men by their living presence and voice. That books had to be written was already a great departure and breach with the Spirit, occasioned by necessity and not in keeping with the New Testament.

It is all the more unfortunate that at the end of the Gutenberg era the Catholic Church in England should in practice have gone into reverse by the device of the missalette which has turned liturgy into a literary exercise. Christian liturgy in essence is for non-readers, requiring only a few songs, canticles, acclamations that can be picked up by dint of repetition. The Bible most often demands that people read and other people listen. If I read the Bible at home, I read it in order to be able to hear it and answer it better when I next hear it read in its proper context of the worshipping community, when it actually becomes the word of God. The fiction and poetry in the Bible are there to keep open the immediacy of God's word as address.

But this is not a plea for the burning of Bibles or an attack on the book trade. The Bible includes literature of enough sorts to stand pledge for all kinds of literature. The myth that is polarized by Genesis-Exodus and the Apocalypse and centred by Jesus of Nazareth is a myth that allows for the inclusion of all that is human. Whatever deals with man and with God and with the world in whatever kind of combination has a claim to fit somewhere within the Christian scheme; to fit not simply in its own terms but to be judged and found true or wanting by the story of God's working with man in the world from creation to recreation, from the Red Sea to the sea of glass and fire.

Faith and Theology in the University

by Roderick Strange

In a recent lecture, Fr Edward Yarnold discussed the place of the theologian in the university.[1] He mentioned the salutary effect of contact with other disciplines on the university theologian, the value of the ecumenical setting which a university provides for theology, and, in particular, the view, proposed by the 1952 Faith and Order Conference at Lund, that theologians should make for the centre of the Christian faith where they are united, and, working from that centre, justify their divisions. On this last point, however, Fr Yarnold registered misgivings, for, he asserted, 'Theology is not a study

[1]See E. J. Yarnold, s.j., 'The Theologian in the University', in *The Month*, March, 1972, pp. 79-82. The lecture was the first annual New Foundation Lecture given at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, on 13th May, 1971.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1972.tb07518.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

which can be pursued with detachment: it requires faith'.[1] He argued the issue with care on the principle that a living theology can only arise from a living tradition, and he went on to discuss the consequences of this viewpoint and draw out its advantages.

At the same time, Fr Yarnold was aware that some theologians, while sympathetic to what he had to say about a living tradition in theology, would want to question the role he ascribed to faith: 'Some theologians—I speak of my own country, but the cap may fit other heads—have thought that this need for commitment is incompatible with scholarly objectivity and freedom of conscience'.[2] For them, in other words, commitment, or faith, threatens the integrity which academic theology requires.[3] They feel that faith would prejudice the detached course which this theology has to take if it is to be true to itself as academic. They would make a distinction between academic and commitment theology. If a man offers himself as a minister of a particular Church, the Church authorities have a duty to see that he is committed to the Gospel that they will require him to teach. This is commitment theology and it is properly taught in a theological college or seminary. But it is inappropriate to the university setting. Dispassionate examination of the Scripture documents and the writings of the Fathers, their placing in history and culture, their development and their relation to the present day, this is the object of university theology. This is the agenda to which the theologian will return, as will his philosopher colleague to the writings of Plato and Aristotle, because it is a rich mine which the understanding of man will never totally exhaust. Not to return would be intellectual suicide. But academic theology can never be bound by commitment. It is not faith seeking to understand, but a detached sifting of the evidence with the appropriate breadth of vision, and it will render up its detached conclusions. Commitment in the exercise of this task would be an intolerable constraint.

The purpose of this article is to suggest that faith, or commitment, does not in fact cramp the university theologian's style. Rather the contrary. He must include his commitment if his theology is to be of any significance at all.

In the first place, there is the question of the nature of the faith which theology involves. If it is understood as simply a deep personal relationship with God, which implies no intellectual content, but which results in a firm adherence to him, it is insufficient. It is rightly eschewed by the academic theologian and should be treated in the same way by the seminarian. It is a thin, empty shell and will soon

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[3] In this paragraph, no names are given. This is deliberate. A trend may be real and need to be discussed, but to identify it with an individual is at once to caricature the views of the individual. Nothing is quite as simple as that. The reality of the trend, in Oxford at any rate, was demonstrated by a graduate seminar of philosophers and theologians which met weekly during Hilary term, 1972. It was chaired jointly by Professors Basil Mitchell, John Macquarrie and Maurice Wiles.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1972.tb07518.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

crack. On the other hand, if faith is understood as a relationship which takes its substance from a profoundly loving knowledge and knowing love of God, based on the Scriptures and the tradition of the believing community, nourished by the liturgy and private prayer, and built up through justice and love, then the situation is altogether different. In his search for the truth, the theologian must tap all the sources of knowledge available to him. Failure to do so is shoddy workmanship at best. It follows that if faith has an intellectual content, and it does, then the knowledge it provides must be consulted by the theologian in the performance of his task. There is no question of having to pin down here exactly what this content affirms. That is another issue and an extremely delicate one. What must be recognized is that the role of faith in theology is not that of prejudice. Of course there is a risk that it may become so, developing into a one-sided relationship, a matter of the heart without reference to the head. Maintaining the balance is one of the most difficult aspects of a theologian's difficult job.[1] Furthermore, to recognize the role of faith in theology is not to deny the value of dispassionate, empirical sifting. But while that is important, it is also limited. A theology that restricted itself to such sifting would remain forever on the foothills. It is necessary to scale the heights as well. For a university theologian to ignore this challenge would be tragic.[2] In fact, despite their claim to thorough-going detachment, most theologians are committed; even detachment is itself a form of commitment—albeit a negative one—and influences their discernment of theological truth. Once the character of faith as a source of knowledge is recognized, it is difficult to see how it can be ignored by a theologian, whether his work takes place in the university, the seminary or anywhere else. But this becomes still more apparent when the role of faith in theology is understood more exactly.

At this point it will be helpful to consider the work of the present Bishop of Durham, Dr Ian T. Ramsey. Working from an empirical standpoint, Dr Ramsey has been anxious to show how it is possible to speak meaningfully about God. In this context he has emphasized particularly the value of odd logical placing in theological language. He gives various examples. He notes the way the ritual of the court-room sustains an atmosphere of impersonality. But should the accused be the judge's wife, the situation is altered; the court is 'electrified' by the strange circumstances of this meeting; here is an 'oddity'. Or again, there is the enthusiastic fisherman who only understands the principle, 'equal pay for equal work', when it is expressed in the odd context of 'equal fishing pay for equal fishing work'. Only then does the penny drop and does it become possible for him to see what the principle is trying to say. These odd situations

[1]See Maurice Wiles, 'The Difficulties of Being a Theologian', in *Theology*, 64 (1961), pp. 181-184.
[2]See Peter L. Berger, *A Rumour of Angels* (Penguins, 1971), p. 105.

are provided by Dr Ramsey as examples or analogies of situations in which a religious discernment can take place. The oddity creates a setting in which it is possible to see more than what is observable simply empirically.[1] In religious language, he argues, models like 'cause', 'good', and 'purpose', to give just three examples, can induce discernment and commitment when coupled with such 'odd' qualifiers as *first*, *infinitely* and *eternal* respectively. The odd connection discloses their religious significance.[2] The qualifiers make it possible to understand the models in a fresh light because they evoke characteristically different situations. All this is most helpful and explains in a more systematic fashion a style of theological language which is scriptural in its inspiration and which has been used constantly, if implicitly, throughout the history of the Church.[3] At the same time, it raises the more complex question of the way a disclosure takes place.

It is not altogether clear from Dr Ramsey's writings *how* a disclosure occurs. At times he seems to say that it is the odd logical placing itself which causes the penny to drop, the ice to melt, the light to dawn. For example he writes: 'A qualifier like "infinite" will work on a model of human love until there dawns on us that particular kind of family resemblance between the various derivative models which reveals God—God as "infinitely loving".'[4] At other times he emphasizes the need for the 'eye of faith' which will make plain the significance of ordinary, empirical seeing.[5] It seems that it is the latter which is required and which is most commonly indicated by Dr Ramsey's examples once they have been pressed a little further. Odd logical placing alone is not enough.

When the prisoner in the dock is not just any woman, but the judge's wife, the situation in its oddity may be ripe for a disclosure, but the disclosure is not automatic. The judge's name, Dr Ramsey observes, is Brown. Suppose his wife is called Mary. Suppose, too, that Mr Justice Brown is so short-sighted that he never recognizes this Mary Brown as his Mary Brown. The situation is at once drained of its oddity, except in so far as the judge failed to recognize his wife. Dr Ramsey rightly notes that no particular arrangement of model and qualifier can be guaranteed to produce a disclosure,[6] but that does not weaken the force of this argument. It seems that there must be a third element, the judge recognizing his wife, for the oddity to realize its potential.

He says so himself in as many words by using another example. The attempt to explain the principle, 'equal pay for equal work', is presented to the enthusiastic fisherman from a wide variety of angles

[1]See Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (London, 1957), ch. 1.
[2]*Ibid.*, ch. 2.
[3]To give two examples: Athanasius, *Or. contra Arianos ii.* 21; J. H. Newman, *Select Treatises of St Athanasius*, vol. ii (London, 1890), p. 445.
[4]Ian T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (Oxford, 1964), p. 61.
[5]e.g. Ian T. Ramsey, *Christian Discourse* (Oxford, 1965), p. 11.
[6]Ramsey, *Religious Language*, p. 79.

without success. 'The head always shakes, and the face looks blank.' The proliferation of arguments is useless until the argument takes the specific form of 'equal fishing pay for equal fishing work'. Then 'he smiles; his face breaks significantly, the penny drops'.[1] But this effect cannot be attributed to the oddity of the logical placing alone. A different odd placing would have no effect; it might make the mist of incomprehension even thicker. 'Equal rowing pay for equal rowing work' might stop the penny ever dropping at all: rowing disturbs the fish. It is this particular odd placing that is effective because, in Dr Ramsey's words, 'he is never, as we should say, "more himself" than when he is fishing. Fishing moves him to tears, reaches the "roots" of his personality.'[2] It is deep knowledge that allows the potential of the odd placing to be realized.

What bearing does this fact have on the study of theology? Dr Ramsey has shown clearly the value of odd logical placing in the model/qualifier pattern of religious language. At the same time, no one case can be guaranteed to evoke a disclosure. The question is whether there will ever be a disclosure unless and until the qualified model strikes a chord deep in the hearer's personality. Take, for example, Jessica, a character in Iris Murdoch's novel, *The Nice and the Good*. 'Jessica', Miss Murdoch explains, 'was . . . entirely outside Christianity. Not only had she never believed or worshipped, she had never been informed about the Bible stories, or the doctrines of the Church in her home or school. Christ was a figure in a mythology, and she knew about as much about him as she knew about Apollo. She was in fact an untainted pagan. . . .'[3] Regale Jessica with oddly placed models and qualifiers and she will regard them as run-of-the-mill nonsense. If she has a philosophical turn of mind, the contrariness of the language will only confirm any suspicion she may have that Christianity is unworthy of serious investigation. 'Infinitely good', 'infinitely wise', 'eternal purpose', 'first cause', 'simplicity', 'unity', 'immutable' and the rest of them—the multiplication of examples will be a waste of time; they will cut no ice with her. The ice will not even melt, the penny never drop, the light never dawn. No disclosure *can* take place, because she does not have within her the means to effect it. There is no chord which the models and qualifiers can strike to get a response.

What would this chord be? To take up Dr Ramsey's examples once more, in the court it is the judge's relationship with the accused. They are married. It is the recognition of the personal bond between them that creates the disclosure and allows the odd discernment to take place. Again, in the fisherman's case, it is the mention of fishing, which is the absorbing interest of his life, about which he knows so much, that makes it possible for him to under-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[3] Iris Murdoch, *The Nice and the Good* (Penguins, 1969), p. 83.

stand something which previously had not registered at all. In both these cases, the personal element is decisive; first, the emphasis is on the love relationship of husband and wife, and next on the intimate knowledge a man has of his abiding interest.

This explanation of the way a disclosure occurs seems to correspond with the account given by Dr Ramsey in *Christian Discourse*. There he asks, among other questions, how the crucifixion became the occasion of a cosmic disclosure. He suggests that Paul would have answered this difficulty in at least two ways. His words, 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures' (I Cor. 15, 3), pointed to the disclosure. The reference to the Scriptures is the clue. It would bring to mind the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Is. 53). 'The Crucifixion matched with Isaiah 53 becomes the occasion of a disclosure.'[1] But to specify the occasion is not to name the cause. The disclosure is caused by the recognition that the crucified Christ corresponds with the Suffering Servant. That deep knowledge is the chord which the matching of the crucifixion and the Suffering Servant can strike to create a disclosure. The second answer, Dr Ramsey suggests, is given by reference to Paul's teaching on the Remnant, although the process is more complex here. Again, it is the recognition of Christ's correspondence, or better, identification, with the remnant—he is the one remaining faithful person—that makes it possible to discern God's activity on the Cross. And the necessary disclosure can occur because the suffering and death of Christ were seen as related to the remnant, which was so deeply understood by devout Jews.

It follows that if Dr Ramsey's theory is in fact a valid and helpful way of speaking about God and understanding the truths of religion, it is so, for the theologian at least, only when he has within him a deep, personal, loving knowledge, the sort of knowledge that the earlier part of this article suggested was an integral part of faith. It should also be clear why the theologian who disregards his faith is limiting his work rather than liberating it. Faith is the chord which his always inadequate religious language can strike to create a disclosure. Only then can he discern the truth that is presented to him; only then can he go on to commit himself afresh and explicitly to what he has discovered. Were there no chord, or if the chord, like a violin string, were so slack that no note could sound, he would be a Jessica. The qualified models might be presented to him endlessly, but they would make no impression. His relentless detachment would guard him against the possibility of any disclosure taking place.

At the end it is important to add two points which must not be obscured. First, it is to be hoped that this deep, personal, loving knowledge, this faith, which theologians need to have, is true faith. But that does not mean that they will all reach the same conclusions. On the contrary, different scholars would always be bringing to

[1]Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, p. 33.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1972.tb07518.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

light aspects of the infinite truth that previously had been veiled. Nor would it follow that their conclusions should always display a neat coherence. Incoherence, a certain logical impropriety, is essential in religious language. This is not to say that there are not some incoherencies which should be disallowed, but that is a different matter. 'What we have to learn', to quote Dr Ramsey for the last time, 'is that there is no single inward track to mystery, and no single outward road from the infinite.'[1] Only in this legitimate diversity can the treasure of Christian truth be discovered.

Secondly, while it is to be hoped that a theologian's faith is true, it is possible for it to be seriously defective. Clearly, the defect will not hinder a disclosure, but it will cause a false discernment. To use a literary example: as Othello's faith in, love for, Desdemona is distorted by jealousy, the evidence Iago brings him evokes a disclosure that creates a false discernment, and so he kills her. The possibility of error indicates the need for an authority in the Church whose right faith is assured. Whether such an authority is given and, if it is, how it should operate, are further questions which need not be treated here. But it may be as well to remark that the exercise of that authority in relation to theology is properly found in a seminary or theological college, and not in a university. That is where the distinction between the two lies, rather than in the consultation or neglect of faith in the academic discipline. This article merely insists that the virtue of detachment, so highly prized among other scholars, plays no part in bringing a theologian—university or otherwise—to perfection. The knowledge faith provides is vital to him, if he is to perform his task at all adequately.

Experiment in the Church

by Peter Hodgson

1. *Scientific Experiments*

Ever since the Second Vatican Council it is being increasingly realized that experiment and adaptation are continuing conditions of the life of the Church. But what precisely is an experiment in this context? Karl Rahner[2] has recently tried to answer this question and he concludes that since history as such is not really open to experimentation in the scientific sense, experiment must have a different meaning in the two contexts, and so the Church can learn nothing useful from a study of scientific experiments. In support of this view Rahner points out that an experiment in the Church is an event in the Church itself and so changes the Church, while no

[1] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, p. 65.
[2] *The Month*, February 1971.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1972.tb07518.x Published online by Cambridge University Press