

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

DEAR SIR,

In his article on *Finality in Theology* Professor Laird quotes some passages from one of my books in which I maintain that for a believing Christian his faith gives him the clue to the understanding of everything in heaven and earth. He then expounds these passages as though they were meant to assert a claim to a type of exclusiveness which I have never held, which indeed I have spent a good deal of time trying to persuade certain of my fellow Christians to abandon.

It may be that I have laid myself open to this misunderstanding by my own failure to express myself clearly. I deliberately used the word "clue" because a clue needs interpretation if its implications are to be grasped and understood, and it is my belief that the implications of the revelation of God in Christ are to be grasped by just such collaborative intercourse between theology and philosophy as Professor Laird advocates at the end of his article.

If you have the space, I should like your readers to have the following passages to take together with those quoted by Professor Laird in your July issue. They come from p. 34 of my *Doctrine of the Trinity*.

"The only possible conclusion to be drawn from the actual revelation which God has given is that while for His own good purposes He enables some people and not others to grasp that revelation, what He demands of all men as the condition of their justification is the sincerity which is true to what it honestly believes and will not pretend to believe what it does not."

"The actual result of God's refusal to make His revelation so clear and self-evident that no one can fail to grasp it is that our minds are kept on the stretch, our wits sharpened, our tastes trained, our characters strengthened. No one, for example, can study the history of Christian doctrine without discovering how greatly our insight into its significance has grown through the interchange of thought between theology and philosophy, between Christian and pagan, between orthodox and heretic. . . . The reason why a particular revelation is given to one man and not to another is that the interplay of their differing minds is for the mutual benefit of both, and it is this mutual benefit that of His love for both God wills with impartial justice to bestow upon them."

Yours faithfully,

LEONARD HODGSON.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

August 29, 1945.

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

DEAR SIR,

When I read Mr. Toms' admirable notice of my text-book *Does It Follow?* I concluded that the little thing was even more popular than I had imagined it to be. On a second reading I found the notice instructive in a way that Mr. Toms did not, I think, intend; and since there will be hundreds of readers of *PHILOSOPHY* eager to read this important work I am bound to point out how his interpretation differs from mine. He says that I am dubious of theoretical exposition. In a handbook chiefly intended for subscribers to the *Daily Babblergraph* and for listeners to the election addresses of the Hon. Samuel Slumkey it was not necessary to define the Forms of Thought. But his principal complaint is that I allow errors that lack objective test. For (a) I suppose that observation precedes reasoning, and therefore I admit a subjective criterion. But I plainly suggest, in all that I say about selection and analysis that observation includes judgment. And (b) I refer to subjective and debatable principles as tests of objectivity. In the sentence to which the critic refers I am discussing hypotheses such as that the weather can be altered by spiritual electricity, and I remark tritely that hypotheses that introduce unknown forms of agency are superfluous. Upon this Mr. Toms saddles me with a premise of his own invention "that supernatural hypotheses are pure speculation," ignoring half my sentence "If results can be accounted for in other ways." This precaution no more

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makes me a positivist than a prelapsarian. He proceeds to show that two examples given in Part II presume sheer imputation on my part. A correspondent in one of the magic journals surmises that some letters are more lucky than others on the ground that he has noticed that football teams beginning with B are seldom beaten. Mr. Toms tells me that to those of a different way of thinking this would not contain error, that it asserts sufficiency of observation, and that I am making a horrible blunder in saying that the observation is unscientific. But when people in the *Monthly Diviner* and elsewhere suppose connections of this sort, between initial letters and victories in the League, we are entitled to suspect errors of very simple enumeration, and can fairly think that the record is insufficient. Examples of this type, in fact, raise interesting discussions about sufficiency of evidence.

Yours faithfully,

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