founded upon belief in God. Ultimately, faith and belief are related terms.

According to Collingwood, faith is a religious attitude or habit of mind

which accepts without criticising, pronounces without proving and acts without arguing. It knows nothing of analysis and classification, hypothesis and induction and syllogism. For the

machinery of thought it has no use.<sup>8</sup>

This is actually a comparison between faith and reason. Faith is regarded as a non-critical disposition towards divine matters. Faith embodies the conviction that the truth of religious propositions is indubitable.

The classical definition of 'faith' is found in the Holy Bible. Here, faith is said to be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".<sup>9</sup> Faith is man's assurance or confidence of the fulfilment of his hopes in the future.

So important is the role of faith at the centre of religion that it is sometimes equated with religion itself. For example, one may say, 'The Christian faith' or 'the Islamic faith' when one means the Christian religion or the religion of Islam, respectively. In addition, faith may depict the corpus of beliefs in any religion. In this case, faith refers to the beliefs and practices of a particular group of people, especially in so far as such beliefs and activities do incorporate the conviction that the realm of the supernatural is real.

All in all, I have endeavoured to show in this chapter that faith is a very important and powerful emotion. I have also tried to show here that there are two types of faith: non-religious faith and religious faith. I have shown that when Collingwood talks of faith what he has in mind is faith in absolute terms and this is the sense in which I also use the term. Finally, the main thrust of this chapter is the idea that faith is an indispensable characteristic of man. Another equally indispensable characteristic of man is his rational faculty as we shall see in the next chapter.

## NOTES

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## CHAPTER THREE

### WHAT IS REASON ?

Before any comparison can be drawn between reason and faith it is important, first of all, to know the particular context in which reason has been used. This is because reason may mean different things for different people, depending, of course, on the wide variety of senses which the word has in ordinary language.

Whenever the term 'reasoning' is employed it designates a mental process which is known as inference an activity by means of which the mind apprehends logical connections between facts or between certain statements which are called premises and a different statement which is known as the conclusion. An argument must have at least one ostensible premise and a the conclusion. Indeed, logicians are convinced that all arguments can be divided into two categories, that is, deduction and induction.

In logic deduction is normally contrasted with induction. Whereas deduction claims (though not always) that the conclusion derives from the premises with logical necessity, induction, on the other hand, only claims that the conclusion follows from the premises with logical probability. Deduction is the movement of the mind from the general to the particular but "the best definition of induction is that it is the passage from particular facts or cases to some common general truth without going through a middle term".<sup>1</sup> Hence, it is not a syllogism.

But in the philosophy of science, deduction is classified as one of the

four types of scientific explanations. These are: genetic explanation, statistical or probabilistic explanation, functional or teleological explanation and deductive or nomological explanation itself. However, I will not go into the discussion of the other types of scientific explanations apart from deduction and induction. Except for deduction, the other types of scientific explanations mentioned above consists of premises which are only probably true while deduction has premises which are certain. In addition, deductive reasoning is commonly found in logic and mathematics but inductive reasoning is most common in the empirical sciences:

Deduction, which is the kind of reasoning we find in Logic and Mathematics, gives conclusions which, if true, are necessarily true. They are true in the same way as analytic statements are true - there is nothing in the consequent which is not already present in the antecedent. Inductive reasoning, on the other hand, resembles empirical statements - it is concerned with the world of experience and provides us with new knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

A deductive argument is like an analytic statement because reason alone is adequate for the proof of its validity or invalidity, soundness or unsoundness. These terms will be explained later in this chapter. But an inductive argument is like an empirical statement because its cogency must be corroborated in experience.

An analytic statement is one in which the predicate term is contained in the subject term, whereas an empirical or a synthetic statement is one whose predicate term is independent of the subject term. An analytic statement is said to be a tautology, a statement which does not add anything to our knowledge of the world around us while an empirical statement is said to

replenish our knowledge of the world. "A tautology is a self-evident truth and at its simplest it is a statement of equality; for example '2=2' is a

tautology 'a rose is a rose' is a tautology".<sup>3</sup> An example of an analytic

statement is: 'A plane figure with three equal sides is an equilateral triangle'. Such a statement is necessarily true. But the following statement which is an example of an empirical statement is only probably true:

'Bald-headed men make bad husbands'.<sup>4</sup> This is a synthetic statement because

the predicate term (that is, 'husbands') is independent of the subject term (that is, 'bald-headed men'). Immanuel Kant gave 'all bodies are extended'<sup>5</sup>

as an example of an analytic judgement and 'all bodies are heavy'<sup>6</sup> as an example of a synthetic judgement.

Furthermore, a deductive argument can be classified as valid or invalid.

Besides, it can be categorized as sound or unsound. First, a deductive argument

is valid just in case the conclusion derives from the premises with logical

necessity. But it is invalid provided that the conclusion does not follow

with logical necessity from the premises. Secondly, a deductive argument is

sound if it is valid and all the premises are true. But it is unsound if it is

invalid or if it has at least one false premise. Thus, a deductive argument

can either be valid or invalid, sound or unsound. But only statement can be

described as true or false. Though an argument cannot, properly speaking, be

called true or false, it may be said to be correct or incorrect if it is

sound or unsound, respectively. The following is an example of a deductive

argument:

1. All men are mortal.
2. Mohammed is a man.
3. Therefore, Mohammed is mortal.

An argument such as the one above is called a syllogism. A syllogism is an argument which has at least two premises and the conclusion. One of the premises is the major premise and the other one is the minor premise. A syllogism must have exactly three terms, that is, the major term, the middle term and the minor term.

In the example above, granted that all men die and that Mohammed is a man is also liable to die like all men do. The first statement, 'all men are mortal,' is called the major premise and its predicate term, that is, the word 'mortal' is known as the major term. But the second statement, 'Mohammed is a man' is the minor premise and its predicate term which is the word 'man' is called the middle term. It also occurs in the major premise. It links both premises together thereby facilitating an inference. Finally, the name 'Mohammed' which is the subject term of the minor premise and the conclusion, is referred to as the minor term. The major term is the predicate term of the major premise as well as of the conclusion.

Deductive arguments can be divided into categorical syllogisms and hypothetical syllogisms. And hypothetical syllogism can be divided further into conditional, conjunctive and disjunctive syllogisms. But sometimes hypothetical syllogisms are referred to as composite syllogisms. A conjunctive syllogism has a conjunction as its major premise. A categorical syllogism is one which is made up of categorical propositions. Such propositions may take any of the following forms: first, a singular

proposition; for example, 'Mohammed is a man'; second, a universal affirmative proposition, for example, 'all men are mortal'; third, a universal negative proposition, for example, 'no men are immortal', fourth, a particular affirmative proposition, for example, 'some Britons are Negroes'; fifth, particular negative propositions, for example, 'some Britons are not Negroes'.<sup>7</sup>

But a hypothetical syllogism consists of conditional propositions, conjunctive propositions and disjunctive propositions depending on whether it is a conditional, a conjunctive or a disjunctive syllogism, respectively. For instance, a conditional syllogism has this format: propositions have this format: 'If....., then'. For example, 'If the day before yesterday was Saturday, then today is Monday'. Here, the clause which is introduced by the word 'if' is called the antecedent. In the example above, the proposition 'the day before yesterday was Saturday' is the antecedent. But the proposition which comes after the word 'then' is called the consequent. In the same example above, the consequent is the proposition 'today is Monday'.

A conditional syllogism has a conditional proposition as its major premise. But a syllogism which has a disjunctive proposition as its major premise is called a disjunctive syllogism. A disjunctive proposition has the form 'Either or...' In this case, the clause which is introduced by the word 'Either' is called a disjunct. Similarly, the clause which comes after the word 'or' is also called a disjunct. Below, I have used the conditional syllogism for illustrative purposes.

Patterns of valid deductive arguments of the conditional syllogism

(Inference rules)

1. Affirming the antecedent  
(modus ponens)

If P, then q.

P

∴ q.

2. Denying the consequent  
(modus tollens)

If P, then q.

Not q.

∴ Not P.

### Patterns of invalid deductive arguments

3. Affirming the consequent

If P, then q

q.

∴ p

4. Denying the antecedent

If P, then q.

Not p.

∴ Not q.

1. Affirming the antecedent

This is a valid form of reasoning. In this case, if the premises are true then the conclusion must of necessity be true as well. For example,

If Ndetei is a biologist, then he is a scientist.

Ndetei is a biologist.

Therefore, Ndetei is a scientist.

This argument is valid because being a biologist is a necessary, though not a sufficient condition for being a scientist in the same way that being a physicist or a chemist, for that matter, is only a necessary condition for being a scientist.

2. Denying the consequent

This is also a valid form of deductive reasoning. For example,

If you are a bachelor, then you are an unmarried male.

You are not an unmarried male.

Therefore, you are not a bachelor.

These are the two forms of valid deductive arguments with which I am concerned here.

### 3. Affirming the consequent

This is an invalid form of deductive inference. Actually it is a fallacy, that is, a logical mistake in reasoning. For example,

If you are a Christian, you are a theist.  
You are a theist.  
Therefore, you are a Christian.

This argument is obviously incorrect because there are many kinds of theists other than Christians. For instance, Jews are also theists. The conclusions of the argument does not follow necessarily from the premises. Being a Christian is only a necessary condition for being a theist but it is not a sufficient condition for being a theist.

### 4. Denying the antecedent

The fallacy of denying the antecedent is obviously another invalid form of deductive reasoning. For example,

If Kimiti is a logician, he is a philosopher.  
Kimiti is not a logician.  
Therefore, Kimiti is not a philosopher.

This is also an incorrect form of reasoning like the previous deductive argument. Given that a logician is a philosopher (since Logic is a branch of the major discipline of Philosophy), it may be wrong to claim that if one is not a logician then one is not a philosopher. For being a logician is a necessary, though not a sufficient condition, for being a philosopher. In any case, philosophy has different branches apart from logic. For example, Epistemology, Metaphysics and Ethics are also branches of philosophy. So, even if Kimiti is not a logician this does not necessarily mean that he is not a

philosopher. Indeed, Kimiti may not be a logician. But he could as well be an epistemologist or a metaphysician both of whom are also philosophers. Hence, Kimiti can still be a philosopher even if he is not a logician.

#### The problem of induction

In induction, we arrive at a general law as the conclusion drawn from the observation of only a limited number of particular instances. But there always remains the possibility of the falsification of such general laws. For example, water expands when it freezes and steam condenses into water when it is cooled below one hundred degrees celsius at sea level. And it is predicable that given the same weather conditions and other circumstances, water will always expand when it freezes (below zero degree celsius) and that steam will always convert into water when it is condensed below one hundred degrees celsius. Such conclusions are derived from the past cases in which water has always expanded and steam has always changed into water under the same conditions.

Unlike deduction, induction is the characteristic method of scientific experiments. It consists in the projection from the known to the unknown. The basic assumption in science is that there is uniformity in nature, that there are certain fixed natural laws such as the law of gravitation which allow scientists to make predictions of the future. But how can we be sure that the future will always be like the past? This question has been called the problem of induction.

Inductive reasoning involves the act of drawing conclusion from what has always been observed to be the case. But on what grounds can we be sure that things will remain the same? For example, one argues inductively when one draws the conclusion that 'all swans are white' from the fact that all the

swans that one has ever come across in one's lifetime have been white in colour. But who knows whether one day one might not stamp on a black swan, for example, by chance. Such an eventuality is highly probable. Thus, a good inductive argument can only be probable.

Again, one can make a general statement that iron sinks in water on the basis of the particular instances that one has observed different pieces of iron sink in water.<sup>8</sup> However, as scientists may say, the conclusion that 'iron always sinks in water' is inferred from innumerable cases in which bars of iron have sunk in water. This conclusion derives from a scientific law, that is, whatever has a higher density than a medium such as water will always sink in that medium, provided all things are constant. Similarly, one can also claim through inductive reasoning that the sun will rise and set tomorrow as it has always been rising and setting since time immemorial. Even so, we can still doubt whether the sun will continue to rise and set everyday in the future just because it has been doing so countless times in the past. However great the number of particular instances of the occurrence of an empirical event, one cannot infer from it the recurrence of such an event with certainty<sup>9</sup> but only with probability. We cannot be sure, for example, that the sun will rise tomorrow even if it rose yesterday and the day before yesterday and so on. All that we are justified to say is that it may or it may not rise tomorrow.

Now, in The Elements of Logic (1957), Vincent Edward Smith has made a clear distinction between two categories of induction, namely, abstractive induction and enumerative induction. And he has subdivided the latter into induction by complete enumeration and induction by incomplete enumeration<sup>9</sup>. According to

the author, abstractive induction is "the kind of induction which is performed in the first act of the mind to reach universal essences," <sup>10</sup> and he gave the following statements as examples of conclusions of abstractive induction: first, "man is rational" <sup>11</sup> and second, "the whole is greater than any of its parts". <sup>12</sup> Such propositions are based on our observation or experience of some and not all cases of men who are rational and wholes which are greater than their individual parts. Undoubtedly, none has examined all men and proved that they are all rational. Likewise, nobody has examined all wholes and proved them to be greater than their discrete parts. On what basis then, can we claim that something is true about a whole class of things when we have simply known it to be true about a small part of the class?

But the author held that in induction by complete enumeration "all cases of a certain kind are examined" <sup>13</sup> in contrast to induction by incomplete enumeration, "where there is an examination of only some cases of a given kind to reach a universal proposition". <sup>14</sup> For Smith, a statement such as "All of the apostles were jews" <sup>15</sup> is an example of the conclusion of induction by complete enumeration. One cannot know that all the apostles of Jesus Christ were Jews unless one ascertains that each one of them was a Jew. Besides, one must know the universal concept of 'Jew' before one can draw such a conclusion. In this regard induction by complete enumeration is closer to abstractive induction than induction by incomplete enumeration. <sup>16</sup> According to Smith, "all hydrogen is combustible" <sup>17</sup> is an example of a conclusion of induction by

incomplete enumeration. Certainly, nobody has carried out an experiment with all available hydrogen in the world and proved it to be inflammable or combustible. This conclusion is arrived at from experiments carried out only with limited samples of hydrogen. So, in induction by complete enumeration it is possible to give all the required instances for drawing the conclusion but this is impossible in induction by incomplete enumeration.

Perhaps, the foremost critic of induction was David Hume (1711-1776). He held that the scientific principle of causality is simply an effect of the habit of our minds. Thus, the reason that we do think that an event A causes B is because we have developed an intellectual habit of constantly associating these events in the mind. So, there is no causal connection between A and B.

Causes and effects are not independent of the mind. In other words, we have been accustomed to think in terms of a cause and an effect whenever events follow each other. There are no causes and effects in the world; this is only the way the mind functions.<sup>18</sup>

Now, the principle of induction, which Hume rejected, claims that if A has been followed or accompanied by B and there has never been any previous occasion when A was not followed by B then it is likely that the next time that A occurs we shall expect it to be followed by B. However, the fact that there has never been an exception to this rule does not rule out such a possibility in the future:

When we judge that A causes B, what has in fact happened so far as A and B are concerned, is that they have been frequently observed to be conjoined, i.e A has been immediately or very quickly, followed by B; we have no right to say that A must be followed by B, or will

be followed by B on future occasions. Nor have we any ground for supposing that, however often A is followed by B, any relation beyond sequence is involved. <sup>19</sup>

So, what happens whenever we claim that A causes B is that we have an impression of A which gives rise to the idea of B. What causes us to think that in future A will be followed by B is the fact that in the past we have always observed B following A and there has never been any instance in which B had not followed A. However, this is not enough justification to suppose that B will follow A in the future as it has always done in the past. We do not know for certain what the future holds with regard to the constant conjunction of A and B. Perhaps, things might be different and contrary to our expectation. So the evidence for holding the belief that the future resembles the past is insufficient, as Hume held.

So far we have been comparing deductive reasoning with inductive reasoning, especially as seen by logicians. However, it is important to note that rationalists tend to prefer deductive reasoning to inductive reasoning while empiricists emphasize the latter. For instance, Plato (428/427-347B.C) exalted the knowledge acquired through deductive reasoning rather than that acquired through inductive reasoning. In fact, he equated the latter with mere opinion and the former with the apprehension of the eternal Forms. For him, proper knowledge consists in the use of reason and not belief. But unlike Plato, Aristotle was an empiricist.

But whether reason is used deductively or inductively, the fact remains that it is an important tool for the acquisition of knowledge. Generally, though, the word 'reason' may be used in a technical sense in philosophy

whereby it refers to a certain faculty in the human mind, the faculty through which men think. When 'reason' is used in this special sense the word is usually written with an initial capital R in order to distinguish it from the other diverse senses of the word.

For his part, Collingwood departs slightly from this sense of reason when he defines it in general as a scientific habit or attitude of mind:

Reason, the scientific habit of mind, is the attitude which we take up towards things as parts of a whole, as finite things distinct from one another and connected with one another by a network of relations which it is the business of thought to trace out in detail.<sup>20</sup>

For Collingwood, reason is a critical attitude or mode of thinking.

Reason is not a credulous state of mind. For it does not take things for granted but subjects them to thorough and rigorous analysis before it can draw any conclusion regarding their truth or falsity. Nothing is to be accepted on insufficient evidence. Thus, whatever is not rationally demonstrable is to be rejected outright. Reason is the foundation of demonstrable knowledge.

As the author put it;

Reason is a habit of mind which aims at criticising before it accepts, proving before it acts'... Instead of relying on its own unanalyzed and instinctive intuitions, it thinks out a method, a logic for itself; it invents a logical machine to think with, and it thinks of the world as, at bottom, itself a machine ... cause and effect, action and reaction, part and whole are the categories of its thought.....<sup>21</sup>

Such a definition of reason is rather abstract. It does not show us exactly what the author means by reason in a plain, simple and straightforward language. The author's reliance on figurative language for conveying his points seems to conceal rather than to reveal what he means to say and it is only after a careful study that one can grasp the intended meaning of such a definition.

Apart from all these senses of the word 'reason' which I have dealt with above, there are still other shades of meanings of the word reason which I have scarcely touched on. For instance, reason may sometimes be used to mean any of the following: thought, cause, common sense, explanation, principle, purpose, justification for something and other related terms. I will, therefore, use Collingwood's definition of reason as an operational definition. Besides, I will compare it, in the next chapter, with his definition of faith.

## NOTES

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3. J. Trusted, The Logic of Scientific Inference. An Introduction, The Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1979, p.50.
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8. See F. Vivian, op cit. p.28.
9. See V.E. Smith, op. cit., pp.158-161.
10. ibid., p.158.
11. ibid., p.157.
12. ibid.
13. ibid., p.160.
14. ibid.
15. ibid., p. 157.
16. ibid., p.166
17. ibid., p.163
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19. B. Russell, A History of Western Philosophy And Its connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Days. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1945, p.666.
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21. ibid.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RELATION OF FAITH TO REASON

The problem of faith and reason stems from the fact that philosophers differ on the question concerning the possible relationship between the concepts of faith and reason. For some philosophers contend that the faith is irrational. If faith is irrational, then it is contrary to reason and if it is rational, then it is in line with reason. But if faith is non-rational, then it has nothing to do with reason, in which case, it is neither rational nor irrational.

As stated elsewhere in this thesis, the problem of faith and reason is a perennial one as it has preoccupied many philosophers in the past, the present, and it will probably continue to do so in the future. One of these philosophers was Robin George Collingwood. According to him,

The war between faith and reason is drawing to a close. The stage was set for it in the Middle Ages. It has been raging with varying intensity but without intermission since the Renaissance, and we are taking part in its concluding phase.<sup>1</sup>

By "war", which is a metaphor, the author means the conflict between the proponents of faith on the one hand, and those of reason on the other hand. This is a problem whose solution he thought could be discovered in his advancement of the theory of the rapprochement between faith and reason. According to him, faith is reconcilable with reason. For he argued that faith corresponds to a whole and reason to the details of its parts.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the

relation between faith and reason is comparable to the connection between a whole and its parts. For that reason, these concepts are really intertwined.

Whereas some philosophers insist that faith and reason are interrelated ideas, others argue that these are mutually exclusive. Let us represent these hypotheses by means of venn diagrams and let F stand for faith and R for reason.

In the first place, the view that faith and reason are interrelated concepts can be illustrated by four different types of diagrams, as shown below.

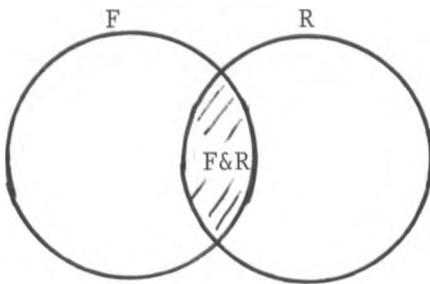


Figure 1

F and R have some elements in common.

Here, R & F is a joint-set, for it contains all elements that are members of both sets, that is, F and R. These, then, are the properties which they shared together. However, the unshared region of F shows that there are certain elements of F which are not members of R. Similarly, the unshaded part of R is an indication that there are some elements of R which are not elements of F. In short, the unshaded areas of the diagram above show that certain elements are either in R and not in F or in F and not in R. Accordingly, these are the items which can be said to account for the differences between faith and reason as these are represented by the two sets. But this does not mean that they have nothing in common. For there are certain characteristics which they

share and others they do not.

As Collingwood has observed, one of the common properties of faith and reason is the fact that both of them are natural and necessary attitudes or habits of the mind. Nevertheless, faith and reason also differ to the extent that faith is mainly a religious habit of the mind whereas reason is a scientific habit of the mind.<sup>3</sup> Thus faith and reason are interrelated ideas in the sense that faith can not do without reason neither can reason do without faith. This is the position of collingwood.

Secondly, it is possible to imagine a hypothetical case in which reason is integrated into faith.

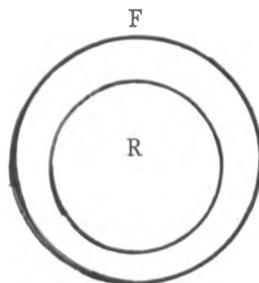


Figure 2

R is a subset of F.

Figure two shows that all elements of reason are also elements of faith and that some elements of faith lie beyond the narrow confines of reason. The diagram demonstrates the hypothetical view that reason is a component of faith, for the former falls within the bounds of faith. So, according to the view, reason is part and parcel of faith. Just as a whole cannot be separated from its parts without ceasing to be a whole altogether, so faith cannot be divorced from reason without ceasing to be faith at the same time. Furthermore,

the diagram above shows that all matters of reason are also matters of faith but some matters of faith are not matters of reason.

Thirdly, the converse of the preceding hypothesis is that all matters of faith are also matters of reason but some matters of reason are not matters of faith. The assumption here can be illustrated as shown below.

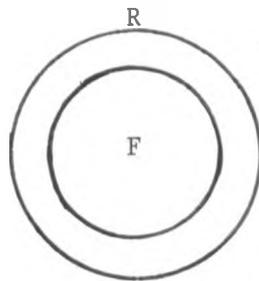


Figure 3

F is a subset of R.

These two figures, that is, two and three, have a reciprocal relationship in the sense that in figure three F and R have exchanged their original positions in figure two.

As indicated in figured three, one may agree, for example, that some subjects such as logic and mathematics are matters of reason and not faith. But the view that all matters of faith are also matters of reason sounds rather exaggerated. For, clearly, there are certain matters of faith which are outside the capacity of reason to comprehend. For instance, the idea of infinity either in space or in time is an idea which goes beyond the scope of

comprehensive reason. So is the existence of God. But nevertheless, the view expressed in figure 2, that all matters of reason are matters of faith is just as mistaken as the opposite view in figured three that all matters of faith are matters of reason. For not every element of reason is an element of faith as figure 2 purports. In the same vein, not all elements of faith can possible be contained within the limits of reason.

Fourthly, faith and reason may be seen as synonyms. See figure 4. In this case, faith and reason mean one and the same thing.



Figure 4

All elements of F belong to R and every element of R is a member of F.

My view is that this is a wrong assumption. It is obviously an implausible position for anybody to adopt. For it is a self-evident truth that perfect similarity between things is a contradiction in terms. Not even the so called identical twins resemble each other in virtually all respects. Perfect similarity is an illusion. As the Aristotelian law of identity states, there is nothing which is perfectly identical with something else. Everything is only

perfectly identical with itself.

Lastly, other philosophers contend that faith and reason are independent concepts. See the figure below.

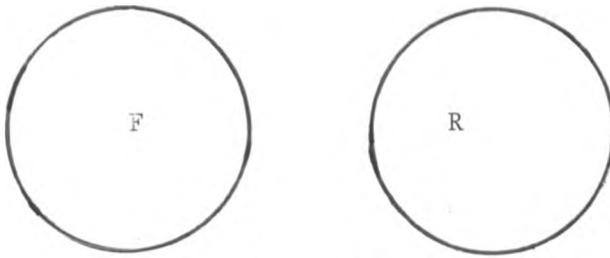


Figure 5

No element of F is contained in R, neither is any element of R a constituent of F.

Here, faith and reason are shown as independent ideas. The separation of the two circles is meant to correspond to the distinctiveness of the ideas of faith and reason.

A notable defender of this point of view was John Locke (1632-1704). For him, faith and reason have "distinct provinces"<sup>4</sup>. In fact, he made a distinction between matters of faith and matters of reason. Although he held that faith and reason are distinguishable concepts, he denied that they are contrary to each other. According to him, there can never be any element of opposition between faith and reason.

For these ideas are alternate means of seeking truth and knowledge. For that matter, both of them have complementary roles to play in human

understanding. As he himself put it,

Whatever God hath revealed is true; no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper subject of faith; but whether it be divine revelation or not, reason must judge, which can never permit the mind to reject a greater evidence to what is less evident nor allow it to entertain probability in opposition to knowledge and certainty.<sup>5</sup>

Here, Locke is of the view that every genuine revelation must have divine origin, otherwise it is not worth calling a revelation in the proper sense of the word. Such a statement must also withstand the test of rational inquiry.

Indeed, Locke proposed three categories of statements. That is, some that are according to reason, others that are contrary to reason and those that are above reason. According to Locke, a proposition is above reason provided that its certainty or probability cannot be deduced from ideas which derive from sensation and reflection. For example, Locke was convinced that the statement that the dead shall rise and live again on the second coming of Jesus Christ to the world is a proposition which is above reason. The truth of such<sup>3</sup> a statement can be grasped not by reason but only through faith.

On the contrary, Locke believed that a statement which is according to reason is one whose truth or probability is discoverable from the ideas of sensation and reflection<sup>6</sup>. For instance, Locke stated that monotheism is according to reason while polytheism is contrary to reason. May be Locke reasoned thus because he believed in monotheism as against polytheism.

As far as Locke was concerned, a proposition is contrary to reason just in case it is "inconsistent with or irreconcilable to our clear and distinct

ideas".<sup>7</sup> By implication, he meant that polytheism is wrong. For John Locke, then, statements of religious faith fall within only two categories of statements as outlined above. That is, propositions of religious faith can either be according to reason or above reason. But they can never be contrary to reason.<sup>8</sup>

Be that as it may, Locke's proposition with regard to the distinctiveness of faith and reason seems plausible in the light of the fact that these ideas are designated by different names. This suggests that faith and reason mean different things. As a matter of fact, different names must mean different things unless such names are synonyms. But 'faith' and 'reason' are not synonyms. Therefore, they mean different things.

As Collingwood has already acknowledge, faith and reason are natural and necessary states of the mind. In an attempt to solve the problem of faith and reason, he argued that each of these concepts has theoretical, practical as well as emotional aspects. Theoretical faith is "the knowledge that the universe as a whole is rational"<sup>9</sup> and practical faith is

The certainty that life is worth living, that the world into which we have been unwillingly thrust is a world that contains scope for action and will give us a fair chance of showing what we are made of; a world in which, if we turn out complete failures, we shall have only ourselves to blame. Practical faith means "accepting the universe", or what is the same thing, knowing that we are free.<sup>10</sup>

But emotional faith is the feeling we have towards the universe as a

whole. An this depends very much on our feeling towards individual things in the universe.

We feel the world sometimes as a familiar place, as our home, sometimes as a alien and strange, and formidable or menacing in its aloofness, sometimes as palpitating with life, sometimes as a single concentrated focus of meaning, a thing that could be completely expressed in a single word if we knew the word, sometimes as a riot of differences inexhaustible to the most patient enumeration<sup>11</sup>.

Whereas I think that Collingwood was right to say that we may have different approaches to the universe at different times, I think he was wrong in supposing that just any attitudes to the universe should be termed faith. My view is that even if we have a certain feeling towards the world and such feeling is negative, say, pessimism or forlornness, then it should not be regarded as faith. This is because faith is supposed to be a positive and not a negative, thing. Thus, only positive feelings should be included under the category of emotional faith. And with regard to reason Collingwood observed that reason has

A theoretical aspect, in which reason treats things as objects to be studied and thought about; a practical aspect, in which we select particular ends to pursue, and distinguish between what we are doing and what we are not doing; and an emotional aspect, in which everything excites in use a feeling proper and peculiar to itself.<sup>12</sup>

I agree with the author that reason has a practical aspect and a

theoretical aspect. But I doubt whether it also has an emotional aspect. I think, instead, that reason is opposed to emotion. And sometimes it is important not to let emotion to overrule reason, especially in a forum where reasoning is required, say, in giving evidence in a court of law. Nevertheless, Collingwood advanced the theory of the "rapprochement between faith and reason". This is the view that faith and reason are inseparable ideas in the sense that faith is our attitude towards "everything in the collective sense"<sup>13</sup> that is, our attitude towards reality in its totality, whereas reason is our attitude towards "everything in the distributive sense",<sup>14</sup> that is, our attitude towards reality in its details.

Collingwood rejected what he regarded as the medieval distinction between faith and reason. He claimed that in the medieval period faith and reason were then said to be distinctive because their objectives were also said to be distinctive and that the object of faith was said to be God as the infinite and that the object of reason was said to be finite facts. He called this view "the Medieval Compromise".

But St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas would not have agreed with Collingwood that there was a distinction between faith and reason in the Medieval times. Indeed, Anselm and Aquinas, among others, combined faith and reason in their various attempts to prove God's existence, as we shall see in the next chapter. Even so, Collingwood argued that faith cannot be separated from reason in as much as the infinite cannot be separated from the finite and that reason is a part of faith just as the finite is part of the infinite:

The weakness of the medieval compromise between faith and reason was really due to the fact that

faith and reason are not two faculties, but two theories of knowledge as a whole, and are therefore mutually contradictory. To separate faith and reason means separating God from nature, the finite from the infinite; the infinite set outside the finite becomes merely another finite, being now limited by the finite as something other than itself, and therefore the finite as such disappears. So long as there is a legitimate sphere of reason there cannot be, outside it, a legitimate sphere of faith, what was given to faith must be claimed as the irredenta of reason. And conversely if the infinite is the proper object of faith, and if the infinite is truly infinite, the finite falls not outside it, but within it, and reason must be swallowed up in faith.<sup>15</sup>

But here Collingwood contradicted himself. He claimed that the infinite cannot be separated from the finite because this would mean that the infinite is limited or bounded and, therefore, the infinite is really not an infinite but a finite thing. Yet the author talked of the finite falling not outside but within the finite. But if the infinite has an "outside" and a "within" as the author puts it, then it means that the infinite is limited because we can only talk of an "outside" and a "within" in cases whereby there is a bound or a limit within which or outside which something may be placed.

Be that as it may, faith and reason are both concerned with the truth and the right. They are intended to lead us to do what is right and to know what is true and these two goals are closely interrelated. Indeed, knowledge and morality rest on a combination of factors which include faith and reason as well. Like faith, reason is applicable in every attempt to understand the ultimate reality. Although unbelievers may lack faith in God, they can hardly afford to do without non-religious faith as the motivating factor in life.

Leo Tolstoy called faith "that by which men live".

Likewise, reason is part and parcel of the constitution of every normal person.

In this chapter, we have seen that the problem of faith and reason is an issue to which two possible solutions have been given; the one that faith and reason are inseparable concepts and the other one that faith and reason are distinct concepts.

The first view was held by Collingwood, among others, and the second by Locke and others. But there is one thing which these two authors had in common and that is the fact that both of them agreed on the view that faith and reason are not contradictory ideas. But that does not mean that they are the same either.

In conclusion, it is imperative for us to take note of the point that the major concern of this chapter has been to support Collingwood's thesis which states that faith and reason are indispensable states of the mind. However, one may lack faith in God but not the non-religious aspect of faith. In the next chapter we shall see how certain believers have tried to reconcile faith and reason in the question of the existence of God.

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## NOTES

1. R.G. Collingwood, "Faith and Reason", in Faith and Reason. Essays in the Philosophy of Religion, ed. by Lionel Rubinoff, Quadrangle Bks; 1968, p. 174.
2. Collingwood, op. cit p. 142.
3. ibid. ,pp. 140-142.
4. J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, George Routledge and Sons Ltd; London, 1967, p.583.
5. Lock, op. cit. ,p. 582.
6. ibid. ,p. 583.
7. ibid.
8. ibid.
9. R.G. Collingwood, "Faith and Reason" in Faith & Reason Essays in the Philosophy of Religion by R.G. Collingwood. Ed. by Lionel Rubinoff, Quadrangle Bks. 1968, p. 141.
10. Collingwood, op. cit. p.141.
11. ibid. ,p. 142.
12. ibid.
13. ibid.
14. ibid.
15. ibid. ,p. 113.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

From the Medieval era up to the contemporary epoch, believers have advanced several proofs or explanations for the existence of God in the hope of showing that faith and reason are compatible ideas, that the latter has a place in religious faith and that it is not the case that religion is opposed to reason. These proofs are: the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, the argument from design, the argument from religious experience as well as the moral argument. They are rational attempts to authenticate God's existence, that is, they seek to justify the statement that 'God exists'. For this reason, they are called theistic proofs.

#### I The Ontological Argument

The word 'ontological' is an adjective derived from the noun 'ontology', meaning, a branch of metaphysics which is concerned with the nature of existence. Accordingly, this argument is called the ontological argument because it is concerned with the existence of God in particular.

Now, the classical version of the ontological argument was formulated by Saint Anselm (1033-1109) in Faith Seeking Understanding, a work which he later entitled Proslogium, that is, discourse. This is a short treatise in the form of a prayer, for it is addressed to God. In fact, Anselm intended it to be "a single argument which would require no other for its proof than itself alone; and alone would suffice to demonstrate that God truly exists..."<sup>1</sup>. That is why it is normally regarded as one of the proofs of God's existence.

But the Monologium, that is, a soliloquy, which Anselm had written at the request of "certain brethren" <sup>2</sup> differs from the Proslogium because it is not meant to be a proof of God's existence; rather, it is a "meditation on the Being of God and some other topics connected with this subject..."<sup>3</sup>

However, in the present chapter, I am concerned with the Proslogium, and not with the Monologium.

In the Proslogium, Anselm declared, this: "credo ut intelligam", that is, "I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, - that unless I believe, I should not understand".<sup>4</sup> This statement suggests that Anselm did set out to find out whether God exists or not. For he had no doubt whatsoever concerning the existence of God. His prime objective was to seek a better understanding of God, whose existence he had already taken for granted.

Given that "unless I believe I shall not understand," <sup>5</sup> it means that the only person who can understand God's existence is one who believes that God exists. On the contrary, a non-believer cannot understand God's existence because he does not believe that God exists. In other words, the non-believer cannot understand God's existence unless he becomes a believer himself. But then he will no longer be a non-believer but a believer. Therefore, it is useless to try to convince a non-believer about the existence of God since he will hardly understand that God exists; only a believer can understand the existence of God. Since belief is considered as a sufficient condition for understanding the truth of the statement 'God exists', One may say that as far as the non-believer is concerned there is no God and there is no way in which

he can be convinced of God's existence since he does not believe that God exists. So, the proposition that 'God exists' can only make sense to a believer as opposed to a non-believer, that is, if Anselm's maxim is anything to go by.

Saint Anselm is convinced that if one truly understands what the word 'God' stands for, then one must also understand that God exists. However, according to his criterion of understanding the existence of God which is cited above as belief, it seems that the only person who can possibly understand the meaning of the term 'God' is the believer himself, since it is him alone who can understand the meaning of 'God'. For Anselm, to know the meaning of the word 'God' is the same thing as knowing that God exists.

In the first place, Anselm made a distinction between existence in the understanding and existence in reality. He said that whatever exists in reality is greater than that which exists only in the understanding. But if anything exists in reality, that is, outside one's mind, it must necessarily exist also as a concept within one's mind. That is, we form concepts of anything that exists. So, one can say that something can either exist exclusively in one's mind or else it may exist in the mind as well as in reality.

But since Anselm assumed that existence in reality is greater than existence in the mind and since he had believed that God is "that, than which nothing greater can be conceived,"<sup>6</sup> it follows that God must necessarily exist as a concept in the mind as well as a being outside the mind. For if one presumes that God exists only as a concept in the mind, this statement would contradict Anselm's definition of 'God' as "a being than which nothing greater can be conceived".<sup>7</sup> If God were to exist merely as a concept in the

mind, it would still be possible to think of another being that exists independently of the mind as well as within it and this being would be 'greater' than God because he would be existing in the understanding as well as in reality, whereas God exists only in the understanding. But this is impossible in the light of the statement that God is the greatest possible being.

According to Anselm's conception of greatness, God must exist outside the mind if He is to be understood as the greatest being. Hence, God is greater than all things that exist only in the understanding. God is also supposed to be greater than any other being which exists in the mind as well in reality. For if anything exists at all, that is, in reality, it must exist also as a concept in the human mind, though certain ideas may appear in the mind but they may not have anything to correspond to them outside the mind, for instance, a lion-headed horse. One may think of such a thing as existing whereas it is a fact that it does not exist in reality.

In the second place, Anselm distinguished between a necessary being, that which cannot be thought of as being non-existent and a contingent being, that which can be thought of as not existing. For him, God is the only necessary being; all other things are contingent beings. It seems that he arrived at this conclusion on the basis of the first part of the argument in which he insisted that God must exist in the understanding as well as in reality for Him to be the greatest conceivable being.

However, Anselm held the view that it amounts to self-contradiction to say that God is not a necessary being because this is like saying that it is not the case that a necessary being is a necessary being. For a non-believer the

term God has no meaning outside the mind. The non-believer denies Anselm's claim that God is a necessary being. That is their point of departure. First of all, there is a need for the non-believer to be convinced that 'God' means a necessary being. However, this seems to be a self-defeating exercise since Saint Anselm observed that unless one is a believer one cannot understand the existence of God.

Lastly, Anselm made reference to the Biblical fool who says "in his heart that there is no God,"<sup>8</sup> a statement from which he derived two senses of understanding. First, understanding the word which signifies something and second, understanding the thing itself.

For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, (...) because he has not made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.<sup>9</sup>

Having said, previously that God is a necessary being, Anselm went ahead to admit that God can only be thought of as not existing in the first sense. Hence, whoever claims that God can be thought of as being non-existent has only understood God as a concept and he has not understood God as a being.

However, he who properly understands God Himself, "Cannot conceive that He does not exist."<sup>10</sup> This is an allusion to religious experience. One who has had an intimate relationship with God can, obviously, not doubt God's existence. But it is difficult to convince a person who has not had such an

experience about its authenticity as we shall see later on.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) refuted the ontological argument, saying that existence is not a property or an attribute of God. As such, it cannot be predicated of God.

Being is evidently not a real predicate, that is, a conception of something which is added to the conception of some other things. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations in it. Logically, it is merely the copular of judgement.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, saying that God exists does not add anything to the concept of God. Here, Kant claims that the statement God 'exists' does not add anything new to the concept of God. However, whoever says that God exists intends to be understood as saying that God is real, that God is an ontological entity. For him, God is something much more than a concept or an idea.

Another notable critic of the ontological argument was Gaunilo, a contemporary of Saint Anselm. In his essay, 'In Behalf of the Fool,' he argued that it is illogical to draw the conclusion that God exists from the fact that one has an idea of God as a perfect being. In other words, the existence of the concept of God in the understanding is not a guarantee of a corresponding reality of God. For example, there are certain things which may exist only as concepts in the mind and not outside it. These are such illusions as fairies and winged-horses. One can think of anything or one may image anything but this does not mean that whatever is thinkable or imaginable does thereby exist. It may or it may not exist at all.

For instance, Gaunilo gave a hypothetical case of a perfect treasure

island. He used the argument that such an island exists on the basis of its supposed excellence as an analogous case of Saint Anselm's version of the ontological argument which stipulates that God exists on the ground that He is the greatest possible being. Gaunilo rejected this argument:

If someone should tell me that there is such an island, I should easily understand his words, in which there is no difficulty. But suppose that he went on to say, as if by a logical inference, "You can no longer doubt that this island which is more excellent than all lands exists somewhere, since you have no doubt that it is in your understanding. And since it is more excellent not to be in the understanding alone, but to exist both in the understanding and in reality, for this reason it must exist. For if it does not exist, any land which really exists will be more excellent than it; and so the island already understood by you to be more excellent will not be more excellent."<sup>12</sup>

Gaunilo said that if anybody should try to convince him this way then such a person would either be joking or else he could be a fool.

For "he ought to show first that the hypothetical excellence of this island exists as a real and indubitable fact."<sup>13</sup> In the same way, Anselm ought to have shown, first of all, that God is a necessary being. But he did not do so; instead, he only said that God is a necessary being. According to Gaunilo, one cannot prove the existence of a perfect treasure island on the basis of the fact that one has its idea in the mind. One can hardly be sure that such an island exists somewhere in the world anymore than one can be certain that God exists simply because God is said to be the greatest being anybody can think

of. In short, it is one thing to say that something exists in the mind and another thing altogether to say that something exists in reality. For existence in the mind is not the same thing as existence outside the mind. An idea exists in the mind but a thing exists outside the mind. So, even though God cannot be called a thing, we cannot infer His existence from the fact that we have an idea of His existence. The fact that we can conceive of God as the most perfect being does not prove that God exists. Hence, the ontological argument is inadequate as a proof of God's existence.

In the final analysis, Anselm's version of the ontological argument appeals only to a believer. But it is quite unacceptable to a non-believer. Actually, the argument is an embodiment of the fallacy of begging the question. That is, its author was engaged in the erroneous act of circular reasoning by assuming the truth of the argument's conclusion, that is, 'God exists'. Since the ontological argument is not based on an appeal to experience, it is normally classified as an a priori argument. A priori refers to independence from experience.

## II The Cosmological Argument

This is the second classical attempt, after the ontological proof, to provide a rational demonstration for believing in the existence of God. The cosmological argument is so called because it refers, as we shall see soon, to certain features of the cosmos. Unlike the previous argument, it is an a posteriori argument for it depends on an appeal to certain aspects of our experience. Its famous version was advanced by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). He rejected the ontological argument in favour of the cosmological argument. For him, one cannot deduce the existence of God from the idea of God.

Aquinas argued that God is not known to exist as soon as the meaning of the term 'God' is understood. He gave two reasons for saying this.

Firstly, Aquinas said that not everybody knows that "God is that than which no greater can be thought of."<sup>14</sup> Secondly, Aquinas said that even if everybody was to know that the word God means "that than which a greater cannot be thought of,"<sup>15</sup> it does not follow that something than which a greater cannot be thought of exists in reality. For this reason, Aquinas declared that the ontological argument cannot dislodge the position of an atheist who claims that there is no God. "Since whatever be granted to exist, whether in reality or in the mind, there is nothing to prevent a person from thinking of something greater, unless he grants that there is in reality something than which a greater cannot be thought of."<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Aquinas rejected Anselm's suggestion that if God is a contingent being, that is, a being that can be thought of as non-existent, then it is possible to conceive of a greater being than God. To quote his own words,

For that it is possible to think that He is not, is not on account of the imperfection of His being or the uncertainty thereof, since in itself His being is supremely manifest, but is the result of the weakness of our mind which is able to see Him, not in Himself but in His effects, so that it is led by reasoning to know that He is to.<sup>17</sup>

So, Aquinas held that God is not known intuitively as Saint Anselm had claimed, but only through His effects. Hence his cosmological argument for the existence of God. Aquinas was convinced that the existence of one thing can

only be derived from the existence of His creation.

The cosmological argument is an argument from the existence of effects to a single cause of such effects, that is, God. It falls into five distinct parts, which the author called ways.

The first way is an argument from the fact of change or motion to a prime mover. God is seen as an unmoved mover who moves other movers:

Whatever is in motion is moved by another: and it is clear to the sense that something, the sun for instance, is in motion. Therefore, it is set in motion by something else moving it. Now that which moves it is itself moved or not. If it be not moved, then the point is proved that we must needs postulate an immovable mover: and this we call God. If, however, it be moved, it proceeds to infinity, or we must come to an immovable mover. But it is not possible to proceed to infinity. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate an immovable mover.<sup>18</sup>

Here, Aquinas argued that there can never be an infinite regress in a continuum of movement. For there must be a first mover to start the entire process of motion or change. Just as a series of movers must have an unmoved mover before the process of movement can begin, owes its beginning to God as the prime mover.

Even so, the first way does not establish the existence of God beyond any reasonable doubt. Yet this is exactly what it is supposed to do. One can hardly be convinced of God's existence immediately one learns that a series of movers must have an unmoved mover at the beginning. Even if we grant that an infinite regress is an impossibility in any series of movers, the mere fact that finite movers moving in finite time must begin somewhere does not prove that God

exists as the infinite being. For the question still remains: does the first cause really exist?

The second way is an argument from causation. It has the same format as the first way. It states that a series of causes must also have a first cause just as a series of movers in the first way must have an unmoved mover. God is seen in terms of a first cause, the initial cause which has a trigger-off effect upon all the subsequent causes. This is an uncaused cause.

Similarly, Aquinas argued that all creatures or existent have their creator as God. Though God is Himself uncaused, he is the cause of everything else. Thus, the second way is an argument from creation to the creator. As in the first way, Aquinas argued here that infinite regress in a series of causes is an impossibility. And he gave three reasons for saying this. These apply to the first two ways.

First, it is impossible for an infinite number of things to be moved in finite time. Second, without the first mover in a series of movers, all movers will be intermediate and none of them would be moved. Lastly, if things move instrumentally, there must be something which moves principally. "But if we proceed to infinity in movers and things moved, they will all be like instrumental movers and things moved,... because they will be alleged to be moved movers, and there will be nothing by way of principal mover." 19

Indeed, Aquinas's denial of the possibility of infinite regress suits his purpose very well. For if we grant that an infinite regress is possible, it would equally be possible that there is nothing like an unmoved mover or an uncaused cause. So, the positing of an uncaused cause tallies with the denial of infinite regress, at least for the purpose of the consistency of the argument.

But the second way, like the first way, does not prove the existence of God, especially to a person who is not a believer. For an atheist denies that there is an uncaused cause.

The third way is an argument from contingency to necessity. Here, Aquinas argued that if everything were contingent, that is, if all things were capable of being and not being there would be no sufficient reason for things to come into existence unless there was a necessary being to necessitate their existence; and this is, according to Aquinas, what everybody understands by the word 'God', that is, a necessary being. However, it can be argued that everything has always been as it is and that there was no common beginning for everything.

Nevertheless, Kant criticised this idea saying that "the concept of an absolutely necessary being is a concept of pure reason, that is, a mere idea the objective reality of which is very far from being proved by the fact that reason requires it."<sup>20</sup> Although reason can lead to the belief that there must be a necessary being as Saint Anselm and Saint Aquinas argued, it cannot prove that such a being actually exists. Moreover, the fact that some things in the world come into existence and cease to be again may have nothing to do with the existence of a necessary being. For it may be that things have always been as they are.

But in the fourth way, Aquinas referred to the evidence of degrees of perfection in the world. He said that since some things are better than others, the most perfect being must also exist as a point of reference for the quality of perfection. That is, there must be something in relation to which others are less perfect. But the only perfect being is believed to be God. Here, God is

seen as the embodiment of perfection. The relative goodness of other things fall short of His perfection. Nevertheless, not everybody thinks of God as the standard of perfection whenever some things are said to be more or less perfect than others. The Criterion of comparison is the relation of such things to an ideal which is untenable in the real sense.

Finally, the fifth way of Saint Thomas Aquinas's version of the cosmological argument is an argument from the fact of purposiveness in nature to the existence of a divine designer. According to Aquinas, the world exhibits a certain element of purpose. This suggests that there is some rational or intellectual being who made the world as if for a purpose. This being is said to be God.

But a critic may deny that the world has a divine purpose. He may say, for instance, that things are simply there, that is, they were not designed for any purpose. Indeed, some critics go as far as saying that things do not exist in order to serve any purpose, that man has a natural quest to look for reason, explanations or purpose in everything that he sees. It is this urge which men project, as it were, in the world as a whole. Indeed, unbelievers deny a teleological explanation of physical existence. They are materialists. For them, neither the world nor man was created for a special purpose. They deny the possibility of an after-life in heaven or a second death in hell. My contention is that even if there is life after death we cannot know this, for this is purely an object for our belief, it is a matter of faith. But though it is unknowable, it is believable.

### III The Argument from Design

Sometimes this argument is called the teleological argument because of

its concern with the end or purpose of things. For this reason, it is closely connected with Aquinas' fifth way. It is usually attributed to William Paley (1743-1805). The argument is based on an analogy. As far as Paley was concerned (in his Natural Theology, or Evidence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearance of Nature (1802)). One can infer the existence of God from the order, design and purpose of things in the universe. For example, Paley saw a similarity between the order and design in a watch and the order and design of the universe. He attributed this to God:

Just as it is implausible to admit the order and design manifest in the watch, and yet deny that the watch required a designer, so too is it highly implausible to recognize the manifestation of order, design and purpose in the universe and yet not admit the existence of a designer. <sup>21</sup>

In other words, just as a watch implies a watch maker so does creation suggest the existence of a creator, that is, God. Thus the universe has a specific order and design which shows that it must have been made by a certain intelligent being for some purpose. The assumption here is that order and design are the products of a rational being.

The argument from design points to the evidence or order in the universe as a basis for drawing the conclusion that God exists. Indeed, even the tiny atom with its electron and protons has a definite design. Similarly, there is some order in the spinning of the earth around its own axis once every twenty-four hours, thus causing days and nights on a regular basis. Apart from the rotation of the earth, the earth also revolves around the sun once every year causing regular season such as spring, winter, autumn and summer in some

parts of the world. Such order and regularity as the revolution of planets around the sun in their fixed orbits may be the work of a super-designer who may have instituted it for his own purpose. Paley also considered human anatomy in addition to the example of the watch. The body is made in such a way that each and every limb and organ has its specific function or functions and all these activities are well controlled and coordinated in the brain. According to the argument from design, as the human body is made for some purpose and in such a good order so is the universe. Indeed, it is most unlikely that man could have created himself anymore than the most complex computer or robot can manufacture itself. As such, the order, design and purpose of the human body in particular and the universe at large is a reflection of the existence of a designer as much as the contrivance of a watch is an indication of the presence of a watch-maker.

However, as David Hume observed, it is not the case that there is only an order in the universe. The universe also contains elements of disorder or chaos which should not be ignored. For example, shooting stars, sinking of sea beds through the "down-warping" and "up-warping" of the earth's surface, flooding and earthquakes.

Basically, though, we can say that a grand design is discernible in the universe, particularly if we observe sexual differences among various organisms, not to forget the structure of the solar system. Unfortunately, it is not possible to prove that there is a designer just because there is order and design in the universe. This is only an inference. We infer the existence of God as a designer from the fact that there is order and design in the universe.

Critics of the argument from design raise several objections against it, including, the theory of evolution through natural selection, that is, the 'survival of the fittest' theory of Charles Darwin (1809-1882). For them, it is likely that human beings have evolved from a primeval single cell to the present stage of homo sapiens and they are not products of creation.

Indeed, the argument from design ignores the possibility of the existence of more than one designer. But the order and design in the universe may be the product of the work of one designer or the work of many designers. Yet the argument opts for the former quite arbitrarily. No wonder the ancient Greeks, Babylonian and Egyptians once espoused polytheism and not monotheism. There is nothing in the argument from design to prevent one from drawing the conclusion that there are more than one designer of the universe.

Paley did not prove beyond reasonable doubt that the universe was designed by God. Even if we grant that there is design in the universe, still this does not show us who is responsible for it. It is true that there is order in the world. But this order does not tell us anything concerning its origin, if any.

Anthony J. Lisska has the following to say:

The data used as premises in the argument from design cannot validly be used to support the claim that the designer is still a living functioning being. It is here that one can take the "God is dead" movement seriously. It could have been the case that the designer, or designers, after planning the universe, ceased to exist. Just as an architect of a building might cease to exist before the building which manifests the evidence of design is demolished, so too might the designer of the universe cease to exist even though the remnants of design are still visible to present observers.<sup>22</sup>

The statement that God is dead is attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). However, Lisska's observation that the designer may not be alive is not compatible with the notion of God as the immortal and eternal being, which is what Paley means by a designer. But Lisska has observed that the fact that the universe exhibits order does not tell us anything about the immortality and the eternity of the designer. According to him, it is fallacious to argue from finitude to infinity, that is the argument from design can only posit a finite designer and not an infinite designer. In other words, we cannot infer infinity from a finite world or necessity from contingency. Moreover, man as a finite being can only understand finite causes and not an infinite cause. "The assertion of an infinite cause of design stretches beyond the data warranted from the cause-effect structure of an analogy in the argument"<sup>23</sup>

As Kant observed, the argument from design depends on the cosmological argument because it also involves reasoning from the nature of the world to God's existence. For this reason, it is an a posteriori argument concerning which Kant had the following to say: "This argument always deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and the most in conformity with the common reason of humanity. It animates the study of nature, as it itself derives its existence and draws ever new strength from that source".<sup>24</sup> But in the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) Kant argued that any attempt to establish God's existence by means of reason alone is bound to be fruitless. Kant is then in an apparent contradiction with himself since his version of the moral argument is also an attempt to prove the existence of God.

It is for this reason that he rejected the argument from design along with the ontological argument and the cosmological argument all of which are rational attempts to show that God exists.

#### IV The Moral Argument

According to Kant, God cannot be known to exist by pure or speculative reason. Instead, he stated that God can only be experienced as a transcendent being through the moral faculty of practical reason. God cannot be known thus because He is supposed to be a noumenon as opposed to a phenomenon. This distinction was made by Kant himself. The latter refers to a thing as it appears while the former means a thing as it is in-itself. For Kant, pure, theoretical or speculative reason can only grasp phenomena, that is, things as they appear to us and not noumena, that is, things as they are in-themselves. The former is the proper sphere of speculative reason.

It was Kant's idea that we have a moral obligation or duty to act virtuously. Kant argued from the fact that moral rules or laws exist to the existence of God as the transhuman source of moral values. So, for Kant morality can only make sense in the light of the existence of God. Morality goes hand in hand with religion.

Furthermore, Kant believed in the existence of God, in human freedom and in the immortality of the soul. For him, one who believes that God exists must also acknowledge the fact that men are free to choose between right and wrong alternatives and that human soul is immortal. One cannot talk of God's existence in isolation and without bringing the concept of human freedom and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul into the picture.

Now, according to Kant, everybody aspires for perfect goodness. summum

bonum. But this goal cannot be achieved in finite time. Instead, this objective is only achievable in infinity. Hence the concept of the immortality of the soul. The soul must be immortal if it has to obtain the greatest goodness.

Now, perfect goodness comprises two things, that is, virtue and happiness. Kant argued that men are capable of attaining virtue by themselves but men are incapable of making themselves happy except by the assistance of God. So God must exist if men are to be happy. Of course, there are many people who are happy. According to Kant happiness consists in the cooperation between one's will and the laws of nature. But only God can ensure the cooperation of the laws of nature with one's will. Therefore, Kant concluded that God exists.

However, critics of the moral argument contend that morality can be explained in terms of human needs and desires and not necessarily in terms of the existence of God. But for Kant, the existence of God is necessary for morality; the need to be moral leads directly to belief in a transcendent God who has commanded men to act virtuously. Nevertheless, some critics say that morality need not point to God's existence because human values emanate from the natural order and structure of the society. In other words, men ought to be moral for the sake of the preservation of the society. Lastly, it is my contention that even the moral argument is inadequate as a proof of the existence of God.

#### V The Argument from Religious Experience

This is the most recent attempt to justify belief in the existence of God. The argument from religious experience is not really an argument in the true sense of the word; rather, it is the view that God's existence can be

established through some spectacular religious events in the lives of men. God is said to manifest Himself to various people in mysterious ways which show that He exists. In fact, some believers go to the extent of saying that they talk to God through prayer and others even claim to have seen God through vision and other dream-like states of the mind; though there is no way in which they can prove their claims to sceptics since such claims are attended with a lot of subjectivism.

For example, when a religious person says that he has had a vision or that he has had a revelation from God he expects other people to believe him. But it is impossible to tell whether he is lying or stating the truth. Who knows whether such a person has really had a revelation or not? Who can tell whether the so-called revelation has a divine origin or not? These are very difficult questions to answer. For this reason, even the argument from religious experience is inadequate as a proof of God's existence.

Some critics of religion explain such religious experiences in terms of pathological mental states. Such, for example, is the experience Saint Paul is reported to have had on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians.<sup>25</sup> For them, a religious experience are normally accompanied by emotional excitement and it is similar to the experience of dreams, hallucinations and other forms of illusions which come about as a result of psychological imbalance.

For instance, in The Future of An Illusion (1927), Sigmund Freud (1856-1936), like Karl Marx (1818-1883) compared religion as a whole to an illusion and suggested that it has no future. Both of them were die-hard atheists. Freud came to the conclusion that religion is a form of neurosis through the method of psychoanalysis in experimental psychology.

Freud likened the behaviour of believers to the conduct of his neurotic patients. For him, there was a semblance between the neurotic's ritual of washing the hands and the believer's observance of certain traditional religious rites. Having observed also that religion is a form of wish-fulfilment, Freud saw the need for religion as a projection of the need for protection against childhood helplessness in adulthood: "The defence against childish helplessness is what lends its characteristic features to the adult's reaction to the helplessness which he has to acknowledge a reaction which is precisely the formation of religion".<sup>26</sup> The author saw religion as a refuge or an escape from the harsh realities of life. For him, God has no objective reality, God is just an idea.

Karl Marx, for his part, dismissed religion as "the opium of the people"<sup>27</sup> Religion, for him, is the outcome of the class struggle in the society, the product of the alienation of man from his work as he produces more and more for the capitalist economy but grows poorer and poorer as a result. Just as some frustrated people find consolation in smoking opium or drinking alcohol besides taking other intoxicating drugs in order to forget their pressing problems, so too does the exploited labour seek refuge and solace in religion. Belief in God is an escape from his desperation. It has the effect of making him forget his problems in the world and to aspire for a better life in heaven. But the worker is unaware that he is using religion as a medicine for his estrangement. He is also oblivious of the fact that the capitalist employs religion as a tool for his exploitation and his domination of the worker. As far as the ingenious capitalist is concerned, the more the

worker is engrossed in religion the more he is likely to be kept ignorant of his exploitation by the capitalist. Thus religion is, according to Marx, a consequence of the suffering of the lot of humanity. That is why he envisaged the abolition of religion in what he believed that would be the final stage of human development which he called communism, a kind of an ideal society or Utopia.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the five theistic proofs which I have so far outlined above do not establish the existence of God beyond any reasonable doubt. However, they serve as evidence to the fact that reason and faith are compatible ideas. This is why I have presented them here. We have seen how men of faith, particularly Saint Anselm and Saint Thomas Aquinas argue or reason about what they believe in. They are not fanatic for they do not hold to their beliefs unreasonably. Instead, they give reasons for holding their beliefs. Whether such reasons are good or bad is another matter. The arguments that they have advanced show that faith can be reasoned about. Indeed, these arguments prove the fact that men of faith are capable of ratiocination and that they do not shy away from debating the existence of God. They testify to the fact that the relationship between faith and reason is one of harmony and mutual interdependence. But we shall come across an argument which presents a contrary view in the following chapter.

## NOTES

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## CHAPTER SIX

### FAITH, REASON AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Like the famous proofs of God's existence, the problem of evil too has a direct bearing on the issue at hand, that is, the problem of faith and reason. However, as I have already shown in the previous chapter, the proofs of God's existence show that faith and reason are reconcilable ideas. Here, reason has been used to discuss faith in God.

But the problem of evil can be construed to mean that faith and reason are irreconcilable concepts. For, as we shall see soon, the problem of evil seems to suggest that it is unreasonable to believe in the existence of an all-powerful and all-good God in the face of the stark reality of evil in the world. In fact, it is against this background that the problem of evil goes against theodicy, which means, "vindication of the justice of God especially in the ordaining or permitting natural and moral evil"<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, evil is the opposite of goodness just as night is the opposite of day.

Indeed, the problem of evil is often used by atheists in order to justify the claim that God does not exist. The problem of evil is a challenge to the believer to explain the existence of an all-powerful and all-good God in the light of the existence of evil.

The problem of evil usually takes the form of an argument or a dilemma. As an argument, it consists of at least eight propositions, thanks to Anthony J. Lisska. It can be stated as follows: first, if God is wholly good and omnipotent too, then it is not His will that evil should exist; second, if God

is omnipotent, He can eliminate evil; third, but evil prevails in the world; fourth, it is possible that God is able but unwilling to eliminate evil; fifth, it is equally probable that God is willing but unable to eliminate evil; sixth, if God is able but unwilling to eliminate evil, then He is not wholly good; seventh, if God is willing but unable to eliminate evil then He is not omnipotent; eighth, it follows that God is either not wholly good or He is not omnipotent.<sup>2</sup>

The non-believer would like to show that if God is all-powerful, then He should have been able to exterminate evil. Besides, the non-believer, would like to show that if God is wholly good then He should have intended to put an end to evil. In addition, the non-believer would like to believe that if God is all-knowing, then He also knows how to dispose of evil once and for all. If all this is true, so the non-believer would think, then evil ought not exist in the world at all. In other words, if God is truly omnipotent, perfectly good and if He is also omniscient, then, accordingly, God should not only possess the necessary power for getting rid of evil for good, but God should also possess the necessary will to destroy evil. Besides, God should be in possession of the necessary knowledge for removing or preventing the occurrence or the recurrence of evil in the world. Thus, the problem of evil consists in the difficulty of trying to understand why evil persists in God's own world when He has everything requisite at His disposal for the annihilation of evil. This is the question which an atheist would wish to pose to atheist, a question that an atheist would expect to be either too difficult or impossible for the theist to answer. For an atheist is one who has already made up his mind that there is no God. And if the atheist is right, then it is ridiculous,

unreasonable or absurd to talk of the omnipotence and the goodness of a non-existent God. Now, for the atheist the existence of evil in the world is irreconcilable with the belief in an omnipotent and good God. But as far as the believer is concerned, the existence of evil is reconcilable with his belief in the existence of the supreme being. For the purpose of this thesis, we can substitute in the sentence above, the words, 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' for 'reconcilable' and 'irreconcilable', respectively.

As Collingwood has already acknowledged, the problem of evil is normally subdivided, like the species of the same genus, into the problem of pain, on the one hand, and the problem of sin, on the other hand. However, Collingwood has identified the problem of sin alone as the legitimate problem of evil. But he has rejected the problem of pain along with utilitarianism of which, he says, it is a legacy. For him,

Pain and sin... are not two kinds or divisions of evil but too conflicting definitions of what evil is. To treat them as co-ordinate heads of one and the same problem is to stand in self-confessed contradiction as to the fundamental nature of the problem at issue.<sup>3</sup>

Here, the author disallows the problem of pain because he is convinced that it is based on a wrong premise. That is the utilitarian conception of the good will which the author contrasts with the Kantian or the ethical view of the good will. Instead, the problem of sin is acceptable to him as a legitimate part of the problem of evil due to the fact that it is founded upon the ethical or the Kantian view of the good will, a standpoint that the author has accepted wholeheartedly. In short, Collingwood admits the legitimacy of the problem of sin together with the rightfulness of the Kantian view of the good will on

which the problem of sin is based but he dismisses the problem of pain along with the utilitarian view of the good will on which the problem of pain is founded.

One view of utilitarianism is that the good will is good in so far as it is good for an end, that is, as a mere means to a certain end and that all other good things are good in themselves. This view stands in stark contrast to what Collingwood has called the Kantian or the ethical view of the good will. The Kantian view of the good will looks at the good will as an end in itself and other good things as good only to the extent that they are means to certain desirable ends. The utilitarian view of the good will emphasises the extraneous goodness of the good will whereas the Kantian view of the good will stresses its internal goodness. The Kantian view maintains that the good will is intrinsically good while the utilitarian view states that the good will is extrinsically good, that it has instrumental goodness.

Hence, Collingwood insists that the problem of goodness is also the problem of the good will since acts are considered good in so far as they are conceived by the good will and evil in so far as they are conceived by the evil will. The author draws a clear-cut distinction between the ethical sense of the word 'good' and the utilitarian sense of 'good'. He calls the ethical sense of good the strict sense of the word and the utilitarian sense of the word 'good' the secondary or the derivative sense of the word.

According to Collingwood the utilitarian sense of the word 'good' is the one in which it is used in reference to such things like tools. For example, a good hoe would be one which serves the very purpose for which it was made, that is, digging the ground, irrespective of the other uses to which

the hoe might be put by its owner. But the ethical sense of the word 'good' is the one in which it has been used by Kant to mean that which is good in itself. For Kant, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will".<sup>4</sup> Thus, all other things which might be good are only good as means to certain ends.

Now, evil and good are moral predicates. They are also relative terms. So, if moral acts are good in as much as they have been executed by a good will, then such acts are also evil provided that they have been sanctioned by an evil will. Besides, if the good will is good in itself, then the evil will is also evil in itself, that is, it is evil as an end and not merely as a means to an end. As Collingwood has put it,

To call a thing evil (or for that matter good) in the moral sense is to call it an act of somebody's will. Nothing that merely exists or merely happens can be called an evil but only something done, an action.<sup>5</sup>

And it appears, as far as the author is concerned, that pain 'merely exists or merely happens'. For this reason, pain cannot be regarded as an evil, for (if his definition of evil is anything to go by) then an evil is 'something done, an action. Consequently, the problem of pain cannot be regarded as the problem of evil.

Collingwood argues that pain is neither good nor evil. For him, pain is not an evil for the simple fact that it is not an act of the evil will and it is not good owing to the fact that it is not produced by a good will either. But this is a debatable point. For pain may be caused either by a good will or

by an evil will.

The problem of pain is the question that, why is there so much pain and suffering in God's own world in spite of His omnipotence, omniscience and benevolence?. Collingwood does not deny the reality of pain and suffering in the world. But he says that for pain to be predicated that it is good or evil, it would have to be the outcome of God's good will or Satan's evil will. But pain could be either the outcome of God's good will or Satan's evil will. In this case, pain can either be good or evil. As far as Collingwood is concerned,

If we believe in God's goodness, we believe that He does not torture us out of wantonness. And if we believe in His omnipotence, we are confident that He does not let us be tortured out of helplessness. We can believe, and there is absolutely nothing in the nature of things to prevent our believing, that it is good for us to have pain, that pain is a thing to thank God for, a thing without which our life would be worse than it is ...<sup>6</sup>

Although the author believes that pain in itself is not an evil, it should be granted that the act of inflicting pain on somebody else can be an evil act, especially if the one who inflicts such pain on the other has an evil will.

But pain may accompany a good act as well. For instance, suppose that you have been injected by a doctor. You may feel a little pain as a result, though the doctor's intention in treating you may be good. Though the doctor makes you feel pain while injecting you, he does so in good faith and not in bad faith. This is a case in which the good will also produces pain. So, what can prevent us from drawing the conclusion that this particular kind of pain

is good for you, though it may not be good in itself?. The answer is in the negative.

However, there are some instances of pain which are anything but good. For example, the pain and the concomitant suffering which may be caused by natural calamities like hailstorm, floods, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes is certainly bad for anybody in his proper senses. Despite the great suffering that may be brought about by such catastrophies, the fact still remains that it is difficult to know whether such cataclysmic events are, in the final analysis, for the worse or for the better, of the ultimate goal of the cosmos.

Though pain per se is undesirable, Collingwood may be right in saying that pain would only be evil just in case it comes as a result of the evil will and there are cases in which pain is actually the effect of the evil will. For example, if somebody hits you with a blunt object, say a hammer, causing you to flinch with pain, he must have done this in bad faith, in which case, his intention was bad and he had an evil will in inflicting pain on you quite deliberately. Hence, the activity of injuring you is an evil act even though the pain inflicted on you may (as Collingwood puts it) be neither good nor bad. For such pain is, supposedly, an event and not an act, that is, as far as Collingwood's formulation of the Kantian or the ethical view of good and evil goes. I would agree with the author that pain is an event and not an act. For scientists tell us that pain consists in the transmission of a certain kind of message from the body cells to the brain through the neurons, which constitute the nervous system of a human being.

Collingwood's position is that the occurrence of pain in this world is consonant with the belief in the existence of an omnipotent and good God. He

says that 'in no case is there any contradiction in supposing that pain is caused by a good will. Indeed, it is not hard to think of cases in which the only thing a good will can do is to cause pain.'<sup>7</sup> For example, consider surgical operations in the theatre. Although the modern surgeons administer anaesthetics and tranquilizers to their patients before or after operating on them, the fact is that the patient sometimes experiences at least some pain, especially on regaining consciousness. Even so, the physician has a good intention, his aim in operating on the patient is not to harm him but to treat him; pain is only an accompaniment of the treatment. Since the doctor has a good will such pain is good for the patient.

It is in this sense, for instance, that euthanasia or mercy killing, may be justifiable, though, like abortion, this is still a controversial issue to date. The Oxford Dictionary defines euthanasia as the act of 'bringing about of a mercifully easy and painless death for persons suffering from an incurable and painful disease'. However, surgical operations and euthanasia are poles apart.

But this is a moral issue. It is questionable whether such killing can be justified or not. Some people would equate it with murder. Maybe euthanasia is justifiable from the ethical point of view of the good will and good acts. Since it is the effect of a good will, that is, a will that seeks to stop the suffering of a person, euthanasia may be good as far as the practitioner is concerned, though the deceased would have most probably considered euthanasia to be evil, no matter how badly deformed or mutilated the victim may be. This is because euthanasia is meant to stop somebody from suffering pain from a serious and chronic ailment or condition but at the expense of his life. Such

a price is too dear to pay for euthanasia.

Let us revert to the problem of evil again. Collingwood's view that the prevalence of evil in the world is consistent with God's omnipotence and goodness draws its support from the philosophy of Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), the German theologian, philosopher and mathematician who argued that the presence of some evil in this world is necessary for the presence of goodness because this is the best possible world, the best world that could ever be conceived and be created by God as a perfect being. In his perfection, God could choose to create nothing short of the best of all possibilities.<sup>8</sup>

Surprisingly, though, the ideal world is not, according to Leibniz, the one which is completely devoid of evil as some sceptics may want to believe, rather, it is a world in which the balance of forces between goodness and evil is in favour of the former. That is, a world in which the proportion of goodness outweighs the amount of evil. Leibniz contended that such a world is the contemporary one. But whether this is so or not is a question that cannot be answered conclusively. In any case goodness and evil are not quantifiable. There is no standard measure for goodness and evil.

As far as Collingwood is concerned, the problem of pain comes as a direct result of confusing the utilitarian sense of the word 'evil' with its ethical sense. The utilitarian sense of 'evil' purports that the evil will is evil for a certain end and that all other things which can also be called evil are evil in themselves. On the contrary, the ethical sense of evil means that the evil will is evil in itself and that all other things which might be called evil are evil for a certain end. Recall Collingwood's definitions of the utilitarian and the ethical sense of the word 'good' above. These definitions

of the two senses of `good' are the correlatives of the definitions of the two senses of `evil'.

Furthermore, Collingwood rejects the word `benevolent' in preference to the word `good' for the purpose of discussing the problem of evil. For him, `benevolent' is a wrong substitute for `good'. The author says that `benevolent' does not represent all the qualities of God's goodness and that benevolent is only applicable in the negative sense in which God is conceived as the negation of a cruel or a malevolent being. Thus, Collingwood thinks that the word `benevolent' is a necessary but inadequate term for the full description of God's good will. "A will that was benevolent and nothing more would be very far from being ideally good,"<sup>9</sup> he says. Indeed, the word `benevolent' is usually used in the discussion of the problem of pain which Collingwood does not recognize as a proper representation of the problem of evil, but it is least commonly used in the discussion of the problem of sin.

Collingwood sets out, as it were, not so much to offer his original solution to the problem of evil as to clarify the utilitarian fallacy, that is, the act of confusing the utilitarian sense of evil with its ethical sense, as stated above. The author is convinced that such clarification is necessary in order to pave way for a future solution to the problem of evil by other authors. Collingwood does not, however, claim to have provided such a solution. Indeed, he has not solved the problem of evil.

One of the possible answers to the problem of evil involves having recourse to the idea of human freedom. It is believed that God created man and endowed him with the gift of free-will. Thus, it is said that man was created in such a way that he is free to choose between good and evil, right and wrong

alternatives. However, sceptics wonder why God could not have made man in such a way that he always does good and not evil. But then, men would not be men but automatons dancing to the tune of their maker's whims. Man's activities would be limited and predetermined by God. Then man would not be free to choose between different alternatives. And so man's freedom would be curtailed.

But whatever the actual resolution of the conflict concerning the problem of evil might be, men of faith do absolve God from the accusation that He is responsible for the prevalence of evil in this world. Instead, they say that it is the devil who brought evil into the world. But this is a theological issue which I would not like to enter into here.

Sceptics contend that if God is really all-knowing, all-powerful and all-good then He ought to have foreseen the evil machinations of Satan through His omniscience. Furthermore, sceptics say that God should have forestalled the Satanic emergence of evil in the world by His omnipotence and benevolence.

But some born-again Christians contend that God, as the infinite being, has His own scheme of things and that this is different from the sceptic's idea of how things ought to be or ought to have been. Staunch Christians are emphatic in their belief that God has the necessary will as well as the requisite power to get rid of evil at the time that He will deem it most appropriate for this eventuality. They hold that all things are possible for God and this includes the eradication of evil.

Born-again Christians believe that God will actually destroy Satan on the Last Day of Judgement <sup>10</sup> and that He will restore an everlasting Kingdom of God, a Kingdom whereby there will be no evil, worry nor sorrow but only goodness and happiness. Even so, this is clearly a matter of faith. It does not

explain the reason why there should be evil at present despite God's omnipotence and goodness.

Perhaps another solution to the problem of evil consists in saying that there is nothing good or evil except what we consider to be so. This is a relativistic position. It was the view of the sophists who taught the Athenians the art of winning court cases through sophistry and rhetoric.

In addition, there is another view that there is no evil as such and that the so-called evil is really the absence of a due good. This is a mistaken view because one cannot be justified in saying that there is no evil simply because evil is the absence of goodness anymore than one can be justified in supposing that there is no night, for example, because it is simply the absence of day. Evil is a real phenomenon.

So far we have seen that the problem of evil touches on the issue of faith and reason. Thus, it has special relevance to the discussion of the problem of faith and reason. The problem can be used as a challenge by a non-believer against a believer. The challenge is for the believer to explain the reasonableness of believing in an all-powerful and wholly good God who has not prevented or eliminated the occurrence of evil in the world. So, while the non-believer is convinced a priori about the unreasonableness of believing in the existence of God because of the existence of evil, the believer is certain about the reasonableness of believing in God even while evil still persists.

Finally, the main thrust of this chapter is that the problem of evil seems to be a battle ground in which the believer's faith in God appears to conflict with the atheist's disbelief. The non-believer uses the problem of evil to show that faith and reason are irreconcilable ideas but the believer insists that

faith and reason are reconcilable ideas despite the existence of evil, for, as it has been shown, this can be harmonized with the existence of an omnipotent and wholly good God.

## NOTES

1. See Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, ed. by Philip Bobcock Gove et.al. G&C. Merriam Co., Springfield, 1961.
2. See A.J. Lisska, Philosophy Matters, Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., Columbus, 1972, p.235.
3. R.G. Collingwood, in Faith & Reason. Essay in the philosophy of Religion By R.G. Collingwood, ed. by Lionel Rubinoff, Quadrangle Bks., Chicago, 1968, p.157.
4. I. Kant, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals, transl. by Thomas K. Abbott with an introd. by Merrin Fox, Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub. Indianapolis 1949, p.11.
5. R.G. Collingwood, op. cit., p.154.
6. ibid., p.155.
7. ibid.
8. See G.W. Leibniz, "The Best of All Possible Worlds," in Roger Eastman, The Coming of Age in Philosophy, ed., Canfield Press, San Francisco, 1973, pp.281-286.
9. R.G. Collingwood, in op. cit., p.154.
10. The Holy Bible, King James Version, Acts, 17:31.

## CONCLUSION

The problem of faith and reason is an old philosophical problem as I have pointed out in the thesis. But it is an issue of fundamental importance in the field of philosophy of religion in particular. Indeed, it is an epistemological problem as well as an existential one. It highlights the relationship between philosophy and theology, science and religion, all of which seem to be in an apparent conflict. While science and philosophy appear to emphasize the use of reason alone as a vital tool for the knowledge of the world, religion and theology tend to exalt faith in God for the same purpose. All the same, man needs reason as much as faith (particularly non-religious faith).

I believe that the matter at hand is an epistemological one because there is a traditional rivalry between the champions of faith on the one hand, and the proponents of reason on the other hand. The dispute is in connection with the legitimacy of either concept as the means of acquiring knowledge not only about ourselves but also our knowledge about the rest of the cosmos, especially as far as the knowledge of the origin of life is concerned. Some philosophers claim the priority of faith over reason in this regard while others insist on the superiority of reason over faith. The latter may be described as rationalists and the former as fideists. Extreme rationalists maintain that reason comprises the foundation on which the entire edifice of knowledge is built. Yet these antagonists agree, either knowingly or unknowingly, on at least one thing, that is, both of them employ reason in order to express themselves. For reason is a universal endowment; so is faith, as I have tried to show in this thesis. However, religious faith is definitely partisan.

But the problem of faith and reason is also an existential question since it individually confronts everyone, at least every normal person. For everybody has to make up his mind whether to cultivate faith or reason in so far as the issue of the existence or the non-existence of God goes. In other words, everybody must choose whether to believe or not to believe that God exists. Everybody must decide by himself whether it is reasonable or unreasonable to believe in the existence of God. We have no choice but to be either believers or unbelievers since agnosticism is an implausible position for anybody to adopt. A person who is convinced that it is reasonable to believe in God is actually a believer whereas one who thinks that it is unreasonable to believe in God is really an unbeliever. For the latter, belief in God is nothing but an irrational activity. But every believer holds that faith in God is justifiable.

Nevertheless, rationality and irrationality are not water-tight compartments because there is a certain continuity between them. Just as most men are normal but some are more normal than others, so are all men rational but some are more rational than others, and it appears to me that most believers are more rational than the majority of unbelievers. But the difference between rationality and irrationality is a difference of degree and not a difference of kind. Rationality and irrationality are relative terms.

As we have seen in chapter three, there is a correct and an incorrect use of reason, and every student of logic will admit this point. That means that reason does not always guarantee knowledge. Whenever reason is utilized in the appropriate manner, be it deductively or inductively, it leads to knowledge. But if it is applied wrongly, it leads to an unsound judgement, a fallacy or a logical error. In other words, correct reasoning tends towards knowledge but

incorrect reasoning leads to ignorance.

Even in the subject of ethics virtues are rational acts whereas vices are irrational acts. And since it is better to be rational than to be irrational, it is equally preferable to be virtuous as opposed to being vicious. Actually, the proper use of reason ought to culminate in virtue or good conduct but its misuse or the lack of it can induce immorality. In my view, the abuse of reason is the cause of permissiveness in the society.

Unless stringent measures are taken in schools and colleges to curb this alarming trend through counselling and the teaching of moral education to young people, it may escalate to unmanageable proportions and we may end up with a sick society whereby vices are glorified and virtues are condemned. Correspondingly, faith is of no less importance than reason in so far as it helps in minimizing immorality.

In conclusion, it is important to take note of the fact that neither faith nor reason need be superior or inferior to the other, for there is no standard measure for such value judgements. As Robin George Collingwood has already acknowledged, faith and reason are natural and necessary states of the mind. But I would like to add that only non-religious faith is indispensable to reason. For one can be rational but lack faith in God. However, one cannot possess religious faith without rationality. In other words, reason is requisite for faith in God but the latter is not a prerequisite for rationality. Not everybody has faith in God. It is only faith in the non-religious sense of the word which is as universal and indispensable as reason itself.

Finally, it is noteworthy that this is the second time since the

establishment of the department of philosophy in this university that the problem of faith and reason has been treated in a Master of Arts thesis. The first attempt to deal with this issue was made by Dr. Justus Mbae (who is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Kenyatta University), in 1977 in a thesis entitled "Faith and reason, some attempts to explain away religion". However, Mbae's thesis differs from the present one because the author has limited the discussion of faith and reason to traditional African religion. My treatment of the same problem is more broadly based, and hence apt to be of greater applicability than Mbae's presentation. In this endeavour, I used as a point of reference the English philosopher Robin George Collingwood whose conception of faith, reason and their relationship I found very interesting indeed.

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