

HARP 78, #26 "The Sources of Religious Insight"
(Apparently, # 1 of 6 Lectures in Spring, 1910
at Yale; this one given May 14, 1910), 1-21 entire,

(also seems given at Mathematical, Apr. 18, 1910) [probably complete since
it fulfills outline of #1 in HAR 78 #2a]

A real testimony to 1910 JR's RELATION
to and CULTIVATION IN THOUGHT OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

NB esp. pp 20-2
d. p. 15 for given
in religious discourse

Box 78 # 3 b

The Sources of Religious Insight.

This lecture is practically
an exposition of Paul's
"The spirit will messe to
out spirits?"
Rom 8:16

Gentlemen of the Theological Club; -

It is no part of the task
(exhaustively and accurately),
of the present paper, to define religion.

I address ^{you as} a company of theological
students who have ~~their~~ ^{your} own views
regarding the nature and the
truth of ~~these~~ ^{your} religions. I do not
~~really~~ know how far my per-
sonal opinions as to ^{these topics} ~~these matters~~
accord with your own. But
there is ^{here} no time to be thorough
going as to the treatment of

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the definition of religion, and I prefer
at the outset merely to assume that,
~~we agree that~~ ^{for us all} religion means
some sort of genuine and valuable
personal intercourse with a real
~~and~~ and significant spiritual
world, - a world such that to
know it sustains us in our con-
flicts with fortune, helps us to
solve the problems of life, ^{supports} ~~and~~ ~~helps~~
us in our efforts to do right, and
wins us over to what is better than
are our natural selves.

Assuming this as our
common view of the ^{general} ~~subject~~

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nature of religion, my present paper is to be confined to the question: What are the sources of religious insight? The spirit in which I discuss this question is very naturally determined by the audience whom I am privileged to address. You, as theological students, are intending, in your professional work, to be religious teachers. That is, you intend, amongst other things, and those whom ~~to expect~~ you teach to acquire insight into the realities and the truths of religion. This of course is not your whole task; for there is in religion, and in the work of the religious teacher, something

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more than the word insight, ^{more than} as the
task of producing insight, can be
said to name. Religious life, religious
~~concepts~~ consolation, piety, morality ^{in general}
and various forms of social service: ^{special}
^(in particular) need - all these are names for ^{objects of} ~~objects~~
interest which you will bear in mind in your
calling ~~of~~ these you will try to promote
& impart, to illustrate, to teach. But
if there is any sort of objective reality
behind or beneath religion, part of
your task will be to obtain and
to teach religious insight. And by
religious insight I mean of course
any genuine knowledge of religious
important truths and realities.

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And so I propose in this paper to discuss with you the question: What are the sources of religious insight? Whence comes our knowledge of religious truth, ~~if~~ in case we have any such knowledge at all?

If ~~we~~ ^{we} had asked this question of ~~the~~ ^{our} the religiously minded amongst our forefathers, we know that they would have answered, with many variations in detail, but with a general accord, that the principal source of religious insight is the revelation which God had ^(chosen to) ~~made,~~ ^{make, has made} and is making ^{the revelation} of himself and of his will, first through

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his inspired Word, and then through
the present workings of his Spirit,
in the church, or in the hearts of the
faithful, or in manifestations of
Divine Providence. ^{Many of} The variations in
detail which would have appeared in
the expression of this answer are well
known to you. I need not attempt to de-
velop them at any length. Whether God
^{had} revealed himself mainly through the
inspired word, or ^{had} also continued to
reveal himself ^(now) through ^{or in} the church,
how far, ^{and in what sense} the work of the Divine Spirit
was a continuing one, constantly
~~making~~ expressing itself afresh in the
hearts of the faithful, how far the

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unconverted, ^{also} were the subjects to whom
God, at his own good pleasure revealed
himself when he moved their hearts,
by his grace, whether, ^{and how} the course of divine
Providence in the affairs of men constituted
a legible revelation, known to all who
chose to study it, - well, these were ^{in the former days}
matters of ^{important} doctrinal difference. Their
variety does not concern us now. Enough,
to such a view God himself was, through
an essentially supernatural, a miracu-
lous process, the creative source of
religious insight. He revealed himself
or had revealed himself to the ^{prejudice} ~~people~~,
when, how, and to whom he would,
by making prophets and holy men speak
as they were moved by his ^{spirit} ~~presence~~

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by uttering his word, by asserting his infallible authority. What was thus revealed, the rightly prepared subject of revelation faithfully ^{and more or less passively} accepted, as the certainly true expression of one who, being God, must know ~~whereof~~ whereof he spoke, and must be incapable of deceit. However men might differ as to their theories of revelation, such men as those whom I now have in mind generally agreed in holding that the principal source of religious insight was just such revelation; a revelation dependent wholly on God's own will.

Now, then, on the whole, do we modern men tend to regard these older views regarding the main source of religious insight? I think

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that few of you, whatever you personally believe about this or that revelation, would prefer to define the chief source of religious insight in the ~~the~~ traditional terms that I have just used. Most of you, if you still employ these terms at all, would very greatly modify their ^{in interpretation} ~~use~~, even in attempting to use them. ^{For you would use them only in a certain context, you would interpret them in some way different from the way in which they were primarily used.} Whatever place you still give to the concept of revelation in your own religious views, most of you are pretty clearly conscious of something that ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{rather} ~~is~~ ^{also} ~~is~~ ^{occasionally} ~~is~~ ^{emphasized,} but that for you is likely to be much more prominently present to consciousness than it was to the forefathers.

To what I refer you all know.
 Let me briefly explain my meaning.
 Revelation is a very general word. If
 one tries to define it more ~~clear~~ exactly,
 one is forthwith met by the fact that
as tradition conceives it,
 revelation may be classified roughly,
 into two ~~sorts~~ sorts: External revelation,
 and internal revelation. I am not attempting
 to be precise or technical in my account
 of either of these types which traditional
 revelation was supposed to take. Let us
 content ourselves by a bare indication.

An ~~External~~^{Ex}ternal revelation would be an event of
 the sort that, in an extreme form, the
 story of the giving of the Law at Mount
 Sinai would exemplify. (In such a story of this
 extreme type of external revelation, God in one way
 or another shows his presence, first

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by physical signs, secondly by ~~words~~ ^{words} which express his will. He appears as the King of Heaven may be expected to ^{(appear} surrounded with wonders and displays of overwhelming power. He says what he chooses. No body who stands in his presence doubts that it is God who speaks. The evidence is momentarily unquestionable. The authority of the revelation is, at least for that moment, irresistible. Such is the event reported in the legend of Sinai.

The ~~case~~ ^{is} ~~an~~ ^{an} tradition in question is ^{I have said an} extreme instance of ^{the external} ~~the~~ ^{of revelation} type. Later theology has always been obliged to interpret the reported events so as to make them agree with ^{far} more spiritual accounts of the divine nature. ^{than that the original} ~~the~~ ^{narrators of the tale had in mind} The giving of the law at Sinai appears when thus interpreted, even by the most literal believer in tradition, as more or less of an accommodation to the senses and the beliefs of crude minds. The God who in fact inhabits

eternity and whom a later religious insight
 views as unchanging and transcendent ^{and}
 omnipresent, ^{unperceivable} could not quite literally have
 done what the original tradition conceived
 him as doing. This ^{reported} scene at Sinai was, for ^{such}
 later theology, rather a signal apparition than
 a completely real revelation. It ^{appeared to the people} ~~was~~ as if God
 had a bodily presence behind the clouds and
 thunders of Sinai. It was as if he spoke with
 a physical voice. Thus he accommodated himself
 to the ^{still} crude mind of Israel. So later thinkers
^{with a will} ~~will~~ ^{in their} interest, of ten
 said; and hereby of course they admitted
 what today is clear to most of us, viz. that,
 whatever the true source of religious
 insight is, the thunders of Sinai ~~would~~
 even if they actually occurred, ^{be of no use} hardly
 constitute what a higher religious
 consciousness would regard as any
 thoroughly satisfactory revelation. ^{Such events} ~~They~~
^{were, they, really} could amuse or terrify us. They could no longer

meet ^{any of our deepest} religious needs.

~~But~~ More frequent and important, ^{in the old traditions} ~~is~~ another class of supposed external revelations, ^{In such cases,} God's will is manifested through some messenger, an angel, ^{or} a prophet, ^{or} ~~the~~ ^a man who is inspired to write a sacred book. In case of such ^{supposed} revelations, one has more or less consciousness that in order to make sure that the revelation is what it purports to be, there must be some sort of evidence ~~given~~ furnished to show that the message is ^{from God} ~~important~~. Such evidence ~~is~~ ^{given} consists, according to tradition, of well known ^{sorts of} signs and wonders, which are supposed to prove that the messenger who reports God's will is indeed in touch with the divine. Whoever is the bearer of the revelation has supernatural

were sufficiently hardened, God's messengers were not believed. As for signs and portents, - it was admitted that false gods or devils might simulate them. Only the truly devout could have the inner enlightenment that enabled them to discern the true prophets from the false. The ~~wise~~ ^{wise} in heart, they and they alone could know for certain what the marks of a genuine external revelation from God were.

All this, I say, even the fathers often admitted. That they still made so much of the traditions of miraculous external revelations was partly due to the fact that they had not become clear as to where their deepest religious interests lay. They therefore, unless they were them-

selves mystics, seldom formulated in
 a clear way the thought which is, I suppose
 familiar to most of you, - the thought
 that an external revelation could be, at best,
 only a stimulus to bring to pass an interna
 revelation. That is, - otherwise worded, - it
^{would be} ~~impossible~~ for any man to know that he
 heard God's voice speaking to him, or
 that this or that vision, prophet, wonder-
 worker, or document, was an expression
 of the divine will, unless the ~~man~~ one
 who was to ~~become~~ ^{be thus externally instructed} ~~that~~ had already
 learned, apart from external revela-
 tion, what are the marks, the distin-
 guishing features, the unmistakable
 signs, whereby God, and no other being
 manifests himself. Whoever already
 knew this, would have been

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already enlightened before the ^{external} revelation came. His touch with the divine would therefore already have occurred in some internal fashion. Otherwise, ~~the~~ Sinai would thunder and the prophets speak, or one would rise from the dead to tell the divine truth, - in vain.

Tradition used to recognize this, - imperfectly I think, - in laying stress upon the need of the right sort of faith as an inner prerequisite to our being able to profit by any ^{external} revelation, Hume's ~~scarcely~~ ^{cynical} comment at the close of his Essay on Miracles gets its dry humor from its formal identity with a perfectly true and deep principle ~~of~~ ^{regarding} the nature of religious insight. In order that one should really be able to

learn through
~~accept~~ a miraculous external revelation
~~the very truth about~~
~~of the divine will,~~
 - an internal miracle ^{must} ~~must~~ already
~~have~~ ^{in the man himself} have been performed, -- the
^{whatever it is} miracle, whereby the finite being ~~should~~
 be prepared to recognize God when
~~the thus prepared believer~~
~~comes~~ ^{comes} in contact with God's expression
 of his ^{own} mind.

How in fact should I know
 the true God from another one, in
 case various supernatural beings
 chanced to be pleased to work wonders
 & influence my mind? ^(if there were such) A being, who
 actually worked wonders, ^{(vast enough and of}
 enough, ^{repeated} could, ^{readily} convince us that
 he was of superhuman might, ^{and} perhaps
 of superhuman wisdom, perhaps also
 of benevolent intentions. But would

such a being thereby prove himself to be
 the one true god? How could we pretend
 to judge? He might be, ^(for all that his wonders proved, - he might be) however wise,
^{might be} still fallible, and suppose himself to be
 the only god when he was merely a kind
 of Faustian Erdgeist, arrogant, but
 finite, and subject to possible dethrone-
 ment by other gods. Or he might think
 it best to ~~deceive~~ ^{mislead} us as to his own limitation.
 If his world of mystery were known to us only through his
^{account of it, how could we see such our mis-}
 How could we judge his rights to make
 assertions about his powers and his
 world? How could we pretend to fathom
 his plans? - Suppose that we began to
 come into some ~~sort~~ ^{sort} of intercourse
 with the inhabitants of Mars. Suppose
 that hereupon they ere long displayed
 prophetic and supernatural powers,
 and began to give us messages re-

regarding the miracles that their supposed
 God had wrought for them, or that they
 could in his name work for us. Suppose
 that the new miraculous powers actually
 began to appear ^{in our world}, and that the Martians
 hereupon undertook a sort of wireless
 missionary propaganda, revealing
 us their God and his doings. Suppose
 hereupon that their theology proved to
 be wholly counter to ours. Well, what
 external evidences could of themselves
 decide whose God was the real one?

You know the only possible
 answer to these questions, in case any
 source of religious insight whatever
 is to be recognized as genuine. The
 witness of the spirit must be, at
 least in its deepest essence, an internal

witness. Religious insight cannot exist unless the spirit itself bears internal witness, - unless something, ^{called} faith, or the inner workings of divine grace, or reason or intuition, ^{or what you will} has first adapted us to know religious truth when we meet it, to recall the ^{true} sound of the divine voice when and if we ever externally hear it. Our religious insight, if indeed we ever are to get any such insight, must, in some measure meet the Platonic requirement. Our knowledge, ^{of such truths} must, ^{nearly} be a sort of reminiscence, - an inner memory ^{of} ~~that~~ ^{of our} lost home which arises within the spirit, and ^{which} ~~that~~ tells us what signs and words and deeds are really worthy to be viewed as expressions of the divine ^{regarding} ~~truth~~ ^{that home.}