

ology of the Apocalypse is no different from that of other parts of the New Testament. What the writer wished to convey to his readers was that Christ was in their midst while they were enduring persecution, and that, whether they lived or suffered martyrdom, there could no hurt come near them.

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## Planning and Religion

To review together Mr Christopher Dawson's *The Judgement of the Nations*<sup>1</sup> and Dr Karl Mannheim's *Diagnosis of our Time*<sup>2</sup> would be unjustifiable were it possible to do justice to either in less than an essay of the old quarterly size. For to discuss either at all adequately would be to discuss also, not necessarily the whole of each author's past work, but the development of certain dominant ideas throughout that work. Otherwise, one is obliged to assume an acquaintance with Dr Mannheim's previous book, *Man and Society*, and with at least two earlier books by Mr Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* and *Beyond Politics*. Some of Dr Mannheim's ideas have, I suspect, obtained currency among persons who either have not read *Man and Society* or have not wholly digested that massive and difficult work; I wish that there was more evidence that Mr Dawson's two books, which contain some of the wisest and most penetrating criticism that has been made of contemporary politics, culture and religion, had been read at all. The two books under review occupy a somewhat similar position in their authors' works. They consist of closely related essays, written at various times during the war; some of Mr Dawson's have appeared, in the same or an earlier form, in *The Dublin Review*; Dr Mannheim's—which he subtitled "wartime essays of a sociologist"—were composed primarily for discussion in private groups. Both volumes were evidently constructed, as all work of profound and conscientious thinking at the present time must be, under considerable difficulty; they are certainly as important as any books on social problems which have appeared during these last three years.

Neither considerations of space nor the foregoing parallel, however, is sufficient to justify considering the books together. But if we find a point upon which they converge, and consider the differences and similarities in their approach, the result—when we have to do with two writers both of great distinction, engaged in different special studies and possessing different backgrounds—may be of some profit. As the questions with which they are concerned are closely related, and as the authors are quite aware of each other's work, the point of convergence is not difficult to find. Mr Dawson says (p. 81): "Is it possible to develop a culture which will be free? Or does cultural planning necessarily involve a totalitarian state? This is the question

<sup>1</sup> Sheed and Ward, 8s. 6d.

<sup>2</sup> Kegan Paul, 10s.

that Dr Mannheim deals with in the final chapters of his book, *Man and Society*." He proceeds, in the next page or two, to discuss Mannheim's solution, and finds two difficulties:

First, that a social science such as he desiderates hardly exists as yet, though we can see its beginnings.

Secondly, that the remoulding of human nature is a task that far transcends politics, and that if the State is entrusted with this task it will inevitably destroy human freedom in a more fundamental way than even the totalitarian states have yet attempted to do.

Those states do, however, show us the risks of a wholesale planning which sacrifices the liberties and spiritual values of the older type of culture for the sake of power and immediate success. The planning of culture cannot be taken in a dictatorial spirit, like a rearmament plan. Since it is a much higher and more difficult task than any economic organization, it demands greater resources of powers of knowledge and understanding. It must, in fact, be undertaken in a really religious spirit.

Dr Mannheim would not, I think, disagree with this affirmation; but his statement of it would be very different. It would be much less simple; that is partly because he is a sociologist, with no dogmatic religious faith such as Mr Dawson's, and partly because he is Mannheim.

Sociology is already a recognized science with an immense body of literature and a formidable, though brief, tradition; it is (as Dr Mannheim says) the science of Human Behaviour, synthesizing and comprehending such more restricted sciences of human behaviour as economics and psychology. Already we need another science, the science of the Behaviour of Sociologists. I mean that the moment the sociologist ceases to confine himself to description within his own terms, and to offering dispassionate predictions of the results of two or more alternative procedures, the moment he betrays any emotional interest in what has happened or in what will happen, elements too personal to be part of the "science" come into play: they appear to us, when we disagree, as *prejudice*, and when we agree, as *wisdom*. I think that Dr Mannheim has a generous share of wisdom, and he would be a singular human being if he had no prejudices; and, besides being a sociologist, he has unusual intuition in matters of art and religion. And furthermore (as one would expect) he has a very complex and fascinating personality, which is by no means unapparent even in the scientific rigours. Not the least of the arduous demanded of his reader is the continuous alertness necessary to decide which side of him is, at the moment, uppermost. There is first of all, of course, the sociologist.

Child psychology, educational psychology, criminology, experimental psychology, psycho-analysis collected a whole store of material which was ready to be co-ordinated and integrated into a Science of Human Behaviour.

There is a more passionate voice, which speaks sometimes almost in the accents of *The New Statesman*:

All of us know that the greatest oppression in history is not that of the slaves, serfs or wage-earning labourers, but that of women in patriarchal society.

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Theology

There is a third voice, which would not be heard in *The New Statesman* at all, and which says:

There will, therefore, in every planned society, be a body somehow similar to the priests, whose task it will be to watch that certain basic standards are established and maintained. . . .

It will become more and more a question whether something corresponding to the monastic seclusion, some form of complete or temporary withdrawal from the affairs of the world, will not be one of the great remedies for the dehumanizing effect of a civilization of busybodies. If this is so, this monastic seclusion will once more have two functions. The first will be to provide an opportunity for those who, so to speak, specialize in religious experience, and whose one task is to transmit the spirit once revealed to later generations without themselves making the adjustments to the new surroundings. These will be the guardians of the spirit, to whom the purity of the deeper experience is more important than its contemporaneity. But there will be, secondly, more secular "orders" into which the active politician and business man can withdraw for a while for contemplation, and so make contact with those who are less involved in the struggle for existence.

This is more like Mr Gerald Heard, but more Christian as well as more human, than the programme presented in *Man the Master*.

The paper from which these last two quotations are taken, "Towards a New Social Philosophy," is of peculiar importance for Christian readers, being subtitled "A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist." Dr Mannheim believes, I think, that the religious element (I am trying to speak his language, not mine) is necessary. For on the one hand "a planned society cannot be built on the neutralized attitudes of the late Liberal age, in which all the values tended to cancel each other out." On the other hand, a planned society which ignores religious values will end in some form of totalitarianism (in this country, probably in what Mr Dawson calls a "totalitarian democracy"). The planning must be done, therefore, with a view to leaving open the place which only a religious reawakening can fill: only "the conditions under which these deeper experiences will flourish can be planned." It will be noted that Dr Mannheim, as a sociologist, is concerned with religion only as "religious experience"—with religion as a feeling experienced by individual human beings; and we may ask, in passing, whether such a description from outside can ever be quite satisfactory, since a necessary condition of that feeling is a belief that certain statements about the universe, about Man and God, are *true*, and a religious "experience" without dogma is very different from the experience of believing a dogma. But I find a difficulty in the assertion that the *conditions* for a religious revival (leaving the revival itself to the Spirit) can be planned. If we build a house, and await the appearance of an interior decorator of genius before covering the walls and floors and purchasing furniture, we know that certain things about that house are settled: we do not expect the decorator to take it to pieces and reconstruct it according to another plan, in the course of carrying out his beautification. But if we plan a society, leaving space for religion to fill when it turns up, how do we know that the form in which it may arrive will fit the place that we have left for it? Dr Mannheim himself may be quite prepared to accept the most drastic alterations, but perhaps it will be too late?

Will, for instance, the "body somewhat similar to the priests," which we learned of in my last quotation, be any more prepared to make room for genuine priests than Pharaoh's experts were to make room for Moses and Aaron? Unless the religious inspiration is already present, in designing the general plan, I doubt whether it is likely to find a warm welcome later.

This difficulty also comes to light in Dr Mannheim's use of the word *basic*. He tells us that "the Christian does not merely want to adjust himself to an environment, but wants to do so only through patterns of action which are in harmony with his basic experience of life. . . . Christian action has its direction, since it is possessed with a basic vision of life, and although this has to be reinterpreted it does not wither away." But he had previously said:

To put it quite briefly, we must establish a set of basic virtues such as decency, mutual help, honesty and social justice, which can be brought home through education and social influence, whereas the higher forms of thought, art, literature, etc., remain as free as they were in the philosophy of Liberalism. It must be one of our main concerns to establish the list of those primary virtues without which no civilization can exist, and which make for the basic conformity which gives stability and soundness to social life.

The question is, Which is the more basic—the Christian vision of life or the primary virtues of social survival? This seems to bring us bang to the question of natural law, upon which I am too prudent here to venture; but we may ask whether it is possible to determine, establish and maintain these social virtues, unless there is some kind of religious vision of life about the place.

I am also troubled by the emphasis on *novelty* in Dr Mannheim's vision of religious revival. He says truly of the "New Spirit" that "we cannot create it. Only if it is already at work can we strengthen those tendencies in it which we desire to prevail"—and only if it is already at work, we may add, is there much hope that it and our planned society can unite successfully. But he has said earlier:

After all, a Cathedral Mass is also a spiritualized collective ecstatic experience. The problem, therefore, is rather to find *new forms of spiritualization* [italics mine] than completely to deny the potentialities inherent in the new forms of group existence.

I hope I am wrong in interpreting these remarks as assuming that the Cathedral Mass is no longer capable of satisfying the human need for collective ecstasy. But much earlier he has said:

If one takes the attitude that the truth of Christianity is laid down in certain clear-cut statements which have supra-temporal validity, there will be small scope for sociological thinking. . . . If in contrast to this one holds the view that the fundamental Christian attitudes have not been laid down in terms of rigid rules, but have rather been given in concrete paradigmata which only point in the direction where Right is to be sought, then there is scope left for creative contribution in every new epoch.

It seems odd that Dr Mannheim, who in the same essay has criticized Modernism with penetration, should commit himself to this statement. In this passage, we observe that one alternative is an *attitude* and the

other a *view*; that the first is concerned with the *truth* of Christianity, while the word *attitude* is called upon to do fresh duty in the second. The first, moreover, seems to point to the Creeds ("clear-cut statements"), but the second substitutes for the "clear-cut statements" "rigid rules"—which are not the same thing. I am, therefore, not convinced that the religion, the place for which his planners are to be planning, is likely to be Christianity; any more than I am convinced that they will be able to plan the place for it unless they already believe it, or are inspired by the Holy Ghost to act as if they did. It is, as Mr Dawson says, "easy for a planned society to incorporate the least vital elements of organized Christianity at its lowest level of spiritual vitality."

I am not (I must explain) anxious to find flaws or ambiguities in Dr Mannheim's argument, and not at all to depreciate an impressive and important work. It is rather that I feel sure that this work is going to have a considerable influence and am by no means confident that the results of this influence will even be such as Dr Mannheim himself would approve. It is a very complex work, demanding close study; and with such a work people find it easier to accept whatever fits, or appears to fit, with the furniture already in their minds, than to understand a whole which will contain much that is unfamiliar and much that imposes re-examination of the opinions they already hold. I regard it as unfortunate, for example, that we shall have the need, the opportunity, and the enthusiasm for a great deal of rebuilding and town planning, at a period in which there exists no great architectural style in which to build; similarly, as a consideration at least recommending caution, that we should have the need, the opportunity, and the enthusiasm for extensive social replanning at a time when values are so confused, and when popular approval is so easily obtained for both the untried and the discredited, for both the callow and the jejune.

I must remind the reader again that each of these volumes is a collection of essays, and that each contains so much thought of immediate value that a dozen reviews of this length would not exhaust the matter of discussion.

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### A Modern Synagogue Sermon

[*Note.*—We recently published an ancient synagogue sermon (see *THEOLOGY*, September, 1942, p. 164). The sermon that follows was delivered in the Cambridge Synagogue on December 12, 1942. Sidrah means the portion of the Law to be read in the synagogue on a Sabbath. This Sabbath's Sidrah was the Sidrah "Mikketz" (Genesis xli, 1—xliv, 17), so called because the second word of the Sidrah is Mikketz, which means "at the end." Bar Mitzvah corresponds in some respects to our Confirmation service; its celebration takes place on the Sabbath after the boy's thirteenth birthday, and the boy himself (Bernard, in this case) reads the Sidrah on that Sabbath.—*Ed.*: *THEOLOGY*.]

My dear Bernard,—If your Bar Mitzvah had been 2,000 or 1,500 years ago, in the Talmudic period, the speaker would probably have made

some comments on the opening part of your Sidrah, the usual thing, one would suppose, at that time on such occasions. As it would be preposterous to compete with the speakers of that age, it may be as well to-day to say a few words on the ending of your Sidrah.

It is indeed a most remarkable ending; at first sight, it might seem to be no proper ending at all. For your Sidrah ends right in the middle of an episode. If I may recall it, Joseph, who has had his cup put in Benjamin's bag, accuses Benjamin of having stolen the cup. The brothers cannot deny the accusation, since the cup is found in Benjamin's bag. But as they would not dare to return to their father without Benjamin, his favourite son, they ask Joseph to keep them all as his slaves for the theft. Joseph, however, replies that he will keep as slave only him who stands convicted, Benjamin; the others, he says, may return in peace to their father. Here the Sidrah ends. The story is not finished—we shall read the final act next Sabbath—but the Sidrah ends; and the question arises, Why does the Sidrah end here? or, more precisely, Why did the Rabbis who made the arrangement of the Pentateuch which we follow (for there are other arrangements), why did they decide that the Sidrah should end here, though the story is not completed?

The two main reasons seem to be these: first, a formal, literary reason; and secondly, a reason having regard to the idea expressed in this ending. The first reason is of a formal, literary nature. The last words of your Sidrah, by which Joseph tells his brothers to go back without Benjamin, are, "Get you up in peace unto your father." This, from the formal point of view, is a happy ending. The words, "Return in peace to your father," from the formal point of view, constitute a happy ending; and the Rabbis liked to end on a formal, happy note of this kind. It is noteworthy, for example, that some of the less cheerful tractates of the Mishna—such as Yoma; Sota or Makkoth—have a cheerful passage added to them as ending. This predilection of the Rabbis for formal, happy endings is based not only on a fairly general, human, sentimental feeling, but also on a deep-rooted religious belief: the belief that happy endings bring luck, point towards a pleasant future. One root of the happy endings of modern literature is those ancient happy endings that were, in a sense, omens, forecasting and foreshaping the future.

But there is a second reason why the Rabbis made your Sidrah end where it does, and this is not a formal reason. Your Sidrah ends with a magnificent idea, the idea of individual responsibility as against communal responsibility. In ancient times, even among less primitive nations, the principle of communal responsibility was prevalent; in other words, it was customary, when a man committed a crime, to punish not only that man but the whole community in which he lived—his family, for example, or his town or his nation. Unfortunately, this idea is very rife again in our own time. The shooting of innocent hostages because another member of the community has committed sabotage, the making responsible all Jews for what one of them or a few of them may do, the demand for mass punishment of the Germans after the war irrespective of guilt, are all bad revivals of the idea of