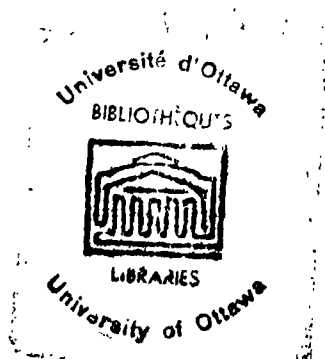


THE EPISTEMOLOGY AND RELIGION OF  
LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY

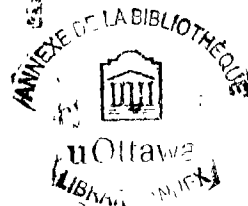
by

John Antal

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of  
Philosophy of the University of Ottawa  
in partial fulfilment for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy.



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## PREFACE

Lord Herbert of Cherbury has received honorable mention in most histories of philosophies. But paradoxically, his principal works, De Veritate and De Religione Laici, in which Herbert expounds his epistemological and religious notions, are less known than they should be by students of seventeenth century British philosophy.

A study of Herbert's doctrines will enable us to better understand the complex forces which motivated seventeenth century English thought. It will show us that British philosophy was not exclusively empirical during this period, and that Herbert was at the fount of that religious rationalizing which significantly shaped seventeenth and eighteenth century English thought. And it will also indicate the confusion and desperation which characterized an age bent on discovering a new basis of wisdom independently of a continuous intellectual tradition.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to expose Herbert's obscured but not insignificant epistemological and religious notions; (2) to consider their difficulties; and (3) evaluate Herbert's position in the history of English philosophy.

I wish at the outset to express my deep gratitude to Reverend Roméo Trudel, O. M. I., for his invaluable encouragement, personal direction, and suggestions.



## **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

Lord Herbert of Cherbury is best known to general readers as the author of his Autobiography,<sup>1</sup> which contains lively accounts of his personal rivalries and of the extravagant manner in which he lived in Paris while he was the English Ambassador to France from 1619 until 1624.<sup>2</sup>

Our interest in Lord Herbert, however, lies not in the story of his life, but in his attempts to solve the philosophical and religious conflicts which characterized his turbulent times. Our study, therefore, will be confined largely to those two works in which Herbert elucidates his philosophical and religious doctrines - his De Veritate and his De Religione Laici respectively.

Lord Herbert flourished in an age predominated by the greatest names in British philosophy - Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. That thinkers of such magnitude deserve considerable attention cannot be denied. But from the fact that these empirical philosophers absorb the attention of students of philosophy, it does not follow that they were the only speculative thinkers in their time. Our understanding of seventeenth century philosophy in England cannot be complete if we ignore those thinkers whose systems of thought did

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1. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, Autobiography, with Introduction, Notes, Appendices, and a Continuation of the Life by Sidney Lee, 2nd ed., London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1906. Lee's Introduction throughout this study will be designated by Roman numerals xi-xl, and his Continuation and Appendices by the same words.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

not follow the empirical tendency, and among whom Lord Herbert can be included.

Sir William Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> Henry Hallam,<sup>2</sup> Charles de Remusat,<sup>3</sup> Meyriek Carre,<sup>4</sup> and Ueberweg<sup>5</sup> are unanimous in affirming that Herbert deserves more consideration than has been accorded him in the history of philosophy. And in his translation of Herbert's De Religione Laici, Hutcheson deploras Herbert's comparative oblivion,<sup>6</sup> estimating his achievement as follows:

Though his achievement, therefore, was necessarily limited, it was by no means sterile; and though his influence has been far from negligible, it by no means follows that his thought is devoid of intrinsic worth. Few men so long ineffectual have been so interesting.<sup>7</sup>

In evaluating Herbert's influence, Ueberweg points out that none "can understand the polemic of Locke's Essay without studying Lord Herbert'

1. REID, Thomas, Works, 2 vols., ed. William Hamilton, London, 1863, II, p. 781-782.

2. HALLAM, Henry, Hallam's Works: Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, 6 vols., New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1880, III, Ch. III, Sect.1, p. 29.

3. DE REMUSAT, Charles, Herbert de Cherbury: sa Vie et ses Œuvre Paris, Didier ETC<sup>le</sup>, Editeurs, p. 307.

4. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, De Veritate, trans. from th Latin by Meyriek Carre, Bristol, 1937, Introduction, p. 6.

5. UEBERWEG, Friedrich, History of Philosophy, trans. G.S.Morris, 2 vols., New York, Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874, II, p.355.

6. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, De Religione Laici, trans. from the Latin with Notes and Introduction by Harold R. Hutcheson, New Haven, 1944, Introduction, p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 5.

De Veritate."<sup>1</sup> Willey maintains that because the manner in which Herbert proposed to solve the problems of his times indicated the direction in which subsequent religious rationalizing was to move in England, Herbert should be studied more thoroughly by students of seventeenth century thought.<sup>2</sup> And Sorley regards Herbert's De Veritate as the first systematic investigation into the problem of truth and criteria in England and his De Religione Laici as the first attempt at a comparative study of religion.<sup>3</sup>

It was the favorable light in which these historians of thought have regarded Herbert that has motivated this examination of the relatively unknown but apparently significant De Veritate and De Religione Laici of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to expound Herbert's philosophical and religious doctrines; (2) to indicate the difficulties implicit in those doctrines; and (3) to evaluate Herbert's position in the history of philosophy.

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1. UEBERWEG, op. cit., II, p. 354.

2. WILLEY, Basil, The Seventeenth Century Background, London, Chatte & Windus, 1949, p. 121-122.

3. SORLEY, William R., "The Philosophy of Lord Herbert of Cherbury," Mind, New Series, VIII, London, 1894, p. 507-508.

CHAPTER I

LORD HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

## CHAPTER I

### LORD HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

This chapter is intended not to dwell on all the events of Herbert's life, but to consider those factors of his education, environment, and activities in the light of which his development as a speculative thinker may be better understood. Following a discussion of Herbert's life, it will be necessary to consider the background of his times in order to appreciate the philosophical and religious tendencies and conflicts of his age. And finally Herbert's works, non-philosophical as well as philosophical and religious, will be reviewed.

#### 1. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LORD HERBERT

Edward Herbert, Lord of Cherbury, was born in Eyton, Wales on March 3, 1583.<sup>1</sup> He was the eldest of ten children born to Richard Herbert of Montgomery Castle and Lady Magdalena, "daughter of Sir Richard Newport and Margaret his wife."<sup>2</sup> Concerning the achievements and failures of Herbert's brothers, Richard, William, Charles, George, Henry, and Thomas, Hutcheson writes:

His brother Sir Henry distinguished himself as a Master of the Revels; his brother George became a brilliant University Curator, then a brilliant courtier, finally a brilliant poet and saint; his other brothers died fighting or sulking. Sloth and self-abasement were not among the sins of the Herberts.<sup>3</sup>

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1. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

3. HUTCHESON, in his Introduction to his translation of Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 12-13.

Herbert was proud of the courage and integrity of his father, Richard Herbert, who was a "deputy lieutenant of the county, justice of the peace, and custos rotularium,"<sup>1</sup> a Sheriff of Montgomeryshire. And it is with pride also that Herbert speaks of the exploits of his grandfather, Edward Herbert:

My grandfather was noted to be a great enemy of the outlaws and thieves of his time, who robbed in great numbers in the mountains of Montgomeryshire, for the suppressing of whom he often went, both day and night, to the places where they were; concerning which, though many particulars have been told me, I shall mention one only.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert then recounts how his grandfather captured a leader of outlaws and brought him to a swift and just punishment.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert was sickly in his infancy and slow in learning to speak. But his first utterance, if we are to believe him, was precocious:

When I came to talk, one of the furthest inquiries I made was, how I came into this world? I told my nurse, keeper, and others, I found myself here indeed, but from what cause or what beginning, or by what means, I could not imagine; but for this, as I was laughed at by nurse, and some other women that were present, so I was wondered at by others, who said, they never heard a child but myself ask that question.<sup>4</sup>

From the time he was ten years old until he was twelve, Herbert studied Greek and logic under Thomas Newton, a graduate of Cambridge and Oxford.<sup>5</sup> Herbert's parents then thought fit to send him to Ox-

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1. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 3-4.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 15-16.

5. Ibid., p. 21.

ford. Shortly after his entrance into Oxford, his father died, October, 1596.<sup>1</sup> When he was fifteen and still a student at Oxford, he married his cousin Mary,<sup>2</sup> who was six years his senior, in accordance with his family's wishes.

Herbert does not mention having received a degree from Oxford, Nevertheless he studied there until 1599, by which time he attained "the knowledge of French, Italian, and Spanish languages,"<sup>3</sup> for the express purpose of making himself "a citizen of the world as far as it were possible."<sup>4</sup> And he learned to play the lute in order to refresh his mind after studies, to which he "was exceedingly inclined."<sup>5</sup>

In 1600 curiosity rather than ambition prompted him into the Court of Elizabeth. His striking appearance must have greatly impressed the Queen:

As soon as she saw me, she stopped, and swearing, her usual oath, demanded, 'Who is this?' Everybody there present looked upon me, but none knew me, until Sir James Croft, a pensioner, finding the Queen stayed, returned back and told who I was, and that I have married Sir William of Herbert of St. Julian's daughter.<sup>6</sup>

During his eight years in Elizabeth's Court, he devoted himself

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1. Ibid., p. 22.

2. Ibid., p. 22. Although Herbert claims his age was "fifteen" at the time of his marriage, Lee affirms that his age was probably seventeen, p. 15, note 3.

3. Ibid., p. 23.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

5. Ibid., p. 23.

6. Ibid., p. 44.

to study . He recommends the reading of Patrizi, Telesio, and Comenius.<sup>1</sup> Although he regards the knowledge of arithmetic, medicine, and botany useful, he confines the utility of geometry to military projects:

As for the knowledge of lines, superficies, and bodies, though it be a science of much certainty and demonstration, it is not much useful for a gentleman, unless it be to understand fortifications, and knowledge whereof is worthy of those who intend the wars.<sup>2</sup>

He speaks of Aristotle's definitions of virtues as:

...being confirmed for the most part by the Platonics, Stoics, and other philosophers, and in general by the Christian Church, as well as all nations in the world whatsoever; they being doctrines imprinted in the soul in its first original, and containing the principal and first notions by which man may attain his happiness here or hereafter.<sup>3</sup>

For instructions in rhetoric and effective speaking, Herbert commends the study of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. He suggests that a style between that of Cicero and that of Quintilian be adopted because the former is "too long and tedious" and the latter is "too short and concise."<sup>4</sup>

Herbert considers it fitting for a gentleman to be a skillful rider, fencer, dancer, and swimmer,<sup>5</sup> but condemns "gambling" as an exercise totally unbecoming the character of a gentleman.<sup>6</sup> Neverthe-

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1. Ibid., p. 25-27.

2. Ibid., p. 27.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

4. Ibid., p. 36.

5. Ibid., p. 37-41.

6. Ibid., p. 42.

less his penchant for dueling is apparent through his Autobiography.

When his wife disapproved of his intention to visit foreign countries, Herbert did not hesitate to remind her that he was too young to travel before he married her.<sup>1</sup> He attempted to further justify his restlessness on the grounds of his knowledge of foreign languages:

...though I was sorry to leave my wife, as having lived honestly with her all this time, I thought it no such unjust ambition, to attain the knowledge of foreign countries; especially, since I had in great part already attained the languages, and that I intended not to spend any long time out of my country.<sup>2</sup>

In 1608, Herbert left England with a valet, two lackies, three horses, and "Mr. Aurelian Townsend, a gentleman that spoke the languages of French, Italian, and Spanish."<sup>3</sup> Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Herbert challenged a French cavalier to a duel for taking a ribbon from the hair of the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Ventadour.<sup>4</sup> He felt himself obliged to follow this course of action by the oath he had taken when he was made "Knight of the Bath,"<sup>5</sup> to defend widows, ladies, maidens, and orphans.

He spent his first summer in France riding and hunting in Chantilly with the Duke of Montmorency. The Duke testified his affection

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1. Ibid., p. 47.

2. Ibid., p. 47-48.

3. Ibid., p. 48.

4. Ibid., p. 49.

5. Ibid., p. 50.

and esteem for Herbert by giving him a jennet, "for which the Duke had sent expressly into Spain, and which cost him there five hundred crowns.

In 1608 Herbert came to Paris, where he was received in the house "of that incomparable scholar Isaac Casaubon."<sup>2</sup> Under the influence of Casaubon, by whose learning Herbert had been greatly impressed,<sup>3</sup> it is possible that Herbert conceived those religious notions which he was to express later in his De Veritate and De Religione Laici.

Herbert returned to England and his family in 1609. He devoted himself partly to his studies and partly to riding the jennet he had brought from France.<sup>4</sup> But within a year Herbert "resolved to take shipping for the Low Countries, and from thence to pass to the city of Juliers."<sup>5</sup> Juliers was one of the principal cities in the Duchy of William John, Duke of Cleves. Shortly after the Duke's death, Archduke Leopold entered Juliers and claimed the Duchy. The English combined with the Dutch in besieging Juliers, which surrendered August 22, 1610.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 56.

2. Ibid., p. 56. Isaac Casaubon was born in Geneva, February 18, 1509. He taught theology at the Academy of Geneva from 1578 until 1596. Towards the end of his life he advocated a "religious revival in which a Christian should participate without quitting the communion of the Church universal." See: PATTISON, Mark, Isaac Casaubon, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, p. 448.

3. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 56.

4. Ibid., p. 59-60.

5. Ibid., p. 60.

6. Ibid., p. 60. See also Lee's summary of this incident in the Low Countries, p. 60, note 2.

One of the officers in this expedition to the Low Countries was the son of the Treasurer of England, Lord Walden, with whom Herbert quarreled while "there was liberal drinking."<sup>1</sup> Lord Walden had taken offence at something which Herbert said in the spirit of levity. Herbert challenged Walden twice, but each time the latter avoided an encounter with the sword.<sup>2</sup> Their differences, however, were resolved in England, where Herbert was acclaimed as a hero:

I had scarce been two days there, when the Lords of the Council sending for me, ended the difference betwixt the Lord of Walden and myself. And now, if I may say it without vanity, I was in great esteem both in court and city; many of the greatest desiring my company, though yet before that time I had no acquaintance with them.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1611 and 1614, Herbert divided his time between the court, in which he was received very favorably, and the country, where nothing memorable occurred.<sup>4</sup> But in the middle of 1614 the joint-holders of the Cleves Territory quarreled. The Spanish General Spinola, on behalf of the Catholic Emperor, invaded the Low Countries.<sup>5</sup> And again Herbert, the knight-errant, offered his services to the Prince of Orange and the Dutch.<sup>6</sup>

While "Sir Henry Wetton mediated a peace by the king's command,"<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 62.

2. Ibid., p. 66.

3. Ibid., p. 68.

4. Ibid., p. 75.

5. Ibid., p. 76.

6. Ibid., p. 76.

7. Ibid., p. 81.

Herbert left for Gelegna. He then traveled through Switzerland and Italy, visiting Venice, Florence, Bologna, Padua, and Milan.<sup>1</sup> He returned to England in 1617.

Shortly after his arrival in London, Herbert was seized with "quar-tan ague,"<sup>2</sup> which made him lean and yellow beyond recognition. The pain-  
less days of his illness Herbert employed in study. And it was not until nearly two years after he was stricken did he completely recover.

While preparing to join the forces of the Earl of Oxford "for the service of the Venetians,"<sup>3</sup> Herbert was summoned by James I to Whitehall, where he was saluted by the Lords as "Lord Ambassador of France."<sup>4</sup>

As Ambassador to Louis XIII's Court, Herbert lived in Paris in the grand style which he thought befitted one in his elevated position. He spent more money "than his salary or his private resources justified."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Herbert discharged his duties with great energy, integrity, and tact.<sup>6</sup>

In a letter dated April 14, 1624, James I informed Herbert that the Earl of Carlisle and Lord Kensington were to replace him as the English Ambassador to France.<sup>7</sup> Lee summarizes the reasons behind Herbert's dismissal.

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1. Ibid., p. 83-92.

2. Ibid., p. 97.

3. Ibid., p. 98.

4. Ibid., p. 99.

5. Ibid., p. xvii-xviii. (Lee's Introduction).

6. Ibid., p. 135, "Continuation" by Lee.

7. Ibid., p. 135, note 3.

James I desired to secure his daughter Elizabeth and her husband, the Elector-Palatine, from the onslaughts of the ambitious German princes without involving England in a war. To achieve this end, he sought a convenient marriage partner for his son Charles, proposing to include into the marriage treaty a pledge from his ally to protect the interests of Elizabeth and the Elector-Palatine.<sup>1</sup>

This proposal James I submitted to France after it had been rejected by Spain. Herbert and the French politicians saw that the proposal was nothing but a scheme to entail obligations and sacrifices on the part of France. Herbert pointed out to James I the need for guaranteeing Louis XIII substantial aid in defending the territory of the Elector-Palatine. The breach between James I and Herbert quickly reached a climax:

...Herbert plainly told James that it would be necessary to bring Louis to some real and tangible proofs of his intention to aid in the recovery of the Elector-Palatine's territory before placing the matrimonial offer beyond recall. Herbert was not talking at random; he was merely interpreting one of the many important pieces of information which had just reached him. Louis XIII was actually making proffers of friendship to the Elector's worst enemy, the Duke of Bavaria. But the English Ministers failed to recognize the significance of this fact, and Herbert resolved on his own account to give the opening discussion the advantage of frankness. He told the French statesmen that the negotiation with Bavaria must provoke a breach with England. The Frenchmen were annoyed by Herbert's freedom of speech; they addressed a remonstrance to the English sovereign; and James accepted the remonstrance in the spirit in which it was offered him.<sup>2</sup>

Thus James I promptly dismissed Herbert, who "suffered for doing no more than his duty - for showing a little more resolution and fixity of principle than was habitual either to him or to his contemporaries."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., "Continuation", p. 136.

2. Ibid., p. 137.

3. Ibid., p. 137.

Herbert went to great lengths to reinstate himself into the good graces of James I, who finally created Herbert "Lord of Castle-Island in the peerage of Ireland."<sup>1</sup> This title represented a hollow honor and entailed no responsible political duties. Charles I, son of James I, elevated Herbert to the English peerage, making him "Baron Herbert of Cherbury"<sup>2</sup> on May 7, 1629.

By 1643 the Civil War between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians had reached a climax. Herbert "resolved to suffer as little inconvenience from the war as possible."<sup>3</sup> He pretended to support the Royalists. But in 1644, when the Parliamentary forces threatened to destroy him and his property, Herbert surrendered and switched his allegiance to the Parliamentarians on condition that he be given protection and that his library remain undisturbed.<sup>4</sup>

He went to London, where he lived on amiable terms with the Parliamentarians, from whom he was granted a pension of twenty pounds a week. This subsistence enabled him to pursue his studies without further interruptions. In health he declined towards the end of his life. In his house on Queen Street, Lord Herbert of Cherbury died, August 20, 1648.<sup>5</sup>

The autobiographical and biographical accounts of Herbert reveal the duality of his personality. But his pettiness and vanity are re-

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1. Ibid., "Continuation," p. 138.

2. Ibid., p. 140.

3. Ibid., "Introduction," p. xxiii.

4. Ibid., p. xxiii.

5. Ibid., "Continuation," p. 161.

deemed by the excellence of his contributions to comparative religion, philosophy, history, and poetry. Despite a life of considerable frivolity, he was keenly alive to the religious, philosophical, and political problems of his day.<sup>1</sup>

Few men contributed so conspicuously in so many fields as Herbert, according to Howells who summarizes his life as consisting of:

Valor and military activity in youth; business of state in middle age; contemplation and labours for the information of posterity in the calmer scenes of closing life. This was Lord Herbert.<sup>2</sup>

Having considered the life of Lord Herbert, we turn now to a retrospect of the historical context in which Herbert lived.

## II. THE BACKGROUND OF HERBERT'S TIMES

The work of no thinker can be so estranged from its milieu that it does not reflect some of the tendencies and problems of the age in which it was conceived, developed, and expressed. Thus a general view of the earlier seventeenth century in which Herbert lived will enable us to better understand his doctrines and the impulses and problems from which they arose.

The term "period of transition" has been applied to nearly every period in history. The frequency with which this term has been applied indicates the continuity which each period in history necessarily has with antecedent and subsequent ages. Nevertheless there were certain

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1. Ibid., p. xxiv.

2. HOWELLS, W. D., ed., The Lives of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Ellwood, Boston, James R. Osgood and Company, 1877, p. 9.

periods in which the transition from one age to another was more significant, radical, and pronounced than in other periods. Such a period was the seventeenth century, about which one historian makes the following observation:

In the history of England, as in that of Europe at large, the seventeenth century is probably the most conspicuous example, unless we except our own age, of such acceleration. It was a period in which both creative and disruptive forces reached a climax and accelerated the process of change.<sup>1</sup>

The seventeenth century formed one of the most pronounced periods of transition in English history. In that period more strands into the fabric of British politics, religion, and philosophy were woven than during any other period.<sup>2</sup>

The first half of the seventeenth century was a period of political conflict between the Crown and Parliament. The crisis came when James I (1603-1625), obsessed with the idea of the "divine right of kings," ignored Parliament.<sup>3</sup> His successor Charles I (1625-1649) ruled without Parliament from 1629 until 1640, when critical financial problems compelled him to summon an assembly. It was this "Long Parliament," which for thirteen years attempted "to replace the authority of the King with their own authority,"<sup>4</sup> with which Lord Herbert had aligned himself to preserve his library and undoubtedly himself.

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1. BUSH, D., English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1945, p. 1.

2. WHITING, B. J., F. B. Millet, et. al., editors, The College Survey of English Literature, 2 vols., New York, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1947, I, p. 519-520.

3. Ibid., p. 527.

4. Ibid., p. 528.

It was an age of conflict of not only politics and armies, but of ideas and attitudes. A general spirit of doubt, inquiry, "and even of insubordination, began to occupy the minds of men."<sup>1</sup> This spirit expressed itself in numerous and conflicting religious sects, "each of which proclaimed, and often exaggerated the efficiency of private judgment."<sup>2</sup>

So intimately was religion related to the life and politics of the English people between 1600 and 1640 that more than two-fifths of the books printed in England during that time dealt with theology.<sup>3</sup> Arminianism, Puritanism, and Presbyterianism struggled for political supremacy,<sup>4</sup> a struggle between those who supported the Crown and those who favored Parliament.

The significant men of this period were not merely men of letters estranged from the forces which were reshaping the institutions of their day, but were participants in the civil, religious, intellectual, and political conflicts of their age. And the varied activities of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, Lord Herbert, John Locke, and John Milton indicated their lively interest in the tendencies, problems, and issues by which their times were being reshaped.<sup>5</sup>

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1. BUCKLE, Henry Thomas, History of Civilization in England, 2 vols. New York, Hearst's International Library Company, 1913, vol. I, part 1, p. 250.

2. Ibid., p. 251.

3. BUSH, op. cit., p. 28-29.

4. HUTCHESON, Introduction to translation of Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 48-49.

5. BUSH, op. cit., p. 29.

"The essence of Renaissance thought was in its humanism, its belief in the creative power of man's mind."<sup>1</sup> Individualism triumphed, reflecting itself in the tendency of seventeenth century thinkers to regard themselves as originators of systems of thought completely estranged from the philosophies of earlier thinkers. Thus Aristotle and Scholasticism were rejected by these self-proclaimed "innovators" as unsuitable to their age and to their individual needs.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of advances in the physical sciences, the protagonists of modernism claimed superiority over the Scholastics. And philosophy inclined itself not towards metaphysics, but towards "matters capable of scientific experimentation and mathematical demonstration."<sup>3</sup>

It must be noted, however, that the Scholasticism which Galileo (1564-1642), Telesio (1508-1588), and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) attacked was not the Scholasticism of St. Thomas, but the decadent Scholasticism which had declined from the great synthesis of St. Thomas, and "which by Galileo's time had reached a low ebb."<sup>4</sup> There was really no idea, scientific or philosophical, in the seventeenth century that was without a history, without roots somewhere in the past<sup>5</sup> - in the atomism of Democritus, the notions of Plato, the Aristotelian interest in nature, the

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1. WHITING, Millet, et. al., op. cit., p. 520.

2. SHEEN, Fulton, J., God and Intelligence, New York, Longmans, Green and Company, 1925, p. 42-43.

3. WHITING, Millet, et. al., op. cit., p. 523.

4. CALDIN, E. F., The Presuppositions of Physical Science, in The Dublin Review, No. 443, London, Burns Oates, 1948, p. 102.

5. Ibid., p. 101.

scientific tendencies of St. Albert, the confidence of St. Thomas in the human reason, the experimental approach to truth of Roger Bacon, and in the penetrating insight of Leonardo da Vinci into the structure and operations of nature.<sup>1</sup>

The Thomistic tradition was not inimical to the scientific spirit; it represented one of the requisite conditions, along with the nominalism of Ockham "which had taken deep root in the European universities of the fourteenth century,"<sup>2</sup> for the rise of the sciences in the seventeenth century:

It would seem, then, that both the Thomist tradition and the nominalist decadence from it favoured the rise of science; the former was necessary before interpretation of empirical data on the material world could begin, the latter before an interest in gaining those empirical data could claim enough attention.<sup>3</sup>

The Renaissance, then, and its concomitant humanism and scientific spirit, did not flare upon the Western world suddenly, but "represented rather the slow maturing forces that had already existed in medieval times."<sup>4</sup> And one of the greatest and most disastrous deficiencies of seventeenth century philosophers consisted in their inability or refusal to discern the continuity of philosophical experience. Of the unity and historical development of philosophy Gilson writes:

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1. Ibid., p. 100-101.

2. GILSON, Etienne, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, p. 90.

3. CALDIN, op. cit., p. 103.

4. BEWKES, Eugene G., H. B. Jefferson, et. al., Experience, Reason and Faith: A Survey in Philosophy and Religion, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1940, p. 432.

There is, and there always will be a history of philosophy, because philosophy exists only in human minds, which themselves have a history, and because the world of knowledge and action to which first principles apply is a changing world, but there should be no history of the first principles themselves, because the metaphysical structure itself does not change.<sup>1</sup>

Severing itself from this heritage of the mind or traditional doctrines, philosophy of the seventeenth century grew not organically from within, but from without on contradictions from one extreme to another.<sup>2</sup>

The greatest alteration in the scientific and the philosophic outlook came with Copernicus (1473-1519). The "Copernican Revolution" had repercussions not only in science, but in philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Kepler (1571-1630) employed the exact observations of the "Rudolphine Tables" of Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), and simplified the heliocentric system of Copernicus. Galileo (1564-1642) provided telescopic observations to confirm the mathematical astronomy of Copernicus and Kepler. And Telesio, anticipating Francis Bacon, insisted that knowledge be an aid to action and a means for achieving greater control over the forces of nature.<sup>4</sup> These men had emphasized the need for observation and experiment and contributed to the growth of interest in the physical sciences.

The principal characteristics of early seventeenth century philosophy, engendered by the undue elevation of empirical truths,<sup>5</sup> were (1)

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1. GILSON, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, p. 318.

2. SHEEN, God and Intelligence, p. 65.

3. DAMPIER, W. C., A History of Science, 3rd ed., New York, MacMillan Company, 1944, p. 123.

4. BOAS, George, The Major Traditions of European Philosophy, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1929, p. 171-172.

5. WILLEY, Seventeenth Century Background, p. 23.

an impulsive rejection of Scholasticism and (2) a naive lack of understanding of the law of wisdom which "requires as its indispensable prerequisite a stable body of doctrine and a continuous intellectual tradition."<sup>1</sup> And from these characteristics and tendencies arose the philosophical problem which faced Lord Herbert.

### III. THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM FACING LORD HERBERT

The problem of separating truth from falsity and reality from illusion has occupied thinkers of every age. But this problem absorbed the attention and energies especially of seventeenth century philosophers:

It was in the seventeenth century that modern European thought seems first to have assumed, once more, that its appointed task was La Recherche de la Verite, the discovery and declaration, according to its lights, of the True Nature of Things...It was then, too, that the concepts of 'truth,' 'reality,' 'explanation' and the rest were being formed, which have moulded all subsequent thinking.<sup>2</sup>

It was the emphasis which the seventeenth century in general had placed on the sensible world - inaugurated by the advances in astronomy, mathematics, and physics, which determined such men as Telesio, Francis Bacon, and Hobbes to direct their interest and focus their attention not upon being, but upon the sensible world, upon the observation and measurement of the becoming. The intellectual revolution, then, of the seventeenth century consisted in the transference of metaphysics to physics, from the consideration of Being to the observation of Becoming.<sup>3</sup>

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1. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 9.

2. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 1. Author's italics

3. Ibid., p. 14-15.

Empirical philosophers began to equate the mechanical explanation of the world with the philosophical explanation. The "mechanico-materialistic explanations began to be 'felt as facts,' that is, as affording that picture of reality, of things-in-themselves, which alone would satisfy contemporary demands."<sup>1</sup> The disastrous misunderstanding of seventeenth century philosophers consisted in their inability to perceive that experimental science was not a metaphysic and in their inability to distinguish "between the philosophy of nature (or 'physics') and metaphysics."<sup>2</sup>

While Francis Bacon viewed sensible data as the beginning and end of knowledge, Descartes viewed the sensible world from the angle of quantity. The latter ended with not a philosophy of nature, but with a mathematics of nature.<sup>3</sup> Maritain appraises the problem of seventeenth century thought as follows:

Now, after long historical reflection it is easy to size up the situation; but at the time this physico-mathematical knowledge was introduced into the sphere of the sciences it was difficult not to mistake it for a philosophy of nature. So the problem was posed in the same way for both the scholastics and their adversaries, - and in an erroneous way. Both of them thought themselves faced with a choice between the old philosophy of nature and the new; but actually there was on the one hand a philosophy of nature and on the other a discipline which cannot be a philosophy of nature: two sciences which do not fish in the same waters and are therefore perfectly compatible.<sup>4</sup>

But in addition to the empiricists and to the "mathematicians of

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1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. MARITAIN, J., Philosophy of Nature, trans., Imelda Chequette Byrne, New York, Philosophical Library, 1951, p. 32. Author's italics.

3. Ibid., p. 41.

4. Ibid., p. 42.

nature," there were during the seventeenth century philosophers who approached reality from what may be called the "anti-empirical" angle. These thinkers stressed the a priori elements of the mind. In England this rationalistic tendency received considerable - if not its original - impulse from Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and was sustained throughout the seventeenth century by the Cambridge Platonists.

Herbert was alive to the intellectual climate of his age,- aware that the ascendant sensationalism and materialism to which Hobbes had given considerable momentum were threatening "the super-sensuous dignity of man."<sup>1</sup> It was against this growing materialism and its concomitant separation of faith and philosophy that Herbert and later the Cambridge Platonists reacted:

It was inevitable that the radical speculations of Hobbes, alike in spheres of metaphysics and politics, should provoke a reaction, and should rally to the defence of the higher spiritual interests of human life those to whom these interests seemed to be bound up with a spiritual interpretation of the universe and a social interpretation of human nature.<sup>2</sup>

And it was unlikely "that the Baconian separation of religion from philosophy would long continue to satisfy."<sup>3</sup> For the task of vindicating the rational character of religion, Herbert regarded himself "divinely appointed."<sup>4</sup>

Herbert proposed to discover that touchstone of truth which would

1. WINDELBAND, W., A History of Philosophy, trans., J. H. Tufts, New York, MacMillan Company, 1901, p. 449.

2. SETH, J., English Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy, London, J. W. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1912, p. 79.

3. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 120.

4. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 133-134. In these passages Herbert claims he waited for and received heaven's approval to publish his De Veritate.

command the universal assent of mankind and thereby obviate the necessity of the embittered religious and philosophical disputes ushered in by the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> Herbert was representative of the seventeenth century in his affirmation that no previous system of thought adequately accounted for reality, and that only a new system and method, completely estranged from the accumulated wisdom of mankind, could explain the nature and criterion of truth.

If neither any previous system of philosophy nor external experience could yield the least doubtful knowledge, where was the greatest certitude to be found? The problem, then, which occupied Lord Herbert and the entire seventeenth century was to find a new basis of wisdom. And Herbert looked in the directions towards which the age in which he lived was already peering, i.e., inwardly, to a sort of "inner light" or tribunal under the supreme jurisdiction of Natural Instinct and the Common Notions of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Having discussed Herbert's life, the background of his times, and the philosophical problem he undertook to resolve, it remains for us to consider his works before proceeding to an exposition of his philosophical and religious doctrines.

#### IV. LORD HERBERT'S WORKS

Lord Herbert was not only a statesman, philosopher, and religious writer, but a poet and historian. It is necessary, then, to review his

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1. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 120.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

works in order to determine the nature and extent of his contributions to poetry and history as well as to philosophy. We shall consider his works under two headings: (A) his non-philosophical works and (B) his philosophical works, under which his religious writings will also be discussed.

#### A. HERBERT'S NON-PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

Since the Autobiography<sup>1</sup> has already received attention in our consideration of Herbert's life, activities, and personality, it will not require further discussion. It might be noted, however, that Herbert's Autobiography represents the nostalgic retrospections of a man whose reputation had declined. Hutcheson's appraisal of Herbert as revealed in the Autobiography is accurate:

If Herbert thought too highly of himself, if much of his pride was tasteless, this may lessen, but not destroy, the value of the extraordinary sincerity with which he writes down the story of his life. He was not dedicated to a cause beyond himself, he was often misled by trifles, and he lacked true greatness; but he was not ignoble.<sup>2</sup>

The reputation of Lord Herbert was overshadowed by the towering figure of his younger brother, George Herbert (1593-1633), whose "verses

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1. Although 200 copies of The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (Strawberry Hill, MDCCLXIV) were printed in 1764 by Horace Walpole for private distribution, the first public edition did not appear until 1770: The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Written by Himself, London, Printed for J. Dodsley in Pall-mall, MDCCLXX. Sidney Lee's revised edition of Lord Herbert's Autobiography (1906)...which is used throughout this study...is the text of the first printed edition issued from Walpole's private press. Lee's edition differs from the 1764 Walpole edition only in the treatment of proper names, which Lee discovered had been incorrectly transcribed. See Lee's "Preface to the Original Issue," included in the 1906 edition, p. vii-viii.

2. HUTCHESON, in his Introduction to Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 27.

are more artistically constructed than Donne's, and they sing as Donne's never could."<sup>1</sup>

The first edition of Lord Herbert's poems appeared posthumously in octavo form in 1665. John G. Collins edited The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury in 1881.<sup>2</sup> The most recent publication of some of Herbert's poems appeared in 1934 in The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse.<sup>3</sup>

The most extensive study of Lord Herbert's poetry was made by G. C. M. Smith in his introduction to The Poems, English and Latin, of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury.<sup>4</sup> Smith believes that Herbert's poetry has not received the recognition it deserves, affirming that "in poetic feeling and art, Edward Herbert soars above his brother George."<sup>5</sup> The same critic regards the satires of Herbert as manifesting a "bald and speculative turn hardly to be paralleled."<sup>6</sup>

Most of Herbert's poetry is Platonic in its search for "harmony above the confusion of the senses."<sup>7</sup> The following verses are typical:

And therefore I, who do not live and move,  
By outward sense so much as faith and love,

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1. WHITING, Millet, et. al., op. cit., p. 568.

2. COLLINS, John, G., ed., The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, London, Chatto and Windus, 1881.

3. GRIERSON, H. J. C. and G. Bulleugh, eds., The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934, p. 226-237.

4. SMITH, G. C. M., ed., The Poems, English and Latin, of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1923.

5. Ibid., p. xvii.

6. Ibid., p. xvii.

7. Ibid., p. xx.

Which is met in inferiour creatures found,  
 May into some immortal state pretend,  
 Since by these wings I thither may ascend,  
 Where faithful loving souls with joys are crowned.<sup>1</sup>

Smith feels that Herbert's tendency to introduce philosophy into his poetry prevented him from "complete artistic achievement."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the following lines evince a rare poetic talent:

This said, in her up-lifted face,  
 Her eyes which did that beauty crown,  
 Were like two stars, that having fall'n down,  
 Look up again to find their place.<sup>3</sup>

Although the poetry of Lord Herbert might never receive more than the meager attention given it to this time, it is not without unusual merit.

We turn now to consider Herbert's most ambitious work in English prose, The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth.<sup>4</sup> In the opening lines of this work, Herbert declares that it is not possible for one "who hath several countenances"<sup>5</sup> to accurately depict a historical figure or event. He seems, then, to be conscious of the obligation of the historian to be unprejudiced and impartial.

Herbert praises Henry VIII...crowned April 22, 1509<sup>6</sup>...as "one of the

1. Ibid., "A Meditation upon his Wax-Candle Burning out," p. 85, v. 55-60.

2. Ibid., Introduction, p. xix.

3. Ibid., "Whether Love Should Live Forever," p. 66, v. 133-136.

4. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth, in Hughes' A Complete History of England: With the Lives of all the Kings and Queens Thereof, 2nd ed., 2 vols, London, Printed for R. Benwicke, Tim. Goodwin, John Walthal, etc., 1719, II, p. 1-268.

5. Ibid., p. 1.

6. Ibid., p. 2.

most glorious Princes of his time."<sup>1</sup> He admits that Henry VIII was cruel and obstinate,<sup>2</sup> but later attempts to rationalize all his shortcomings by attributing them to the defamations of partial lovers of truth and the criticisms of prejudicial persons.<sup>3</sup>

Even a cursory reading of this history reveals that Herbert had undertaken it to curry royal favor. It exhibits, as Lee points out:

...little of the independent criticism which gives value to Lord Herbert's philosophical writings. It is an unmeasured eulogy of Henry VIII's statesmanship, and a laboured endeavour to condone the crimes of his private life.<sup>4</sup>

The work required a tremendous amount of research, for some of which Herbert employed Thomas Master, "a Fellow of New College, Oxford."<sup>5</sup> But there is no evidence to suggest that Master and the other clerks contributed "more than mechanical service"<sup>6</sup> to the composition and organization of Henry VIII.

The most conspicuous limitation of Herbert as a historian lies in his indifference to social, intellectual, and economical disturbances unless directly affecting politics. This limitation, however, was characteristic of his time. It would be futile, therefore, for us to apply

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1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

3. Ibid., p. 266-268.

4. LEE, in his Introduction to Herbert's Autobiography, p. xxxviii.

5. Ibid., where Lee reveals that Thomas and other clerks had gathered four large volumes of material for Henry VIII, Introduction, p. xxxviii, note 3.

6. Ibid., p. xxxix.

modern standards of criticism to his work."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Herbert's Henry VIII contains many valuable observations which could have been made only by an alert and well-informed historian. It can be safely said that few historians up to Herbert's time had recognized as clearly as Herbert the importance of source documents and material, in the study of which Hutcheson regards Herbert as a "pioneer of first importance."<sup>2</sup>

The last of Herbert's non-philosophical works is The Expedition to the Isle of Rhe.<sup>3</sup> It is an account of the Duke of Buckingham's expedition in which Herbert "does not appear to have been himself engaged."<sup>4</sup> The original manuscript, with its dedication to Charles I in Herbert's handwriting, was obtained by the Earl of Powis in 1850 from David Laing, who had twelve years earlier "purchased it accidentally at a sale in London."<sup>5</sup> A Latin translation by Doctor Timothy Baldwin of the original English manuscript appeared in 1656.<sup>6</sup>

Provoked by the interception of British merchant ships by French vessels, Charles I proclaimed the existence of a state of war between England and France.<sup>7</sup> The English King appointed the Duke of Buckingham

1. HUTCHESON, "Introduction" to Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 26.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, The Expedition to the Isle of Rhe, ed., Earl of Powis, London, Whittingham and Wilkins, 1860.

4. Ibid., p. xx.

5. Ibid., p. xviii.

6. Ibid., p. c.

7. Ibid., p. 12-13.

to head the expedition to the Island of Rhé, from which it was hoped that France could be attacked and Spain restrained.<sup>1</sup>

In every sea and land engagement the British were decisively defeated by the French. Herbert, however, attempts to minimize France's victory by claiming that the French suffered as many casualties as the English.<sup>2</sup> Although Hutcheson thinks that Herbert's attacks against the French by comparison with those of other English authors are "restrained and almost courteous,"<sup>3</sup> there is neither restraint nor courtesy in the following criticism of the French by Herbert:

Besides that, our victories were masculine, glorious, and due to our virtue; that yours were only opportune, obnoxious, and momentary.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert closes his account with a plea for patriotism:

Let it be lawful for everyone to defend the dignity of his country,<sup>5</sup> unlawful for any to sow or nourish the seeds of dissension.

Unfortunately, however, Herbert seems to think that the quality of patriotism is monopolized by Englishmen.

Having commented on Herbert's poetic and historical works, we shall now review his philosophical and religious writings.

#### B. HERBERT'S PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

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1. Ibid., p. 18-22.

2. Ibid., p. 284.

3. HUTCHESON, "Introduction" to Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 25.

4. HERBERT, The Expedition to the Isle of Rhé, p. 284-285.

5. Ibid., p. 287.

We shall consider Herbert's De Veritate first because all of his subsequent philosophical and religious writings were either amplifications of or based on the ideas advanced in the De Veritate. Since the division and the doctrinal contents of this work are to be discussed in other chapters, we shall at this time concern ourselves only with its writing, publication, and editions.

Herbert may have planned and begun his De Veritate while he was convalescing (1616-1617).<sup>1</sup> But he did not complete it until 1624 while he was still the English Ambassador to France. He deliberately withheld its publication because he felt it represented a revolutionary approach to the problem of the conditions and standard of truth:

...howbeit, as the frame of my whole book was so different from any thing which had been written heretofore, I found I must either renounce the authority of all that had written formerly concerning the method of finding out truth, and consequently insist upon my own way, or hazard myself to a general censure, concerning the whole argument of my book.<sup>2</sup>

Even though Grotius, the great Dutch international lawyer and philosopher, and Tilenus, a teacher of theology at Sedan, exhorted Herbert to have his De Veritate printed,<sup>3</sup> he hesitated to publish it. He wanted the highest kind of approval - that of heaven. And in his Autobiography, he relates how at last he received a "nod" from heaven:

Being thus doubtful in my chamber, one fair day in the summer, my casement being opened towards the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book, De Veri-

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1. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 97.

2. Ibid., p. 133.

3. Ibid., p. 132-133.

tate, in my hand, and, kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words:

'O thou eternal God, Author of the light which now shines upon me, and Giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech Thee, of thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make; I am not satisfied enough whether I shall publish this book, De Veritate; if it be for Thy glory, I beseech Thee give me some sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.'

I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud though yet gentle noise came from the heavens, for it was like nothing on earth, which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded, whereupon also I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the eternal God is true, neither am I any way superstitiously deceived herein, since I did not only hear the noise, but in the serenest sky I ever saw, being without all cloud, did to my thinking see the place from whence it came.<sup>1</sup>

Satisfied that heaven had "signaled its approval" of the publication of his De Veritate, Herbert had it printed in Paris in 1624 at his own expense and "dispersed it among the prime scholars of Europe."<sup>2</sup> Three other editions - all in Latin like the first edition - were published in London, in 1633, 1645, and 1656 respectively.<sup>3</sup>

In 1639 a French translation of the De Veritate was published. Carré believes it was translated by Mersenne;<sup>4</sup> but Hutcheson maintains he has found no evidence to support Carré's supposition, and inclines to the opinion that Herbert himself translated it.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 133-134.

2. Ibid., p. 134.

3. HUTCHESON, "Introduction" to Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 154-155.

4. CARRÉ, "Preface" to his translation of Herbert's De Veritate, p. 6.

5. HUTCHESON, "Introduction, p. 157.

In 1937, Meyrick Carré translated Herbert's De Veritate into English. This translation is based on the 1645 Latin edition, which is considered the best edition because it was revised and expanded by Herbert three years before his death.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's De Causis Errorum, which was published in 1645, represents "a detailed, unenlightening commentary" on the De Veritate, consisting largely of notions which Herbert had expressed previously and more cogently.<sup>2</sup>

In his Autobiography, Herbert confesses that he had gathered certain material in the light of which he hopes to write a "little treatise" concerning education.<sup>3</sup> This treatise was completed by Herbert, but it was not published until 1768<sup>4</sup> "under the title of A Dialogue between a Tutor and a Pupil."<sup>5</sup>

In this work Herbert restates the five basic religious notions with which he had concluded his De Veritate, and attempts to confirm their universality. The Tutor reminds his Pupil that the five notions essential to all religions are: (1) there is a Supreme God;<sup>6</sup> (2) that He must

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1. Ibid., p. 155.

2. Ibid., p. 44.

3. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 43.

4. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, A Dialogue between a Tutor and a Pupil, London, Printed by W. Bathoe, MDCCLXVIII.

5. LEE, "Introduction" to Herbert's Autobiography, p. xxx. See also Lee's note 5, p. xxx.

6. HERBERT, A Dialogue between a Tutor and a Pupil, p. 2. See also the concluding section of Herbert's De Veritate for a discussion of these religious notions.

be worshipped,<sup>1</sup> (3) that virtue and piety are essential to worship,<sup>2</sup> (4) that sinners must repent,<sup>3</sup> and (5) that there are rewards and punishments in a future life.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the Dialogue the Tutor urges his Pupil to "fix and repose"<sup>5</sup> himself upon these universal truths among all the disputed articles of religion.

Herbert's De Religione Gentilium was first published in Amsterdam in 1663. Two other editions were published in Amsterdam, one in 1665 and the other in 1700.<sup>6</sup> An English translation by William Lewis appeared in 1705.<sup>7</sup>

In this work Herbert notes the parallels existing between religions, and attempts to establish that they are not fundamentally different from Christianity<sup>8</sup> in regard to the five religious notions he had discussed in his De Veritate and restated in his Dialogue. He maintains the sufficiency of natural religion. Salvation for Herbert is not special or supernat-

1. Ibid., p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Ibid., p. 7.

5. Ibid., p. 7-8.

6. HUTCHESON, "Bibliography" to his translation of De Religione Laici p. 151-152.

7. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, The Antient Religion of the Gentiles and Causes of their Errors Consider'd, trans., William Lewis, Printed for John Nutt, near Stationers-Hall, 1705.

8. Ibid., p. 364-366.

ural, but natural, a notion which was to influence subsequent religious thought in England.<sup>1</sup>

We close this discussion of Herbert's works with a few remarks on his De Religione Laici, in which Herbert is at his best as a religious writer. It was first published in 1645 in conjunction with De Causis Errorum.<sup>2</sup> Another Latin edition of this work appeared in 1656.<sup>3</sup> Harold R. Hitchens translated this work into English in 1944.<sup>4</sup>

In his De Religione Laici, Herbert proposes to help the confused layman reach those religious doctrines "about which there is most agreement."<sup>5</sup> These common notions of religion, which Herbert had discussed in his De Veritate, underlie not one religion, but all religions.<sup>6</sup>

In this work Herbert attempts to reconcile the religious controversies of his time by arguing that the differences between religions are accidental, and that beneath these differences are his five basic notions of religion.

Herbert's works testify to a life which did not consist entirely of dueling, frivolities, and extravagances - as the reading of only his

1. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 130.

2. HERBERT, Edward, Lord of Cherbury, De Causis Errorum: una cum tractatu de Religione Laici, Et Appendice ad Sacerdotes, London, 1645.

3. HUTCHESON, "Bibliography" to his translation of Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 151.

4. This translation is based on the 1645 edition. The English and Latin are on pages contiguous to each other, the former on odd and the latter on even number pages.

5. HERBERT, De Religione Laici, p. 87.

6. Ibid., p. 87.

Autobiography might lead one to think. And although the following exposition of his De Veritate and his De Religione Laici will reveal that Herbert was not always guided by principles which have stood the test of severe reflection, it will, nevertheless, disclose a sincere love of truth.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONDITIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF TRUTH

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL CONDITIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF TRUTH

In this chapter the problem of De Veritate as stated by Herbert in his "Preface" will be discussed first; second, the general conditions and definitions of truth will be considered; third, the seven propositions concerning truth will be treated; and in the fourth and last part of this chapter Herbert's four classes of truth will be examined.

#### 1. THE PROBLEM

Herbert states that the entire aim of his "work is the common nature of the search for truth which exists in every normal human being."<sup>1</sup> He claims that he has not found a satisfactory definition of truth in the writings of any earlier thinkers, who have been confounded by the complex nature of truth:

...especially since they have devoted themselves to the construction of philosophical systems based rather upon the opinions of others than upon the facts. Nevertheless, I find that the most renowned writers not only avoid errors, but often hit upon important truths, though I confess they appear to do so by happy accident.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Herbert immediately makes it clear that he does not intend to follow or develop any traditional philosophical system. Affirming that the writers and thinkers of the past have failed to discover and adequately define truth because of their preoccupation with the views of

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, "Preface: To the Candid Reader," p. 71.

2. Ibid., p. 71.

others rather than with the "facts as they are,"<sup>1</sup> Herbert proposes "to treat these matters only in the light of his independent judgments."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, "a completely satisfactory discussion"<sup>3</sup> of truth is not to be expected of Herbert. His pressing military and ambassadorial duties had prevented him from devoting as much time as a complete inquiry into the nature and conditions of truth demands. But it is enough, he adds, "to have laid the foundations or ground-plan of the structure of truth."<sup>4</sup>

In his attitude towards tradition, Herbert is not unlike his contemporary Francis Bacon. But while Bacon was primarily interested in the facts of sense-experience, Herbert was concerned with a deeper problem - the nature and criterion of truth, as the following exposition of his doctrines will indicate.

## 2. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF TRUTH

Convinced that "some spirit of truth"<sup>5</sup> pervades the religious and philosophical controversies, Herbert decides first "to examine truth itself, and in the second place, assertions which claim to be true."<sup>6</sup> For

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1. Ibid., p. 72.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

3. Ibid., p. 73.

4. Ibid., p. 73.

5. Ibid., p. 75.

6. Ibid., p. 75.

unless those truths in terms of which other truths are measured are accurate, no certainty can be achieved.<sup>1</sup>

It is urgent, then, to find some infallible touchstone in the light of which truth can be distinguished from falsehood. For Herbert this ultimate criterion consists in the 'Common Notions' or "whatever is universally asserted as the truth."<sup>2</sup>

Nothing universal can take place unless it is influenced by "Universal Providence which disposes the movements of events."<sup>3</sup> At this point Herbert introduces his conception of "Natural Instinct" without defining it, but to merely indicate that it is derived from Universal Consent.<sup>4</sup>

The Natural Instinct which activates plants and animals in an irrational manner manifests itself in man in the form of an impulse for self-preservation and, as he will point out later, salvation.<sup>5</sup> And it is for this reason that greater credence should be given to Natural Instinct than to any other faculty.

Herbert makes a few general statements concerning truth, faculty, and the conditions of perception - notions which he explains more fully in subsequent chapters. He recognizes that we cannot know everything, but we can know somethings which are, Herbert writes:

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1. Ibid., p. 76.
  2. Ibid., p. 77.
  3. Ibid., p. 77.
  4. Ibid., p. 77.
  5. Ibid., p. 119.

...testified to by the presence of a faculty, though the faculty and the object are not necessarily in conformity with each other when they are both present. For unless the intermediate conditions are favourable each factor is confined to its own sphere.<sup>1</sup>

Truth, then, for Herbert is a conformity between objects and faculties.<sup>2</sup> This conformity, however, is realized only under certain conditions.<sup>3</sup> Herbert reminds his readers that his notion of conformity between faculties and their analogous objects is fundamental:

The whole of my doctrine of truth is based upon the proper conformity of the faculties with their objects. Everyone will find various types of these in himself according to the various types of objects. Whatever is true, however, is readily believed, because here objects correspond harmoniously with faculties and faculties with objects.<sup>4</sup>

In such an account of knowledge it is necessary to posit as many faculties as there are differences in objects.

From these general remarks Herbert proceeds "to embrace the entire doctrine of truth in seven propositions."<sup>5</sup> He has asked his readers to consider and reject the definitions of truth given by other writers. If his readers had failed to satisfactorily define truth for themselves, they are urged by Herbert to accept his account of truth.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. SEVEN PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING TRUTH

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1. Ibid., p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

3. Ibid., p. 78-79.

4. Ibid., p. 80.

5. Ibid., p. 82.

6. Ibid., p. 79.

Herbert states his first proposition simply: "Truth Exists."<sup>1</sup> Thus he has no doubt concerning either the existence of truth or the ability of the human mind to know at least some truths. And the purpose he gives for his first proposition is "to assert the existence of truth against imbeciles and sceptics."<sup>2</sup> And to resolve the growing scepticism and the religious disputes of his time, Herbert regarded himself, as his Autobiography suggests, "divinely commissioned."<sup>3</sup>

In his second proposition Herbert points to the interchangeableness of truth and being: "Truth is as eternal or as ancient as things themselves."<sup>4</sup>

In so far as a thing has existed or now exists, it has been or it is true. Everything possesses truth to the extent that it exists. Its truth, then, is commensurate with its duration. Thus an eternal thing is eternally true and a temporal thing is only temporarily true.<sup>5</sup>

What place or region does this truth occupy? Herbert's third proposition answers: "This truth is everywhere."<sup>6</sup> Truth encompasses not only being, infinite as well as finite, but even non-being in a certain sense:

For there is a kind of truth relative to entities that have no existence, such as fictions and falsehoods, since they can be

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1. Ibid., p. 83. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 133-134.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 83. Author's italics.

5. Ibid., p. 83.

6. Ibid., p. 83. Author's italics.

truly described as such. The area of truth, then, is vast, and approaches so nearly the quality of infinity that it may be said to surpass existence itself.<sup>1</sup>

The first three propositions treated the truth of things themselves. Herbert's fourth proposition considers that characteristic by which the truth of things reveals itself, i.e., its evidence: "This truth reveals itself."<sup>2</sup>

He distinguishes the manifestation of the truth of a thing as "truth of appearance" from the "truth of the thing itself." The former, being highly conditional, is capable of deceiving, while the latter, belonging to the thing itself, is absolute.<sup>3</sup>

"There are as many truths as there are differences of things"<sup>4</sup> is Herbert's fifth proposition. In discussing this proposition he divides being according to essential differences:

It serves to distinguish the universal nature of being according to its differences, both generic and specific. In this way existence receives its character, and is ranked in the order of truths in virtue of its differing quality. And as with every fresh difference there arises a new truth, so with every new term there emerges a new difference.<sup>5</sup>

Thus he divides being according to the degrees of generality perceived in many things and according to the differences belonging to individuals. And it is these differences perceived in things which "possess the value of objects, whether they are detected in things, in words,

1. Ibid., p. 83-84.

2. Ibid., p. 84. Author's italics.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Ibid., p. 85. Author's italics.

5. Ibid., p. 85.

in signs, in ourselves, or outside ourselves."<sup>1</sup> An object, then, enjoys broad extension, being anything extramental or subjective which affects a faculty.

"The differences of things are recognised in virtue of our innate powers or faculties"<sup>2</sup> is Herbert's sixth proposition. Herbert explains that each faculty has a certain property by means of which it conforms with every difference in an object. Such a conformity between a faculty and its cognate objects demands another kind of truth - "truth of concept."<sup>3</sup>

This truth of concept, however, is subjective and not necessarily in conformity with the thing itself. From this kind of truth Herbert deduces his Common Notions or "truths of the intellect," as the following passage indicates:

Now this kind of truth, in distinction from the preceding ones, belongs entirely to us. But a thing does not always perfectly coincide with a concept. If the sense-organ is imperfect, or if it is of peer quality, if the mind is filled with deceitful prejudices, the concept is wholly vitiated. Accordingly, in addition to this truth we must postulate a truth of intellect, which alone is able to decide in virtue of its inborn capacity or its Common Notions whether our subjective faculties have exercised their perceptions well or ill.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert relegates explaining the kind of faculties needed to apprehend the various kinds of truth to another chapter, desiring only to point out the following:

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1. Ibid., p. 85.
  2. Ibid., p. 85. Author's italics.
  3. Ibid., p. 86.
  4. Ibid., p. 86.

...that the ground of truth of things lies in things themselves, while the ground of that truth which refers to us resides in the intellect; for it is only by means of our intellect that we can correct errors.<sup>1</sup>

But it will be shown later that Herbert disregards or abandons both of these grounds of truth at the expense of the tenability of his doctrines.

How is truth to be tested? This is an important problem for Herbert. He recognizes the need of an accurate standard or scale by which truths must be tested, "just as scales are tested before goods are weighed out; for unless the scales are accurate, what we measure by them will also fail to be exact."<sup>2</sup> The search for this standard leads him to his seventh and last proposition concerning truth: "There is a truth of all these truths."<sup>3</sup>

It is in "the truth of the intellect" that Herbert discovers his system of knowledge consummated, providing that the conditions of the preceding truths - of thing, appearance, and concept - have been realized:

In this last proposition the truth of intellect makes its appearance, and in it the edifice of truths is completed. When the intellect perceives that it has clear understanding, it recurs to fundamental truth. For truth of intellect, therefore, several conditions are requisite, namely truth of the thing itself, truth of appearance, and truth of concept.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert alludes to the religious and philosophical disputes of his time, and affirms that conflicting authorities have not resolved their

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1. Ibid., p. 86-87.

2. Ibid., p. 75-76.

3. Ibid., p. 87. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 87.

contradictions because they have failed to recognize the reliable grounds - his seven propositions - by which truth is to be distinguished from falsehood.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. THE FOUR CLASSES OF TRUTH

Herbert concludes his general discussion of the conditions, definitions, and propositions of truth with a brief summary of the four kinds of truth to which he has already referred - the truth of thing, of appearance, of concept, and of intellect.

The veritas rei or truth of thing Herbert defines as "the inherent conformity of the thing itself, or that ground in virtue of which everything remains constant with itself."<sup>2</sup> The truth of the thing, then, is that by which something is above the threshold of nothing.

The veritas apparentiae or truth of appearance is defined as "the conditional conformity with the thing."<sup>3</sup> This truth depends entirely upon conditions external to the thing itself and is, therefore, capable of causing deception.

The veritas conceptus or truth of concept is defined as "the conditional conformity between our subjective faculties and the thing as it appears."<sup>4</sup> This class of truth, consisting of conformities between subjective elements and the highly conditional truths of appearance,

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1. Ibid., p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 88.

4. Ibid., p. 88.

stands in special need of proper alignment or correction.

The veritas intellectus or truth of the intellect Herbert defines as "the right conformity between all the preceding conformities."<sup>1</sup> These truths of the intellect, the "truths of all truths," are the Common Notions in the light of which all other truths are to be judged.

The fundamental notion which Herbert has advanced so far is that truth consists of conformity between faculties and their proper or analogous objects. Involved in every instance of apprehension of truth are three factors: (1) the object or that which is brought into conformity; (2) the faculty or that which conforms; and (3) the conditions and laws according to which the conformity between object and faculty occurs.<sup>2</sup>

Having seen that whatever is perceived is in some way related to or connected with the act of perception, we shall now proceed with Herbert to "examine the laws and conditions of this connection."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 89.

CHAPTER III

THE CONDITIONS AND FACULTIES OF PERCEPTION

## CHAPTER III

### THE CONDITIONS AND FACULTIES OF PERCEPTION

In this chapter the conditions which must obtain before truth is apprehended and the faculties of perception as conceived by Herbert will be indicated. The exposition of these conditions and faculties will proceed under the following headings: (1) the conditions required for the truth of the object; (2) the conditions required for the truth of appearance; (3) the conditions for the truth of the concept; (4) the conditions for the truth of the intellect; and (5) the faculties of perception.

#### 1. THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE TRUTH OF THE OBJECT

Not all the phenomena of the universe are known to us. These unknown phenomena "fall beyond the scope of the ordinary forms of apprehension."<sup>1</sup> Herbert does not deny the existence of these phenomena or objects. Between such objects and our faculties there is no natural and active relation. Therefore these objects fall beyond what Herbert calls "our analogy."

But there are many objects which affect us through our faculties; and in so far as these objects can produce a change in our faculties, they may be said to fall "within our analogy." If objects are to be perceived at all, they cannot lie outside the sphere of operation of the faculties. This condition under which a thing can be perceived

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 90.

Herbert states as follows: "The First Condition is that it must fall within our analogy."<sup>1</sup>

The objects which fall within our analogy modify our faculties.<sup>2</sup> Later, however, Herbert prevents the possibility of these analogous objects affecting or modifying our faculties by denying passivity to the senses and to the intellect.

The object which falls within our analogy cannot be too small or too large:

It is not only the smallest things which escape the perception of our senses, but any transcendental object surpasses human understanding. It follows that we can only faintly imagine the infinite and eternal after the analogy of the finite and temporal.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the second condition required for the truth of the thing is "that the object should be of the right size."<sup>4</sup>

The object which falls within our analogy and is neither too small nor too great for our comprehension must also have a characteristic which distinguishes it from other objects. An object without "any limiting character cannot be distinguished from other things."<sup>5</sup> This requirement brings Herbert to another condition: "The Third Condition required for the truth of the object is that it should possess some distinguishing characteristic."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 90. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 90.

3. Ibid., p. 91.

4. Ibid., p. 90.

5. Ibid., p. 91.

6. Ibid., p. 91. Author's italics.

Corresponding to every difference in an object is a reciprocal or analogous faculty. If this sort of 'pre-established harmony' between objects and faculties is overlooked, Herbert warns us that "the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm cannot be understood."<sup>1</sup>

Besides the three preceding conditions, another condition is required for the truth of the object - a condition which arises out of the harmonious relationship between man and the universe in the form of a special kind of affinity between object and faculty.<sup>2</sup>

According to Herbert, the human mind is fashioned from elements in harmony with the external world. The mind is tuned, as it were, to various pitches, each of which represents a faculty which vibrates or unfolds itself when presented with an analogous object, i.e., one with a corresponding pitch. In the light of this explanation, Herbert's fourth and last condition for the truth of an object may be better understood: "The Fourth Condition to establish the truth of the object is that it must be related to some faculty."<sup>3</sup> Herbert's "analogy," then, is based on his conception of the harmony between microcosm and macrocosm.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE TRUTH OF APPEARANCE

Herbert next discusses the four conditions required for the truth

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1. Ibid., p. 91.

2. Ibid., p. 91-92.

3. Ibid., p. 91. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 118-119.

of the appearance, which he has defined as "the conditional conformity with the thing."<sup>1</sup> These conditions pertain not to the thing itself, but to those conditions "by which images or appearances of things are brought into conformity with their prototypes."<sup>2</sup>

Herbert opens his discussion of these conditions with the following statement: "The First Condition for the truth of appearance is that the object should remain for a sufficient time."<sup>3</sup> Then he explains further:

For whether in regard to the object or the faculty, if a sufficient period does not elapse, things cannot be perceived at all, whatever affinity they bear to the faculties. Thus missiles fired by military engines, or smells and tastes escape perception owing to their rapid flight."<sup>4</sup>

Having pointed out that an object cannot be too transitory if it is to be perceived, Herbert then considers the matter of proper medium between the object and the faculty: "The Second Condition required for the truth of appearance is that there should be a suitable medium of communication."<sup>5</sup>

Appearances, lying outside of ourselves between objects and our faculties, are especially subject to distortions in the absence of proper media. Thus our chances of error in relation to external media are greatest:

And it is important to observe that it is far easier to be mistaken about the media which lie outside us than in those which

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1. Ibid., p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

3. Ibid., p. 92. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 92.

5. Ibid., p. 93. Author's italics.

form part of ourselves. Thus among the external senses sight is the most liable to error in regard to its objects, and next in order, hearing and smell, and finally taste and touch.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's notion that exact correspondence between thought and object is necessary in the apprehension of truth leads him to attribute certainty in proportion to its subjectivity, and to regard the greatest truths - the Common Notions - as innate.

If the object is to be perceived, it can neither be too near nor too far. If the object is too near, it obstructs the operation of our faculties; and it vanishes from our perceptive range if it is too distant. Therefore: "The Third Condition of truth of appearance is that the distance should be suitable."<sup>2</sup>

The most appropriate distance according to Herbert is the one from which the individual parts of the object "can be perceived both separately and in relation to the whole."<sup>3</sup> But appropriate distances are required not only for objects of sight, but for objects of hearing. Just as objects of sight vanish, "sounds fade into troubled silence"<sup>4</sup> under unsuitable distances.

Even in the soul, those things or images which are not separated, but contiguous, are most easily remembered, and for the same reason "facts are more readily recalled which have been frequently experienced."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 95.

2. Ibid., p. 95. Author's italics.

3. Ibid., p. 96.

4. Ibid., p. 97.

5. Ibid., p. 97.

The next and last condition necessary for the truth of appearance of an object relates to the position in which the subject perceives accurately and the object reveals its real character: "The Fourth Condition of the truth of appearance is that the object should occupy a fitting position."<sup>1</sup>

The proper position of the subject cannot be underestimated. Altering or reversing his position would create a different and erroneous impression:

The point of view of a man lying face downwards is different to that of a man lying on his back; a man lying down has a different point of view to that of a man standing up; a man with his back turned receives a different impression to one who faces the object; and all these points of view are distinct from that of a man who is upside down.<sup>2</sup>

A suitable position is required on the part of the object, too. No object is perceived outside of certain positions and situations. And the position which "displays the right proportion of objects"<sup>3</sup> is the most appropriate.

Herbert describes appearance as an "ectype or representation"<sup>4</sup> which must conform both to the object under the conditions indicated and to the concept under conditions to be discussed under the next heading. This representative form can be, according to Herbert, severed from the object and retained in a spiritual form. It is homogeneous and "wholly present

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1. Ibid., p. 97. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 98.

3. Ibid., p. 98.

4. Ibid., p. 98.

in the whole and in any part."<sup>1</sup> But how these representative forms are derived from the object and so dematerialized as to be immaterially united with the mind of the knower, Herbert does not explain. But he insists that the faculties are always active and never acted upon, and refuses to accept the Scholastic condition "that an object must stimulate the sense-organ."<sup>2</sup>

### 3. THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE TRUTH OF CONCEPT.

Herbert now considers the conditions necessary for the truth of concept, defined earlier as "the conditional conformity between our subjective faculties and the thing as it appears."<sup>3</sup> He distinguishes truth of appearance from truth of concept on the grounds that the former lies outside of us while the latter "is a part of ourselves."<sup>4</sup> The truth of the concept bears a significant relation to the appearance:

Further it occupies a special position in relation to the truth of appearance. For while the one consists in a precise external conformity with its original, the other consists in an exact internal conformity with the object as it appears. These truths are entirely distinct.<sup>5</sup>

The truth of concept, then, requires not only the suitable media of truth of appearance, but sound sense-organs. Therefore: "The First

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1. Ibid., p. 99.

2. Ibid., p. 100.

3. Ibid., p. 88.

4. Ibid., p. 101.

5. Ibid., p. 101.

Condition of Truth of Concept is that the sense-organ be unimpaired."<sup>1</sup>

Any swelling, inflammation, constriction, or obstruction of the organs of the faculties will adversely influence the concept."<sup>2</sup>

The sense-organ must be not only uninjured, but normal: "The Second Condition of Truth of Concept is that the sense-organ should not suffer from any abnormality."<sup>3</sup> Herbert illustrates this condition:

Accordingly to the man with jaundice everything is yellow, and all things taste bitter to the fevered tongue. And in our mental life errors due to preconceptions and ill-advised actions spring from these causes; and when the preconceived ideals are false wild insanity results."<sup>4</sup>

Attention must be fixed steadily on the object being perceived. In the absence of this factor of focusing attention, the other conditions of truth of concept are futile. Thus Herbert states: "The Third Condition of Truth of Concept is that the faculty which becomes aware of the act of attention itself must not waver."<sup>5</sup> He explains this condition further:

It is useless for the other factors to be efficient if no faculty is directed to the object. The eye of a man asleep sees nothing though it may be open, and in men who are broad awake the faculties which are concerned with external things are useless when they are directed elsewhere."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 102. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 102.

3. Ibid., p. 102. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 102.

5. Ibid., p. 103. Author's italics.

6. Ibid., p. 103.

Every faculty has its proper or cognate object, which alone it is able to perceive. Thus a man does not try to see with his ears or hear with his eyes. This fourth and last requirement for the truth of concept Herbert states: "The Fourth Condition of Truth of Concept is that the analogous faculty be applied."<sup>1</sup> He then illustrates this condition:

The faculties themselves require a fitting and agreeable process of conformation just as their sense-organs and inlets do. No one except a perverted ingenuity would try to inhale a sound through his nose or detect a smell through his ears.<sup>2</sup>

And any person who sought to supplant the proper objects of natural instinct with those of the internal senses, external senses, or discursive thought "would assuredly reverse the entire scheme of truth."<sup>3</sup>

So far Herbert has indicated not entirely inaccurately even if not with originality the conditions under which perception occurs. No theory of knowledge - if it aspires to give a realistic account of the nature and conditions of human knowledge - can ignore the empirical conditions of perception. But we shall see that Herbert soon disregards these empirical foundations of knowledge which he has just stressed and enumerated.

#### 4. THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR TRUTH OF INTELLECT

The conditions above are required for the apprehension of simple truths. And only when these conditions have been fulfilled is the path

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1. Ibid., p. 103. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 103.

3. Ibid., p. 103.

cleared for the attainment of intellectual truth, defined as "the truth of all truths and the right conformity between all the preceding conformities."<sup>1</sup> But the force of this admission Herbert impairs with the assertion that the intellect operates without reference to and independently of experience:

It is clear that since there is something spiritual in it, it does not stand in need of outside aid, but rejoices in truths peculiar to itself. These truths, indeed, seem to vanish in the absence of objects; yet they cannot be wholly passive and idle, seeing that they are essential to objects and objects to them. Now these truths are the Common Notions found in all normal men; and by them, as though inspired from on high our minds are enabled to come to decisions concerning the events which take place upon the theatre of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert, then, identifies the truths of the intellect with the Common Notions, i.e., those axioms of science and laws of thought and morality which command the universal consent of mankind. They are necessary in every act of knowledge. Without them "we could have no experience at all nor be capable of observations."<sup>3</sup>

These Common Notions without which everything would be meaningless "are derived from universal wisdom and imprinted on the soul by the dictates of nature itself."<sup>4</sup> They are, then, as Herbert conceives them, innate.

It is imperative that his readers note, list, and remember these

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1. Ibid., p. 88-89.

2. Ibid., p. 104-105.

3. Ibid., p. 104.

4. Ibid., p. 106.

Common Notions if they hope to discover the key to all the enigmas of the world:

I urge my readers to select, distinguish and arrange these notions, for if the Common Notions are arranged in due order and distinguished from the mass of false opinions, they prevail over mysteries and faith and the arrogance of authority, and enable us to make a clean sweep of fables, errors and obscurities.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert concludes his discussion of the conditions of truth of concept with a few vague remarks on 'composite truth,' which "is concerned with universals."<sup>2</sup> He hints at his trace of nominalism when he affirms that the importance of composite truth lies in its attachment to "the universal aspect of things."<sup>3</sup> Then he passes to an explanation of the faculties.

#### 5. THE FACULTIES OF APPREHENSION

Herbert opens his discussion of the faculties of apprehension with the following statement: "There are as many faculties as there are differences of things and vice versa."<sup>4</sup> He defines faculty as an "inner power which develops different forms of apprehension in their relation to the different forms of the object."<sup>5</sup>

A different faculty corresponds not only with every different analogous object, but with each difference in that cognate or analogous ob-

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1. Ibid., p. 106.

2. Ibid., p. 107.

3. Ibid., p. 107.

4. Ibid., p. 108. Author's italics.

5. Ibid., p. 108.

ject. And every faculty or power of the mind operates in accordance with "the laws of correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm."<sup>1</sup>

He explains that these various faculties of the mind establish a relation between themselves and their objects:

They are, as it were, mental beams which thrust through the apertures of the senses and pick out the appropriate specific essences according to the mutual analogy of things.<sup>2</sup>

Differences, then, in the form of different faculties, exist within the mind according as there are differences in object. This doctrine demands that one faculty be concerned with the existence of an object, another faculty with its media, and still another with its position.<sup>3</sup>

Pleasure and pain require different faculties. To every image, sensation, and degree of sensation "there corresponds some new faculty in us showing itself by a new sensation or judgment."<sup>4</sup> The faculties of the mind, then, correspond with things both in their generic and specific differences.

Herbert insists that the number of faculties cannot be less than the number of different objects:

Those who reject this abundant reproduction of faculties on the ground that they are thereby multiplied to excess and are indeed nothing but inventions, must take care that they are not led to reduce the infinite endowment of the mind to so narrow a compass that by granting only five kinds of objects to the five senses, they render obsolete a vast number of phrases of all kinds at

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1. Ibid., p. 108.

2. Ibid., p. 109.

3. Ibid., p. 109.

4. Ibid., p. 111.

present in our vocabulary and abolish them on the ground that there is nothing to which they can apply.<sup>1</sup>

We shall see that in the later sections of his De Veritate, Herbert paradoxically enough disregards the propositions and definitions which he had emphasized earlier. And despite his insistence that faculties are as numerous as the differences of things, he reduces his virtually limitless number of faculties to four classes: (1) natural instinct; (2) the internal senses; (3) the external senses; (4) and discursive thought or reason. And it is to the first of these that we now turn our attention.

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1. Ibid., p. 113.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL INSTINCT AND THE COMMON NOTIONS

## CHAPTER IV

### NATURAL INSTINCT AND THE COMMON NOTIONS

According to Herbert no truth can be proved or apprehended except through one of the four faculties or modes of apprehension, i.e., Natural Instinct, the internal senses, the external senses, and discursive thought. To the faculty of Natural Instinct Herbert attributes the highest degree of certitude. It is this faculty that will be considered in this chapter under the following headings: (1) Natural Instinct; (2) the Common Notions; and (3) the characteristics of the Common Notions.

#### 1. NATURAL INSTINCT

Although "Nature" had been a significant idea in European thought since antiquity, it was especially influential "from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century."<sup>1</sup> In this atmosphere Herbert, having rejected the intellectual approach to reality of the Scholastics, regarded "Nature" as the ground upon which philosophy and religion must be erected. It is in the light of this growing tendency to apotheosize Nature in the seventeenth century that we can understand the significance and the high priority of certitude which Herbert attached to "Nature," "Natural," and "Instinct."

Herbert asserts that Natural Instinct is "that mode of apprehension which springs from the faculties which conform to Common Notions."<sup>2</sup> The

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1. WILLEY, Basil, The Eighteenth Century Background, London, Chatto and Windus, 1949, p. 2.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 115.

notions to which Natural Instinct conforms are those first principles "which cannot be denied except by madmen."<sup>1</sup> It is the basis of this faculty which conforms to the Common Notions that Herbert attempts to establish.

The foundation of Natural Instinct is universal consent, "which is essentially due to Divine Providence."<sup>2</sup> Herbert goes on to explain that that to which men universally assent "must be true and must have been brought into conformity in virtue of some internal faculty."<sup>3</sup> Universal consent, then, is the final test of truth and Natural Instinct is the most reliable of our faculties.

For Herbert the law of Nature is the law of God. And by holding that universal consent is established by Divine Providence and that Natural Instinct is an imprint of Providence on the soul, Herbert is confident that he is "defending God's cause."<sup>4</sup>

Herbert so far has indicated that universal consent is the final test of truth and that the faculty which conforms to those truths commanding universal consent is "Natural Instinct." He now points out that Natural Instinct has two aspects, i.e., (1) as a faculty which conforms and (2) as the conformation itself:

I now pass to the definition of Natural Instinct. I may preface it by saying that it has two aspects; in one aspect it is the

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1. Ibid., p. 116.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. Ibid., p. 116.

4. Ibid., p. 118.

faculty which conforms; and in the other it is the state of the conformity itself, that is to say, it is expressed in apprehension. So far as it is a faculty it is the immediate instrument of Divine Providence, some measure of which is imprinted on our mind.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike discursive thought which moves deliberately among images derived from the internal and external senses,<sup>2</sup> Natural Instinct apprehends its own truths directly and immediately. On the grounds that certain fundamental truths necessary for knowledge and self-preservation are known spontaneously and independently of discursive thought, Herbert posited a faculty which he regarded "instinctive" in so far as its spontaneous activity was opposed to the reflective knowledge of the philosophers and scientists. As a faculty which grasps first principles or the Common Notions, Natural Instinct is not unlike what Aristotle considers the originative source of knowledge, i.e., that "intuition that apprehends the primary premisses."<sup>3</sup>

According to Herbert the nature of Natural Instinct is neither rational nor intellectual, but "to fulfil itself irrationally, that is to say without foresight."<sup>4</sup> As a faculty which conforms, Natural Instinct is "an immediate emanation of the mind, co-extensive with the dictates of nature, so that it directly supports the doctrine of self-preservation."

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1. Ibid., p. 122. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 232.

3. ARISTOTLE, Posterior Analytics, translated by G.R.G.Mure, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed., Richard McKeon, New York, Random House, 1941, Bk. II, Ch. 19, 100b.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 139.

5. Ibid., p. 123.

Herbert does not confine the function of Natural Instinct to cognition and self-preservation, but extends it to moral and aesthetic activities, as the continuation of his cumbersome definition indicates:

In the second aspect natural instincts are expressions of those faculties which are found in every normal man, through which the Common Notions touching the internal conformity of things, such as the cause, means and purpose of things, the good, bad, beautiful, pleasing, etc., especially those Notions which tend towards the preservation of the individual, species, of kinds, and of the universe, are brought into conformity independently of discursive thought.<sup>1</sup>

In his second sense, Herbert seems to regard Natural Instinct not as one faculty, but as a kind of master faculty constituted by and ordering all those faculties that operate for the good, the improvement, the elevation, and the preservation of the individual. In the following passage Herbert again refers to Natural Instinct as to "faculties in general:"

There is nothing that prevents the faculties which precede the external modes of apprehension, such as touch, taste, etc., from surviving the destruction of these senses. The faculties of natural instinct are of the same nature and so they may survive death.<sup>2</sup>

The usefulness of Natural Instinct is not confined to this world, but continues into the next:

And so this faculty of natural instinct will survive and accompany us like a faithful companion, applying new faculties to new objects. If this instinct survives in whatever bodiless and inconceivable form, it will provide for the self-preservation of every soul and, unless he falls into sin, enable man to live in peace and happiness.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 122. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

3. Ibid., p. 124-125.

We have seen that Herbert regards Natural Instinct as a faculty which conforms to or apprehends the Common Notions independently of discursive thought or reason. We now turn to Natural Instinct as a conformity or as the Common Notions.

## 2. THE COMMON NOTIONS

Herbert identifies Natural Instinct - in so far as it is a conformity or is expressed in a perception - with the Common Notions:

In its second aspect natural instinct is the expression of some conformity or some conformity actually completed. In this sense it coincides with the Common Notions which as a gift of nature itself must be considered as a form of Blessedness, even if its meaning is obscure to us, so far as it is not yet revealed.<sup>1</sup>

But before a person can recognize the value of these Common Notions, he can be neither foolish nor weak-minded, but must be of a sound and normal mind. Nevertheless these Common Notions "may not be ever entirely absent,"<sup>2</sup> since even drunkards and madmen manifest a remarkable tendency towards their self-preservation.

These Common Notions are the primary truths - the laws of thought, the axioms of science, and the principles of morality - of the ancients (the Stoics). They are formed spontaneously and accepted without hesitation as distinguished from conclusions laboriously and artificially reached by discursive thought.<sup>3</sup>

None can dispute these Common Notions without violating his nature. They are neither deduced from experience nor conveyed by objects, but

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1. Ibid., p. 125.

2. Ibid., p. 125.

3. Ibid., p. 125-126.

are implanted in our minds by Nature:

No one, however wild his views, imagines that they are conveyed by objects themselves. The only other alternative is that Nature has inscribed them within us and that in this way they are revealed as Common Notions, and would otherwise remain hidden in us. And so we must believe that God has bestowed on us not only a representation of His form but also some portion of His wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

These Common Notions or truths of first inscription witnessed by Natural Instinct, then, are innate.

Herbert asserts that the Common Notions to which all men with normal minds give their assent are the distinctive property of Natural Instinct.<sup>2</sup> He begs his readers not to confuse these Common Notions with any truths less than fundamental, adding that they are derived not from any other truths, but "from Nature and must be accepted as the teaching of natural instinct."<sup>3</sup>

An orderly arrangement of these Common Notions will, according to Herbert, enable us to clearly understand what had previously baffled us. From them all proof is derived and by them "facts acquire a mathematical certainty."<sup>4</sup>

Herbert sharply distinguishes Natural Instinct from reason as well as from the internal and external modes of apprehension. Therefore those notions which arise from Natural Instinct without the aid of reason are to be distinguished from those attained with the aid of reason:

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1. Ibid., p. 126.

2. Ibid., p. 128-129.

3. Ibid., p. 130.

4. Ibid., p. 135.

From all this the conclusion stated in our definition follows, namely, that these Common Notions can be brought into conformity by their own activity without the aid of reason. I do not deny that there are many truths which can only be reached with the help of discursive reason, but Common Notions of this kind refer to the second rank.<sup>1</sup>

Common Notions of the first order, then, are instinctive; they are not reasoned to, but are simply asserted.<sup>2</sup> They immediately commend themselves as true, and are the basic truths which all men must accept and utilize in order to know and survive. Such Common Notions we must discover, establish on universal consent, and arrange if we are to distinguish truth from error in both religious and philosophic matters.<sup>3</sup>

Those truths attained with the assistance of discursive thought are not genuine Common Notions, since they are deduced from those Common Notions of the first order which are accepted in their own light. But how are we to distinguish the two kinds of Common Notions - those which are genuine and formed independently of reason from the secondary notions which require the help of reason? The Common Notions of the first order are differentiated from those of secondary importance by six marks or characteristics. And it is these six marks by which the pure Common Notions are recognized that we now examine.

### 3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON NOTIONS

Herbert advances six marks by which genuine Common Notions are to be

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1. Ibid., p. 137.

2. Ibid., p. 129.

3. Ibid., p. 137.

distinguished from notions of the second rank. Because Natural Instinct is the "first of all the faculties in man,"<sup>1</sup> Herbert maintains that the truths arising from this faculty are prior to the apprehensions of the other faculties in the order of the development of the individual. The first characteristic of Common Notions is, therefore, their "priority."

In the first place they are distinguished by their priority. Natural Instinct occupies the first position among our faculties, discursive reason the last. Thus this faculty that promotes self-preservation in the elements, the zoophytes, and even the embryo, and applying itself gradually to objects, forestalls at every point the processes of reason.<sup>2</sup>

By its spontaneous activity Natural Instinct is able to immediately apprehend what reason attains only after a laborious procedure. Thus the beauty of an edifice is perceived by Natural Instinct long before reason, following a lengthy consideration of line, curve, and symmetry, becomes aware of that beauty:

In the same way Natural Instinct anticipates reason in perceiving the beauty of the proportions of a house built according to architectural principles; for reason reaches its conclusions by a laborious consideration of the proportions, first severally and then as a whole, and even in the process itself is constrained to rely on Common Notions.<sup>3</sup>

Common Notions of the first rank are not deduced; they depend on no premisses higher than themselves. It is from them that the entire series of inference is drawn. As principles of knowledge, then, they are distinguished from derived notions by their "independence:"

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1. Ibid., p. 137.

2. Ibid., p. 139.

3. Ibid., p. 139.

The second characteristic consists in independence. For if a principle is derived from some Common Notion it does not belong to the first order, but to the second, however true it may be. So when there is no further fundamental Common Notion to which we can refer, we must hold it to belong to the first class; and upon it the entire chain of inference depends.<sup>1</sup>

Being derived from Natural Instinct, the pure Common Notions are universal and present in every sane person. These Common Notions are applicable by discursive reason to particulars. "Universality," then, is another mark of genuine Common Notions:

The third characteristic is universality. Accordingly I state the chief criterion of Natural Instinct to be universal consent (putting aside persons who are out of their minds or mentally incapable). For I have always viewed particular principles with suspicion as savouring of deception, or at least mingled with error. In a word, pure Common Notions are universals, distilled as it were from the wisdom of Nature itself; though they may be broken up into particular forms by discursive reason.<sup>2</sup>

In the above passage Herbert uses the term "universal" in a double sense: in the first sense it signifies the universal acceptance of the Common Notions by all mentally competent persons; and in the second sense, to which Herbert passes without warning, the term refers to the universality enjoyed by the Common Notions. Herbert's indifference to the consistent signification of the terms he employs contributes to much of the confusion inherent in his De Veritate.

Common Notions carry with themselves an authority which is not found in any derived notions. Nor can they be, once understood, denied or disputed without disturbing the entire edifice of truth. They are, then,

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1. Ibid., p. 139.

2. Ibid., p. 139-140.

further distinguished by their "certainty:"

The fourth mark is certainty. For these Notions exercise an authority so profound that anyone who were to doubt them would upset the whole natural order and strip himself of his humanity. These principles may not be disputed. As long as they are understood it is impossible to deny them.<sup>1</sup>

The pure Common Notions are essential not only for knowledge, but for self-preservation. Those notions which do not promote the self-preservation of the individual cannot be genuine Common Notions. Therefore "necessity" is another mark of the Common Notions:"

The fifth is necessity. Every Common Notion is directed towards man's preservation. These Common Notions contain such an abundance of secret power that when they are arranged systematically they reflect the eternal wisdom of the universe.<sup>2</sup>

The last mark of the Common Notions pertains to the "method of their conformation." They are accepted the instant the meaning of the terms in which they are expressed is understood, as distinguished from the slow and methodical acceptance of truths by reason. Herbert explains this as follows:

The sixth characteristic consists in the method of conformation. Common Notions are brought into conformity immediately, provided that the meaning of the facts or words is grasped; while discursive reasoning works slowly by means of species and its Questions, moving forever to and fro, without any recourse to apprehension.<sup>3</sup>

For Herbert, then, reason and Natural Instinct are distinct powers. He criticizes reason for operating in the only manner it can operate, i.e.,

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1. Ibid., p. 140.

2. Ibid., p. 140.

3. Ibid., p. 140.

moving from one to another thing understood. But the consequences of Herbert's misunderstanding of reason and its relation to the intellect will be treated later.

Herbert locates the Common Notions within the knowing subject. Equipped with them we are enabled to grasp effortlessly those truths which "we endeavour to acquire with vast effort from laws, religions, and the whole body of treatises."<sup>1</sup>

The characteristics which Herbert attributes to the Common Notions belong to first principles. And although he regards these characteristics as the logical and epistemological tests of the nature and conditions of knowledge, he appeals almost entirely to universal consent as the beginning and end of philosophy and theology<sup>2</sup> and as the ultimate criterion of truth. Whatever receives universal consent must be not only indisputably true, but formed by the faculty of greatest certitude, i.e., Natural Instinct.

Herbert concludes his discussion of the Common Notions with a few remarks on the twofold object of Natural Instinct, one individual and the other general. The individual object of Natural Instinct is man's Eternal Blessedness, in which the law of self-preservation, extending throughout the universe, culminates.<sup>3</sup>

His explanation of the common object of Natural Instinct is vague and ungainly:

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1. Ibid., p. 141.

2. Ibid., p. 118.

3. Ibid., p. 142-143.

As for the general object of Natural Instinct, it consists of whatever can be brought into conformity by the other faculties, whether intellectual or physical. And these consist not only of apprehensions which correspond to the principle of individuation, as I have pointed out above, but of those through which objects are judged good or bad; or to speak more clearly, whatever serves the mind and body.<sup>1</sup>

The good of the individual,- including his health, development, and happiness,- resulting from the proper ordination and harmony of all the faculties is for Herbert the common object of Natural Instinct.

Herbert considers the faculties in the order of decreasing certitude- Natural Instinct, the internal senses, the external senses, and discursive reason. Having completed his discussion of Natural Instinct and the Common Notions, he considers next the internal senses and then the external senses. And it is these two faculties which will be examined in the following chapter.

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1. Ibid., p. 144.

CHAPTER V

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SENSES

## CHAPTER V

### THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SENSES

Herbert's account of the internal and external modes of apprehension is profuse with medicinal and botanical digressions. These irrelevant speculations will be disregarded in our examination of the internal and external senses under the following divisions: (I) The Internal Senses; (1) the internal senses defined; (2) the classes of internal senses; (3) the common sense of the internal senses; and (4) the objects of the internal senses. The second part of this chapter will treat (II) The External Senses - under these headings: (1) the external senses defined; and (2) the faculties and media of external perception.

#### I. THE INTERNAL SENSES

##### 1. THE INTERNAL SENSES DEFINED

The internal senses deal with the inner analogy between things and function with the aid of Natural Instinct. They pertain to our affective reactions to objects. Herbert introduces his analysis of the internal senses with this explanation:

The internal modes of apprehension are activities by which objects are brought into conformity with the faculties existing in all normal men and which proceeding from Natural Instinct are concerned with the internal analogy of things that refers to good, evil, pleasure and displeasure; and operate in a special form and in an indirect way under the guidance of Natural Instinct.<sup>1</sup>

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 146. Author's italics.

In this cumbersome explanation Herbert is straining to distinguish instinctive knowledge from its application in particular instances.

Herbert regards the internal perceptions as a "kind of ground-plan"<sup>1</sup> without which the external senses could not begin to achieve their conformities. The internal senses are closely related to Natural Instinct. In fact Herbert connects the two faculties so intimately that internal senses and Natural Instinct are indistinguishable:

Following immediately, then, upon Natural Instinct or the eternal wisdom which is engraved upon our minds, internal perception claims first place. It is closely related to Natural Instinct, and is concerned with the same object; and all ideas which are derived from external objects begin and end in one of these senses. I find them, therefore, so difficult to distinguish that I propose to discuss them together here.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the greater directness with which the internal senses apprehend their objects, i.e., our fears, hopes, pleasure, and pain, they rank above the external senses and discursive reason in degree of certitude. This hierarchy of certitude in us is, according to Herbert, determined by the extent to which our faculties reflect the truth and goodness of God. Natural Instinct is the most reflective and discursive thought the least reflective of divine truth and wisdom, with the internal senses occupying a position next to Natural Instinct. Herbert explains this in terms of Neo-Platonic "emanation:"

But just as with the diffusion of light which, the wider it is cast, tends gradually to become fainter till it finally merges into shadows and darkness; so the divine image imparting itself fully to us when we are harmoniously alive and free, is reflected first in Natural Instinct or the general law of Pro-

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1. Ibid., p. 146.

2. Ibid., p. 147.

vidence, and next in an infinite number of faculties, internal and external, corresponding to their special objects, and fades at last into the shades of the body, so that it often seems to dissolve into matter itself.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert then speaks of three sources of activity: the object, the bodily humours, and "the soul in its relation with the body."<sup>2</sup> The object, however, as Herbert conceives it, does not in the strict sense stimulate or modify a faculty, but merely evokes, as it were, an active power whose nature corresponds to that of the object. Nor does he allow, as will be established later, the means by which a faculty can be determined into an act of perception.

Because the body consists of humours fashioned out of the elements of external nature, it is analogous to the macrocosm.<sup>3</sup> And when the body, mind, and objects act together, "we are the victims of violent impulses."<sup>4</sup>

Herbert points out that there are certain emotions or internal forms of apprehensions which arise entirely from the mind while others originate in the bodily humours, objects, or in a combination of these sources. He then proceeds to discuss these four classes of internal senses.

## 2. THE CLASSES OF INTERNAL SENSES

Herbert distinguishes the four kinds of internal apprehensions according as they spring from the mind, the bodily humours (blood, phlegm,

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1. Ibid., p. 150.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

3. Ibid., p. 152.

4. Ibid., p. 154.

black bile, and yellow bile), the object, or from a combination of these sources. He discusses first the purely mental apprehensions which are concerned with the common good and eternal objects:

The internal forms of apprehension which I attribute to the mind are those which do not arise from the objects nor their images nor from bodily humours but proceed from those faculties which are concerned with the common good, and can react upon the apprehensions produced by objects or by their images or by the bodily humours, with the consequence that they establish control over all kinds of evil and violent passions and reversing their impulse can overcome them and finally repress and allay them. And so at last they enjoy conformity with the objects of the Universe and embrace them only, thus giving assurance of the eternal Blessedness of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

The gist of this turgid explanation is that the purely mental apprehensions originate in the spiritual faculties of the soul, i.e., the intellect and the will, promote the common good, contribute to self-control, and yield promise of eternal happiness.

According to Herbert there are in man faculties analogous with not only the world, but with the attributes of God. The root of the spiritual faculties which produce feelings of love, hope, and belief is "free will," which is related to the infinite freedom of God.<sup>2</sup> Every spiritual faculty in man, then, corresponds to some attribute of God:

Accordingly there is a special faculty which relates to God as cause; another to end; another as the means; another relates to His goodness; another to His wisdom; another to His justice; another to His eternity; another to His blessedness. These faculties, therefore, must each be brought into conformity with God.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 155. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 156.

3. Ibid., p. 157.

Herbert regards free will as "that unparalleled wonder of nature."<sup>1</sup> By virtue of this faculty the soul can turn in any direction. He associates the freedom of human will with "the element of infinity which is innate in us."<sup>2</sup> But he points out that the will is not free in relation to eternal happiness:

This faculty is not free in every instance, nor do its activities always correspond to this freedom...We are not free in relation to the end, because no one can prevent himself from desiring Eternal Happiness, as I have argued fully in another place. But in relation to the means we are free.<sup>3</sup>

He adopts the Scholastic teaching that man wills eternal happiness of necessity without acknowledging his source.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert concludes his discussion of the apprehensions which arise from the spiritual faculties by urging us to be thankful for our great gift of freedom and warning us against abusing that freedom, "in which we can trace in a narrow compass the form and system of the infinite."<sup>5</sup>

It is the internal corporeal senses that Herbert considers next. Being the source of base feelings and passions, the internal physical apprehensions relate not to God, but to the world:

Internal physical apprehensions I term those which spring from the motions of bodily humours and fill us with discom-

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1. Ibid., p. 162.

2. Ibid., p. 162.

3. Ibid., p. 163.

4. The will in relation to eternal happiness is treated by St. Thomas Aquinas: The Summa Theologica, the English Dominican Translation, edited and annotated by Anton C. Pegis, in Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, 2 vols., New York, Random House, 1945, I-II, q. 13, a. 6, resp.

5. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 164-165.

fert, producing coarse and oppressive sensations. The faculties relating to these apprehensions apply to the world while those of the preceding class apply to God.<sup>1</sup>

Apathy, envy, melancholy, and sensual impulses are among the feelings which arise from the bodily humours. And Herbert maintains that each feeling, impulse, or sensation requires a different faculty and principle.<sup>2</sup>

The four bodily humours correspond with the four elements. Herbert again emphasizes that relationship between microcosm and macrocosm in which the former reflects "some analogy to the world at large."<sup>3</sup> In the bodily humours are represented all the elements of external nature which contribute to our physiological, digestive, and vegetative activities.<sup>4</sup>

We debase our spiritual faculties by directing them towards worldly and sensual objects. If we apply love and hope to transitory objects, we shall suffer anxiety and emotional agitation. The spiritual faculties which are concerned with lofty emotions and eternal objects should not be thrust "into the baser and lustful regions of the mind."<sup>5</sup>

The third kind of internal apprehension is derived from objects. It is concerned not with images, but with pleasure, pain, and passion:

I call the internal sensations what are derived objects

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1. Ibid., p. 166. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 165-166.

3. Ibid., p. 167.

4. Ibid., p. 169.

5. Ibid., p. 173-174.

those that proceed from the hidden action of internal objects upon our inner analogy and are apprehended by the mind.<sup>1</sup>

In this ill-constructed passage Herbert refers to feelings and emotions. The faculty by which one perceives pain is not the same faculty by which one perceives pleasure. A new faculty is required not only for each feeling, but for every quality and degree of feeling. Thus the doctrine that there are as many faculties as there are differences in objects Herbert applies to intellectual knowledge, perception, feelings, and emotions.<sup>2</sup>

The most complex type of apprehensions arise from the mind, body, and objects, i.e., the mixed type of apprehensions:

A mixed type of consciousness is one which springs from alternately acting principles and produces effects which are fluctuating and variable sometimes on our minds, sometimes on our bodily humours, sometimes again on objects or their images retained in memory.<sup>3</sup>

These mixed affections arise because man derives his psychological and physiological structure from various sources - his temperament he derives from the elements, his physical growth from the vegetative order, his base tendencies from animals, and his will and understanding from the image of divinity within him.<sup>4</sup>

In accordance with the general tendency of his times, Herbert asserts that neither teachers nor books are required to understand the world and ourselves. All that is necessary for a comprehensive view of man

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1. Ibid., p. 175. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 176.

3. Ibid., p. 178. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 178-179.

and the world is an appeal to consciousness and experience rather than to tradition or authority.<sup>1</sup> Herbert then goes on to consider the "common sense of the internal senses."

### 3. THE COMMON SENSE OF THE INTERNAL SENSES

By "common sense" Herbert means neither the unreflective opinion of a majority of people nor that body of intuited truths common to all men, but rather "conscience." Man has never been without conscience, the existence of which "is due to Nature or Universal Providence."<sup>2</sup> He defines it thus:

Conscience is the common sense of the inner senses. It springs from the faculty which is conscious, through which we examine not only what is good and evil, but also their different degrees, according to their value or reverse, by means of the high authority of the Common Notions, with the aim of reaching a decision concerning what we ought to do.<sup>3</sup>

Conscience, then, according to Herbert, is that mode of apprehension by which the moral intuitions of the Common Notions are applied to particular acts.

It is in accordance with the judgments of conscience that "we prefer the good of the spirit to that of the body, and the general good to the particular good."<sup>4</sup> That we should not do to others what we would not do to ourselves and that we should be temperate are other Common Notions which the common sense or conscience applies to particular ac-

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1. Ibid., p. 182-183.

2. Ibid., p. 184.

3. Ibid., p. 184. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 185-186.

tions.<sup>1</sup> Conscience also leads us to the recognition of the existence of a supreme power, of a Providence, and of the necessity to act in accordance with the laws of nature.<sup>2</sup>

Having pointed out that conscience applies the moral intuitions of the Common Notions to particular cases, Herbert considers next the objects of the inner faculties or senses.

#### 4. THE OBJECTS OF THE INNER FACULTIES

The inner faculties have for their common object the "good." And because every good leads to a greater or higher good, the ultimate good in the series must necessarily be the supreme good or eternal happiness:

...for since each inner faculty refers to good with the hope of attaining it, the two aims coincide, in view of the fact that we may enjoy good. Good, then, is the common object of the inner faculties, and because all good is a means of reaching something better until some final good is reached, this final good must be taken to be the supreme good. Now since blessedness consists in every kind of good, and eternity in all time, this supreme good will be eternal happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert, then, identifies the object of the inner faculties with that of Natural Instinct.

As there are four kinds of truth, there are four kinds of good - of the thing, of the appearance, of the concept, and of the intellect:

Now there are four kinds of goodness: the first is goodness of the thing or object itself; the second, goodness of appearance; the third, goodness of concept, and finally there

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1. Ibid., p. 186-187.

2. Ibid., p. 187.

3. Ibid., p. 189.

is goodness of the intellect.<sup>1</sup>

The goodness of the object inheres in the internal character of the object; the goodness of appearance proceeds from the inherent character of the object and is subject to the conditions governing the truth of appearance; the goodness of the concept is the initial correspondence of the object with the internal faculties; and the goodness of the intellect lies in the conformity of all the other conformities.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert then classifies virtues and vices according as they arise from the spiritual faculties (love, belief, and trust), the bodily humours (anger, rage, and hate), or from the physical faculties (intemperance, concupiscence, and incontinence).<sup>3</sup>

Herbert concludes his discussion of the internal senses by stressing the importance of conscience or common sense, the function of which "is to control the entire range of feelings, so that it constitutes the consciousness of the interior forms of apprehension."<sup>4</sup> In this light, conscience or the common sense may be said to be the means whereby isolated impressions and feelings are unified and integrated in the consciousness.

Herbert then turns to consider those faculties which he ranks third in degree of certitude - the external senses.

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1. Ibid., p. 191.

2. Ibid., p. 191-192.

3. Ibid., p. 195-203.

4. Ibid., p. 205-206.

## II. THE EXTERNAL SENSES

### 1. THE EXTERNAL SENSES DEFINED

Herbert begins his examination of the external senses by means of which occurs our perceptive contact with the extra-mental world with the following definition:

The external forms of apprehension (so named partly from the external position of their organs, partly from the fact that they refer to the conformity of the external analogy between things) are processes which result in the conformity of objects with the faculties of all normal human beings. They are directed by the agency of some internal form of sensation to apprehend particular ideas of the third order of the external analogy under condition, through some internal sense, as the immediate cause, and through natural instinct, as the remote cause, although it is in reality the principal cause.<sup>1</sup>

The external senses, then, are concerned with external objects, and are motivated by and dependent on the internal senses, just as the internal modes of apprehension rely on Natural Instinct.

Between all the faculties there is a reciprocal dependence. Thus the external faculties cannot function without the internal faculties any more than the latter can operate without the former.<sup>2</sup> It has been pointed out, however, that Herbert earlier insisted that Natural Instinct apprehends the Common Notions without the aid of sensory experience.<sup>3</sup>

He exaggerates the power of the human mind when he holds that it can penetrate into the very nature of the thing and know substance essentially:

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1. Ibid., p. 208. Author's italics.
  2. Ibid., p. 209.
  3. Ibid., p. 122.

For my part, I maintain that we perceive substance essentially and colour accidentally, for it is a Common Notion that there is a substance or principle of inherence in things which may be absent.<sup>1</sup>

Here Herbert confuses, as he does throughout his De Veritate, sense knowledge with intellectual knowledge. Substance is not perceived by any external faculty as Herbert seems to think, but is inferred by the intellect.

Our initial awareness of an object, even before we can identify or recognize it, Herbert vaguely attributes to "some inner faculty dependent on Natural Instinct or some Common Notion."<sup>2</sup> This "keying," as it were, of the faculties even before perception occurs arises from the harmony between man and the universe.<sup>3</sup> The external faculties, then, are pre-tuned in order that they may correspond with the analogous objects that fall within their perceptive range.

Holding fast to the doctrine that there are as many faculties as there are differences in objects, Herbert regards the conventional division of the five senses unsatisfactory.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless he neither invents nor discovers any new external faculties, but discusses them under the old headings of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. And it is to these faculties and the conditions required for their respective operation that Herbert considers next.

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1. Ibid., p. 208.

2. Ibid., p. 208.

3. Ibid., p. 208-209.

4. Ibid., p. 209-210.

## 2. THE EXTERNAL SENSES AND THEIR MEDIA

Before turning to the five senses, Herbert insists that there is one faculty concerned with shape, another with size, another with color, etc. Perceiving a landscape, for example, requires as many faculties as there are different colors, curves, lines, and proportions.<sup>1</sup> He goes on to multiply faculties in order to account for the apprehension of thickness, thinness, crookedness, and straightness.<sup>2</sup> But in his analysis of the external modes of apprehension Herbert treats only the five outer senses.

He considers first the faculty of sight, pointing out that the object of sight depends on light for its visibility:

There is no faculty which is so dependent on conditions, since besides those which I have pointed out at the beginning of this book, it requires that the object (I do not say medium) should be sufficiently illuminated to be seen. When these conditions are present, it never errs, though otherwise it may lead us astray and be deceived in the objects before it.<sup>3</sup>

The medium necessary for seeing consists of the most simple elements, i.e., "air, water, and every kind of transparent body."<sup>4</sup> In the absence of some kind of transparent body, "we should be in darkness and liable to absurd errors."<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the conditions of perception earlier enumerated, sight requires organs of vision that are sound and free of disturbances.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 211-212.

2. Ibid., p. 212.

3. Ibid., p. 213.

4. Ibid., p. 215.

5. Ibid., p. 216.

6. Ibid., p. 214.

Herbert reveals his supercilious neglect of philosophical literature when he affirms that no previous philosopher had given a satisfactory account of the manner in which images are assimilated by the faculties.<sup>1</sup> And by positing as many faculties as there are differences in objects, he feels he has circumvented this problem.

He goes on to consider the conditions under which seeing occurs. The necessary medium consists of the most simple elements - "air, water, and every kind of transparent body."<sup>2</sup> Without this medium the visual faculty would be incapable of operating. Herbert's brief analysis concerning the media of light and the conditions of visual perception contains nothing which Aristotle has analyzed more minutely in his De Anima.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert considers the faculty of hearing next, the special or analogous object of which is sound.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the proper medium of auditory perception he writes:

The required medium of transmission is air. Some authorities add water, adducing in support the croaking of frogs. This faculty is in right conformity when it possesses the conditions which I have mentioned at the beginning of this book.<sup>5</sup>

His observations concerning the anatomy of the ear are not original,

1. Ibid., p. 214-215.

2. Ibid., p. 215.

3. ARISTOTLE, De Anima, trans. J. A. Smith, in Basic Works of Aristotle, Bk. II, Ch. 7, 418b.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 216.

5. Ibid., p. 216.

but reflect the opinions of his contemporary anatomists, as the following passage indicates:

Let us consider the organ, or workshop of hearing. In it I find the labrynth, the stirrup, the anvil, the mallet, etc., can be detected. The expert anatomists tell us many interesting facts about them. You will notice a close correspondence between the ears, the larynx and the palate, owing to the extension of the pair of nerves into those parts.<sup>1</sup>

The faculty of smell is the next of the outer senses which Herbert discusses. And according to him it "occupies a central position among the faculties."<sup>2</sup> He names some of the different smells: "sweet, stinking putrid, rancid, mouldering, cankerous, faint, etc."<sup>3</sup> To these he adds the smells of various herbs, roots, and flowers.

The medium required for the faculty of smell is air and, Herbert continues:

...according to the authorities, water. They refer in proof to fishes, though as far as we are concerned air alone is the proper vehicle of smell, so that if the requisite conditions of which I have spoken at the beginning of this book are united with this medium, the faculty will be in proper conformity with its object.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert distinguishes two kinds of smells - pleasant and unpleasant. The former are wholesome and the latter are injurious. Conjoining distasteful smells with what is harmful is the means taken by nature to protect us. Nevertheless, he adds, "there are certain foods, the smell of which is unpleasant, which can be safely taken."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 219.

2. Ibid., p. 218.

3. Ibid., p. 218.

4. Ibid., p. 219.

5. Ibid., p. 220.

The faculty of smell is clearly linked with the faculty of taste, since whatever "smells has flavour and more often vice versa."<sup>1</sup> It is because we can often detect the quality of certain things by smelling before tasting them that Herbert treats "smell first, and taste second, as connected faculties."<sup>2</sup>

The analogous object of the faculty of taste is flavour, "and the correct medium is a kind of tasteless saliva."<sup>3</sup> This medium, however, must be accompanied by the conditions which Herbert had enumerated earlier in his treatment of the conditions of perception.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert discusses at great length the various flavours and their effects, i.e., the biting effect of acrid flavours, the pinching effect of acid flavours, and the seething effect of greasy and oily flavours.<sup>5</sup> This discussion is followed by an attempt to appraise the medicinal value of various herbs, leaves, flowers, and seeds,<sup>6</sup> by which we need not be delayed.

He concludes his discussion of the external senses with a few remarks on the faculty of touch. Each quality of hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness, pointedness, bluntness, thinness, thickness, etc., requires, according to Herbert, a different faculty. Thus the faculty which responds to the quality of roughness is not competent to respond to the

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1. Ibid., p. 220. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 221.

3. Ibid., p. 221.

4. Ibid., p. 75-107.

5. Ibid., p. 222-224.

6. Ibid., p. 226-228.

quality of smoothness. He places the organs of conformity in the extremities of the skin, adding that the sensitivity to objects of touch "pervades and penetrates all the senses."<sup>1</sup>

He points out that man would be utterly frustrated if Divine Providence had provided him with fitting instruments for the perception of colors, sounds, odors, flavours, and tactile qualities, and at the same time denied him the means of apprehending these necessary truths by which falsity is distinguished from truth. Thus it is necessary to refer constantly to the Common Notions, by which alone mistakes are corrected.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert has given a description of the external senses, of their objects, and of the conditions under which their conformity with objects occurs. But he has not explained how the senses are determined or how sense images are dematerialized and assimilated by the mind. But the difficulties in Herbert's doctrines of sense knowledge, intellectual knowledge, and ultimate criterion of truth will be indicated later.

We turn now to examine discursive thought and the "Zetetica."

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1. Ibid., p. 230.

2. Ibid., p. 231.

CHAPTER VI

DISCURSIVE THOUGHT AND THE ZETETICA

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCURSIVE THOUGHT AND THE ZETETICA

Discursive thought or reason as Herbert conceives it must be not only guided by the Common Notions, but must also - if it is to attain truth - follow a certain method of inquiry, to which he refers as the "Zetetica."

In this chapter we shall consider discursive thought and the Zetetica under the following headings: (1) discursive thought; (2) the Zetetica; and (3) the questions or categories - (A) existence, (B) substance, (C) essence, (D) quantity, (E) relation, (F) mode, (G) place, (H) time, (I) origin, (J) purpose.

#### 1. DISCURSIVE THOUGHT

According to Herbert no faculty is more subject to error than discursive thought. Its tendency to error he attributes to the indirectness with which it apprehends the images supplied by the internal and external senses:

Accordingly the function of discursive thought is to proceed by means of the images which it receives from the external or internal faculties, methodically investigating to the utmost of its power the analogy which exists between things. Hence it moves more deliberately than any other faculty and takes the lowest place among them, though it passes by degrees into the inner types of experience.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert reminds his readers of the sharp distinction he has made between discursive thought and the Common Notions, in the absence of which

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 232.

reason as well as the internal and external senses would be incapable of attaining truth.<sup>1</sup> He then goes on to define discursive thought:

Discursive judgments consist of forms of knowledge which proceed from the conformity of objects, or, to speak more accurately, of their images with the faculties which are found in every normal human being. When particular objects have been apprehended, discursive thought, by means of certain Zetetic or heuristic faculties and the Common Notions, considers their existence, essence, quality, quantity, relations, place, and time; their causes, means, and ends; in a word, their general and particular nature, either by combining or by dividing them, in order to discover the analogy obtaining between things. Thus it occupies the fourth position among the faculties and is highly dependent upon conditions.<sup>2</sup>

In this laborious definition, Herbert indicates that discursive thought is the faculty which is concerned with the conceptions of objects, that it examines and distinguishes with the aid of the Common Notions the general and particular nature of objects, and that it is the most fallible of our faculties. The accuracy of discursive thought depends on the extent to which it is guided by the Common Notions and the extent to which it employs the proper method of investigation, i.e., the Zetetica, which Herbert explains later.

Discursive thought as Herbert regards it may be said to be irrational, since it resists the evidence of perception. It is to discursive thought that Herbert attributes man's sins, doubts, errors, and contradictions:

It is discursive thought which denies and persists in denial, utters blasphemies, and breeds fictions and deceits, refusing to yield even to the evidence of perception. Thus some stupidly deny that they are free in spite of the inner consciousness, and

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1. Ibid., p. 232-233.

2. Ibid., p. 233. Author's italics.

others assert that it is impossible to entertain any good idea, not even that one.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert adds that it is unfortunate that man is endowed with discursive reason, the faculty by which man is inclined "to be the frequent victim of indiciſien."<sup>2</sup>

After attempting to discredit the value of reason, Herbert confesses that he does not wish to reject it entirely. Even discursive thought, he argues, was made by nature to serve some purpose, i.e., to enable man to draw conclusions from general principles and the Common Notions:

I do not desire, however, to abolish it, for nature has done nothing in vain, but has endowed human nature with the special distinction of discursive thought. Discursive thought, then, possesses a truth of its own; though this is so limited and vague that all the assured truths which spring from universal consent are referred back to natural instinct.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert veers into a brief discussion of memory, which "attends all faculties since within that general repository are stored images, ideas, and deductions obtained from other faculties."<sup>4</sup> He distinguishes memory from recollection: the former, whose function is merely to store away ideas and images, is passive; the latter, whose function is to draw out what the memory retains, is active.<sup>5</sup> And in the following passage he suggests the associative process:

That in this life we recall some matters with difficulty is due

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1. Ibid., p. 234.

2. Ibid., p. 233.

3. Ibid., p. 235.

4. Ibid., p. 237.

5. Ibid., p. 237-238.

to the fact that the last thing which the intellect encountered had nothing in common with what it was concerned with at the time. The intellect effects new conformities among these already existing, and so always possesses an element of continuity.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert points out that some grain of truth lies beneath the wildest errors and that a Common Notion often lurks in a forest of falsehoods. These buried and hidden truths may be discovered by using the Zetetica, to which we now direct our attention.

## 2. THE ZETETICA

There is a limited amount of questions which discursive thought can ask about any object under investigation. Each of these questions pertains to some aspect of the object, i.e., its existence, essence, substance, quality, quantity, relation, mode, time, place, origin, and purpose...each of which will be discussed later. The faculties which ask these questions Herbert refers to as the "Zetetic Faculties."<sup>2</sup>

The faculty which is concerned with what a thing is, is not the same faculty which deals with whether the thing exists, and the faculty which asks about the location of a thing is different from that which inquires about the cause of the thing. None of these faculties can infringe into the sphere of another faculty without losing its competence.

The Zetetica is the method or art by means of which each faculty is used and applied within the area of its effectiveness, and by means of which are discovered the relationship which concepts - called "images" by Herbert - have with each other. Herbert expounds the Zetetica in the following passage:

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1. Ibid., p. 238.

2. Ibid., p. 240.

Let the reader reflect upon this order of knowledge; observing in the first place that there is a multitude of differences within the scope of his analogy, as he can gather from the dictionaries, or from the facts themselves. Secondly, every one of these differences produces a new perception; and thirdly, every new perception creates a new image. When he has become aware of these points, he will observe a certain analogy between the images, and this is discovered by the aid of certain faculties in us. And though these are identical with those which everyone unwittingly and casually uses, their method and the beauty of their system has nowhere else been pointed out. I call this art, therefore, my Zetetica, which I proclaim to be the key to every kind of doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert usually exaggerates the fallibility of reason, but at this point he attributes to reason - when it follows the Zetetic method of investigation - the ability "to distinguish truth from falsehood in any given proposition."<sup>2</sup> And he regards it as the only path leading to truth.

He dismisses the predicaments of the Schelastics as being inadequate to embrace universal principles. And although he accuses the Schoolmen of depending too much on discursive thought, he himself - at least at this point - attaches so much importance to it as to even subordinate faith to it when he urges that all authoritative truths be submitted to the Zetetic faculties as to a supreme tribunal.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert arrogantly substitutes both the Aristotelian "categories" and the Schelastic predicaments with what he calls the "Questions which can be asked on every possible subject."<sup>4</sup> It is to these Questions along

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1. Ibid., p. 240.

2. Ibid., p. 241.

3. Ibid., p. 241.

4. Ibid., p. 243.

which Herbert maintains discursive thought must proceed if it is to exhaust all there is to know about any subject, that we now turn.

### 3. THE QUESTIONS OR CATEGORIES

The Zetetica proceeds by examining the subject under investigation in the light of ten categories or, as Herbert chooses to call them, "Questions." He claims that no subject under consideration can be examined under any category or question other than those which he enumerates.<sup>1</sup> These questions, then, provide the tools necessary to understand reality. But Herbert's insistence that no such method had ever been used indicates both the exaggerated opinion he has of his originality and the obstinacy of his refusal to acknowledge his indebtedness to the traditional method of the classification of modes of being.

#### A. EXISTENCE

In his treatment of the questions, Herbert considers first the question of "existence:" "The Faculty which asks the Question 'Whether a thing exists?'"<sup>2</sup> For unless we first determine the existence of a thing, we shall be unable to distinguish it from that which is non-existent, imaginary, false, probable, or possible:

We must ask ourselves before anything else whether the thing exists, for in this way any object can be distinguished not only from what has no existence, from what is imaginary, or from what is false, but also from what is probable and pos-

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1. Ibid., p. 242.

2. Ibid., p. 244. Author's italics.

sible. It is well, then, to begin with this question.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert points out that the faculties involved in answering the question which refers to the existence of a thing are Natural Instinct, the internal senses, the external senses, and discursive thought.<sup>2</sup> He warns the readers not to reverse this order, and urges them to trust Common Notions even if they are resisted by the other faculties.<sup>3</sup>

In the question of a thing's existence, discursive thought is to be disregarded, "except in so far as it succeeds in extracting Common Notions from a cloud of words."<sup>4</sup> Reason, then, must be subordinated to Natural Instinct and never be estranged from the Common Notions. That an object exists is perceived by Natural Instinct before the other faculties are able to answer further questions concerning that object.

Having indicated by what faculties we determine that a thing exists, Herbert turns to examine "substance."

## B. SUBSTANCE

"The Faculty which asks the Question 'What a thing is?'"<sup>5</sup> is the heading under which Herbert discusses "substance." Because nothing is so simple as to be without parts, Herbert confesses that the problem of

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1. Ibid., p. 244.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

3. Ibid., p. 245.

4. Ibid., p. 245.

5. Ibid., p. 246. Author's italics.

substance - what a thing is - is very difficult.<sup>1</sup> The problem of ascertaining what a thing is becomes especially difficult in relation to natural objects, because "our faculties, being limited by their own analogy, cannot penetrate the internal essences of things."<sup>2</sup> Artificial things, however, by virtue of their dependence on our minds, are more transparent and can be understood with less difficulty.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert goes on to say that all objects have a twofold nature, one general and the other particular. The former is to be found in the general differences of things and the latter in particular differences. And whatever knowledge we have of things which transcend the senses is analogical:

We cannot decide the way in which the first cause acts, except on the basis of our own actions, and our experience of time, clumsy though this may be. Yet the fact that there is a first cause and that somehow eternity exists are Common Notions.<sup>4</sup>

He asserts that substance consists of those differences "which constitute and complete a thing."<sup>5</sup> What can be removed from a substance without altering its nature is "accidental." He points out that what is substance in relation to one thing may be an accident in relation to another thing:

Consequently these elements are not called accidents in virtue

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1. Ibid., p. 246.

2. Ibid., p. 247.

3. Ibid., p. 247.

4. Ibid., p. 249.

5. Ibid., p. 251.

of their peculiar nature, but because they become accessories of other objects. Iron preserves its special nature without heat or movement, but if man loses them he perishes. These considerations are self-evident. It follows that what is substance for one object is accident for another, and vice versa. We learn this - to mention no other means - from consciousness itself and from Common Notions.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert suggests that the seeker for truth exercise great care in distinguishing the constitutive differences from "the merely passing accidents of objects, whether they are found in individuals, species, or genera."<sup>2</sup>

He concludes his treatment of substance by pointing out that the faculties which apply to the question of what the thing is are "Natural Instinct, internal and external perception, and discursive thought."<sup>3</sup>

#### C. ESSENCE

The problem of "essence" Herbert considers under "The Faculty which refers to the Question 'Of what kind?'"<sup>4</sup> It is necessary for us to know what an object is if we are to understand what kind of object it is.

In his brief discussion of this question Herbert stresses the relation which exists between qualities and essence. In his opinion "qualities subsist in the essence of an object,"<sup>5</sup> ner can genera, species, or indi-

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1. Ibid., p. 252-253. Author's italic.

2. Ibid., p. 257-258.

3. Ibid., p. 258.

4. Ibid., p. 258. Author's italics.

5. Ibid., p. 261.

viduals exist in the absence of qualities. Herbert, however, seems to identify qualities with essence, since in the Table of Categories which he draws later<sup>1</sup> he lists not the question or category of "essence," but "quality."

The faculties which are concerned with the essence of things "are Natural Instinct and internal physical sense; externally, Natural Instinct and Discursive Thought."<sup>2</sup>

#### D. QUANTITY

Herbert considers "quantity" under "The Faculty which refers to the Question of Quantity."<sup>3</sup> That by which things are limited or determined is quantity:

For we cannot discuss the magnitude of anything until we have examined all its limits. Consequently whatever is found when the limiting terms have been precisely determined must be referred to the sphere of quantity.<sup>4</sup>

As Aristotle did,<sup>5</sup> Herbert distinguishes quantity into continuous quantity and discontinuous or discrete quantity, the former being magnitude and the latter number.<sup>6</sup> Each kind of quantity, according to Herbert, requires a different faculty: the faculties of touch and sight respond to continuous quantities, while the faculty of hearing, which delights

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1. Ibid., p. 284-285.

2. Ibid., p. 261.

3. Ibid., p. 261. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 261.

5. ARISTOTLE, Categories, trans. E. Edghill, in Basic Works, Ch.6, 5a.

6. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 262.

in harmony, enjoys "a remarkable conformity with proportionate numbers."<sup>1</sup> The faculties of taste and smell, however, can directly apprehend neither continuous nor discontinuous quantity. But Natural Instinct and the Common Notions occupy an important position in relation to both kinds of quantity:

Natural Instinct suggests many facts about these two quantities; hence Common Notions are familiar in mathematics. For this reason they are called postulates, because there is no further ground to which reference can be made. The reason why mathematical sciences are the most certain of all becomes clear; for there is complete agreement concerning the principles of this science, namely the point and unity, and also concerning the Common Notions, or postulates, which are the foundation of the whole of mathematics.<sup>2</sup>

Having examined things as they are in themselves, Herbert now turns to consider things as they are related to other things.

#### B. RELATION

Under "The Faculty which refers to the Question of Relation,"<sup>3</sup> Herbert considers things as they are related to other things. Under this category he includes action and passion, both of which he asserts cannot be considered apart from some preceding relation.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert lists three types of relations: those which exist in reality; those which are attributed to reality by the mind; and those which are a combination of the two preceding relations.<sup>5</sup> Each of these rela-

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1. Ibid., p. 262.

2. Ibid., p. 263.

3. Ibid., p. 264. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 264.

5. Ibid., p. 264.

tions he divides into essential, analogous, and mixed. The essential relation is that by which one thing is distinguished from another; the analogous relation is that which is external to things; and the mixed relation is one which may be "considered essential in one aspect and analogous in another."<sup>1</sup>

Herbert distinguishes relation from essence since the former follows upon the latter. Relation is distinct from quality because it can be neither increased nor decreased; and it "is distinct from quantity in nearly all its effects."<sup>2</sup>

The external modes of apprehension are unable to be of any value in regard to relation. Natural Instinct and the internal senses refer to essential relations; discursive thought refers to those relations which are attributed to reality; while both Natural Instinct and discursive thought are concerned with mixed relations.<sup>3</sup>

Everything has, in addition to its own nature, something which the mind attributes or ascribes to it. It is this attribution of the mind upon real analogies which Herbert maintains accounts for injustice in laws and perversion in education and religion.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert points out that we see, hear, feel, and know things because of the proportion which exists between things themselves, between things and ourselves, and finally between all things and the first cause.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 265.

2. Ibid., p. 269.

3. Ibid., p. 269.

4. Ibid., p. 269.

5. Ibid., p. 268.

## F. MODE

"The Faculty which refers to the Question 'How? Through what? or By what means?'"<sup>1</sup> is the heading under which Herbert treats "mode." The completion of each activity requires a special mode. Thus sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch occur only under certain conditions or modes:

One kind of means is appropriate to the channels of sight, another to those of hearing, another to those of smell, others again to those of taste and touch. Various types are required for the conformity of the internal types of apprehension which have no bearing on external types.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert emphasizes the importance of discovering the proper means or modes under which the faculties correspond with their analogous objects. The failure to discover the appropriate modes results in ignorance:

We must, then, understand that all our ignorance is due to a failure of means. For we must hold that no object can be without a corresponding faculty, nor can we abandon confidence in the possibility of their conformation. Who could deny that he could perceive every kind of object whether human or divine, when the conditions appropriate to it occur?<sup>3</sup>

Natural Instinct and discursive thought are the faculties which apply to the question of mode; "for internal and external forms of perception do not of themselves extend to the forms or laws of action."<sup>4</sup> The function, then, of Natural Instinct and discursive thought in respect to mode is to prevent errors by confining each faculty within its own pre-

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1. Ibid., p. 269. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 269.

3. Ibid., p. 271.

4. Ibid., p. 270.

vince.<sup>1</sup>

### G. PLACE

"The Faculty which refers to the Question 'Where?'"<sup>2</sup> considers things in so far as they occupy a place in space. Herbert distinguishes situation from place, the first being "the circumscribing limits, the latter the actual limits of an object."<sup>3</sup>

Place, being concomitant with every object, provides a feature which facilitates memory:

Now every place to which an object is referred provides a feature which is particularly recognisable in memory. Hence places offer a ready means of recollection.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert goes on to indicate the faculties which are concerned with the question of place: the external perceptions are concerned with the position or place of things external to us, while the internal perceptions conjoined with discursive thought are concerned with "the order, distribution and extent of the internal faculties."<sup>5</sup>

### H. TIME

Herbert turns next to "The Faculty which refers to the Question 'When?'"<sup>6</sup> Under this category he examines objects in so far as they are

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1. Ibid., p. 270.

2. Ibid., p. 272. Author's italics.

3. Ibid., p. 272.

4. Ibid., p. 272.

5. Ibid., p. 272.

6. Ibid., p. 272. Author's italics.

measureable in terms of present, past, or future time.<sup>1</sup>

He distinguishes between the awareness of time and the awareness of movement. The faculty which perceives movement is too sluggish to perceive the rapid sequence of instances. Therefore time and movement, being distinct, require different faculties. Nor can the present, past, or future be perceived by the same faculty.<sup>2</sup>

Although nature has not provided us generously with faculties designed to perceive the future, knowledge of the future - Herbert holds - may be vouchsafed us after death...

...since it is impossible to suppose that Nature has provided them to no purpose. And we must believe that the past and the future will be open to our most profound understanding.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert indicates the faculties which are concerned with the question of time: the bodily faculties perceive the present; the higher faculties, i.e., Natural Instinct and the internal senses, are required to extend perception into the past or the future; and there is also "a faculty in us corresponding to eternity, and this gathers together the past, present, and future by means of the Common Notions."<sup>4</sup>

#### I. ORIGIN

Herbert next considers "The Faculty which refers to the Question of

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1. Ibid., p. 272.

2. Ibid., p. 273-274.

3. Ibid., p. 274.

4. Ibid., p. 274.

'Whence?'"<sup>1</sup> Under this question he proposes to investigate causes. He asserts that there is no sharp distinction between the formal cause and the efficient cause, because unless a formal cause acted it could be recognized not as a formal cause, but merely as a principle.<sup>2</sup>

He gives the traditional definition of cause as "that upon which the being of an object depends."<sup>3</sup> A principle, on the other hand, enjoys less determination but a wider sphere of reference than a cause. He maintains that there is no problem so important as the one dealing with cause, since nothing occurs without a cause nor can any object be thoroughly understood without a knowledge of its causes.<sup>4</sup>

That there is a first cause is a Common Notion, which "is applied to particular cases by discursive thought, with the result that it usually reaches the conclusion that every object has only one first cause."<sup>5</sup> But independently of the Common Notions, discursive thought would involve itself in a perpetual circle; it is compelled, therefore, by Natural Instinct to accept the existence of a first cause:

There are numerous Common Notions concerning cause which discursive thought skilfully extracts, infers, and lays bare, hardly ever failing at any point to produce causes of its own, or to invent them. Again, discursive thought, moving from one cause to another, would never reach a conclusion, unless instinct persuaded it of the existence of a first cause.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 275. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 275.

3. Ibid., p. 275.

4. Ibid., p. 275-276.

5. Ibid., p. 276.

6. Ibid., p. 277.

In his cursory treatment of the causes, Herbert merely indicates that nothing can be causeless and points to the necessity of a first cause.

#### J. PURPOSE

Final cause Herbert considers under "The Faculty which excites the Question 'For what purpose?'"<sup>1</sup> He defines final cause as "that for the sake of which a thing exists."<sup>2</sup> Because nothing is or acts without an end, the consideration of the final end or cause should initiate every inquiry:

Since it is a Common Notion that every natural agent is active for some end, whatever they may turn out to be, this end must be the first point of investigation, wherever possible. All things depend on some way upon the end.<sup>3</sup>

Discerning that all things are dependent upon a final cause, Herbert points to a hierarchy of ends,- general, particular, immediate, mediate, remote, and ulterior,- which culminate necessarily in the final end.<sup>4</sup> He adds that no created thing escapes a relation to God as to a final end beyond which there can be no greater fulfilment.<sup>5</sup>

Herbert concludes his discussion of purpose by indicating that the faculties which answer questions pertaining to purpose are Natural Instinct and discursive thought.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 277. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 277.

3. Ibid., p. 277.

4. Ibid., p. 277-278.

5. Ibid., p. 278.

6. Ibid., p. 278.

The Zetetica and Questions are far less comprehensive than Aristotle's categories and the Scholastic's predicaments which Herbert criticized. His indebtedness to Aristotle and the Scholastics for his method of investigation is evident even if it is not acknowledged.

Herbert insists that no object can be understood apart from the use of his method.<sup>1</sup> Although he has criticized the Scholastics for relying on discursive thought rather than on Natural Instinct and universal consent, he guarantees that his readers, in possessing the Zetetica, will have available "a perfect system drawn from wisdom or general providence."<sup>2</sup> But this "perfect system" Herbert, after summarizing it in a "Table of Questions,"<sup>3</sup> never uses, follows, or applies.

At this point the De Veritate is logically completed. But Herbert goes on to discuss those fundamental religious notions about which "there exists the greatest measure of agreement,"<sup>4</sup> It is these religious notions which we shall now examine.

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1. Ibid., p. 279-282.

2. Ibid., p. 287.

3. Ibid., p. 284-285.

4. Ibid., p. 287.

CHAPTER VII

HERBERT'S COMMON NOTIONS CONCERNING RELIGION

## CHAPTER VII

### HERBERT'S COMMON NOTIONS CONCERNING RELIGION

Herbert regards "religion" as one of the Common Notions because no nation or age has ever been without some form of religion. In the concluding chapters of his De Veritate, Herbert expounds the Common Notions of religion, and then briefly discusses revelation, probability, possibility, and falsity. In this chapter, Herbert's concluding chapters will be considered under the following headings: (1) Herbert's standard of religious truths; (2) the five common religious notions; (3) revelation; and (4) probability, possibility, and falsity.

#### 1. HERBERT'S STANDARD OF RELIGIOUS TRUTHS

In an early page of his De Veritate, Herbert suggests that the aim of his work is to provide a much-needed quintessence of all religious beliefs, in the light of which he hoped the bitter religious disputes of his time might be settled:

The multitude of sects, divisions, sub-divisions, and cross-divisions in the schools hopelessly distract the wits of the learned and the consciences of the unlettered. Yet some spirit of truth pervades the shapeless and monstrous chaos of beliefs, informing its very errors with life and motion; and it is this spirit that I propose in the following work to examine, to clarify and to defend.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this passage we can safely conclude with Hutcheson,<sup>2</sup> de

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 75.

2. HUTCHESON, in his "Introduction" to his translation of Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 39.

Rémusat,<sup>1</sup> and Willey,<sup>2</sup> that Herbert had conceived and elaborated his De Veritate in order to furnish "a common denominator for all religions."<sup>3</sup>

Herbert begins his discussion of the fundamental religious notions by affirming that without the Common Notions brought to light by universal consent, no truths, religious as well as philosophical, can be established:

Some doctrines due to revelation may be, and some of them ought to be, abandoned. In this connection the teaching of Common Notions is important; indeed, without them it is impossible to establish any standard of discrimination in revelation or even in religion.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert entertained the belief current among the Protestant reformers of his time - that the primitive purity and simplicity of Christianity had been corrupted and multiplied by self-appointed messengers of truth, each of whom regarded himself as the sole custodian of heaven-born truths.<sup>5</sup> Religion, then, as well as philosophy, must be - according to Herbert - in harmony with the Common Notions, which he values so highly that he declares "the book, religion, and prophet which adheres most closely to them is the best."<sup>6</sup>

The Common Notions, whether of philosophy or religion, are those notions which are established by universal wisdom, and which, therefore, are universally accepted by all men in all times. The problem with which

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1. DE RÉMUSAT, op. cit., p. 175.

2. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 123.

3. Ibid., p. 123.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 289.

5. Ibid., p. 289-290.

6. Ibid., p. 291.

Herbert is confronted is to determine what notions in religion are acknowledged by universal consent; for Herbert claims that it is these universally accepted notions "in which alone the glory of Divine Universal Providence is displayed."<sup>1</sup>

We consider now those five fundamental religious notions which Herbert came to recognize - after scrutinizing his heart and all religions - as immutable in the true religion.

## 2. THE FIVE COMMON NOTIONS OF RELIGION

Although men have disagreed on the kind and number of gods, they have never disagreed concerning the existence of one God supreme above all others. The Greeks, Romans, Jews, Mohammedans, Indians, and Christians have acknowledged "some sovereign deity."<sup>2</sup> In the light of the universal agreement in respect to the existence one sovereign deity, Herbert formulates the first teaching of the Common Notions: "There is a Supreme God."<sup>3</sup>

Herbert then proceeds to point to those attributes of God about which he affirms there has always been universal agreement: He is blessed; He is the end towards which all things move; He is the cause of all things in so far as they are good; He is the means by which all things are produced; He is eternal, good, just, wise, omnipotent, and free.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 291.

2. Ibid., p. 291.

3. Ibid., p. 291. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 291-292.

It is further universally accepted that "This Sovereign Deity ought to be Worshipped."<sup>1</sup> Methods of worshipping God have varied from time to time; but the fact that God has been always worshipped is constant and incontestable:

While there is no general agreement concerning the worship of gods, sacred beings, saints, and angels, yet the Common Notion or Universal Consent tell us that adoration ought to be reserved for the one God. Hence divine religion - and no race, however savage, has existed without some expression of it - is found established among all nations.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert argues that atheists do not believe in God because of the terrible things attributed to God by deluded men. But even atheists, he adds, would believe in God if they properly considered His attributes of goodness, justice, wisdom, and mercy.<sup>3</sup>

In his third article, Herbert indicates that virtue and piety constitute the essential part of divine worship. Concerning religious rites and practices, men do not agree; but all men agree in regard to the necessity of virtue:

The connection of Virtue with Piety, defined in this work as the right conformation of faculties, is and always has been held to be, the most important part of religious practice.<sup>4</sup>

Thus every faculty which is used for its proper end or object not only contributes to a good life, but brings the subject a step nearer to eternal happiness. And in a Platonic passage, Herbert recommends that men

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1. Ibid., p. 293, Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 293.

3. Ibid., p. 295.

4. Ibid., p. 296. Author's italics.

detach themselves from earthly delights by cultivating virtue:

And I knew no more convincing proof than the fact that it is only virtue that has the power to draw our soul from the delights which engulf it, and even to restore it to its native region, so that freed from the foul embrace of vice, and finally from the fear of death itself, it can apply itself to its proper function and attain inward everlasting joy.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert continues that it is Nature which secretly advises all men that only by virtue is the mind "gradually separated and released from the body,"<sup>2</sup> and given uninterrupted inner peace.

He proceeds towards another religious notion, asserting that there never was a time when men were not horrified by their crimes and did not believe their crimes had to be expiated by some form of repentance. This notion Herbert enunciates in his fourth article:

The minds of men have always been filled with horror for their wickedness. Their vices and crimes have been obvious to them. They must be expiated by repentance.<sup>3</sup>

The forms of expiation which differ with the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Indians, and Christians, all arise out of a sense of sin. The object of expiation is, and always has been, a reconciliation with God.<sup>4</sup> And it is a blasphemy to declare with Predestinarian doctrines "that God has cut us off from the means by which we can return to Him,"<sup>5</sup>

Conscience, religion, and philosophy teach us that we shall be rewarded or punished after this life according to our just deserts. This

1. Ibid., p. 297.

2. Ibid., p. 297.

3. Ibid., p. 298. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 298-299.

5. Ibid., p. 299-300.

notion Herbert expresses in his fifth and final article of religion:

"There is Reward or Punishment after this life."<sup>1</sup>

The rewards after this life have been thought to be in heaven, the Elysian fields, and in contemplation; while the punishments have been placed in hell, metempsychosis, and the infernal regions.<sup>2</sup> But no nation, tribe, or race, however civilized or savage, has ever denied the existence of rewards or punishments after this life.<sup>3</sup>

Having stated the five Common Notions of religion, Herbert goes on to consider their origin. And he maintains that it is from God that these Common Notions proceed, that it is by God that they are engraved on our souls:

It follows from these considerations that the Dogmas which recognise a sovereign Deity, enjoin us to worship Him, command us to live a holy life, lead us to repent our sins, and warn us of future recompense or punishment, proceed from God and are inscribed within us in the form of Common Notions.<sup>4</sup>

Since nothing can be admitted in religion which is not in harmony with these Common Notions, Herbert concludes that they alone constitute the uniform Church, that through them is salvation possible.<sup>5</sup> Because these primary notions are universally accepted, they represent for Herbert the ultimate criterion, upon which "the mind takes its stand."<sup>6</sup> Thus

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1. Ibid., p. 300. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 300-301.

3. Ibid., p. 301.

4. Ibid., p. 302.

5. Ibid., p. 303.

6. Ibid., p. 305.

for Herbert the ultimate criterion for all truths, religious as well as philosophical, is universal consent.

For Herbert, then, these five Common Notions of religion were the basis for true religion and were all that was necessary for salvation. In these five articles of religion, Herbert has laid the ground for what later became known as "natural religion."<sup>1</sup>

Having elaborated his religious notions, Herbert turns to briefly consider "Revelation."

### 3. REVELATION

The nature of Revelation Herbert affirms to be distinct from truth as defined earlier, i.e., the conformity of our faculties with their analogous objects. The latter depends upon our faculties "while the truth of revelation depends upon the authority of him who reveals it."<sup>2</sup>

Since all revelations are not true, Herbert deems it necessary to indicate four conditions under which a revelation may be trusted: (1) the person to whom a revelation is made must be in a religious frame of mind; (2) the revelation must be directly received, thus any revelation otherwise received falls into the sphere of possibility; (3) the revelation must direct towards a good end; and (4) "the breath of the Divine Spirit must be immediately felt."<sup>3</sup>

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1. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 130.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 308.

3. Ibid., p. 308.

Herbert then goes on to enumerate four more conditions under which we can have faith in the revelations received by prophets, priests, and men of other ages: (1) that there be no doubt that a certain revelation had been received; (2) that the revelation be announced either by God in His own voice or by one of His messengers; (3) that the revelation be reported precisely as it had been revealed; and (4) that the revelation so intimately concern the future as to become an article of faith.<sup>1</sup>

Still reluctant to give any credence to authoritative teaching, Herbert is in reality trying to explain away Revelation by identifying it with his Common Notions. Before passing to discuss "probability," he proposes to consider whether the Decalogue should be regarded as containing "Common Notions or revealed truths."<sup>2</sup> And he does not hesitate to consider the Ten Commandments as constituting "a summary of Common Notions."<sup>3</sup>

Affirming that the essentials of religion had been written by Nature in the hearts of all men, Herbert felt that all men were equally capable of receiving divine communications, as he claims he had received divine approval of his De Veritate. Thus he regarded all traditional truths and authoritative teaching as "secondary sources" of religious knowledge if not "unnecessary."

Herbert concludes his De Veritate with a few remarks on probability, possibility, and falsity, to which we now turn.

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1. Ibid., p. 309-310.

2. Ibid., p. 312.

3. Ibid., p. 313.

## 4. PROBABILITY, POSSIBILITY, AND FALSITY

Herbert begins his discussion of probability by pointing out that it applies to the past:

All tradition and history, every thing in short that concerns the past, whether it be true or false, good or evil, possesses for us only probability, since it depends on the authority of the narrator. Consequently its basis lies beyond the scope of the faculties, whether we take truth of the thing itself or truth of the intellect.<sup>1</sup>

The foundation of the entire body of history, resting merely on the evidence of historians, is - according to Herbert - precarious. And just as it is beyond our faculties to know with certainty the extent to which historians of the past have been right or wrong, so knowing with certainty anything about the future is beyond our faculties.<sup>2</sup>

While probability concerns the past, possibility concerns the future. Thus Herbert regards possibility as "everything which is likely to happen."<sup>3</sup> He adds that it is more difficult to predict the future than it is to reconstruct the past because the former requires divine inspiration.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert includes eternal blessedness among possibilities, since all our faculties refer to it as to their final end. To believe that eternal happiness is beyond our reach is sacrilegious.<sup>5</sup> There is within us a

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1. Ibid., p. 314.

2. Ibid., p. 322.

3. Ibid., p. 323.

4. Ibid., p. 324.

5. Ibid., p. 326.

vestige of the infinite, in virtue of which we may, under conditions favorable for an almost limitless perspective, perceive and understand what is now a deep mystery.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert treats falsity very briefly. Whatever "is neither true, (whether the truth be natural or revealed) nor probable, nor possible, will be wholly false."<sup>2</sup> Falsity arises whenever the conditions of truth earlier indicated do not obtain.

At the conclusion of his De Veritate, Herbert points out that since the truth of the thing is unconditional and the truths of the intellect consist in the incontestable Common Notions, falsehoods and errors can be attributed only to appearances and concepts:

Now it is clear that only that which is subject to conditions can be untrue. For neither the thing itself nor the intellect can err since it always judges truly what is presented to it. Error, therefore, must undoubtedly lie in appearance, so far as it refers to its prototype, as well as in the concept in the analogy which relates it to the intellect.<sup>3</sup>

We may now turn to examine Herbert's De Religione, the aim of which is to direct bewildered laymen into the acceptance of the Common Notions of religion advanced in the concluding section of the De Veritate.

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1. Ibid., p. 329-331.

2. Ibid., p. 332.

3. Ibid., p. 333-334.

CHAPTER VIII

HERBERT'S DE RELIGIONE LAICI

## CHAPTER VIII

### HERBERT'S DE RELIGIONE LAICI

The De Religione Laici is the shortest of Herbert's works, but reveals him at his best as a religious writer. It is not so turgid, vague, and generalized as his De Veritate. Nevertheless "his own lack of logical clarity and of the requisite historical knowledge"<sup>1</sup> render not only his De Religione Laici, but all of his works less convincing than they might have been at the hands of a more disciplined and less prejudiced mind.

The De Religione Laici in conjunction with De Causis Errorum was first published in London in 1645. Another edition, which differs from the first edition only in minor points, appeared in London in 1656. Hutcheson's translation is based on the 1645 edition.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter we shall consider Herbert's De Religione Laici according to (1) the problem, (2) the alternatives, and (3) the solution.

#### 1. THE PROBLEM

Living in an age of bitter religious wars and controversies, Herbert had attempted in the final chapters of his De Veritate to indicate those fundamental religious notions concerning which he claimed there had al-

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1. HUTCHESON, in his "Introduction" to Herbert's De Religione Laici, p. 49.

2. The Latin and English face each other on opposite pages, with the translated pages appearing on the right or odd-numbered pages from 87 through 133.

ways been universal agreement. He concluded that the best religion is that religion in which his five Common Notions or articles of religion are incorporated. And he now assumes that the readers of his De Religione Laici are familiar with the doctrines contained in his De Veritate.

In the opening lines of his De Religione Laici, Herbert announces the problem - the importance of discovering wherein divided, troubled, and bewildered minds can find a guarantee of peace and salvation:

What, namely, shall the layman, encompassed by the terrors of divers churches militant throughout the world, decide as to the best religion? For there is no church that does not breathe threats, none almost that does not deny the possibility of salvation outside its own pale.<sup>1</sup>

The uneasy and troubled layman or "Wayfarer" wanders through Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Indies. But wherever he goes, he encounters teachers and theologians who maintain with equal fervor different ways to salvation. The problem facing the layman everywhere is, indeed, serious: if he follows the teachings of one faith, he is condemned by other churches and religions:

What Wayfarer, then, born in an unfortunate land or age shall save himself? How especially shall he protect himself if every man's individual dogmas about necessary and excellent truth are so proposed as to damn all the rest?<sup>2</sup>

But the problem of the confused layman is especially complicated when some of the teachers recommend that he follow "Faith" and the other teachers urge that he follow "Reason." It is to the discussion of these alternatives posed by Herbert that we now turn.

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1. HERBERT, De Religione Laici, p. 87.

2. Ibid., p. 87.

## 2. THE ALTERNATIVES

The wandering layman, then, can follow Faith - in which case the followers of Reason will accuse him of abandoning his rational faculties - or he can follow Reason, which the proponents of Faith will regard inadequate and corrupt:

For while some say that this Faith is recommended, which the Wayfarer will not easily distinguish from any notorious credulity, and while others prefer a Reason that their opponents maintain is depraved, weak, and all but dead, what marks shall he insist on?<sup>1</sup>

Herbert feels that an analysis of Faith and Reason will reveal the need for both. The layman is to depend on his reason to discover those religious doctrines which command universal consent,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time he is not to neglect those truths of Faith "which are not repugnant to the truths of Reason."<sup>3</sup>

He distinguishes between Faith in the past and Faith in the future, and warns against using the term indiscriminately. Faith in the past, which Herbert affirms requires no faculty, is nothing more than "probability." But he equates Faith in the future with belief in God:

But the Faith in God that regards the future proceeds from the highest faculty of the soul, the faculty which especially distinguishes man from other creatures. And indeed it is attended by several common notions, while one only (namely that it is possible) relates to the Faith that regards the past.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 89.

2. Ibid., p. 89.

3. Ibid., p. 91.

4. Ibid., p. 91.

Herbert argues that since we cannot judge of the things which exceed the range of our faculties, we cannot concede to the teachings of earlier writers a higher status than that of probability...even if those teachings were truthful. Because the truths of the teachings of past thinkers have not been immediately experienced by us, apprehended by our faculties, they can never belong to us.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Herbert exalts Faith in the future or belief in God on the grounds that it arises from the highest faculty of the soul, i.e., Natural Instinct. And by those histories not repugnant to reason which Herbert recommends his readers may accept, he means those doctrines which are in accordance with the Common Notions and are illumined by Natural Instinct.

It must be noted that Herbert subordinates reason to Natural Instinct. For him reason is "right" only when it is guided by Natural Instinct, upon which the imprint of the divine is brightest and strongest.

Herbert illustrates the suspicion with which seventeenth century thinkers regarded traditional and historical teachings when he warns the Wayfarer to exercise great caution in accepting the testimony of even the most authoritative writers and historians:

But lest the Wayfarer incline too much to the capitulating sort of Faith, he should be warned against accepting without distinction everything he finds in histories. Not only are there histories here and there which require much discrimination and examination, but there are some especially which are so extravagant, so repugnant to the universal nature of things that only a rash judgment may be passed upon them; wherefore uncertainties of no minor importance occur even in the gravest authors.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 93-95.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

By priests, historians, and earlier writers who have followed traditional religion, Herbert holds the layman has been not enlightened, but deceived.<sup>1</sup> Therefore he urges the layman to question all histories, divine as well as human, including the Sacred Scriptures. Although he tells the layman to believe in the possibility of even those events in the Scriptures which seem to be impossible, he later insists that no external authority should take priority over the dictates of the independent judgment of mankind. Thus he writes that we can accept the testimony of authoritative teaching and the Sacred Scriptures providing...

...however, that there be a common privilege of studying and of arriving at conclusions about the consequences of acts said to have taken place from the earliest ages of the world, and that, although faith in the historical narrative remains the Church's prerogative, the liberty of passing judgment shall remain with mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Having indicated the problems and alternatives attending the layman's search for religious truths and salvation, Herbert feels he is ready to propose a way out of the difficulty.

### 3. THE SOLUTION

In the beginning of his De Religione laici, Herbert had hinted at the solution when he wrote that it would be necessary for the layman to study the various religions of the world and select those doctrines "about which there is most agreement."<sup>3</sup> Now he declares that an examination of all the religions in the world requires more genius, resour-

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1. Ibid., p. 97.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

3. Ibid., p. 89.

ces, and time than are possessed by any man. And so, unless the layman does not object to wandering endlessly without hope of finding the means for his salvation, he must accept the "catholic truths,"<sup>1</sup> the Common Notions of religion:

Unless the Wayfarer, therefore, would do better to turn with unwearied labor to the controversies of nations everywhere, he will have to return to the catholic truths, and on the strength of these appear confidently before the divine tribunal, while he casts away fears and obtains the saving grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert, then, feels that the five fundamental articles of religion underlie all rites and sacraments and contain in themselves all that is required for salvation.

He goes on to comment briefly on the impious practices of the pagans. He charges that self-appointed priests and ministers are responsible for corrupting the primitive purity of religion. He adds that they have deviated from the basic religious notions for selfish reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert then stresses the importance of virtue and piety,<sup>4</sup> in the practicing of which the souls of men will be purged of impurities and will be "presented whole to God, and be endowed immediately with eternal blessedness."<sup>5</sup> For Herbert, then, the essence of religion consists in moral actions.

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1. Ibid., p. 103.

2. Ibid., p. 103.

3. Ibid., p. 105-107.

4. Ibid., p. 110.

5. Ibid., p. 111.

Herbert discusses briefly the permanence of creation. He maintains that God had so created the world that all things in it can be brought to full ripeness and realization without having recourse to the supernatural.<sup>1</sup> All the things God has created remain unaltered, "though they escape the eyes of those who grope in the darkness."<sup>2</sup>

His attacks on the Church reflect the general tendency of Reformation thinkers to permit no authority to supersede the dictates of the individual conscience. Again Herbert urges the layman to follow his own conscience, upon which are inscribed those fundamental notions of religion which alone are infallible, and by which alone he can attain eternal happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert then crystalizes seven reasons for having written his De Religione Laici: (1) to declare that divine providence is the highest attribute of God; (2) to teach only those truths inscribed in the conscience of every man; (3) to point out those articles of religion acknowledged by all men; (4) to lay the basis for settling all religious disputes; (5) to secure for religion - in which are incorporated the five articles of religion - the authority due to it; (6) to encourage rigid morality; and (7) to show that every valid doctrine of salvation tends towards universally accepted religious notions.<sup>4</sup>

He mentions without discussing the five religious notions he had

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1. Ibid., p. 113.

2. Ibid., p. 115.

3. Ibid., p. 119-121.

4. Ibid., p. 125-127.

elaborated in his De Veritate: (1) that there is a Supreme God; (2) that this Supreme God ought to be worshipped; (3) that virtue and piety constitute the essence of divine worship; (4) that sins should be expiated by repentance; and (5) that there are rewards and punishments after this life.<sup>1</sup>

In the last sentence of his De Religione Laici, Herbert expresses the hope that his work increase the glory of God and contribute to the reconciliation of religious disputes:

God grant that what we here have written serve to increase His glory and to establish common peace.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that the tendency underlying the De Religione Laici leads towards the identification of basic religious ideas with the Common Notions expounded in the De Veritate. That the ultimate criterion for all truths, religious as well as philosophical, is "universal consent," Herbert has emphasized in both of these works. And subordinating reason to Natural Instinct, Herbert has advocated a non-intellectual approach to God, truth, and knowledge.

So far we have exhibited Herbert's doctrines. We now turn to consider the difficulties implicit in his doctrines.

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1. Ibid., p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 133.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIFFICULTIES IN HERBERT'S DOCTRINES

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DIFFICULTIES IN HERBERT'S DOCTRINES

The doctrines of Lord Herbert can be best criticized by pointing to their salient difficulties and inadequacies - to show how they fail to satisfactorily and realistically explain knowledge and the criteria of truth.

The problems to which sense-knowledge as advanced by Herbert give rise will be considered first; his explanation of intellectual knowledge will be examined next; then his notions of truth and criteria will be reviewed; and finally an inquiry into the validity of his religious notions will be made.

#### 1. SENSE-KNOWLEDGE

Despite his initial proposal to break with all previous philosophy, Herbert adopts the traditional division of the five senses by which we are placed in perceptive contact with the external world. The nature of these external senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - is corporeal. Thus the senses are determined by their nature to reach only those objects which are extended and material.

The senses, then, are material instruments capable of contacting the external world. So far, Herbert poses no difficulties in either his division of the senses or in his regarding the senses as corporeal

Sense perception occurs only when certain material conditions obtain, some of which pertain to the object and others to the subject.

Thus light must be present before an object can be seen, and air must be present to conduct sound waves to the organ of hearing. The sense organs themselves must be normal and unimpaired if they are to perceive their proper or analogous objects.

Herbert's analysis of the conditions of perception on the part of the subject and of the object is not original. The conditions which he enumerates are some of the traditional notions with which he must have been impressed during his omniverous reading,<sup>1</sup> but which he was not willing to attribute to earlier philosophers. More than four centuries before Herbert's time, St. Thomas discerned the intrinsic dependence of sense perception upon the material conditions of both the subject and the object, and declared that certain powers, such as the sensitive and the nutritive, are in the body as in their subjects and cannot function apart from their corporeal organs.<sup>2</sup>

But after giving a detailed and not unrealistic explanation of the conditions necessary for sense perception, Herbert falls into one difficulty after another. And it is these difficulties which will now be traced and indicated.

According to Herbert, every mode of apprehension - sensuous, intellectual, and intuitive - is the result of the conformity of a faculty with its proper object. He defines faculty as "the inner conforming prin-

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1. CARRE, M., Phases of Thought in England, Oxford, 1949, p. 223.

2. AQUINAS, T., Summa Theologica, in the Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, based on the Dominican translation, edited and annotated by Anton C. Pegis, 2 vols., New York, Random House, 1945, I, q. 78, a. 3, resp.

inciple"<sup>1</sup> and object as "that which stimulates an analogous faculty."<sup>2</sup> He adds that sense-knowledge is the product of neither the faculty itself nor of the object itself, but of the "activities which springs from the concurrence between them."<sup>3</sup> But despite his insistence that an object is that which stimulates and that every faculty is a principle of conforming, he denies that the sense faculty is passive. For him the mind with all its faculties is never acted upon, but is always acting.

By denying passivity to the sense faculties, Herbert makes it impossible for the various sense organs to be affected by their five generically different kinds of stimuli, i.e., their proper objects. In the absence of an initial physiological phase, in which the sense organs are materially modified by an object, neither sense-knowledge nor intellectual knowledge is possible.

That knowledge is a compound of both subjective and objective elements, Herbert admits.<sup>4</sup> But the mere falling of an object within the perceptive range of a faculty - which Herbert claims is essentially and exclusively active - does not constitute a conformity or result in cognition. If the senses are void of passivity, they cannot be determined by their analogous objects, as is pointed out by St. Thomas:

Sense is a passive power, and is naturally immuted by the exterior sensible. Hence, the exterior cause of such im-

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 153.

2. Ibid., p. 153.

3. Ibid., p. 153.

4. Ibid., p. 153.

mutation is what is per se perceived by the sense, and according to the diversity of that exterior cause are the sensitive powers diversified.<sup>1</sup>

A large part of Herbert's difficulties arise from his arrogance - from his desire to indiscriminately brush aside traditional teachings and to erect a system of thought in a vacuum. By rejecting the Thomistic-Aristotelian hylomorphism and the doctrine of sensible species, Herbert deprived himself of the only means by which knowledge, sense and intellectual, can be realistically explained.

Herbert tacitly admits that a conformity between a sense faculty and its analogous object involves an immaterial as well as a material operation when he affirms that the seeing of a stone does not render the faculty of sight into stone.<sup>2</sup> But he provides neither the means by which the sense faculty is materially determined nor the means by which is effected the immaterial assimilation of the object by the subject.

Sense faculties as Herbert conceives them - void of passivity - are incapable of being formally determined by their proper objects. Sense cognition is more than the mere juxtaposition of object and sense faculty. The sense, being a capacity for perception, must first be activated or determined by an object into an act of perception, as St. Thomas explains:

For the reason why we actually feel or know a thing is because our intellect or sense is actually informed by the sensible or intelligible species. And because of this only, it follows that sense or intellect is distinct from the sen-

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1. Sum. Theol., I, 2. 78, a. 3, resp.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 99.

sible or intelligible object, since both are in potentiality.<sup>1</sup>

Thus before a sense faculty can react psychically it must be altered or modified physically. And this cognitional determination in respect to the sense faculty is effected by the "sensible species," which Herbert regards as superfluous.<sup>2</sup> In rejecting the sensible species, Herbert discards the very principle from which knowledge proceeds and through which the object is immediately apprehended.

Knowledge is not, as Herbert seems to believe, the mere proximity of numberless faculties to their analogous objects, but a vital and immanent activity by which the nature of the subject can share in some way the nature of something other than himself. And the only manner in which the object can influence the subject is by its action, which produces in the terminal organs of the knower a modification which is like itself, since every effect resembles its cause. But the union of subject and object requires more than the material modification of the subject; it needs what St. Thomas calls "spiritual immutation," which he explains and distinguishes from "natural immutation" in the following passage:

Natural immutation takes place when the form of that which causes the immutation is received, according to its natural being, into the thing immuted, as heat is received into the thing heated. But spiritual immutation takes place when the form of what causes the immutation is received, according to a spiritual mode of being, into the thing immuted, as the form of color is received into the pupil which does not thereby become colored. Now, for the operation of the senses a spiritual immutation is required, whereby an intention of the

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 14, a. 2, resp.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 100.

sensible form is effected in the sensible organ. Otherwise, all natural bodies would have sensation when they undergo alteration.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the subject receives into himself the form of the object. And in receiving that form, the very being of the subject may be said to expand by becoming like that object.<sup>2</sup>

In Herbert's explanation of sensation, there is lacking this necessary synthesis of two natures - that of the object and that of the knower - in which the formal characteristics of the object known are immanently present to and assimilated by the knower. Without this merging of two potencies,- the potency of the sense to an act of sensation and the potency of the object to be perceived,- into one actuality, knowledge is impossible.

In Herbert's theory of sensation there is no merging of object and subject; there is merely a unilateral action in which tireless faculties are constantly stretching towards analogous objects without themselves being specified and determined by those objects. His account of sense-knowledge entails the absurd conclusion that our sensations, images, and psychological experiences are not really determined by objective realities, but are more or less autonomous. According to Herbert's teaching, the contents of the mind are related to realities not as effects to causes, but rather as causes to effects. And the external world as Herbert conceives it,- void of the metaphysical conditions of matter and form, or potency and act, which alone render knowledge possible,- is

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 78, a. 3, resp.

2. Ibid., I, q. 84, a. 2, resp.

neither transparent to the mind nor capable of determining the subject into acts of sensation.

In his description of the material conditions necessary for sensation and sense-knowledge, Herbert is quite astute even if not original; but the metaphysical conditions of knowledge given by the heritage of the mind, he disregards to the detriment of his own system. He fails to avail himself of that philosophic tradition which is, as Maritain points out, "indispensable for wisdom."<sup>1</sup>

The manner in which sensory experiences are distinguished and unified into perceptual wholes, how the mind and body co-ordinate in acts of knowing, Herbert does not explain; he merely presupposes "that mind and body are so ingeniously united that the ways in which they interact elude our grasp."<sup>2</sup> Although he encumbers the mind with as many faculties as there are differences in objects, he neglects to attribute to the mind the power by which the various sensations are distinguished and synthesized.

The faculty which distinguishes one sensation from another must know all sensations. This faculty St. Thomas calls the "common sense:"

The proper sense judges of the proper sensible by discerning it from all other things which come under the same sense; for instance, by discerning white from black or green. But neither sight nor taste can discern white from sweet, because what discerns between two things must know both. Hence the discerning judgment must be assigned to the common sense. To it, as to a common term, all apprehensions of the sense must be referred, and by it, again, all the intentions of the senses are perceived; as when someone sees that he sees.<sup>3</sup>

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1. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 10.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 151.

3. Sum. Theol., I, q. 78, a. 4, ad. 2.

Herbert does not allow for this co-ordination by an internal faculty, necessarily distinct from the external senses, of sensory data into units of psychological experience. Although he distinguishes the internal senses from the other faculties, he does not show how knowledge proceeds from the particular sense images of organic faculties to the formation of universal ideas by the intellect.

Having considered the problems and difficulties involved in Herbert's explanation of sense-knowledge, we proceed to examine the inadequacies implicit in his explanation of intellectual knowledge. It will be pointed out why that conformity between faculty and object which constitutes the core of Herbert's De Veritate cannot be achieved by a faculty which he insists operates independently of and without relation to sensible perception.

## 2. INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Such universal truths as the principle of contradiction, of causality, and as the axioms of geometry,- truths which command the universal consent of mankind,- are formed, according to Herbert, without the aid of reason, which he regards as the most unreliable of faculties.<sup>1</sup> He maintains that these universal truths or "Common Notions" are independent not only of reason, but of the external and internal faculties.

Herbert stresses that the Common Notions are implanted in us by nature<sup>2</sup> and are apprehended directly and intuitively by Natural Instinct,

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 232.

2. Ibid., p. 112.

the faculty which "occupies the first position among our faculties."<sup>1</sup> External objects, then, do not convey these Common Notions to the understanding.

Herbert, however, exaggerates the knowing powers of the human mind. A perfect intellectual being such as an angel requires neither external senses nor a body in order to know. But man does not possess a perfect form of intelligence. Man is partly, not purely intellectual, as St. Thomas explains:

For what is such by participation, and what is movable, and what is imperfect, always requires the pre-existence of something essentially such, immovable and perfect. Now the human soul is called intellectual by reason of participation in intellectual power, a sign of which is that it is not wholly intellectual but only in part.<sup>2</sup>

Only if man were a pure intellect would he require neither his external senses nor his body to know. Man is a composite of body and soul; he needs, therefore, both his material and his spiritual faculties - his senses and his intellect - in order to understand.

Herbert is not wrong in affirming that a spiritual faculty is necessary to attain ideas of causality, beauty, and good. But this necessity does not imply that the faculty of understanding requires no body. The faculty of understanding needs the body not as an organ of action,<sup>3</sup> but because it operates on material things.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert sharply distinguishes reason from Natural Instinct on the

1. Ibid., p. 139.

2. Sum. Theol., I, q. 79, a. 4, resp.

3. Ibid., I, q. 75, a. 2, ad. 3.

4. Ibid., resp.

grounds of the different ways in which they operate, the former moving deliberately and methodically<sup>1</sup> and the latter apprehending truth immediately.<sup>2</sup> But these different modes of operation do not belong, as Herbert maintains, to two distinct faculties; they are two operations of one faculty of understanding, as St. Thomas indicates:

Reason and intellect in man cannot be distinct powers. We shall understand this clearly if we consider their respective acts. For to understand is to apprehend intelligible truth absolutely, and to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert accuses the Scholastics of exalting reason. His attack, however, against the Scholastics is based on his misunderstanding of the traditional doctrine of intellect. For the discarded, ignored, or misunderstood "intelligence" of the Scholastics, Herbert substitutes "Natural Instinct." Attributing the religious and philosophic disputes of his time to inordinate appeals to discursive reason, Herbert appeals to Natural Instinct, which he regards as an irrational faculty.<sup>4</sup> But an examination of Natural Instinct as Herbert conceives it will disclose its incompetence to attain intellectual knowledge.

Throughout his De Veritate Herbert urges the necessity of discarding reason and its discursiveness and of appealing to Natural Instinct and its directness and immediacy in knowing and apprehending truths. But

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 120.

2. Ibid., p. 139.

3. Sum. Theol., I, q. 79, a. 8, resp.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 139.

this discursiveness on the part of reason, advancing from one truth to another,<sup>1</sup> is the natural mode in which the human intellect perfects itself,<sup>2</sup> since man's knowledge comes not by way of infused ideas, but by way of sense experience and external realities.<sup>3</sup>

For Herbert the most reliable faculty is that which perceives and conforms with its object with the greatest immediacy and directness. And since reason or discursive thought "passes by degrees into the internal type of experience,"<sup>4</sup> i.e., indirectly, it cannot be the most reliable of faculties. Thus by it, according to Herbert, "man is the frequent victim of indecision."<sup>5</sup> But unlike the angels, man has an imperfect knowledge of intelligible truth, and needs reason to advance from one truth to another...in virtue of which "he is called rational."<sup>6</sup> And if man discarded, as Herbert urges, reason, he would no longer be a "rational animal."

It is true that the reason does not attain the particular object directly. But it should not be criticized, as Herbert does, for not performing a function - i.e., apprehending particulars directly - which is relegated not to it, but to the sense faculties.<sup>7</sup> Discarding the

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 79, a. 8, resp.

2. Ibid., I, q. 58, a. 3, resp.

3. Ibid., resp.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 120.

5. Ibid., p. 233.

6. Sum. Theol., I, q. 79, a. 8, resp. Author's italics.

7. Ibid., I, q. 84, a. 7, resp.

reason because it does not attain particulars directly would be not unlike amputating the hand because it does not "see."

Herbert has no way of ascertaining that the ideas with which reason is concerned really conform with reality. His questioning of the truth value of reason can be attributed first to his failure to recognize that the intellect must be determined by its proper object to an act of thought, and, second, to his misunderstanding of the nature and function of ideas.

Let us examine the consequences of his first failure, which consists in assigning self-autonomy to the intellect. If the intellect were not passive in regard to intelligibles, its relation to its object, i.e., "universally all being,"<sup>1</sup> would consist in being the very act of all being.<sup>2</sup> But only an infinite intellect, as St. Thomas establishes, can be so related to universal being:

But no created intellect can be an act in relation to the whole universal being; for then it would need to be an infinite being. Therefore no created intellect, by reason of its very being, is the act of all things intelligible; but it is compared to these intelligible things as a potentiality to act.<sup>3</sup>

By denying passivity to the intellect, Herbert tacitly attributes to man the perfection which belongs only to God, in whose divine intellect all being pre-exists as in its final cause.<sup>4</sup>

Man's intellect, being united with a physical organism and therefore imperfect, requires some means by which its weaknesses and deficiencies

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1. Ibid., I, q. 78, a. 2, resp.

2. Ibid., I, q. 79, a. 2, resp.

3. Ibid., resp.

4. Ibid., I, q. 14, a. 2, resp.

might be overcome, otherwise it would never attain the ratio of things,<sup>1</sup> or that conceptual knowledge which transcends, even though it is derived from, the particular knowledge of the senses. But in his opposition to a sensuous interpretation of knowledge, Herbert so isolates intellectual knowledge from sense-knowledge that he fails to see the necessary relation which exists between the two levels of human knowledge.

According to Herbert, every essence is apprehended by a different faculty. He asserts that the faculty which apprehends the essence of a circle is not the same faculty which apprehends the essence of a triangle. Herbert is therefore forced to encumber the mind with as many faculties as there are differences and essences because he has discarded the Scholastic notion of the abstractive power of the intellect, by which the intelligible latent in the phantasm - the synthesized sense perception - is revealed.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert's doctrine of intellectual knowledge fails to explain how the intellect, a spiritual faculty, derives from particular, sensuous images the objects of its own apprehension. And only by positing a power which abstracts the potentially intelligible from sensuous images can intellectual knowledge and universal ideas be satisfactorily explained. St. Thomas' realistic explanation of knowledge obviates the problems which face less noetic philosophers:

Now nothing is reduced from potentiality to act except by something in act; as the senses are made actual by what is actually sensible. We must assign therefore on the part of the intellect

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1. Ibid., I, q. 54, a. 4, ad. 3.

2. Ibid., I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 3.

some power to make things actually intelligible, by the abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessity of positing an agent intellect.<sup>1</sup>

The law of causality, then, demands the existence of the active intellect by which the intelligibility or nature within matter is illuminated or revealed. The result of this abstractive process, the species impressa, activates or informs the "passive intellect" to form a species expressa or concept. St. Thomas explains this abstractive process as follows:

Not only does the agent intellect illumine phantasms, it does more; by its power intelligible species are abstracted from phantasms. It illumines phantasms because, just as the sensitive part acquires a greater power by its conjunction with the intellectual part, so through the power of the agent intellect phantasms are made more fit for the abstraction of intelligible intentions from them. Now the agent intellect abstracts intelligible species from phantasms inasmuch as by its power we are able to take into our consideration the nature of species without individual conditions. It is in accord with their likeness that the possible intellect is informed.<sup>2</sup>

Neither Herbert nor any other philosopher, ancient or modern, succeeds in adequately explaining the formation of ideas and the transition of sense-knowledge to conceptual knowledge independently of abstraction. Only if our knowledge proceeded from infused ideas rather than from the world of sensible objects would we have no need for abstraction.

Having established that the mind as Herbert conceives it cannot be determined by sensible or intelligible forms, we turn not to examine the difficulties which arise from his notions regarding the nature and

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1. Ibid., I, q. 79, a. 3, resp.

2. Ibid., I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 4.

function of ideas.

Because the conceptions or "images,"<sup>1</sup> as Herbert calls them, with which discursive thought is concerned are not apprehended as directly as first principles and axioms of science and mathematics are by Natural Instinct, Herbert concludes that ideas represent "the uncertain sphere of discursive thought."<sup>2</sup>

Our knowledge of ideas is, as Herbert indicates, indirect, but only because it is attained by a second act of the mind, i.e., an act of reflection. But this does not mean, as Herbert implies, that conceptual knowledge has no value. The two operations of the intellect, the abstractive and reflexive, are necessary because man is a composite of body and soul. He knows both by his corporeal senses and his intellectual soul. Without his senses he could not establish perceptive contact with the external world; and without his spiritual and intellectual soul he would be incapable of direct abstraction.

The universality of each idea is not, as Herbert affirms, revealed by a different faculty, but by another activity of the same faculty, i. e., the intellect. Abstraction reveals the object's ratio or the essence, which is the fundament of the universal. The discernment of the applicability of an idea to many things arises from the reflexive act of the intellect, by reverting to the concept. Thus universal ideas represent not an infinite variety of analogous objects to which must correspond an infinite variety of faculties - as Herbert would have us

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 232.

2. Ibid., p. 232.

believe - but the fruition of sense and intellectual activity. Herbert, however, argues that ideas do not attain reality because they are not directly apprehended. It is his misunderstanding of the nature of ideas that leads him to this conclusion.

An idea is neither a substitute for nor a symbol of reality; it is a unique kind of sign found nowhere in the material world, i.e., a formal sign which signifies and makes known before it is known itself. Herbert does not seem to recognize that the idea or concept is not that which we know, but that by which we know:

The intelligible species is to the intellect what the sensible species is to the sense. But the sensible species is not what is perceived, but that by which the sense perceives. Therefore the intelligible species is not what is actually understood, but that by which the intellect understands.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, if ideas did not attain reality and were merely effigies of realities, the sciences would be concerned not with things outside the mind, but only with ideas in the mind.<sup>2</sup>

In a doctrine such as Herbert advances, with its emphasis upon the direct and absolute conformity between numberless objects and an equal amount of faculties, the question "has perfect conformity been achieved?" often arises, especially in relation to conceptual knowledge. But such a problem and uncertainty do not arise in the Thomistic explanation of knowledge, in which the object known is immediately presented and known.

Since the manner in which a thinker explains the origin of ideas determines the type of system he constructs, an examination of Herbert's Common Notions and Natural Instinct is not out of order at this point.

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 85, a. 2, c. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., I, 76, a. 2, ad. 4.

In accordance with the general tendency of his time, Herbert is introspective. He appeals "to an inner tribunal presided over by 'Reason,' 'Nature,' or 'Truths of first inscription.'"<sup>1</sup> The highest certitude Herbert attributes to Natural Instinct, the faculty which, according to Herbert, immediately apprehends the Common Notions, i.e., the first principles of thought, science, morality, and religion. Thus Herbert maintains that all that is necessary to attain truth is to attend to these infallible touchstones with which nature has endowed all men.

These Common Notions are certainties which spring from the very nature of man. And in so far as they are admitted by all men, Herbert claims they "belong to the common perception, consent, or to the common sense of mankind."<sup>2</sup>

Herbert often writes as if he regarded himself the first to discover the necessity of Common Notions or first principles. But that these first principles are indemonstrable and are the dictates of man's rational nature, Aristotle recognized and explained long before Herbert's time:

Our own doctrine is that not all knowledge is demonstrative: on the contrary, knowledge of the immediate premisses is independent of demonstration. (The necessity of this is obvious; for since we must know the prior premisses from which the demonstration is drawn, and since the regress must end in immediate truths, those truths must be indemonstrable.)<sup>3</sup>

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1. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 123.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 134.

3. ARISTOTLE, Posterior Analytics, trans., G. R. G. Mure, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon, Bk. I, Ch. 3, 72b.

Herbert insists that these Common Notions are independent of experience, and are implanted in us by God. They are, then, according to Herbert, innate. He affirms that only with such an origin could the Common Notions be universally accepted by all men.

If Herbert had been less inclined to discredit the achievements of earlier and ancient philosophers, he would have learned from Aristotle the absurdity of holding that first principles or Common Notions are innate:

Now it is strange if we possess them from birth; for it means that we possess apprehensions more accurate than demonstration and fail to notice them. If on the other hand we acquire them and do not previously possess them, how could we apprehend and learn without a basis of pre-existent knowledge? For that is impossible, as we used to find in the case of demonstration. So it emerges that neither can we possess them from birth, nor can they come to be in us if we are without knowledge of them to the extent of having no such developed state at all. Therefore we must possess a capacity of some sort, but not such as to rank higher in accuracy than those developed states.<sup>1</sup>

Intending, however, to develop no previous system of thought, Herbert cuts himself off from an intellectual tradition which had achieved a greater depth of understanding into the problem of knowledge than any man could ever hope to attain without relying on the heritage of the mind.

Innate ideas, particularly those of Lord Herbert, are attacked by John Locke in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding:

This argument, drawn from universal consent, has this misfortune in it, that if it were true in matter of fact, that there were certain truths wherein all mankind agreed, it would not prove them innate, if there can be any other way

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1. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 19, 99b.

shown how men may come to know that universal agreement, in the things they do consent in, which I presume may be done.<sup>1</sup>

Locke adds that the argument from universal consent designed to prove innate ideas seems rather "a demonstration that there are none such; because there are none to which all mankind give universal consent."<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, in Herbert's De Veritate a passage in the light of which Locke's criticism against Herbert's innate principles might appear unwarranted:

I readily agree that there is nothing in the understanding which has not first existed in the senses, but only on condition that the universal analogy between the external and the internal difference is added.<sup>3</sup>

This passage by itself might suggest that what Herbert considers innate are not ideas, but faculties. And it is in this light that Hutcheson evaluates this passage:

He grants that there is nothing in the mind which was not first in the senses, but he insists that we recognize the universal analogy of external and internal differences - that is, the analogy between the mind and the sense in this respect. It is the admission which is important. That attack of Locke and others on Herbert's 'innate ideas' went considerably wide of the mark. What he thought innate was not ideas, but modes of thought. Man's faculties are innate, and these, when stimulated to action by his inward or external environment, work inevitably in their own way to mould his ideas.<sup>4</sup>

This admission on Herbert's part, however, does not characterize the general tendency of the De Veritate, but represents one of the many

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1. LOCKE, J, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. R. Wilburn, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1948, Bk. I, Ch. 2, Sec. 3. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 2, Sec. 4.

3. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 209.

4. HUTCHESON, op. cit., p. 36-37.

paradoxical fragments in a context in which the "innateness" of the Common Notions predominates. Moreover, the faculties, both sense and intellectual, as Herbert interprets them - i.e., undetermined by sensible and intelligible species - are not capable of being, as Hutcheson asserts, "stimulated." It is Hutcheson's defense of Herbert at this point that goes "considerably wide of the mark."

If the Common Notions or first principles are neither innate, as Herbert more or less holds, nor derived from demonstration, since all knowledge proceeds from indemonstrable principles,<sup>1</sup> what is their origin? Neither the intellect nor what Herbert calls "Natural Instinct" can by itself reach, for example, the principle that the whole is greater than any of its parts. To know this principle presupposes knowing what a whole is and what a part is,- and none of these can be known except by an act of abstraction of its intelligible species from its sensible matter.<sup>2</sup> This and other primary truths "are neither innate in a determinate form, nor developed from higher states of knowledge, but from sense-perception."<sup>3</sup>

The mere psychological scrutinization of one's mind does not yield, as Herbert affirms, the first principles or Common Notions. First principles are immediate judgments originating, as all human knowledge does, in the senses. The process by which first principles are known requires not only sense experience, but abstraction. And that the understanding accepts first principles is due to their objective and immediate evidence.

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1. ARISTOTLE, Posterior Analytics, Bk. I, Ch. 3, 72b.

2. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 19, 100a.

Sense experience, then, provides the matter, and abstraction the necessary condition, for intellectual knowledge. Having seen that Herbert's explanation has neither the required matter nor the necessary condition for a satisfactory account of intellectual knowledge, we turn now to consider the defects of his notions of truth and criteria.

### 3. TRUTH AND CRITERIA

We shall first consider Herbert's notions of truth to determine if they are satisfactory and consistent, and then examine his "ultimate criterion" in order to ascertain if it is a reliable standard by which to test the truth value of judgments.

From the fact that Herbert investigates the nature and criterion of truth it is evident that he does not doubt that truth exists. He announces in his first proposition concerning truth that "truth exists."<sup>1</sup> And in his second proposition he declares that this truth is "as eternal or as ancient as things themselves,"<sup>2</sup> or that, in other words, truth and being are convertible.<sup>3</sup>

In admitting that truth and being are convertible, Herbert is not the original thinker he boasts he is, but is adopting, whether he acknowledges it or not, one of those traditional doctrines from which he assumes he has completely separated himself. But long before Herbert's time, St. Thomas clearly stated the doctrine of the convertibility of

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 83. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., p. 83. Author's italics.

3. Ibid., p. 83.

truth with being:

The true resides in things and in the intellect, as was said before. But the true that is in things is substantially convertible with being, while the true that is in the intellect is convertible with being, as that which manifests is convertible with the manifested; for this belongs to the nature of truth, as has been said already.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is Herbert the innovator in philosophy he claims he is when he affirms, in elaborating his third proposition, that truth encompasses not only being, but, in a certain sense, fictions and falsehoods.<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas had pointed out long before Herbert that fictions enjoy at least a logical being.<sup>3</sup>

Although Herbert accepts these and other fundamental concepts concerning truth which he himself, notwithstanding his claims to the contrary, did not discover, but which need as their indispensable prerequisites "a stable body of doctrine and a continuous intellectual tradition,"<sup>4</sup> he nevertheless reaches conclusions which merely satisfy his own particular needs,<sup>5</sup> and thus does not contribute to the mind's deeper penetration into the mystery of knowledge, being, or, as we shall see later, of God.

Against this attempt of the modern world, in which Herbert may be included, to change the nature of reason, Maritain makes this observation:

I have in mind what may be called the peculiar experience of the modern world, all the attempts it has made to alter the nature of wisdom. The experiment has certainly been carried out. After

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 16, a. 3, ad. 1.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 83.

3. Sum. Theol., I, q. 16, a. 3, ad. 2.

4. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 9.

5. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 125.

Descartes had denied the scientific value of theology and Kant the scientific value of metaphysics, we have witnessed human reason gone astray and a captive to empiricism seeking wisdom more anxiously than before, yet failing to find it, because it has rejected the sense of mystery and has attempted to subject wisdom to the alien law of progress by substitution. It turns now towards the east, now towards the west. Will wisdom come from one quarter or the other? It does not even possess the criteria by which wisdom could be recognized and is blown about by every chance wind of desire.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly Herbert may be included among those thinkers who felt that all problems, religious, moral, and philosophic could be solved merely by substituting their own systems for those they found inconsistent or incongruent with their particular desires, needs, prejudices, and views. We shall now see that Herbert attempted to solve the problem of truth and criteria by advancing his Common Notions, each of which "to a man of his type of culture and at his particular stage of civilisation seemed indisputably 'true' because it satisfied his deepest needs."<sup>2</sup>

The veritas rei or truth of the thing, Herbert defines as the "inherent conformity of the thing itself, or the ground in virtue of which everything remains constant with itself."<sup>3</sup> A cursory view of this definition might lead one to compare Herbert's "truth of the thing" with the traditional "ontological truth," which is the conformity of a thing with the Divine Intellect. But in the light of Herbert's subsequent statements, it will become clear that his veritas rei does not have, as it were, the metaphysical stature of the Scholastic "ontological truth."

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1. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 11.

2. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 125.

3. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 88.

Herbert's statement that all truth is "highly conditional"<sup>1</sup> betrays his lack of insight into the metaphysics of the truth of things. Although he later qualifies this statement by making an exception of the "truth of the thing itself,"<sup>2</sup> he places the truth of all truths not in the Divine Intellect, but in the human intellect, in which he claims "the edifice of truth is completed."<sup>3</sup>

If, however, the human intellect contained truth primarily, it would be the measure of all things. This would mean that truth is given to knowable things by the human intellect, which, of course, is absurd. The human intellect does not create, but merely discovers the truth in things; it does not measure, but is measured by things. The Divine Intellect alone is the measure, and the human intellect is that which is measured.<sup>4</sup> Herbert perverts this order because he fails to see that it is in the "Divine Mind from which reality derives its intelligibility."<sup>5</sup>

Everything is related essentially to the intellect on which it depends and accidentally to the intellect by which it is knowable. Its "truth" resides primarily in the intellect and secondarily in things according as they are related to the intellect as their source."<sup>6</sup> But since the human intellect cannot reach Divine ideas which measure all things, it

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1. Ibid., p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 87.

4. Sum. Theol., I, q. 21, a. 2, resp.

5. COFFEY, P., Ontology, New York, Peter Smith, 1938, p. 161.

6. Sum. Theol., I, q. 16, a. 1, resp.

must reach things before it can be determined by their being into acts of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Being made by God, "who is Intelligence itself, the Exemplary and the Formal Cause of all creation, the world is intelligible - that is, it has been made intelligibly."<sup>2</sup> Without discerning this two-fold relationship of the truth of the thing, Herbert cannot account for the intelligibility on the part of the object or on the part of the subject. The philosophy of St. Thomas, however, accounts for all intelligibility - that of the object because it has been made intelligible by God, and that of the subject because of his active intellect, by means of which he is able to share in the Divine Light by which all things are made intelligible.

In the absence of such a relationship between all things and an infinite mind, the universe would "lack transparency to the mind."<sup>3</sup> And without the dependence of all things upon the mind of God, there would be no eternal truth and consequently no ontological truth or truth of anykind. Concerning the necessity of this relationship of dependence of contingent and created things upon the Divine Mind, Reinhardt writes:

Truth is eternal or absolute only in the eternal mind and in the multiform participating expression of this mind in finite, contingent beings. If, on the other hand, there is no such Supreme Being, comprising both supreme knowledge and supreme truth, then there is no truth in the ontological sense and therefore no truth at all...The reality of things is eternally in conformity with the way in which these things are known by the eternal mind.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., I, q. 16, a. 1. ad. 3.

2. SHEEN, F. J., God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy, New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1925, p. 138. Author's italics.

3. GILSON, E., The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. E. Brough, London, B. Herder Book Co., 1937, p. 264.

4. REINHARDT, K. F., A Realistic Philosophy, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1944. p. 26-27.

We now pass to a consideration of Herbert's veritas apparentiae, which he defines as the conditional conformity of the appearance or the image of the object with its prototype.<sup>1</sup> This definition strongly suggests that Herbert's "truth of appearance" is nothing more than "accident" couched beneath another terminology.

Herbert's discussion of the position of the perceiver in relation to the appearance of a thing resembles that of Thomas Reid. While the former holds that the "point of view of a man lying face downwards is different to that of a man lying on his back; a man lying down has a different point of view to that of a man standing up,"<sup>2</sup> the latter maintains that anyone "acquainted with the rules of perspective knows that the appearance of the figure of the book must vary in every different position."<sup>3</sup>

This similarity between Herbert and Reid is noted not to suggest that Herbert lived far ahead of his times, but to emphasize that all knowledge must have an empirical foundation consisting of certain conditions on the part of object and subject before the object can so affect the faculty of a subject as to result in an apprehension of truth.

Herbert attempts to explain how the object is dematerialized, by claiming that the appearance "being, as it were, cut off from the object, can be retained in a spiritual form even when the object is no longer present."<sup>4</sup> This awkward account of the transition of sense-

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 92.

2. Ibid., p. 98.

3. REID, T., Of the Human Mind, in Works, ed., Sir William Hamilton, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1863, vol. I, Ch. VI, Sec. iii.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 99.

knowledge to conceptual knowledge is inadequate, since only by a process of abstraction, as has been shown, can this transition occur - a process conspicuously absent in Herbert's De Veritate,

While the truth of appearance is, according to Herbert, entirely objective, the truth of concept - which he defines as "the conditional conformity between subjective faculty and the thing as it appears"<sup>1</sup> - is subjective. Here Herbert is confusing "concept" with "perception." His failure to distinguish a concept, which is a simple intellectual apprehension universal in representation, from a percept, which is the particular sensuous representation of an object,- leads to considerable confusion.

That he confuses sensuous perceptions with concepts is evident when he writes that the appearance, after being cut off from its prototype, is brought into conformity with a concept.<sup>2</sup> In this explanation is implicit the absurd notion that the material by its own power can produce a spiritual effect, i.e., the concept. It must be pointed out again, even at the expense of repetition, that the only way in which the intellect can obtain universal concepts from particular sensuous representations is through the power of abstraction as conceived by St. Thomas:

Now nothing is reduced from potentiality to act except by something in act; as the senses are made actual by something which is actually sensible. We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by the abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessity for positing an agent intellect.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 99.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

3. Sum. Theol., I, 79, a. 3. resp.

By treating sense perceptions and faculties as if they were intellectual apprehensions, and by maintaining that the senses operate as the intellect does, Herbert violates his own dictum "that the analogous faculty be applied."<sup>1</sup>

In his discussion of the truths of the intellect,- the Common Notions which are apprehended by Natural Instinct and without which no knowledge would be possible,- Herbert asserts that these primary truths require no outside aid, but that they are not entirely passive:

These truths, indeed, seem to vanish in the absence of objects; yet they cannot be wholly passive and idle, seeing that they are essential to objects and objects to them. Now these truths are the Common Notions.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to understand how Herbert can insist that the Common Notions are derived not from experience, but "from universal wisdom and imprinted on the soul by the dictates of nature itself,"<sup>3</sup> and at the same time affirm that all the conditions of external perception along with the truth of things, appearances, and of concepts are required before the truth of Common Notions is achieved.<sup>4</sup> If the Common Notions are, as Herbert holds, innate, requiring neither sense perception nor reason, then they would be discovered by acts of introspection complemented by the complete blocking of our sense faculties and obliterating everything from the memory.

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 103.

2. Ibid., p. 106.

3. Ibid., p. 106.

4. Ibid., p. 103.

But first principles or Common Notions are not understood independently of sense experience. The intelligence does not know, for example, that the whole is greater than the part unless it knows what the whole is and what the part is. But a man cannot know what the whole and the part are "except through the intelligible species which he has received from the phantasm,"<sup>1</sup> i.e., the intelligible species abstracted from sensible matter.

Herbert affirms that the nature of Natural Instinct by which the Common Notions are apprehended is "to fulfill itself irrationally, that is to say without foresight."<sup>2</sup> With reason understood as the reflective operation of the mind, Herbert sharply contrasts the Common Notions or the teachings of nature as instinctive belief. But neither in its reflective nor in its spontaneous operations is the mind "irrational:"

In other words, however rapid and unreflective my spontaneous thinking may be, it is not entirely different from an exact and scientific weighing of evidence. The two kinds of thought differ rather as the implicit from the explicit, the confused from the distinct, the unreflective from the reflective. The human mind, even at its most irrational, still retains traces of rationality; for any belief, however wild, there is always a reason, however poor and however inadequate.<sup>3</sup>

In maintaining that our supersensible cognitions are the objects of a kind of blind instinct, which is not unlike the "Common Sense" of Thomas Reid, Herbert poses the problem of the relation of this Natural Instinct or common sense to philosophy, i.e., can the common sense, regarded either as Natural Instinct or as an authority, be in itself suf-

1. Sum. Theol., I-II, q. 51, a. 1, resp.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 139.

3. HAWKINS, D. J. B., The Criticism of Experience, New York, Sheed, and Ward, 1945, p. 89.

ficient for philosophy? Maritain points out the reason for this problem and to some of the schools to which the solutions of this problem have given rise:

The wholly spontaneous character of common sense, and its inability to give an account of its convictions, have led certain philosophers to regard it as a special faculty purely instinctive and unrelated to the intellect (the Scottish school, end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century; Reid, Dugdale Stewart, and in Europe, Jouffroy), or as a sentiment distinct from and superior to reason (the intuitive or sentimentalist school; for instance, Rousseau, Jacobi, and in our time Bergson). But in that case it would be necessarily blind, for we possess no other light than that of intellect or reason.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's Natural Instinct, understood as a blind tendency to believe, unable to reject even those judgments which are not self-evident, would represent what Gilson calls a complete despair of the rationality of human knowledge.<sup>2</sup> A faculty of this nature could impart not rational certitude, but only unintelligent knowledge.

Herbert followed the Renaissance tendency to begin philosophy anew by disregarding, or taking no notice of, the contributions to philosophic wisdom which earlier thinkers had made.<sup>3</sup> Contending that neither the authority of intellectual tradition nor external experience yields truths of indisputable certitude, Herbert attempts to discover a new standard and basis of truth. And he believes he has found this ultimate criterion or "infallible touchstone"<sup>4</sup> in those Common Notions which he

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1. MARITAIN, J., An Introduction to Philosophy, trans. E. I. Watkin, New York, Sheed and Ward, p. 135-136.

2. GILSON, E., Realisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1939, p. 21-22.

3. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 17.

4. Ibid., p. 122.

claims are inscribed in the minds of all men and are received by universal consent.

A criterion is a standard by which to judge. And the problem immediately before us is to ascertain whether or not that criterion of truth conceived by Herbert really certifies the truths and realities of objects.

Although Herbert advocates the necessity of appealing to consciousness as to the touchstone of truth, he refers more often and more emphatically to "universal consent" as the ultimate criterion of truth. His Natural Instinct, circling endlessly from one apprehension to another for the affirmation of each preceding apprehension, must find the motive of its certitude outside of itself, i.e., in the universal consent of mankind. It will be pointed out how neither Natural Instinct nor outside authority can be the final test of truth.

Herbert affirms that since no one attaining the use of reason can deny the certitude of first principles or Common Notions, the grounds for their acceptance lie in universal consent.<sup>1</sup> But what compels our assent in regard to all truths is neither subjective evidence nor universal consent, but objective evidence, the shining of truth in its own light.<sup>2</sup> The characteristics of priority, independence, necessity, universality, and certainty which Herbert attributes to the Common Notions cannot arise from universal acceptance. Common Notions or first principles are true "on account of their own evidence."<sup>3</sup>

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1. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 139-141.

2. MARITAIN, An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 136.

3. SHEEN, God and Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 149.

The Common Notions or first principles must be known not only prior to but better than conclusions or consequences are, because all our knowledge proceeds from principles and premisses which are previously and better understood. It is for this reason that our knowledge is the effect of our knowledge of premisses and ultimately of first principles.<sup>1</sup>

Nor does the independence of Common Notions arise from universal consent as Herbert holds, but from the fact that the truth of Common Notions is manifested by itself and depends on no other truths for its evidence. Thus all scientific knowledge depends upon the truth of these basic premisses as upon its "originative source."<sup>2</sup>

First principles or Common Notions are necessary for the "same reasons that first principles are necessary in every order within the whole hierarchy of the visible universe,"<sup>3</sup> And it is because everything is intelligible only in function of being that the most fundamental judgment is one of affirmation, i.e., "being is," and the next most fundamental judgment is one of negation, i.e., "non-being is not." Herbert does not recognize the metaphysics underlying the necessity of first principles because he fails to see that "that which falls under apprehension first is being, the understanding of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends."<sup>4</sup>

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1. ARISTOTLE, Posterior Analytics, trans. G. R. G. Mure, in Basic Works of Aristotle, Bk. I, Ch. 2. 71b.

2. Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 19, 100b.

3. SHEEN, God and Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 147.

4. Sum. Theol., I-II, q. 94, a. 2, resp. Author's italics.

The universality which characterizes first principles is not derived from the extent of the agreement given them, as Herbert affirms, but from their objective applicability which admits of no exceptions.

And finally the certainty which Herbert attributes to the Common Notions rests not on the flimsy grounds that none might deny them, but on the unshakeable grounds of the objective evidence of their truth manifesting itself to the attentive mind.

In relation to self-preservation and conduct, universal consent is one of the criteria of truth, but it cannot be the ultimate criterion in all matters. If we were compelled to appeal to the majority of men for the certification of our knowledge, we would end in scepticism, since what lifetime is of a sufficient duration "to take the testimony of all men on a single question?"<sup>1</sup> Moreover, if the certainty of the individual reason is to be questioned, then universal consent, which is "the collection of individual reasons, is no more trustworthy."<sup>2</sup>

In so far as Herbert emphasizes universal consent as the final motive of certitude, he is not unlike the "traditionalists," the modern protagonist of whom is De Lemennais (1782-1854). Like the traditionalists, Herbert maintains that God impressed these first principles or Common Notions upon the minds of all men, and that the ultimate criterion of truth consists in the authority of mankind "manifested by the general

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1. POLAND, W., S. J., The Truth of Thought, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1916, p. 166.

2. MERCIER, Cardinal, A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy, trans. T. L. Parker and S. A. Perker, 2 vols., London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1938, vol. I, p. 365.

consent of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Certitude thus motivated is based on an act of faith. Herbert's system, therefore, is a form of "fideism," based on the doctrine that "faith" alone is the only means of attaining certitude. An act of faith on which all certain knowledge is to be erected must be either blind, in which event it cannot be a reliable criterion, or it can be justified, in which case it cannot be the final motive of certitude because it then requires that the reason sees such truths anterior to the act of faith as the existence of God and the fact of the revelation. In neither case, then, can an act of faith be the final motive of certitude.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert misses the significance of his fourth proposition concerning truth, i.e., "truth reveals itself."<sup>3</sup> The manifestation of truth of itself is "evidence."<sup>4</sup> If this truth shines out of objects which exist independently of the subject, it cannot proceed from the subject (Natural Instinct), or from a multitude of subjects (universal consent). To discover, therefore, the final motive of certitude, we must turn to the object from which its truth reveals itself. The ultimate criterion of truth then, cannot be any faculty, instinct, extrinsic authority, or act of faith. It must be "objective evidence."

The evidence which is perceived in any act of knowledge is not subjective as Herbert holds, but objective. In every act of judgment the

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1. POLAND, op. cit., p. 166.

2. MERCIER, op. cit., I, p. 364.

3. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 84.

4. GLENN, P. J., Criteriaology, St. Louis, B. Herber Book Co., 1945, p. 128.

subject must return to the object referred to or declared. It is this "existential character of judgment" which Gilson so clearly explains that escapes Herbert entirely:

For, indeed, the noun ens (being) is derived from esse (to be) so that the adequation in which truth consists is achieved by a kind of assimilation of the intellect to the existence (esse) of the thing, through the very operation whereby it accepts it such as it is. Existential judgment expresses that assimilation.<sup>1</sup>

It is objective reality that measures the mind and it is to that that the mind must turn to discover if its perceptions, thoughts, and judgments correspond with it. And it is consequent upon his failure to become fully aware of the metaphysical foundations of knowledge that Herbert's De Veritate is untenable. Scholasticism, on the other hand, is conscious of the metaphysics involved in a realistic epistemology when it, as Maritain observes:

...recognizes that reason is our sole natural means of attaining truth, but only when formed and disciplined, in the first place and pre-eminently by reality itself (for our mind is not the measure of things, but things measure the mind), secondly by teachers (for science is a collective, not an individual, achievement, and can be built up only by a continuous living tradition), and finally by God, if He should please to instruct mankind and bestow upon philosophers the negative rule of faith and theology.<sup>2</sup>

The first two conditions mentioned by Maritain, Herbert does not fulfill: according to Herbert, the reason is impotent as an instrument of rational knowledge, the intellect is not determined by reality, nor is its certitude motivated by objective evidence. And in his desire to revolutionize philosophical thought, he ignores the philosophical achieve-

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1. GILSON, E., Being and Some Philosophers, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Garden City Press Co-Operative, 1949, p.188

2. MARITAIN, An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 184.

ments which contribute to a continuous living tradition. And whether or not Herbert satisfies the third condition of which Maritain speaks will be ascertained in the subsequent review of his religious notions.

#### 4. RELIGIOUS NOTIONS

In opposition to the mechanistic view of Hobbes, Herbert advanced both his philosophic and religious notions from the conviction that "it was through the religious world-view, not the mechanical, that Truth must be sought."<sup>1</sup> And in accordance with the Zeitgeist, the spirit of his time, Herbert attempted to formulate his religious notions as he had his philosophical notions, i.e., independently of tradition. The ultimate criterion of his religious notions remained the same - universal consent.

By urging the wandering layman in his search for the most certain religious truths to question all traditional truths, even those found in the revelations,<sup>2</sup> Herbert reflects that spiritual decline of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century during which not only metaphysical truths, but spiritual realities were rejected, until Sacred Scriptures were questioned and even denied. Herbert, then, is guilty of what Sheen calls "Lyricism:"

Lyricism always accompanies this Spirit of the Age. Lyricism is the interpretation of philosophy, politics, religion, literature, art, and God, in terms of the particular Spirit of the Age enjoying popularity at the moment. The progress from one Spirit of the Age to another is not vital like the growth of cell from cell, but mechanical like the swing of a pendulum. The Thought of the Spirit of the Age grows by contradictions, rather than by

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1. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 119.

2. HERBERT, De Religione Laici, p. 99.

intussusception and assimilation.<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's disregard and neglect of all authoritative teaching indicate his belief that wisdom progresses by the mere changing of ideals, rather than by that continuous, ever-deepening intellectual probing in which are unraveled more mysteries of being, and of which Maritain writes as follows:

Thus we can read and reread the same book, the Bible for example, and every time discover something new and more profound. Obviously under the conditions of human life, progress of this kind requires intellectual tradition, the firm continuity of a system based on principles which do not change.<sup>2</sup>

Being founded on the Word of God, theology is not subject to the changes, additions, and revisions which characterize the physical sciences.<sup>3</sup> Therefore theology enjoys not only a greater stability than that which underlies philosophy, but a stability of a higher order:

It is true that even the stability of theology is not absolute, for its continuity is not immutability but progress by penetration and admits therefore, of many discoveries, renewals, and unexpected explanations. But even so theology is far more strictly and essentially traditional than philosophy. Its continuity is of another order and imitates more closely the immutability of uncreated Wisdom.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert asserts that among the Common Notions which men know instinctively is the notion that "God exists."<sup>5</sup> And he regards universal

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1. SHEEN, F. J., Philosophy of Religion, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948, p. 3.

2. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 7.

3. Ibid., p. 10.

4. Ibid., p. 10-11.

5. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 291.

agreement as the criterion for the concept of the existence of God.<sup>1</sup> Universal agreement, as has been shown, cannot be the final motive of certitude, since it is impossible for any man to consult the opinions of all men for the certification of his own notion of God.

The concept of God does rise almost spontaneously in us, but not until we have attained the use of reason. And although God's existence is self-evident of itself, it is not self-evident to us, "since we cannot mentally conceive God's essence."<sup>2</sup> Because we cannot know God's essence a priori or possess, as Herbert believes, an immediate and intuitive knowledge of God, our knowledge of God is constructed a posteriori, "through the likenesses of Him that are found in the effects which He works."<sup>3</sup> Therefore the manner in which we establish the existence of God is essentially the same kind of thinking used in all our reasoning:

Although God transcends sense and the objects of sense, nevertheless sensible effects are the basis of our demonstrations of the existence of God. Thus the origin of our own knowledge is in sense, even of things that transcend sense.<sup>4</sup>

By his inordinate confidence in Natural Instinct and in the Common Notions, Herbert is led to believe that there is no need for the rational demonstration of God's existence and to affirm that our knowledge of God is intuitive rather than gleaned from the effects upon which God's per-

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1. Ibid., p. 291.

2. AQUINAS, T., Summa Contra Gentiles, trans. J. Rickaby, S. J., Westminster, Maryland, The Carroll Press, 1950, Bk. I, Ch. XI.

3. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. XI.

4. Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. XII. See also St. Thomas' treatment of the existence of God in the Summa Theologica, question 2, articles 1 through 3.

fection is analogically manifested. But by such intuitive knowledge of God as Herbert attributes to the human mind, man would be "constituted thereby in a state of heavenly happiness, which is obviously not the case with human beings here on earth."<sup>1</sup>

But besides the knowledge of God's existence derived by the natural light of reason and inferred from the sensible world of created and contingent beings, there is another kind of knowledge, which is derived from the authoritative revelations made to man by God, and which consists of truths beyond the reach of the natural and unaided faculties of knowing. Nevertheless, the thought which motivates Herbert's De Veritate and De Religione Laici is that Natural Instinct and the Common Notions are self-sufficient and can stand permanently and alone.

Herbert so exalts his Common Notions as to make them the standard by which all books, religions, and even the truths of Sacred Scriptures are judged.<sup>2</sup> The truths of Sacred Scriptures, however, proceed from principles revealed by God and, therefore, are not reducible to the principles of those sciences or disciplines known by the natural light of the human reason.<sup>3</sup> Thus Lord Herbert's exaggerated estimation of the Common Notions may be summarily dismissed by pointing out that one truth of the Sacred Scriptures is infinitely more valid, immutable, and more precious than all of Herbert's Common Notions together, because, as

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1. GLENN, P. J., Theodicy, St. Louis Missouri, B. Herder Book Co., 1939, p. 46.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 291.

3. Sun. Theol., I, q. 6, a. 6, ad. 1.

St. Thomas declares, "although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest."<sup>1</sup>

Herbert maintains that the faculties with which nature has endowed all men, unguided by revelation and unexalted by grace, can apprehend with equal spontaneity the flickering spark of a fire-fly and the infinite light of God in the beatific vision. He does not recognize or admit the immensity which separates created things from the divine essence.

Man's knowledge begins with the impressment of cognitional images upon his faculties. But the power to receive a form which transcends the categories of sense experience issues not from the natural faculties of man, but from God, a notion which St. Thomas explains:

It is impossible for that which is the proper form of one thing to become the form of another thing, unless that latter thing comes to partake of some likeness to the former. But the divine essence is the proper intelligible form of the divine intelligence, and is proportionate to it: for in God these three are one, that which it understands, that whereby it understands, and that which is understood. It is impossible therefore for the very essence of God to become an intelligible form to any created intellect otherwise than by the said intellect coming to be a partaker in some likeness of God.<sup>2</sup>

Nor can the nature of a lower order of beings attain the property of a higher nature:

The property of a higher nature cannot be attained by a lower nature except by the action of that higher nature to which it properly belongs. But to see God by the divine essence is the property of the divine nature: for it is proper to every agent to act by its own proper form. Therefore no subsistent intel-

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1. Sum. Theol., I, q. 1, a. 8, ad. 2.

2. C. G. Bk. III, Ch. LIII. Author's italics.

ligence can see God by the divine essence except through the action of God bringing it about.<sup>1</sup>

The nature of man, then, in order to know and attain God, must be not merely intensified, but transfigured and perfected. And this can be done only by He Who created man - God.<sup>2</sup> Thus that distance between God and man which is too great for man to cross, is not too great for God to span if He so wills.

That there are many truths which man's unaided faculties cannot attain escapes Lord Herbert of Cherbury. His insistence that the simple articles of natural religion,- consisting of his five common religious notions,- constitute all that is necessary for the knowledge of all truths and for salvation, renders his De Religione Laici unable to provide the means whereby man's nature can receive the highest perfection of which it is capable. His resolution to cut himself from the past prevents him from availing himself of those authoritative and traditional truths which could have imparted greater validity to his religious notions.

Despite his proposal to discover a common denominator for both philosophy and religion, and to advance a system of thought independently of the ideas of earlier thinkers, Herbert often smuggles into his "original" works traditional truths. In discussing his religious notions, Herbert displays an insight into "natural law" and into the obligations imposed by God upon men through their natures.<sup>3</sup> It is very probable that Herbert became familiar with certain traditional notions concerning

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1. Ibid., Bk. III, Ch. LII.

2. GILSON, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 262.

3. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 297.

the natural law through his intimacy with Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), the Dutch philosopher and international lawyer who had commended the De Veritate more highly than Herbert's "modesty" saw fit to repeat.<sup>1</sup>

Hugo Grotius, according to Rommen, "marked the transition from the metaphysical to the rationalist natural law."<sup>2</sup> But while Grotius' concept of natural law was too strongly influenced by tradition to be deistical,<sup>3</sup> Herbert's concept, motivated by the tendency of English thought to break with all traditional and authoritative teaching, was not influenced by traditional thought. Grotius, therefore, was not willing to estrange the natural from the supernatural, while Herbert was avid to do so by disregarding the supernatural entirely. And it is this difference between Grotius and Herbert which could easily have determined the former along traditional lines and the latter into "deism."

Herbert's historical sense is faulty when he argues that the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Hindus conceived "sin" as the Christians.<sup>4</sup> The Christian concept of natural law, however, has - as Gilson points out - "a character quite other than it could possibly have in any Greek ethic."<sup>5</sup> For the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, and the Greeks, sin was not the rebellion against God that it was for Christian theologians

1. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 133.

2. ROMMEN, H. A., The Natural Law, trans. T. R. Hanley, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1948, p. 70.

3. Ibid., p. 71.

4. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 299.

5. GILSON, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 339.

and philosophers, whose concept of sin became intimately connected with the idea of creation - an idea absent in the systems of the ancient thinkers.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is the validity of the notion of reward and punishment after this life derived, as Herbert affirms, from general agreement,<sup>2</sup> but from the dependence of all creatures on God and from the participation of the natural law in the divine law. This sanction of reward and punishment Gilson explains:

Both good and bad are subject to the divine law; the former inasmuch as they fulfil it, the latter, who refuse to fulfil it, inasmuch as they must submit to it. On the purely natural and philosophic plane the upshot of the moral life is merely this life's happiness, gained or lost according as to whether human acts are in accordance or otherwise with nature and reason. Now, however, it is the divine will and reason which, ensuring the operation of the natural law, determine the fate of human beings to which that law applies.<sup>3</sup>

It is because of his departure from the traditional notion of the natural law that Herbert veers into "what came later to be commonly known as 'natural religion.'"<sup>4</sup>

Herbert believed that by a kind of "fideism" he could repudiate Scholasticism and at the same time secure the religious truths which were threatened by the materialism and sensationalism which characterized seventeenth century England. We have seen, however, the untenability of a

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1. Ibid., p. 339.

2. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 299.

3. GILSON, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 339.

4. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 130.

refuge into such a position as Herbert takes.

Herbert reacted primarily against the increasing atheism of his time. He thought he had found a sanctuary for the eternal verities in his non-intellectual approach to God. But the foundation of our belief in God cannot be non-intellectual. To believe in God, "we must have a reason for that belief. Before we can live as if God existed, we must have a reason for this hypothesis of His existence."<sup>1</sup> And only if the foundation of our belief in God is intellectual is it, as Sheen observes:

...immediately removed from the vicissitudes of the affective life; God then becomes something more than a "variant." He becomes a constant. Hence it is that God as well as the Crede of an Intellectualist are true independently of his affective states. God will have the same objective validity for us whether we are contemplating a sunset or suffering in anguish.<sup>2</sup>

So far we have exhibited Herbert's philosophical and religious notions and indicated the difficulties implicit in them. It now remains for us to evaluate Herbert's position in the history of philosophy.

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1. SHEEN, God and Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 209.

2. Ibid., p. 197.

CHAPTER X

EVALUATION OF HERBERT'S HISTORICAL POSITION

## CHAPTER X

### EVALUATION OF HERBERT'S HISTORICAL POSITION

We have examined the doctrines which Lord Herbert expounded in his principal works - De Veritate and De Religione Laici. We have also established that his doctrines were not always in accord with principles which have stood the test of severe or disciplined reflection.

We shall now compare Herbert's doctrines with the ideas of other thinkers - those with whom he had little in common, i.e., the British Empiricists, as well as those thinkers with whom he may be said to have something in common, i.e., Descartes, the Cambridge Platonists, and the Deists. Only after relating Herbert's doctrines to those of earlier, contemporary, and subsequent thinkers shall we be able to properly evaluate his position in the history of thought.

In this chapter, then, we shall consider Herbert in relation to (1) his sources, (2) the British Empiricists, (3) Descartes, (4) the Cambridge Platonists, and (5) the Deists.

#### 1. HERBERT'S SOURCES

Herbert had determined not to continue any philosophical tradition. Nor did he intend to base his religious doctrines upon either historical revelation or any human institution. It is inevitable that a thinker so avid to revolutionize thought as Herbert should tend to avoid mentioning the names of the very philosophers by whom he has been influenced.

Ironically enough, however, it is in those instances when a revolutionary thinker succeeds in estranging himself from the heritage of the mind or what Maritain calls "a stable body of doctrines and a continuous

intellectual tradition,"<sup>1</sup> that he bases his doctrines, "adapted to the vision of one epoch and one epoch alone,"<sup>2</sup> on faulty foundations.

Every thinker is indebted to previous thinkers even if he fails or refuses to acknowledge his debt. It is not denied that one philosopher may be more "original" in the sense that he depends less on the doctrines of earlier and contemporary thinkers than another; but that any philosopher can stand totally void of any ties with the past is historically impossible.

Since no thinker can construct a system of thought in a vacuum, Herbert must have some ties with antecedent thinkers. He derived his ideas of the "Common Notions" and "Natural Instinct" from the Stoics, who taught that in Nature must be sought the Supreme Good and the standard by which all things are to be judged.<sup>3</sup> That the Common Notions are imprinted on the mind and represent the primary truths of religion, morality, philosophy, and science is another tenet of the Stoic philosopher, Cicero.<sup>4</sup> Thus Herbert attacks the tradition of the Scholastics but nevertheless brings his "doctrines in touch with the older tradition of Stoicism."<sup>5</sup>

We have seen that Herbert's method of inquiry resembles the categorical method of Aristotle. Herbert's method or the Zetetica might also have been influenced by the "great art" of Ramon Lull (Raymond Lully, 1235-

1. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. CICERO, M. T., Academics, trans., J. S. Reid, London, MacMillan and Co., 1880, I, 5, 19.

4. Ibid., XI, 2, 42.

5. CARRÉ, Phases of Thought in England, p. 222.

1315). Lully's "great art" consisted in arranging a series of nine questions on seven moveable disks, the manipulation of which would reveal the correct answer to any question.<sup>1</sup>

Although Herbert never indicates the genesis of his ideas in his religious and philosophical writings, he reveals in his Autobiography that with Casaubon,<sup>2</sup> Gretius,<sup>3</sup> and the theological writer Tielenus,<sup>4</sup> he had enjoyed conversations from which he had greatly benefitted.

The definition that truth is a correspondence of thought with object for which Herbert claims full credit is rooted in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. And some of Herbert's notions concerning free will and the natural law indicate his familiarity with Scholastic concepts.

Herbert had urged the sane and unprejudiced readers to whom he had dedicated his De Veritate to leave in the cloakroom all their "trinkets" - traditional teachings - before entering the shrine of truth.<sup>5</sup> Yet he himself selected and smuggled ideas from a multitude of sources, ending up with "an eclectic string of incompatible doctrines."<sup>6</sup> Thus the outcome of his proposal to revolutionize thought indicated "how difficult it was to detach the mind from its heritage."<sup>7</sup>

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1. LULL, R., Obras de Ramon Lull, en dos tomos, Palma De Mallorca, 1903.

2. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 132-133.

4. Ibid., p. 133.

5. HERBERT, De Veritate, "Preface."

6. CARRÉ, Phases of Thought in England, p. 221.

7. Ibid., p. 222.

Herbert's eclecticism reflects the seventeenth century thinkers' confusion and feeling that the traditional teachings were unequal to the current intellectual demands. Carré discerns the significance of Herbert's medley of ideas:

But in its belief in universal analogies, its scornful rejection of the logic of the schools in combination with an uncritical reliance upon the old method of formal definitions and distinctions, in its Protestant assertion of independence and democratic rationality, and in its Stoic theories of truth, De Veritate is symptomatic of much of the confusion and desperation at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Omniverous readers, such as Herbert, struggled in a sea of contending authorities; the metaphysics of St. Thomas perceived through the commentaries of Suarez, mingled with the radical attacks on the methods of the schools by Telesio and Patrizzi, Stoic views combined with Neo-Platonism and the occult science of Paracelsus and the alchemists.<sup>1</sup>

Having rejected the sound intellectual tradition of the Scholastics but still aspiring to discover a new basis of knowledge and certainty with which to combat the irreligious scepticism and growing materialism of his time, Herbert reached a position of "irrational fideism."<sup>2</sup>

Herbert is a transitional thinker, partly new and partly old. With his penchant for duelling and knight-errantry, he represents the declining tradition of chivalric qualities which, however, are fused "with the new rationalism, Quixotry and Deism."<sup>3</sup> And this fusion of old and new tendencies is manifested in Herbert's writings, the interest of which is due to their "transitional character in the history of thought."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 223.

2. BUSH, D., English Literature in the Early Seventeenth Century, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1945, p. 323.

3. WILLEY, B. "Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Spiritual Quixote of the Seventeenth Century," in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, vol. xxvii, 1942, p. 22.

4. SORLEY, W. R., A History of English Philosophy, Cambridge, University Press, 1920. p. 40.

## 2. THE BRITISH EMPIRICISTS

It is necessary to our understanding of Herbert's position in the history of English philosophy to consider at least the salient features of that current of thought against which Lord Herbert had reacted - British Empiricism.

Of all of his writings, it is only in his Autobiography that Herbert refers to his contemporary, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), and then only briefly in an admission that he had patterned his Henry VIII after Bacon's Henry VII.<sup>1</sup>

In 1625 Bacon had dedicated his translation of the Psalms to George Herbert. It is very likely that he knew the poet's brother and had met him in the English Court with which both he and Lord Herbert were connected at the same time.<sup>2</sup>

Just as Herbert, Bacon typifies the seventeenth century thinker when he proposes to break with all authoritative teaching and to reconstruct knowledge on a new basis.<sup>3</sup> Except, however, for their desire for independence, their philosophies differ considerably.

For Bacon there is no "natural" or "given" knowledge as there is for Herbert. According to Bacon, truth is not drawn from the mind, which cannot be trusted, but which must always be directed by observation and ex-

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1. HERBERT, Autobiography, p. 143.

2. LEE, op. cit., xxxii.

3. BACON, F., Novum Organum: Aphorisms Concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man, in The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill, ed., E. A. Burt, New York, Random House, Inc., 1939, I, xxi.

periment.<sup>1</sup> Thus while Bacon renounces all a priori reasoning and claims that only the inductive method yields truth, Herbert - regarding induction and experiment futile in his investigation into the nature of truth and into the mental processes by which knowledge is acquired - depends largely on deductive arguments.

Bacon attributes the tendency of the human mind to fall into error to what he calls "idols," images or prejudices which mislead the mind: idols of the tribe, the cave, market-place, and theater.<sup>2</sup> How are we to banish these idols from our minds? Bacon answers that we must go directly to nature and discover the laws according to which it operates. And "induction" is the "new method" by means of which Bacon claims we can discover the laws or "forms" of nature, multiply our inventions, and thereby achieve greater dominion over nature.<sup>3</sup>

But Bacon's "new method" was analyzed nearly twenty centuries earlier by the very philosopher whom Bacon regards as the most pernicious of idols.<sup>4</sup> Since Aristotle had given an analysis of induction<sup>5</sup> long before Bacon, the latter cannot be called the "Apostle of experimental philosophy."<sup>6</sup> In fact, Bacon had rejected the Copernican theory, ridiculed the telescope,

1. Ibid., I, xxi.

2. Ibid., I, xxxviii-xliv.

3. Ibid., II, iv.

4. Ibid., I, lxiii.

5. ARISTOTLE, Prior Analytics, Bk. II, ch. 23.

6. DOHERTY, J. "Flaws in the Philosophy of Bacon," in Essays on Religion and Literature, London, Henry S. King and Co., 1874, p. 285.

and affirmed that mathematics was of no special aid to astronomy.<sup>1</sup>

Induction, then, is not the Novum Organum that Bacon would have us believe it is. Induction is a natural process. And man would not have survived unless he employed from the earliest dawn of his existence some form of induction in securing his food, finding shelter, protecting himself from his enemies, and profiting by his mistakes.

Bacon maintains that man can understand only what he observes and experiences, and that beyond his observations and experiences man is helplessly ignorant and impotent.<sup>2</sup> Thought, then, for Bacon consists not of generic ideas, but of sense perceptions. He approaches reality not to generalize, but to reduce it to material constituents. And it is from Bacon's distrust of conceptions, from his aversion for metaphysics, and from his supreme regard for facts that the empirical current in English philosophy received its impulse.<sup>3</sup>

Bacon not only derived knowledge from, but limited it to, sensuous elements - facts, observations, and experiments. Herbert, on the other hand, stressed the non-sensuous elements of knowledge and tended to make sensations derive from certain a priori elements in the mind, i.e., the Common Notions. Thus Bacon may be said to have given English philosophy its empirical current, Herbert may be said to have given it an impulse which was to develop into a rationalistic current.

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1. Ibid., p. 285-286.

2. BACON, op. cit., I, 1.

3. FISCHER, K., Bacon of Verulam, trans. John Oxenford, London, Longman's and Roberts, 1857, p. 414.

The most significant characteristics of Bacon consist of his anti-rationalism, his distrust of abstraction, and his undue elevation of sensible realities and empirical truths.<sup>1</sup> It was this undue attachment to the observable that led to the tendency to mistake the physico-mathematical science for a philosophy of nature - a mistake which constituted the disastrous misunderstanding of modern philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

In the hands of subsequent empiricists, the Baconian method became an "idol of the theater" more dogmatic than any system of thought which Bacon had attacked.<sup>3</sup> And the empiricism to which Bacon had given an impulse was swelled by the doctrines of Thomas Hobbes.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Lord Herbert were contemporaries, but they had nothing in common except a desire to supplant the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition with their own doctrines. But while Hobbes believed it was the mechanical view of the universe that would yield truth, Herbert was convinced that only in a religious world-view could truth be found.<sup>4</sup>

Hobbes finds the starting-point of knowledge in motion. For him sensation is nothing more than the pressure exerted by external bodies on the sense-organs.<sup>5</sup> The motion affecting the sense-organs is not different from motion in general. Just as physical motion tends to dwindle, so

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1. BACON, Nov. Org., I, li.

2. MARITAIN, Philosophy of Nature, p. 41.

3. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 39.

4. Ibid., p. 119.

5. HOBBS, T., Leviathan, with essay by W. G. Pogson Smith, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, IV, ch. clvi.

perceptual motion tends to fade. And this fading or "decaying sense" is, according to Hobbes, memory and imagination.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing exists except that which is material or corporeal asserts Hobbes.<sup>2</sup> And because our senses perceive only the particular and the material, Hobbes concludes that we can affirm neither the universal nor the spiritual.<sup>3</sup>

Hobbes not only developed the sensualism of Bacon, but applied it to knowledge, religion, morality, and politics. An undisguised materialist Hobbes believed that religion was born of fear, that it was ineffective, and that the Church should be constituted by police authority.<sup>4</sup>

It was, indeed, inevitable that the irreligious and mechanistic view of Thomas Hobbes would be challenged. Outraged by Hobbes' materialism, the rational theologians of the seventeenth century defined their position "largely in conscious opposition to Hobbisim."<sup>5</sup> And it is this religious rationalizing to which Herbert gave an impulse and which was to be carried on by the Cambridge Platonists and the Deists.<sup>6</sup>

But before tracing the development of this rationalistic current in British philosophy, we shall glance at the empiricist John Locke, whose Essay cannot be - according to Ueberweg - understood "without studying

1. Ibid., I, ch. ii.

2. Ibid., IV, ch. clvi.

3. Ibid., I, ch. iv.

4. Ibid., I, ch. v.

5. WILLEY, The Seventeenth Century Background, p. 119.

6. UEBERWEG, History of Philosophy, II, p. 355.

Lord Herbert's De Veritate."<sup>1</sup>

John Locke (1632-1704) followed the Baconian tradition. The condition which Bacon had stipulated for his philosophy - purging the mind of all its notions - becomes the central thesis of Locke's Essay. And it is in his criticism of innate ideas that he refers to Lord Herbert:

When I have writ this, being informed, that my Lord Herbert had, in his book De Veritate, assigned these innate principles I presently consulted him, hoping to find, in the man of so great parts, something that might satisfy me in this point, and put an end to my enquiry.<sup>2</sup>

Consulting the 1656 edition of Herbert's De Veritate, Locke finds Herbert's doctrines of Common Notions and the six marks by which they are distinguished, i.e., priority, independence, universality, necessity, certainty, and self-evidence. Locke notes that Herbert had affirmed that God had implanted these notions in the minds of all men. Then Locke enumerates the five common religious notions which Herbert had maintained were innate and were grounded in the universal consent of mankind.<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that Locke does not deny the certainty of Herbert's Common Notions:

Though I allow these to be clear truths, and such as, if rightly explained, a rational creature can hardly avoid giving his assent to; yet I think he is far from proving them innate notions...<sup>4</sup>

What Locke denies is that the certainty of these Common Notions is due to the universal consent given them:

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1. Ibid., p. 354.

2. LOCKE, J., Essay Concerning Human Understanding, in Works of John Locke, 9 vols., vol. I: Bk. I, ch.iii,sect. 15.

3. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. iii, sects. 25-26.

4. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. iii, sect. 15.

For otherwise it will be hard to understand, how there be some principles, which all men do acknowledge and agree in; and yet there are none of these principles which are not by depraved custom, and ill education, blotted out of the minds of many men; which is to say, that all men admit, but yet many men do deny, and dissent from them.<sup>1</sup>

Locke disproves the innateness of the Common Notions by pointing out that "children, idiots, and a large part of mankind"<sup>2</sup> do not know them. Herbert, however, has made it clear that one of the conditions of perception on the part of the subject is that the faculties be normal and free from impairment. It is only at this point that Locke's criticism of Herbert goes wide of the mark. Nevertheless Herbert stresses the innateness not of faculties, but of ideas, which are derived not from experience, but "from universal wisdom imprinted on the soul by the dictates of nature itself."<sup>3</sup>

Locke places our knowledge of objects through sensation in the lowest of his three degrees of certainty. Intuition, which is the perception of self-evident truths, has, according to Locke, the highest degree of certitude, while demonstration, which is the perception of the connection between our ideas, is next to intuition in rank of certainty.<sup>4</sup> Thus Fullerton's estimate of Locke is accurate when he writes that "Locke is not a rationalist of malice prepense. He tries to be an empiricist."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. iii, sect. 20.

2. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. ii, sect. 27.

3. HERBERT, De Veritate, p. 106.

4. LOCKE, op. cit., Bk. IV, ch. ii, sect. 14.

5. FULLERTON, G. S., An Introduction to Philosophy, New York, MacMillan Co., 1915, p. 210.

It is not a far cry from Herbert's "Natural Instinct" to Locke's "intuition," by which self-evident truths are apprehended. This intuitive knowledge, according to Herbert and Locke, cannot be proved or disproved, but upon it depends the certainty of all our knowledge.

Often the mind cannot perceive the agreement or disagreement between ideas immediately and must compare these ideas with other ideas. Knowledge so derived is "demonstrative knowledge."<sup>1</sup> This "demonstrative knowledge" of Locke does not differ essentially from Herbert's "discursive thought." Locke's "demonstration" and Herbert's "reason" have the same function, i. e., the movement of thought from given premises to conclusions. And just as Herbert's discursive thought must always be guided by the Common Notions and Natural Instinct, Locke's demonstrative knowledge cannot proceed without the aid of intuition.

Exhibiting the doctrines of Locke would take us too far afield. We can only point out that Locke sometimes occupies the position of a materialist, when he recognizes only the knowledge of matter, and at other times the position of an idealist, when he admits the certified knowledge of the mind. Locke saw that the problem was to avoid drawing general conclusions from every fact on the one hand, and to avoid regarding facts without referring them to the understanding on the other hand.<sup>2</sup> The ambiguity of his position is indicated by the different paths which subsequent thinkers who accepted Locke's Essay as the groundwork of their own speculations were to follow.

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1. LOCKE, op. cit., Bk. IV, ch. ii, sect. 5.

2. GILSON, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, p. 165-168.

To trace the empirical current of British philosophy to its conclusion, it is necessary to turn to Berkeley who draws out the logical consequences of Locke's principle that we have immediate knowledge only of our ideas.

The historical position of George Berkeley (1685-1753) lies between Locke and Hume as the link in the series that marks the transition from empiricism to idealism. But the significance of Berkeley in the history of thought is not as an idealist, but as an empiricist carrying the tradition of Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke. As Locke and Hobbes were consistent Baconian empiricists, Berkeley was "the consistent Locke."<sup>1</sup>

Berkeley indicates one of the points of departure which Locke's epistemological metaphysics offered. He discovered that Locke allowed the hypothesis that matter can think. If this were so, how, thought Berkeley, could the immateriality of the thinking principle be affirmed? He felt he had solved the problem by demolishing the conception of corporeal substance.

Berkeley proposes to discover those philosophic principles from which has arisen the notion that our inability to attain truth is due to "the natural dullness and limitation of our faculties."<sup>2</sup> He then proceeds to attack the notion of general and abstract ideas which he considers the source of many false principles.

He urges the reader to examine his own thought to be convinced of

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1. FISCHER, op. cit., p. 454.

2. BERKELEY, G. A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, ed. Thomas J. McCormack, Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1913, p. 3.

the impossibility of framing such a general idea of a triangle as Locke describes - one which "must be neither oblique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once."<sup>1</sup> A nominalist, Berkeley affirms that language is responsible for the production of general and abstract ideas, which are merely "a great number of particular ideas."<sup>2</sup>

Berkeley proceeds to draw the conclusion of Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Locke had argued that secondary qualities - color, sound, taste, odor, etc. - bear no likeness to objects outside our minds, and are merely ideas in ourselves.<sup>3</sup> The primary qualities of bulk, figure, number, motion, etc., Locke insisted existed in objects outside of ourselves, in that unknown reality, i.e., material substance.<sup>4</sup> But Berkeley points out that if there is no reason for affirming realities corresponding to our ideas of color, sound, taste, etc. neither is there any reason for affirming that objective realities correspond to our ideas of the primary qualities, i.e., extension, figure, number, and motion.<sup>5</sup> By deducting all perceptible qualities from sensible things, we reach not Locke's material substance, but nothing. Since it is impossible to separate the being of a sensible thing from its being perceived, Berkeley concludes that there is no "other Substance than

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1. LOCKE, op. cit., Bk. IV, ch. vii, sect. 9.

2. BERKELEY, op. cit., "Introd." p. 18-24.

3. LOCKE, op. cit., Bk. II, ch. viii, sect. 10.

4. Ibid., Bk. II, ch. xxiii, sect. 12.

5. BERKELEY, op. cit., I, 9.

Spirit, or that which perceives."<sup>1</sup> Berkeley, then, thought that by clearing the world of matter he had made room for the spirit. In reality, however, he paved the way for scepticism.

Berkeley then goes on to draw the conclusion of Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Locke had argued that the ideas we have of secondary qualities - colors, sounds, tastes, and odors - bear no likeness to objects outside the mind. Berkeley holds that the primary qualities - extension, figure, motion, etc. - which Locke believed resembled realities, are also ideas in the mind. Therefore, according to Berkeley, primary as well as secondary qualities exist only in our perception.<sup>2</sup>

Berkeley, however, is not to be called an "idealist" in the sense that Kant and Hegel are considered idealists. But "Berkeleyan idealism is the Baconian and Lockean sensualism carried to its logical conclusion."<sup>3</sup>

Taking his cue from Berkeley, David Hume (1711-1776) insists that we cannot, on a purely empirical standpoint, allow our conceptions of spiritual as well as material substance to possess objective validity. And just as Berkeley had abolished the material world, Hume abolishes the spiritual world.

Hume maintains that our ideas are merely less lively copies of our impressions and that universal ideas are nothing more than particular ideas to which common terms are given.<sup>4</sup> But the core of Hume's philoso-

1. Ibid., I, 7. Author's italics.

2. Ibid., I, 9.

3. FISCHER, op. cit., p. 458.

4. HUME, D., An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Chicago, Henry Regner Co., 1949, II, XII.

phy is his criticism of the principle of causality. He argues that the notion of causality is not attained by a priori reasoning, because the effect, being distinct from the cause, is not contained in the cause.<sup>1</sup> Nor do we know the connection between the cause and effect by reasoning a posteriori, because we can perceive no super-sensuous relationship between cause and effect.<sup>2</sup>

If the idea of causality on which is based all the knowledge we derive from experience is neither a priori nor a posteriori, how is it to be accounted for? Hume attributes our knowledge of causality to custom or habit.<sup>3</sup> And he adds that since we cannot know or demonstrate the connection between two facts, we must believe in this connection or allow that our "belief is entirely without foundation."<sup>4</sup> This statement is, indeed, a perfect expression of scepticism.<sup>5</sup>

We have seen the empirical stream of thought which rushed tumultuously through English philosophy during the seventeenth century run dry before the end of the following century. Empiricism, then, ended in the despair of reaching truth.

Herbert's affinity was not with the empiricists, who tried to explain knowledge in strictly sensuous terms, but rather with those thinker who affirmed that all our knowledge is brought forth from within the mind, i.e., Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists.

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1. Ibid., IV, I,

2. Ibid., VII, I.

3. Ibid., V, I.

4. Ibid., V, I.

5. FISCHER, op. cit., p. 478.

## 3. DESCARTES

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was familiar with Lord Herbert's De Veritate. In a letter to Mersenne, from whom he had received a copy of Herbert's De Veritate, he wrote that the work contained many excellent passages but that it held a position different from his own.<sup>1</sup> Descartes points out at the outset that "truth," into which the De Veritate inquired, has always been so clear to him as to require no examination. And he adds that unless we know truth naturally we could not attain any knowledge of it:

As to the book in general, it holds a position very different from the one I have followed. It examines what truth is; and as for myself, I have never doubted what it is, finding that it is a notion so transcendently clear that it is impossible not to know it: indeed, we have as many means of examining a balance as we have of using it, but we would not have any knowledge of truth if we did not know it naturally. Because, what reason would we have to believe that something is true if we could not know naturally what truth is?<sup>2</sup>

It is with Herbert's criterion of truth - universal consent - that Descartes takes special issue. He sees, as Locke was to see later, that no truth could satisfy Herbert's test, since no truth is so certain that it can be neither denied or ignored:

The author takes as the basis of his truth universal consent, while I have as a basis for mine only natural reason, and this is proper in some way: because, all men having a same natural reason, it seems that they should all have the same notions; but this natural reason is very different in that there is nearly

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1. DESCARTES, R., in a letter to Mersenne dated October 16, 1639, in Œuvres de Descartes, 13 vols., edited by Charles Adams and Paul Tannery, Paris, Leopold Cerf, 1897-1913, vol. II, p. 596-598.

2. Ibid., p. 596-597. My translation.

no one who uses his natural reason correctly, whence it follows that many ( for example all those we know) can consent to a same error, and there is a great number of things which can be known by natural reason and nobody has yet thought of them.<sup>1</sup>

For Descartes, the criterion of truth was clarity and distinctness of ideas<sup>2</sup> the basis of which he finds in natural reason. Thus Descartes' criterion is not as liable to fall apart by any extension of knowledge as Herbert's universal consent.

Nor does Descartes agree with Herbert that those instincts which impel men to self-preservation and pleasures are infallible guides in the search for truth. Descartes distinguishes two kinds of instincts: (1) the intellectual instinct which belongs to man in virtue of his rationality, and (2) the instinct for conservation and corporeal pleasures which belongs to man in virtue of his animality:

He wants us to follow chiefly our natural instincts, from which he extracts the common notions; as for myself, I distinguish two kinds of instincts: one in us as in men and is purely intellectual; it is the natural reason and is the only one I hold to be reliable; the other is in us as in animals, and is a certain natural impulse ordained to the conservation of our body, to the enjoyment of corporeal pleasures, etc; and this one should not always be followed.<sup>3</sup>

That this distinction did not occur to Herbert may be attributed to his doctrine of harmony between macrocosm and microcosm. Thus he was not confronted with the Cartesian problem of explaining the interaction be-

1. Ibid., p. 598. My translation.

2. DESCARTES, R., Discourse on Method, in The Philosophy of Descartes trans. John Veitch, New York, Tudor Publishing Co., 1930, II.

3. DESCARTES, in his letter to Mersenne, October 16, 1639, Œuvres de Descartes, vol. II, p. 598.

tween mind and body.

Herbert's *Zetetica* Descartes regards favorably. He writes that Herbert's *Zetetica* or method of inquiry is useful, "because if we examine carefully all that the thing contains, we shall be certain that nothing is omitted."<sup>1</sup>

It is Herbert's religious notions with which Descartes seems to be in greatest accord. In Herbert's religious doctrines, Descartes finds such piety and such conformity with common sense that he wishes they receive the approval of orthodox theology.<sup>2</sup>

The notion that "God exists" is, according to Herbert, a common notion implanted in the minds of all men by God. Descartes, too, attributes the origin of the idea of God's existence to God:

There remains only the inquiry as to the way in which I received this idea from God; for I have not drawn it from the senses, nor is it even presented to me unexpectedly, as is usual with the ideas of sensible objects, when these are presented or appear to be presented to the external organs of the senses; it is not even a pure production or fiction of my mind, for it is not in my power to take from or add to it; and consequently there but remains the alternative that it is innate, in the same way as is the idea of myself. And, in truth, it is not to be wondered at that God, at my creation, implanted this idea in me, that it might serve, as it were, for the mark of the workman impressed on his work.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert maintained that our notions of the first principles of thought and of axioms of science and mathematics arose not from sensible experience, but from the nature of the mind. Descartes similarly regards the mind as the seat of immutable truths:

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 597. My translation.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 597.

3. DESCARTES, Discourse on Method, in The Philosophy of Descartes, III.

We now come to speak of eternal truths. When we apprehend that it is impossible a thing arise from nothing, this proposition, ex nihilo nihil fit, is not considered as something existing, or as the mode of a thing, but as an eternal truth having its seat in our mind, and is called a common notion or axiom.<sup>1</sup>

There is, then, some basis for holding - as Carré, Sorley, Ueberweg, and Willey do - that Herbert in a sense anticipates the rationalism inaugurated on the Continent by Descartes. And even if we are hesitant to give such credit to Herbert, we are forced to acknowledge that Herbert, whose De Veritate appeared sixteen years before Descartes' Discourse on Method, defended the doctrine of innate ideas as fervently as Descartes, and that he followed the Renaissance tendencies of casting aside all his books in his search for a new basis of wisdom and of appealing to consciousness for the least doubtful knowledge as faithfully, if not as famously, as Descartes.

That Lord Herbert of Cherbury gave a certain impulse to subsequent religious rationalizing in English will be seen in the following consideration of the Cambridge Platonists.

#### 4. THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

A detailed study of the voluminous writings of the Cambridge Platonists is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to our understanding of Herbert's position in the history of English thought to at least glance at the salient notions of this group of thinkers who continued the religious rationalizing which characterized the religious and philosophical works of Lord Herbert.

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1. Ibid., Principles of Philosophy, I, XLIX.

As a group, the Cambridge Platonists combated the rising tide of sensationalism and materialism. They stressed the immutable principles of knowledge and morality, tended towards mysticism, and attempted to derive, in the Platonic tradition, knowledge from ideas inherent in the rational nature of man. All of them were preachers and teachers who taught in the interests of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Since the time of Plato, Platonism had never been totally absent from European thought. It influenced Plotinus and St. Augustine. It flowed profusely through the poetry of Spenser, Sidney, Vaughn, Cowley, Ben Jonson, and John Milton.<sup>2</sup> It was largely against the materialism of Hobbes that the Cambridge Platonists adopted the metaphysics of Plato and proposed to discover, as Herbert had intended before them, points of agreement in the medley of religious opinions.

It is significant that the Platonists flourished at Cambridge, "where Cartesianism had for many years a partial foothold,"<sup>3</sup> rather than at Oxford, where Aristotelianism predominated until it was displaced by the philosophy of John Locke.<sup>4</sup>

Having pointed to the general characteristics of the Cambridge Platonists, we turn now to consider the main doctrines of five of the most illustrious representatives of this group of religious thinkers.

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1. TULLOCH, J., Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols., Edinburgh and London, Blackwood and Sons, 1872, vol. II, p. 119.

2. GREENSLET, F., John Glanvill: A Study in English Thought and Letters of the Seventeenth Century, New York, MacMillan Co., 1900, p. 8.

3. TULLOCH, op. cit., II, p. 357.

4. Ibid., p. 357-358.

Benjamin Whichcote (1610-1683) is regarded as the first of the Cambridge Platonists.<sup>1</sup> As a college tutor, he was in a position to exert considerable influence. It is from his views that the new movement in Cambridge begins.<sup>2</sup>

He urged that men quit their barren speculations and devote themselves to the fruitful pursuit of the "inner light." He held that God illuminated the souls of all men who live the life of reason. And what for Herbert were "Common Notions" for Whichcote were "Truths of first inscription."<sup>3</sup> These truths are connatural to man and flow "from the Principle of which man doth consists in his very first Make: This is the soul's complexion."<sup>4</sup>

Just as Herbert had maintained that no knowledge was possible without the Common Notions, Whichcote holds that nothing can be known except in the light of these truths of first inscription, about which no disagreement is possible.<sup>5</sup> Thus Whichcote appeals to his truths of first inscription as confidently as Herbert had appealed to his Common Notions.

Whichcote shares Herbert's distrust of discursive thought; he holds that no discursive thought is necessary for understanding these truths

1. Ibid., p. 100.

2. Ibid., p. 100-101.

3. WHICHCOTE, B., The Glorious Evidence and Power of Divine Truth, in E. T. Campagnac, The Cambridge Platonists, Being Selections from the Writings of Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, and Nathaniel Culverwel, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1901, p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

5. Ibid., p. 3-4.

of first inscription. They are spontaneously known to be true the instant they are proposed.<sup>1</sup>

According to Whichcote, faith is not reasonless, but the highest possible kind of reason. Thus faith does not submerge reason, but elevates and improves it.<sup>2</sup> Religion must be fruitful of good results; it must improve the mind, conserve the body, and contribute to kindness, temperance, and humility.<sup>3</sup>

Herbert had affirmed that man's nature required no supernatural aid to elevate him to a state of eternal blessedness. Whichcote similarly affirms that man, through the mere exercise of his natural faculties, not only discovers what is natural, but receives the supernatural.<sup>4</sup>

Tulloch refers to John Smith (1618-1652) as "a thinker without a biography."<sup>5</sup> But he adds that there is considerable evidence that Smith's sincere sympathies and deep religious feelings impressed all those with whom he came into contact.<sup>6</sup>

The central notion around which Smith develops his sermons and discourses is the notion that all knowledge, whether religious or philosophic, arises from the soul. The most effective way to achieve divine knowledge

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1. Ibid., p. 11-13.

2. WHICHCOTE, The work of Reason, cited by Campagnac, op. cit., p. 51.

3. Ibid., p. 58-62.

4. Ibid., p. 63-69.

5. TULLOCH, op. cit., II, p. 122.

6. Ibid., p. 124-125.

consists in an interpretation of one's spiritual life. Smith writes that the one who learns best the highest truths is one who "reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and Perfect Being stamped upon his soul."<sup>1</sup>

Like Herbert, Smith admits the innateness of the common religious notions. These common religious notions are, according to Smith, choked and overruled by vice and very often "smother'd or tainted with a deep dye of men's filthy lusts."<sup>2</sup>

Smith also distrusts discursive thought and maintains that only intuitive knowledge is reliable. He regards knowledge which is ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations as "thin, airy knowledge."<sup>3</sup> Smith looks within himself to find the highest source of certitude. And like Herbert, he feels that men do not need to consult books and authoritative writers, but their own minds for the most certain truths.<sup>4</sup>

Smith's innate notions of God resemble Herbert's common religious notions and Whichcote's truths of first inscription:

The Immutable Nature of God: From thence arise all those Eternal Rules of Truth and Goodness which are the foundation of all Religion, and which God at the First creation folded up in the Soul of man.<sup>5</sup>

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1. SMITH, J., Of the Existence and Nature of God, cited by Campagnac, op. cit., Ch. I, sect. 1. p. 83.

2. Ibid., Ch. I, sect. 1. p. 84.

3. SMITH, J., Concerning the True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge, cited by Campagnac, op. cit., Ch. I, sect. 1, p. 82.

4. Ibid., Ch. I, sect. 2, p. 163.

5. SMITH, J., The Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion, cited by Campagnac, op. cit., Ch. I, sect. 1. Author's italics.

There is in Smith's religious writings the same tendency to refer all problems of knowledge, religious and philosophic, to an inner tribunal presided over by principles stamped upon the nature of man by God which characterized Herbert's writings. And both Herbert and Smith asserted that unless we turn within ourselves to reflect upon the notions which God had traced upon our minds, our experience and lives are without intelligibility.

We have seen that the opposition to the materialism of Hobbes was the starting-point of the Cambridge Platonists. And none of the Platonists perceived the growing force of the irreligious movement more clearly than Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688).<sup>1</sup> Nor was any Platonist more determined to affirm the reality of the spirit than Cudworth. His The True Intellectual System of the Universe represents his supreme effort to combat the rising tide of materialism and sensationalism of his time.<sup>2</sup>

Cudworth considers the notion of the existence of God a common notion, the universality of which "makes it self-evident."<sup>3</sup> Therefore all those who still insist that there is no God are nothing more "than the monsters and anomalies of human kind."<sup>4</sup>

Cudworth argues that matter, which is dead and senseless, could never generate mind, which is a spiritual and vital reality. A strictly mechanistic explanation of sensation cannot account for the immaterial aware-

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1. TULLOCH, op. cit., II, p. 221-223.

2. CUDWORTH, R., The True Intellectual System of the Universe, 4 vols. London, J. F. Dove, 1820, vol. III, ch. v, p. 208-210.

3. Ibid., III, ch. v, p. 210.

4. Ibid., III, ch. v, p. 211.

ness of objects. Gudwerth concludes that sensible things are understood not by the senses, but by intelligible and immutable ideas which arise from the nature of the mind.<sup>1</sup> He emphasizes throughout his entire work that knowledge cannot be interpreted in strictly sensuous terms. Although he admits the necessity of the senses receiving the evidence of particular bodies, he adds:

The certainty of this every evidence is not from sense alone, but from a complication of reason and understanding together with it. Were sense the only evidence of things, there could be no absolute truth at all of any thing.<sup>2</sup>

For Gudwerth, then, the world of the mind and the spirit is more real and significant than the world of the senses and of matter. By stressing the priority of mind and spirit over matter and of ideas over sensations, he hoped to refute the materialists and atheists.

"The most typical and most vital and interesting of all the Cambridge Platonists"<sup>3</sup> according to Tulloch is Henry More (1614-1687). In his An Antidote Against Atheism, More appears in the form of a naturalist in order to vanquish all those who deny the existence of God.<sup>4</sup> Failing as Herbert had earlier to find satisfying knowledge in authoritative books and authors, he quenched his thirst for truth by turning upon his own soul.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., III, ch. v, p. 212-215.

2. Ibid., III, ch. v, p. 217.

3. TULLOCH, op. cit., II, p. 361.

4. MORE, H., An Antidote Against Atheism or, An Appeal to the Natural Faculties of the Minde of Man whether there be not a God, 2nd. ed., London, Printed by J. Flesher, 1655, p. xxii-xxiii.

5. Ibid., p. xxv.

More begins his polemic against atheism by challenging atheists to frame a notion of the God they deny. Proceeding in a manner akin to Descartes, More argues:

...he that would rationally doubt or deny a thing, should have a settled Notion of the thing he doubts of or denies. But if they profess that this is the very ground of their denying or doubting whether there be a God, because they can frame no notion of Him, I shall forthwith take away that allegation by offering them such a notion as is proper to God, as any notion is proper to any thing else in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Then defining God as an absolutely perfect being, he concludes that "to be fully and absolutely perfect is to be at least as perfect as the apprehension of man can conceive without contradiction."<sup>2</sup> Thus if this be a God, He is to be regarded by us "such as this idea or notion sets forth."<sup>3</sup>

We can see that the direction of More's argument is towards the formation of a notion of God, a notion which the atheists claim does not exist. More first reasons that there is in man a notion which is formed by attributing all conceivable perfection to it. He then points out that this notion of God is essential to the soul of man and can never be expunged from it. He concludes: "there is an inseparable idea of a being absolutely perfect ever residing, though not always acting, in the soul of man."<sup>4</sup>

For More, as for Herbert, the first principles of science, thought,

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1. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 3, p. 10. Author's italic.

2. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 3, p. 10.

3. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 3, p. 10.

4. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 3, p. 11.

morality, and religion are "the natural furniture of the mind."<sup>1</sup> Nor is it the material impressien of the object upon the soul which causes knowledge; it is rather the concepts which, being the essential elements in all knowledge, "take notice of the external objects."<sup>2</sup>

Mere is as reluctant as Herbert to concede any passivity to the mind. For him, ideas are never acted upon, but always act. The principles of contradiction, identity, and the notion that the whole is greater than the part, or that every number is either odd or even,- all these, he claims, must be innate, since they "are true to the soul at the first preposal; as any one that is in his wits does plainly see."<sup>3</sup> He regards these "innate ideas in the mind as the ground for the demonstration of the existence of God."<sup>4</sup>

Mere, then, turned within himself for the greatest source of certitude, to an "inner light" in terms of which alone religious and philosephic truths have any validity. And the highest evidence Mere discovers not in the objective order, but in the spiritual realm of the mind.

The last Cambridge Platonist at whose doctrines we shall glimpse is Nathaniel Culverwel, concerning the years of whose birth and death little is known.<sup>5</sup> Cairns writes that although there is no means of fixing the time of his birth, it is probable that he died in 1650 or 1651 while still

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1. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 6, p. 22.

2. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 6, p. 22.

3. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 6, p. 25.

4. Ibid., Appendix to ch. 1, p. 294.

5. CULVERWEL, N., Of the Light of Nature, ed., Jehn Brown, with a critical essay by Jehn Cairns, Edinburgh, Thomas Constable and Co., 1857. p. xiv.

it can read this written law, and can follow the commandments of the Creator."<sup>1</sup> Thus to obey reason is, as it were, to be persuaded by God, who has endowed all rational creatures with the essential lamp by which they are brought nearer to God.<sup>2</sup>

In all acts of knowledge man must either consult the light of nature within himself or he must borrow that light from the "candle of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> i.e., of another person. Culverwel parts company with Herbert when he admits with St. Thomas the limitation of the natural reason with respect to revealed truths:

But I must rather incline to the determination of Aquinas, and multitudes of others that are of the same judgment, that human reason, when it has stretched itself to the uttermost, is not at all proportional to them, but, at the best, can give only some faint illustrations, some weak adumbrations of them. They were never against reason; they will always be above reason.<sup>4</sup>

There were other Platonists in the Cambridge group - Glanvill, Rust, Fowler, Patrick, and Werthington; but they were merely satellites to the Platonists whose doctrines have been considered to show their affinity with the doctrines of Lord Herbert. The priority of the non-sensuous elements in human knowledge, the certitude of Natural Instinct, the innateness of the Common Notions, and the principle of self-consciousness which Herbert had emphasized indicated clearly the direction in which the speculations of the Cambridge Platonists were to move. Thus like Descartes, Herbert and the Cambridge Platonists searched for the least

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1. Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 90.

2. Ibid., Ch. IX, p. 100.

3. Ibid., Ch. XV, p. 207.

4. Ibid., Ch. XVI, p. 229.

a young man.<sup>1</sup>

The central theme of Culverwel's most important work, Of the Light of Nature, concerns the reconciliation of faith and reason. Twin lights flow from faith and reason, both of which radiate from one source and "sweetly conspire in the same end - the glory of that being from which they shine, and the welfare and happiness of that being upon which they shine."<sup>2</sup>

Culverwel echoes Herbert's notions concerning nature and the origin of first principles; he affirms that nature is the imprint of God traced in the being of all creatures that they might reach Him, and that stamped upon the being of man are "some first and alphabetical notions, the putting together of which it can spell out the law of nature."<sup>3</sup>

Culverwel locates the fountain of all the common notions in the soul of man, to which he refers as "the garden of God."<sup>4</sup> All the roots in that garden are inviolable, however the branches and fruit are cut and bruised. And these common notions or first principles of science, morality, and religion are known not by discursive thought, but instinctively.<sup>5</sup>

God provided man not only with these principles by which he may be guided and governed, but also the means by which these principles are discovered - by "an intellectual light in the soul, by the light of which

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1. Ibid., p. xiv.

2. Ibid., Ch. I, p. 17.

3. Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 81.

4. Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 81.

5. Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 83.

doubtful knowledge in the basis of man's rational nature. There was, however, this difference between Descartes on the one hand and Herbert and the Cambridge Platonists on the other hand: Descartes moved towards this end from the side of a physico-mathematical interpretation of the world - an interpretation which was mistaken for a philosophy of nature;<sup>1</sup> while Herbert and the Cambridge Platonists approached the same goal from the theological side.<sup>2</sup>

We continue to trace Herbert's relation to "that great movement of religious rationalizing which is known as English Deism, and which has in many ways been significant in shaping the course of subsequent speculation."<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. DEISM

The two extreme views regarding the problem of the relation of man and the world to God are "deism" and "pantheism:" the former divorces God from the world while the latter identifies Him with the world. Our concern here is with deism, the basic tenets of which Herbert has defined.

Many factors contributed to making eighteenth century England the "Golden Age of Deism."<sup>4</sup> The restoration of the Stuarts encouraged a general reaction against "both the strict morals and the strict theology

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1. MARITAIN, Philosophy of Nature, p. 41-44.

2. TULLOCH, op. cit., I, p. 25.

3. UEBERWEG, op. cit., II, p. 355.

4. WILLEY, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 3.

of the Puritans."<sup>1</sup> Under these favorable conditions, deism, the principles of which Lord Herbert had formulated in the early seventeenth century, flourished and developed until the middle of the following century.

Advances in the physical sciences contributed to the "divinization" of nature. In the light of the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Boyle, and Newton, arose thinkers who felt that a cosmology firmly grounded in nature demanded a religion which had no recourse to the supernatural.<sup>2</sup>

An examination of the roots and the background of deism is an undertaking intricate and beyond the scope of this study. But for an accurate summary of the results of the scientific movement of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, we can turn to Willey's observation:

First, it produced a 'climate of opinion' in which supernatural and occult explanations of natural phenomena ceased to satisfy, and the universe came more and more to be regarded as the Great Machine, working rigidly by determined laws of material causation. The supernatural, both in its divine and its diabolical forms, was banished from Nature.<sup>3</sup>

Leland traces the use of the term "Deists" to the middle of the sixteenth century in France, where Viret and other writers who espoused the Christian revelations, teachings, and rites assumed the name of deists, - "a name more honorable than that of atheists."<sup>4</sup> But because Lord Herbert

1. ORR, John, English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Grand Rapids Press, 1934, p. 114.

2. SHEEN, Philosophy of Religion, p. 7.

3. WILLEY, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 3-4.

4. LELAND, John, A View of the Principal Deistical Writers, London, R. Griffin and Company, 1837, Let., I, p. 1.

was the first to state the principles of the deistic religion, Leland regards him as "the father of English Deism."<sup>1</sup>

Of all the deists, it was only Charles Bleunt (1654-1693) who acknowledged himself as a disciple of Lord Herbert. Bleunt, however, contributed no new ideas to deism, but depended heavily on, and often smuggling long passages from, Herbert's De Veritate, De Religione Laici, and Dialogue between a Tutor and His Pupil.<sup>2</sup>

In his Oracles of Reason, throughout which is stressed the sufficiency of natural religion as opposed to divine revelation, Bleunt does not readily accept that innateness of the idea of God which Herbert had expounded. Nevertheless Bleunt writes that the idea of God "is very seen imprinted in the minds of men."<sup>3</sup>

Without adding any new content, Bleunt subdivides Herbert's five common notions of religion into seven articles:

1. That there is an infinite eternal God, Greater of all things. 2. That He governs the world by Providence. 3. That 'tis our Duty to worship and obey Him as our Greater and Governour. 4. That our worship consists in prayer to Him, and praise of Him. 5. That our obedience consists in the rules of right reason, the practice whereupon is moral virtue. 6. That we are to expect rewards and punishments hereafter, according to our actions in this life; which includes the soul's immortality, and is proved by admitting Providence. 7. That when we err from the rules of our duty, we ought to repent, and trust in God's mercy and pardon.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., Let. II, p. 19.

2. HUTCHESON, op. cit., p. 55.

3. BLOUNT, Charles, Oracles of Reason, in Miscellaneous Works, ed., Charles Gilden, London, 1695, p. 181. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., p. 197-198.

Despite his slavish imitation of Herbert, Bleunt is significant in so far as he succeeded in reviving the enthusiasm for natural religion which had declined since Herbert's death. Subsequent deists were to follow Bleunt's critical tendencies:

Bleunt wrote more against the Bible and its characters and stories than Herbert of Cherbury. Later deists followed Bleunt in this.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, deism became subject to still another influence. Although it moved largely in accordance with Herbert's common religious notions, it began to emphasize not the rationalistic basis of innate ideas as Herbert and the Cambridge Platonists had done, but the empirical basis to which Locke had given a tremendous impetus. Thus Locke, who considered himself a devout and orthodox Christian, influenced deism more than any other thinker with the exception of Lord Herbert.<sup>2</sup> This change of point of emphasis was indicated in Bleunt's hesitancy to accept unconditionally Herbert's doctrine of innate ideas. And it is for this reason that Orr regards Bleunt as marking the transition on the part of the deists "from the rationalistic basis of a doctrine of innate ideas to the empirical basis provided by Locke's philosophy."<sup>3</sup>

Locke had written that our final judge and guide in all matters should be reason.<sup>4</sup> And the deist John Toland (1669-1722) argues that if reason is our only guide in all matters, historical revelation should be abandoned and natural religion alone should be retained.

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1. ORR, op. cit., p. 113.

2. Ibid., p. 113-114.

3. Ibid., p. 112.

4. LOCKE, Essay, Bk. IV, ch. xix, sects. 4-11.

Although Toland claims to be a devout Christian,<sup>1</sup> he affirms that historical Christianity, pure in its primitive and natural state, was corrupted by false prophets and insists that every revealed truth be proved.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever doctrine, whether of Scriptures or of science, is not in accordance with the common notions must be, Toland argues, rejected.<sup>2</sup> He echoes, in a later idiom, Herbert's position that the final test of truth is found in the common notions.

Nevertheless, it is Locke's theory of knowledge which Toland adopts: an idea is for Toland what it was for Locke, i.e., the immediate object of the mind that thinks. Knowledge, Toland concludes in Lockean fashion, is:

...nothing else but the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas in a greater or lesser number, wheresoever this agreement or disagreement may consist.<sup>3</sup>

And what is "evidently repugnant to clear and distinct ideas, or to our Common Notions, is contrary to reason."<sup>4</sup> Therefore whatever is not clear and distinct in Scriptures or in science cannot be accepted as knowledge.

Toland emphasized an anti-mysterious, anti-supernatural Christianity and "ushered in that flourishing period of English Deism in which Locke's influence became more evident."<sup>5</sup> And his Christianity Not Mysterious

1. TOLAND, J., Christianity Not Mysterious, 2nd ed., London, Printed at the Dolphin over against St. Dunstan Church in Fleetstreet, 1696, p.xxvi:

2. Ibid., Ch. II, sect. 2, p. 42-43.

3. Ibid., Ch. II, sect. 1, p. 12. Author's italics.

4. Ibid., Ch. I, sect. 2, p. 25.

5. ORR, op. cit., p. 121.

"gave articulate expression to a widely diffused, but as yet latent, sentiment."<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent deists became progressively more critical of the Scriptures. And Anthony Collins (1676-1729), "who lyricized the Newtonian rationalist universe,"<sup>2</sup> denied prophecies and miracles.

Collins pays tribute to, among others, Lord Herbert and John Locke, because both of them departed from all authoritative teaching and from commonly received opinions "like men of sense who think at all must."<sup>3</sup> For Collins "free-thinkers" were such men as Herbert, Locke, Chillingworth, Whichcote, and Cudworth, who "rejected revelation and held to the deistic notions of religion."<sup>4</sup>

In his Discourse of Free-Thinking, Collins proposes to prove that following the dictates of reason necessarily involves the abandonment of belief in the supernatural.<sup>5</sup> He maintains that only the superstitious are inclined to believe in a just and merciful God, who "can never render man more acceptable,"<sup>6</sup> i.e., through grace.

His A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion consists of prejudicial attacks against Christianity.<sup>7</sup> He urges the need

1. STEPHEN, L., History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century 2nd ed., 2 vols., London, Smith, Elder, and Company, vol. I, p. 125.

2. SHEEN, Philosophy of Religion, p. 8.

3. COLLINS, A., A Discourse of Free-Thinking, London, 1713, Sect. III p. 177.

4. ORR, op. cit., p. 130.

5. COLLINS, op. cit., Sect. I, p. 6-7.

6. Ibid., Sect. II, p. 38.

7. COLLINS, A., A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, London, 1724.

of an allegorical rather than a literal interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. His criticism of the value of prophecies and of Scriptures<sup>1</sup> illustrates, as Leland observes:

...the prejudice and bigotry against Christianity, which has possessed the minds of gentlemen that glory in the name of Free-thinkers.<sup>2</sup>

The view that true religion should be based on "Nature" rather than on "Revelation" was exploited by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Although he professed to be a devout Christian,<sup>3</sup> his flippant attitude toward Sacred Scriptures and his antagonism toward the clergy hardly entitled him to be regarded "among the friends of the Christian cause."<sup>4</sup>

Shaftesbury's notions have much in common with Herbert's articles of natural religion. He holds that man is born not only to virtue, "but to religion, piety, and adulation."<sup>5</sup> The sense of right and wrong is natural and constitutes a first principle or common notion which requires no discursive thought.<sup>6</sup> These notions indicate his sympathy with three of Herbert's articles of religion: (1) that there is a God, (2) that He ought to be worshipped, and (3) that virtue is the principal part of worship.

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1. COLLINS, A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Sect. II, p. 32-35.

2. LELAND, op. cit., I, Let. VII, p. 70.

3. COOPER, A. A., Earl of Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc., 2 vols., ed. with introduction and notes by John M. Robertson, London, Grant Richards, 1900, II, "Miscellaneous Reflections," Misc. V, ch. II, p. 352.

4. LELAND, op. cit., I, Let. VI, p. 53.

5. COOPER, op. cit., II, Misc. IV, ch. 1, p. 294-295.

6. Ibid., I, "Concerning Virtue or Merit," Part III, sect. 1, p. 260.

Shaftesbury is significant among deists in that he stressed a natural religion which was essentially ethical. And other deists were to follow his method of attacking both Christianity and the Scriptures by the use of ridicule.<sup>1</sup>

Matthew Tindal (1656-1733) best represented the deistic movement. The attempt of earlier deists to discredit all revealed religion and undermine the authority of the Scriptures reached its climax in Tindal.

Tindal's principal line of argument is based on the conception of the perfection of God. God's perfection guarantees, according to Tindal, the perfection of natural religion:

If God, then, from the beginning gave Men a Religion; I ask, was that Religion imperfect or perfect?

Most perfect, without doubt; since no religion can come from a Being of infinite Wisdom and Perfection, but what is absolutely perfect.<sup>2</sup>

Being "absolutely perfect, universal, and immutable,"<sup>3</sup> natural religion admits of no addition, subtraction, or alteration. Thus Tindal concludes that revelation, being nothing more than a feeble reproduction of the primitive light of natural religion, is superfluous.<sup>4</sup>

Tindal agrees with Herbert that religion is a common notion which has always been clear to all men, having been inscribed by God in the minds of all men so as to be universally admitted by all men in all ages.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ibid., I, Sect. II, p. 10-13.

2. TINDAL, M., Christianity as Old as the Creation: Or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature, London, 1730, Ch. I, p. 3.

3. Ibid., Ch. I, p. 3.

4. Ibid., Ch. I, p. 3-5.

5. Ibid., Ch. III, p. 22-23.

In the alleged clearness of the light of nature, men require no external revelation, no explanation, no instructions, nor - Leland adds - "Tindal's works."<sup>1</sup> Although Tindal's Christianity as Old as the Creation was regarded as the "Deistic Bible,"<sup>2</sup> it was thoroughly repudiated by apologists and defenders of Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

There were other deists: William Wollaston (1659-1724), Bernard de Mandeville (1670-1733), Thomas Morgan (d. 1743), and Thomas Chubb (1679-1747). But these thinkers merely echoed the deists whose doctrines have been already discussed. Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke (1672-1751), in his works<sup>4</sup> summarized the notions and arguments of earlier deists. And David Hume (1711-1776), emphasizing natural religion and attacking prophecies and miracles,<sup>5</sup> also gave expression to deistical notions. But enough consideration of deistical doctrines has been given to indicate their affinity with the religious notions of Lord Herbert.

There are, nevertheless, differences between Herbert and the later deists arising from a difference in objectives: Herbert proposed to discover those fundamental religious truths by which he hoped all religious disputes might be settled, and the later deists were preoccupied with attacking revealed religion in an effort to elevate natural reli-

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1. LELAND, op. cit., Let. IX, p. 97.

2. ORR, op. cit., p. 140.

3. UEBERWEG, op. cit., II, p. 379-385.

4. BOLINGBROKE, H., The Works of Lord Bolingbroke, 4 vols., Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1841.

5. HUME, D., Essays, Literary, Moral, and Political, London, Ward, Lock, and Company, Ltd., (no date given).

gion to a status of absolute self-sufficiency.

English deism, representing an interpretation of religion in terms of the scientific conceptions which enjoyed popularity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, declined in the absence of that Spirit of the Age which it satisfied. Another Spirit, "Romanticism," demanded another interpretation:

The Spirit of the Age swung to the extreme end of the pendulum: from the domination of cold reason to the domination of gushy sentimentalism. The "naturally Christian" souls of men told them that they were rational animals. The Newtonian tradition emphasized the rational, but forgot the animal side, or feelings, which have a right to be heard. Men, analyzing their own natures, quite readily understand that life is bigger than cold deductive reason and cannot be confined within its categories. The reaction of common sense was away from reason and toward feeling, toward a philosophy of romanticism.<sup>1</sup>

Other causes for the decline of English deism as enumerated by Orr were:

...divisions among the deists themselves, the exhaustion of the subject, the undermining effect of the new skeptical philosophy, the strong and sometimes able literary opposition to deism on the part of apologists in the churches, the effects of the great religious revival and the turning of the people to pressing political and military interests.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of deism, however, did not end in the middle of the eighteenth century, but spread to France, Germany, and America. Its influence can be seen in Voltaire, Diderot, Holbach, and Emerson,<sup>3</sup> and is discernible in the modernist's critical approach to the Bible.<sup>4</sup>

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1. SHEEN, Philosophy of Religion, p. 24-25.

2. ORR, op. cit., p. 266.

3. Ibid., p. 179-220.

4. Ibid., p. 245.

Having indicated that in the broad framework of the doctrines of natural religion defined by Lord Herbert early in the seventeenth century were developed those deistical notions which significantly influenced "the course of all subsequent speculation,"<sup>1</sup> we turn now to the summary and conclusion of this study.

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1. UEBERWEG, op. cit., II, p. 355.

**CHAPTER XI**

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have seen that the main burden of this study consisted in exposing the epistemological and religious doctrines of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, indicating the difficulties implicit in those doctrines, and evaluating Herbert's position in the history of thought. In conclusion, it will suffice to reiterate in brief the findings of the present study under the first heading, "summary," and to crystallize Herbert's contributions to British philosophy under the second heading, "conclusion."

#### 1. SUMMARY

Nearly all the notable historians of thought mention the name of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Most of them deplore the fact that Herbert's principal works, De Veritate and De Religione Laici, are not better known to students of seventeenth century European philosophy. They agree that the significance of Herbert's writings, which were widely read by his contemporaries, was not fully appreciated then nor is now accurately ascertained. It was the importance which most historians have attributed to Lord Herbert that prompted this study of the epistemological and religious doctrines of this comparatively unknown but not insignificant thinker.

Autobiographical and biographical accounts have disclosed that Lord Herbert was born in Eyton, Wales, March 3, 1583. He was the oldest of ten children born to Richard Henry of Montgomery Castle and Lady Magdalen.

All of Herbert's brothers led illustrious and intensely active lives.

While attending Oxford, Herbert married a wealthy cousin. Herbert claims that by 1599 he had mastered French, Italian, and Spanish. In 1608 he went to France, where he rode, hunted, challenged cavaliers to duels, and conversed with great scholars. He was appointed English ambassador to France - an office from which he was dismissed in 1624 for acting more resolutely in the interests of his country than was customary among his contemporaries.

The pension he received from the Parliamentarians enabled him to devote his time to his writing and studies. He died August 20, 1648. Despite a life of considerable frivolity, he was keenly alive to the religious and philosophical problems which disturbed his time, and managed to make contributions in the fields of comparative religion, philosophy, history, and poetry.

It was learned that Herbert lived in a turbulent age. The spirit of individualism and scepticism expressed itself in numerous religious sects: Arminianism, Puritanism, Presbyterianism, and Anglicanism struggled for political supremacy. And in the light of advances in the physical sciences, religion, philosophy, and literature were altered in order "to be more in keeping with the new scientific outlook."<sup>1</sup>

It was also noted that during the early seventeenth century, the emphasis was no longer upon metaphysics, but upon physics. This inordinate and exclusive respect for empirical data engendered a materialistic approach to knowledge and reality. It was against this tide of sensationalism and materialism that Lord Herbert reacted and defined his own

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1. SHEEN, Philosophy of Religion, p. 7.

position - one in which the super-sensuous elements of knowledge predominated.

It was shown that Herbert was representative of his age in his unfavorable attitude towards traditional thought. If no previous system of philosophy nor external experience could yield certain knowledge, where was truth to be found? This was Herbert's and the seventeenth century's problem - to discover a new basis of wisdom. And we have seen that Herbert regarded himself divinely appointed for the task of discovering and publishing the infallible touchstone of truth by which he hoped the bitter religious and philosophical disputes of his time would be eliminated.

In the "Preface" to his De Veritate, Herbert made it clear that he intended to develop no traditional system of thought, that he proposed to discard all books and earlier ideas, in an independent search for truth. It was found, nevertheless, that his definition of truth as a conformity of the faculties with their objects was far from original.

At the outset of his De Veritate, Herbert lay down the following seven propositions in which he claimed his entire doctrine of truth was embraced: (1) truth exists; (2) truth is coeval with the objects to which it relates; (3) truth exists everywhere; (4) truth is self-evident; (5) there are as many differences of truth as there are differences in things; (6) these differences in things are made known to us by different natural faculties; and (7) there is a truth of all these truths, i.e., the truth of the intellect.

Herbert then distinguished truth into: (1) the truth of the object - the inherent conformity of the object with itself; (2) the truth of the appearance - the conditional conformity of the appearance with the object;

(3) the truth of the concept - the conditional conformity of the senses with the appearance of things; and (4) the truth of the intellect - the due conformity between all the other conformities. The truths of the intellect represented Herbert's "Common Notions," in the light of which all other truths were to be judged.

Herbert continued to examine the conditions under which the conformities between faculties and objects are realized. He concluded that the object must bear to the faculty a relation in which it can modify the faculty; that the object must be of the proper size; that the object must possess some distinguishing characteristic; and finally that the object must be accommodated to some perceptive faculty.

His investigation then extended into those four conditions which he maintained were necessary for the truth of the appearance. These conditions were found to be the following: (1) the object must be perceived for a sufficient time; (2) a suitable medium between object and perceptive faculty must be present; (3) a suitable distance must intervene between object and perceptive power; and (4) the object must be so situated as to reveal its real character.

It was learned that Herbert listed the following conditions for the truth of the concept: (1) unimpaired sense-organs; (2) normal sense-organs; (3) attention on the part of the faculty to the object; and (4) the application of the proper faculty.

Only when these conditions had been fulfilled was the way cleared for intellectual truths. Herbert identified intellectual truths with the Common Notions...the laws of thought, the axioms of science, and the laws of morality...which command the universal consent of mankind, and

without which neither knowledge nor experience would be possible.

It was pointed out that Herbert, despite his insistence that there were as many faculties as there were differences in things, treated faculties under four headings: (1) Natural Instinct, (2) the internal senses, (3) the external senses, and (4) discursive thought or reason.

Herbert revealed his anti-intellectualism by attributing the highest degree of certitude to Natural Instinct. He affirmed that Natural Instinct was as infallible a guide in our search for truth as it was to our self-preservation. He regarded Natural Instinct as purely instinctive, non-rational, and without relation to discursive thought or reason. But it was shown that in the light of the intellect or reason occurred both the spontaneous, unreflective thinking and the scientific weighing of evidence.

Herbert believed that Natural Instinct perceived the Common Notions independently of external experience and discursive thought. Being neither deduced by experience nor conveyed by objects, Herbert affirmed that they were innate and that they were implanted in the minds of all men by God. The ground of the Common Notions was universal consent, which for Herbert was the final test of truth.

The Common Notions or first principles Herbert distinguished from derived or secondary notions by six marks or characteristics: priority, independence, universality, certainty, necessity, and mode of apprehension, i.e., intuitively and spontaneously. Herbert wrote as if he considered himself the first thinker to list the characteristics of first principles. But Aristotle's explanation of the origin and characteristics of first principles is not only prior to Herbert's, but far more accurate and thorough.

The absurdity of holding that either blind instinct or the universal consent of mankind is the ultimate criterion of truth has been established: to an instinct distinct from reason we could not appeal for the reality of objective truth, because within an endless circle of unreflective acts of the instinct, no single act could be affirmed by another equally unreflective act; and if we were required to appeal to the universal consent of mankind for the certification of our knowledge, we would end in scepticism, because no lifetime is long enough to enable any man to consult the testimony of all men on a single question. It was shown that the ultimate criterion of truth is objective evidence, since our minds do not measure but are measured by reality.

Herbert then regarded the internal senses as faculties pertaining to our affective reactions to objects, i.e., fears, hopes, pleasures, pain, etc. And the common sense of the internal senses he identified with "conscience." But we have seen that Herbert overlooks one of the principal functions of the internal senses, i.e., the unification of the various impressions received by the external senses.

It was then found that by "external senses" Herbert meant the channels through which we received the ordinary sense impressions, And it was disclosed that Herbert's analysis of the conditions under which seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching occur was not original as he claimed it to be, and far less extensive than that of Aristotle of whom he wrote so disparagingly.

Herbert regarded discursive thought as the least reliable of all our faculties. But he claimed that discursive thought could distinguish truth from falsehood in any proposition if it followed his *Zetetica* or

method of investigation. The *Zetetica* examines the subject under investigation in the light of ten "questions" - existence, substance, essence, quantity, relation, mode, place, time, origin, and purpose. Herbert was not the first thinker to attempt to classify the various modes of being, as he would have his readers believe, since his "original" and "unique" questions resemble the table of categories of Aristotle.

In the concluding portion of his *De Veritate*, Herbert attempts to find among the conflicting religious sects certain fundamental religious notions concerning which there could be no disagreement. The five notions Herbert recognized as immutable in the true religion we found to be - God exists, He ought to be worshipped, virtue is the most important part of religion, sins are to be expiated, and there is reward and punishment after this life. It was within the framework of these five articles of religion that the deists were to develop their notions of natural religion.

In his *De Religione Laici*, Herbert attempts to lead the seeker of religious truths to the acceptance of those notions which command the universal consent of mankind, i.e., the five articles of natural religion he had advanced in his *De Veritate*. In this work Herbert stresses the sufficiency of nature and maintains that the ultimate criterion of truth, religious as well as philosophical, is universal consent.

The exposition of Herbert's epistemological and religious doctrines was followed by a consideration of their difficulties. It was noted that by denying passivity to the sense faculties, Herbert made it impossible for the various sense organs to be modified by their proper or analogous objects. And in rejecting the "sensible species" of the Scholastics, Herbert discards the very principle from which knowledge proceeds and

through which the object is immediately apprehended.

Herbert failed to explain how the intellect, a spiritual faculty, derives from particular and sensuous images the objects of its own apprehension. It was established that the transition of sense knowledge to conceptual knowledge cannot occur independently of the process of abstraction as explained by St. Thomas. In his extreme opposition to a sensuous interpretation of knowledge, Herbert so isolated the intellect from the senses that the necessary relation and connection between these two levels of human knowledge escaped him completely.

Had Herbert been less inclined to discredit the achievements of earlier and ancient philosophers, he would have learned from Aristotle the absurdity of holding that first principles or what Herbert calls the Common Notions are innate and are known independently of sense experience. By his impossible ambition to philosophize in a vacuum, Herbert had cut himself off from an intellectual tradition and source of wisdom by which he might have been guided into more tenable doctrines.

Although Herbert adopted without acknowledging such traditional notions as the "self-evidence" of truth and the "convertibility of truth and being," he fails to see the direction to which such notions pointed concerning the ultimate criterion of truth, i. e., not the universal consent of mankind, but objective evidence; and he fails to discern that it is objective reality that measures the mind and to which the mind must go for the certification of its knowledge.

It was made evident that Herbert felt wisdom progresses by the substitution of one set of ideals for another rather than by that ever-deepening intellectual probing in which the mysteries of being are unraveled. This mistaken notion of the progress of wisdom led Herbert to

so exalt his Common Notions as to make them the standard by which all books, religions, and even Sacred Scriptures were to be judged - a notion which the deists were to exploit later.

In tracing Herbert's sources, it was discovered that Herbert, despite his resolution to utilize the ideas of no previous system of thought, brought his own doctrines in alignment with the Stoic ideas of the Common Notions and Natural Instinct. It was also noted that to Aristotle, St. Thomas, Lull, and Grotius, Herbert owed a debt he refused to acknowledge. The medley of ideas on Herbert's part reflected not only his historical ties, but the general confusion and desperation of his own times.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Although "empiricism" was not invented, discovered, or first appreciated by Francis Bacon, the British brand of empiricism received a considerable impulse from the eloquent Baconian plea for empirical science. Later, Hobbes and Locke entrenched empiricism firmly in seventeenth century British philosophy.

British philosophy, however, was not exclusively empirical during the seventeenth century. By the swelling tide of materialism which resulted from a strictly empirical and sensuous interpretation of knowledge ethics, and reality, many thinkers were outraged. These men saw that sensationalism threatened to leave no room for the idea of God, the spirit morality, and immortality. Their strenuous opposition to Hobbes' mechanistic view of reality gave rise to another movement, the rationalistic, which may be said to have received an impulse in England from Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

The manner in which Herbert proposed to transcend the religious controversies of his time,- by his appeal to nature, the Common Notions, Natural Instinct, and to the light of nature,- hinted at the direction in which subsequent theologians in England were to move, i.e., away from the supernatural. It was to the vindication of the rational character of religion that Herbert and later the Cambridge Platonists and the deists devoted their energies.

The fundamental principles upon which natural religion was to be erected Herbert advanced at the end of his De Veritate as the five common notions of religion and treated as the common denominator for all religion in his De Religione Laici. Discernible in the works of the Cambridge men and the deists are Herbert's notions of, and approach to, religion. Thus Herbert influenced, either directly or indirectly, as well as anticipated the religious rationalizing of the Cambridge Platonists and the deists in England.

Although Herbert's religious notions were significant in influencing religious thought in England, his philosophical notions remained obscure. Herbert's Latin, in which he wrote his religious and philosophical works, was not the cogent and lucid Latin of the great Scholastics. Only in his brief discussion of the five common notions of religion at the end of his De Veritate is Herbert's Latin free of the ambiguous, cloudy, and cumbersome expressions which characterize the major part of his work. His injudicious use of Latin might well have prevented his De Veritate from exercising a greater and more immediate influence on speculative thought in Europe.

Booming above the awkward pronouncements of Herbert were the stentorian voices of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and, later, John Locke -

all proclaiming, against Herbert's doctrine of innate ideas, that truth is not drawn from the mind, but is derived from and limited to sense knowledge. By the thundering eloquence of these empiricists, the foreign lisplings of Herbert could easily have been submerged.

Sorley observes that Herbert's philosophical speculations made little or no impression on European philosophy because they stressed "universal consent" as the ultimate criterion of truth. He believes that Herbert's philosophical works would have been more congenial and consequently more popular and influential if their point of emphasis had been the principle of "self-consciousness" rather than the universal agreement of mankind<sup>1</sup>...a criterion which both rationalists and empiricists felt had been demolished by John Locke.

But as a theologian, Herbert did not suffer the same obscurity. The "Golden Age"<sup>2</sup> of natural theology at the turn of the eighteenth century was essentially eclectic. It selected and exploited those notions which it felt satisfied the particular needs. In the light of the emphasis which the empiricists placed upon this world and nature, it felt that religion, too, must be accommodated to the trend of the times... must be grounded upon the "natural" rather than the "supernatural." It substituted "nature" for "grace," "instinct" for "intellect," and the "Common Notions" or "truths of first inscription" for "Sacred Scriptures." This natural religion which the eighteenth century English theologians developed had been systematized by Lord Herbert a century earlier.

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1. SORLEY, "The Philosophy of Lord Herbert of Cherbury," in Mind, p. 506-508.

2. WILLEY, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 3.

Under the increasing influence of the empiricists, particularly that of John Locke, the notions of Herbert receded. It was shown that the influence of Locke which touched Charles Blount lightly fell progressively heavier on subsequent deists. But the ideas in Herbert's De Veritate, centering around intuited truths and the a priori elements of the mind and suggesting the unfolding of subjective forms of cognition, may be said to hint at the more critical inquiries into those problems of knowledge which were to arise when the stream of empiricism ran dry into its logical and inevitable end., i. e., scepticism. Thus, indeed Herbert's De Veritate contains ideas which "look beyond the whole course of English Empiricism, by which for more than two centuries they were submerged."<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's De Veritate, which appeared in 1635, rather than Locke's Essay, published in 1690, deserves to be called the first systematic inquiry into the conditions of truth and the complex process of knowledge undertaken in English philosophy. Herbert may also be credited with making the first attempt at a comparative study of religion.

But the De Veritate is also significant in that it reflects the desperate search for a new basis of wisdom after an indiscriminate rejection of what Maritain calls "a stable body of doctrine and a continuous intellectual tradition."<sup>2</sup> The De Veritate clearly illustrates the impossibility of wisdom progressing by substitution rather than by a process of deepening within the framework of concepts which do not change, chameleon-like

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1. CARRE, "Introduction" to his translation of Herbert's De Veritate p. 60.

2. MARITAIN, A Preface to Metaphysics, p. 9.

with every scientific discovery or invention of science, every new trend in thought, art, or literature, and each mood of a volatile age,- but which remain permanent and yet which allow perennial scope for an ever-deepening exploration into the inexhaustible richness and mystery of being.

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