The concept of revelation

Thesis

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The Concept of Revelation

In choosing an experiential approach to the concept of revelation and, in preferring this to either an informative or an instructional view, I have faced head-on a central concern for Christian theists. This appertains to the epistemological problem raised by the assumption at the heart of belief in revelation, that God can, in some way or another, be known by men. For to say that God has revealed Himself to his human creatures implies some kind of knowledge of God. I have rejected attempts to describe this in terms simply of degrees of commitment, evinced by Christian faith and attitudes, and attempted to show that the concept of revelation, as traditionally understood, requires an apperception of reality which enables the verb to know to be suitably used.

My method has been to use Wittgenstein's concepts of a language game and a form of life to demonstrate that it makes sense to say that, in Christ, a knowledge of God is possible. I have argued that certain fundamental propositions, implicit within the Kerygma of the Apostolic community, provide the basis for intelligible talk about man's encounter with his Creator.

After analysing different sorts of knowledge claim, I reached the conclusion that knowledge by description best suits the demands of the kerygmatic language game. This coheres with my argument, following Wittgenstein, that it is in the learning of an apposite language game and adhering to the rules prescribed by its autonomous grammar that understanding of Christian propositions can be gained.

To elucidate this, I discussed Kant's view concerning the place of reason in reaching a posteriori judgements. I introduced Popper's notion of a 'third world of ideas' to justify the Christian's claim that ideas relative to the kerygma and didache etc have stood the test of time. Such ideas might be accorded a certain objectivity.
Is the question of God's existence begged in the language game? To answer this I examined a number of views about the verb 'to exist' and adopted Russell's suggestion that it operates in a second order manner. I explored his thinking about significant inexistent objects. I proceeded to relate these problems to Wittgenstein's discussion of sense and reference in respect of what he says of the 'mystical' and about significant yet meaningless propositions. Yet the main thrust of my argument was to seek to explicate the notion of man's response to God (who is thus taken to exist and to be active in communication with man), by pointing again to the fact of the form of life of Christian belief. I concluded that it is here that all that can intelligibly be said of God making Himself known, and being known by believers, must be grounded.
CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF REVELATION - INTRODUCTION

1 DEFINITIONS

So that I may introduce the definition of revelation which I intend to adopt in this study, I shall begin by quoting a few relevant authorities on the subject. aThe Oxford English Dictionary establishes the primacy of a religious connotation for the word. For it speaks of it, firstly, as 'the disclosure of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural agency;' and, secondly, as 'something disclosed or made known by divine or supernatural means.' The dictionary proceeds, thirdly, to give wider, neutral definitions: 'A striking disclosure of something previously unknown or not realised. Disclosure of facts made by a person; exposure of something previously disguised or concealed.' Linking each of these definitions, clearly, is the central idea of bringing into the open, for men to understand, something which previously had been opaque. Since I am concerned with the Theistic concept of revelation, it is with the first two definitions that I shall especially have to do.

I turn next to the ways in which the word 'revelation' is used in the Bible. My informant is Dr James Packer who says: b"The English word 'reveal' from the Latin revelo, is the regular Authorized Version rendering of the Hebrew גָּלָה and the Greek ἀποκαλύπτω, which corresponds to גָּלָה in the Septuagint and the New Testament. גָּלָה, ἀποκαλύπτω, and revelo all express the same idea - that of unveiling something hidden, so that it may be seen and known for what it is. Accordingly, when the Bible speaks of revelation, the thought intended is of God the Creator actively disclosing to men His power and glory, His nature and character, His will, ways and plans - in short, Himself - in order that men may know Him." Packer intimates that he subscribes
to the older Protestant view of God communicating truths about Himself, termed 'propositional revelation,' rather than to the newer view which understands it to be essentially non-verbal in character. His understanding of the theology of revelation thus focuses upon the Law, the Prophets and Christ as being conveyers of truth concerning God. He represents that Theistic tradition which holds the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to be the spoken 'word of God' to man.

Finally, James Barr may be cited as one who endeavours to elucidate the concept of revelation, from a modern theological position. He argues, "It is man who developed the biblical tradition and man who decided when it might be suitably fixed and made canonical. If one wants to use the Word-of-God type of language, the proper term for the Bible would be the Word of Israel, Word of some leading early Christians." He goes on to draw a distinction between the controversial status of the 'events' or 'acts of God' depicted in the Old Testament, and the 'external phenomenon (Jesus) who existed in the world.' He asks whether, given the sheer magnitude of the Christ-event within Christian belief, and assuming the term 'revelation' is to be used, does it not lead to a position that there was only one solitary real revelation, in the full sense of the word? Barr points out that there is a difference also between, what he calls the surface account furnished by the Bible and our understanding of what was happening. Further, "even in the surface form of the Bible, the reportage of divine communications to man is only one part; the forms of many books is that of a man-to-man communication, of which many parts, but not all, report communications from God to man. The Pauline letters are letters from the apostle to the churches, not letters from God to St Paul." Thus Barr thinks that the traditional conflict between propositional and personal revelation can be by-passed. It is necessary to recognise the right function of propositions (along with
non-propositional verbal communications). Sometimes the question is of a kerygmatic or response-demanding function, as against a neutral information-giving one; sometimes it is a parabolic or indirect function, as against a direct one . . . Genre-mistakes cause the wrong kind of truth values to be attached to biblical sentences. Literary embellishments then come to be regarded as scientifically true assertions, kerygmatic words of grace and promise come to be taken as text-book doctrine." Is Revelation antecedent to, or consequent upon, the compilation of Biblical means of communicating what are said to be divine ideas: through Law, Prophets, Christ-event? Barr draws our attention here to a further aspect of the matter. There are those who conceive of Revelation as being orientated towards the future, concerned with what is hoped for and believed in on the strength of human understanding of religious principles. Those who see revelation as being antecedent to its manifestation in the Biblical literature, take a different view (presumably that of Packer).

The theological position I intend to take up is one which has been influenced by Pannenberg in so far as he speaks, generally of revelation as history and, particularly, of the 'Christ-event' as being the focal point of that revelation. His emphasis upon the kerygma - the proclamation of the early church about Christ's saving acts - will be adhered to. I shall attempt to show that it is in this proclamation, and in its attendant societal ramifications, that intelligibility may be given to the idea of God disclosing Himself to His human creatures. Thus my approach to the concept of revelation will be a Christian Theistic one. It will, further, be an experiential one. This is not to exclude the possibility of speaking of information of, or instruction from, God. It is to pursue the notion, implicit in the kerygma, of a disclosure-response relationship.

In attempting to define revelation, therefore, as divine activity,
directed towards mankind, the idea of God disclosing Himself emerges. Such disclosure is to be understood as a personal revelation by God. To whom does He reveal Himself? Clearly, a necessary condition for such disclosure is that there should be those to whom the revelation is made. It would not make sense to speak of God, albeit deemed to be Creator of the world, as disclosing Himself to other than intelligent, self-conscious beings, capable of receiving and understanding the disclosure. According to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, God reveals Himself to man in various ways and through specific actions on His part.

2 PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THIS EXPERIENTIAL VIEW OF REVELATION

There are a number of presuppositions which such a view of revelation demands. I shall draw attention to two in particular. These are the presupposition that God exists and the presupposition that He communicates with man.

a. The Existence of God

The first of these is implicit in the proposition that God actively reaches out to man in self-disclosure. I am here taking God to be objectively real, one capable of revealing Himself to man. My experiential view of revelation necessarily implies "belief-in" God by those who claim to believe that God has thus disclosed Himself. It follows that, in speaking of human reaction to belief in this revelation of God, the belief in question must, logically, be belief in a God who exists. I do not wish to associate myself with the views of D Phillips and others, who appear to dodge the issue as to the objective existence of God. B.Williams calls Theists to task, and rightly so I feel, when they appear to interpret the existence of God in terms of human experience alone. On such a view, the question arises: If man ceased to exist, would God cease to exist? When the notion of the existence of God is reduced to certain kinds of human
experience, as Phillips seems to want to say, the logical answer to this question must be 'yes'. My conception of the existence of God as an objective Being, on the contrary would yield the answer 'no'. It would be logically possible for God to exist even if no human beings existed. So, in saying that the concept of revelation is to be understood, not principally as information about, or instruction from, but as experience of God, I do not wish to imply in any way that it can be cashed solely in terms of experiences which men have. On the contrary, I want to try to establish that the notion of God, viewed as objective Being, having a relationship with His human creatures, can be shown to make sense. A necessary condition for an experiential concept of revelation is the idea of a personal God. To explicate this idea we may adopt Farmer's definition of God as Absolute Demand and Final Succour. Farmer speaks of the believer's apprehension of 'absolute, sacred, unconditional values' which are felt to make demands upon him, even to the extent of the sacrifice of life itself; inseparable from this is an awareness of God as a source of ultimate or final succour, one who will in no circumstances desert or fail the believer. In using the concepts of a Will which impinges upon my will and a Refuge to whom I can flee, Farmer demonstrates the personal nature of the God in whom Christians believe. It will be intelligible, then, to speak of experience as an area of human apperception wherein knowledge by acquaintance, involving the possibility of warmth, affection and trust between people may be seen to obtain. This will enable the concept of "belief in" to be given substance, in relation to the concept of the development and growth of personal relationships, understood within a Theistic context. It is in the light of these concepts that the concept of revelation itself, interpreted in experiential terms, may find some anchorage.
b. Communication Between God and Man

The view of what I take revelation to be presupposes, secondly, the possibility of communication between God and man. To presuppose such communication, we must firstly notice that the idea of communication itself is, to some degree, a paradoxical one. For, on the one hand, what is communicated must be new and unfamiliar. If this were not so, A would have nothing of significance to say to B. Indeed, were he to repeat what B already knew, it would not appear to be a genuine or, at least, worthwhile communication. To communicate to B, A must be in possession of information or radiate the effects of an experience such that B would stand to receive something which he has hitherto not known or experienced. The notions of freshness and originality are relevant to the concept of communication. What is communicated, be it descriptive facts or an impression of something achieved, or an experience of grief or joy, will provide to the recipient of it something unknown by him previously. On the other hand, the communicator has to invoke the old and the familiar if he is to communicate whatever it is he is seeking to convey. For, if he is to be understood by the one whom he wishes to inform or influence in some way, the medium of communication has to be intelligible to both parties. Hence A must use words, gestures, facial expressions, and the like which B already understands for successful communication to take place. Thus it is clear that there is a paradox resident in the concept of communication.

The paradox is heightened when the new and unfamiliar being communicated is conceived to be transcendent. There is a danger that, in this instance, the notion of communication would become incomprehensible. It may be wondered whether the idea of transcendent knowledge, said to be communicated to man through God's revelation, has any coherence. For while it is the case that any communication whatsoever requires freshness and originality, if it is to be taken to be genuine
communication, that which is communicated must also belong to a class of communicable subjects. Can we speak of the transcendent as being included in this class? It will be part of my task to try to examine the concept of transcendence as understood by Theists. In trying to find some intelligible way of speaking of God, who is said to be unbounded by space and time, clearly talk of communication with man raises difficulties.

Philosophical Issues which Arise from my Experiential View of Revelation

a. Man's cognition of God

Cognitive awareness of God by man means a knowledge of God. If I can show that it is logically sound to use the verb 'to know' in a Theistic sense, the question as to the nature of the knowledge laid claim to by believers arises. It could be immediate knowledge: some form of direct perception perhaps, or an experience where memory is invoked or, yet again, a self-conscious awareness of one's mental state. It could, alternatively, be inferential knowledge of the kind provided by science, by history or by a 'reading off' from a particular situation a piece of putative knowledge. For example, I infer from Smith's sudden expression of joy that he has received the good news he has been awaiting. Each of these direct or inferential forms of knowledge are empirical in that they each relate to putative states of affairs. If I am to succeed in speaking of man's knowledge of God I shall have to show some affinity between such knowledge and at least one of the kinds of knowledge which has been discussed.

Would it be possible, for example, to speak of men knowing God in a way which is similar to their knowledge of the world? The world is 'there'; it is not brought into existence by men; they perceive and experience within an existent system, and their perceptions and experiences are dependent upon this objectivity. May we speak of
theistic knowledge as knowledge of an object? Such talk, within Theism, is sustained. Yet Theism does not conceive of God as an empiricist would conceive of the world. For its view of the self disclosure of God points to a personal element. According, therefore, to the doctrine of revelation, God is to be known through his personal communication with man. So, on the one hand, a Christian's knowledge of God may be compared with a man's knowledge of the world but, on the other hand, his knowledge is taken to be some kind of acquaintance of a personal nature.

It will be possible to say from this distinction, that Theistic knowledge has elements of knowledge by description as well as of knowledge by acquaintance. In so far as there are constative propositions included within Christian talk of revelation, it is a kind of knowledge by description.

b. Man's Conative Response to God

However, when the personal nature of knowledge of God is emphasised, some kind of knowledge by acquaintance is implied. An experiential view of revelation requires the concept of man's conative response to God to lend the necessary personal dimension to the knowledge in question. The believer is said to apprehend knowledge of God by conative response, that is by trust in, and commitment to, God. There may be said, then, to be a dual character of theistic knowledge: it is both cognitive and conative, for it is objective and personal in nature.

We may, next, consider how this knowledge is gained. It might be thought to be an achievement, a hard-won success whereby the believer eventually is victorious. Ryle's idea of 'know' as a success verb, as distinct from 'believe' which has a logical affinity with 'wonder' 'ponder' 'consider' etc. would seem to be appropriate in this case. It might, however, be considered justified true belief. Here appropriate
evidence would be needed to support the knowledge claim. Or it might be said to be causal. Here the emphasis would be upon something inducing the knowledge in question. For example my belief that there is a table before me is induced by the existence of a table: its existence is the cause of my having a perception of a table. Whichever of these concepts of knowledge might be thought to be relevant to the concept of revelation, a place for reflection upon putative facts seems to be essential. For Theistic knowledge embraces knowing 'that' as well as knowing 'how', and each of these suggest a learning process. The Christian claims to know 'that' in respect of putative historical propositions, and he demonstrates that he knows 'how' in the observance of the rites and ceremonies of his religion.

So there is an epistemological element in talking of God disclosing himself to men. From what I have said, it is plain that problems are raised as to the nature of the knowledge claimed by believers. Part of my task will be to attempt to seek logical justification for the Christian view that, in Christ, knowledge of God may be experienced.

c. Knowledge of other minds

A further problem relates to philosophy of mind, or psychological philosophy. If, to some extent, the epistemology of revelation centres upon constative propositions, the psychology of belief would seem to bear more upon the conative element. There might appear to be a problem raised by the notion of One who is taken to be Bodiless Agent, or Spirit, being said to communicate with sentient beings. I do not think a logical difficulty resides here, although there is clearly an empirical puzzle in trying to envisage non-corporeal agency relating to corporeal selves. The logical difficulty, I believe, resides more firmly in the area of attempting to identify god. To discuss these issues, I shall consider dualist views of a Cartesian nature, while duly treading cautiously in the light of Ryle's stricture concerning
the fallacy of the 'ghost in the machine'. In attempting to grapple with the problem of speaking intelligibly of the idea of god, I shall look at the assertions of Brentano and Russell to the effect that the concept of intentional inexistent objects is coherent. Further, I shall investigate Wittgenstein's use of the term 'the mystical' and, tentatively, attempt a link with what he says about non-cognitive avowals within the context of an 'autonomous' grammar.

d. The Nature of Religious Belief

It is, however, in my analysis of religious belief itself that a key to understanding might be provided. For it could be said that religious belief, in the context of the concept of revelation, forms a kind of 'deposit' whereby putative events recorded in the Bible (and possibly elsewhere) are accorded the status of divine disclosure to men. Belief, is seen to be the existent attitude amongst men whereby the truth of the recorded and experienced godly motions is vouchsafed. To the sceptic (the agnostic) who chivvies the believer for his resort to fantasy and escapism, it could be retorted that in the existence of religious belief itself (and here I have Christian belief particularly in mind), there is a significant empirical phenomenon, by which knowledge claims concerning relationship with God can be examined. Hence, it is religious belief itself (or the particular view of religious belief which I shall favour and seek to justify) which may be said to be an entrance both to explanation and understanding.

To elucidate the view which I intend to adopt, I must first draw attention to the fact that it is customary to separate knowledge from belief. One is thought to operate in the area of assurance and certainty; the other in the less pretentious area of conviction and hope. If such a distinction is drawn between a knowledge claim and an assertion of belief, a considerable philosophical problem arises when an attempt is made to bring together, in some way, these two states.
Can a man who says that he knows that ... be told that he simply believes it; or can a sincere believer be credited with knowledge when he asserts what he holds to be true? My experiential view of revelation seems to require that I bring together these apparently diverse epistemological elements. I propose to do this by stressing the idea of religious belief as being essentially human response to divine disclosure, not some kind of theory about the world.

What kind of belief is meant when the idea of the disclosure of God and man's apprehension of that disclosure is spoken about? To believe the Christian gospel is both to entertain a proposition, (or series of propositions) which bears upon the kerygma and to evaluate, in some way or another, the facts which it proclaims. Price has distinguished an evaluative from a factual connotation of religious belief. He points out that the former is not a necessary condition of the latter. Since a Christian holds a warm, affective attitude towards Christ, because of what he believes God has effected for him through Christ, he evinces an evaluative 'belief in' God. He shows approval by his attitude of belief for the retrospective, present and prospective benefits which he takes to be effected on his behalf (and on behalf of others). The answer to my question therefore as to the nature of Theistic belief is that it is 'belief in' rather than 'belief that'. It is not by believing that  so much as believing  the kind of God of whom the kerygma speaks, that the Christian might be said to demonstrate his convictions about God's disclosure to him. (However, belief 'that' God exists and 'that' He has performed saving acts for man is entailed by such). Such a view coheres with the conative response of which I previously spoke. 'Belief in' can be seen to be a prior requirement for apprehension of the cognitive awareness (implicit in the notion of encounter with God) to become viable. There are thus constative and commissive elements present in Theistic 'belief in'.
I shall depend heavily upon the philosophy of Wittgenstein in attempting to argue that 'belief in' may, given the acceptance of certain presuppositions, lead to 'knowing that.' It will be my contention that the kerygma, which I have already identified as the particular feature of written Christianity, generated within the Apostolic community a 'form of life' whereby men believed that they had encountered God. I shall take the kerygma, in its sense of proclamation of the Christ-event (the saving deeds and words of Christ and His fulfilling the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament) to have the force of a fundamental proposition. As such it is not a hypothesis, but determines all that can be said about the Christian view of divine self disclosure and human apprehension of it. It will be, then, by examining the 'autonomous grammar' of the kerygmatic language game that the problem of how, if at all, 'belief in' may lead to 'knowing that' will be resolved. Further, I shall use another of Wittgenstein's concepts, that of religious belief as a 'picture' which the believer holds 'for ever before him' to indicate the logical status which revelation may be shown to have.

Before concluding this introduction, I shall say a few words about how I understand Wittgenstein on these matters. I believe that, in part at least, he meant by a 'form of life' the essential 'acting' which a society or group of people perform and, importantly, in so-doing, evince certain fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of their language game(s). By fundamental proposition, he meant certain assumptions which are 'there' like our life (for example all human beings have two parents; objects do not appear, disappear and re-appear without due cause). A fundamental proposition, being at the bottom of all that can conceivably be said about a particular matter, cannot be treated as a hypothesis. It is not an empirical proposition, subject to verification or falsification.
I intend to argue that the Apostolic community and the fundamental propositions embedded in, or relative to, the initial proclamation of the Christ-event (the kerygma), comprise a 'form of life' which can illuminate the traditional Christian Theistic claim that God has made Himself known to men 'in Christ'. What counts as an explanation, and what characterises the Christian experience of God, therefore, are determined by the autonomous grammar of the (Kerygmatic) language game. The latter phrase (language game) of course refers to an area of discourse, of which Wittgenstein spoke in his "Philosophical Investigations". The 'depth' or 'autonomous' grammar will be unique to a particular 'game', in so far as it grows out of societal needs and actions which stem from the form of life, and its fundamental propositions. To discover what sense, if any, can be given, therefore, to the proposition that men may have an experience of God, whereby they may coherently speak of knowing God, I shall examine the salient characteristics of a specific area of discourse - that of Biblical revelation.
CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIAN BELIEF AS 'UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT'

Since I do not subscribe to the view that an experience of God means, what T. R. Miles (and others, like D. Phillips and D. Cupitt) interpret it to mean, an experience which can be explicated solely as that which is, in some way or another, an expression of unconditional commitment, I do not intend to begin with individual volitional statements. Rather, I wish to use Wittgenstein's phrase 'a form of life' to suggest that the Christian experience of the individual believer can only be understood in relation to the language used by a community of believers in which those beliefs have their home.

Miles' wish to avoid errors which he thinks derive from the false dichotomy between material/immaterial, body/mind etc., while important for intelligible speech about the 'self', leads him, I feel, to go beyond what is warranted by the Christian tradition. He too readily rejects any talk of experience of an objective God, whose existence and communicating activity are presupposed in my experiential view of revelation. Like Miles, and others of a similar persuasion (e.g. Phillips), I want to try to discover whether speaking of men having an experience of God can be given intelligible expression.

By commencing with Wittgenstein's notion that a language-game reflects a form of life in which it is grounded, I hope to build upon the supposition that it is in the kerygma (the primitive proclamation of the Apostles concerning Christ's person and actions) that the meaning of what a present day experience of God is, can be discovered. Like so many contemporary exponents of belief, Miles considers the cultural milieu of our day, and the interpretations of experiences which such cultural influences inspire, to be so
different from the situation of Old Testament and Jesus' days, that ipso facto any talk within the Biblical narrative of encounter with God, considered to be encounter with an objective Being, to be hopelessly overtaken by more enlightened thinking. So Miles takes his cue as to what might be meant by an experience of God from contemporary views of a psychological and sociological nature. Whether this is the correct procedure to take or not, I shall be concerned with the logical implications of saying that to explicate what it means to speak of an experience of God is to explore the logic of a particular form of life. This is both the communal life of the early Christians about which we read in the New Testament, and especially in the Acts; and those fundamental propositions and the 'grammar' associated with them which determine what can be said. If it can be established that it is here, in the dynamic experiences which the presence of Christ stimulated in those who met him, or were the recipients of the kerygma, that the paradigm for Christian experience may be found, I believe that a certain objectivity may be lent to the subject. This does not mean that the concept of unconditional commitment, which Miles holds to be constitutive of religious belief, is not a necessary condition for the view I wish to expound. If the concept of revelation requires the ideas of encounter and response to make sense of God being said to reveal Himself to men, such unconditional commitment by believers would be demanded. And such commitment indicates the commissive aspect of 'belief in' which provides the key to Theistic understanding. I differ from Miles in attempting to find the meaning of religious experience within that language (especially as conveyed by the Kerygma and its doctrinal derivatives) of which the form of life of the early Christian community was the exemplar. This may appear to
say no more than that I hold the New Testament picture of Christian experience in high esteem. And that would be true. It is, however, in the logical possibilities of conceiving of the early church as the promulgator of a language-game, which provides for those believers who play that game today, the kind of language wherein religious experience may be clothed in some sort of realism. I shall discuss Quine's dictum that the "roots of reference" are to be found in language and ally this with Wittgenstein's dictum that meaning is to be sought in looking to see how words are used, within a particular language game. It is precisely in this regard that I wish to argue that religious experience, an integral part of the New Testament story of that community which owed its being to the kerygmatic proclamation, is to be understood. Thus what I conceive religious experience to be, in Christian terms, cannot logically (given the stipulations I have made about the original linguistic foundation for Christian talk) be spoken of solely as certain feelings, attitudes or aspirations which 'unconditional commitment' induce, and which do not require objective reference beyond the self to explicate. There is no attempt in my view to provide "evidence" (such a base to Miles' understanding of what religious experience requires to justify it being so called) to try to "prove" that the apostles met God in a way which would be open to empirical enquiry. My point is, rather, to emphasise what it makes sense to day, given my view that cultural differences between our society and that of the early church need not vitiate the contention that the language of theological insight (the perception of something new for them, and for us when apprehended through belief in Christ) contains an avenue whereby speaking about experience of God may be given intelligibility. I differ from the sort of philosophical approach
followed by Miles, therefore, principally in my wish to anchor modern
talk of Christian experience in the logical ground established by the
apostolic kerygmatic language game, which has as its central axiom,
what Pannenberg calls, the Christ-event. By this he means, not only
the facts of Jesus' life (such as they might be considered to be,
after due notice has been taken of theological scholarship) but the
theological understanding which permeates the New Testament literature.
For Pannenberg, the resurrection of Christ (which he takes to be a
physical event) gives a uniqueness to those ideas concerning Christ
which emanate from the post-Easter insights of the apostles. Thus
what can be said of Christian experience can only be said when the
"Christ-event" itself is seen to be constitutive of that experience.
This means that for a modern believer to speak authentically of
Christian experience of God, he can only do so by acclaiming the
Lordship of Christ. For so to acclaim Christ is to indicate,
assuming sincerity and understanding on his part, participation in
both a form of life and in a language which shows what Christian
religious experience means. Its meaning is bound up with the idea
that God has revealed himself to man, for it is by encounter with
the Christ of the kerygmatic proclamation, and through response to
such encounter, that revelation is irradiated for the believer.
His 'belief-in' God enables him to experience something of the
meaning of divine disclosure, of which the apostolic community
claimed to bear testimony and about which they so fervently and
resolutely spoke. My contention is, therefore, that Miles is wrong
to dismiss the notion of encounter with something outside the self
on the ground that it could never be known whether this were the
case. I also think that he is wrong to invoke the spectre of
Cartesian dualism or the censoring by Ryle of the idea of the
'ghost in the machine' of the mind-body problem, in order to show
that religious experience is, in the last analysis unconditional commitment, demanding nothing beyond the self to justify it.

Here Miles endorses Flew's agnostic criticism of Baillie and Farmer, who speak of experiences of God through prayer etc. Flew wants to know what difference would be made by simply imagining the presence of God in such circumstances. Unlike Miles, who is reduced to speaking of experiences which could be explicated without reference to God (although he speaks of the believer's unconditional commitment to God), I am trying to say something quite different. My view is that the kerygma of the Apostles, with its consequent form of life and language game emanated from something which, to quote Wittgenstein, is "there, like our life." Their prior 'belief in' God enabled them to discern the revelation of God in Christ. So, today, it would be possible to speak of an experience as being 'consequent upon', i.e. the outcome of, 'belief in'.

Miles rightly speaks of an experience being either an experience of (e.g. of Smith being a talkative man or of Eastern bazaars) or experience with (e.g. with children, with machine-tools). He points out that 'I had an experience of Smith' seems odd. He later uses this to reject 'I had an experience of God' and argues that religious experience can, in no circumstances, be said to be of or with something or some-one beyond the self, that is beyond one's feelings, attitudes, aspirations etc. Religious experience is characterized by committal, devotion, social action etc. I do not, of course, deny any of these characteristics as being elements in the Christian's repertoire of his religious life. To be a Christian in the sense of responding sincerely to the 'Christ-event', however, could be said to be an experience of something new. Feelings and volitions will be involved. Yet the doing of the act whereby assent
is given to that which the apostles wrote of Christ is to participate in something more. My point here is that the Apostles could not (and I take this to be a logical point as well as an empirical actuality) have written or spoken of this 'new creation', this 'something more' if they had not been gripped by the Christ whom they encountered in the person of Jesus. It was the apostles' belief that the awareness of newness and innovation came from beyond themselves, yet had as its source an historical personage whom they had seen and heard. That is the heart of the matter. Miles' talk of commitment is insufficient to make sense of what the Christian Faith purports to provide. The Apostles' experiences are a paradigm for our experiences. I cannot have their experiences but I can respond in a similar fashion, and believe about Christ and in Christ as they did. From this it might be said that I am speaking of 'experience by proxy' or second-order experience, in that modern believers are conceived to know certain statements about Christ and certain theological formulations. To adopt this view would be to revert to an informative view of revelation, rather than the experiential view I am seeking to uphold. My argument is that if it be accepted that the roots of reference are to be found in language, and if meaning is to be defined as use, the particular use to which a Christ-centred language game is put by believers, and the meaning which is explained through a specific act of identification with the apostolic kerygma, and all that it implies, are the means of speaking intelligibly of an experience of God.

The apparent circularity of my argument which would confirm Miles in his view that there can be no way of speaking intelligibly of God, understood as objective Being revealing Himself to man, may be avoided when the logical implications of assenting to the kerygmatic
language game are scrutinised. Wittgenstein said that what differentiates believers from unbelievers is the use of different pictures. These pictures reflect different world views, ways of seeing things. Since they are totally different, an unbeliever cannot contradict a believer or vice versa. One is either committed to a particular world view or not. This argument appears to support Miles' contention that religious experience is not about something external to the believer but a matter of commitment. I do not dispute the necessity of commitment, as I have said. I do contend, however, that the commitment in the case of a Christian believer is to the Christ event which, imprinted in language as it is (in the New Testament) necessitates participation in a form of life. The structure of the language associated with this form of life cannot, logically, function without the concept of encounter and response between God and man, given expression by the 'Christ-event'. It is here that my experiential view of revelation joins hands with the informative and instructive views. For religious experience, understood in this Christian sense, can be said to be commissive (as Miles shows), performative (assent to a language-game and to its logical entailments and contraries), necessitating knowledge ('of' facts about Christ, theology etc. and 'how' to relate these to worship etc) and dependent upon 'belief in' God, as a prior condition. It is in the sine qua non of this particular participation in a form of life, however, that experience of God has its significance. It would not be possible to play that language game, in my opinion, without the apostolic affirmations about God-in-Christ having a perlocutionary force for the believer, and so he could not, logically, be said to be participating apart from, not merely an assent to the Christ-event, but some newness of life for which the phrase experience of God
would, given the constitutive concept of God which determines religious belief, be appropriate. There is more to it than unconditional commitment, important as that is.

If this attempt to tie the concept of religious experience to language which purports to reflect divine revelation to man, be said to open the way to an infinite number of creeds which lay claim to particular disclosures by Allah, Brahma, Ormuzd or whoever, no problem seems to me to ensue. It is incumbent upon those who claim to be the recipients of a divine disclosure to say how such a disclosure was made manifest to them or their forbears and how they were able to determine that it was indeed what they hold it to be. Given the view that Christian Theism owes its existence to a form of life and the language game of Christian belief, it follows that it is that area of discourse, and not another, which will provide the logical basis for what can or cannot be said about revelation, as understood by Christians. My problem has been to try to find some means of showing how experience, understood in its normal usage, may be said to be a word which can be used in a rational way when that of which men are said to have experience is a self-disclosing God. Therefore, whatever other assertions of divine revelation may be made by those of other faiths (about which I do not consider it to be part of my task here to comment upon), the view I am espousing is (as any other claim to divine revelation in other faiths would be) rooted in a particular linguistic context. Christian Theism is rooted in that area of discourse which has as its focal point, I believe, the apostolic proclamation of the Christ event. And that event, incorporating theological interpretation of the putative historical material as given in the New Testament, provides a pivotal reference by which talk of religious experience can be said
to find some justification.

NOTE

Throughout this chapter, I have referred to different concepts of religious belief: that it is unconditional commitment; that it is culturally determined; or that it is in need of modern appraisal. I have chosen the view which sees Christian belief as being explicated by reference to its appropriate form of life and language game. In drawing attention to views which I do not share, it may be observed that I touch upon, but do not develop, some of the alternative interpretations of religious belief which are discussed by Stuart Brown in "Do Religious Claims Make Sense?" SCM, London, 1969
CHAPTER TWO


d FLEW, Antony: God and Philosophy London, 1966 p 133 ff
CHAPTER THREE

THE FOCAL POINT OF THE LANGUAGE GAME TO WHICH 'BELIEF IN' RELATES: THE KERYGMA

Pannenberg tells us that it is in the 'fate of Jesus' that the Christian may find a secure basis for a faith which looks to the future for its final vindication. In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the God of Israel has shown himself to be the one God of all men. 'The God of Israel has substantiated his deity in an ultimate way and is now manifest as the God of all men. With the resurrection of Jesus, the end of history has already recurred ... If the fate of Jesus Christ is the anticipation of the end, and thus the revelation of God, then no further revelation of God can happen. This does not mean that nothing new happens after Christ. The history after Christ is determined in essence by the proclamation of the revelation in Christ.' Pannenberg goes on to assert several important inferences in respect of our understanding of the concept of revelation. Meaning is provided for all history through the Christ event, so that while the totality of history demonstrates the deity of the one God, it is through that one particular event that the purpose of history is disclosed. This is because the end of history is anticipated by it. Yet our present position is that of openness to the eschaton, the end, which has already been revealed in the Christ event. As such it cannot be overtaken by any later event. The eschatological nature of the Christ event enables us to discern the self-revelation of God in it. Pannenberg then shows how the report of the fate of Jesus by the apostles, the kerygma, enabled them to convey the revelation of God to their generation. So for us today, it is through the kerygma, the proclamation which tells of the revealing history centred on the Christ event, that we may apprehend
the eschatological self-revelation of God. We are privileged, through this proclamation of the Christ event, to know about the Universality of God’s revelation, something of which Israel with its recognition of Yahweh’s revelation through occupation of the land, reception of the law and of the prophetic voice, had less awareness.

It is to be observed that Pannenberg’s thesis entails two distinct kinds of knowledge: historical knowledge and some form of knowledge by experience or by intuition. (Both are knowledge claims wherein putative ‘knowing that’ is indicated.) If A is a serious believer he may be said to know certain things. He knows that the Apostles recorded various events relating to the life of Jesus of Nazareth; and what those events were; in addition, he knows the substance of teachings attributed to him and those said to be by Apostles, including Paul. Beyond this, he believes that he has acquired a grasp of those insights to which the Apostles bore witness. Through a religious experience of some kind he has achieved intuitive understanding and he has evinced his response to the kerygma. In so doing he has shared in a way of life lived by a community of people in this age, and in previous ages.

So we may establish the constative and commissive aspects which the kerygma requires. For B, an agnostic, neither of these aspects of knowledge would be laid claim to, although in principle it would be possible for him to acquire historical knowledge of the faith. It would not be possible for B, as an unbeliever, to claim the kind of insight spoken of by A, based on a kerygmatic understanding of that historical knowledge. Undoubtedly, we may say that A possesses knowledge (necessarily of at least some historical facts and, indubitably, knowledge based on some sort of intuition or experience which his response to the kerygma han brought) which B does not possess. Here we see that ‘belief in’ is a pre-requisite for playing the theistic
The "depth" grammar of the 'game' may be said to include both the Christ-event and the kerygma of which Pannenberg speaks. It would make sense to say, given this fundamental difference between the knowledge-claims made by A and B, that A conceives the transcendent to be revealed through the immanent (in the sense that empirical criteria are appealed to, to make such claims) while B recognises no such transcendent reality. A understands what it means to say that God's revelation has occurred through historical events: part of his stock of knowledge, as a believer, resides in the historical element. Yet he would insist that it is through his response to the Christ-event, the kerygma, that he has embarked upon a path which looks ahead as much as it does to what has gone before. Pannenberg's concept of God as the Power of the future, who is ahead of every present age, and through whom the eschatological ideas expressed by Jesus and Paul are said to be capable of fulfilment, provides a necessary complement to his concept of revelation as history. We are thus able to grasp the possibility of the historical as being, although linear in its space-time aspect, cosmic when seen in its totality. That is to say, when viewed sub specie aeternitae, from the position of the revealing purpose and activity of God, futurity as well as pastness focus on the eternal in the present. Although from a human standpoint the future may be said to be open in a way in which the past is not, the end has been glimpsed in what has already occurred. Here Wittgenstein's pointer metaphor is appropriate. To which I refer in some detail when considering the concept of the INTENTIONALITY OF GOD. We can plot the logical bearings which this understanding of the Christ-event necessitate. It is here, too, that the idea of appropriation through belief, provides the basis for further belief. Such beliefs include the conviction that the events reported have present and future signifi-
cance for the believer, and for all who share his faith. Pannenberg's concept of revelation as history thus enables us to recognise the possibility of making sense of indirect, inferential knowledge as counting as knowledge of the transcendent, insofar as the concept of 'belief in' is given full play, as required by the kerygma.

It will be observed that I have itemised the historical element as being the avenue for speaking about the transcendent. Since it is only through the report of the Christ-event, by the proclamation of the kerygma, that revelation is claimed to have been conveyed to those who would respond to it, it may be said that what would otherwise have been unknown to man, was made known through this medium. This must be taken to be so, for the Christian Faith is about God meeting man through the Incarnation. Pannenberg’s definition of revelation as history points to this understanding of the transcendent being beyond knowledge, rather than beyond description. Inherent in his thesis is the hint of 'something more'. His stress upon the forward-looking aspect of the kerygma indicates that Christians await a fuller knowledge of God than that already conveyed through the Christ-event, as far as its historical aspect is concerned. A glimpse of what is yet to be - the 'eschaton' seen through the events of history - has been gained. It is in the believer's response to the message of the kerygma, as much now as in Apostolic days that a realisation of the eternal dimension is possible for him. The commissive aspect of 'belief in' is thus to the fore. In this way, a grasp of what is meant by the transcendent emerges. In the possession of the insight which knowledge of something new brings with it, the believer may be said to be appraised of a deeper understanding than mere knowledge that certain historical events are said to have occurred could bring. His "belief in" God thus embraces both constative and commissive elements. He 'believes that' in the
kerygma the proclamation of God's word to men has been effected; and he 'believes in' the One who both proclaimed that word and became the focus of the proclamation itself.

It will be seen that the believer is in the position of supplementing knowledge claims about past events, which are of necessity claims about closed events, with claims to an understanding of what is the case in respect of present knowledge, which embraces an openness towards the future. His claim to know X, through response to the kerygma cannot be logically separated from his knowledge about the past. His claim to possess knowledge of revelation as history, or of a transcendent Being made known through immanent events, entails an understanding of the Christ-event, in its past, present and future senses. So Wittgenstein's criterion concerning the learning associated with a language game is fulfilled. Without a basic historical knowledge he could not, logically, be in a position to respond to the kerygma. As in any other piece of knowledge which is inferentially acquired, the believer must rely upon experiences which he has. On the one hand, these will be experiences of learning history. This reflects the constative element of belief. On the other hand, they will be experiences which have enabled him to be aware of having responded to the Christian message. Here the commissive element of belief is seen. By paying heed to the report of those historical events he has gained an insight as to their import and bearing upon his life.

All of this Wittgenstein would want to place within the borders of a specific language-game. I have talked, in effect, of the "depth grammar" of sentences appropriate to Christian theology. The autonomous grammar of the 'game' determines meaning. I have implied that there is a "form of life" which the language of theism reflects.
In aligning historical events with present experiences and expectations of future events, I have indicated the "logical space" covered by the interior structure of this particular language game. This has been demonstrated by recognizing the constative and commissive elements of Christian belief, and that knowledge which a believer may be said to possess by dint of his response to the Christian report of those events. What it makes sense to say, then, is that the transcendent expressed in the immanent is not solely related to history, but to an apperception by each generation of believers of what is the case in respect of their having reached out beyond knowledge of putative historical events to an awareness of new insights gained by their belief in the proclamation (kerygma) of those events.

I shall now examine Quine's view that the roots of reference are to be found in language and argue that, as a complement to Wittgenstein's understanding of the autonomous grammar yielded by a particular language game, it is in the language employed by the Apostolic Kerygma (and its attendant 'form of life' and its societal foundations) that the meaning of Christian propositions concerning revelation is to be discovered.

bThe concept of the kerygma as a report of apostolic observations could 'serve to pick out what witnesses can agree on'. Sentences are to be found in the New Testament kerygmatic material (whether in the Gospels, the Acts or the Epistles) which may be said to express 'socially shared' experiences. It is thus through language that their referential aspect may be inferred. And the notion of today's believers being able to gain some sort of inferential knowledge of God through response to the proclamation enshrined in the appropriate language, once again fulfills Wittgenstein's criterion of finding meaning in usage and his stress upon the autonomy of the 'grammar' concerned. The societal aspect of the kerygma (one with which
Bultmann and the Form Critics are especially associated, through their stress upon the early Christian communities as the source of the established kerygmatic message) gives to the inter-relatedness of theological doctrines a significance which solitary pronouncements would not give. For example, Paul's credal statement "Christ died for our sins" presupposes not only theological elucidation but historical description and discussion, against which the claim may be examined. "Most sentences do not admit separately of observational evidence." Quine goes on to tell us that both the evidential and the semantical relations are complex when we study 'observation sentences'. He points us away from ideas to language, an apparent difference with Popper here. Thus it is in the understanding of sentences, based both upon socially acceptable empirical data and ostensibly learned rules, that a selection can be made as to what is the case. We may all share in the study, and sifting, of language to help us arrive at the truth.

So it would be possible to say that the Apostles, as witnesses, agreed upon reports of observed events which they proclaimed (the kerygma) by word of mouth and by writing. This provided the constative element. All who heard or read their proclamation were invited to increase their knowledge of the nature of things by making a positive response to that to which their words (observation sentences) directed them. So demonstrating the commissive aspect of 'belief in'. To dismiss such response as being merely a favourable value-judgement or merely assent to certain propositions is to minimise naked understanding of language. Logically odd religious language may be, in the discernment achieved through openness to its depths of meaning new knowledge may indeed be imparted. I have argued that the knowledge-claim which the concept of revelation as history makes, is not
to be reduced simply to a claim to one's having an experience. It is a necessary condition for one to acquire knowledge of the transcendent (understood to be in the nature of revelation as history) that one should experience firstly a learning of certain putative facts (the conconstative aspect of belief) and, secondly, experience some kind of recognition of the significance of those facts (the commissive response of belief). However, to say this, is to say something other than to say that the alleged knowledge resides in the experience alone. My quotations from Quine were intended to underline the belief held by Christians that, in the kerygmatic report of events vouchsafed by an agreed verdict of the Apostles, 'observation-sentences' were being provided. Quine's demonstration of the relationship of evidential and semantical elements in language, and their social grounding, enables us to appreciate the necessity of a careful study of what has been and is said by Christians. The fellowship of the church — then and now — is the society which has produced a language, some of it having a special connotation within the boundaries of that language, dependent for its very existence upon 'observation statements', the report of which both instituted the fellowship and has sustained it since then. To say that a believer's inference through experience of 'observation-statements' and response to the shared insights of the kerygma is a linguistic matter is to say no more than one would say of the communication of any experience whatsoever. Quine has much to say about the way that 'children acquire an understanding of the relation of words and sentences to external objects.' He analyses the learning process which enables a child to select and classify appropriate linguistic phrases and sentences to enable him to communicate acceptably in the society to which he belongs. Compare here Wittgenstein's emphasis upon the learning of rules and the contextual nature of language. There is an empirical
checking system to help him sort out what is deemed to be pertinent to the situation he meets. Thus in learning to understand 'red', a child firstly learns that it is a matter of sight not of some other sense. He has to find how much to count, how big a patch, and what aspect of the patch - not confusing shape with colour. Shade too is significant and the degree of orange permitted to allow of 'red' being defined. 

Quine insists, however, that it is 'present impingements' which suffice for observation sentences: 'It is raining', 'This is red', 'That is a rabbit'; although each of these are dependent on one's earlier training in the use of language, they are of a different sort of sentence to those which make a remark about ancient Egypt or about the nucleus of an atom. He would not, therefore, accept my attempt to describe Judaeo-Christian historical propositions as observation statements. Yet it is not only Quine's Wittgensteinian remark that the road to reference is through language, but his stress upon the necessity that there should be witnesses to establish the veracity of a report of observations, which has led me to discuss his philosophy. In his exposition of how a child learns to relate language to experience, Quine speaks of ontological sophistication. This phrase may be applied to his ingenious exploration of the logic of referring. He cautions us to adopt a method of relative empiricism: "Don't venture farther from sensory evidence than you need to." He concedes though that even in the case of bodies "those prototypical objects of reference" there was no intention of copying Russell and Carnap in attempting to translate talk of bodies into talk of sense impressions. "I asked how, given our stimulations, we might have developed our corporeal style of talk." Quine elucidates the physiological factors in the stimulation of human responses. He states that he has speculated on causes, not justifications. By a study of semantical relations within language,
clues to fundamental causes may be discovered. And interestingly, Quine asserts "One could ask, in the same spirit, how we developed our religious talk . . . If we managed to reconstruct these causal chains of language learning, we would find that every here and there the learner had made a little leap on the strength of analogy or conjecture or confusion; but then the same seemed to be true of our learning to talk of bodies. In short, I speculated on causes and not on values." Here Quine concedes the point made by Hudson that there does appear to be, in the last analysis, an elusiveness in respect of physical objects as regards the attempt to ground what we say about them in sense experience. It is in his linking of observation statements to a report which must have social approval for it to be valid, that his analysis seems to bear upon the coherence of the concept of revelation as history. I realise that I have gone well beyond what Quine himself would accept as viable observation statements. I do not think that I have tried to make any substantive claims in respect of theistic historical propositions. What I have attempted is to show how the basic Wittgensteinian view concerning meaning as use seems to gain support from Quine's discussion about the roots of reference in relation to language. Also this accords with Wittgenstein's teaching that the autonomous grammar of the game and those fundamental propositions upon which it rests determine what can be said and wherein meaning is to be discovered. If I have succeeded in arguing some plausibility for the view that in the apprehension, through the written and spoken work, of both the apostolic witness and the kerygmatic pronouncement, intelligibility can be given to the concept of revelation as history I shall be satisfied.

From what I have just said, it is clear that "belief in" understood in its constative and commissive aspects provides a criterion
for a believer to become alive to the transcendental claims implicit within the kerygma. It would not be possible for him to claim any sort of reception of the revelation implicit in the Christ-event and at the same time dis-believe in it. There is a finality about human response to the kerygma, going beyond psychological states or moods, which encapsulates the essence of what is entailed in Christian belief. As regards Wittgenstein's notion of having compelling reasons for knowledge-claims, A would be able to speak of such reasons. Although historical knowledge cannot be said to be knowledge of God, it may be considered to be preliminary to the further knowledge which kerygmatic understanding will bring. Albeit, inferential and not direct knowledge is here to be understood. His claim to know 'something more' than that yielded by the historical facts alone is a recognition of the commissive nature of theistic language. It has perlocutionary as well as illocutionary force for the believer. If we are to discover the meaning of this language we must follow Wittgenstein's advice and see how it is used, and more: to discover by the system of representation, that meaning which the autonomous grammar of the 'game' yields. We shall then notice that, within the language-game played by the Apostles who reported the Christ-event, and in its subsequent conveyance through kerygmatic proclamation, the claim to know the transcendent through experience of the immanent is frequently made. I am in effect arguing that the apostolic conviction for what they understood to be the Christ-event formed the basis of all that they had to say about revelation.

How far may the concept of response to the Christ-event or, to hark back to Pannenberg's thesis, the notion of revelation as history, be considered to be 'fundamental propositions in theistic discourse? We have seen that the Christ event is the sine qua non of Christian belief. It follows that there can be no intelligible talk of what
constitutes belief apart from it. For talk of such is grounded logically in the 'grammar' of the 'game'. To be sure, we cannot adduce empirical evidence for that which is beyond empirical enquiry. This does not entail the proposition that the concept of revelation as history is necessarily self-contradictory or incoherent. While Wittgenstein (in the forward to the TRACTACUS) speaks of drawing a boundary around what can be said and at the end of that work cautions us to remain silent of what cannot be spoken about (the "mystical"), he also informs us that a proposition shows how things stand, if it is true. We have had occasion to emphasise that a "form of life" has been expressed in the kerygmatic beliefs of the early church. We have seen how today the Christian community enters into that form of life by its understanding of the language employed amongst its members. Quine's analysis of the referential elements to be discovered in the language of a particular society, ultimately traceable to approved facts, provides further support for this approach. One may thus visualise a kind of chain connecting the linguistic formulae of today's believers with observation statements reported through the kerygma by the Apostles. Tentatively, I would offer the suggestion that in its perlocutionary impact upon the believer, the kerygma to which he responds as he believes, provides a basis for a claim to inferential knowledge. I would further suggest that the necessity imposed upon the believer through the acceptance of the kerygma is logical necessity. The finality of the observation-statements which form the substance of the apostolic report does not allow of variation of what can be said. Theologians discuss at length the problem of what we can know of the life and words of Christ. Even Bultmann accepted the kerygma, at least in its existential challenge: he had to accept that the early church proclaimed X for it to be possible to say that we can respond to X today.
Can we have the logical insight that 'there is no such doubt in this case'? Can the proposition that I may gain an inferential knowledge of God through the Christ-event; or more truly through response to the kerygma (in so far as the kerygma establishes the concept of an encounter response relationship; belief in Christ is thus a non-negotiable condition for 'knowing') be deemed to be a fundamental proposition for theism? A fundamental proposition in the sense that one must begin with not doubting if if one is to play the theistic language-game? It is important to say that it is not that a believer asserts that he knows that p which is being examined. For clearly such an assertion can be said to reflect his state of mind: it would be subjective and untestable. Rather, the assertion amounts to absolute conviction that this is how things stand. In Wittgenstein's words, the believer for ever holds a picture before him. His world waxes and wanes as a whole. His weltanschauung determines his attitude to all that happens in his life. To deny that he has gained, by experience, an inferential knowledge - an indirect grasp of not only reported events but an insight into the meaning of them - would be to deny everything which acts within his world. For it is through such acting that his talk of knowing God, revealed in historical events, shows how the focus of everything is upon the Christ-event, into which he has entered by faith.
CHAPTER THREE


b QUINE, W. V.: The Roots of Reference Illinois, Open Court, 1975 pp 38 - 40; 131 - 138


'BELIEF IN' AS A KEY TO 'KNOWING THAT'

A Christian Belief conceived to be a 'form of life'

Will 'belief in' lead to 'knowing that'? The question seems to be demanded by an implicit assumption in the concept of revelation. For if revelation is taken to be the disclosure by God to man of something new, some new knowledge which he cannot otherwise obtain, it is clear that a knowledge claim is being made. Of course, on an informative view of revelation, the knowledge in question would be factual knowledge pertaining to something which is deemed to be the case. The putative historical events of the Judeo-Christian tradition would fit into this area. If an instructive view of revelation is in mind, we should be directed towards injunctions and moral ideas as being the new knowledge which was being imparted to us. Since my experiential view of revelation requires encounter with God to authenticate it, there would appear to be a need to establish someone who is known. To say that the question is "Will 'belief in' lead to 'knowing whom'?" might therefore be more apposite to the subject. I am substituting a relative pronoun for a demonstrative one. Yet if I claim to know someone I must be able to single out one individual rather than another. In that sense, whom I claim to know must be akin to claiming to 'know that'.

For if I am to sustain my experiential view of the concept of revelation, with its emphasis upon human encounter with God, and the prior assumption of God's self-disclosure towards man, I must in some way be able to show how one might intelligibly speak of knowing God through believing in Him, constatively and commissively. Two important questions immediately raise themselves, 1. Who or what is
god? That is, how are we to identify Him as an object of possible knowledge by men? 2. In what sense is the verb 'to know' being used, in this context? If the constative element in the 'belief in' god which Christianity affirms takes care of 'knowing how' we are to worship and obey God (being informed of such through the kerygma), it would seem that the commissive element points towards some kind of 'knowledge by acquaintance'. (Commitment, however, could be to a moral code, not necessarily to a person.) For, it might be said, it is precisely a claim to encounter with God, through the response to the kerygma (belief in) which Christian Theism makes. Encounter means to meet something or someone. It is with this in mind that I have put stress upon the form of life which may be said both to exhibit how a community of people act out their belief in God, and to provide a clue as to how a knowledge of God, through some kind of encounter with Him, may be understood. So the Apostles, in promulgating the kerygma, and in responding to the One whom it proclaimed, demonstrated their knowledge of God through their form of life.

The concept of a form of life thus holds within it all that can be worked upon to provide an intelligible 'surview' (to use Wittgenstein's word) of the concept of revelation. It yields the autonomous grammar which those fundamental propositions implicit within the kerygma of necessity (and so logically) create. Learning to play the Christian Theistic language game involves learning rules whereby the 'depth' grammar (which demonstrates the interior logic of Christian talk about God, interpreted and, given content by, the proclamation of the Apostolic kerygma) may be understood. Such understanding becomes possible where there is explanation and where the experiences gained by believers through worship and fellowship etc. are thereby illuminated. The fundamental proposition, at the base of all that is said within the game, concerns the concept of god which
is seen to be constitutive of religious belief in general and, in so far as it centres upon the person of Christ, of Christian belief in particular. My contention is, then, that by adopting Wittgenstein's concept of a form of life and by arguing for the logical coherence of what is said by those who comprise the community who exhibit that form of life, light can be shed upon the concept of 'belief in' god which I have proposed as a means of constructing an intelligible Theistic epistemology. The twin components of the kind of 'belief in' which the kerygma requires (and which is thus demanded logically by those fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of the language game) are the constative and commissive elements of that belief. There must be, therefore, both indicative and imperative propositions to which one is called to assent and, without such assent, one would not be, logically, in a position to entertain the proposition that, in Christ, God might be encountered. I have forwarded the notion of a causal nexus or gradation of necessary conditions for being able to say that God can be known! The apex is knowledge by experience - encounter with a god who is conceived to have revealed Himself, through acts of self disclosure to man, so that that which may be thought to lie beyond knowledge can be known. The route to this experience is then seen to be, or may be shown to be, those stages of assent and commitment, whereby belief in God gradually (though not perhaps necessarily so) takes on, or rather acquires, that dimension of understanding where a knowledge-claim can, justifiably, be made. The unbeliever may, logically, put himself in a position to ascertain what this knowledge purports to be (and how it may be said to relate to other areas of human knowledge) by studying the documents and observing the practices which make up the Christian (body of belief) and by assenting to the proclamation itself. Freedom of the will and the
necessity for faith are two essential features of the psychology of belief. One may or may not respond to the demands and promises made by the kerygma. Without faith, understood to be the commitment aspect of 'belief in', knowledge of God would, logically, be impossible. 

'It if any man will do his (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine.'

It remains to be shown, of course, how one may intelligibly use the verb 'to know' in this context. It also remains to be shown how one can make sense of the proposition that believers can make a valid knowledge claim in respect of that which, in normal empirical usage, appears to be beyond knowledge. Central to this problem, is the problem of identifying 'God' and thus of trying to speak coherently of the concept of the transcendent form within a finite existence. One may indeed 'know of the doctrine', if by that is meant the teachings and ethical demands of Christianity. To agree with the proposition that 'no man at any time has known God' however, and then to try to make sense of the proposition 'the only begotten Son has made him known' clearly takes us beyond learning about Christ's life or discovering what the moral precepts taught by him are. It takes firmly into the area of human experience of personal encounter. We are invited to look in the direction of the Son in order to attain knowledge of the Father.

Personal encounter usually presupposes bodily presence. Yet writing letters, speaking over the telephone etc. establish personal encounter also. One might be said to 'believe in' the writer of a letter or the speaker at the other end of the telephone. Such 'belief in' clearly implies 'belief that' such a person exists. In encountering someone through the medium of written or spoken word, one is committed to the belief and one constatively receives information. Might there be here a suggestion for Christian belief? Even though bodily presence is not effected, the believer is persuaded
that through the written 'Word', he is being communicated with. His reading of the Bible has perlocutionary force for him. Integral to the subject matter is God in Christ who is declared to be the 'author and finisher', 'the Alpha and Omega' of all that is written. Belief in Christ yields constative and commissive results. One is learning new truths and being persuaded thereby to commit oneself to the 'sender' of the 'letter', the speaker of the 'message'. All of this, of course, begs the question of the actual identity of the alleged provider of the knowledge. The evidence for such a One is often said to be the experience which is generated through response to the revelation. It is deemed to be an experience whereby encounter with God occurs. Such a notion coheres with the ideas found in the kerygma. The Apostles proclaimed their encounter with God through meeting Christ.

We are being asked, then, to consider a knowledge claim concerning God's revelation of Himself to mankind which, in order to be corroborated in personal experiences, requires 'belief in' God, and adherence to the constative and commissive elements included within that 'belief in'. I have tried to illustrate the matter by reference to a letter and a telephone call. Logically, 'belief in' in the sense demanded by the kerygma conceives of someone at the other end of the revealing process. It cannot rest with human agency alone, so that the speeches of Peter and Paul in the New Testament, require the concept of divine agency to give them sense. However the ideas of the New Testament are viewed, the end is the same. So we might apply Popper's view of a "third world" of ideas, which he suggests might have a certain objectivity, if found to be seminal in the production of new information and understanding. We might use Quine's view as to language being the arrow, as it were, to take us to the 'roots of reference'. Here we would think of
Wittgenstein's plea to seek for understanding in the use to which words are put within a language game. We would think, further, as I have done, of the form of life which is reflected in the game. Or, again, we might sift the historical data and utilise New Testament scholarship to try to ascertain probable or possible events, through which 'belief in' God is given empirical anchorage. In each or any of these we would need to bear in mind the logical structure of the language game to determine the rationality of using the concept of 'belief in' as a vehicle for talk of encounter between believer and God. And prominent here would be the notion of God being said to take the initiative in making Himself known. The question which was begged above, therefore, must find an answer of sorts in the sphere of trying to make sense of an unseen agent who is said to act meaningfully in human affairs.

B General and Particular Beliefs

In speaking of the possibility of 'belief in' opening an avenue to 'knowing that', and in acknowledging that an evaluative 'belief in' (trust in and commitment to God) requires some kind of factual 'belief in' to complement and elucidate it, a further distinction is called for. When surveying our beliefs, we may notice that some are general beliefs and some are particular ones. The former relate to ideas and evaluative concepts; the latter to putative facts. Since ideas may, necessarily, be ideas about non real objects, the need to establish a specific objective criterion to support such beliefs will not be demanded. Ideologies, thus, in their broad principles display general rather than particular beliefs. By contrast a belief 'that' such and such is the case will be a particular belief which will be subject, in principle, to verification or falsification (Price's 'The Cat is in the cupboard' where a belief is entertained and subsequently tested by looking in the cupboard).
Theistic beliefs concerning God's activities in the world are clearly general beliefs insofar as they express theological ideas. It would be possible to adduce beliefs, within Theism, which might seem to possess a similar status to the kind of belief in an intentional inexistent object of which Brentano writes. Or the propositions which are said by Russell to make sense while lacking existential import ('The present king of France is bald') and those of which Wittgenstein speaks which lack sense but which 'do not reduce to gibberish' (the proposition of logic; attempted references to the 'mystical' which might seem to qualify for the caveat 'what we cannot speak of we should pass over in silence') might also have a comparative significance. These comparisons I try to make when discussing the philosophical problem of discussing God as Bodiless Agent acting in the world and the cognate of that, the problem of how man might know such a God.

While recognising the general beliefs which are to be found amongst Christians and, while appreciating the less exacting criteria which these beliefs require insofar as empirical justification is not needed for them, it is none the less in respect of particular beliefs that my experiential view of revelation, I think, will be explicated. My reservation concerns the implication of a confusion between empirical and logical aspects of what I wish to say. For I have argued that the kerygma provides the starting point for a Christian understanding of revelation. Now insofar as I have looked to fundamental propositions and to a form of life as being constructed by the kerygma, I want to stress the conceptual patterns of the concept of revelation. In other words, my preoccupation has been with what it makes sense to say as a consequence of the acceptance by believers of those ideas implicit within the Christian Theistic language game. I have grounded my attempts to find logical coherence
for the notion of God communicating with man in something other than empirical events, per se. It might appear confusing, therefore, if I attempt to erect particular beliefs of a factual nature, and hence empirical ones, as some kind of epistemological feature of my venture. But this fear is ungrounded when it is seen that it masks a further confusion. To speak of those fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of the kerygmatic language game and which provide the Christian form of life with its authentication does not entail the exclusion of certain constative propositions which are, by definition, empirical propositions. I have exhaustively shown that belief in God, the corner stone of the Theistic edifice, comprises a constative as well as a commissive element. Further, it has been seen that 'belief in', while prior to, does not deny, 'belief that'. Where the waters are muddied a little is in the possibility of running together putative historical facts, relative to Christ and the early church with theological propositions which are hermeneutical and thus interpretative rather than factual. What I am striving to clarify is the central place taken by the kerygma - the proclamation of the Apostles - which has to be understood in an historical context if its meaning is to be explicated. It is in this connection that Pannenberg's phrase, the Christ-event, is applicable. My point has been to say that there are particular propositions as well as general ones in the Christian language game. It will be becoming clear, I think, that the logical oddness which the word 'God' suggests provides a clue to understanding in respect of both types of belief. For one cannot function without the other. If I am to understand what it means to say that God has revealed himself to men - a general belief - I must apprehend how in the proclamation of the Christ event (in part - the empirical - a particular belief) such disclosure has been effected. To conclude and sum up we may
say that the notion of God itself expresses a general belief, while within the kerygma there are particular beliefs which comprise an empirical nexus of putative events. Thus there is a sense in which I cannot be in error in respect of beliefs about God. I can be mistaken, demonstrably, about specific beliefs attaching to the kerygma and, indeed, to the Judaeo-Christian portrayal of certain events. It is the task of the Christian language game to provide meaning for the idea of God in relation to human experiences, and thus to show how general beliefs may be provided with an objective determination through various particular beliefs.
CHAPTER FOUR

a John 7:17

b John 11:8

c Hebrews 12:1-2; Revelation 1:8


e QUINE, W. V.: opus cited, p. 35 above

CHAPTER FIVE

CHRISTIAN 'ACTING' AND SPEAKING: A "FORM OF LIFE"?

Will it do to speak of Christian Theistic belief and practice - as proclaimed in the kerygma and evinced in the Apostolic community - as a form of life? I believe that it will, for reasons which I shall give. To enable me to do so, I shall discuss four philosophical commentators upon Wittgenstein's use of the phrase. These are: aJ. F. M. Hunter, whose views are given in a paper "Forms of Life in Wittgenstein's Investigations"; bP. Sherry, in his paper "Is Religion a Form of Life?"; cW. D. Hudson, in his book 'Wittgenstein and Religious Belief' and subsequent comments upon such; and dH. Le Roy Finch in a chapter entitled "Forms of Life" in his book "Wittgenstein - the Later Philosophy". Before indicating where differences between these philosophers lie, a note of agreement is apparent. They all accept that, whatever Wittgenstein meant by the expression 'form of life', is bound up with his understanding of the term 'language-game'. Although Hunter refers to one interpretation which identifies it with a language game, he rejects this interpretation, and in this he finds support from the others. What does each philosopher consider Wittgenstein to mean by a form of life?

Succinctly, I shall list the differing views of these writers.

Hunter opts for an understanding which puts emphasis upon what is typical of a living being: "typical in the sense of being very broadly in the same class as the growth or nutrition of living organisms . . ." He favours this interpretation in preference to ones which perhaps imply a more set or formal communal pattern of activity. A form of life, then, implies growth, development, individuality: it possesses a dynamic character. In so far as I favour a vibrant, even if communal, expression of religious belief
as evinced by the kerygmatic order of living, at that point (only) would I borrow something from Hunter's interpretation.

Sherry emphasises the 'surroundings' of a 'form of life' to explicate its meaning. He draws a logical distinction between these, which Wittgenstein alternatively names 'customs', 'institutions', 'context', 'culture' or 'common behaviour', and a form of life as such. Context gives to a form of life its significance and together, surroundings and form of life provide a 'given' element. At this, what seems to me, incontestable level, I concur with Sherry. When he goes on to emphasise human response to particular expressions of forms of life and seeks to find grounds for justification in such expressions, I part company with him. At this point, he appears to come near to Hunter's view of the typical activities of living organisms as being representative of forms of life; at least in their manifestations in human experience.

Hudson is concerned to illustrate what he conceives a form of life to be by reference to religious belief. Against Sherry particularly, who holds that religious belief embraces a number of forms of life (e.g. of hoping, praying, forgiving etc.) Hudson takes religious belief itself to be a single form of life. Hudson, accordingly, defines a 'form of life' as a language-game which possesses 'ultimacy of intelligibility and justification'. He stresses that it is beyond being justified or unjustified and it is grounded in action. Hence by playing a language game, one accepts certain fundamental propositions which determine all that can intelligibly be said within it. Herein lies the ultimacy which removes from hypothetical consideration those actions which find their meaning in what is said of them. "It is how we speak, rather than that we speak which constitutes a form of life in my view", 
Hudson remarks. It will be clear from what I have said, that I have lent heavily upon this interpretation.

Finally, Finch defines a form of life as social and cultural behaviour in a particular aspect 'in so far as it is meaningful'. Forms of life are interwoven with language: the inevitable setting of language is some human activity which is meaningful in the terms in which the language with which it is carried out is meaningful. . . To put the matter differently: a form of life is a possibility of meaningful action shared in by members of a group . . ." Language games and forms of life cannot coincide. Our system of reference is human social life and behaviour: Finch finds a comparison between what Wittgenstein calls forms of life with what sociologists call 'social' or 'institutional' facts - "only for Wittgenstein they are not "facts" but units of meaningful action which are carried out together by members of a social group . . ." This emphasis upon meaningful action is, I think helpful, in so far as it coheres with what Wittgenstein has to say about explanation being provided from within the depth grammar of a language game - I have tried to argue that the kerygmatic language game provides just such explanation of what experience of God might mean for believers.

Incidentally, Finch criticises Winch's view that a form of life needs to be associated with epistemology. "There is no epistemological basis or content to the notion of forms of life." I take this to mean that there is what Hudson calls an ultimacy about a form of life which places it beyond the need to be justified or unjustified. In any case, Finch's emphasis upon meaning as being grounded in social action is consistent with my understanding of Christian communal activity as an indicator of assertions about God which are made therein.

It might appear that I have attempted an eclectic 'survey' of
the notion of a form of life and selected discriminately to suit my case. What I am seeking to say about revelation as an experiential encounter between believer and God, epitomized in the encounter between the Apostles and Jesus of Nazareth (and in the transformation from presentation of the proclaimer to that of the One proclaimed), depends upon making good sense of the concept of a form of life. For my thesis is bound so closely to Wittgenstein's view of the primacy of fundamental propositions (which I shall expound at some length in the following chapter), that it is incumbent upon me to show how this view provides logical support for my idea that, in the Christ-event, a knowledge claim about encounter with God may be made. This requires that I show that the Christian communal activity and practice, emanating from the Apostolic kerygma, does indeed take on the character of a form of life, with its implicit fundamental proposition concerning God in Christ and associated theological doctrines.

I wish to say that not only is it, in the light of the fore-going discussion, permissible to use the phrase 'form of life' to denote the language, community and activities rooted in the central beliefs of Christianity, but that it may be called a paradigm for what Wittgenstein intended by the phrase. To justify this assertion, I propose to state a number of reasons and support them by reference to points in my argument which look, either back to what I have already said about the kerygma, or forwards to further discussion of the significance of Wittgenstein's slogan: "The explanation of the meaning of a proposition is the meaning." Firstly the Christian active community is composed of all those who have elected to believe in God as understood through faith in Christ. There is thus, at the level of belief, a homogeneity which enables the community to be marked off as an exclusive entity. It is a specific entity, a clearly delineated group of like-minded adherents to a religious
belief. Secondly, the language game which is played as a consequence of such belief is unique insofar as talk of Christ and his attributes is irreducible to talk of other prophets or thinkers. To play this language game is to learn to use specific language wherein the proclamation of the kerygma and the behavioural implications of it constitute the criteria for participation in a form of life. Thirdly, what Wittgenstein says about all one's questions and answers being rooted in fundamental propositions, which lie at the bottom of a language game, is indicated here. For the constitutive concept of Theism - belief in God - finds its home here. It makes sense to ask questions about God within this context. Fourthly, the form of life implicit within the Christian language game or presupposed by it can be shown to determine all that can and cannot be said about meaning and reference. Logical criteria (and 'rules') are established through the medium of the communication between believers, on the basis of their understanding of the primitive kerygma. So an autonomous grammar exists which reflects the depth grammar of the game. Fifthly, the constative aspect which such proclamation produces, is mirrored in the commissive formulae, whereby a way of life is pronounced. Ethical and spiritual demands are made upon the denizens of the Christological interpretation of God's revelation to man. And so, sixthly, 'belief in' may be said to yield the possibility of new knowledge, knowledge about God and of God. Each of these six elements, it seems to me, have some bearing upon the view that religious belief (as evinced in the community of believers), and particularly Christian belief, may be considered a form of life. For I have attempted to argue that in the kerygma, the proclamation of the primitive church, and in its commissive implications for believers, the foundation for Christian beliefs reside. And that foundation is that to which the description 'form of life' might be
applied insofar as it was upon such that people based their worship and attitudes to life. It helped to shape a new dimension of belief and practice. So, I cannot see why Wittgenstein's use of the term cannot suitably be used to describe the nexus of belief and language of the Christian community. If I am right, my efforts to anchor epistemological questions in those fundamental propositions relative to belief in God and knowledge claims of God in the kerygma will be supported. In the use to which Christian words were put by the Apostles, and have subsequently been used by generations of believers, one may discern the meanings of those propositions which form the substance of Christian belief. I think, therefore, that the concept of a community of believers, kerygmatically inspired and informed, qualifies for Wittgenstein's connotation 'Form of Life', and because of its conformity to what he said about fundamental propositions, autonomous grammar, criteria and rules, may be said to be paradigmatic of what a 'form of life' is. I hold that the kerygmatic language game and the Christian community in which it is rooted comprise a 'form of life', wherein the meaning of propositions concerning encounter with God find logical grounding. Since fundamental propositions inherent in the Christian belief in God are implicit within this 'form of life', I accept that at this level a 'given' element obtains. I do not think, however, that this militates against my overall view that the idea of lack of grounds is preferable to an endless searching for 'privileged' facts to corroborate (epistemological) assertions of belief.

I am in partial agreement with the prevalent views of each of the four philosophers discussed. With Hunter, I see a form of life to have some organic meaning: my understanding of the Apostolic community as one which grows as it 'feeds' upon its Christian (or kerygmatic) beliefs shows this. With Sherry, I take the point that
Wittgenstein put emphasis upon the context or \textit{surrounds} of a form of life, and would stress the all important contextual (and thus unique) aspects of the primitive believing community. With Finch, I would acknowledge the concept of meaningful action as being determinant of a form of life: so much of what I say of the 'autonomous' grammar of the kerygmatic language game inheres in an understanding of what the writers intended in their proclamation and doctrines. Finally, with V'udson, I identify firmly in finding in certain fundamental propositions (the concept of god, and the proclamation of the Christ-event) a logical basis for the Christian form of life. With him, I have found reason to subscribe to the view that an identifiable, analysable, unique form of life can be singled out by paying heed to the requirements of rational debate and to the intelligibility of what it makes sense to say. I believe that, understood as a specific form of life, the Christian language game and its associated logical criteria of autonomous grammar forms of representation and fundamental propositions, provide just such an entity. Thus, while some of the ideas forwarded by Hunter, Sherry and Finch find support in my construction of an experiential view of the concept of revelation, I am influenced by Hudson's interpretation of Wittgenstein most decisively. My case depends upon my being able to show that rationality resides ultimately in that form of life which explains what is meant by an experience of God. Thus, I conclude, that the view of the meaning of the phrase form of life which I espouse is that which construes it to be a determinant of meaning itself.
CHAPTER FIVE


b SHERRY, Patrick: *Is Religion a Form of Life?* American Philosophical Quarterly, Volume 9 No 2, April 1972


e HUDSON, W. D.: *Lecture Notes delivered at the University of Exeter* 1978 onwards


NOTE

Wittgenstein's five references to "form of life" in his *Philosophical Investigations* are found at: 19, 23, 241, pages 174 and 226. Additionally, there are important allusions to it in *Lectures on Religious Belief* p 58, Notebook identified as "Band XV" (Von Wright's Catalogue No. 119) cited by H. le Roy Finch, opus cited above p 93.
CHAPTER SIX

AN EXPERIENTIAL VIEW OF REVELATION — THE ROLE OF
FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS IN PROVIDING EXPLANATION

To seek to understand what is meant by an experience of God, it is necessary to determine what characterises that experience. This, I think, may be done by paying careful attention to what counts as an explanation of it. I am taking the view that for the concept of experience to make sense within the limitations imposed by those fundamental propositions inherent in the Christian Theistic language game, the autonomous grammar of that game should be analysed. For what it makes sense to say in respect of man being said to know God must, given the acceptance of those fundamental propositions, depend upon an ability to understand the meaning attaching to the system of representation exhibited in the language game. I believe that we shall discover that, insofar as we look for explanation within the boundaries which the autonomous grammar establishes, the explanation of the meaning can then be shown to be the relevant meaning. Thus to say that a believer, through assent to constative propositions and by commitment to the One about whom those propositions speak, has an experience of God is to say something about the meaning which finds its explanation through understanding of the 'depth grammar' of the 'game'.

Wittgenstein's belief that fundamental propositions are implicit within our acting, in a sense enables us to say that our empirical "knowing" of God stands or falls in relation to the coherence of the concept of "God" as a constituent of the theistic language game. Our acting, as believers, includes the prayers, hymns, sermons, charitable works etc. which accompany worship and practice. It is within the framework of this devotional life, that the theist might speak of
knowing God. Yet his speaking in this manner rests upon a prior and underlying understanding that "God" is written into the very substance of which the theistic area of discourse is composed. Viewed in this way, it would not make sense to say that the believer discovers God or discerns Him as one would come across or experience some physical phenomenon for the first time. That there is an empirical manifestation of Theistic belief, Sunday church attendance and all the paraphernalia of Christian activity demonstrates. If one's involvement in these things substantiate a claim to one's knowing and being known by God, the nature of that claim is open for all to investigate. To the accusation that all that the sceptical observer can perceive after painstaking enquiry, are certain rituals and morally attuned actions on behalf of the believer, it must be replied that all such overt acts of behaviour presuppose that which lies beyond empirical showing. What lies beyond such activity, yet is implicit within it, are those fundamental propositions which enable Theists to perform and to say all which appertains to the language-game which they play.

With the concept of "God", given content, as Hudson suggests, by the recognition of Christ as the One who shows us God's nature and will for us, as the fundamental constituent of the theistic language-game, Christian language has illocutionary and perlocutionary force for the believer. That is to say, it is in response to an ontological choice regarding one's understanding of life and of the world, that one decides to indulge in that area of discourse which characterises Christian Theism. It is thus through 'belief in' God that one, logically and psychologically, becomes involved. Taking this step commits one, inevitably and necessarily, to the acceptance of specific principles and views which accompany the concept of Christian dedication. This, then, is the commissive aspect of 'belief in'. It would be as ludicrous for a scientist to doubt the
uniformity of nature or the existence of physical objects; as for the believer to deny that "God" (and in the Christian sense, Christ) constitutes what it is which underlies all that he says, as a believer. Thus we can see that empirical evidence for Christian belief, whatever it may be thought to be, cannot of itself provide empirical verification or falsification of the fact of "God". On the other hand, if there were no 'acting' of the sort which has come to be associated with Christian belief, there could not be any ground for speaking intelligibly of "God". Since primitive man sought to interact with the forces of nature, man's belief in physical phenomena has informed all his scientific endeavours. A host of words and phrases indicate the primacy of such a belief. Daily life functions on the acceptance of its truth. So the Christian language game mirrors "a form of life" which, while being influenced by changing ideas over the passage of time, originated with the Apostles and continues to inspire the words and phrases heard in the churches and in Christian discourse. To attempt to deny the existence of God, or alternatively to offer empirical evidence for such existence, would be to put that area of discourse into limbo.

How, then, may Wittgenstein's insistence that fundamental propositions provide 'the rock-bottom of my convictions', 'the foundation of all my beliefs' and the 'fundamental principles of human enquiry' help us to determine the epistemological issue concerning the juxtaposition of knowledge and belief? Do they, perhaps, suggest a kind of cast iron certainty which, residing at the base of all that believers say, help to dispel doubt and, in some way, authenticate belief? We may recall that Price seeks to give to Christian belief an empirical testing on the invitation to the sceptic to "taste and see" that the "Lord is good" etc. In so doing, he advocates an hypothetical approach to religious truth, dependent upon
the laws of verification and falsification, at least insofar as such laws can be said to apply to a person's having experiences which are said to be attendant upon Price's empirical procedure for affirming the reality of God for oneself. Wittgenstein steadfastly opposed all such efforts to interpret religious belief in such a manner. Instead, he insisted on the essential logical difference of theistic and empirical modes of speaking. They are different language games, and only conceptual confusion can result from any attempt to bridge the gulf between them.

I give below some examples from Wittgenstein's "Lectures on Religious Belief" to elucidate this point. They are all quoted from Hudson's "Wittgenstein and Religious Belief".

"We don't talk about hypothesis, or about high probability. Nor about knowing. In a religious discourse we use such expressions as "I believe that so and so will happen", and use them differently to the way in which we use them in science."

"Suppose somebody made this guidance for this life: believing in the Last Judgment. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind . . . It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by regulating for all his life."

(LRB pp 53 - 4, Hudson p. 169)

And quite unequivocally, in response to O'Hara's statement that religion is a question of science, Wittgenstein remarked, "I would definitely call O'Hara unreasonable. I would say, if this is religious belief, then it's all superstition." (LRB pp 57 - 59, Hudson p. 167). Hudson interprets Wittgenstein to mean by "reasonable" scientific, and reminds us that Wittgenstein was aware of the problem of the rationality of religious belief. Wittgenstein stressed the fact that the difference between the believer and unbeliever is that they
have different pictures. For the believer these pictures provide an explanation for and an interpretation of his experiences. Thus his belief in the Last Judgment "might play the role of constantly admonishing" him (LRB p 56; Hudson p 172). Wittgenstein adds: "Here an enormous difference would be between those people for whom the picture is constantly in the fore-ground and others who just didn't use it at all." Similarly, he says "Suppose that someone believed in the Last Judgment, and I don't, does that mean that I believe the opposite to him, just that there won't be such a thing? I would say: "not at all, or not always"." (LRB p 53; Hudson p 168)

Let us take this matter further by commenting on Hudson's attempt to relate his definition of religious belief as being constituted by the concept of god (i.e. the god of any religion whatsoever) to Wittgenstein's concept of fundamental propositions being "anchored in all my questions and answers, so anchored that I cannot touch them". Hudson suggests that the concept of god constitutes religious belief in a four-fold way. He compares the constitutive function of such a concept with that of two other areas of discourse where what is said is determined by appropriate constitutive concepts. These are the discourses of physical science and morality, whose language focuses upon and pre-supposes the existence of physical objects and the fact of moral obligations respectively. There could be no speaking of scientific language or of moral language were these constitutive concepts not accepted as the foundational beliefs, upon which everything which is said, rests. Similarly religious belief may be said to be constituted by a concept which is just as basic for any intelligible speech about religion to be employed: namely, the concept of god. The four senses by which this concept constitutes religious belief are as follows. "First, everything said within religious belief is said with reference to
Secondly, the existence of God is something which cannot be doubted within religious belief. Thirdly, definitions of the concept of God are logically related to what can, or cannot, be said within religious belief. Fourthly, the concept of God is logically irreducible."

In a recent paper, J. Hudson reiterates, develops or introduces further arguments to support his view that there is a close tie between the claim that the concept of God constitutes religious belief and Wittgenstein's understanding of fundamental propositions as the rock-bottom of all our convictions. He reminds us that Wittgenstein refuted the argument that religious beliefs or "opinions" are hypotheses, which further evidence could one day validate. Hudson explores the possibility of religion being conceived to transcend a limit, recalling Wittgenstein's use of the concept of "the mystical" as that which lies "outside the world" since, being conceived as that which has absolute value, it cannot, logically, be just one more thing. Hence "the mystical" transcends the limits of language by "showing itself". All this accords with Wittgenstein's later view that religious belief consists in holding a picture forever before one such that one sees the world as a whole. (Here Hudson draws upon Wittgenstein's remark that the world of the happy man "waxes and wanes as a whole"). Since, however, Wittgenstein introduced the notion of two godheads, the world and the independent "I" whereby, metaphysically speaking, the self expressed by "I" or "will" can alter the limits of the world (in effect by making oneself independent of the world by renouncing any influence on happenings), Hudson believes that, at this point, Wittgenstein has left religion behind. He therefore turns to, and clearly approves, the second conception of religion found in Wittgenstein's writings, namely that it constitutes, rather than transcends, a limit to our
thinking. It is at this point that Hudson draws upon Wittgenstein's exposition of the significance of fundamental propositions from "On Certainty".

The important point which he makes by drawing this comparison is that it is in the non-hypothetical aspect of fundamental propositions that the significance for religious belief is to be discerned. For just as fundamental propositions constitute a limit as to what can or cannot be said within any language game, so certain religious beliefs constitute a limit as to what counts as an explanation and what characterizes experience. And basic to all such beliefs is belief in god. Hudson thinks that the concept of god is, in Wittgenstein's terminology, 'the tacit presupposition' of religious belief. Further, in respect of fundamental propositions, Hudson comments, "What we must say instead (i.e. rather than as with an empirical proposition where truth may be shown) is that assent to a fundamental proposition gives our experience in some respect or other the character it has."

Our very experiences reflect our assent to such propositions which give to those experiences the character they possess.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS IN EXPLICATING
THE MEANING IMPLICIT WITHIN LANGUAGE GAMES

"Wittgenstein asks, "Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair?" and replies "There is no why. I simply don't. This is how I act." Later he alludes to a telephone conversation in which his friend in New York describes the kind of buds on a tree and Wittgenstein determines with conviction, from this information, what sort of tree it is. He then comments, "Am I also convinced that the earth exists? The existence of the earth is rather part of the whole picture which forms the starting-point of belief for me." Similarly, to the suggestion that a table
before someone either vanishes or alters its shape and colour when
no one is observing it, and then when someone looks at it again
changes back to its old condition, Wittgenstein responds, "But who
is going to suppose such a thing!" He comments, "Here we see that
the idea of 'agreement with reality' does not have any clear
application. So 'The reasonable man does not have certain doubts'.

My experience of the world of nature has the character it has
because it is conditioned by my "not doubting" certain propositions
(Hudson's paraphrase of Wittgenstein at 150). "Hudson applies this
thinking about fundamental propositions to the area of religious
discourse. He makes a comparison with the experience we have of
feeling remorse or of being aware of a sense of responsibility. The
underlying belief which enables us to interpret our feelings in
moral categories is the fundamental proposition, "There is such a
thing as moral obligation". Hudson comments, "... it is only
people who already believe that there is such a thing as moral
obligation who can feel moral responsibility or remorse." In a
similar way, he points out that religious beliefs "characterize
our experience." Belief in god, as a constituent of what is
entailed in the commitment of oneself to the theistic language
game, permits the believer to interpret his experiences in the light
of this belief. Thus Wittgenstein can ask rhetorically, 'Why
shouldn't one form of life culminate in an utterance of belief in
a Last Judgment?' (LRB p 58). 'The 'form of life' here is clearly
conceived to be all the 'acting' which lies at the root of the
theistic language-game. Hudson draws our attention to Wittgenstein's
observation in "Philosophical Investigations" (25) "Commanding,
questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our
natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing." He relates
this observation to Wittgenstein's analysis of non-doubting behaviour,
without which our facility for doubting could not function (O.C. 354).

P In what he calls a 'very badly expressed and probably badly thought' statement, Wittgenstein speaks of the certainty, which is comfortable and not still struggling, as not something 'akin to hastiness or superficiality, but as a form of life'. "But this means that I want to conceive it as something i.e. the certainty enshrined in a fundamental proposition that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal." So belief in a Last Judgment, viewed in the light of being a fundamental proposition within theism, both counts as an explanation (if it were deemed to serve as an explanation, Hudson points out, it would be hypothetical and thus empirical) and characterizes one's experiences. It draws a limit to thinking for a theist. Thus a believer might explain an illness in terms of punishment which an unbeliever would not do.

Wittgenstein speaks of the use of different pictures by the two groups of people. A believer's experience of anxiety or the terror which Wittgenstein refers to as "part of the substance of the belief" in a Last Judgment, advert also to the limit which religious beliefs constitute. There is no question of belief in a Last Judgment being viewed as an empirical hypothesis. This is brought out clearly in Wittgenstein's comparison of the different attitudes of two people expressed as follows. "Suppose someone were a believer and said, 'I believe in a Last Judgment' and I said 'Well I'm not so sure. Possibly.' You would say there was an enormous gulf between us.

If he said 'There is a German aeroplane overhead,' and I said 'Possibly. I'm not sure,' you'd say we were fairly near!" (p 53 LRB)

The fact that a believer uses his belief in a Last Judgment as both an explanation for events in his life and as an interpretation of feelings and attitudes which he experiences, bears witness to the limiting and constitutive nature of the belief itself. Behind such a
concept (i.e. of a Last Judgment) lies that of belief in god. For the notion of a final judging of humanity (however that is understood by the believer), can make no sense whatsoever in the absence of some conceptualisation of divine agency, through whom such judging is thought to be effected. Hence we notice again the primacy of belief in god as constitutive of theistic belief. It is a fundamental proposition of such belief and, as such, informs and explicates each and every aspect of that belief.

The example of belief in a Last Judgment is helpful in drawing attention to a distinction which Wittgenstein made as to the immutability or otherwise of fundamental propositions. Hudson reiterates, towards the end of his paper previously alluded to, his point that Wittgenstein, some of the time at least, thought of religion as constituting a limit to thinking in the way that fundamental propositions do. Hudson adds that the question as to whether religious belief can continue to be considered a rational system (which he himself holds to be the case) is a separate issue. Here we may take note of the significant differentiation which Wittgenstein recognised between forms of fundamental proposition. Wittgenstein speaks of the "river-bed of thoughts" as being capable of shift. "But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other . . . And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited." At once Wittgenstein offers an example of an immutable proposition, illustrative of those which, in his analogy of the river, form the solid rock bed. "Such a proposition might be g.g. "My body has never disappeared and re-appeared again after an interval." Any suggestion that this
proposition may not be in accordance with the facts meets the rebuff that such a suggestion would not fit into the rest of his convictions at all. This leads Wittgenstein to make the remark that such a proposition is an unshakeable conviction, "anchored in all my questions and answers". Assertions as to his possessing two hands, being the offspring of human parents and never having been a great distance from the surface of the earth are in similar vein. In citing these examples, Wittgenstein refuted Moore's claim to knowledge where universally accepted truisms were concerned.

Wittgenstein's recognition of other kinds of fundamental proposition, those not representative (as in the case of those just listed) of the hard rock of the river bed, was made in the realization that human beings have modified or given up ideas which, at one time, were believed to be fool-proof. These ideas would be expressed in propositions which represent the shifting area of the river bed. Scientific theory is marked by changes of this nature: flat earth to sphere, helio movement to natatory earth, steady state to 'big bang', predictability to indeterminancy etc. Axioms of scientific enquiry such as the fact of physical objects or the uniformity of nature are held fast: firmly held theories about the structure of the universe and of life give way to new theories in the wake of fresh empirical evidence.

When we consider, with Wittgenstein, belief in a Last Judgment as a belief which cannot be doubted within the theistic language-game, since belief in the Judaeo-Christian God entails belief in judgment, we can see that, like the scientific theories referred to, it is capable of fresh definition. Hudson comments, "Sophisticated believers can be found arguing however about such matters as what conclusion should, or should not, be drawn from the 'last' in 'Last
Judgement'. Should we take this picture to imply simply that human history will reach some temporal dénouement; or that the judgment of God on human beings takes place here and now but is final in the sense simply that it cannot be gainsaid?" He contrasts these alternative interpretations of a specific feature of theistic belief with the immutable, and thus definitive, proposition that the concept of God's judgment involves belief in the justice of God which cannot, logically, be interpreted to mean any form of injustice.
CHAPTER SIX


b PRICE, H. H.: *Belief* opus cited (p 44 above) p 455 ff

c HUDSON, W. D.: *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*, opus cited (p 52 above) p 161

d ibid p. 169

e ibid p. 161

f ibid p. 168


h WITTGENSTEIN, L: *On Certainty* opus cited (p. 13 above) p. 103


j HUDSON, W. D.: *The Light Wittgenstein Sheds on Religious Belief* opus cited (p. 35 above)


l HUDSON, W. D. *The Light Wittgenstein Sheds on Religious Belief* p. 14


n HUDSON, W. D.: *The Light Wittgenstein Sheds on Religious Belief* pp 14 - 15

o HUDSON, W. D.: *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief* p 172

p WITTGENSTEIN, L.: *On Certainty* 334, 357-8, 359

q HUDSON, W. D.: *The Light Wittgenstein Sheds on Religious Belief* p 13

r Quoted by Hudson in *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*

s HUDSON, W. D.: *The Light Wittgenstein Sheds on Religious Belief* p. 16

t WITTGENSTEIN, L.: *On Certainty* 97, 99, 101

u HUDSON, W. D.: *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief* p 190
CHAPTER SEVEN

WITTGENSTEIN ON EXPLANATION, UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING

We have been taught by Wittgenstein that the explanation of the meaning of a sentence or of a word is the meaning of it. A man's understanding of a particular explanation can be gauged by the way he reacts to it. His ability to apply correctly the word or sentence within its appropriate language-game is the measure of that understanding. He may, of course, apply it correctly without understanding, in which case further examination of his claim to understand would be required. Knowing how to apply a word is the consequence of correct training. To be informed of the techniques for using a word is to be informed of the area of discourse where it normally finds its home. Extensive definition, use of samples or verbal explanation may have been employed to demonstrate how the word may be used. Variations of usage will have been observed as the growth of skill in recognizing different situations in which it might occur has taken place. Where we have tended to seek objective reference to establish the meaning of a word, Wittgenstein has persuaded us to look, instead, and see how that word is used. He has weaned us from the Augustinian picture of language where meaning was thought to reside in an external reference. With such a change of direction, we have been encouraged to recognize the folly of thinking that the entertaining of a proposition, and the assertion thereof, are divisible into mental and verbal events. In supposing, surmising, wondering or believing that \( p \) we have used linguistic patterns of expression as much as in writing or speaking overt propositions or commands, wishes, questions etc. To formulate opinions and query ideas about a subject is to engage in a kind of linguistic activity, which only finds meaning within a specific
language-game. All human efforts at communicating thoughts reflect the existence of verbal manifestations of a community, and the exchange of views and information within it. It might be thought that, since Wittgenstein relegated ostensive definition to a more lowly position, without in any way denying its role in our understanding of propositions, and by way of compensation raised into eminence the parts played by sampling and by comparing and contrasting, the strangle-hold of empiricism has been relaxed somewhat. Wittgenstein's revolutionary change of emphasis was away from his picture theory of meaning which, like the empiricism of Frege and Russell, had been mesmerised by the Augustinian contention that words and sentences must, when properly understood, refer to objects in the world. His doctrine that reference is to be discovered within language, rather than via language to a supposed reality beyond it, had opened the way for a different way of conceiving of meaning. In this connection, it is interesting to notice Wittgenstein's concern for proper names, about which he had a good deal to say. What he so strongly resisted was his earlier attempt to adopt the slogan: 'unum nomen, unum nominatum.' Frege had departed from the rigidity of this principle, by teaching that only an expression together with its context has a sense. Wittgenstein's focus upon context reflected this opinion, but his stress upon samples rather than simples, e.g. examples of colours, colour variations, textures, smoothnesses and hardnesses, liquidity and solidity etc, indicated that he, unlike Frege, had broken once and for all with the idea that, in the last analysis, there must be a particular object for which a word stands. This much and more is ventilated in his 'Philosophical Investigations'. Wittgenstein acknowledged that one mistake he made in his atomistic philosophy propounded in the 'Tractatus' was to project
grammar on to reality. By adhering to an Augustinian model of language, he generalised about proper names in relation to objects which were thought to be indicated by them. He created metaphysical necessities in so doing. In his later philosophy, he pointed out that ostensive definition is bound up with the use of objects as samples. In pointing to a red object and saying "This is "red"" (i.e. what is meant by the word "red"), one is employing the object as a sample of the colour red. Also by stating that an ostensive definition is a rule, not a statement of fact, he undermined the belief that such a definition connects language with reality. The important point for my purpose is to notice that, according to this new way of viewing ostensive definition - that is by connecting it with the use of samples and concentrating on its practical significance rather than on its assumed metaphysical propensities - it enables some symbols to be explained in terms of others. This can only be achieved by seeing that explanation is an explanation within language. Wittgenstein is at pains to stress that the ability to give an ostensive explanation of, say, 'red' is dependent upon the ability to apply 'red' correctly. However, it is to be observed that a correct explanation can be of more than one kind. By pointing to a shape which is circular and saying 'That is the shape of a circle' one is explaining the word as much as one would do by giving a mathematical description. Also, the fact that one cannot call to mind the necessary explanation may not indicate a person's inability to do so. He may recall it on being prompted or by being influenced by events which help him to recall what the explanation is. A degree of latitude, both in the determination of what counts as an explanation and in the conditions permissible for a person to be allowed to give an explanation, exists once we recognise that the meaning of a word or a phrase is to be discovered within language, with its corre-
lates of gestures and bodily articulations. Flexibility and approximation, as in the command to 'stand roughly here', variety of usages, wherein one sentence-radical may be allied to a number of functional phrases (illustrated by the boxer stance picture) may suitably provide explanation.

Employing a word correctly, within its appropriate context, is indeed necessary for both explanation and understanding. So, in seeking to explain to someone what a word, phrase or sentence means it is essential that the one doing this understands what he says, and his understanding will be shown in his ability to use the word, phrase or sentence correctly. He may use a gesture (wave of his arm, facial expression etc), point to an object, using it ostensively and as a sample, or allude to comparative or contrasting examples to demonstrate that understanding. In doing any or all of these things, he will not be in any way implying that the object or objects referred to by his elucidatory procedures are merely incidental. There will be no indication or hint that the real samples are mental entities (e.g. the length of the standard metre, the colour of the patch on the chart, or the image of this particular colour in the mind of the perceiver).

It is the application of rules which enables a speaker to use words correctly. Wittgenstein moved away from the calculus model which Frege had used to apply the game of chess to language. In place of that, he showed that a word has a meaning only in the context of a sentence and a sentence only in the context of a language, just as a chess piece has significance only in the context of a move and a move only in the context of a game. Thus when I am showing my understanding of a word through ostensively applying it as a sample of a particular shade of colour, weight or length of an object, I am displaying how it is used within a contextual pattern.
It is this pattern which engrossed Wittgenstein. He commented upon
the richness and complexity of language. He speaks of language
growing and developing like a city which adds new streets and houses
to its area. He said much about family resemblances which illus-
trate the connections and likenesses, sometimes unobserved, between
words and phrases having natural kinship. That ostensive definition
alone will not provide a fixed definition of a word but rather one
which differs from one setting to another, from one usage to another,
will be apparent. The shade of 'red' indicated with regard to a
piece of cloth or a house or car, discloses a sampling procedure,
involving exclusion of other shades which in other circumstances
would be ostensively suitable. That there are other correct
usages of the word 'red' does not suggest in any way that my use of
the word in a particular situation, as a sample of a shade of red,
is not in itself a complete description. Wittgenstein teaches us
that a language-game is complete in itself, insofar as it permits
people to communicate correctly what they have to say. Further
knowledge may extend its frontier, but that does not mean that it
is not already complete as far as explanation and understanding of
its constituents is concerned. What is essential for clarity of
understanding is to have a 'surview' of the language used. It is
in seeing the connections, analogies and disanalogies between words,
both within a particular language-game and, more widely, throughout
the range of the language used that perplexity can be eased.

From what I have written, being greatly guided by Baker and
Hacker in their exhaustive analysis of part of the "Investigations",
it will be clear that it is not always appropriate to seek for
necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of an
expression. "An inexact or incomplete X may suit our purposes
perfectly in a given context." Thus Wittgenstein gives an example
of an order being given to 'stand roughly here'. It will be a contextual matter to illustrate the acceptable use of "He saw red and lashed out in fury". Obviously, the autonomous nature of grammar precludes here any suggestion that 'red' can only be used by reference to some established reality. It is to be observed that it requires a grasp of the different way in which the word 'red' is being used in the above example, both by one familiar with its application and by a learner. To understand what is meant by the word 'on' one requires an understanding of the words used in any phrase in which it occurs - 'on the table' 'on the agenda' 'on Monday' etc. Understanding is provided by contextual paraphrastic explanation. The correct use of an expression and giving the correct explanations of that use are the two criteria of someone being said to understand it. Indeed, Wittgenstein provides a variety of criteria of meaning which can be grasped when we realise that these can be explicated in terms of criteria of understanding. He gives at least four criteria of explanation. Firstly, it must be of general application. Secondly, it must be public. The institution of words is lacking in a private explanation. Thirdly, explanation, unlike causes, comes to an end. The practice of explanation has limits (which may shift). Fourthly, there exists a public practice of applying the explained expressions, through appeal to rules. So, I return to the fundamental dictum that meaning is what is given by an explanation of meaning. And one's understanding of an expression can be gauged by the giving, in one way or another, of a correct explanation of it.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN TALK OF GOD'S REVELATION TO MEN

I have attempted to analyse meaning in relation to the view that a limit is imposed upon what can, or cannot, be said in a
particular language-game by those fundamental propositions upon which the game rests. A number of important points emerge from this for my attempt to provide some kind of logical coherence for the concept of revelation. I shall deal with these by way of drawing together the Wittgensteinian strands I have discussed.

To use a word correctly, in keeping with those rules which govern its normal usage, is to show that the speaker understands the meaning of that word, given the assurance that he is in a position to have acquired a grasp of that usage. Training in the use of the word will be evinced by his correct use of it. That use will provide evidence of understanding when its contextual location is clearly defined: that is its appropriate language game or home. The limits imposed upon it will be determined by those fundamental propositions which form the presuppositions upon which it rests. Such propositions are not matters for empirical enquiry and do not depend for their validity upon contingent elements to which the particular word may, for its meaning to be explicated, relate.

If we grant, then, that the word 'God' considered to be the constitutive concept of religious belief, and thus a fundamental proposition of that belief, cannot be open to empirical enquiry, because it does not contribute in any way to a hypothesis about a possible state of affairs, we can make a beginning towards an understanding of Theistic talk. If we, further, accept the principle that the concept of God determines all that can be said within the Theistic language game, the path can be cleared for an attempt to give some kind of intelligibility to the idea that, in Christ, God has made himself known (revealed himself) to mankind. For it is Christ (and the 'Christ-event') which give to the concept of God its distinctive Christian characteristic.

Armed with this fundamental proposition for discourse about
Christian belief, it will then be possible to use Wittgenstein's concept of meaning as use to elucidate epistemological problems concerning man's knowledge of God. As I have said, the believer who speaks of his relationship with God will be able to provide an explanation of the meaning of what he lays claim to by correctly using words, phrases and sentences which refer to, and find their grounding in, the fundamental proposition concerning God which lies at the bottom of all which he has learned to say about his beliefs.

It is important to notice, from what I have just written, that the charge that believers simply project their particular 'depth grammar' on to reality can be answered, when the 'form of life', to which the autonomous grammar of Christian Theism relates, is investigated. By this I mean that societal and individual way of life and explanatory language which characterises the Christian community: members of 'Christ's Body', the Church. In case I am misunderstood, I should make it clear that a yardstick by which to measure the genuineness of those professing to call themselves Christians should (given the original context in which Christianity is placed) be that of the Apostolic faith. We have seen how the kerygma, the primitive proclamation by the early church can be seen to be a linguistic foundation for both explaining and understanding what might be meant by 'an experience of God'. Following Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and of meaning, it will be in the believers ability to say correctly what his belief consists in, that explanation and understanding may be indicated. For he will be obeying those rules which are inherent in the tradition, and which criteria relative to that fundamental proposition concerning the concept of God, have helped to shape.

The keeping of rules of the 'game' or adherence to them on the
part of the sincere believer will be a recognition by him of the understanding to which his belief adverts. By his response, in faith, to the kerygma, he believes that he has encountered the God whose manifestation in Jesus comprised the historical event upon which that kerygma was subsequently proclaimed by the Apostles. I think it would be fair to say that they were not guilty of making the mistake which Wittgenstein came to see was at the heart of so much misunderstanding, namely our tendency to project our grammar on to reality. Their method of representation rested upon their prior belief in God, for they were raised in the religious tradition of Israel. Insofar as they encountered Jesus of Nazareth, communed with him and drew inspiration from him, their eventual proclamation of knowing God through faithfin that Jesus might be seen as a logical progression within that belief.

The language game which Christians elect to play in our own day may be said to emanate from the Apostolic area of discourse. This in turn, as I have tried to emphasise, drew its strength from that constitutive concept of god which we have shown to be at the bottom of the game. All the 'acting' of the Apostles and of believers today can only make sense when understood in this way. Limits as to what can be said or cannot be said are imposed by that presupposition. Nothing which is said therefore, whether in the New Testament or in later Christian literature can, logically, be considered hypothetically aimed at establishing the existence of God. There is, it's interesting to note, however, a sense in which the Apostles offered samples of the sort of behaviour and the sort of moral and spiritual characteristics a follower of Christ might be encouraged to emulate. And they did compare and contrast Jesus with the Graeco-Roman deities and with the manifestations of the God of Israel, recorded in the Old Testament. Although, as I have previously indicated, the kind of empirical
testing, Wittgenstein had in mind when he spoke of the need to provide
samples rather than simples in order to provide ostensive explanation,
within an appropriate context, (to discover what a particular word
means) cannot apply, by its very nature, to the spiritual dimension
to which Christian Theism points, we may, I think, suitably utilise
his methodology. For in seeking meaning and understanding, the
Apostolic carefulness in making such distinctions relative to what
they took to be the unique contribution made by Christ to human
knowledge of God, must be of value. The reason for this is given a
little further on.

It is important, in this connection, to see how Wittgenstein's
dictum that 'the explanation of the meaning is the meaning' of a
given proposition, may be applied to those explanations proffered
by the Apostles. Such explanations are to be found in the Gospels,
the Acts and the Epistles. For example, the Pauline assertion that
'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself', whilst clearly
a theological interpretation of the early church, provides a signifi-
cant explanation concerning its beliefs. We can discern the
various features here of a specific area of discourse in operation.
Thus we may notice the primacy of the fundamental proposition which
sets a limit to what can be said. Their inherited 'belief in' God,
enabled the Apostles to ground their 'hermeneutical' remarks about
their experiences with Jesus of Nazareth in a theological mould.
Then, there is the autonomous grammar which emerged through their
collective and individual enterprises in putting into spoken or
written vocabulary a body of ideas. Such ideas emanated from
another of Wittgenstein's categories, namely a 'form of life'.
Indeed, such a 'form of life' was instrumental in inspiring and
formulating the language game itself. So what was said of Christ
as, for example, in the proposition of Paul given above, expressed
beliefs shared by communities of believers.

Thus it is that we may reasonably speak of the proposition "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" as an explanation of meaning. It provides one of many similar theological propositions whereby the meaning of the nascent Christian belief concerning God's revelation to men in Christ may be said to be given explanation. Wittgenstein's dictum 'the explanation of the meaning is the meaning' appears to be apposite in this instance. When the critic asks for the meaning of the general Theistic proposition that, in Christ, God has revealed Himself to humankind, he can be directed to such explanation as offered by the Apostolic writings. Thus general beliefs about God find explanation through an understanding of particular beliefs relative to the Christ event.

Now, all this may seem to fit the Wittgensteinian model. What are we to reply, however, to the unbeliever who, having been given such an explanation, from within the limits presented by the fundamental proposition regarding "God", seeks further understanding? Wittgenstein wishes us to discover in the explanation of the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence the meaning which it bears, when correctly used. Such meaning entails understanding if both parties to the communicative process are capable and willing to grasp that meaning. A knowledge of the appropriate language and a learned awareness of when or when not a word or phrase is being correctly used, are pre-requisites for such communication to be effective. We may, it would seem have to face the problem of explanation of meaning being given, yet being not understood where Theistic discourse is concerned.

Perhaps we should observe that the proposition from St Paul referred to above requires some initial elucidation before its meaning can be adduced. That was what I wished to imply in what I
said about its home being the language game and the form of life of the early Christian community. It would seem, then, that the unbeliever needs considerable education in the wider aspects of the kerygmatic proclamation to enable him to recognize that particular proposition as some kind of an explanation regarding the concept of revelation. For the proposition that God was effecting reconciliation between erring man and Himself through the ministry of Christ to make sense, it might be supposed, the appropriate theology of atonement must be introduced. And, indeed, such a theology is provided by Paul and, more widely, by other New Testament writers. Surely, this indicates the contextual framework which exemplifies Wittgenstein's later teaching that reference is to be sought within a specific area of discourse. The proposition thus emerges as a paradigm of those beliefs which gain their meaning and reference within the context of the Apostolic proclamation.

It would not, I think, be altogether outside the scope of Wittgenstein's definition of a sample whereby understanding in usage is displayed. I have noticed the vital distinction between empirical sampling which he discusses in his 'Philosophical Investigations' and elsewhere, and the sampling of ideas to which I have drawn attention. Yet the method holds, I believe, insofar as ideological concepts require a context to give them the significance which they seek to make known. My understanding of the determinism which the principle of dialectical materialism embraces, requires a similar language game and a similar form of life for Marxist ideology.

In isolation it cannot intelligibly be understood. My efforts later in my dissertation to draw parallels between sensibly aroused concepts and ideologically aroused ones will throw further light upon this matter. I shall endeavour to analyze the similarities and dissimilarities between sensory perception and our belief about
physical objects, and those which might be thought to hold between theistic beliefs, and an awareness of God to which they purport to point. My concern at this stage has been to suggest that the Christian car show examples of what his beliefs about God entail. The proposition concerning God's reconciling work effected through Christ is particularly apt in adverting to a central doctrine of Christian Theism. For the purpose of seeking to elucidate the concept of revelation, understood in an experiential way, that proposition suitably links the divine and human elements of the assumed nexus. Here, then, is a 'showing' of the kind of pattern which an unbeliever can expect to find when, and if, he earnestly requests believers to demonstrate the meaning of those theological propositions which comprise the Christian language game. A single proposition may not suffice (indeed cannot for the reason given above) to elucidate what Theists are saying in their talk of God's revelation to man. But, just as the colour red (to use one of Wittgenstein's examples) may be indicated by reference to a variety of shades, whose degree of redness can only be shown through the exhibition of different samples, so theological pronouncements require varied manifestation if they are to be explicated. Likewise physical objects such as tables, chairs, windows and doors become identified, it would seem, through the sampling process, as a child is introduced to different examples of each item. The important conclusion to be drawn from an apparently disparate and tenuously connected parallel is that concerning linguistic proficiency. A child learns to use words correctly as a result of his having acquired an understanding of ostensive identification. A believer learns to use correctly, within the norms imposed by the autonomous grammar of the kerygmatic form of life, those pronouncements about God and Christ which advert to a common usage:
that of the community of believers.
a I have made use considerably of Hacker and Baker's commentary upon Philosophical Investigations Volume One, to analyse Wittgenstein's thinking on Explanation, Understanding and Meaning, throughout this chapter. HACKER, Peter M. S. and BAKER, A. P. Oxford, Blackwell, 1980
CHAPTER EIGHT

FUNCTION OF FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS IN PROVIDING

INTelligibility FOR WHAT IS SAID

A SUMMARY

Fundamental propositions thus perform the following functions. First, they set limits to language and so to what can, or cannot, be said. Secondly, they determine what counts as an explanation and what characterizes an experience within a particular language game. Thirdly, they establish logical criteria for showing what are the entailments and contraries yielded by their inherent presuppositions. Fourthly, they enable us to conceptualize our experiences in such a way that some kind of assurance can be gained as to our belief in a reality beyond subjective sensory perceptions. All of these have a bearing upon Theistic beliefs and upon the concept of Revelation.

Here I would like to deal with the third function mentioned above. Applied to Theism, it is instructive to notice those entailments which stem from the constituent concept of God which, as we have seen, may be said to act as a fundamental proposition. To do this will be to appraise ourselves of certain modal qualifiers which operate in relation to that fundamental proposition. I am proposing to continue to interpret this in a Christian Theistic manner. Thus the person of Christ, and what is said to be believed about him in the New Testament, are apposite factors in any intelligible notion of God which is deemed to be the bed rock of the language game. Modally speaking, it is then necessarily, certainly or obligatorily the case that whatever God is, He is actuated by love, justice and goodness. This assertion does not depend upon a hypothesis concerning God. It asserts logical necessity. Given the fundamental
proposition of Christian Theism concerning God, to speak at all about Revelation, is to use entailments yielded by that concept. Contrarily, it is logically necessary, that the negation of those attributes referred to above, such as hatred, injustice and evil are excluded, necessarily, certainly and obligatorily from those descriptions of God which Christian Theism uses.

I shall now say something more about this issue of modal qualifiers in relation to the constituent concept of God, understood to be a fundamental proposition for Theism.

To draw to a conclusion my discussion of the significance of fundamental propositions for theistic belief, it will be helpful to consider White’s views as to the nature of modality, as a complement to what can be said about necessity. "In short, modal concepts do not signify particular items either in the world or in our minds, but the relation of one item to others in a situation," White proclaims. He points out that modals, like evaluative concepts, have to be studied in relation to their context (a good Wittgensteinian requirement) to ascertain their referential focus. White draws our attention to what he considers to be a number of fallacies as to the use of modal forms (e.g. necessity, certainty, possibility etc). To elucidate these fallacies, he contrasts the traditional antithesis of ‘de dicto’ and ‘de re’ interpretations of modal qualification. The former relates to the qualification by modals of what is said about something, while the latter relates to the something which it is said about. White further contrasts the adverbial and impersonal form of modality with that which appears to give a more personal reference. He finds here some affiliation with
the ancient differentiation between the application of modal qualification to the whole or to the part of something. The thrust of his argument lies in his wish to stress the objective focus of modality. Hence he refutes the view that modals are 'de dicto' qualifications as Hume argued. When we say that something is possibly, necessarily or certainly so we do not simply engage in illocution. Less still do we express thoughts about what we take to be the case, founded upon 'impressions' conjured up by our minds. White especially draws our attention to the need to notice carefully what precisely is being qualified by a particular modal. Thus their relative nature can be shown by his example of the most rabid misogynist in the Faculty. That he is against Women's Lib. expresses a necessary truth. It is in relation to his being a misogynist that he can be said to be opposed to 'Women's Lib'. The fact that he happens to be professor of Classics as well does not permit us to say that 'The Professor of Classics is against Women's Lib.' expresses a necessary truth. Similarly, "it is because the planets number nine and not merely because they have some number that the number of the planets is necessarily greater than seven..." though "The number of the planets is greater than seven" unlike "Nine is greater than seven" does not express that philosophers call a necessary truth." The specific reference to which a necessary truth relates is clear. It can only be construed as being that which is relative to a logical entailment; for it is by dint of possessing certain qualities or expressing definite ideas that X can be said to be necessarily (or obligatorily) Y.

White further refutes the dogma that what is qualified by modals such as necessarily, probably, certainly is not the proposition to which they relate in itself but the truth or otherwise of
it. We stress the difference between what is stated or expressed by a proposition and the attempt to construe what is thus expressed as a proposition. To say that $X$ is necessarily (or possibly, certainly etc) $Y$ is not to say that it is the proposition that $X$ is necessarily $Y$.

This would be like saying that in the proposition 'the gearbox is possibly (necessarily, certainly) faulty' it is meant that the gearbox is possible (necessary or certain). The relativity of the qualifying modals is clear. White is here concerned to show that the qualifying words are not a verbal locution but a reference to what is being qualified. It is in relation to the actions and happenings themselves that modals have their significance not in the propositions about them. Likewise, White rejects Hume's subjective analysis of necessity as "existing in the mind, not in objects." In a modern version of this theory, modals such as 'must' and 'ought' apply not to an event but to our thinking of that event. Thus to quote White's example, in such an expression as 'Smith must (or ought to) hang his hat there' (used in an indicative-governing way), the modals 'must' or 'ought' relate to our thinking that he must (ought) to hang his hat. In rejecting this interpretation of the usage of modals, White again seeks to refute the 'de dicto' position in favour of the 'de re' one.

With White's help, it can be seen that what is said of God by way of logical entailment from the premise stated must, necessarily follow in respect of God - as an objective being. This need not conflict with Wittgenstein's view that reference is to be discovered in the use to which words are put. In fact it coheres with his view about the role of fundamental propositions in determining what can, or cannot, be said. We are following that dictum in noticing more carefully how critical qualifying words are used by theists. If we take White's realistic argument about the reference of modals, we
reach the happy conclusion that the particular language of Theism has as its essential object - God Himself. For God as an object is presupposed in the fundamental proposition upon which Theism rests. By objectifying Him as the One in whom Theists profess to believe, not only is an unwarranted subjectivism avoided, but we are able to keep in line with traditional Theistic understanding. At the same time, Wittgenstein's criteria for speaking intelligibly within a particular language-are are adhered to, while permitting a specific point of reference to be ascertained in relation to the subject and, indeed, substance of that area of discourse. What I hope I have succeeded in doing has been to identify what it is within theistic language which can be seen to justify its claim to knowledge by revelation. We are attempting to answer this question, among others: what precisely is it which Theists take to be that knowledge which revelation is believed to convey to them? By utilizing recent discussion of Wittgenstein's doctrine of fundamental propositions and the analysis of the concept of God as constituting religious belief, pursued by Hudson, I have tried to answer that question. With the help of White's analysis of modal qualifiers, I have been able to elicit those characteristics of God which Theists take to be implicit in their recognition of that theistic fundamental proposition.

There could be no Christian language save apart from the fact of Christ and the proclamation of Christ to the men of his generation and beyond. In that sense there must, as matter of logical necessity be conceived to be an empirical bridge which enables the Christian talk of God to bear significance. For the ideas which were instantiated by the early theology, while having a realism by dint of their articulated projection by the community, could not
have originated apart from their experiences. Such experiences are conceived to be capable of revival by each generation of believers insofar as they discover a dimension to their lives, through faith, which gives substance to their religious commitment.

In considering that necessity which the theistic concept of God suggests, it is of interest to ask whether it makes sense to say that God needs to act in certain ways or stands in need of certain things. White points out the difference between the retrospective and prospective use of the concept of necessity. He informs us that 'need' cannot be used in the indicative way, but also that in its subjunctive usage it can only express the idea of being necessary for something: that is, it is prospective, not retrospective in its usage. White remarks, "Thus, a necessary result or consequence is one which has to be, but not necessarily one that is needed; whereas a necessary means is one which both has to be and is needed" and he exemplifies this by the following comparison. "To say 'If a gas is touched by a spark it must explode' is different from 'If a gas is to explode, it must be touched by a spark.' Only the latter signifies a need. One can see the causal factor here, for the immediate cause of a gas exploding will be the application to it of a spark. Hence, being in communication with the spark, it must explode. The word 'must' as an expression of need is brought out clearly in White's further example "Everyone going abroad needs to have - and, therefore of course, must have - a passport." Again, he stresses the prospective necessity which need points to - a need to or for something. By contrast it is possible for 'must' to express something which is not needed. Hence the regulation that every citizen must have an identity card.

White also differentiates wants and needs by pointing out that
what one wants can express desire and there need be no constraint upon one. However, to need something requires an explanation as to why it is needed and a constraint upon one, as suggested: physical, moral, legal, psychological or whatever. An end-state is always complementary to a state of need. However, one can need something which one does not lack. To say that I need all the money I have at present is such a case. Hence, although often to need something is to lack it, it is not necessarily the case. I think that it can be seen that to speak of God having wishes and intentions in initiating revelation, is different from attributing such lack to him.

Thus, in speaking of that necessity which attaches to our talk of God, where the concept of God is conceived to be constitutive of religious belief, we mean those entailments which such necessity imposes upon what is said. By negation it determines what cannot be said. It must, therefore, logically be true that, given the stipulation inherent in Theism about God, it is intelligible to speak of his willing those actions of creation, revelation and redemption which he purposes for his creatures. By contrast, we cannot say that he is the cause of any action which is contrary to those attributes of love, justice and holiness which are said to characterise his person. The concept of personality referred to here, implies a capacity to advance his intentions for man in a manner appropriate to human personal response. It is sensible then to suppose that God needs human stimulus in order to extend his revelation to man, as a gas needs a spark to explode, to use White's example. And just as the converse, that a gas must explode if touched by a spark, indicates necessity but not need, so in noticing the logical entailments which Theistic belief in God yield, it can be shown how necessity rather than need is implied. It must
be so, therefore, that in speaking of God's acts, it is the case that necessarily (obligatorily or certainly - the sort of variants White offers) he does X rather than Y. There is no question of empirical choice or a scale of preferences being open here. It is not a question of what God can or cannot do, viewed from the position of what omnipotence is deemed to represent in an empirical sphere. Rather it is a question of logical necessity as to what it makes sense to say of God, where the fundamental proposition, that belief which is "swallowed" along with all the other beliefs which we learn when we imbibe the theistic language-game, stands firm in such a context. That such necessity is proximate rather than ultimate is itself a logical necessity. For if we accept the view of Wittgenstein that the difference between believers and unbelievers is that they each use different pictures, the theistic picture can but be proximate. It represents an 'ontological choice' as Hudson puts it. Yet this does not nullify the use of the analogy of the hard rock of a river bed or of the notion of the concept of God being 'anchored in all my questions and answers, so anchored that I cannot touch it', to remind ourselves of two of Wittgenstein's illustrations of fundamental propositions.

C RELIGIOUS BELIEF - USING A PICTURE

Wittgenstein speaks of religious belief as using a picture, or pictures. Hudson remarks that the pictures concerned are, of course, mental ones. A condition for saying that God is known would then be the subjective capacity to learn, according to Wittgenstein, certain 'connections' which enable the believer to talk about his faith. Knowing how to use the picture, either psychologically or logically, or both, would be a requisite for being accounted a believer. Wittgenstein refers to the psychological effects of holding a
picture of the Last Judgement in the foreground of one's consciousness: it would help to regulate all of one's life. Logically, to use such a picture would be to learn the technique of applying the connections relevant to religious discourse. Wittgenstein asks what conclusions are to be drawn from the picture of the Eye of God. In ordinary language, we associate eyebrows with eyes and it becomes apparent that the believer, in speaking of the Eye of God watching him, does not intend such a physical connection to apply in this instance. Provided, however, that the metaphor can be sustained in respect of the concept of God being said to see what cannot be seen by man, or to guide the believer in the right pathway ('I will guide thee with mine eye'), the usage of the figure of God's eye is intelligible. So the technique of learning the appropriate connections for the use of the phrase the 'Eye of God' is a necessary condition for its application within Christian discourse. While it is permissible to draw the conclusion that God 'sees' further than man and is thus capable of leading him rightly, it is not permissible to ask questions about the colour of God's eyebrows. Such a concept is not compatible with the particular usage being employed by the religious picture suggested. Wittgenstein's use of the concept of a picture to indicate what religious belief is thus tallies with his concept of a language game. To use the picture correctly, the believer must recognise the due entailments and incompatibles yielded by the particular concepts implicit in his belief. It comes down to his use of language: what it makes sense to say or not to say in respect of theistic belief. The question which emerges here is: does the concept of a picture as expressive of religious belief constitute some kind of assertion of knowledge? May we use Wittgenstein's notion to enable us to say that God can be known by a believer? Wittgenstein himself would regard the idea as preposterous.
"For a blunder, that is too big." The religious language game is not that of science. True, but may we say that Wittgenstein's idea of a religious picture is a necessary condition, if not a sufficient condition, for saying that real (as distinct from Newman's 'notional') belief accompanies or, at least, paves the way for knowledge of God? For what could knowledge of God mean apart from a knowledge of how to hold together those elements in theistic belief thinking of God as loving, righteous etc7 which are constitutive of its very nature? If this seems to be too narrow a stipulation as to what might be said to constitute knowledge of God, at least it must be granted that it forms a pre-requisite for such knowledge. To be sure, Wittgenstein's insistence that a believer cannot contradict an unbeliever, and vice versa, removes the concept of religious belief as a picture from the area of truth conditional propositions. So we are not expected to provide empirical data to substantiate what we are intending to include in the picture - or perhaps, more correctly, what we find to comprise the picture which is constituted by religious belief. The picture may be understood, however, to indicate (as Wittgenstein obviously thought) what could or could not be said. It shows the limits which the theistic language-game imposes as to what is permissible. Above all, it enables the believer to have a comprehensive interpretation of his world - a world which waxes and wanes as a whole. Intelligibility is perceived in the coherence of thought which the picture provides.

What we are implying here, in respect of the concept of revelation, is that any claim to knowledge of God has necessarily found expression in language. The Bible is said to be the vehicle of divine truth to men. In its pages, numerous writers have in various ways conveyed that revelation through putative historical
events, laws, psalms, poetry, symbolic language, parables etc. Literary genre is all important in the matter of revelation. To grasp something of the intentions of its expositors, to reflect upon their use of metaphor and image and to ponder the lessons to be learned from the historical facts alluded to, is to enter into the heart of what revelation is. Wittgenstein's view that religious belief may be seen as a picture can help in enabling us to speak intelligibly of revelation. The crux would seem to reside here. For it is the care which we take in analysing the language used in the theistic language-game which determines how we shall see the picture presented to us. It seems to be confirmed by Wittgenstein's remark about the fact that the unbeliever cannot contradict the believer "You can say they are contradicting one another. It is Greek to me." Wittgenstein acknowledges the essential facts of Christian Theistic belief, for example the death and resurrection of Jesus. He is right to tell us that they are some of the connections which enable the believer to use the picture in a way consonant with the belief which he purports to hold. This of course does not mean that we are not to take seriously the task of examining the hard data comprising the historical framework of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Unbeliever and believer are confronted with putative historical facts which are an indispensable core of all that goes to make up theistic belief, in a way in which eastern religious are not so indebted to definite historical events. One could envisage a language game being played by Buddhists or Vedantists in which the necessity to include specific historical facts would not be considered to be essential to its nature. They, too, might be said to hold a picture before them as to what it is they believe and, although meditation and mysticism are essential features of their religious practice, they cannot be said to be
wedded to historical facts in the way that Jews and Christians (and to some extent Muslims) are. Wittgenstein would no doubt have ascertained to this observation, since he informs us that the religious language game must not, by its very nature, be confused with others which depend upon empirical criteria for their legitimacy: that, presumably, therefore, it does not (or is not conceived to be part of what it makes sense to say) constitute anything within that language game to seek to intrude such an epistemological quest. "It's Greek to me" etc. I want therefore, to utilise Wittgenstein's idea of a picture as a vital contribution to all else being disclosed. It may well be that his understanding of the mystical as that which cannot be spoken of but only shown (TRACTATUS) helps to throw light upon his meaning or understanding of religious belief. Language sets limits to what can be said. The mystical is outside those limits.

For it is clear that Wittgenstein's doctrine of religious belief being understood as a picture meets the criteria for any X being held to be a belief. Price's discussion of the attitudinal nature of belief confirms this. Price also prefers a dispositional to an occurrence understanding of believing X. He shows further that belief in X as distinct from belief that X exists, is weak or strong belief in proportion to the conviction one has about it, and the vitality with which it is entertained. He thinks that Newman's idea of real as distinct from notional belief is especially significant for religious belief. All of this seems to endorse the assertion I have made in respect of Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief. Hudson itemises three things which being a theistic believer means, following Wittgenstein's model. He says that in using certain pictures the believer receives explanation through significance being given to everything in his life; he
commits himself to what those pictures reveal; and he responds affectively to their implications, with pity, terror, awe, etc. A sincere theistic believer then is one for whom there is psychological and logical value in those pictures, which he has learned to use by dint of his being a believer.
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b ibid p. 176

c ibid p. 171

d ibid p. 103

e ibid p. 110


g PRICE, H. H.: *Belief* previously cited, pages 315 - 48

h HUDSON, W. D.: opus cited p. 191 above.
So far I have used Wittgenstein's philosophy concerning the placement of the meaning of a proposition within the context of a specific language game, in alliance with his view that fundamental propositions count as an explanation of that meaning. I have further noticed that in explaining what is meant by reference to fundamental propositions, it is necessary to discern the depth grammar which emanates from them. Entailments and contraries are seen to be logical products of the ideas implicit within those basic assumptions which lie at the bottom of the 'game'. Since experience is characterised by those logical elements, it follows that what can or cannot be said of human activity is dependent upon acceptance of the 'rules' appropriate to the particular area of discourse relevant to the subject concerned. I believe that, in seeking to establish priority for the concept of God as constitutive of religious belief and, in intending to show how the kerygma provides the ground for intelligible talk of God making Himself known to man, I can utilise these principles of Wittgenstein's philosophy suitably. For the concept of 'belief in' provides a human responsive attitude entirely appropriate to the requirements of the proclamation about Jesus which the kerygma announces. It is apposite in indicating how men might assent to the notion that, in Christ, they have encountered God. Explanation of what is meant by a knowledge claim to this effect, and an understanding as to how experiences consequent upon such alleged encounter might be characterised, are each given irradiation in this way. Understanding must precede knowledge and
explanation precedes them both. I must be told or discover what is the case, and how it can be shown to be the case, if I am to be satisfied that I am in possession of something which might pass for knowledge. Thus by learning and by acquisition of appropriate rules to enable me to use words I have learned correctly, I should be in a position to provide an explanation of the meaning of those propositions which assert what I purport to 'believe in'.

The system of representation shown in the area of discourse (or by the autonomous grammar) which focuses upon the CHRIST EVENT indicates How reality is conceived to be.

My purpose then has been to try to establish that belief in God, and in Christ, has constative and commissive elements. The constative propositions, having empirical significance, find their meaning within the area of discourse in which the proclamation of the kerygma will be shown to be determinative. And integral to all that is thereby proclaimed is the constitutive concept of God, which functions as the primary or pivotal fundamental proposition of the Christian Theistic language game. Given that 'belief in' is the appropriate response to the kerygma, the notion of encounter with, and thus knowledge of God, is logically determined by the fundamental proposition to which one thereby assents. Belief that God exists and belief that He has made himself known to man in the person of Christ are necessarily implicit in the decision to believe in Christ, where such 'belief in' indicates trust and obedience to him. Entry into the form of life which finds its expression in the kerygma and associated language game is achieved through belief in God and 'in Christ. 'Belief in' thus is shown to be the key to understanding and understanding enables the believer to explain the meaning of those propositions which assert divine self disclosure and human encounter with the divine through response to Christ. Christ is
deemed to be alive in the sense that one's belief in Him opens up the possibility of spiritual awareness of His presence, and prompts obedience to His commands. In this way, both explanation and experience are seen to be determined by the criteria which have shaped the autonomous 'depth grammar' of the Christian language game. That language, although expressive of the unique subject matter which it describes, is also in true Wittgensteinian manner (by which I mean that it meets his stipulation that language within a language game must not, to be deemed to be intelligible, be without 'connections' with normal usage) capable of being understood from beyond its bounds. So, although 'belief in' is seen to be an integral element in the whole issue of making sense of putative claims by Theists to encounter with a revealing deity, it does not entail a loss of hold on what might be considered to be the 'true world of 'real'' experiences. What we presuppose about the world must determine, to some extent, the sort of experiences we have. The belief which we entertain about what we conceive to be real; our system of representation (here determined by 'belief in' Christ etc) shows us what that 'reality' may be taken to be. The concept of 'belief in' where the object of such belief is One who no longer physically exists, and about whom much theological and literary speculation continues to flourish, has been shown to be a necessary condition for justifying the attempt to explicate that meaning which is said to be resident in the kerygma. Its contact with 'reality' is then a matter of seeing where such belief leads one in being able to conceptualize experiences which, by their nature, suggest 'something more' than those dependent solely upon arousal by sense data. One might speak of ideologically aroused concepts rather than sensibly aroused ones.

I hope that what I have said above will help to provide a coherent and intelligible basis for speaking of the Christian view
that, in the person of Christ and in the proclamation by which the Apostles themselves, made known the One who had himself proclaimed the 'good news', an ultimate ground for speaking of God's revelation to human beings has been established. The question as to whether God exists or not is of course left unanswered and nothing I have said has, I hope, suggested that by simply playing a language game or entering into a form of life, the question can be shelved. It remains at the very heart of any efforts I might make to forward the view that an experiential interpretation of a self-revealing God can be shown to be intelligible. But what, it may be asked, of other world religious views? Although I am concerned specifically with Christian Theism, it may not be inappropriate to try to notice briefly how the concept of revelation relates to them.

Firstly, it should be observed that my two presuppositions for the experiential view of revelation which I have adopted, namely the existence of God and the idea that God makes Himself known to mankind through some means of communication, fit other religious beliefs, especially those of the monistic faiths of Islam and Judaism and, to some extent, Sikhism and Parseeism. There may be some ambiguity in seeking to apply these presuppositions to Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, Jainism and Taoism, where stress is laid upon moral attributes rather than upon revelation. Hinduism with its monistic view of the unity of God and man in a particular scheme of things, may also lack something of the clearly defined concept of communication between a self-disclosing deity and mankind. Secondly, attempts at comparison between the concept of revelation through the kerygma and other concepts (for example the address by Allah to Mohammed at Medina in c. 610 A.D.) inevitably raise theological issues concerning the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.

In this respect, Nielsen's assumption that an anthropological
concept of God belongs to Graeco-Roman and ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian ideas rather than to more modern formulations, is interesting. He attempts in his book entitled "Scepticism" to argue for the incoherence of the concept of God, where such a concept is strictly non-anthropological and confined to a purely spiritual, other-dimensional creator. Nelson's assumption, in the light of what I have said of the primacy of the kerygma as the focal point of the Christian view of God's revelation to man, could lead me into a discussion on the use of analogy in seeking to speak intelligibly of God by comparison with significant figures such as 'father', 'king', 'shepherd' etc which the Bible supplies. I do not think that this is the moment for such a discussion. Yet my distinguishing feature which has been noticed to set Christian belief off from other world religious beliefs does raise this issue. For the kerygma makes proclamations about Jesus of Nazareth which could be interpreted as an attempt to anthropomorphize the concept of God. Whether this is so or not, it is the case that both Islam and Judaism accuse Christianity of blasphemy against the One who is deemed to be the Wholly Other by speaking of Christ as the Son of God and teaching that He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a Servant."²

Thirdly, I want to say as a consequence from these theological disputes, that since my whole case is built upon the premise that the form of life of the Christian community is dependent upon some kind of acceptance of God-in-Christ, or the Christ-event, acceptance of the kerygma is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for knowledge of God. It is a necessary condition because, as we have seen, logical ultimacy for Christian talk of revelation is resident in the form of life and the fundamental propositions which support
it, of which the kerygma is one. It is a sufficient condition because response to the kerygma, given the premises concerning God's self-disclosure through the Christ-event, enables belief in God to be clothed with the garments of experiential encounter with God. Thus, whatever disputes may abound between adherents of different faiths concerning the primacy of one particular faith over another, Christian Theism is necessarily, as a matter of logical necessity, grounded in the kerygma. And at the heart of the proclamation which comprises that kerygma is the belief that putative historical events in the first century A.D. establishes the right for Christians to speak of experiential encounter with their Creator.

Belief in, then, may be said to be the appropriate form of belief entailed by the kerygmatic proclamation. Such belief in focuses upon constative and commissive elements within the kerygma, without which the essential features of the Christian faith could not subsist. That is to say, in order to enter into and to experience what it is the kerygma proclaims, a believer dually responds by affirming indicatives and imperatives. He accepts belief that certain revelatory propositions are true, but also commits himself to belief in the One about whom those propositions make specific theistic claims. Such belief in sits nicely into the framework of a form of life, for it indicates what is required of some one who wishes to put himself in a position where he might understand the meaning of those claims. By believing in Christ, he adopts a positive stance towards the message of the kerygma and acknowledges its constative and commissive implications for him. The form of life, embodying a continuing manifestation of what Christians conceive encounter with God to mean, provides both an explanation of the constative propositions presented by the kerygma and the basis for those experiences which commitment to its demands produce. For
experience within the form of life which emanates from the kerygma is
determined by those fundamental propositions resident or implicit
within it. That is to say, any putative experience about which a
believer may speak can be spoken about solely in terms of those con-
stitutive and commissive propositions which his belief in the kerygmatic
proclamation call forth. Belief in is constituted by constative and
commissive elements which the New Testament present and prescribe
respectively.
CHAPTER EIGHT D


b Philippians 2:1-11
CHAPTER NINE

THE CONCEPT OF INTENTIONALITY IN RELATION TO GOD BEING
SAID TO ACT IN THE WORLD

In the TRACTATUS, Wittgenstein attempted to show how facts are pictured in language to indicate what can and cannot be said. His concern was primarily with the picturing of facts spoken of in the indicative mood. Later he came to see that we also picture states of affairs emanating from psychological states like wishing, intending, etc. The optative mood (or subjunctive mood) and the imperative mood, as well as the indicative mood, were now included in Wittgenstein's interests. First person psychological states would thus be seen to be picturings of certain mental events. Insofar as they can be put in linguistic format, language can represent pictorially commands and wishes, previously considered to be excluded from such methodology. Our attempts to talk intelligibly of God wishing to fulfil certain purposes for humanity, or intending to carry out certain actions in the world on its behalf, may be aided here. Take for example the remark, "I wish to continue to write this thesis" or "I intend to continue writing this thesis", the psychological states of wishing and intending, when expressed in a suitable context as in these examples, show what can be said as effectively as descriptive indicative propositions may do. For, given that there is something being wished for or intended, its placing within a context which enables such psychological language to be used appropriately, presents us with a state of affairs as surely founded as where the indicative mood is used. Thus my saying that I wish to complete this thesis may be understood as an expression of a state of affairs, pictured in the stating of the
wish. And this will be true even though my saying that I am now writing these words may be considered to present a more incisive picture as to what is the case.

The biblical representation of God being said not only to perform certain actions in the world, but to have wishes and intentions about what he purposes for mankind, will depend severally upon the spheres of discourse in which they occur, being shown to possess, or not to possess, logical coherence. I shall apply Wittgenstein's views on expectation to the concept of God having wishes and intentions. His later thinking on the way in which commands and wishes express a state of affairs is here most apt. "The expectation comes somewhere between a statement about a current state of affairs, and a command for the future," Ronny observes in respect of Wittgenstein's thinking in "Philosophische Beobachtungen". In this work Wittgenstein said 'The essential thing in intentionality, and in intention itself is the picture, the picture of what is intended.' This bringing to the fore of the concept of a picture as the focus for the articulation of psychological states, helps immensely to clarify what is being adduced by theists in their talk of divine intentionality. What God intended for Israel, we are told by Old Testament writers, is clearly related to the keeping of his commands. His ultimate expectation for Israel is seen to be the realization of articulated intentions, tempered and shaped by the degree to which his commands were eventually obeyed. What God is said to do through overt action on Israel's behalf is shown to be one in ideological understanding with expressions of his wishes, intentions, commands and expectations. As a Judaeo-Christian theistic language-game, what is said about God within it has a coherence which embraces the language of intention and expectation.
as surely as that of description and report. In the 'Philosophical Investigations', Wittgenstein says that it is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact. He came to see that it is in the articulation of psychological states such as wishes, intentions and expectations that their logical status can be shown. His reference to 'logical space' enabled him to show the connection between different points descriptive of a particular psychological concept, like expectation. It seems to me that this linguistic analysis is invaluable in helping us to understand the Biblical teaching about God's intentions and their expected fulfilments. I shall try to apply what Wittgenstein says about the movement of a pointer which shows the object of expectation, to this theistic idea of how things stand. For they may be seen to stand in relation to one another as they are given expression in propositions which picture psychological states.

Wittgenstein came to see that the pictorial element of a proposition is separable from its indicative element. "A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand." Kenny remarks "One might equally say 'A command shows how things stand if it is obeyed. And it says that they should so stand.' Both an indicative proposition and a command, we might say, contain a description of affairs." The former describes how things are; the latter how things should be. In the light of this observation, we may analyse the concepts of God being said to wish for and to intend certain things for mankind. It will be helpful to utilise Wittgenstein's theory of expectation. This involved the first person employment of psychological concepts: sometimes he says that these utterances express a given emotion; at other times he suggests that they are part of a kind of behaviour. For example,
when expecting a friend who is late in arriving, I may express my
expectation by pacing a room, looking out of a window etc. I express
my expectation through my behaviour. On the other hand, it may be
held that my saying 'I am expecting my friend' is part of, rather
than a report on, my expectation. Allied to this distinction, and
supporting all Wittgenstein's thinking on the subject, is the belief
that there can be no gulf between an expectation and the report of
such. He replied to Russell's view that recognition of an external
relation is necessary to conceive of the fulfilment of an expectation,
by affirming that "there are only two things involved in a thought's
being true, namely, the thought and the fact." So expectation must
be internally related to what is expected. Its differentiation from
a memory picture lies in its meaning. In asking how a picture is
meant, Wittgenstein ruled out that this could be something to be
settled in the future (for example, by a feeling of satisfaction when
the picture event occurred). The intention expresses itself already
in the way in which I now compare the picture with reality. This of
course presents problems, not least being that of trying to compare
an expectation picture with reality, when that reality is in the
future. Here Wittgenstein's speech-ruler metaphor is appropriate.
We are asked to visualise a ruler being placed, as it were, against
the present point and also to point forward in the direction of
expectation. He establishes his notions of intentionality and
expectation in relation to, what he terms, 'logical space'. We are
in a familiar area of Wittgenstein's later thinking. It is not in
the causal relational nexus that clarification in to be sought.
Instead of trying to go behind the phenomena presented to us, we
place the phenomena in a broader setting. In other words, we must
explore the logic of the language-game of intending and expecting (or
To elucidate this point, we should note that psychological
states such as wishing, expecting, intending, hoping (looking ahead)
or remembering, reflecting, recalling (in respect of the past) are
not objects like horses, trees or buildings. Wittgenstein rejected
both behaviourist and internalising attempts to point to something
which is the object of each of these psychological or mental events.
Instead he showed how they each must be understood within the context
of an appropriate linguistic setting. Since we are concerned with
states which look to the future (wishing, intending, expecting etc),
I shall concern myself further with these 'mental' concepts. If we
ask in what intending, for example, consists we may come to see that
the answer is elusive. We have said that it is mistaken to attempt
to identify the state of intending as some sort of entity which can
be observed, like a dog might be observed. It is helpful to see that
our use of the verb 'intending' will be diffuse. It will not be
possible to give it a 'meaning' which establishes it univocally in all
circumstances. For it is these very circumstances, in all their many
possibilities, which gives to the concept of intending its context-
related significance. For example, I intend to continue writing this
dissertation. My friend's intention is to become a Christian
counsellor. I intend to meet my friend to discuss our mutual interests.
So one could continue. I think I have made it clear that to use the
verb 'to intend' in any of its tenses is to express a psychological
disposition, variant in usage, and dependent upon circumstantial
words to indicate each specific meaning. The meaning does not inhere
in an assumed behavioural characteristic of the one expressing an
intention or in some imaginary mental, inner image called 'intending'
or 'having an intention to do X', but in our understanding the
words of the sentence(s) in which it is placed. The logical position of the verb 'to intend' is to be grasped by due appraisal of the "grammar". The context establishes the way in which the word is being used. For we are mistaken if we imagine that there is something intangible and hidden in addition to the situation which enables us to speak intelligibly of intending to do X. When I assert that I intend to continue writing this thesis, my intention is encapsulated within the phenomenon itself. That I have such an intention is a fact, but not a fact such that a piece of overt behaviour or supposed internal event in my mind could be discovered to identify this intention. The sense of the assertion resides in its reference to something which is the case, namely that I intend to continue writing. A reader may understand what I mean when I say that I have such an intention, provided that he is able to understand the words of the sentence in which it is placed. Sometimes, a sentence will not be sufficient to supply all that is required to clarify how the verb 'to intend' is being used. For example, the intention behind the signing of the (now abortive) SALT agreement was to help to ensure world peace. It requires further information to elucidate what is meant. We would need to know that the agreement referred to the restriction upon nuclear arms in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. jointly. Given the prior fact that a "cold war" has existed between these two 'super powers' for many years, the significance of the treaty is laid bare. It makes sense to use a psychological word like 'intention' in respect of the overriding purpose in the minds of the American and Soviet leaders. So the context of the political situation appertaining to relations between East and West, communist and capitalist states, has to be made clear in order that what is meant by the word 'intention' in this instance may be grasped.

If it is accepted that verbs which express psychological states
acquire meaning in the context of the particular setting in which they are used, clearly the concepts of expectation and intentionality within theistic discourse must find their logical status there. The key theistic word "God" and its conclusive concept of "belief in God" provide the grounds for ideas of divine intentionality. Within that context, speaking of God having expectations and intentions makes good sense. We are saying nothing about evidence for the existence of God here or supplying criteria for belief in him. These may indeed be considered to be the sine qua non of religious credibility. Analogy with moral discourse will show that the quest for credibility, or at least intelligibility, is far from easy.

Since Moore averred that the word "good" is indefinable, moral philosophers have debated the thorny problem as to the possibility of deriving "ought" propositions from "is" propositions. That is, they have wondered whether it is logically possible to deduce moral values from descriptions of states of affairs e.g. John ought to visit his aunt, because she is ill. The descriptivists have argued in favour of this, prescriptivists and emotivists against it. Sometimes the language of science appears to sit loosely upon the reality it purports to describe: in its talk of molecules, atoms and particles it postulates an invisible (to the naked eye) world of activity within apparently solid, stable objects. Credibility may be said to be stretched as far as the layman is concerned. He may find it hard to believe in the existence of molecules, atoms etc., just as the phenomenologist may question the reality of abstract values. But we are not making tests for credibility. We are concerned with the intelligibility of what is said. For as Wittgenstein pleads, "philosophy should try neither to identify nor to explain the phenomena of mind . . . It should describe language . . . It should bring to mind how we actually use the mental terms
that confuse us philosophically.\textsuperscript{i}

So while the notions of wishing, expecting and intending may be applied differently, there may be said to be such a thing as a normal response in the way that people understand each of them. The differences are the result of differences in their contexts. We do not therefore find it difficult to grasp the principle of God wishing for, expecting and intending certain events in the human arena. Once we accept the theistic belief that he is a god whose nature is to love and who acts justly we can conceive of him wanting the best for his creatures. Belief in such a god is a prior condition to acceding to the idea of God being said to take an initiative in the world. It is not a necessary condition, however. An unbeliever can recognize the intelligibility of speaking of a God such as is postulated in Christian Theism. Likewise he can appreciate the concepts of intentionality in respect of such a God who is said to act in the world. He may not choose to play the theistic language-game; he can, however, be helped to see that there is a game to be played in which rational people may join. Thus to the sceptic who ridicules the idea of God having wishes and intentions, the theist can suggest that it is the placing of these concepts within their true boundaries that coherence may be given to them. The sceptic's mistake may be to try to confine them within too narrow limitations. By turning his attention towards the way in which these concepts are used he will see that it is this which shows their function. For we have made it clear the fact that to say that \(A\) intends to do \(B\) is to show how that statement of psychological fact stands in relation to those circumstances which are the occasion of it being said. If \(A\) intends to get up early to go fishing, his intention can only be spoken of intelligibly when we relate it to such events as an alarm clock ringing, hustle and bustle in dressing and breakfasting, motoring to the river etc. That his intention may not be
realised (he may be ill when the day dawns), does not change the fact that talking about intention to fish only makes sense within a 'fishing' context. It is one thing to examine the "grammar" peculiar to the language of wishing, intention and expectation; it is another to ask what are the criteria which permit us to use this language firstly, in a general way and secondly, in respect of Cod." The importance of ascertaining these criteria is to be seen in the remark by Wittgenstein that criteria govern what is said. Thus to say that A has an expectation of B makes sense within an appropriate linguistic framework expressive of a 'form of life'. That is to say there is a logical anchorage for speaking of expectation, or intention, or wishing, within the boundary of the language of hope. Human looking ahead and longing for certain specific events which are yet to be presents us with the empirical environment in which such language fits appositely. One criterion, therefore, for establishing the 'grammar' for the use of the language of expectation, intention or wishing is that of human utility. Wittgenstein suggested that criteria are arbitrary: they emanate from human need. They are not 'given' in the sense that necessary and sufficient conditions are in an empirical truth-conditional situation. They rather enable us to speak intelligibly of how these psychological dispositions may be expressed. A criterion shows how and when language appertaining to the future may be used. It cannot be justified since it rests on human tradition and expediency, not being impelled by overt conditions. Common usage dictates the verbal correctness or otherwise of words like expectation, as in the case of countless other words of varying linguistic contexts. Thus their validity depends upon the 'form of life' which they reflect and seek to express. Clearly, a further criterion for clear and coherent speaking about expectation 'et alia' is that public and not private
language be used. For it is a truism that there must be public
criteria for p, so that if the criteria are correct p will be correct.
Yet, further, criteria are rough and imprecise: it is regular use
which enables them to provide standards for accepted speech.

Within Biblical Theism, we are presented with the language of
hope. Holtmann and Pannenberg have written eloquently of the
'theology of hope'. The criteria for using this language may be
said to be those standards which Israel, the early church and the
contemporary church have accepted. The 'sitz im leben' concerning
Jesus' life and that of the first Christians provide the logical
grounding for theistic language of hope and expectation. It makes
sense to say that believers conceive of God having expectations for
his people. The criteria for such language are arbitrary certainly,
arising out of the needs of the believing community. They must
necessarily, therefore, be public, open to all to examine. A 'form
of life' is to be found in the community of the Judaeo-Christian
tradition which provides the logical setting for words of expect-
tation. That tradition shows that the criterion of regular use
has indeed helped to weave into its fabric the notion of God
intending to achieve still more for man than hitherto experienced.
Those tendencies and dispositions of God's character, previously
discussed, are the psychological features whose expression in the
historical events of the tradition is a pointer to the realization
of future expectation. Certainly it is in the language of the Bible
that we read of God's expectations. The metaphor of laying a
measure against propositions expressing expectation which occupy the
same logical space makes good sense of that language. The 'object
of expectation' might be said to be that goal which the Bible
writers repeatedly refer to in their eschatological writings. Thus
God's wishes and intentions are related to cosmic or supra-simulane
events so that we do not find divine mental states being substituted for putative happenings in which men may participate. It is true that the mind of God is sometimes spoken of and its essentially hidden nature implied. God’s thoughts are said to be unlike those of man. The logical space demanded by the need to speak intelligibly about God having wishes and intentions which he is able, to some extent, to implement provides suitable grounding for such intelligibility. Wittgenstein’s pointer metaphor to suggest the marking of positions relative to present expectation and subsequent fulfillment of that expectation similarly helps us to map the logical boundary of our language-game about God as initiator of events.

So, although we are constrained to speak by analogy with human experience of God’s mental and overt activity, we have drawn attention to the need to recognize the ‘logical space’ appropriate to the specific area of speech relative to God’s revelation to man. Thus the deity’s wishes for man anticipate the objects that fulfill them. What counts as fulfillment will be the implementation of the events or actions intended by God. We are not here concerned with the empirical matter of historical evidence for putative actions of the deity; rather our concern is the question of the logical coherence of speaking about God’s initiative in revelation. Wittgenstein has persuaded us that it is in our use of language that we can determine such logical coherence or lack of it. In his analysis of the grammar of a particular proposition he demonstrated how words are used in the context of a particular language-game. Abandoning his picture theory of meaning, he substituted a functional interpretation of the meaning of propositions: their contextual sphere was held to determine their significance. Bearing this in mind in connection with his considerable discussion of philosophy of mind (psychology) we may recall his refutation of behaviourism. Wittgenstein appeared at times
to suggest a behaviourist view when he disputed the possibility of our knowledge of mental states. For example he informed us that to say 'I am in pain' entirely describes my condition, making the assertion 'I know I am in pain' inaccurate. This is because there is no mental state which may be known, since feeling pain is its own verification. Wittgenstein said that he was not a behaviourist insofar as he thought that our experiences acquire significance beyond their physical nature through their expression in language. Thus it is by careful analysis of grammar that the meaning of propositions and behind them the true understanding of what is the case may be discovered.

In analysing what it means to say that God has taken an initiative through revelation, we may say, then, that the desires and wishes which we take to be behind specific events in the world are to be contemplated linguistically. Wittgenstein's use of the notion of logical space enables us to view theistic verbs of intentionality (wishing, expecting, purposing etc) as being connected with events which are thought to have fulfilled the aspirations expressed by those verbs. The language of the Bible presents us with examples of Yahweh being represented as promising to act on Israel's behalf. He informed Moses that he would go before the people from Egypt and lead them to the promised land; he assured David that his army would defeat the Philistines; he spoke through Jeremiah to comfort the exiled nation that they would one day return to their homeland. All are predictions of facts. We are here concerned with the language by which these promises and events are reported. In human affairs, if A predicts to B that he will do X, in the fulfilment of the deed he is said to 'keep his word'. Two reports are conceivable. One would refer to A's words spoken at T₁. Wittgenstein's point about mental events not being states of affairs,
although analysable through the words in which they are described (and thus demonstrable as states of affairs by being articulated) may help us to grasp what such a report is saying. It is showing us what A does at T₁; he says (or writes) that he intends (hopes, wishes) to do X at some future time. The report of A's doing X at T₂ will also represent a specific action performed by A. Thus each report describes a state of affairs in the world. The link between the reports Wittgenstein calls points, as it were, measured along a 'line' which occupies the same 'logical space'. For it is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact. So the Biblical reporting of Yahweh's intentions (and also, to a degree, wishes and desires; I say, to a degree, because these express idealistic hopes for mankind rather than realisations of the divine will in spite of human intrinsigence), and the report of their fulfilment in events, exhibit linguistic consistency. Within the theistic language-game it is coherent to speak of God intending and implementing acts of will through which he is said to reveal himself to man. They are recorded as states of affairs. That it makes sense to speak of those theological propositions which lie behind the notion of revelatory initiative, I believe, has been demonstrated. "The sense of a proposition presupposes only the grammatically correct use of certain words." Elsewhere, Wittgenstein stated that it was only through a verbal expression, indicating as it were the movement of a pointer showing the object of expectation, could an expectation be expressed. This refers to his concept of logical space which permits him to relate propositions purporting to convey a psychological state to an appropriate system. The language of the Bible provides just such a system, in giving us theological propositions which report the realization of alleged psychological states of the divine mind in specific acts in the world. We are treated to verbal expressions
of God's wishes and intentions which occupy the logical space presupposed by theism. In also presenting us with reports of events which are said to result from divine agency, the Bible verbally shows the direction those wishes and intentions point. Theism is a unity of propositions about a God who reveals himself through creation, acts of salvation and redemption, incarnation and final judgement. That these events reflect the mind of God is made plain. There is no hiatus between psychological states and states of affairs. Divine activity is reported as being a record of what is the case. Although man is the object of God's intentions, it is made clear that human agency is incapable of achieving the goals indicated by verbal expressions of expectation. Hence the necessity of divine initiative in conveying to man an understanding of his intentions. Those intentions are expressed within the kind of language which consorts well with Wittgenstein's concept of 'weltanschauung' - a world-view which 'waxes and wanes as a whole' as the theist responds to it in faith and commitment.
I would define the taking of an initiative as the taking of a new step originating within the self which, although determined by the character of the individual taking the step, bears the genuine marks of creativity. It will be seen as the result of a decision to perform that particular action. This would seem to rule out things done by habit. My driving a car after due experience may not be deemed to imply initiative; although my deciding to get up and drive the car might suggest a sort of initiative. A candidate sitting an examination may be said to be taking an initiative in applying pen to paper and proceeding to answer the questions suitably. This would suggest that to take an initiative is to make an effort to do something in a constructive way. Would tying my shoe-lace qualify as an example, or would it be more true to say that, having learned to tie shoe laces years ago, the action is performed in a mechanical way, while my mind is engaged with other matters? A pupil who makes little effort in school might be said to lack initiative: he doesn’t try to improve his academic work. If he hands in to the teacher an exercise carelessly written and only partially completed, can he be said to have taken or shown initiative in his work? Making a casual effort would not seem to qualify the schoolboy’s shoddy work for the verdict of taking an initiative. He lacks the determination to achieve and so his effort is poor. It would seem that merely to take some sort of action simpliciter is insufficient to earn such a description. Three features apparently need to be present for an action taken to be called taking an initiative. Firstly, there must be specific motivation or purpose to kindle sufficient enthusiasm to make an effort to do something. Secondly, the ability to perform the deed must be present in the one who seeks to take such action.
prompted by past praise from his parents, a youngster might volunteer to tie his shoe laces, thus performing a feat which indicated an advance upon previously displayed skills. This would correctly be described as taking an initiative in a way which an older person's tying shoe laces would not be deemed to be. If the youngster was handicapped so that he was unable to tie them, he could not be said to be taking an initiative, however much the desire to do so might exist. Implicit within the phrase 'taking an initiative' is the idea that something will be effected by the implementation of the decision to do what is conceived in the mind. Here one is not committed to a view which isolates 'mind' from body or is necessarily dualistic. The wish to do X, however much it carries with it strong desire to perform the deed, cannot be said to be taking an initiative until some specific action is taken, which enables the wish to be realised (in one way or another). "The wish is father to the deed", but thoughts without deeds remain dormant or moribund.

I have, then, suggested that to take an initiative is to carry out some action such that the perpetrator of the action may be said to implement a decision emanating from within the self. To say that it is self-determined is not to deny that there will be prior conditions and antecedent causes, without which the action could not take place. For example, the one who performs such an action must be physically and psychologically able to do so. A handicapped dwarf would be incapable of pole-vaulting a six-foot hurdle, for example. A man's being able to implement an intention will depend upon prior conditions which may incorporate environmental as well as genetic factors which have combined to make him the sort of person he is. Thirdly, there must be appropriate circumstances prevailing to allow the action to be taken. An athletic exponent of pole-vaulting would be prevented from jumping in the absence of the
appropriate equipment. We have thus extended the notion of initiative to include wishes, intentions and other self-determining elements, occasioned by character which has been formed from previous decisions and actions. Ability has been shown to mean having the capability in the sense of possessing the necessary physical and psychological powers to effect what one has in mind. In addition, the appropriate opportunity and facilities to ensure that those powers can be used to fulfil the given intention must be present for an intention to be realised. Thus a distinction between motives and intentions is implicit in what is understood by initiative.

In stating that God has taken the initiative in revealing himself to men, therefore, theists postulate a desire on his part to do so and the ability to implement this desire. 'For God so loved the world (his attitude towards men) that he gave his only son (he effected his intention for men) that whoever believes on him ... should have everlasting life (the purpose of his activity). Let us note the application of what has been said of the nature of taking an initiative in relation to theistic claims about revelation. The idea of God's love for the world indicates that he has compelling desire to aid his erring and struggling creatures. The motivation for distinctive action is to be discovered in God's nature. Such is logically distinct from an intention to act. It is a constant theme of the Bible that he was constrained by his 'everlasting love' to intervene on man's behalf. The inability of man to initiate a loving relationship with him finds expression in the words 'not that we loved God but that he first loved us', and in 'God showed his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'. The impression is given that, being what he is, he can do no other than manifest his loving disposition for the benefit of mankind. From within his own self he has the essential quality of compassionate love
which prompts him unremittingly to extend such to man. That is not to say that this love may not be spurned by the free decision of men, in which case we are informed in scripture that God may withdraw his good efforts towards them, for the time being. Since his wish is to extend his love towards men, it cannot be said to be self-contradictory that he should so withdraw himself, in some way, for the duration. For this could be said to be reflective of his love in its fundamental motivation, namely to move men to respond in love, not indifference or rejection, towards him. We need here to note a distinction between motives and intentions. It must also be noticed that God’s love is said to be balanced with his holiness and righteousness and that whatever he does in loving action can only be done if it is in keeping with his holy and just desires. If we take the point that his wish to create free, responsive beings must be set within an overall intention to reveal himself to them we may suppose that his loving intentions for men reflect wishes which were only partly capable of creative fulfilment. Here the human analogy holds. For to wish for X must be, given limitations imposed by other people’s actions and circumstances, a weaker mental event than to intend to do Y where intention is implemented by firm resolve to do it. And the nature of one’s wishes and intentions will reflect the nature of the self of the one in whose mind they originate. Character must help to shape such, so that wishes of a wholesome kind, although incapable of complete or partial fulfilment, would almost certainly instruct the sort of intentions which are capable of some implementation. A gangster who wishes to achieve success as a man of affluence, may have to settle for less as he seeks to follow through intentions to procure wealth in illegal ways. Daulked in realising what he wishes for, he nonetheless displays his character in that degree of self-determined behaviour which he is able to perform. So the wholly
good and righteous God of Christian theism may be grieved by his inability to create, or fashion through human response the kind of men he yearned for. In determining to intervene practically in the human arena, he evinced his wish to change this situation. In so far as theism conceives of God as the omnipotent creator and sustainer of the universe, it holds that he possesses the ability to effect such intervention.
CHAPTER NINE


c WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Zettel 53


e KENNY, A: opus cited above p 121

f WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Philosophische Bermerkugen 63

g KENNY, A: p 126

h WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Philosophische Bermerkugen 65

i MALCOLM, N.: Knowledge and Certainty New Jersey, 1963, p 157

j ibid


l Exodus 12-14; 1 Samuel 20-26, Jeremiah Chapter 29 verse 10

m WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Philosophische Bermerkugen 72

n WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Zettel 53
CHAPTER TEN

THE LOGICAL SUPERINDING FOR AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF REVELATION:

THE THEISTIC LANGUAGE-GAME

1 The Problem of Doubt in Relation to Claiming to know that It

To say that I know that such-and-such is the case indicates that I am using the verb 'to know' within the accepted boundaries of a particular language-game. In so far as I lay claim to some item of empirical knowledge, I expose myself to the possibility of being falsified by events. Should I wish to make an affirmation of certainty by speaking of being sure of what I claim to know, I have to concede that some one else may doubt it. Of a certain claim to know with certainty a number of what, to him, seemed to be unsatisfiable propositions, Wittgenstein commented "You don't know anything."

As Elizabeth Farkins Wolrast points out "If someone says, 'This is absolutely certain - certain beyond doubt or the possibility of doubt,' he is expressing his belief. He does not describe a state of affairs . . ." and a few lines before this she declares, "There is no defense against the possibility of doubt. That doubt is always possible regarding what we know, or claim to know, in a logical truth."

Descartes wrestled with the difficulty of whether he could know anything for sure and found that doubt plagued his efforts. Moore attempted to cut through the cords which seemed to bind philosophers in their quest for indubitable facts, by an appeal to common-sense experiences of knowing that p. Wittgenstein asks whether it makes sense to doubt fundamental propositions (e.g. that the earth existed a long time before I was born). In saying that Moore claimed that he knew it was a hand which he perceived (his own hand), Wittgenstein
reminded him of the public nature of such 'knowledge'. It was not a privileged fact known only by Moore. In that sense, Moore's claim to know an immediate object of perception, would seem not to require the verb 'to know' to indicate its assured existence. Doubt here would appear to be inappropriate. D. Wolfson reminds us, however, of the logical necessity of doubt in relation to claims to know or assertions of belief. He criticises the view that knowledge should be viewed as some sort of inventory whereby it is implied that there are a number of things which might be known. C. Richard's wish to establish the unassailability of mathematical proof in Cartesian, and he wishes to extend the same privilege to direct observations. However, there is a vast difference between an a priori statement which owes its truth to logical necessity, like that concerning the angles of a triangle, and an empirical proposition concerning some experience one is having, or has had, which owes its truth to suitable verification in the external world. So Richard's linking of direct observations, for example that one sees a brown patch in one's visual field, cannot be taken to be necessarily a valid parallel.

Ayer makes an important remark about this: "In demanding for empirical statements the safeguard of logical necessity, these philosophers (e.g. Leibnitz) have failed to see that they would thereby rob them of their factual content." Ayer, while agreeing that one's being sure cannot lend support to the belief that what one is sure about must be true, acknowledges that one can claim the right to be sure for empirical propositions. The extent to which such a claim may be justified will depend upon the degree to which a secure basis for the claim can be offered. He gives an example that the statement is self-evident, or that its truth is directly warranted by our experience, or that it is validly derivable from some other statements, or set of statements, of which we have the right to be sure. He
later says that a man who makes a claim to be sure in respect of a piece of putative knowledge must show that he has taken every reasonable step towards making sure if his claim is to be accepted by others. If his claim is to know how to do X his doing it will establish some credibility for that claim, especially if he repeats the feat several times. His claim to know that p will gain approval if he succeeds in showing that it rests upon due authority, for example knowledge of an historical fact. This draws attention to Ryle's definition of knowing something as a success verb, while his classification of believing something is that it is a motive word. Here one would have to succeed in showing the strength of one's claim to know that p or how to do X, while in believing one is setting one's sights rather lower and indicating an inclination in one direction rather than another. Although Ayer clearly favours a scientific view of how we can perceive the world of physical objects, he cannot altogether get beyond the position of conceiving of his immediate sensory experiences as being the awareness of some sort of sense-data phenomena. He speaks of seeing a seeing-cigarette case before him, for example. He does so in support of the idea of the incorrigibility of immediate sense perception, while allowing for verbal misrepresentation.

If we recognize the juxtaposition of knowing, believing and doubting, as well as a host of perceptive and cognitive verbs expressive of how we ascertain what it is we are experiencing at any given time (entertaining a proposition, assenting to it, confirming it, recognizing an object or person, identifying, classifying, comparing, understanding, clarifying, seeing, etc), we shall be able to grasp a logical truth which can only aid theistic efforts to speak of revelation as 'knowledge'. It is true that to say I know that p suggests an infallible state while to say that I believe that p does
not, yet it remains also true that I may make a mistake in my assertion of knowing a particular fact. How often have we spoken confidently of knowing something, only to find later that we were mistaken? K. Volgaft has shown that we may only refer claims to knowing to human agents, who may be mistaken, as human agents, in any of such claims. We express our belief that such-and-such in the case in the recognition that we may be mistaken. If scepticism would seem to follow from this, it is not by the discovery of some 'privileged fact' which is beyond doubt that we shall overcome such. Malcolm Clark speaks favourably of the language of questioning rather than affirming to conquer scepticism. He does so in support of a 1st-person agent approach to knowing rather than a 3rd person spectator approach. The agent experiences perplexity before the situations he confronts. Unlike the scientist, who adopts the viewpoint of an observer, he refrains from stating A or not-A. Instead of viewing an object in terms of its being one thing or another (and hence as, Volgaft denies, the possibility of being one of a number of items of knowledge), he acknowledges his role as agent in questioning what he perceives.

Chisholm's Three Condition Theory is pertinent here. It states that before a man can be said to know such-and-such, he must firstly, be sure; secondly, he must be able to produce evidence justifying his assurance; and thirdly, what he is sure of must be true. (1) S accepts P; (2) S is sure that P is true; (3) P is true.

Volgaft criticises this theory in respect of claims to know something. She differentiates claiming to know a thing from identifying something. Since we express our beliefs in making such a claim rather than identifying one thing or another, there cannot be necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing, as Chisholm affirms. For we do not subsume what we say we know under a specific class concept. Her refutation of Chisholm's formula turns upon the logical
impossibility of determining 'objectively' what in fact are our beliefs about something. 'For whether someone does have 'adequate evidence', whether he does accept h', and whether h is true - all those reflect our beliefs' as he states. Aaron acknowledges the value of the Three Condition Theory in stressing the centrality in 'knowing' of being sure. He agrees with Wolcarn, however, that being sure cannot be identified with knowing. He also points out that while Chisholm's theory may appear to be suitable for instances of 'knowing that' it is inappropriate for many instances of 'knowing how'. e.g. 'He knows how to grow dahlias' or 'He knows French' i.e. how to speak and understand French. Ayer suggests that it is the application of the word 'know' rather than its meaning which marks off scepticism from claims to being sure of what is known. 'What the sceptic contends in that our markings are too high; that the grounds on which we are normally ready to concede the right to be sure are worth less than we think; ... or not worth anything at all.' In spite of this Ayer believes that criteria can be established for knowing that something in the case (like Aaron he accepts that 'knowing how' has to be considered separately). He speaks of not only being sure of what one says one knows, but having the 'right to be sure'. Such a right has to be earned in various ways, he informs us. However, any definition of knowledge must remain elusive just as a definition of good must be elusive. For the standards we establish to satisfy our attempts to be sure of what we know may be compared with standards of goodness which help to shape our usage of the word "good". Knowledge, to some extent, may thus be said to be value-laden, to be looked at in relation to its particular language-game.

This reference to standards which may fluctuate implies a flexible approach to the subject. Malcolm Clark's insistence on a questioning
rather than an affirming attitude before the phenomena of one's experience, seems to have a similar bearing. As he says, perplexity, confusion and doubt result from such questioning, from which we may seek some sort of deliverance. Stating or affirming something may avoid such perplexity, but at the same time makes for a more static attitude to knowing. Rather than seeking 'privileged' facts which may be forwarded to settle the issue, we admit of the possibility of more light being thrown upon the situation. We may remain open to the availability of new insights or information which present a challenge to that 'knowledge' which previously we imagined we possessed. The point made earlier of Moore's claim to know certain facts for certain has been dismissed by Wittgenstein on the ground that Moore misused the verb to know in this instance. The public nature of the situation where Moore held up his hand to affirm certain perceptual knowledge, precludes the success of what Moore wished to achieve. He wished to use that 'unascertainable' fact as an indisputable basis for genuine knowledge claims. Neither is Moore's attempt to list specific items, as incorrigible evidences of what is known for sure, satisfactory, Wolgan reminds us. For it implies that there is a class of things which one might know and that it is possible, in principle, to exhaust the total of knowable items. Such a view runs counter to the kind of open and enquiring approach to the problem of knowledge which I have discussed. And it has been observed that to claim to know something is, logically, to admit of the possibility of doubt. Would it be appropriate, in the light of the above discussion, to adopt E. Williams' view, that non-propositional, 'ineffable' pieces of knowledge (the so-called "given" element) are inadmissible? Must I, with him, regard all knowledge to be propositional, related to concepts and not to existential truth?
The Relationship of Knowing to Believing

Malcolm presents us with a sequence of propositions concerning the probability of a course containing a flow of water. He uses this example to try to illustrate the difference between knowledge and belief. He points out that the possession of relevant evidence by the claimant is a necessary condition for knowing. Thus 'I know that it (the river in the course) won't be dry' and the reason given 'I saw a lot of water flowing there this morning' carries with it a sufficient reason for such a claim. If on going to the course in the afternoon we found it to be dry, we should say that you believed there would be water, even though you declared that you knew at the time. Malcolm refutes Prichard in the latter's contention that it is by reflection that we cannot mistake belief for knowledge. Reflection alone, in the case of the probability of there being water in the course, could not elicit a certainty, however much the speaker felt sure at the time of speaking. Malcolm distinguishes strong and weak senses of knowing as a consequence. Prichard draws a firm distinction between our ability to know that we are knowing something and our knowing on other occasions that we are only believing something. Hamlyn disagrees on both counts. He points out that children may know things without knowing that they do, and a teacher may have to draw their attention to it. Hamlyn also considers the possibility of unconscious beliefs to tell against Prichard's assertion. On the other hand, Prichard's cautionary advice is that in thinking we know X we may be taking much for granted: that is, he agrees with Cook Wilson in rejecting the notion that thinking without question 'that the thing in front of me is a table, or that today is Tuesday, or that so and so came to see me last week' is the same as being certain.

The 'taking for granted' habit undoubtedly accounts for mistaken
in our claims to know what in or was the case. To return to Malcolm's example of the gorge being found to be dry after one had made a confident assertion to the contrary, we notice the importance he places upon supporting facts. The prediction that, should one go to the gorge in the afternoon, one would find water in it was made upon the experience of having seen water there that very morning. On finding the gorge to be dry, however, it becomes necessary to alter a knowledge claim retrospectively to an assertion of belief. This hypothetical example helps to centre both knowledge claims and belief assertions upon the need to corroborate, where one can, the claim being made. To believe that the gorge would be flowing with water, even to the extent of having a strong conviction that this would be so, awaits evidence as to whether the belief is justified or not.

As A. R. White states: "... it is a characteristic of all claims [to knowing] that they may be validated or invalidated; it is a characteristic of all pretensions to knowledge that they may be exposed as fraudulent." He goes on to refute Malcolm's use of 'know' when given a 'strong' connotation, since Malcolm insists that such usage (e.g. in the case of the proposition 2 + 2 = 4 or that there is an ink-pot in front of no) precludes any admission of making a mistake. Interestingly, White in commenting on the different views held by Malcolm and Frichard, finds a common factor (at least in respect of Malcolm's revised version of his own view): it is that in making a claim to know X one can, by reflecting on one's condition and without recourse to anything else such as the facts of the case, discover whether in fact such a claim is being made. Thus one can know by introspection whether one is making a claim to know that p or only believing it to be the case. This of course tells us nothing of the truth or falsity of the putative knowledge for which the claim is being made; it merely enables the person making it to distinguish
Knowing claims from belief assertions. Here White endorses Prichard's view concerning the part introspection may play in determining whether we believe or know that p.

Woozley takes philosophers like Malcolm to task for the mistake they make in assuming that a man cannot know something unless he is sure of it. This idea of 'being sure' and 'having the right to be sure' finds strong echoes in Ayer's views. Woozley uses the expression 'feels sure' in respect of knowledge claims and exposes the fallacy of such feeling being accredited with grounds for certainty. Woozley's distinction between the justifiability and the truth (or validity) of a claim to knowing that p is crucial. As White comments, this distinction points to two different ways of judging someone's claim to know. For one could be justified in making a claim which is false. The men of the fifteenth century were justified in asserting that the earth is flat, given the limited scientific knowledge they possessed. So we may say of someone's claim to know that, in the circumstances in which they made it, it was reasonable. Thus the claim can be subsequently shown to be invalid, though reasonable. On the other hand, we might rebuke someone for making a claim which we deem to be unreasonable, implying that they had the opportunity to correct their claim to enable it to be a true one. As White goes on to show, the criterion of good evidence is really relevant to the assessment of the reasonableness of a claim to knowledge rather than to its validity. All of which brings us again to Malcolm's example of the gorge, and the distinction which he draws between a claim at T₁ that one knows it to be flowing with water. The ground for this claim is that one has witnessed water running there shortly or some time before the claim was made. However, subsequently at T₂ it is discovered that the gorge is dry and the claim to know, made at T₁, is now modified retrospectively
to the effect that one believed (strongly no doubt) that it would flow with water at $T_2$. It was reasonable to say that one knew there was water in the gorge at $T_1$ (indeed, at the time of speaking, the possibility is that that was the case). On being found to have predicted falsely in respect of what one expected to find, the belief that this would be so was found to be invalid.

It is clear that it is the reasonableness of the claim-making, not the claim itself which is, in this instance, important. The relevant question to ask the claimant would be "How do you know?" rather than "What do you know?" The reply to that question entitles the claimant to the respect of his interlocutor. For he states that he saw water in the gorge that morning. We must notice that his ability to give grounds for his reply may be taken as an indication of a disposition so to answer. Thus there is a class of events such that, whenever any member of that class is experienced the person concerned uses this to proclaim a prediction for the near future. Given the occurrence of $E$ at $t_1$ he is disposed regularly to predict that at $t_2$, $E'$ (similar event) will occur. All such predictions depend upon inference. They all run the risk of meeting Hume's criticisms about inductive reasoning. Since the claim to knowledge is made in respect of an indirect situation, memory will play an important part in enabling the claimant to state his proposition. Memory however could be appealed to in order to support a claim to direct not inferential knowledge. It is significant that P rice recognizes an affiliation between 'knowing that' and 'believing that', admitting of difference of degree rather than of kind. "There are some sorts of knowledge which can be defined, with suitable precautions, in terms of belief," he informs us. He speaks of the possessor of knowledge, as distinct from one who merely believes, as one who has more evidence and stronger reasons for the proposition
as to what is claimed to be the case. In his talk of degrees of
knowing (including belief) he seems to reflect Malcolm's strong and
weak forms of knowing. Since Price's linking 'knowing' with
'believing' refers to inferential knowledge, the parallel is
heightened, for Malcolm's 'weak knowing', as I have shown, relates
to situations (as in the case of the proposition about there being
water in the gorge) where the speaker is not directly able to verify
the proposition. Hence, as we have seen, he has to give reasons for
his assertion, in such a case, and these inevitably entail some
reliance upon memory, as well as prediction as to what one expects to
be the case should one seek to verify or falsify the proposition in
question. Malcolm's strong form of knowing mirrors the kind of know-
ledge about which Price affirms there cannot be any reduction to
belief terms whatsoever. This is immediate or direct knowledge,
where to modify one's claim to know that p would be impossible.
(It is raining" "There is something brown in my present visual field"
"I have a headache" etc.) as one legitimately may do when uttering a
belief: "I believe it is raining" said in a position where one is
unable to know for sure whether this is so or not. The question
"How do you know?" in these instances does not make sense, as it
does in respect of the 'weak' forms of knowing or inferential know-
ledge. Price includes having a memory of one's headache as being an
example of direct knowledge: something which one cannot doubt: reasons
are unnecessary in speaking of it; it is sufficient to say that one
has a memory of having a headache.

Although belief is always fallible, however firmly one believes
or however strong one's evidence for one's belief may be, it remains
ture that knowledge cannot be given cast-iron guarantees. Philosophers
largely are agreed that there is no road from belief to knowledge. Prichard
remarks that no improvement in a belief and no increase in one's
feeling of conviction will convert it into knowledge. It is a different in kind as are desiring and feeling or red and blue. Yet different degrees of knowing are admitted. Cook Wilson defines the verb strictly to mean the having of some entity or some fact directly present to one's consciousness. Price remarks that a more lax sense of knowing is the believing of some proposition which is reasonably certain, and Malcolm distinguishes his 'strong' and 'weak' senses of knowing. White criticises this latter distinction, on the grounds that it is a logical characteristic of all claims to knowing that they may be validated or invalidated. Yet White agrees that Malcolm is right if we move from one's not allowing a claim to be invalidated to one's not being able to see how it could be. That is why we assert 'I know' so strongly in such instances: $2 + 2 = 4$, the ink-bottle is before me, etc. White comments here on Moore's appeal to common-sense, that it is not that statements of common-sense are true or known to be true, but that it is more reasonable to claim they are true than the opposite. Prichard believes that where we should say we are certain, we should be prepared to say we know. Of the proposition that the square of three must be an odd number, he asks that if we do not say we know this to be so, we must wonder what in fact we know at all. Yet with all this, the possibility of one's being mistaken in respect of claims to know may not appear to be so different from the accepted fallibility which attaches to statements of belief.

Woozley criticises Malcolm's assertion that 'being confident is a necessary condition for knowing' pointing out that normally a man would not make a claim to know unless he was sure. He could know without being sure but would not be justified in making the claim. It is on this issue of claiming to know as distinct from knowing that Woozley lays bare a vital source of confusion. Does claiming to know amount to no more than mere belief? Price reminds us that there is a
state of mind which we are tempted to call belief where we are not aware of the possibility that we may be mistaken. He calls this acceptance or taking for granted. Cook Wilson terms it being under the impression that; Prichard speaks of thinking without question. Cook Wilson tells us that having an opinion, although dependent upon thinking, is not knowing, any more than pondering, wondering or inquiring are. On the other hand perception and the apprehension of a feeling are examples of knowing (or channels of knowing). So it is possible to make a claim to know where, on closer inspection, one's claim (knowing) is a matter of opinion or mere belief. Price, however, reminds us that for belief proper (as distinct from the simple entertaining of a proposition without positive assent to it being given), some knowledge must be present.

A belief rests upon some knowledge and upon probability. Price cites an example of our hearing a noise in the cupboard which we believe to be the missing cat. We entertain the proposition that the cat is in the cupboard, and in going further than this and assenting to it we express our belief in the probability that that is where we shall find it. However, for this assent to qualify as a belief, it is necessary that we acknowledge the possibility that we may be mistaken, for the noise from the cupboard may be made by a rat or a small boy. We recognize that in believing the proposition p, there are alternative propositions, q and r, which might obtain. The evidence which would confirm the truth of p is incomplete, until the cupboard door is opened and the cat discovered inside. Yet, in assenting to p as well as entertaining its likelihood, we give credence to a set of facts which, in our view, makes p more likely than r; viz, we have heard a 'meow', we have previously on other occasions found the cat in the cupboard, we noticed the cat in the vicinity of the cupboard five minutes ago. Price thus defines belief
proper as reasoned assent to an entertained proposition. A certain degree of confidence, how much or how little will indicate our emotional response to the case in point, as shown. We deliberately choose to assent to \( p \), aware that \( q \) and \( r \) have claims upon us, but give priority to \( p \). What needs to be stressed, in our use of Price’s analysis of belief, is the difference which he here draws between firm belief and zero acceptance, taking for granted, being under the impression that, or thinking without question. Considered thought in given to the proposition in what Price calls belief proper. If one knew that \( p \), there would be no room left to believe that \( p \), or if one knew how to perform \( p \) there would be no need to speculate or express a predilection for this method rather than that as to how to do \( p \).

Although thought may be required before we are able to state what we know, as when we answer correctly a question addressed to us, thinking is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for knowing. Cock Wilson speaks of knowing that which is directly presented to our senses or apprehended at once. However unconscious some residual beliefs may be, in that we have no occasion to examine them now, any relevant belief cannot be other than that about which due thought is applied. But not all unexamined assumptions should be taken to be bogus. We do not need to be asking ourselves constantly whether we have evidence for a belief or even to be aware of our having it. Price explains that our acceptance of Smith’s trustworthiness may be the result of long encounter with him and experience of having seen him relating to other people. If the subject arise, we would affirm Smith’s trustworthiness, but we do not need to produce an inventory of Smith’s deeds or to recall any specific examples to enable us to make that affirmation. Price speaks of our disinclination to doubt a proposition, which frequent
exposure to relevant situations increases. Insofar as Price accepts Cook Wilson's strict use of knowing to direct experience, his conclusion as to the reinforcement of our less (vocal or) articulate beliefs by repetitive favourable circumstances, does not seem to me to fall short of his "lax" sense of knowing, namely the believing of some proposition which is reasonably certain. This is inferential knowledge of course. It consorts also with Woolley's remark that although to say 'I think I know that' seems odd, although not 'I think I know what (where, when, why)', we should perhaps permit ourselves to say it more often in admission of the fact that we have less than certainty for some of our propositions. He does not think that adding the verb 'think' diminishes a claim to know since knowing is not like wondering, pondering, reflecting etc, a psychological word, least of all is its claim based upon a mental state or a condition; it refers to what we do to attain an end. One may wrongly think one knows and not know that one knows. Prichard rejects the former of these possibilities, arguing that claiming to be certain when one thinks one knows is actually being 'under an impression that', knowledge here being simulated. To be certain is not to know; no inductive generalization can count as knowledge; (sugar is sweet etc); if we say we are certain we should be prepared to say we know. Prichard cites the example of saying we know that a noise is loud.

3 The Application of the Discussion to Theistic Belief

From the various views concerning the relation of belief to knowledge which have been discussed, it can be seen that my initial assertion (at the beginning of this chapter), that any knowledge claim whatever requires a context to enable its merit or deservit to be assessed, has been illustrated. Thus a knowledge claim may be
said to be circumstantial, relative to a given situation. I think that it will be possible to find a degree of agreement in these views, while acknowledging definite points of disagreement. A major point of difference relates to the question as to whether necessary and sufficient conditions for a claim by S to know that p can be established. Another relates to the question as to whether belief 'that' can, in some way, lead to a claim to know 'that', where appropriate corroborative circumstances obtain, or seem to exist. There is some difference of opinion, also, in respect of one’s intuitions or introspections about what one knows one believes or believes one knows. Thus the issue of being sure, or having a conviction that such and such is the case, poses a problem in relation to attempts to establish grounds for knowing that p.

The following points will indicate the conclusions I have reached and which will guide me in my efforts to discover how far, if at all, revelation in an experiential sense, may be said to qualify for some kind of knowing by man and by God. First, I want to accept Wittgenstein’s contextual basis for seeking the meaning of knowledge claims: the medium for understanding in the language game, where the verb 'to know' acquires the meaning it has as determined by the conditions (ultimately the 'form of life' and the associated autonomous or depth grammar of the game) inherent in the linguistic criteria therein indicated. This need not entail the seeking of a ‘given’ element or ‘privileged’ fact. Secondly, following from the first point, it is mistaken, I believe, to view 'knowledge' as consisting in a number of facts which could, in principle, be accumulated like an inventory and which, again in principle, must have a finite limit in terms of mathematical formulae. I have shown, by contrast, sympathy with the more open approach of Wolgast and Clark, both of
when espouse a questioning and first person interpretation of knowledge claims. Hence, I am favouring a view which seeks to avoid the two components theory; that is, the view which conceives of knowledge as comprising a given element and human reflection upon such.

Thirdly, the subjective aspect of one's claims to know that p might seem, therefore, to advert to a state of mind or a particular phase of consciousness. Without absurdly wishing to say that my awareness of my assertions of belief or my claims to knowing could function in a state of unconsciousness, I think that I want to say something other than that such assertions or claims are simply comments upon my psychology. I want to use Ayer's concept of 'having the right to be sure' as a criterion for a genuine knowledge claim, where that right is seen to be relative to one's being in a position to make such a claim: one has to earn the right to make it.

Here, I believe that Wittgenstein's discussion about knowing in "On Certainty" is relevant to my view. He shows us that, in the light of those fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of a particular language game, it does not make sense to doubt those things which hold fast there. To use Ayer's phrase, my 'having the right to be sure' will then depend upon my having appraised myself of those determinants of the kind of knowledge which a particular area of discourse exhibits. This should not be confused with the seeking of empirical grounds by looking for a 'given' element to try to provide an indubitable basis for a knowledge claim.

Fourthly, it will be seen, then, that my claims to know will be inescapably bound up with the learning of a language game, and the ability to demonstrate that I have mastered the rules which enable me to use correctly the words, phrases and sentences appropriate to a particular subject. White's point about the distinction between validating and justifying a proposition, where a knowledge claim is
made, will link up with this matter of learning. To know that \( p \) in a
given instance requires that I am in a position to state a satisfactory
claim to know, and such a claim presupposes a grasp of linguistic
patterns of recognizing and identifying correctly how \( p \) is to be
described.

Fifthly, it does not follow from what has been said of the need
to root the word 'know' in a particular context, to ascertain what
sort of a claim is being made by its use, that there is only a
shifting sort of usage for the verb. On the contrary, the philosophers
referred to have been at one in seeking to demonstrate that claiming
to know that \( p \) is of a different order to asserting a belief that \( p \).
Knowing, in whatever context it exists might be said to possess a
homogeneous quality in that it is, to use Ryle's phrase, a "Success
word". It is where I am able to show that I have cause to justify
a claim to know that \( p \), in whatever context the claim might be made,
that I can rightfully make such a claim. To justify here points to
my being in a satisfactory position to support my claim with
publicly acceptable grounds for the claim. Malcolm's use of 'strong'
versions of 'know' would appear to meet Ayer's criterion for having
the right to be sure, although Hamlyn refutes the attempt to argue
from a subjective conviction of being sure to a successful assertion
of knowing. Wolgast's view that in saying that I know that \( p \) I do
but assert a belief about it, would seem to tally with this view.
Yet my saying that I know, where I might in other circumstances
speak of belief would, as Malcolm's 'weak' version of knowing
reminds us, at least provide a subjective assurance to the sort of
success Ryle wished to differentiate from states like wondering,
entertaining, pondering or thinking, where something short of
arrival seen to be indicated.

Sixthly, I am able to postulate, therefore, that it is in the
connection between the subject's first person (and necessarily questioning) approach to personal knowledge, and the linguistic framework in which his specific usage of that verb is used, that headway for my subject can be made. For, given that I shall concern myself with ideologically aroused concepts, rather than sensibly aroused concepts, I may be appearing to settle for Cook Wilson's position whereby I conclude that 'I think I know' in respect of the beliefs about a revealing deity, who is said to be seeking communion with me through some kind of experience or set of experiences. It might also appear that I shall not perhaps be able to comply with Frichard's request that where one should speak of certainty, one should speak of knowledge, for that certainty will not apparently be open to me in the area of religious discussion. Yet it is precisely through being in a position whereby the believer can speak of knowing God by his response to the Christ-event, that 'certainty' is possible. However, seventhly, I would want to think that I shall avoid the charge of merely 'taking for granted' or 'being under the impression that', or 'thinking without question' or 'merely having an opinion', when I attempt to find some kind of intelligible use of the verb to know within Theistic talk about God's revelation (and hence the alleged making known of Himself to men). I shall inevitably run the risk of falling foul of Wootley's stricture upon Malcolm, that being confident should not be forwarded as a necessary condition for knowing. Wootley, it will be recalled, points out that a man would not make a claim to know unless he was sure; where he makes a claim to know without being sure, he is not justified in so doing.

Malcolm's 'weak' version of knowing would fit the latter observation for the claim made as to water being in the gorge did not merit the kind of assurance that this was so which the knowledge claim suggested.

(A puzzle here is that, the claimant appeared to be justified at the
time of his assertions; yet we must recall that justification for
and validation of a knowledge claim may not coincide.) I shall rely
more specifically upon Ayer's formulation of having the right to be
sure and argue that, with appropriate provisos in view of the ideo-
logical nature of the matter on hand (where Ayer is concerned with
perception and sensations (or sense data) in relation to claims to
knowing), Christians may stake a claim to experiential knowledge of
God when, and only when, they are able to show that they are able to
evidence understanding of what it is they mean by such claims. Such
understanding will be demonstrated, as I have attempted to argue, by
their ability to explain the meaning of their assertions about
encounter with God. So it is a conceptual issue, principally. And I
have sought to establish that the korya provides the necessary and
sufficient condition for formulating a scheme for the encounter-
response principle to acquire logical significance (insofar as I am
speaking specifically of Christian revelation). That significance
can only be seen when the hypothetical nature of questions about God
is rejected, and the privacy of the form of life, understood as
those communal experiences where the concept of a God, which has been
given meaning through Christ, is considered to be constitutive of
belief.

So, I reach the position of affirming the need to study a
language game to ascertain whether a specific knowledge claim is
intelligible. Being able to justify a claim will depend upon one's
being in a position to know whatever it may be to which a claim is
being laid. The assumptions which inform the particular area of
speaking in question will help to show what sort of knowledge is
being considered. If it is a claim to know that p, the subject's
position here will be critical. He does but express (or, perhaps,
imply) a belief in the sense that he indicates this is how things stand, as far as he is concerned. In being able to use correctly a language which has a public authentication, he moves away from subjective statements. The difference between immediate sense perception and his description of such should be noted here. He does not, however, necessarily remove the questions which accompany an open, enquiring approach to the issue at stake. In respect of Theistic discourse, this must be so and a third person, spectator description of what p is taken to be may seem to be less to the fore. It will not be entirely excluded, in view of the historical propositions, without which the Apostolic proclamation (the kerygma) could not operate. As part of the process whereby that which is thought to be known requires sentient beings, and beings capable of intellectual enquiry, who interact with what is thought to be the case, the believer in God, must bear some responsibility for the elaboration of new ideas pertinent to his beliefs. In that respect, however, he does not differ from a man who makes a claim to know that p in respect of sensory perception. For in the epistemology of belief and knowledge, to speak of any knowledge whatever demands some kind of relationship between the knower and the known. And, whatever may be said of the logical relationship of knowledge to belief, and of both to doubt, it must be remembered that any knowledge claim, strong or weak, direct or inferential, is subject to the possibility of being mistaken. It is because this is a logical necessity that I have looked to Wittgenstein's anchorage of empirical propositions in those fundamental propositions which form the "rock bed of the river". In doing so, we are encouraged to move from the multitude of views and arguments about knowledge and belief to a consideration of logical criteria for determining what it makes sense to say. Such criteria should not be taken to be substitutes for
'n' given facts which are held to be sacrosanct. Rather, they are the criteria which emanate from empirical events of the nature of the form of life and which determine the linguistic rules for speaking coherently of revelation.
CHAPTER TEN

1 The Problem of doubt in relation to claiming to know that p

a WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig: On Certainty opus cited (p 13 above). 6, 112, 136 - 7


c WITTGENSTEIN, L.: opus cited above: 155, 325

d WOLGAST, E. L.: opus cited above p 202


g ibid p 40

h ibid p 43


j AYER, A. J.: opus cited above

k WOLGAST, E. L.: opus cited above. pages 47-50


m CHISHOLM, Roderick cited by R. I. Aaron in Knowing and the Function of Reason (see o below) p. 4

n WOLGAST, E. L.: opus cited above. pages 28-31, 203

o AARON, R. I. Knowing and the Function of Reason Oxford, Clarendon, 1971. pages 4-26 and 50-4

p ibid p. 5

q AYER, A. J.: opus cited above, page 35

r ibid p. 63

The Relationship of Knowing and Believing

MALCOLM, Norman: Knowledge and Belief in *Knowledge and Belief* ed by A. P. Griffiths, Oxford, 1967. p 69 ff

PRICHARD, H. A.: Knowing and Believing in *Knowledge and Belief* (above) p 60 ff


COOK WILSON, J.: *The Relation of Knowing to Believing in Knowledge and Belief* (above) p 67 ff

WHITE, A. R.: *On Claiming to Know* in ibid p 103 ff

WOOLEY, A. D.: *Knowing and NOT Knowing* in ibid p 82 ff


References beyond this are to statements within sources cited above.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

KNOWLEDGE BY DESCRIPTION

What sense would it make to speak of the knowledge conveyed by divine revelation to be knowledge by description? For it is a facet of traditional Christian theistic belief that its propositions concerning the content of that revelation are held to be truths, capable of being grasped by the faithful. Philosophically, we have to enquire whether these propositions meet the requirements for truth-conditional rules. In other words, we ask whether they purport to describe a 'reality', testable by experience in some way or another. Is it necessary to speak, however, of validation of propositions here? At once, we recognise a problem, previously alluded to, namely the recorded nature of the propositions in question. For they do not purport to be, apart from claims to certain present awarenesses of the individual, about events in the world now. They take us into a realm of cosmic happenings stretching to past aeons (the creation of the world and of man) and to specific historical events set in Palestine and adjacent lands from the seventeenth century B.C. to the first century A.D. Yet the propositions relating to these recorded events form the foundation for Judaeo-Christian belief. Without them, no coherent basis for such belief would exist. In part, we are faced, then, with the kind of problems which beset philosophers of history. In this respect, we may recognise that the aGardiner-Nempel attempt to subsume historical propositions under general laws, will be less satisfactory for an analysis of Biblical historical propositions, than the bDray-Broadbeck thesis which lays stress on the uniqueness of specific events. Clearly, the a priori claim of theism concerning the activity of God in the world, implies something other than the sort of events
which might be empirically subsumed under a 'covering law' mandatum.

There are those, of course, who would wish to view recorded history, "in toto", as belonging to God's overruling providence: Käsemann, for instance, when he speaks of the Christ event as being the focal point of all history. Against this view, one might think of that held by Küstenmacher, and others, which conceives of biblical history as being specifically 'salvation-history': God is held to have shaped the events of Israel's history and those of the early church in a way which is significantly different from secular history, per se. We are concerned, however, to see what may be said to support the idea that we are presented with knowledge-by-description in those revelatory acts which are believed to lie behind the propositions forwarded as doctrines of truth by theists. To describe X is to try to describe what is taken to be the case. Our conceptualization of sensory experiences provide us with grounds for thinking that some consensus amongst a population is possible. Subjective differences, however, show that a number of variables cloud the issue. Even if the problem of visual, acoustic, tactile sensory experiences being subject to a considerable range of difference be overcome, we wonder whether A sees a 'red' object in precisely the same way as B. Realism would have us accept that, given certain conditions (e.g. the three conditional theory of Chisholm) a degree of certainty about our observation of the world may be obtained. Extensive definition is held to be important in enabling an intelligible naming process to take place, so that a multitude of objects may be recognized and communication about them achieved. In Ritter's phrase, these may be referred to as 'sensibly aroused concepts'.

If I say that I believe that God created the world, redeemed mankind and will be our judge, am I describing events which can be identified extensively? Clearly not. There remains the possibility
of verbal definition. I may not have seen or heard Yoruba tribesmen of Nigeria performing a ritual dance. I have no reason to doubt that such dances occur. It is sufficient that I read about or listen to a description of what took place at such an event. Is it sufficient for me to read the propositions given in the Bible and in the Creeds to enable me to accept, in a bone fide way, the truth of the propositions asserted? I must take it that historical propositions relate to events attested by witnesses and are bone fide reports. Since there is no way that I can verify them in any ostensive manner, may I attach to them some degree of certainty by verbal communication? There are those apologists who would point out that the authority of God in informing us in his Word of what he has done is more trustworthy than the most careful reporting of a Yoruba dance might be. As Packer says, "Scripture is termed infallible and inerrant to express the conviction that all its teaching is the utterance of God who cannot lie." The argument is apparently circular. I must accept what is proclaimed because it has the authority of God who cannot lie, and my understanding that this is the word of God (and thus has divine authority) is because I am told so by scriptural writers. However whether one takes a conservative or liberal view of Scripture, Christian Theism asserts certain beliefs. They take the form of descriptions through verbal formulation.

To speak of knowledge by description in regard to historical propositions which purport to provide information about God's activities in the world must lack validating criteria, of a certain kind, clearly. That an event occurred which bore the hallmark of divine agency may or may not be the case; putative miracles would fill one bill. They would have to be taken on trust today. It is plain, therefore, that it is not in any attempt to validate that which, by its nature, cannot be validated that the idea of knowledge
by description might serve a purpose in seeking to understand the concept of revelation. But it would make good sense to ask the question: are the descriptions offered by Christians in support of their belief in God's activities in the world, justified or not? That is a different matter, and one to which I shall address myself. In order to try to discover whether one may speak intelligibly about knowledge by description in the field of Theism, I shall commence by relating this to the concept of knowledge by acquaintance.

It is not easy to avoid introducing Russell's dictum that knowledge by description is, in the last analysis, reducible to knowledge by acquaintance. We recall Ayer's later attempts to define his verification principle, so that he spoke now of a statement being indirectly verifiable if it satisfied certain conditions. He admitted that his earlier attempt to restrict verifiable statements to either analytic or demonstrable empirical propositions had failed. May we say that there is something open to rational enquiry in the propositions forwarded by theists, which provides us with some such verifiable criterion? Moore held, against Russell, that knowledge by acquaintance was subject to one's being deluded or mistaken in a way which knowledge by description, purporting to give information of certain truths, was not. All here turns on the question as to whether accurate description of X is possible, apart from prior acquaintance with the constituents which make up X. Analytically, a true description of X provides a description of truth. But how may this be ascertained? Who are the parties or party to the description? For it might be said of any individual who purports to proclaim that he knows that P, that he is but expressing his belief in respect of P. So Wittgenstein countered Moore's claim to know that what he held before him was a hand, by averring that Moore simply adverted to some-
thing which was not open to doubt. We may not dispute that biblical writers and church fathers expressed a belief when they proclaimed, with the insight of faith, that God had revealed himself in this way or that.

May we apply Russell's dictum for an analysis of knowledge by description to Christian propositions? For example, is it sensible to analyze propositions about Jesus in some sort of way as follows: There was one, and only one, such that that was he who died at the hands of Pontius Pilate (was found to have vacated the tomb in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea etc). Russell suggested that it was in the naming of the constituent elements in a proposition that its component parts might be examined and tested. Dray's suggestion in respect of historical propositions is that the details as to probable intention, motivation etc, and all the relevant aspects of the character of the one claimed to have performed a specific action, would have to be taken into account. For Russell wants us to reduce descriptive propositions to basic atomic facts — 'this white', 'that man' etc. Dray wishes to analyze a putative historical event as a unique happening in the light of all the known facts in respect of those responsible for its perpetration. Given theistic presuppositions about God's agency in the world, and on behalf of man, it would seem to be intelligible to apply these twin criteria to propositions about Jesus. If it be granted that it was God's intention to effect a cosmic redemption for mankind in and through the person of Jesus of Nazareth, such motivation would be adequate explanation for the events recorded in propositional form in the Christian tradition. Thus 'Christ died for our sins and rose again on the third day' voice the realization of expectations proclaimed by prophets and fulfilled in historical events. It will be seen that I have changed putative historical events into theological propositions. This would seem to
be a short-circuiting of the encapsulated motivations implicit in the
descriptions given. In saying that Jesus of Nazareth died at the
hands of the Romans in c. A.D. 33, theism requires that we recognize
God's intention in this event. So Peter proclaims it in his
Pentecost speech. Fact and interpretation are interwoven in such a
proposition. Russell would want us to adhere to putative fact or
empirical proposition. In dealing with putative historical proposi-
tions, we are in a disciplinary area which carries its own
sanctions. Each historical proposition of note is pregnant with
what it bears upon in human understanding. Caesar crossed the
Rubicon or Queen Anne died for example. Each event had very signi-
ificant consequences for Roman and English history respectively.
Isolation of an event from context is historically impossible.

Wittgenstein's comment "If someone says he knew something, it
must be something that, by general consent, he is in a position to
know," must here be related to his emphasis upon what he says of the
significance of language games. Of historical propositions he makes
it plain that these require an appropriate language game to provide
an intelligible basis for what they have to say. However, it is not
a matter of giving grounds to establish such propositions. We do
not 'see' the truth of historical knowledge so much as participate
in it by our 'acting' which lies at the bottom of the language
game. So here is the idea of commitment to beliefs which rest upon
Theistic fundamental propositions. And Wittgenstein points out that
grounds cannot be given here but more can be learned to elucidate a
particular piece of historical information. As he so often reminds
us, it is in the picture which we have before us, that some under-
standing may be achieved of what we are seeking to communicate.
From these observations we may ask: to what extent would it make
sense to speak of a Christian being in a position to be able to speak of the truth of the various propositions which make up his religious belief? As a member of a group engaged in a language game which reflects a form of life he may be said to be a participant, along with those who also believe, in using a specific propositional form. An essential element in this are propositions which describe certain theistic beliefs like: 'God created the world', 'Christ died for our sins'. These constitute the overall picture. By using the language they do to express their beliefs about God and the world, they may have a truth-bearing function given the prior beliefs they hold about God.

Wittgenstein asks of a proposition about which a query is raised by someone, whether it is reasonable to doubt what is expressed in such a proposition. He points out that it would be rather senseless to question the existence of the world before one's birth or a hundred or so years before that. Doubt fails to be significant in this instance. What of theistic propositions which purport to describe divine actions? It is not only by those outside the theistic language-game but by many inside (that is, those who, by faith of some sort, are prepared to play that game) that doubts are voiced concerning such propositions. If we consider the putative historical facts such as the birth of Jesus in Palestine, his death at Calvary etc, it is reasonable to say that we know them by having learned them, in a way similar to our learning facts about, say, Napoleon. We have come to believe that they are true. Wittgenstein reminds us that acceptance of historical facts has been learned: they are what go to make up a particular language game. He acknowledges that in order to verify specific facts we must refer to established authorities. That is entailed in the playing of a
language-game involving historical propositions. In the use to which those facts are put, in their expression in appropriate language, their meaning is to be sought. Context is important. A putative historical fact does not stand in isolation, but relates to a wider whole of historical perspective. An historian is judged to be competent to analyze and to communicate what it is in a particular historical situation which needs emphasis, or in what way it relates to that period in which it occurred. He plays the language game and by his choice and use of suitable words, enables his audience or readers to become involved in the scene depicted. Together they act out, verbally, a reconstruction of events presumed to have taken place, perhaps many years before their own lives. The putative truth of historical propositions thus enunciated rests upon the authority upon which they lie, whether that authority be documentary or contemporary historian, and upon their being coherently described within the confines of the language game.

If it be accepted, then, that our understanding of what we mean by 'knowing' in relative to the particular language-game being played, we can go on to consider the question of the intelligibility of the concept of men knowing God and its complement, God revealing himself to men. Here we encounter a fundamental tenet of theism: man's natural ignorance of God necessitates self-disclosure to men by God. Christianity holds that man is incapable, unaided, to reach a knowledge of his Creator. "Who by searching can find him?" Yet he is bid to make that search in the assurance that God himself is willing to impart understanding to the believer. "Seek the Lord while he may be found." "Seek and you shall find." God is portrayed as being driven by his very nature, of which love is said to be the guiding principle, to reveal himself to men. "No man has ever seen
God, the only begotten Son . . . has made him known." "God, who in former times made himself known through the prophets has, in these latter days, made himself known through his Son." So, Scripture teaches that man has spiritual desire to know God but is unable to discover him; God's love for his creature, man, is such that he is impelled to make himself known. To be sure, the separateness of God and man is compounded by the reality of man's sinfulness, which militates against human response to the overtures of God. The picture painted in the Bible is of God frequently hiding himself from man as a result of the latter's rejection of God's loving and righteous demands. However, God's love is said to be steadfast and un conquerable, breaking through the opaqueness of man's selfishness.

"For a little while, in my wrath, I hid myself from you, yet with everlasting love have I redeemed you! 'God showed his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Similarly, man is bidden to step out in faith to secure those gifts of grace, forgiveness and freedom offered by his Maker. 'Draw near to God and he will draw near to you! 'If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins!' Being justified by faith, we have peace with God . . . through Christ.' In both Old and New Testaments the idea of covenant-relationship between Israel (or Church) and God is a consistent theme. It is a theme which modern biblical scholarship endorses, amidst all the uncertainty in regard to authorship, sources and historical authenticity. For if the Bible in the modern world can be said to convey any unequivocal message, it must surely be that it records a people's experience of faith in One who had progressively revealed himself and his intentions to them. O! Eber't's 'I-Thou' formula denoting personal relationship enabling humans to worship, speak and write about One whom they
conceived was at work in their experiences, and was going ahead of them in the implementation of his purposes, encapsulates the central principle of revelation: To be known and to know. 'I know my sheep by name and they hear my voice'. The propositions which are associated with the Biblical literature depend upon descriptions of putative events, whereby claims about God are voiced. As a body of doctrinal statements, they have a perlocutionary function in seeking to persuade readers that those events enabled Jews, and later Christians, to experience the presence of God in their lives. So they have an explanatory, as well as a descriptive, purpose. They indicate how in various human circumstances God was made manifest to those of faith. Although they appear to require acceptance by readers of a 'given' element in revelation, and to that extent must, logically, entail the making known by giving - by initiating actions - on the part of God, it need not be assumed from this that they support a foundational concept of knowledge. Such a consideration might be the point at which my attempt to use Russell's argument about knowledge by description falls down.

Russell was wedded to a 'unum nomen, unum nominatum' view of knowledge and reality: he has been mirrored by many philosophers including P. C. I. Lewis, who made a sharp distinction between the data of experience and the mental events by which we perceive that data. My emphasis, however, has been upon Wittgenstein's contextual setting for the understanding of knowledge claims: this I have consistently allied to his theory of language games as being relative to differences in respect of the meaning of propositions.

The Scriptural allusions to which I have referred might find some kind of epistemological significance if they are accorded a propositional status. By this I mean that, in keeping with the 'open' view of belief and knowledge to which I have lent support,
Biblical attempts to talk of men's encounter with God should be considered to be subject to conditions of propositional criteria, and not treated as non-inferential, ineffable pieces of knowledge: the "given". Nor should this be seen as a contradiction of my wish to treat revelation as experiential.

For to be said to have an experience of X need not presuppose the absence of concepts or formulations of what one might take X to be; by which I mean that it cannot (surely) be deemed to be a necessary condition for one's knowing by experience that one should know such non-inferentially although often it may be a sufficient condition. I am here thinking of G. Williams' argument in his book 'Groundless Belief' in which he refutes the two components view of a 'given' element and a receptive one, in the form of a human mind which cogitates about, or reflects upon, a 'given' something which is directly perceived. I am also recalling what is said about the problems of attempting to make sense of the concept of a pure sense datum, isolated from prior conceptual understanding. To say of the men of the Bible that they experienced the ineffable or the numinous, does not require that they lacked concepts by which the coherence of what they subsequently said of their alleged encounters with the divine was established. Williams argues for a 'no foundations' view of knowledge, by which he seeks to refute both the sceptic and the person who says that there must be an infinite regress of justifying assertions, unless knowledge can be shown to rest on a certain foundation. Thus he suggests that 'groundless belief', whereby we trust our senses and rely upon the hard won knowledge of empirical science, where it is clearly apposite to do so, is preferable to a view of belief which is obsessed by a quest for certainty. To some extent he disagrees with Wittgenstein, not so much in respect of the latter's contextual approach to asserting claims to knowledge, but
in respect of his criteriological conditions for making a claim. These Williams takes to be a retreat to \textit{ground}s and to the \textit{given}.

I am not able to agree wholly with Williams, therefore, at this juncture, but I think that what he has to say about an open approach to belief and knowledge, which does not rest upon some ultimate ground, coheres with what I have already argued. And, here, I believe that I have found some guidance to help me recognize, in the descriptions given in Biblical and Theistic propositions, a conceptually inspired language wherein men's experiences are given significance in relation to the specific theistic claims made for them. To be propositional, and thus sensibly aroused by concepts, would certainly cohere with what I have written of the help provided by Wittgenstein's ideas about fundamental propositions. These are held to be beyond hypothetical enquiry; they do not lend themselves to a truth-falsehood analysis. They cannot be said to be \textit{given} in the sense that non-inferential data are held, by phenomenologists and exponents of sense data views about knowledge, to be \textit{given}. However, I have referred to Wittgenstein's insistence that the \textit{grammar} of a language game presupposes rules which rest upon criteria which, however arbitrary, would appear to have a \textit{given} aspect. Williams criticizes such appeal to criteria as being in danger of fuelling the infinite regress problem.

In abandoning the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, Russell appealed to \textit{basic} propositions which he defined as those which are caused as immediately as possible by perceptive experiences. Ayer took up this approach in his emphasis upon a proposition's function in not only naming a situation (e.g. a report of a sense-datum) but in describing that situation. Both Russell and Ayer came to see that the attempt to find an incorrigible and infallible locus for direct knowing by acquaintance with the contents of a sense datum was
suspect. Still, both hold to the view that a speaker cannot be proved wrong in cases where he rejects correction. Ayer went further in granting an eye witness a primacy, if not a claim to infallibility, in a sense datum statement. He recognized that a mistake might be more than a purely verbal one, a distinction which Russell initially had not made (preferring to speak of 'ill-chosen' words whereby a man's description of a sense datum does not match its actual character). I shall not discuss here distinctions between verbal and factual errors in respect of knowledge by acquaintance. I am concerned to show that Russell and Ayer (and, as Pears indicates, Austin also) were alive to the danger of seeking ultimacy in sense data statements which failed to take into account the need for understanding, and hence explanation. It would seem, then, that a descriptive element should be recognized in any report of a knowledge claim, in which the claimant speaks of acquaintance with a specific object of knowledge. The bearing of this upon my experiential view of revelation is that, whatever encounter with God may be taken to mean (whether a numinous, direct experience, or some kind of encounter through apprehension of a cognitive awareness through worship, Bible reading etc), its propositional form will necessitate a descriptive element. My attempt to utilise the kerygma will be seen to tally with this demand.

I conclude, then, that Russell's analysis of knowledge by description and its possibility of reduction to knowledge by acquaintance cannot be sustained if it espouses non-inferential knowledge as its fundamental tenet. I can, however, assent to Russell's view that description of a state of affairs resolves itself into the constituents of knowledge with which I am acquainted, if such be taken to mean that I bring to my experiences concepts which enable me both to be assured of a 'reality' beyond the self, and an awareness, through
perceptive faculties, which creates a knowing situation. I believe, therefore, that the propositions of the Bible, which I spent some time in discussing, can be taken to be roads towards the understanding of the assertion of the writers, that encounters with God were thereby experienced.
CHAPTER ELEVEN


b ibid

c PANNENBERG, Wolfhart opus cited p 35 above

d CULLMANN, Oscar: Salvation in History 1967

e PACKER, James: Fundamentalism and the Word of God London InterVarsity Press, 1958. p. 96

f JAGER, R. The Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy London, 1972


h MOORE, G. E.: cited by E. H. Wolgast: The Paradoxes of Knowledge (opus cited p 139 above) pages 64-75 and 98

i JAGER, R. opus cited above

j DRAY, W. H. opus cited above

k Acts 222

l WITTGENSTEIN, L.: On Certainty 19.4.555

m ibid 204-6

n Isaiah 55, Matthew 77, John 118, Hebrews 1, Isaiah 548, Romans 58, 1 John 1, Romans 51, John 101.

o BUBER, Martin: The Idea of the Holy

p LEWIS, C. I.: cited in Perception and Identity (above, g)

q WILLIAMS, M.: Groundless Belief opus cited, p. 139 above

r PEARS, D.: in Perception and Identity opus cited (g) above. p. 66

s ibid p. 79
To what extent, we may ask, can the concept of God seeking to win a response from humans, who are believed to be free agents capable of choosing to respond to His overtures towards them, be associated with the concept of knowing, where such a concept itself, to use the definition given by Ryle and others, necessarily implies achievement, won through effort? If to know, in contrast with belief, entails having succeeded in discovering, in some way or another, what is the case (where knowing that p is being considered), may we postulate a proposition to the effect that in the victory gained by A in persuading B to do what A wishes, where such an act is deemed to be beneficial to both parties (perhaps initially unforeseen by B), there is some kind of affinity with that success which coming to know that p brings? There are several problems here, I think. Firstly, we may wonder how a believer is supposed to know that God has indeed 'won' a response through the believer's action in making a commitment to God. If knowing that God has revealed himself to mankind is to be said to rest upon such a contingency (i.e., that a believer, C in responding to the gospel, has enabled God to 'win' his response) the question appears to be begged. It cannot perhaps be disputed that C has made a decision to accept Christian beliefs. It could be argued that he has learned both how and what is required to substantiate his profession of faith. Can it, however, be taken to be the case, from this, that C is able to discern that the God in whom he has trusted has likewise experienced certain events, of which that of succeeding in winning C's response is fundamental? I think not. Yet I would not want to dismiss too freely the conceptual possibilities which reside in the notion discussed. Secondly, and clearly emanating
from the first objection, in the problem of the psychological state
which conversion or commitment to God involves. Whatever C may now
be said to know, which he did not previously know, appears to be
capable of being reduced to subjective feelings e.g. of certainty,
wonder, joy, etc which cannot be taken to be evidence, in themselves,
of an equivalent or similar experience on the part of God. Later, I
shall attempt to analyse past-sentences in relation to claims to
experiences of God encounters the difficulty that, being private,
they can always be esteemed to be merely psychological states. Care
must be taken here, however, as was pointed out, to recognize the
logical possibility of C laying claim to a numinous or ineffable
experience which, though personal, could in principle be experienced,
in a somewhat similar manner by D and E. True, claiming to have a
pain or to feel tired, where the speaker is sincere and knows the
meanings of the words, is accorded factual status, having as it does
a 'public' conceivable confirmed by well-nigh universal experience.
Thirdly, we have to face the problem of how the new knowledge, gained
by an act of commitment, enables C to stake a claim to knowing some-
thing he did not already know. Aristotle's efforts in trying to
envision learning as a form of recapitulation of what was known
already precludes the possibility of scientific discovery. Popper's
"third world of ideas" provides us with a conceptual scheme for an
inclusion of something other than sensory facts as such, in his
deductive-hypothetical analysis of knowledge. Clearly, to be 'won'
by God in the sense that C has freely responded to promptings of
love and goodness, alleged to flow from his Maker, would be to be in
a different standing than hitherto. Certainly one must suppose that
new self-knowledge would result from such a changed awareness (of
the situation). If it can be argued that it is here that most
progress is likely to be made in making sense of the concept of God winning a response from man, it may be replied that we are now trapped in a verbal debate. But is it merely verbal? Has not my adoption of Wittgenstein’s theory of language games appeared to land me there, in any case? Part of my struggle has been to extricate myself from any such charge, at least sufficiently to rescue from mere verbalism, the concept of revelation. True, I laid stress on the idea of Quine that the roots of reference are to be found in language. Yet I attempted at some length to show how one piece of language, that enshrined in the kerygmatic proclamation, could only make sense when viewed in the context of putative historical and contemporary propositions. I am indebted to Popper for showing us that ideas can be seen as having, in some instances, more than merely verbal purport, providing that one adheres to Popper’s criterion of seeing ideas, not only as being instantiated, but as the precursors of new understanding. I think it may be helpful to examine the concept of A winning a response from B to elucidate theistic belief on this matter. In so doing, we may be able to decide whether this concept can be analogically sustained as a paradigm for religious knowledge. Let us observe the following initial points: (a) to win a response from someone and to know that p involve a person or persons who are active in these ways: thus there must, as a necessary condition, be communication between them; (b) both entail the gaining of success after some effort; (c) that success is won by the agent from someone or something; (d) thus it is clear that the taking of an initiative is a necessary condition for either to occur.

Conceptually all this accords with the logic of Theism: (a) ‘God so loved the world that he gave’ ... personality is reflected here; (b) ‘he gave his only son’ suggests effort and pain on the part of the Creator; (c) having instantiated free beings, God is
said to win a response from them insofar as they freely respond to Him; (d) the assumed taking of an initiative by God is indeed a necessary condition for the believer to be able to affirm that he has (or so he believes) been healed, restored and forgiven.

But does he know that this is the case? I discuss this point further later in relation to Kant's views. Further, can he be sure that it is God who has indeed won his response in an actual, empirical sense? I think that these questions can only be answered by recalling what has been said about the distinction between a first person and a third person experience of knowing. It is that distinction which sets off participant from spectator; involvement from watching. Of course such a remark assumes that the knower, in this case the theistic believer, and the known (the grace of God revealed to him), are necessarily connected. It feeds upon the idea that the 'knowledge' yielded by the commitment of trustful belief is, to some extent, the product of his faith and that of the believing community. It is at this point that my utilization of Wittgenstein's concept of a theistic language game has proved to be so helpful. My problem has been, not only to establish rational criteria for playing that game, but to seek to demonstrate what form, if any; the putative knowledge claim laid to by participants in it, can possibly take. Contradiction continues to stalk my efforts since I am constantly threatened with a charge of establishing companionable self-deluding solipsism. For if only believers are able to attain the esoteric knowledge of theism, what hope can there be of laying such a shadowy figure alongside other more publicly acclaimed areas of knowledge? Such a distinction can, of course, readily be seen to be false. That can be shown to be so, as long as Aristotelian or Cartesian models are rejected. Notions of a fixed corpus of facts waiting to be recalled or elucidated and thus 'given' to the learner;
or dualistic stress upon thought (conceived to be some sort of separate entity) and extension (the stuff of existence beyond the seeking mind), must be repudiated. It is as we accept with Kant the reason of the knowing agent, and yet go beyond his philosophy, and beyond the empiricism of positivism and its descendents, that we can appreciate the vital role played by the knower in epistemological enquiry. It has emerged clearly from my analysis of theistic belief, that the concept of revelation has its twin components of revealing personal agent and receptive personal being. The wish to know is shown to be as crucial for the apperception of the issues at stake as is the grasping of divine agency in the procedure of revelation. Movement, progress, flowing dynamism - these are the concepts which apply: the static, immutable or inert (an unmoved mover) seem to be inadequate.

There are clearly considerable difficulties in trying to apply Ryle's idea of the verb 'to know' conceived to be a 'success' verb (in contrast with verbs which express searching rather than achieving, like wonder, ponder, question, believe etc) to the central tenet of revelation, that of God making Himself known to man. If we approach the matter from the opposite direction, from that of man searching and finding God, the same notion of success being gained would apply insofar as the achievement of understanding would obtain. The Bible exhorts us "to seek and to find", and "to taste and to see" (that the Lord is good). I have emphasized the part played by the believer in his action in responding to the proclamation, and I have shown how 'belief in' is a pre-requisite for participation in that form of life which I have associated with the Apostolic kerygma.

Kant put prior emphasis upon reason in his analysis of revelation. While accepting the Judaeo-Christian teaching of God's
initiative in making Himself known to men, he thought that human reason is capable of ascertaining the truth by its capacity for moral reflection. It would appear, then, that Kant conceived of the verb to know as a success verb, but his interest lay in journeying from the human to the divine, rather than from God to man. Of course, such a view presupposes communication between two parties, as much as that which emphasises the divine initiative in the procedure.

Insofar as some knowledge — inferential knowledge — must depend upon active thought, the idea of knowing as a form of achievement will comprise an aspect of my eventual conclusion on the subject of revelation. However, it will be in some kind of fusion between first person and third person claims to know that I shall attempt to validate as well as to justify my experiential view of that subject. I shall want to say that the presumption, yielded by the kerygma and its cognates, that the knowledge of a believer is knowledge by acquaintance, will turn out to be, on closer analysis, a species of knowledge by description. To the extent that to be able to describe X indicates the ability to do X, the notion of success will not be entirely disbandied. It will perhaps be given less prominence than Ryle gave it. My affiliation to Kant will be that in acknowledging the part played by the theistic 'knower', I am recognising that reason is important for the apprehension of the Kerygma. Ultimately, I shall be arguing that it is in the ideas which inform the 'form of life' of the Christian community that the notion of encounter with God, and hence an experience of God's love, justice, holiness and purposes for us humans, is given legitimacy. Acquaintance with God — person-to-person relationship, necessitates (partly because of the asymmetrical factor of Bodiless Agent being said to communicate with, and to be made known to, bodily Agents)
description of putative states of affairs.

My point in discussing the view that there might be a way of using the notion of the verb to know being a 'success' verb to explicate the notion of God 'winning' a response from man (and then to introduce the antithesis of this: man being said to 'achieve' by reason, a knowledge or understanding of God), was to stress the active connotation given to the knowing process. Communication between personal beings - one of whom is said to be divine - is an activity. Agency is the appropriate concept to apply in such a context. This has not meant an attempt to exclude what at first sight appears to be a passive, receptive idea of being 'appeared to'. This does figure in the Judaeo-Christian picture of God's revelation to man. Indeed, receptivity to a message (in the case of the prophets, Mary at the Annunciation, Paul at Troas etc) plays a major part in the Biblical account. It cannot be gainsaid, however, that by prior belief 'in' God, these people were predisposed to be receptive. My experiential idea about man today knowing God requires assent to, and thus apprehension of (through appropriate validation and justification of knowledge claims), a body of doctrines or ideas relative to such, which involve activity on the part of the believer. It is in this regard that I have attempted to analyse first person, questioning and open approaches to knowing; while complementarily embracing third person, observing reports. In the fusion of these two approaches I hope that it will become clear that Christian theism requires and offers descriptions which are both first and third person in content. In saying this, I would draw a parallel with sense data statements wherein propositions about perception made by a first person agent, necessarily must be a description or report of what is claimed to be seen, heard etc. This will be the case in a way, although different in terms of the
source and hence the tenor of it, akin to third person descriptions of say, for example, scientific or historical facts. The kerygma, the central feature of the form of life which I conceive to be the channel of Christian revelation, can be understood as inspiring both first person and third person descriptions of putative encounters with God.

At this point I think that some observations about sense data by Charles Taylor would be helpful. He discusses the third chapter of Ayer's 'The Problem of Knowledge' in respect of the use of sense data to "scale down our perceptual claims so as to get something of which we are certain". (p 102). So we seek a rock-bottom certainty by stripping down our perceptual claim which means that we avoid "stepping beyond the bare content of experience to any claims about how things stand which could turn out to be mistaken". He paraphrases Ayer's attempt to argue for the incorrigibility of sense data statements. It is in saying no more than one's immediate sensory experience 'strictly warrants' that such a claim to incorrigibility may be justified. For to be undergoing an illusion concerning (the instance Ayer gives) a seeming cigarette case before him necessitates a more cautious statement. Where such a caveat does not apply, we have to pass from "it seems to me that I perceive X" to "I perceive a seeming X" with the implication that there is a seeming-X which I perceive. (Taylor's paraphrase of Ayer.)

It would appear that we can speak coherently, then, of sense data. 'All we need to do' Taylor writes, 'is to introduce the terms as expressions designating experience . . . where statements about experience make no claim about how things stand in the world, we can say "by sense data are blue, rough" and so on.' Taylor criticises such a view. He believes that the fallacy of isolating sense data statements as possessing privileged status, indicative of rock-bottom
certainty, lies in the mistaken notion that we can speak of our experiences as being independent of our activity. "I should like to argue that the sense datum is an incoherent or impossible notion because there is no experience which is independent of our activity."

He goes on to suggest that our perceptual activity focuses, selects, and fastens on certain features of our perceptual field on a given occasion. In this way it "organizes a field, the elements of which are also identified in a certain way (for instance, as trees and shrubs rather than just as green and brown patches, or as typscripts and magazines, rather than just as undifferentiated reading matter on my desk. There is no room here for a pure given, for an object which would be quite independent of our activity. We can take the simplest case, one of the most oft-quoted examples of a putative sense datum: a patch of red which is here in my visual field now... the words 'here' and 'now' already reflect the subject's activity of selection and focus."

Taylor concludes by reminding us that the answer to the question 'How do we become aware of the world?' lies in our ability to create a unity of consciousness. He accepts Kant's view that we organize a field by making judgements and so by establishing relations which are objectively valid. "Kant makes the fundamental point that experience must be an organized whole, shaped by the demands of objectivity; that anything other than this could not be understood as experience, i.e., as the subject's awareness of the world."

Before proceeding to look at Kant's philosophy in respect of revelation, I shall analyse first person claims to knowing. I shall then be able to consider the interpretative aspect, in describing sense datum experiences, in relation to descriptions which believers make of their religious experiences. This will first involve some discussion of so-called ruminous or ineffable experiences, where
these are conceived to be indicators of divine influence. I shall thus examine first person empirical claims, and then consider first person statements of a theistic nature. The method will be essentially empiricist. I shall then discuss Kant's view that reason may be said to play an important part in determining what revelation is. In so doing I shall move to a rationalist approach to the subject of divine self-disclosure, or revelation. I shall then investigate Popper's 'third world' of ideas and raise the question as to how far Theistic ideas relevant to the concept of revelation can be classified as 'third world' ideas, in Popper's definition of the term. Here the method will be conceptual, with a definite empiricist element. I shall consider third person rather than first person claims to know in my discussion of Popper.

I shall then turn my attention to speech acts and performatives, as a preparation for discussing Wittgenstein's philosophy in relation to first person claims to know God. I shall thus be recognising a certain relevance from Kant and Popper in speaking about Wittgenstein's concern to discover the meaning of propositions within language, rather than by reference to overt happenings. But I shall want to say that it is the direction, followed generally in my work, of discovering understanding within a specific area of discourse that an analysis of the verb to know will be achieved, Theistically speaking. Here I shall conclude that it is not so much in first person claims about the numinous or the ineffable, but in apparent third person description of states of affairs and ideas, that cogency will be displayed.

Let us suppose that the view of opponents of a pure sense datum theory is justified, and that in each case where I speak of a patch of colour or a particular shape within the range of my perceptive vision, I am but registering a cognitive, awareness denoting learned
concepts. My seeing, hearing, touching etc will be the means whereby I recall sensibly aroused concepts. Such a view would harmonise nicely with Wittgenstein's wish to seek a context for our talk of any putative state of affairs. I shall analyse first person agent sentences where private awarenesses of states of affairs are claimed. This will include reference to a subject considered at length by Wittgenstein, that of pain. I shall examine the apparent incorrigible status of 'pain' language in relation to first person agency. It will become clear, I believe, that the problem in respect of isolating a pure sense datum, held to be incorrigible as far as the agent is concerned, will apply also in respect of personal sensations and feelings like pain and tiredness. These states are to be viewed within the framework of appropriate concepts, which have been learned, and their appropriate rules which determine their use.

This being so, I shall be unable to ascribe to so-called numinous experiences the kind of ultimacy which some people would want to establish for them. That will not mean that putative encounter between man and God, in some dynamic, unique way should be discounted. It will mean that in speaking about an experience of God (with which subject I am especially concerned), concepts must, logically, be invoked which would place these statements within a frame of reference. Such a context suggests social and public criteria of understanding, dependent upon explanation which emanates from the 'depth grammar' of a particular language. Thus it will be by reference to the Theistic language game that first person claims will attain whatever intelligibility can be accorded to them.

Because I shall be influenced, therefore, by my attempt to find in the form of life occasioned by the kerygmatic language game, both an explanation of, and a characterization of religious experience (as centred upon the Christ event), I shall reject the first person
knowledge claims, simpliciter or per se. It is for this reason that I shall consider third person statements, such as reports and descriptions, in relation to Theistic talk of revelation. In this way, I shall be encouraged to examine both the rationalism of Kant and the anti-inductionist empiricism of Popper to seek illumination for my theme. Both Kant and Popper are interested in a posteriori judgement by humans upon ideas. The 'given' in their estimation can only be examined and instantiated in the area of human intelligible discourse when it has been 'tested' in some way, through the application of human reason.

While finding the ideas of testability or subjection to reason congenial, insofar as these notions cohere with the linguistic criteria appropriate to the concept of a language game, the issue of first person claims to knowledge of God will not so easily be laid aside. For in stressing the importance of seeking in the language of the kerygmatic form of life an explanation of the Christian belief in encounter between human and divine agencies, the subject of performative language inevitably arises. I shall examine Austin's teaching about the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of certain kinds of sentence, and briefly look at some examples within Theistic discourse. Such a course of action will bring me back to the question of first person proclamations and acclamations about putative experiences with God. While recognizing the cogency of these vocative statements ("We praise Thee, O God" for example) within Christian worship and belief, it is in the communal aspect that the idea of an experience with God seems to reside. Attention to the societal kerygmatic proclamation (or area of discourse) from which pertinent ideas emanated in thus of primary importance — so, once again it is to Wittgenstein that I turn to examine the nature both of performatives and of first person claims of knowledge of God.
I shall discuss Wittgenstein's distinction between a cognitive awareness and an 'avowal' whereby significance is given to individual (and perhaps corporate) experiences in differing ways. Both find their logical grounding within an appropriate area of discourse and meaning is to be discerned by reference to the 'grammar' and 'rules' of that language game. Perhaps, given the obvious difficulties in speaking of God in empirical terms, the notion of speaking of an experience of God partakes more of the nature of an avowal than of a cognitively attuned statement? In discussing this and other Wittgensteinian ideas, I shall be building a bridge between first and third person concepts of knowledge in speaking of God being known by experience. I shall go on to discuss whether Theists are justified, in the light of my discussion, in asserting P such that P is entailed by their assertion. I shall argue that this would be tenable provided that some support can be given to the view that Christians, in their claim to encounter God in Christ, can instantiate relevant ideas about the Christ event. But to do this, they must be able to instantiate such ideas in specific, singular propositions and not to be content to reduce their assertions to general propositions about loving, sustaining, inspiring etc where such predicates are said to relate to God. In ending the section of my work on the subject of epistemology in this way, I shall provide a suitable link with the next and final major section, concerned with ontology, especially as pertaining to the proposition that God is existent Being.

Before embarking upon a discussion of first person claims to know that p, in relation to so-called experiences of God 'within the self', I intend to indulge in a digression. This may appear to take me some way from the path I am treading, and suggest something other than what I appear to be intending. However, I think that it
is a digression worth assaying, for it enables me to look a little more closely at two areas of theological enquiry: natural theology and the phenomena of theophanies or numinous experiences. I shall return to my main theme, and follow the course charted in the foregoing prospectus, after making this digression. I hope that it will prove to be, not a pointless distraction from my central concern, but a complementary exercise, conducive to better understanding of alternative, yet helpful, views about the concept of revelation.
Scientists, in the light of Einstein's Theory of Relativity, today favour a view of the universe which lays stress upon dynamic inter-relationships in nature which hold it together. Freedom rather than determinism in an open rather than closed universe is given increasing emphasis. In place of the old forms of causal connection and natural law are now put 'field-structures' and 'field-laws'. An attempt to construct a picture of things by making deductions from observation is no longer the scientific method. Rather there is a growing conviction that the richness and order of the universe suggest ever more levels of creativity. The possibility of a higher system is entailed by the evidence for growth and advance in all that goes to make up our world. The Theist, inclined to speak of God in terms of free creative agency, finds much here which appears to facilitate some kind of fusion of thought between language-games. The concept of person, embodying the notion of the creative energy of the self, going beyond a hard deterministic interpretation, coheres well with the concept of a personal God who is conceived to be the origin of freedom and the creator of a world of free beings.

William Temple suggests that believers become aware of the transcendent in the Immanent. He affirms that all existence is a medium of revelation, and the notion of special revelation rests upon this prior belief. The possibility of any revelation whatsoever depends upon there not being anything which is not revelation. His starting point for an understanding of the transcendent, therefore, is in the immanent. It is in the variety of nature, rather than in its unity, that Temple thinks that the divine is reflected. In his understanding of progress and change in the natural order,
he anticipated the thinking previously referred to: our present scientific understanding puts emphasis upon inter-action and change more than on stability and perpetuity. Temple's methodology is the Classic one of attempting to go from known to unknown; in this case, to posit the divine by contemplating the natural. Such a concept of the divine will is one which sees it at work within, and not external to, the natural order. Temple does not ignore the possibility of specific events in the world being attributed to divine agency. The reference above to special revelation shows this.

His analysis of the concepts of process, mind, value, truth, goodness and beauty leads him to speak of the transcendence of mind in so far as man is capable of contemplating these things. In effect, Temple adverts to a logical distinction between the 'given-ness' of those qualities and human awareness of them. Yet here we must recognize a possibility of confusing logical with evaluative determinations. From such a distinction, he infers that transcendent mind is expressed in the immanent, while shaping and directing its development. Man is of the earthly creation, yet stands apart from it through his ability to impose meaning and unity upon it. So, Temple believes, God is also, in a sense, involved in the process of earthly phenomena, yet exists over and above them. Just as man transcends the nature which he perceives and seeks to apprehend, so God's transcendence is to be inferred from those qualities of beauty, value, goodness, truth etc which man recognizes in the natural order. Temple conceives of mind as being raised above those 'sense' by which man interprets the physical world of experience. Such a view would appear to contradict that of Ryle who refutes a dualist concept of mind. Human mental phenomena, Temple says, suggests divine mind, the origin and instigator of reality. So beauty; et alia; implies God by pronouncing transcendence within, yet above, the immanent.
Are we entitled to make such an inference? Philosophy of mind would perhaps provide a critical answer. Ryle argued that such mental states as are experienced in the apperception of value, beauty etc must be considered to be the expression of feelings which in turn reflect habit-memories and dispositions. I am but contemplating that which has been learned from childhood. Wittgenstein's stress upon our learning of a language with its appropriate rules reminds us of this. My awareness of beauty or intrinsic worth in a flower or landscape is a piece of learned behaviour in response to those sort of stimuli to my brain and nervous system. If we say that there is a language-game to be played in relation to aesthetic appreciation of certain sense data experiences, do we move beyond simple behaviourism? As we have seen, Wittgenstein protested that he was not a behaviourist, because he was concerned to analyse the language in which concepts relative to human experience is expressed.

Clarification of language enables us to move in an area of human activity which, although expressive of and dependent upon, brute facts of experience permits a sharper focus to be brought to bear upon such experience. It seems to be unsatisfactory to try to reduce such aesthetic experiences solely to biological mechanisms. We have a deep belief that the total personality is engaged in the mental events which accompany the enjoyment of music, sculpture, art or poetry; it is no less the case with our appreciation of natural phenomena. It would be absurd to try to circumvent the bodily chemistry and brain discharges which provide the indispensable media of our being conscious of aesthetic or any other experiences. Within the area of speaking of "experiences of the soul" however we may, rightly in my opinion, discuss those "transports of delight" which give an impression of being elusive of final bio-chemical definition. Our language bears testimony to this, with its rich quarry of words.
and phrases descriptive of the spiritual and aesthetic pleasures of
man. From what I have written above, we may conclude that Temple's
attempt to posit logical status for the concept of transcendence is
perfectly in order within theistic reasoning. To use A. T. Ramsey's
phrase, it is only by recognising the 'logical oddity' of what we
have to say about our experiences of beauty, value and goodness (and
the rest) that we can offer, in confidence, some basis for our
assertion that such experiences are incapable of being exhaustively
spoken about in behaviouristic terms. So the word 'transcendence'
seems to be demanded by this very logical oddness. Genes, molecules,
proteins, neurons et alia, seem to be strange bed-fellows with those
mental experiences whereby an appreciation of the beautiful and
profound is gained. And Temple's introduction of the concept of
mind as transcending the mundane and materialistic, as experienced
through the immanent in the world, seems to allow him to postulate
divine Mind as ultimate source and energiser of all life. Thus
Hudson's view of a god who, as bodiless agent, acts spatio-temporally
may not be, logically, altogether remote from Temple's construction.
Both recognize, that in speaking of the transcendent which is yet
known by man within and through the immanent (whether specific event
or implicit agency), we must grasp a logical truth: namely that
different categories of thought are being brought together. It could
be through historical events or contemporary ones; or it could be
inferred from feelings and emotions generated by natural beauty,
and awareness of goodness, value and unity, as it were, emanating
from the structure and order of the world. It would also make sense
to consider claims by the religious to certain ineffable experiences
as being awareness of divine influences. Karl Heim's idea of a
fifth dimension going beyond the four dimensions of space and time
would be a relevant example of this. Lyttken cites the instance
of a Swedish woman who experienced a wonderful sense of all-pervading love, which accompanied the very bright light which seemed to fill the surrounding forest area where her attention had first been arrested by the reflection of this light upon a snowflake and a spruce leaf. A new dimension of universal width, expressing Love as being at the heart of all creation, filled her consciousness. Lyttken relates this incident to biblical narrations of mystics: Isaiah in the Temple, Jesus transfigured before his disciples, St Paul's vision on the Damascus road. He observes that light played a part in each and that cultural and environmental factors also were significant. Would claims of individuals (or a group as in the case of the disciples at the Transfiguration) qualify (a) as suitable contenders for the title of conditional claims to divine revelation to man and (b) are they more or less suitable in that regard in comparison with other contenders already discussed?

An immediate criticism of candidates for consideration from the supply of ineffable experiences laid claim to by various people, is the obvious one of lack of external corroboration. By their very nature, notwithstanding the incident of the Transfiguration (or in our times, the claim by many troops to see "the angel of Hans" in 1917), visions, out-of-body sensations, trances etc are subjective experiences, known only by those who experience them. I shall try to analyze claims to knowing God in the context to other personal claims — for example, 'I have a headache' — which by their nature can only be experienced by the one having the experience, later. At this point we do seem to face a certain impasse in trying to credit reports of ineffable experiences with divine authentication. And yet to dismiss them so glibly would be to close the door abruptly to a sequence of reports throughout history of experiences which seem to the percipients of them to emanate from a source other than
that evoked by immediate or prior circumstances. Logically, granted
the primacy of spirit in God and man, such extraordinary happenings
are possible. We run the same sort of risk in trying to reduce them
to "nothing - but" psychological events, as we do in talking of
pieces of human behaviour as being "nothing - but" overt manifestation
of brain-states and muscular movements. This sort of reductionism
plays havoc with all that we have tried to argue for in our attempt
to say that the theistic view of man must be, given the prior
condition of belief in a creator God, that of spiritual, creative
being and not solely conglomerate of bio-chemical substances and
mechanisms. Can we, any the more, assume that my learned responses
to the external stimuli I daily encounter, are the total possibility
of interpretative cogitations of which my cerebral apparatus is
capable? Would it be inappropriate to recall the debate in moral
philosophy on the illusion referred to as the 'naturalistic fallacy'?
If moral judgements are not presumptively to be considered as mere
appendages to a description of what is the case in any particular
situation, are we any more entitled to believe that the last word
has been said about that can be included within human experience?
We are here at the heart of the matter. Since Brentano attempted
to provide intelligibility for the notion of intentional inexistent
objects and Russell spoke of meaning in respect of non-existential
propositions, another spectre has haunted philosophy of mind
besides the ghost-in-the-machine which Ryle so decisively sought to
bring to rest. I have alluded to behaviours which seems to grow
space in those quarters where brain research and experimental
psychology hold sway. That it may be impossible, in the cases of
ineffability here being examined, to point to any referent such that
any conceivable verification principle for empirical propositions
might be applied, forces us to speak of another dimension, unknowable
through accepted sensory perceptive faculties. Surely it begs the
question to argue that, since a first person agency account alone is
provided of such an experience, rather than a third person spectator
one which would enable all and sundry to examine the credentials for
its authenticity, it is ipso facto spurious. The task on hand is to
establish whether an ineffable experience of one kind or another
could be said to be an example of the percipient having encountered
God or not, and its very private nature is both its glory and its
imponderability. Not perhaps unlike the traditional debate about
proofs for God's existence in relation to faith. To have faith is
to believe; without faith one can never logically know what trust
in God is. The humanist, in the last resort, is on his own in the
world. He places a subjective interpretation upon his experiences
in the light of various observations and presuppositions. Clearly,
the bio-chemist, physiologist, or psychologist express their learned
knowledge and the insights they have gained from personal experiences
so that it is they themselves who, ultimately, as self-conscious
beings reflect upon their understanding of the world.

Firstly, we may not speak of one man's experience as being
identical with that of another without expressing a self-contradic-
tion, in view of the empirical impossibility of two men having
precisely the same experience. An unusual experience of A may be
communicated verbally to B, without B in any sense being said to
have that experience. Secondly, it may be said that if this is so,
there is little to be gained in discussing these ineffable experi-
ences which lack any conceivable confirmation beyond that which
the percipient believes he has had. But this is not so for, if they
are true, they must ipso facto be of the first importance for us all
insofar as they point away from the mundane and provide hope and
reassurance of which we all stand in need. Thirdly, there can
obviously be some link with ordinary experiences. At an initial stage, the Swedish lady was aware of a snowflake and a spruce leaf: something possible for anyone with normal sight. In spite of Wittgenstein's strictures upon using language of the mystical, which he thought can only be shown, men have attempted to record in words an account of ineffable experiences. The Bible contains several such accounts. They are set in a cultural milieu which both gives to these records their peculiar details and their spiritual significance. We face the familiar problem in biblical exegesis of trying to ascertain what it is which is being recorded, of a particular incident, and of attempting to discern the theological interpretation which is placed upon it. The question of an alleged ineffable experience being prompted by religious demands and necessitated by cultic or prophetic exigencies makes it difficult to establish whether any particular account can be accorded extraordinary status. It cannot be denied that, without exception, physical features are described which are said to be the accompaniment of the transcendent experience in hand. Not only is there a particular venue like the Temple or a mountain-top; there is also frequently a reference to light and manifestations of power such as thunder. In these circumstances or similar ones a mystical experience usually is said to occur. Since we are unable to indicate what the content of such an experience may have been, we are left with the actual physical phenomena as our only empirical reference. To recapitulate on this issue of putative mystical experiences, biblical or otherwise, I have reflected upon the obvious subjective aspect of such. I have attempted to argue, however, that the logical and empirical impossibility of one man's experience being identical with another's does not in itself invalidate its claims to extraordinariness. The importance of a putative ineffable experience could be said to be
so great that we dare not dismiss it out of hand. This does not of course mean that all steps will not be taken to discover whether there are adequate psychological, physiological or environmental factors to account for the event. I have also referred to the physical aspect of any recorded mystical experience as enabling us to provide a point of reference in the known which, while not establishing any ground for speaking of the unique, nonetheless provides us with a framework to say something intelligible. Insofar as the 'something more' may seem to be elusive to verbal expression, Wittgenstein's belief that the mystical cannot be spoken about may seem to hold good. For example, we might point to the reputed change which Christian conversion has effected in people down through the centuries. The modern counter-argument in respect of such claims, is to speak of psychological factors being responsible for these changes. In part, this is necessarily true if only because any human experience whatsoever must involve psychological factors. If, however, a man's life is so changed that neither his previous or present circumstances can be shown to facilitate the transformation, another element is to be looked for. Christian conversion, in which a man responds to, and opens up his life to, God's love and influence, seems to provide an explanation of the sort of difference in a man's character and attitude to life which we are now discussing. Suppose a convert refers to specific feelings and emotions which he experiences as a result of his decision to respond to God's overtures to him, expressed in Scripture and through the ministry of Christian people. Wesley spoke of his heart being 'strangely moved' as the realization of what was happening to him as he invoked God's forgiving grace. Such a testimony has frequently been reiterated. Paul speaks of the new creation which is effected by a man's response to Christ. Of course these conversion experiences
would be called special ones. However, I think it would be consistent with the intention expressed through a human act of will to trust God to argue that, in the subsequent life of the convert, and to the extent that he continues to respond by heart and will, he has an awareness of being guided and strengthened by divine will. I am trying to say that the decision to respond and keep on responding, perhaps with the help of the ministry of the word and the sacrament, can be considered to provide grounds for speaking of a condition for the knowledge of God by man. It would then be a sine qua non of theistic understanding. Prima facie to decide sincerely to respond to God in trust and commitment is to experience his presence and influence upon one. ^I. T. Ramsey's lengthy explanation of why it is necessary to have a discernment of the "something more" of human experience before we can commit ourselves to God is pertinent to what I have said. It is when 'the penny drops, the ice breaks or the light dawns' that we are able to discern that which we previously could not see or grasp.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN


c RYLE, G.: *The Concept of Mind* previously cited

d RAMSEY, I. T.: *Religious Language* SCM 1957


g RUSSEL, B.: *My Philosophical Development* London, 1959

h WITTGENSTEIN, L.: *Tractatus* opus cited (p. 78 above)

i PRICE, H. H.: *Belief* opus cited (p 140 above) final chapter on 'acting as if' in relation to coming to believe in God

j II Corinthians 5:17

Are experiences within the self examples of 'knowing that'?

FIRST PERSON CLAIMS TO KNOWING

Bearing in mind Austin's understanding of the illocutionary use of 'knowing that', I shall now investigate what is entailed by first person, or agent, claims to knowing. I would like to relate this to Ayer's discussion of the question as to whether knowing consists in being in a special state of mind. Thus Austin taught us to recognize the performative or illocutionary use of such phrases as 'I know that . . .' in certain instances. Examples of such would be where the verb is an expression of agreement, emphasis or assertion. Here the speaker is performing a verbal action rather than a descriptive one. He projects himself into the utterance of his claim to know such-and-such, in a way that makes it clear that he can answer for the truth of what he says. However, Ayer refutes the argument that knowing consists in being in a special state of mind. "Knowing should not be represented as a matter of being in some infallible state of consciousness: for there cannot be such states." Ayer says that if knowing did in fact consist in being in a special state of mind, all that would be necessary to discover what it is possible to know would be to examine the states of mind of those who lay claim to knowledge. Even if this could be done, all that it would reveal would be the experiences which the subjects of these claims were having. It could not establish that they knew anything at all, Ayer asserts. He therefore rejects the idea that knowledge can be treated as though it consisted in the possession of an 'inner searchlight'. The disclosure of certain experiences itself is insufficient to establish the existence of anything beyond those experiences. Ayer rejects the Platonic
claim that 'the perfectly real can alone be perfectly known' as
being little more than a declaration that one cannot know what is
not the case. To lay claim to knowing such-and-such makes a subse-
quent assertion that one 'may be wrong', in respect of that claim,
self-contradictory. It would be appropriate to speak of believing
such-and-such in those circumstances, when of course admission of
the possibility of being wrong is legitimate. Does this mean that
what is known must be true? Ayer points out that, linguistically,
what is known must be true, for what is not true cannot properly be
said to be known. But he does distinguish being certain from
knowing, as understood in common usage. For what is true, and
known to be true, need not be necessary or certain in itself.
Although the content of one's present experience may be thought to
be certain, much of what we claim to know would not be deemed to be
so if restricted to a narrow definition of certainty. So to say
that if, something is known it is true is correct, it does not follow
that if something is known then it is a necessary truth.

Reference to necessary truth as a criterion for being certain
that p accords with Waegasth'view that in saying I know that p I am
expressing a belief rather than asserting a fact. And it also
enables us to adopt Clark's point about the questioning attitude
which a first person, agency concept of knowing suggests. 'The way
I confront the world questioningly' he writes, 'will decide, not the
particular facts I find, but the sort of facts I can expect to find.'
And N. Green states 'Our humanity is the complex of criteria, of
evaluative structures within which we have come to dwell and are
content to dwell.' She believes that it is impossible to speak of
value-free facts. Thus my stance towards the world is a dispositional
one. History will play a significant part in the shaping of my aware-
ness and understanding of it. My experience of the world is


specifically my own, while intercourse with others demands that I participate in public, as well as private, expression of that experience. Thus, although I may express a belief in saying that I know that p, in so far as I share a common environment with my fellows, I must also share, to some extent, a common knowledge concerning p (insofar as it is an item open to public scrutiny). Any claim to knowledge, however, must, in the last analysis, rest upon someone observing p. Otherwise grounds for accepting the truth concerning p would be absent, and Ayer's point about experience in itself being insufficient to establish the existence of anything beyond that experience would be justified.

Within theistic discourse, this criterion concerning experience and objective reference to verify it, is clearly inappropriate. If a man claims to have had an experience of God, he will not be able to point to its referent. This is logically so since a Bodiless Agent will not be a member of a class of discernible objects. Yet Ayer uses this fact to rule out the legitimacy of religious claims to truth. Still, we are involved in a language-game where "God" is its sine qua non. For what constitutes the religious language-game is an area of discourse which focuses its attention upon speaking about God. We thus seek an appropriate conceptual understanding not empirical verification. What are we to make of the man's claim, therefore, to having had an experience of God? May the 'expression of belief', to use Wolgast's phrase, which accompanies this experience be deemed to be some sort of knowledge? If it be conceded that his experience is something which is real for him, would the concept of the questioning, open attitude of first person agency help us towards establishing some sort of claim to knowing in this matter? The many and varied narratives concerning the experiences of the men of the Bible and of numerous others over the years
would seem to turn for their credibility upon the satisfactory answering of these questions. As a paradigm of a putative experience within the theistic language-game, let us take the sophisticated modern theologian's view of the resurrection of Christ. For example, Don Cupitt speaks of this as being something which we may experience today as we respond to the influence of God's presence in our lives. (In "Taking Leave of God" Cupitt has gone beyond this. "God" is now deemed to be entirely internal to the believer, not an existent Being beyond the self.) Cupitt's earlier view is reminiscent of E. Paltmann's existential interpretation of the resurrection as a present reality in my commitment to Christ now, rather than my belief in an alleged historical event two thousand years ago. These modern interpretations of the meaning of the New Testament stories of the Resurrection might be expressed, as a reflection of a particular person's experience today, in some such form as 'I have experienced (as experiencing) an awareness of the presence of God in my life'.

I suggest that here is a paradigm case which will enable us to examine the legitimacy of my adoption of first person agency concepts of knowing and its associated interpretation of knowing as an 'expression of belief'. However, such a claim would need to be understood in relation to a community of believers.

A useful starting-point might be a consideration of Aaron's use of the term psi-sentence. Examples given are 'I have a pain' or 'I feel tired'. Aaron says that for someone to say of each of these respectively, 'he winces' or 'he yawns' is to say something different than saying 'he feels pain' or 'he feels tired'. We cannot reduce one set of sayings to the other without loss of meaning. It is only by showing that the commentator shares an awareness of what it means to have a pain or to feel tired that he can indicate that he understands my experiences. Aaron calls a sentence which
expresses such an experience a psi-sentence to distinguish it from a sentence which has its referent beyond the self. Thus to say that John is on the lawn or, more assertively, 'I know that John is on the lawn' is not to utter a psi-sentence. I think that Aaron's differentiation here is helpful in that it enables us to pursue our scheme of examining the relevance of the concept of knowing as an expression of that which appertains to my self and not to another. If it can be shown that to say that I feel tired is to express a reality which I alone am experiencing insofar as my own self-awareness in concerned, it may be possible to show that expressions of religious experience can likewise acquire respectability. It may be noted that, in contrast with what was said about dispositionally-conditioned ways of knowing, psi-sentences reflect immediate experiences of the self. Or, to be clearer, the presupposition for a dispositional expression of knowing p is that I shall have experienced it before in the sense that I express a learned response. When I confront the world, questioningly, as Clark suggests, I am registering my beliefs about the world which environmental education have helped to shape. Now, it must be granted that my ability to state that I am in pain or am tired presuppose previous experiences of these conditions. To use Baker's 1 phrase, a 'sensibly aroused concept' is appropriated on each occasion. To that extent they share with non psi-sentences a common foundation in the processes whereby I came to know about myself and the external world. For it was presumably by having objects ostensively or verbally defined and acquiring an understanding by verbal means as to what being in pain or feeling tired meant that I gained my earliest understanding6 of things. Yet my having a pain or feeling tired now depend upon, for their present reality, nothing more than that I just am in a conscious state of experiencing one of these conditions. My
recognition of this state in dispositional but whether I recognise it or not, I shall still be aware of the condition of my body at the present time. Having tried to elucidate this point, I shall compare the sort of psi-sentence used (I am in pain, I feel tired) with a religious-experience type sentence (I am experiencing or have experienced the presence of God).

Firstly, both sets express first person experience of the self. Provided that the one who speaks of such an experience is sincere in what he says and understands the meaning of the words uttered, he may be said to be giving a bonâ fide account of an experience which he is having. Secondly, they do not attempt to give a spectator account of some external happening; to that extent they do not claim to say anything about the world beyond the experience of the individual. Their subject-matter pertains to the professed experiences of an individual. Thirdly, they proclaim states of feeling which others might and do share or experience also. They do not purport to be special experiences known only to the one who makes the particular pronouncement. As we have seen, in speaking of any putative experience, I am of necessity putting a construction upon it. Such a construction will reflect cultural and social impressions which I have, consciously or unconsciously, assimilated.

A number of qualifications have to be made about my attempt to find in the concept of a psi-sentence an opening for intelligible talk of encounter with God. First, it will be objected that the statements which refer to bodily feelings (I am in pain; I feel tired) are indeed commonplace and all are capable of experiencing them. Whereas the proposition 'I am experiencing (or experienced) the presence of Christ (or God)' is probably not commonplace; it may in fact be the case that only a comparatively few people would make such a claim. Secondly, this claim would seem to depend for
its justification upon the existence of a being beyond the self in a way that the other propositions do not. The question is: are we at liberty to reject the religious-experience proposition as a non-empirical one as positivists and empiricists would insist that we must do? If it can be shown that first person agency claim to knowing that $p$ must logically depend upon the self's capacity to deliberate upon its own experiences, it would seem that putative claims to knowing God, should experiences thought to be such be had, can be shown to be intelligible. Yet, without a prior belief in God, it is difficult to see how any such claims could be formulated, for they would lack an appropriate base. Related to the question is the issue which runs as a thread through the whole subject, namely that of the interaction of divine and human agency. For whereas my having a pain in my body or feeling tired are natural experiences which occur by dint of possessing a body and being subject to processes which act upon all sentient life, having an experience of God would appear to invoke something quite distinctive. A danger here is that a false antithesis between 'body' and 'spirit' might be implied. Thus, although a religious experience is that which is experienced by the self and accorded the status of a real event for the person who has it, it seems to fall into a category other than than of pain-sentence variety which Aaron has in mind. On the other hand, it has an affinity with the pain-sentence in as much as it is an expression of a personal experience rather than a statement of fact about external events. It may, of course, be induced by external circumstances. A person may have a putative experience of God as a result of religious observance in a church service where, with others or alone, he is influenced by what he hears and sees around him such as Isaiah is said to have been aware of the presence of Yahweh in the Temple in Jerusalem. The question would
then arise as to whether the presumed experience of God which the ecclesiastical surroundings and paraphernalia have helped to excite, is anything more than an emotional response to those man-made influences. If we wish to attempt to establish some sort of affinity between the sort of experience I have when I am in pain or feel tired and the sort of experience I have when I believe that I am in the presence of God, or in some way aware of that presence, we must presumably be able to point to a suitable manifest physical activity to evince this. As we have seen, however, a third person comment upon a man who is in pain, to the effect that it is said that he winces, is a deduction of a subjective absolute experience of the self to a physical piece of behaviour, which is interpreted as being a manifestation of the pain suffered. But no such manifestation may be apparent, just as a man might feel weary, without necessarily demonstrating this in an outward form, such as yawning. If we can establish the logical possibility of a prompting of the self by an unseen agency, it might or might not be the case that such a prompting within the consciousness of that self, should be overtly shown. I think, therefore, that we may adapt the concept of a psi-sentence, to mean a sentence which expresses the absolute conviction of the self that a specific experience is being, or has been had, to the religious-type experience and any appropriate sentence which might be uttered by the one who experiences it. The claim to knowing here would be subjective, but all claims to knowing of a first person agency kind must be so. If we adopt the constructions previously mentioned, it will be recalled that we saw the essentially open posture taken up. These were firstly, the idea of knowing as an expression of belief and secondly, the idea of a questioning rather than asserting approach to knowing. To these we must note also the importance of considering the causal
elements by which the percipient helps to define what he perceives. 'Knowing that' was considered in the light of the knowing agent's participation in the process. The agency of the self in that source of enquiry without which knowing could not be said to be undertaken. We are not dismissing the fact of physical objects here, or the part played by sense data in enabling the agent to form ideas of what it is his senses are presenting him with.

At this juncture, I would like to examine the word 'absolute' which I used in relation to psi-sentence: expressions of experiences of the individual. It was said above that, ceteris ceteribus, a man who says he is in pain or feels tired would not be doubted. Here the idea of incorrigibility or infallibility of 'psi' type sentences is pointed to. It is common experience to be aware of either of these physical conditions and taken to be indubitable that a man who speaks sincerely and correctly could not be doubted for making such a remark. This, of course, includes ruling out the effects of drugs or hallucinatory experiences. He may be said to have 'absolute' knowledge of his state of consciousness. Ayer says that this simply points to the fact that such a man in having such an experience: it does not point to any piece of knowledge beyond it. But a so-called 'numinous' or 'inafable' experience of God revealing himself to man, would not need to be anything beyond a man's experience; for the experience itself would, although unusual and unique perhaps, be self contained. It would not do, however, to isolate this from a conceptual scheme which functions through 'belief in'. To the extent that a psi-sentence may be said, therefore to express a genuine experience of the self, the truth of which may (in normal circumstances) be readily presumed by those to whom it is addressed, it may also be said to convey something which is known for sure. As has been stressed, the possibility of self-
deception has been eliminated, as far as one can do so. Aaron's use of the term psi-sentence is adopted to indicate a class of sentence which enables the speaker to speak of objects that are not merely physical. Psi-sentences are unique in that they register what is significant for the speaker himself. Thus 'I am six foot tall' or 'I am in the kitchen' are not psi-sentences for they do not refer to the experience of knowing. On the other hand 'I feel tired' or 'I (do) enjoy this sort of music' are just such references and are psi-sentences. I am indebted to Aaron for this concept, but Ayer's wish to restrict references to one's experiences to a sort of subjective unverifiable category seems to offset its usefulness. Still, Ayer spends a good deal of time in expounding his own thesis about criteria of personal identity, the privacy of experience, problems of communication and other minds. In utilising Aaron's idea of psi-sentences, I have chiefly been concerned to argue that there may be said to be a class of experiences which constitute a type of knowing where the experience itself is its own justification for uttering such a sentence.

Am I thereby placing a class of utterances beyond the bounds of scrutiny? In one sense, this must be so. For, as we have seen, in so far as psi-sentences speak of an experience of knowing which is made by the subject of that experience, the only external test we may apply is to look for suitable effects beyond the subject's assertion. So 'I have a pain' or 'I feel tired' are significant to an observer insofar as he has himself experienced these states. I am brought back, therefore, to previous observations about the so-called incorrigibility of sense datum statements. I have taken the view in regard to these that there is no such a thing as a pure sense datum. I have stressed the part played by learned concepts in the interpretation of one's sensibly (or in the case of
ideas, as in the religious subject being studied, ideologically) aroused concepts. This leads me away from an attempt, which I think (largely) has not been successful, to find some kind of parallel between Aaron's concept of psi-sentences (clearly intended to explicate empirical personal events) and first person claims to know God. My conclusion about first person agency (psi-sentences) is as follows. While not wishing to exclude unusual happenings as part of the Christian tradition, I do not believe that my attempt to relate Aaron's concept of a psi-sentence to the sort of propositions encountered in Christian discourse can be sustained. For one thing there is a disparity between what can only be termed so-called numinous or ineffable experiences, and the well known experiences offered by Aaron, relating to pain or tiredness. Also, I have already shown sympathy with the critique of the pure sense datum theory. I have been inclined towards the notion of sensibly aroused concepts, which imply learning. All this agrees with Wittgenstein's view about samples and the contextual aspect of our learning of the meaning of words etc. I conclude, therefore, that first person agency, divorced from a societal setting, will not suffice to make sense of knowledge claims as far as knowing God is concerned. It will be observed that I am relating this reservation to my belief that knowledge by acquaintance requires knowledge by description in the Christian perspective.

Having concluded that first person statements in respect of God being known, conceived to be unique, incorrigible experiences 'within' the self, are inadmissible as an intelligible construction of what knowledge of God is, I shall now discuss the contribution of Kant to the subject of revelation. Kant gives priority to reason in human apperception of divine self disclosure and, in keeping with his wider philosophy, assimilates this apperception to moral categories.
By dint of man's moral nature, he is capable of assessing and judging the matter, for he possesses a criterion in advance of God's activity on his behalf. Knowledge of God, according to Kant, is thus deemed to be ineluctibly bound up with man's moral consciousness. As I shall show, at this point he appears to find an echo in Wittgenstein, when the latter looks to fundamental propositions to determine what can be said within a particular discipline.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN


c ibid pp 22-4


e GRENE, Marjorie The Knower and the Known London, Faber & Faber, 1966 p 157

f CUPITT, D.: in his more recent book Taking Leave of God has gone beyond this view


h AARON, R. I.: Knowing and the Function of Reason Oxford, Clarendon, 1971


j Isaiah 6:1-10

k opus cited above

l Aaron p 68 f
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE PLACE OF IDEAS IN AN EXPERIENTIAL VIEW OF REVELATION:

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REASON

Kant's differentiation between inward and external forms of revelation partly stems from his rationalist propensities and partly from his recognition of the necessity for divine activity in historical times to supplement and, indeed, to motivate, man's innate moral inclinations. In his "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone" he argues the case for access to God's revelation through a channel other than that provided by the church or its theologians. However, Kant, almost contradicting this view, elsewhere proclaims the service performed by the church in cleansing "the moral relation of man to the Supreme Being". It is in this respect that he acknowledges the part played by faith in taking the believer beyond the position of what he terms pure rationalism can, unaided, establish. Reason has the task of investigating and assessing the truth of the historical revelation: the 'inward' or a priori judges the 'external' and reaches an a posteriori conclusion. On a number of occasions, Kant speaks of 'external' revelation as being now a hastener of what man could and ought to have discovered through the use of their reason; and now as an indispensable conveyer of universal moral laws which would, in all probability, not have been so completely discovered in the absence of it. In each instance, Kant observes that human reason is capable of knowing the truth of the moral and religious teachings thus revealed. We may note that my criticism of a pure sense datum and the part of description of one's sense perception cohere with Kant's thinking. It should be understood at this point that he further differentiated religion, which is conceived to be hidden from man, from ecclesiastical faith which might, in some
instances, degenerate into superstition - in other words, from the practice of Christian (or perhaps other) religious observance. It is the hidden variety, which he conceived to be the ground of moral beliefs and the power to implement such in human society, which he had in mind in making his assertions about the interdependency of inward and external forms of revelation. bDespland quotes from a letter of Kant to Jacobi (30th August, 1789) to illustrate this interdependence: "For one can just as well admit that if the Gospel had not previously instructed us in the universal moral laws, in their total purity, our reason would not yet have discovered them so completely; still, once we are in possession of them, we can convince anyone of their correctness and validity using reason alone." In an earlier letter, to C. H. Jung-Stilling, dated 1st March 1789, Kant spoke of the Gospel as not only agreeing "with the speculations of a perfected reason" but shedding "new light on the whole field surveyed by that reason, illuminating what still remains opaque to it". So, even if we may see here a recognition for revelation by God, human reason retains a crucial role in interpreting it. Once again, this observation would seem to be consistent with my attempt to erect the concept of knowing as being, in part, a matter of description. Kant takes revelation to be something to be looked at and described, rather than specific events which are independent of the enquirer's survey. An empiricist would be interested in discovering what the putative experiences are which are being given the connotation of revelation. It is difficult to see how far, in this case, one could go beyond subjective reports of alleged ineffable happenings. The rationalist, however, conceives of a propensity to judge what revelation is through an a priori understanding of what might constitute such a revelation. This is where Kant's concept of 'inward' revelation seems to have some bearing on the matter.
A question which arises is: would it make sense to say that that which is conceived to be unknown to man, yet considered to be made known through divine agency, may yet in some way be known through human reason alone? Surely not. If one's understanding of revelation is that it is the making known by God of that which he otherwise cannot know, it would not do to credit human reason with the role of sole arbiter as to what revelation is conceived to be. If however one speaks of enlightened reason, consequent upon response to the kerygma it would be a different matter. I think that a misconception here is to think of revelation as comprising the giving of information, rather than explanation. Revelation, as was indicated in my first chapter, may be taken to be one of three things: information, experience or command. This tripartite distinction reflects the cognitive, conative and volitional aspects of man's responses to various stimuli. It could be said that, when we are speaking of God revealing Himself to man, the common factor in each of these responses is an awareness of something outside the self which informs, induces feelings or issues commands.

In regard to each of these, however, a question arises. What conditions have to be fulfilled to authenticate them? This needs unravelling. So-called information from God could be true, but explicable as due to purely psychological mechanisms. Yet the 'transport of delight' etc of which Christians speak, a sense of being carried along by an experience, not manufacturing such for oneself, might appear to be authentic. And the same might be said of a sense of overriding obligation as in moral awareness. Such might affirm an absolute or ultimate demand, beyond the individual's own ethical impetus. In both these examples, one concerning experience through feeling, and the other concerning moral awareness, the attribution to something external to oneself might be maintained.
It was this kind of dual impact I had in mind when I used Farmer's reference to God as Ultimate Demand and Final Succour.

To claim authenticity for some kind of external revelation must mean more than this. To say that it is outside oneself might be satisfactory. But may it be said to be from God? If not, it cannot be accorded the appellation of revelation. How does one test whether or not the feelings I alluded to above or realization of a moral imperative are from God? I believe that it is necessary to remind ourselves of my major presuppositions in speaking of revelation: the existence of God and the communication by God to men. The 'outside' or external influence which is conceived to be God will then be understood as a basic concept which constitutes belief. If we accept that the concept of God is a fundamental proposition in our discourse about revelation, the need for justification will not arise. The 'outside' which is God in a determinative concept for all that can be said about revelation. In history we can test the plausibility of statements about the past: but not the statement that there is a past. Likewise we may assess putative revelatory statements by reference to the fundamental propositions that the concept of God constitutes belief and that God communicates to men, but not that there is a God or that He does communicate knowledge to men.

Kant, however, appears to submit the content of revelation to the test of human reason. He writes: 'Even if God were to make an immediate appearance, I would still need rational theology as a presupposition. For how am I to be certain that it is God himself who has appeared to me, or only another powerful being? Thus I have need of a pure idea of the understanding, an idea of a most perfect being, if I am not to be blinded and led astray. Thus we can have no correct insight into external revelation of God, and we can make
no right use of it, until we have made a wholly rational theology
our property. But on the other hand an external divine revelation
can be an occasion for man to come for the first time to pure concepts
of God which are pure concepts of understanding . . . With time it
\[\text{verbal revelation}\] becomes a matter of tradition . . . Here the
religion of reason always has to remain the substratum and foundation
of every investigation. It is according to this religion that the
value of verbal revelation must be determined. So it must precede
every other revelation as a yardstick."

In stressing reason as the key to an understanding of Revelation,
Kant clearly endorses the idea of inward rather than external
revelation in the sense that reason is held to be the arbiter of, or
capable of adjudging, what God's revelation to man is. What Kant is
saying in effect is: 'X appears. X is God. To recognize God I must
be able to recognize a degree of consistency in what is said about
God so that the idea of God is given rational coherence.' How, we
may ask, is the idea of God authenticated? Kant's wish to find
authentication through the use of reason alone reminds us that reason
may be considered as both discursive and intuitive. The latter is
the source of fundamental propositions which have to be understood
through the medium of language. Kant's appeal to reason to make
sense of the concept of revelation, therefore, requires acceptance
of those fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of the
Theistic language game. A rational system of belief, then, will pay
heed to the overlap between language games in seeking to elucidate
what can be said.

For it is in the normal usage of words that understanding is
indicated. To isolate a word from its usual 'home' is to misrepresent
it. If I am applying reason to anything which purports to be the
case, I must heed the means of communication whereby I seek to
authenticate the matter in hand. Otherwise it would be inappropriate to speak of reason. This indicates the discursive aspect of reason: putative facts and states of affairs are subjected to verbal criteria. It is, however, in the intuitive aspect of reason that credence may be given to Kant's wish to say that 'immanent' revelation has precedence over or, at least, has prior status, in the process of revelation. The a priori 'givenness' of our rational faculty suggests an intuitive awareness of how things stand.

In seeking to make sense of our varied experiences, we do so within an accepted framework of reference and, similarly, in enquiring into the nature of any proposition relative to those experiences we are obliged to exercise our faculties of reasoning. It seems to be true, therefore, that to speak of the concept of revelation is to go on from a basis of theistic premises about God and man by applying our reason to the propositions which express ideas about the matter. This coheres with my view that description is required to interpret and explain Christian experience of God. It would no more be possible to say what revelation is apart from such necessary conditions, than to reflect upon any putative scientific or historical propositions without recourse to rational thought. Kant's verdict on the possibility of an immediate encounter with God, to the effect that even such an ineffable experience would need to be brought before the bar of reason, testifies to this.

Kant and Wittgenstein

It is at this point that we are able to see a similarity with Wittgenstein's thinking in 'On Certainty'. There acquiring a system of beliefs by observation and instruction is differentiated from learning as such. 'A child learns to believe a host of things i.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand
unshakably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What
stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or
convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it. A
little before this, Wittgenstein says, 'it is not single axioms
that strike me as obvious, it is a system in which consequences and
premises give one another mutual support', and he refers to our
believing not a single proposition but a whole system of propositions.

It is clear that Kant conceives of moral beliefs as a system
which 'hold fast' for the believer, enabling him to test other
propositions against such beliefs. Here we recognise Kant's position
as to the intuitive nature of reason. So a child "swallows" the
consequence of a mountain's having existed for a long time, in
learning that someone climbed it many years ago. While the veracity
of the story of the mountain being climbed might be challenged, the
question of it having existed a long time doesn't arise at all.

There is a sense in which Kant adopts man's moral reason as bearing
a similarity to a fundamental proposition which enables reasoning
about putative divine moral injunctions to be assayed. That is why
I stressed his a priori judging faculty in discussing his concept of
'inward' revelation. Such revelation is part of what man, qua
reasoning man, is. If to tell a story about a mountain is to speak
unquestioningly of the mountain's existence, to give a moral judgement
is to express oneself in respect of a universe of discourse where
the concepts of right and wrong are central. We should then imbibe
moral concepts from childhood, but Kant presupposes a universal
moral understanding. If to assess the moral standing of putative
teachings bearing a claim to revelation is to relate such moral
perspectives to learned ideas, a prior authority seems to be demanded.
Wittgenstein speaks of some things standing unshakably within a
system of beliefs, not because they are intrinsically obvious or
convincing but because of "what lies around" them. It seems to me that the problem of a threatened self-contradiction in Kant's talk of moral reason lies in his presumption of men knowing the good in advance of their discovering it. It would, however, make sense to say that moral understanding or a moral perspective on human affairs holds fast in a system of beliefs which owes as much to ancestry as to present experience. Given such an a priori standing for moral consciousness, conceived to be inherited and implicit within man's communal organisation, anything at all which might be learned empirically would necessarily fall within the ambit of moral reason. Thus the learned teachings which, at least to some extent, are considered to comprise revelation, would be subject to this procedure.

It follows that, in one sense, it must be true to say that if revelation is conceived to have a moral connotation, its authenticity as such must be assessed by reference to those moral judgments which form the things which hold fast in society. Kant implies that such moral reason as man has, independent of learned facts of an empirical nature, itself reflects divine origination. That man has this capacity to grasp the significance of moral evaluation in the situations he meets, bears testimony to this. Thus there need be no distinction, in the last analysis, between speaking of revelation in inward and external forms.

My reference to the learning of ideas in connection with Kant's view of revelation, leads me to consider a different, although not altogether dissimilar, contribution made by Popper's philosophy, here applied to theistic ideas. Although Popper was interested primarily in an empiricism which his knowledge of science stimulated, his notion of a 'world' of ideas may be utilised, I believe, to further my thesis. This will become apparent in two main respects. Firstly, I shall show that the Theistic ideas associated with the
kerygma could be accorded the status of so called 'third world ideas': in this case they might be said to be instantiated within the Christian form of life, and hence to qualify as 'objective' knowledge. Secondly, such ideas are descriptive in the sense that they bear upon events from which theological understanding flowed. In this regard, Kant's view that reason judges revelation, and the a priori becomes the a posteriori through human deliberation, may seem to bear some resemblance. And both Kant and Popper, I think, point to the Wittgensteinian emphasis upon learning as a means to understanding.

In adopting the procedure whereby I have shifted the ground from alleged first person knowing of God, to descriptive accounts of what counts as knowledge of God, I shall be seeking a conclusion consistent with the total picture painted. That picture has of course been one in which Wittgenstein's notion of context as the determinant of meaning has predominated. I am now trying to draw together ideas from both Kant and Popper which seem to me to be helpful in my quest for meaning in respect of the concept of revelation. In each case, I shall attempt to scrutinise their respective contributions in the light of Wittgenstein's philosophy.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN


b DESPLAND, M. Kant on History and Religion McGill - Queen's University, Montreal 1973, pp 221 citing Philosophical Correspondence p 158

c From Philosophical Correspondence p 131 quoted ibid p 222

d FARMER, H. H.: opus cited in my Introduction p 13 above

e WOOD, Allen W and CLARK, Gertrude M (Translators) Lectures on Philosophical Theology by I. Kant, Ithaca, Carnell University Press, 1978. p 161

f WITTGENSTEIN, L.: On Certainty 279, 144, 142, 141, 143 and 144 (again)
On Popper's analysis of 'third world' understanding, the Christian theistic picture of human belief might perhaps be accorded the title 'knowledge' in his sense of the word. He does not want to speak of certainty in respect of scientific hypotheses, duly tested and applied through technology and so on. He tells us that we are for ever formulating new ideas about the world, as we progress from one system of human thought to another. So we might take an outward, public, spectator view of third world knowledge and apply such to theistic beliefs about revelation. If Popper wants to say that, insofar as these 'third world' ideas can be called knowledge, for the time being (i.e. awaiting further enlightenment) so be it. The time being, for modern theists (including an impressive number of recent scientific writers on theistic belief), is obviously the present age.

If we, as rational people, accept that all our beliefs about the world, including the world of ideas, must be subject to further enquiry, no anxiety need trouble the theist on that score. It will be observed, however, that Popper probably inter-related his "three worlds" in order to construct premises from which his conclusions have been deduced. He included modern bio-chemical facts (or perhaps tentative facts in some cases) and gave more than a casual glance towards the behavioural reactions of humans to those facts. He thus included his 'first' and 'second' worlds in his scheme.

So one might attempt to analyse 'third' world of 'ideas' with a realisation that theism has, by tradition, attempted to construct an overall picture of the world as the creation of God and of its inhabitants (men) as ethical beings bearing responsibility for their
actions.

Wittgenstein, however, would not confer upon such a picture of the world, in its representation of physical phenomena or of human nature, the epithet of knowledge. As we previously reminded ourselves, his comment about a tendency to confuse empirical facts with religious beliefs is a "blunder which is too big". Would he accept Popper's concept of a third world of ideas, which includes poetic ideas as well as scientific ones? Would he be willing to accord some kind of objective status for these ideas? Surely, he would want to mark off a distinctive boundary for Popper's third world order of knowledge. We have seen that Wittgenstein stressed the use of linguistic rules in establishing explanation and understanding. So, his insistence that we should take note of the way that words are used, and seek their meaning within the context of the particular language-game in which they are employed, would allow us some scope for Popper's methodology. We shall be concerned to see what possibilities are implicit within the picture which the concept of the objectivity of ideas presents. If there are positive possibilities which provide us with clarification of concepts for theistic reasoning, the Wittgensteinian and Popperian models may find complementary utility. Wittgenstein, I believe, would not want to speak of 'third world' ideas as facts in the sense of empirical facts, which might be subjected to tests of verifiability or falsification, but would acknowledge the capacity of such ideas to generate new ways of seeing how things stand. Within the Christian language-game, limits are thus set as to what can and cannot be said. It is I think his stress upon the way in which language shows how things are, how they seem to those who use that language, which could be crucial here in providing logical support for Popper's thesis. So one might argue that the theistic concept of revelation cannot be eliminated - or, more
correctly, the constituents which together combine to make up that concept - as a defunct idea, superceded by those ideas associated with scientific materialism. The fundamental propositions of Theism relative to the concept of God and, as far as Christianity is concerned, the notion of God's proclamation to man in the Kerygma, remind us of the importance of those constative and coercive elements which make up the 'belief in' which is thus evoked. And Wittgenstein's assistance in helping us to analyse our use of words within their contextual boundaries, provides us with the machinery to do two things. Firstly, it enables us to keep the concept of revelation in focus so that it can be subjected to sustained scrutiny. Our judgement is called for to enable us to ascertain what purports to be the case in respect of the truth claiming message of the Kerygma, with its associated Christian teachings embodied in the Didache and Didaskalo. Secondly, to say that meaning is dependent upon an understanding of the usage of theistic language, points to its being held firmly where can we gauge its referential import, other than in the world of demonstrable events.

Following Popper, may we here isolate a public, spectator, third person, observable something whether scientific datum, facet of human behaviour or idea which is openly discussed as that which may qualify for the description of objective knowledge - at least in so far as that particular item holds up to the scrutiny of public enquiry? By deciding not, at this stage, to permit first person subjective and private, experiential claims to knowing that p to count as 'objective' knowledge, we may be aided in forwarding some kind of definition of that term. Any such personal claim to know 'how' or to know 'that' must be tested in the crucible of observable demonstration. Clearly, if ideas are to be given the status of 'objective knowledge' we cannot confine our attention to
to physical objects, nor even to their effects (e.g. the bombardment of sub-atomic particles in a bubble chamber). Yet such an idea will be about the world in some way or another. In each and every area of human endeavour which is capable of being described through language, concepts must be formulated and used. Ideas abound in the sea of human thought and inventiveness. One can have a variety of ideas about the game of cricket, relative to its style of play, organisation, equipment etc. One might equally have ideas about truth or beauty, abstract concepts, yet contingent upon the world of experience. We evaluate our experiences, passing judgment upon them, and submitting them to the search-light of moral analysis. Here the a priori and a posteriori elements of Kant’s thinking may be recalled. What we have said about meaning as use permits us to speak of these varying ideas as being intelligible only in their appropriate setting. This is not to say, of course, that the same idea might not be applied in more than one area of discourse; but then it would have relevance to each one in some way or another. Wittgenstein’s point about ‘connections’ which help us to discover what can be said indicates the transferring properties of concepts. He tells us that normal usage enables us to establish how we shall use a particular word; its use within a particular language game will not be so strained from that accepted usage to rob it of intelligibility. That it can function in a number of different ‘games’ speaks for its general utility; a specific ‘game’ however will help to establish which particular nuance of meaning the word will bear. I am trying here to advert to the plurality of ideas within human speech and to stress their anchorage within one or more fields of communication.

For I think it may be suggested that the term ‘objective knowledge’ can be shown to make sense in respect of any and each of Popper’s three worlds. A datum of scientific enquiry or of historical
investigation, 'facts' as usually so regarded, or a piece of overt behaviour by a man or a group of people may be considered alongside an idea, a concept of the intellect, an apparently abstract thing, all of them being the projected phenomena of human life. The scientist scrutinises and later writes about his experiment, the newspaper records the act of robbery, the philosopher ponders an idea: all find their way into a medium of communication which seeks, if accurate, to show how things stand: if the propositions expressing these various observations are true. It is Popper's contention that the false must be discarded through the means of eliminating blatant error. An idea may be objective once it is public property so to speak; it can become objective 'knowledge' once it passes a suitable test, the criteria for which will be, in Wittgenstein's reckoning, pragmatic and arbitrary; they cannot simply be subjectively and selectively fixed. I have attempted to argue that theistic ideas may be retained as pertaining to 'objective knowledge'.(a) because they have been looked at very hardly indeed by men of a range of intellectual ability and experience (b) because they form part of a language-game which may be intelligibly constructed and (c) because out of the twin actions of holding theistic ideas in view and of bringing into focus the logical structure of those ideas, an objective, public grasp of the putative truth to which they point can be obtained. And central to such ideas in the concept of revelation.

Popper in the light of Wittgenstein

Having found some connection between Kant and Wittgenstein as far as second order propositions are concerned (e.g. the concept of the a posteriori and the concept of apperception of rules in understanding), I shall show that Wittgenstein can be used also to interpret Popper. For it has been argued that the autonomy of
grammar determines the logical status of language, and the explanation produced by reference to it can yield understanding. I want to suggest that Popper's demand that we treat ideas in an objective way with a view to eliminating those which fail to match the requirements of empirical knowledge might show a way forward for ideas about revelation. True, we are not concerned with perception in the realm of science as Popper was. Wittgenstein drew a sharp distinction between religious ideas and empirical propositions. Yet the concept of revelation could be subjected to a Popperian analysis as that which relies upon ideas which persist, which stubbornly refuse to be replaced by something different. In the light of Wittgenstein's attribution of meaning to usage, we have said that theistic concepts are able to be located clearly and firmly within an area of discourse, familiar to numerous believers. If it is the case that, from the Popperian third world analysis of theism, the concept of revelation continues to hold its own, against the probability of its elimination as having long since ceased to have credibility in a world dominated by empirical science, my twin principles of keeping the concept in focus and holding it firmly within its linguistic setting might yield a positive outcome. In this way I think that I shall be able to apply Wittgenstein's thinking about language, showing how things are, to good effect. "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand ... A proposition constructs a world with the help of a logical scaffolding, so that one can actually see from the proposition how everything stands logically if it is true." I think the following extracts from the "Philosophical Investigations" will help to show how Popper's third world of ideas may be considered to be of "objective" significance. "A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words ... A perspicuous representation produces just that under-
standing which consists in 'seeing connections' ... Philosophical problems ... are not of course empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language ... One must always ask oneself: is the word (e.g. "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name") ever actually used in this way in the language game which is its original home? Philosophy simply puts everything before us ... Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us. For we can avoid ineptness or emptiness in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison as - so to speak, a measuring-rod; not as a preconceived idea to which reality must correspond."

In these statements, Wittgenstein is asking a plea for clarity in the use of language and for scrutiny of it to determine the meaning of specific propositions. Those propositions which express Popper's 'third-word' of ideas should, according to this counsel, be subjected to the rigorous investigation which linguistic analysis requires. We shall be able to see from such propositions "how things stand logically if they are true". This will necessitate looking for 'connections', by using an appropriate 'measuring-rod, so to speak' born out of the 'original home' of the language-game to which the propositions belong (or out of which they emanate). All thought of a pre-conceived reality must go. One essential factor is that of ambiguity. Wittgenstein illustrates this by referring to the part which looking, listening or pointing play in helping us to give meaning to our experiences as we seek to describe them to others. All important in the description is the significance of 'surface' and 'depth' grammar. Merely to hear a sentence and to grasp something of its meaning may be to miss its reference to how things stand or to fail to see what it is that it shows. 'Interpre-
tations by themselves do not determine meaning." Wittgenstein, of course, relates meaning to obeying rules which, like making a report or giving an order (or playing a game of chess) are customs. "To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to master a technique."

Wittgenstein's teaching about our systems of representation might be applied to what Popper is trying to establish by his 'third world' principle of objectivity. However, there is a danger that Popper here might be mistakenly using a system of representation to project on to reality, or seeming reality, such ideas. Are we entitled to seek to apply the notion of a "grammar" which, when interpreted aright, enables us to see how things stand, in respect of the so called "third world" of ideas? Wittgenstein abandoned his picture theory of meaning in which he tried to establish a relationship between facts in the world and the words which were held to represent them in 'atomic propositions'. Could the concept of revelation, understood to mean the notion of God's revelatory imparting of knowledge to men, which they otherwise cannot gain, utilise the 'measuring-rod' metaphor to probe the 'surface' and 'depth' grammar of its appropriate linguistic environment? By examining the 'connections' which theistic language provides, as the 'measuring-rod' is set against its propositional claims, may the seeming opaqueness be unmuddied to produce the sort of clarity and creative energy which Popper requires? Is it then a matter of mastering a technique and rightly observing a custom by obeying appropriate rules which can give to the concept of revelation meaning for our world today? Of these idiomatic terms used by Wittgenstein, the metaphor of a measuring-rod and the notion of 'connections' might appear to be particularly apposite in attempting to meet Popper's criteria for the acceptance of a 'third world of
ideas and an application of the concept to theistic ideas. The rules to be observed are those relative to the theistic language game; its 'depth' grammar must be elicited by a careful study of its interior logic. What could be conceived to be an appropriate 'measuring rod' to help us assess the viability in the world of those ideas? May I suggest that this would be the connections themselves by which 'objectivity' can be measured? Logically, theistic ideas may be said to possess cogency insofar as they throw light upon that concept of revelation. Within theistic discourse, with its recognition of God as creator and upholder of life, it makes sense to say that the knowledge which man attains of his creator results from his response to that which is revealed to him. All sorts of 'connections' have been advocated to try to establish a logical basis for relating theistic ideas to human experience; thus moving outside the theistic sphere of discourse itself. The classical arguments for the existence of God did just this: ontological, cosmological, teleological and moral arguments. Each has occasioned much debate and none perhaps provide the sort of 'proof' they were intended to display. But Wittgenstein's idea of 'logical space' enables us to follow through the implications of ideas expressed within theistic discourse.

An Experience of God Understood in Relation to Description Yet, Paradoxically, Perhaps, in Relation to Performatives

I conclude from my discussion of the part played by descriptions within the Christian language-game, that it will be through the medium of pertinent language that intelligibility can be given to the Christian claim that, in Christ, an encounter with God may be said to take place. This leads me to a consideration of the role of performative language in Christian worship. It shows that the apparent detachment from referential criteria in the product of a
mistaken attitude. For the kind of language which the ideas of the Christian religion stimulates requires for its meaning an understanding that reference is indeed found within that language. The explanation indicated by the believer's ability to use that language correctly, both in acts of worship and by way of elucidation of his beliefs, in the explanation of all the aspects of his activity as a Christian. Thus the notion of revelation, of the self-disclosure by God to man and man's response to that encounter, is irradiated here. I believe that my stress upon firstly the kerygma, and subsequently upon the verbal significance of the describing element in the kind of knowledge claims advanced by Theists, have shown the concept of revelation to be bound up with the literary genre in which it is described. It is in acknowledging this, that I was persuaded to relate to my central Wittgensteinian theme, the paramount place of the kind of ideas which seem to occupy the attention of Kant, from a rationalist position, and Popper, from an empiricist one. In all this, an overriding aim has been to lead us away from any pre-occupation we may have that an experience of a pristine nature must be isolated to demonstrate God's relationship with man. So I attacked the pure sense datum theory, the concept of 'givenness' and referential ideas of meaning in respect of empirical proposition. And so it is that I have come to take an experience of God to mean an experience which owes its rationale to correct usage of language by believers; a correct usage which enables their descriptions to provide explanation and understanding.

If it may be said, then, that an experience of God, interpreted in traditional Christian terms, finds its meaning through knowledge by description and, if that description is, at least in part, a description of ideas relevant to divine self-disclosure, the signifi-
cance of language is apparent. Will it be sufficient, now to enlist
the idea of speech acts and performatives to provide the required confirmation of knowledge claiming propositions? I shall examine attempts by some Theists to argue in favour of a subjective assurance which religious performatives occasion, when used in appropriate worshipping situations. These views will be utilised to suggest that the knowing 'that' element of the Christian's claim, is taken care of by the sort of ideas I have been discussing. These, it will be recalled have been: (a) Ideas relative to the kerygma, as the proclamation of the Christ-event, which forms the foundational ideas of the Christian Theistic language-game, (b) Ideas which form the subject of descriptions which have the status of explaining what human experience of God could mean, (c) Kant's view that revelation waits upon reason and thus upon the judgement by believers to arrive at a posteriori understanding of Theistic ideas; (d) Popper's theory of a 'third world' of ideas which gain the status of objective knowledge insofar as they become instantiated as trust-worthy explanations and as harbingers of further understanding. I suggested that those ideas associated with the Christ-event might qualify for this definition. Further, I have tried to locate ideas of God, and of his revelation to responsive men and women, to the idea of a form of life, understood to be both a community of believers and a logical structure rooted in certain fundamental propositions. The central proposition is that concerning the concept of god, which I have taken to be constitutive of Theistic belief. Associated with this has been the kerygma concerning Christ and his saving work which has been taken to be a fundamental proposition for Christian Theism.

While the ideas which comprise such an important part of the language game played by believers are able, perhaps, to provide an explanatory role in respect of the concept of revelation, the notion
of God remains a difficult one. This is not because it is necessary to revert to an empirical, in place of a conceptual, attempt to identify God. It is because the idea of communication is an integral part of my experiential view of revelation—of men and God being said to relate to each other in some kind of knowable communion. This idea entails the discernment of not the identification of God, so that intelligibility may be given to the claim that through God's self-disclosure to men, a bridge has been erected whereby humans may experience here and now the blessings of his presence. In looking at performatives, therefore, I shall discuss Wittgenstein on the idea of avowals in relation to Christian beliefs about experience of God.

I shall conclude my enquiry into the juxtaposition of belief and knowledge in respect of Christian claims about knowledge of God, by seeing whether Christians are entitled to assert P such that P is entailed by their assertion of it. This will be firmly consequent upon all that I have been emphasizing concerning the primacy of ideas on Theistic discourse. I will, therefore, bear in mind the whole gamut of arguments I have assayed, and philosophical opinions which I have examined. Yet my quest will not thereby reach an end. For the loose end of a thread which keeps re-emerging remains to be grasped and tied. To the question: Has the existence of God been begged in the language game which I have repeatedly referred to? Some kind of answer must be attempted. Beyond the problem of the epistemology of Christian belief, there lurks an ontological problem concerning the activity of God. My final section will attempt to make sense of the idea of Bodiless Agent communicating with men and being said to have an encounter with men.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN


b WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Tractatus opus cited p 17 above 4.5 and 4.023

c WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Philosophical Investigations opus cited p 13 above 122, 109, 115, 126, 131, 651, 664, 198, 199
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SPEECH ACTS AND PERFORMATIVES: THEIR ROLE IN RELATION TO THE IDEA OF ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Epistemologically, it is to be appreciated that further distinction would have to be made in regard to the verb to believe. In the sense in which it is maybe used when we speak of knowing that p, as being an expression of belief about p, we use an illocutionary device or speech-act. If said in good faith, and with due understanding of the words used, my profession to know that p is an assertion that is how I perceive or understand p. When I make claims about the first century founder of Christianity, I am expressing my belief perhaps with a certain perlocutionary force. In as much as I am not trying to describe or comment upon some datum of my present experience, and am not simply reporting a putative historical event, my expression of belief seems to carry with it a persuasive characteristic. If I say that I believe such and such about Christ or God - he redeemed mankind for example, - my expression of belief carries with it a commenatory element in the way that saying I know that p (i.e. express my belief that p is as perceived by me) does not. It was said earlier that theistic affirmation of Christian belief embraces interpretation as well as descriptive data e.g. 'Christ died for our sins'. The historical proposition about Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified at the hands of the Roman procurator, Pilate, takes on a vastly different meaning when interpreted as that act whereby God 'was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

Two different dimensions of belief are possible in this proposition. One concerns the historical fact, alluded to by Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus and Pliny that Jesus died such a death. The other and obviously controversial claim upon belief is that God effected his
saving purpose in and through that redemptive act of Jesus, the Christ. The former expression of belief, proclaiming the death of Jesus at Calvary under Pilate provides the basis for an assertion having illocutionary force. I can assert or state that item of the Christian creed in a way which would find analogy in any number of putative historical propositions: for example Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. When I proclaim that, by his death Jesus effected a saving act of grace for mankind, I am expressing a belief which goes beyond illocutionary performative language (in this instance the giving of some information viz - Jesus died on a cross). I am inevitably, consciously or unconsciously, producing some sort of feelings in those who hear or read what I say: my statement that Christ died for the sins of mankind has perlocutionary force. This means that there must, by the nature of the belief expressed, be an empirical and psychological significance in the words used. Yet the distinction can be overstated. I have previously remarked on the impossibility of distinguishing fact and interpretation in respect of secular historical events. One might conceive of emotion being aroused in those who learn of the circumstances attendant on the executions of Lady Jane Grey or Mary Queen of Scots. The fact of their deaths alone does not convey the historical reasons for such. On discovering these reasons, an enquirer may be influenced emotionally by what he or she discovers of the circumstances leading up to the executions. Wittgenstein's language-game model will again be seen to provide helpful aid to making sense of such historical material. Circumstances, including the events cited about the Tudor executions, touch upon raw nerves. Historian and layman can become implicated in the moral dilemma faced by opposing factions of these times. A rapport is established with them which illustrates Wittgenstein's point about our language
being an 'acting' performance. Insofar as theistic propositions about God's involvement in the life and death of Jesus carry serious implications for us all, we are not immune to the considerable influence which such written or spoken propositions may have upon us. They express the sort of philosophical ideas for the benefit of man which, by comparison, communists would claim for Marxist propositions about economic determinism and the historical process.

It may be that, since our enquiry has been so firmly rooted in linguistic philosophy, we shall have to pursue it solely in linguistic terms. I do not mean the obvious here in that anything at all which is communicated by humans can have (but does not need to have) exposition through language. I mean rather that any attempt to reach a cognitive assertion, least of all one which could be shown to possess referential status, of the experience of revelation by any human being or community, might be said to be doomed to failure. Instead we should, perhaps, adopt another of Wittgenstein's words. We should speak of avowals by Christians concerning God's revealing grace to them. Now Wittgenstein used the term 'avowal' to speak of psychological first person assertions which he claimed were non-cognitive. That is to say they did not speak of a state of affairs to which publicly determined methods of verification or falsification could be applied. They rather voiced the mood, feelings and personal experiences of the speaker: they were an avowal of what to him, an agent, was the case as far as his own experience went. Wittgenstein had by the time he spoke of avowals rid himself of any vestiges of solipsism, a suspicion of which harks around his truth conditional analysis of atomic proposition in the 'Tractatus'. His moving away from the picture theory of meaning to the position where criteria and rules were deemed to be the necessary conditions for enabling people to ascertain
the meaning of a proposition, squarely placed the issue of psychological first person statements within the framework of public usage. Thus one is able to discern the meaning of a word by observing its use within a specific context, a language-game, and its normal usage would, inevitably, reflect the appropriate criteria which determined which rules were to be followed in its application. An avowal, on the other hand, lacks cognitive status, although Hacker disputes this conclusion drawn by Wittgenstein on the grounds that, for example, an avowal of my being in pain at this moment could be spoken of descriptively (and thus with cognitive significance) if my 'avowal' of the moment were related to previous pain of yesterday about which I spoke. Hacker launches an onslaught on Wittgenstein's doctrine of avowals. It would be inappropriate here to discuss further the threads of his argument. I am here concerned to investigate the possibility of applying the concept of an 'avowal' (i.e. a first person psychological utterance, I am in pain, I think that p, I believe, wonder, am surprised, etc) to proclamations by believers of their 'knowing' or in some way 'experiencing' the presence of God. I have discussed 'psi' sentences previously, and clearly there is an affiliation between the concept of an avowal and that of a psi-sentence. I concluded, then, that first person claims to knowing (psi-sentences) were inadequate for my purposes.

What then would constitute an avowal in the theistic language-game? If, as Wittgenstein suggests, an avowal has the logical status of a sigh, exclamation or other expression of feeling, one must suppose that Christians, engaged in worship or private devotions, might be making avowals when they respond, in other than propositional form, to certain credal proclamations. Even the saying of "Amen" at the end of a prayer or in relation to a cognitively spoken assenveration of Christian belief, might be deemed to be an avowal,
in that it expresses one's psychological state.

I think that Wittgenstein's doctrine of the autonomy of grammar is another important contribution to what I have to say. If it can be shown that there are performative utterances which have the character of avowals 'I baptise this infant'; 'I take this woman'; the words of the grace: "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" etc, it may also be appropriate to relate these sort of remarks to the broader issue of the autonomy of grammar.

Wittgenstein intended by this doctrine to show how the picture theory of meaning of the 'Tractatus' and the Augustinian model of language which lay behind it, were fundamentally misconceived. They had worked from the erroneous premise that words, to be meaningful, must relate to some 'thing' in the external world. Wittgenstein's concern with 'simples' and 'atomic' propositions, where he found some affiliation with Russell, reflected this preoccupation. Once he came to see that it is the 'depth' grammar, reflective of these criteria which pinpoint the logical space in which moves in a language-game may legitimately be made (by adherence to appropriate rules for that game, learned from childhood or at such time as initiation into a new area of discourse commenced), he was able to establish the privacy of language in his search for the understanding of propositions. Presumably, therefore, to ascertain the meaning of an avowal one must examine the grammar of a particular 'game'. It might make sense to say that acclamations made within Christian Theistic dialogue and worship express non-cognitive, yet significant avowals of belief: of how things stand as it were for believers as they experience the presence of God.

With this in mind, I shall proceed to discuss the role of performative language in religious devotion, especially as described by Price and Aldrich. I shall recall that, the danger of confusing
what some would term 'subjective' assertion with objective fact, can be circumvented when Wittgenstein's view is observed that religious belief may be understood as the holding of a picture before one. Any experience whatever of course is subjective; interpretation is influenced by the particular picture used. Bearing this qualification in mind, I believe that the role of performative utterances (whether deemed to be avowals or something else) is a constructive role in the Christian epistemology.

Those philosophers who seek meaning in linguistic usage inform us of the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of "performance" language - we may 'do things' with words, expressing through them our intentions and ideas. We may persuade others to join us in entering into new experiences as the commissive and affective force of our words is appropriated by them. Group psychology will be inevitably at work in the communication of religious traditions and in the powerful emotions released. Whether an 'advanced' religious experience (Christian, Jewish etc) occurs in the company of others, as in an act of worship, or alone in the privacy of one's room, the recounting of it to others could be done in a manner which would permit the adjective "performative" to describe the method of communication. In a sense, the experience itself would also qualify for this description. The accompanying thoughts, unspoken ideas and emotions may be seen as the reflection of previously acquired beliefs. The idiomatic "language" in which they are couched, whether spoken or not are, as it were, a performance, an activity born of those beliefs. I am not discounting here the phenomenon of a unique happening which previous events might not seem to have inspired; for such a vision or startling event are not infrequently claimed by those who speak of religious experience (Mohammed in the cave at al Madina, St Paul on the Damascus Road, Wesley in Alderangate Street.
I am arguing for the primacy of activity and an awareness of such activity in the discourse which embraces religious experience. Whatever the encounter may be, and however the content of the sensory intake is interpreted, the verbal description of a religious experience has a performative note. A Christian may speak of his soul reaching out to God, or of God's Spirit taking hold of him, of gripping him and possessing him. To be sure, feelings aroused may have a passive emphasis: he may speak of 'waiting' upon God, being still in His Presence, resting in the 'Everlasting Arms' etc. It can be seen that even these concepts, however, include the idea of reaching out, of encounter between believer and God. I have tried to show, with special reference to religious experience, that an experience is both a happening to one and a response and initiation by the self. However much my brain, nervous system and sensory equipment may be the medium of my having an experience, my ideas and the impressions gained by reflection (Popper's 'third world' of ideas) make their contribution. *Clark* says "I find myself passing from the attitude of one reaching out for God and praying to him as if he were there to the conviction that I am engaged in loving discourse with a personal Presence actually there." Price stresses the performatory nature of sincere observance, including privately said prayers. He comments that you do not just imagine you are saying, for example the first lines of the *Te Deum*, you actually say them. "*Te Deum laudamus*" can still be a performatory sentence, in which one is not stating that one praises, but actually praising. Similarly if I say 'forgive us our trespasses', I am making a request or a petition, not stating that I make it. Price made this observation in response to Aldrich's challenge as to whether a man really means what he says in religious utterances, and in
response to the question as to what is being addressed in prayer or worshipped. Central to my analysis of theistic belief has been the dual facts of encounter and response. To speak of each of these entails the use of performative language. What better to show this than the Biblical injunction "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you"?

It must be said that the kind of relationship which the Christian believes he has is with God; it is not like just any other experience; not simply another example of a personal encounter on the human level. For if God is the One with whom the believer has this relationship, it necessarily must be other than a simple human relationship. Yet the notion of personality and the related principle of personal relationships have to be understood to speak intelligibly of such a belief. Aldrich draws a helpful distinction between the concept of a possessor of something and the thing which is possessed be it an object beyond the self or an attribute of the self. He contrasts the following (a) your body is wonderful (b) your mind is wonderful (c) your personality is wonderful (d) your person is wonderful, with (e) you are a wonderful person. In the latter example "nouns are dispensed with and by-passed in favour of a personal pronoun as the key word". It is when the vocative case is used that the one being addressed is viewed apart from any possession belonging to him or her. Yet the attribution of personality is extended even, according to Aldrich, where one may be addressing an inanimate object, like a mountain: "You are wonderful." The I-Thou relationship, stressed by Buber in his attempt to point us to the significance which attaches to communion between selves, as distinct from our standing with non-personal "things", endorses this use of the vocative appellation towards another.

Price and Aldrich help us to appreciate the strength of the
performative in religious worship and devotion; further, they encourage us to consider seriously the use of the vocative in our language about the divine. We are able to see that it is not in the possession of qualities or characteristics that the beneficiary of our adoration is to be praised or addressed. That there are a whole range of appropriate attributes said to "belong to" God is not here being denied. Here we are analysing the concept of addressing the deity in a believing, sincere manner, such that our belief uses all the elements of addressing some-one which attach to the normal use of the vocative case. If, as Christians believe, the addressee is conceived to be unlike any other recipient of adoring, respectful and trusting praise, the principle remains the same.

What can we establish from the foregoing discussion? If a believer in one who speaks of experiences with God for which he uses, on occasions, the vocative case as he would do in addressing another human (or animal or thing) with whom or with which he has established a rapport, these experiences are clearly contingent in nature. He expresses them in the world. They occur in the course of a multitude of worldly activities and partake of the benefits and limitations which characterise them all. To that extent, any putative relationship with God which the believer lays claim to, must be seen within the context of empirical facts. Now it is central to Christian belief that Jesus lived in the world and affected saving benefits for mankind through his life here. Further, it is believed that the Holy Spirit continues to be active in making Christ real for each generation of believers.

Yet it must be conceded that the one laying claim to experiences with God is pre-eminently participating in a form of life and using language-case. Wittgenstein's analogy of the taking hold of a towel as being like the taking hold of something without having doubts, of making an affirmative utterance about a state of affairs
where a claim to knowing would be superfluous, makes this point beautifully. For does not the Christian in the exultant mood of praise, thanksgiving or rejoicing utter joyfully his conviction that he has met God? Wittgenstein immediately warns us that, the analogy of 'taking hold' of a towel, as a picture of 'taking hold' of a proposition, corresponds to sureness not to knowing. And he goes on to caution us against being too hasty in asserting that there are things that we know. In fact, such a claim can do little more than indicate one's feeling of sureness. It is when we use a sentence outside its context that it appears in a false light. Then it is that we try to justify ourselves by making claims to knowing.

Does this mean that the believer has legitimate grounds for his assertions, provided that he keeps within the bounds of his language-game and avoids unsatisfactory knowledge claims? He would then be in a position not dissimilar to some-one playing a language game in respect of physical objects. In making remarks or giving orders about trees or books, for example, it would be, on most occasions, inappropriate to introduce the concept of 'knowing' (I know that is a tree or I know that is a book). As Wittgenstein remarks:

"Children do not learn that books exist - they learn to fetch books etc" and asks "why must one know that the objects concerned exist? Is it not enough that experience does not later show the opposite?" In similar fashion Wittgenstein comments that one need not believe Locke when he says he knows that there's a tree in front of him. It is sufficient that we have learned the appropriate language game, enabling us to 'take hold' of suitable linguistic usages; it is in the performance that we show our understanding of the 'form of life' which lies behind the particular language game. What can the application of his question cited above from 'On Certainty' 9477 to the learning process of theirs? Why must one
know that the objects concerned exist? Isn't it enough that experience doesn't later show the opposite? Although there are Christians who would say that their conversion to Christ has been vindicated by subsequent experience, and they have no reason to deny the validity of their relationship with God, it remains true that what they say is of a fundamentally different order to one's talking, as Wittgenstein does in the context quoted above, about towels, books, trees and names. In his 'Lectures on Religious Belief' Wittgenstein contends any attempt to adduce empirical evidence by theists, insisting that the language game to be played by theists is emphatically not one in which empirical evidence is forwarded. The theist has a different "picture" which guides and influences him, from that of the agnostic, who is guided by a world view where 'God' is incomprehensible.

CONCLUSION: THE CHRISTIAN'S RIGHT TO MAKE A KNOWLEDGE CLAIM

How is a believer in a position to make a knowledge claim concerning a relationship with God? By demonstrating that he has learned correctly what the meaning of specific propositions is. These propositions are those appertaining to the concept of the Christ event. By responding in faith to him whom the Apostles proclaimed as the revealer of God to men, he identifies himself with the Christian form of life. This has been the consistent contention of my epistemological enquiry. I want now to recall Wittgenstein's censure of Moore when the latter claimed to know for sure that the object he held aloft was his hand. Wittgenstein pointed out that this was an abuse of the verb to know because, in the public circumstances where Moore spoke, it would not make sense to doubt that the object referred to was a hand. Wittgenstein developed, in relation to his idea of language games, the view that knowledge claims require a context to justify them, and that that context is
logically dependent upon fundamental propositions, which do not require criteria or justification. Rules determine the correct usage which the autonomous grammar of the appropriate area of discourse or language game imposes upon the subject matter of that particular area. It is by learning that any knowledge claims which are apposite to the issues at stake there can be made.

With this in mind, I believe that it makes sense to say that the Christian, insofar as he faithfully adheres to, and is informed by, the depth grammar of the kerygmatic language game, can make a knowledge claim that encounter with God is experienced. I have shown that, usually, this will involve a communal profession of meeting God in and through the practice of the religion. The point I am seeking to make is that his critic's demand for overt 'evidence' of a putative godly manifestation - a modern-day theophany or christophany - will not, usually, be in order. For his critic can be shown to be confusing the justification with the validation of a claim. What he takes to be a validating requirement, in his view something empirical and demonstrable, turns out to be a justifying factor: the Christian does have a particular experience or set of experiences. These will merit the epithet 'religious' in that they will occur during worship, Bible-study, meditation, activity on behalf of others etc and will probably be similar to those experienced by the community which share his beliefs. Were he not to have any such experience he could not justify a knowledge claim that he meets or has met God. But the critic must look elsewhere for the validation of the claim. That is to be done by looking and seeing how the words, phrases and sentences which comprise the depth grammar of the Christian language game are used. Only then can a validation of a claim to know God be given its necessary logical support. It is,
then, not perhaps fanciful to apply Wittgenstein's criticism of
Moore to the criticism leveled by those who would seek validation
for a claim to know or experience God in some external (and
presumably startling) event. Moore was rebuked for his abuse of
the verb 'to know': the context on the occasion when Moore spoke of
knowing (that what was before him was a hand) was inappropriate for
such usage. It has been my endeavor to try to say that the context
provided by acceptance of certain fundamental propositions (concerning
'God' and concerning the Christ-event) is an appropriate one for
speaking of encounter with the God of Christian Theism. The
believer justifies his knowledge claim by certain experiences which
the Christian form of life facilitate and help to interpret. He
validates his claim by showing that he has learned (i.e. gained the
requisite knowledge) to apply rules correctly, where the depth
grammar of the Theistic language game is concerned. Against Miles,
Phillips, Braithwaite, Cupitt and others, I maintain that a believer
is entitled to speak of an apprehension of divine self disclosure,
where the initiative has not been his but God's, and where the
response which he makes through belief in God-in-Christ indicates
how he has begun to apprehend.

He can speak of cognitive awareness of God because of his
conative response to the kerygma. It is a proclamation which
impinges upon him from without yet (as Kant insisted) he has the
rational faculty to turn the a priori into the a posteriori. In
judging and appraising, he discovers that he has been 'revealed to',
as it were. This is because he has learned what are the ideas in
this matter of selecting and understanding relevant facts about
Christ and about the faith. So the constative and comissive
elements of his 'belief in' Christ reflect the dual characteristics
of what I have termed 'ideologically aroused concepts'. To be able
to speak rationally and coherently of these concepts is to show publicly what is entailed by the proposition that through the Christ-event there is a knowledge of, i.e. an encounter with, God.

Can Theists assert 'P' such that 'P' is entailed by their assertion?

What remains to be analysed is the question as to whether Theists can assert P such that P is entailed by their assertion. That is to say, we must look at the postulate that, in the realm of ideas which I have isolated as that area where a knowledge claim is made, there is the possibility of an assertion of what is the case. Before I proceed I want to suggest that Christian theological beliefs may be separated into four major topics, as follows (a) creationist ideas (b) soteriological ideas (c) ethical ideas, and (d) eschatological ideas, (i.e. as distinct from the philosophical ideas I referred to a little while ago). These, together, I would say, comprise the ideas which I take to be instantiated within Christian Theism, now, in the past and must continue to be so in the future. They comprise those ideas which humans have expressed through the pages of the Bible and the writings of the Church. It is to be noticed that their pragmatic impact is fundamental for all that Christians hold to be precious in their Faith. Thus ideas of creation inspire modern conservationist and ecological thinking as well as concern about nuclear energy. Soteriological ideas provide the basis for modern insights into the nature of forgiveness which have psychological as well as moral and spiritual implications. The Ethical ideas rooted in Decalogue, Prophetic utterance, Sermon on the Mount and other New Testament Teachings guide modern behaviour in the Christian community. Finally, hope is inspired by eschatological ideas. Fannenbergs concept of the Power of the Future, which impinges upon every present human situation, provides a modern interpretation of this belief.

The Christian will contend that if these ideas are not about
what is true then his very belief in God must be seen to be ill-founded. In seeking to discover whether it makes sense to speak of an assertion of \( P \) which entails \( P \) in respect of theistic ideas (those ideas which constitute Revelation and define this concept) two things must be faced. First, we may wonder whether it is permissible to accord to the specific ideas associated with the Judaeo-Christian tradition the status of divine revelation. Circularity and question-begging would seem to be perilously close to the surface. For is not the concept of revelation part of the package which theists deliver in their belief-system? I shall argue that, although there is substance in this view, it need not be so damaging as might be thought. Secondly, if it is argued that the meaning of Revelation is to be discovered through an understanding of the ideas above referred to, it may be legitimately asked whether other sets of ideas also qualify for some sort of revelatory basis. I would here mention the ideas of two major current philosophies, Evolutionism and Marxism, in this connection. As a matter of fact, no such claim is made by each of these; their beliefs emphatically exclude and reject any notion of divine agency. To the degree to which Theism makes a special claim, to that extent we must say that it is intrinsic to theistic ideas about the world and life upon it, that man has been granted knowledge of God. By the same token, Evolutionism (which must not be confused with the theory of biological evolution) and Marxism, specifically disclaim all such knowledge.

To assert \( P \) where \( P \) is conceived to be those instantiated ideas which Theism holds to be true, we assert specific, singular propositions. \( P \) is conceived to be about creation, salvation, goodness and future hope for whom ground the theistic belief in God is related to experiential facts of the sort previously discussed, all of which have a pragmatic implementation. Although, collectively,
they would appear to be general propositions about the predicates of loving, creating, inspiring and sustaining, they are in their theistic setting centred upon an object, God, without whose initiative and agency human beings could not experience creativity, love etc. I am swimming hard against a tide of reductionist reasoning. I am not contending for love in a broad, ill-defined sense as being a substitute for God (as John Robinson in "Honest to God" or D. Phillips etc appear to do). I am contending for the appropriation by believers of well defined ideas which, worked out in living experience and which, without the Christian revelation, must remain unknown and hence incapable of implementation in human society. That is what I mean by instantiation. Concepts about interaction among believers and the world are tested out in the hard school of life.

My attempt to offer theistic ideas as the instantiation at the heart of human experience of God's revelation to man, presupposed faith in God i.e., that a step of belief had already been taken. One's knowledge of God would then be that knowing which encounter with the objective ideas occasioned. Given one's belief in God through faith in Christ, it would not make sense to say that one doubted the essential ideas by which the structure of belief is undergirded. Thus in the matter of the assertion of P there is no hidden conditional for the conditional element has been taken care of in the choice to believe or, at least, in the act of deciding that one will act 'as if' Theism in true. The claim to know that P is a later step in the procedure of adopting a Theistic position in regard to the world. To leave out the idea of God as creator, saviour, inspirer of moral actions and ultimate hope for the future, would be to contradict oneself in respect of those very ideas which are seen objectively by the believer.
In asserting \( P \) the theist has in mind a set of singular propositions which collectively comprise the instantiation of those ideas, whose concretion in the actual experiences of the Christian community provide an empirical implementation in the world. He is able to assert that \( P \) entails \( P \) because \( P \) itself in the sine qua non of Theism. \( P \) in \( P \) is analytically true; not both \( P \) and non-\( P \) establishes the fact of \( P \) as far as his own experience teaches him; either \( P \) or non-\( P \) establishes the specific nature of those ideas whose realization comprise the substance of his belief. The criteria for the truth of \( P \) have centred upon the logical possibility of making sense of revelation, being conceived to be those ideas which theism has instantiated. From a Biblical standpoint it is God who instantiates theism through His Word. If I seem not to have advanced beyond the position held by Wittgenstein, whereby the meaning of a proposition is determined by its use, I believe I may have indicated wherein lies the significance of theistic beliefs. I have tried to maintain my view that the concept of revelation necessitates, as a foundation for belief, some sort of knowledge claim. It has been made clear, I think, that Christians are justified in making such a claim. That evidence there is has been shown to lie in the area of ideas. If it appears that I have failed to lend credence to Popper's 'third world of ideas' as bearing upon the concept of the concretion of theistic ideas, it seems to me that much falls with this defect. If, on the other hand, I have given a degree of intelligibility to this concept, I believe I may have gone some way towards applying to the idea of God's revelation to man the appellation of "knowledge" on the basis of Popper's methodology. Undoubtedly it is a species of "weak" knowing (Malcolm) and the staunch believer would not allow his claim to know to be invalidated. He would not, however, be entitled to assert that he could see no way in which it
could be invalidated. His degree of certainty would, though, enable him to make a knowledge claim and he would be justified in so doing. I can only suppose that counter ideas of a kind supported by human experiences would count against his claim, should they be available to agnostics to use.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

a WITTGENSTEIN, L.: His use of the term 'avowal' discussed by Hacker

b WITTGENSTEIN, L.: Tractatus opus cited p 117 above

c opus cited above

d CLARK, Norris: Some Criteria Offered in Faith and the Philosophers

e PRICE, H. H.: Response to Aldrich in ibid, p 55

f ALDRICH, Virgil: in paper entitled Tinkling Symbols ibid pages 50–51

g WITTGENSTEIN, L.: On Certainty 510, 476, 477, 520
CHAPTER: EIGHTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF SAYING THAT X EXISTS

My awareness of a state of affairs of which I am a participant indicates my ability to conceptualise what I take to be the case. Put like this, I am avoiding the two components theory of knowledge, wherein a 'given' element is taken to be reflected upon by me, or registered in certain mental states. I am also avoiding the notion of a pure sense datum which is isolated from prior perceptions etc. It suggests, rather, an open situation in which my role as first person perceiver permits me to explain to myself or to other people what is sensibly or ideologically aroused consciously to me. A description of an experience of my past life will invoke memory which similarly draws upon concepts for its articulation. Either present or past reports may add auditory, tactile, olfactory or gustatory aspects to visually perceptive ones. From Wittgenstein, we may take his counsel concerning correct usage, indicative of having learned meaning through appropriate application of words, phrases and sentences, within the boundaries of a specific area of discourse. Exactness is not called for so much as the clarity which ability to indicate samples and map definitive characteristics shows.

Baker has coined the phrase 'sensibly aroused concept' to describe a sense datum which I experience at a given time. He means by this that in visually, auditorially, tactiley, olfactory or gustatorily, having certain sensory impressions of whatever impinges upon my consciousness, I interpret the same by reference to conceptualisation, learned from childhood. Concepts pre-date percepts or, at least, my present perceptions are understood in the light of prior cognitive awarenesses. I have learned to identify objects, smells, colours,
tastes etc, and my ability to grasp what I believe to be the case, in respect of a current experience indicates that a learned concept is being sensibly aroused. I share with my fellows, apparently, this knowledge as to identification of sights, sounds and smells from a shared environment, wherein our capacity to locate meanings of words correctly displays mutual recognition of communal signs. There is a cultural element in determining how I perceive the world.

If we adopt Woollsey's criticism of those philosophers (like Malcolm) who request confidence in the claimant to knowing, as a condition for such knowing, we might be persuaded to avoid speaking of 'being sure' when a claim is made. On the other hand, Prichard and Cook-Wilson each spoke of the need to profess certainty where such seemed to be justified, even though (as fallible humans) we may sometimes make such a profession of certainty in respect of a knowledge claim and subsequently discover that we were mistaken. Ayer recognises that we have to earn the right to be sure in those circumstances propitious to a knowledge claim; these he held to be of an empirical nature, for which some kind of support in favour of the claim could be adduced. From these observations it might be said that a source of confusion lies in the tendency to argue from the premise that in staking a claim to know that \( p \), and so being merely under the impression that \( p \), or be merely thinking that \( p \), necessarily entails the proposition that in no case can I really be confident in asserting that I really know that \( p \).

When, therefore, I address myself to the question "What can I know whether stated in the guise of being sure or otherwise?" I cannot use the strength of my conviction that I know such-and-such but may, reasonably, say that in respect of a sincerely made knowledge claim, this is what I know. And here I am not seeking grounds for my belief in the 'objective' nature of my piece of knowledge. What I am
saying looks to the Wittgensteinian view that my understanding of the knowledge claim I am making (and hence the credibility of that claim) will depend upon my ability to use correctly those concepts which bear upon it. I have indicated already my intention to follow an open, questioning view of knowledge which looks to coherence of the concepts enlisted in making knowledge claims, rather than to 'privileged' facts which are supposed to provide some kind of indubitable certainty for those claims. In adopting this approach, I must say that I have been influenced by such philosophers as C. M. Williams, E. H. Wolgast and Malcolm Clark. As I have shown, the epistemological attitude taken up by these writers finds an echo in the philosophy of science of Karl Popper, whose attempt to find 'objective' significance for human ideas (the 'third world of ideas') may be used to marry an experiential view of revelation to those teachings of the Apostles which are rooted in, and blossom from the Kerygma. And in so far as Ayer counters the sceptic's demand for a near perfectionist standard for a putative knowledge claim, by pointing out that such a demand must be impracticable, and therefore of little epistemological value, I am attempting to keep in mind his request that the would be knower must 'earn the right' to be sure. Indeed, I hope that my dissertation is itself an exercise in seeking to earn that right for Christian Theistic beliefs about revelation. Yet with due regard being accorded to the afore-mentioned, it is to Wittgenstein that I owe my central postulate, that the kind of ground or givenness to which my experiential view of revelation looks, is not an empirical but a logical one. For if my searching for intelligibility for the idea that God has made himself known to his human creatures, and is thus able to be known (to some degree) by them, is to be pursued satisfactorily, it will be that fundamental proposition concerning the constitutive concept of god (as definitive of religious belief) which enables that to be done. Hence,
I trust that I shall not be accused of self-contradiction in my apparent repudiation of empirical grounds for belief concerning encounter between God and man, while firmly adhering to the ground provided by that fundamental proposition.

I must now turn to the question as to what it means to say that 'X' exists. I shall consider three answers to this question and notice that each, necessarily, implies some kind of experience by means of which S comes to believe that 'X' can be said to exist. Firstly, we may ask whether the concept of existence is necessarily bound up with the concept of causality. Does our grasp of the meaning of 'X' being said to exist depend upon our understanding of those laws which determine contingency? Certainly, we find ourselves using the principles of causality in much of what we record of our empirical experiences. Thus we believe that our perceptions are caused by a confluence of visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and gustatory sensations with appropriate light, and sound waves, odour molecules or impulses and vibrations such that the sights we believe that we see or the sounds we believe that we hear etc are caused by prior combinations of physical forces. Suppose alternatively, with Hume, that we speak of 'bundles of perceptions' to denote sequences we experience, each separate and only loosely related one to the other. In this case, we may not argue inductively that contingent relations obtain, linking together all that happens in our lives. What is can only be disparate in respect of continuity and permanence. If the world is all that is the case, its being so, as far as each person is concerned, is disjointed and ephemeral. Suppose, yet further, that the notion of something being said to exist is a verbal location, serving as a predicate or extension of what we need to say to make sense of our experiences (or what happens to us). For something to be said to exist, it would then be necessary for certain conditions to be fulfilled. The verb
'to exist' would be logically contingent upon our having particular experiences and being able to verify them in some manner. Thus verbal definitions require empirical reference. Idealists like *Locke have spoken of secondary qualities of colour or scent being given to a flower by our senses, while others like *Berkeley have spoken of all phenomena as being dependent upon our awareness of them: "esse est percipi". Then in *Descartes for the concept of necessary being. This finds expression, not in the contingency of causal relations, but in the immutable and permanent essence of that which cannot be other.

The concept of existence is, in these different arguments, bound up with an understanding of experience. In giving accounts of our experiences and being aware of having had them, or currently having them, we are able to proclaim our belief that there exists around us a world of objects and events. Thus what we say of our experiences, reflect concepts which suggest a unified area of public knowledge. That we may sometimes be mistaken in this respect, need not deter us from making some positive inferences as to existent selves and phenomena.

Philosophers use words like redundant or degenerate of the verb 'to exist' when in some instances of its being used as a predicate it adds nothing to the meaning or sense of a proposition. Thus to assert that this room exists or does not exist (Pears) or to state *Descartes' 'Cogito, ergo Sum' (Ayer) are examples of redundancy. Since it would be a referential tautology to say "This room exists" and a referential contradiction to say 'this room does not exist' it has been argued that existence is not a predicate. The addition of the predicate does not appear to tell us anything beyond what is already stated by the demonstrative, at least in the affirmative statement. Ayer points out that, although there are occasions when to say 'I exist'
or 'I am conscious' make sense, they do not differ from the information conveyed by a gesture or an ejaculation, for to be in any state whatever is to ensure one's existence, even if not one's consciousness.

To adopt Russell's distinction between the substantive and existential import of X (by naming or denoting) suggests the possibility of our being able to assess a class of existent entities. However, Pears remarks that the anomalies, which his minimal formulation for stating that existence is not a predicate indicate, can be avoided if Russell's way of treating existence is adopted. The notion of reference itself may be abandoned. For it is by naming that we reach reality. "Names, if they are names and not frauds, just go out like arrows and encounter reality," Russell asserts. It is by the variable and existential quantifier that descriptive phrases 'encounter reality', whilst themselves not being names. Hence Russell's use of the existential quantifier 'something' or a surrogate for it. By reducing the elements in a descriptive phrase or phrases to particulars which were thus existentially quantified, he was able to point to possible areas of acquaintance whereby we might identify clearly what is the case. "Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted" he states. Russell's application of these principles to his proposition "The father of Russell was a viscount" (something was the father of Russell, not more than one thing was, and that something was a viscount) might be used to illustrate the use of the existential qualifier.

Russell's association of acquaintance with ontological claims indicates a referential theory of meaning. James Thompson shows how we can avoid using the word 'exists' at all, so that although we do utter sentences in which 'exists' occurs as a predicate, we have no need to do so. 'For example, instead of saying that the round square
does not exist, we can say instead that no square is round, or that, whatever figure you care to take, that figure will not be both square and round. So too the "logical relations of the assertion that unicorns do not exist are probably better grasped through the sentence 'No animal is a unicorn' than they are through the sentence 'Unicorns do not exist'.' We are not entitled to conclude from this that 'exists' is not a predicate. We may, however, agree with Russell that it is a second order predicate. It is not to be viewed as one among a list of the features of a described entity as 'red', 'square', 'heavy' are. Russell argued that the job of 'exists' is to record the fact that these other terms really apply to something; it demonstrates that they are instantiated. (It is precisely this lack of instantiation which some would use to deny the intelligibility of propositions about God. However, it can be countered by Theists that, given their understanding of God, as Bodiless Agent or 'Spirit', they would seek a different logical placing for this concept than that provided by the concept of an existent object, instantiated in the world.)

If our attempt to discover whether the question "what exists?" or "what is there?" is an intelligible question, we are obliged also to examine the meaning of the concept of reality. To say that X exists is to state that X is 'real'. What do we mean by this assertion? P.K. Nielson informs us that "what is real and what is unreal is a very context-dependent notion ... We have no antecedent understanding of reality such that we could determine whether language agreed with reality." So coherence is given to the concept of reality through those determinants in ordinary language which do not strain customary usage. On the ground that notions of God, as talked of by Theists, do in fact strain such usage, Nielson rejects any application of the epithet "real" to the word "God". Nielson's view gains support from
Wittgenstein who tells us to look and see how words are used in order to discern their meaning. What is "real" can, according to this requirement, only be discovered by careful examination of each situation; by paying attention to the particular language-game in which a claim to reality is being made. Although there may appear to be circularity in this argument: what is "real" is that which common usage indicates, and ordinary language determines whether something is eligible for the epithet "real", it is nevertheless tautologically true that our notion of the concept of reality must at some point consort with common usage. However, it surely is not so much in its manner of being located in various areas of discourse, but in its function as a predicate, generally, that we may ask questions about its bearing upon our understanding.

Children divide their world into those events and experiences which are "real" and those which are "pretend". Sometimes the lines between actuality and fantasy may be blurred. Adults, too, share the problem of finding the distinction, on occasions, to be difficult to make. Normally, of course, they would not think that there was a problem. Underlying this bland assumption there would appear to be a degree of taking things for granted, thinking "as if" such and such is the case or accepting a situation without question. Baker's idea of sensibly aroused concepts and some kind of correspondence theory of truth might seem to be apposite here. In view of what has been said about the tendency we have to rely upon beliefs which may or may not be well founded, and bearing in mind the predilection we often betray for making knowledge claims where assertions of belief might be more appropriate, it would seem that our determination of what is "real" may be open to some criticism. Yet it would seem to be true that, where the "real" is less than verified through lack of attention to the case in point, we have or might have the possibility of correcting
our error. All this assumes that it is within our ability to give a
verdict as to what reality is, if only we take sufficient trouble to
ascertain carefully what the facts of the case are. A correspondence
theory of truth seems to be in mind here. We are reminded again of
Russell's observation "Every proposition which we can understand must
be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted."

But does acquaintance with the constituents which make up a
proposition, consist of verifiable pieces of information which a
person's sense organs enable him to have? I want to argue that
acquaintance with some-one or some-thing requires essentially and
previously an understanding of concepts which have been learned in a
particular cultural environment. To say that one is acquainted with
constituents which collectively comprise a putative piece of sensory
experience is to speak of sensibly aroused concepts. Such concepts
embrace such things as perceiving, feeling, wondering etc as well as
those relating to such things as hardness, brightness, shades of
colour, differences of shape etc. The processes of perceiving and
explaining necessitate a comprehensive set of concepts to enable one
to show that one understands any proposition which speaks of a
specific state of affairs. Russell seems to hold to a view of know-
ledge by acquaintance which Wittgenstein showed to be mistaken. For
to be acquainted entirely with those constituents which make up a
proposition appears to require the adoption of the 'unum nomen, unum
nominatum' formula whereby it is assumed that for each and every
component named correctly, I am in a position to corroborate accurately
those objects which are perceived in my field of vision, range of
hearing etc. Wittgenstein, as we have seen, moved away from this
view to one which sought to find meaning and understanding by
reference not to an assumed correspondence between a name and an
object so named (or by descriptive phrases relative to specific names), but by appraising oneself of the context in which it was customary to apply that name. In so doing he was following Frego who disapproved of the Jumnum nomen view and argued for a contextual view. Not that Russell was unaware of the significance of this view, yet preferred in his earlier philosophy his own method of seeking to reduce knowledge by description to knowledge by acquaintance. My point is to ask whether the believed acquaintance with what Wittgenstein in his Tractatus termed 'simples' can indeed do what Russell claimed for it. Or, do we in fact acquaint ourselves with components of perception, apart from the learned understanding (and I do not wish here to imply a conditioned deterministic theory of learning) which we have acquired, and which thus places concepts before percepts? I do not think that a protracted discussion as to the merit or demerit of the view that ostensive familiarisation in childhood through being taught to name trees, books, tables, animals etc is called for. For as Wittgenstein remarks a child learns what books are by fetching them from the shelves. It is in an appropriate situation or series of situations that he comes to understand what is intended by the use of the word "book". Its existence as a separate entity, fulfilling a particular function in human affairs, is grasped through the learning and application of concepts whereby ability to read and so to use one's eyes, and concepts concerning degrees of texture, colour, print etc are paramount.

My recall of what I have already discussed of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, has been done to reinforce my contention that it is in an open, enquiring approach to knowledge that I wish to proceed: not open in the sense of anticipating constant novelty, but in the sense of being open to fresh understanding. Words like 'acquaintance' should be understood in relation to other concepts with which they
possess some kind of affinity: e.g. proximity to, related to, contingent upon, etc. To be acquainted with X, therefore, is to be in a position whereby S can correctly state that he can correctly identify X. He is in possession of a vocabulary and has a grasp of appropriate words and phrases which enable him to show that it makes sense, in that situation, to assert that he is acquainted with X. In doing so he does not speak erroneously, I think, of sensations, feelings, thoughts etc and objects beyond the self. Rather he speaks of concepts which are sensibly and ideologically aroused (i.e. through sense experience — "sense data" as some would say — and through ideas formed by long association with the sort of situation in question) and which include his subjective awarenesses as well as what he takes to be the case beyond him.

In so far as one may speak of 'given' elements — perhaps considered to be those patches of colour, shapes etc which one perceives — one is not appealing to a category of privileged facts or unassailable pieces of information: thus not to 'pure' sense data. Rather one is able to take something to be the case to the degree that one's understanding is shown by appeal to the coherence of what is said, relative to the matter. It will reflect one's learning in that one is able to demonstrate understanding of the correct usage of words by being able to explain if necessary their conceptual significance. Thus in speaking of my visit to the park and in my description of beds of flowers, well kept lawns and majestic trees which I observed, I have and use concepts not only of flowers, openness, fresh air etc but, on reflection, concepts of sights, smells, touching etc. The overall picture can be depicted because I have learned to make sense of what was going on, of which I was a spectator and a participant. In speaking of the experience, I indicated that I had learned an appropriate language
whereby I could speak of samples of trees, flowers and lawns together with appropriate sights, sounds, smells etc. This is not to say that my perceptions were 'unreal'. On the contrary, I could envisage a reality which conceives of knower and known being interdependent. My nervous system, cortex and eyes, ears and nose were able to ascertain that certain concepts were being stimulated, recalled and used, while other inappropriate concepts (e.g. my working as a schoolmaster in a classroom) were not.

To analyse 'exists' would seem, therefore, to require some attention being paid to the particular area of discourse in which the verb is being employed. If we accept the definition 'second order predicate' it would be in one's ability to show the meaning of the first order predicates that its particular significance would be illuminated. Thus to say of the park with its flowers etc that it exists, or that I, as an observer of the flowers, exist, is to explain contextually and contingently a state of affairs which, logically, entails existence. Would it make sense, Wittgenstein would ask, to doubt that this is so, in such circumstances?

As a first person agent, able to voice my understanding of a world of physical objects, and thus able to give a subjective interpretation of sights, sounds, smells etc currently experienced by me, I proclaim 'existence' and 'reality'. These are concepts which, in this instance, derive from prior events in my life, and my present articulation encapsulates a continuum of personal consciousness, which combines elements of immediate sensory perception with accumulated learning, stemming from numerous varied, yet not altogether dissimilar conscious experiences. And this concept of a 'real' world beyond personal sensory experiences extends to so called abstract notions, like the approval I give in respect of the Beethoven Symphony to which I am listening, where concepts of harmony, tone, variation and depth
of meaning take on significance. Or I might speak with disapproval of man's inhumanity to man when I hear on the radio of brutal killings of innocent people. Moral values are appealed to. In my judging a situation of this nature to be immoral, I include within my definition of what is 'real' not only physical data, not only memories of past experiences, abstractions relative to music but also to principles of ethics. And all these categories of my experience may be subsumed under the general term 'existence'. By this I mean that in as much as they are demonstrably not figments of a fevered imagination, or occasioned by drug abuse or other hallucinatory mechanisms, I take them to denote aspects (first order characteristics) of which the predicate 'exists' has determinate, if secondary, meaning. I have already argued that first person agency claims to knowing are complementary to, and not to be considered in conflict with, third person spectator accounts of what is taken to be the case. Hence, as I have emphasized, public language and those areas of discourse in which men collectively engage, reflect those concepts which I have taken to be definitive of the knowledge to which groups of individuals or populations lay claim. It is not so much in an assumed 'given' element, therefore, or appeal to privileged fact or unassailable truth that talk of something or someone existing or being real finds logical foundation. I have attempted to say that what we mean by 'exists' and 'reality' do require experiences of subjects to provide their necessary empirical anchorage. And while my own experiences are for me as a separate being avenues whereby I am led to understand and to explain notions of existence and notions of reality, my involvement with other people, who share a common language and culture, ensures that I do not wander too far from the pathway of publicly acclaimed intelligibility. For we share concepts and together respond to aroused concepts, whether through direct sense perception or through the stimulation of aesthetic, moral
or religious ideas. Here I agree with Quine as well as with Ayer, both empiricists, in the belief that I can trust societal inspirations in locating the objectivity of verbal constructions; and appreciate that, in so far as verification for my perception of the world might take the form of a direct realist approach or, what may be said to be akin to it, a 'scientific' one, its verifiability rests within a sphere of shared communication. Concepts are mutually endorsed and socially established; their acceptability is in proportion to their utility in enabling the community to find at least some intelligibility for their beliefs concerning states of affairs, in which individuals and groups recognise coherence rather than confusion. It is in the joint holding together of the 'existent' and the 'real'; in the conflation of participation and observation - of subjective enquiry and overt happenings - that experiences of humans gain significance and acquire meaning. All of this does not, I think, detract in any way from what I have said of fundamental propositions, which inform or determine the sort of concepts which will be possible.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN (A)

a BAKER, M. J. Perceiving, Explaining and Acting New York, Vantage Press, 1979

b Discussed previously in chapter on Belief and Knowledge, Chapter Ten above, page 118ff

c WILLIAMS, M. Groundless Belief Oxford, Blackwell, 1977  
WOLGAST E. H.: Paradoxes of Knowledge and CLARK M. Perplexity and Knowledge cited previously (p 139 above)

d POPPER, K. opus cited above p. 212


g BERKELEY, G. Treatise Concerning the Principles of Knowledge


k AYER, A. J. Problem of Knowledge opus cited (p 139 above)


m RUSSELL, B. Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description p 49


o JAGER, R. opus cited above, p 257

p Cited by HUDSON A Philosophical Approach to Religion p 99

q BAKER, M. J.: opus cited above

r QUINE W. V. and AYER, A. J.: works referred to in earlier chapters (pages 35 and 139 respectively)
Identifying God: What Does It Mean to Say That God Exists?

Who or what is god, and in what sense is god defined in the language game itself? "Does god exist?" can be said to be a viable question here; but is this question begged in the 'game'? Also, one must recognize a further question in respect of those predicates which are attributed to god, as he is conceived to be within Christian Theism. The question of the objectivisation of the subject thus arises. To say that the answers to these questions are to be discerned within the language game which has as its core the language of the kerygma needs examination. Will it do to make this claim? It is one thing to seek to find meaning for the concept of man's encounter with God through playing a language game, and in the process to be able perhaps to say what sort of god he is. This would be to demonstrate correct usage of certain concepts. It is another thing to attempt to say that knowledge of god in the sense of objective support for the existence of god is thus irradiated and indeed established. Yet it is surely here that talk of God being known can be given intelligibility. Let me explain how I think this may be done.

It will be recalled that comparisons were drawn between religious discourse and moral and scientific discourse. It was seen that each area of discourse is determined as to what can or cannot be said within them by certain fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of the respective games. In playing any one of these games, one is committed, ipso facto, to an acceptance of those propositions and to all that they entail as regards explanatory and experiential implications. Thus to be able to debate the ethics of, say, capital punishment one is by necessity, not choice, obliged to accept the principle of moral obligation. It is not something apart from the...
language game: it determines what it is possible to say within it. A more apposite comparison, perhaps, for my purpose, is that concerning the concept of a physical object which lies at the bottom of the scientific area of discourse. For it would not make sense to attempt to speak of chemical reactions or d.n.a molecules, atoms, protons etc if one did not presuppose the existence of physical objects. However, the important comparable factor is that which appertains to the problem of my belief in physical objects on the strength of, principally, sense data perceptions which enable me to support such belief. We have discussed the view that my perceiving, for example, the bushes which are now before me is dependent upon my having a concept of something I have learned to call a bush and of which therefore my perception at this moment may be said to be a sensibly aroused concept. Yet, however much I take my sense datum of the bush which is now before me to provide a true state of affairs, I cannot logically reduce what I say about physical objects to sense data. There is always the possibility that my perception, although conceptually aroused and so indicating a cultural, environmental and communal causative nexus, is inadequately or mistakenly conveying a 'real' situation. This difficulty does not, however, lead me to doubt the general reliability of my senses in providing me with some kind of assurance as to what I conceive to be the case, in any particular situation, assuming normalcy of vision, hearing etc and absence of deleterious circumstances (like my being 'high' on a drug, suffering from mental aberrations etc). The logical gap between my talk of sense data or sensibly aroused concepts (or whichever phrase one substitutes here) and my talk of existent objects, does not logically preclude intelligible talk of events and happenings relative to my own experience.

I have tried to show that this is indeed so, not by appealing to
a 'given' element in isolation from a perceiving mind. I am not here suggesting, necessarily, a Berkeleyan idea of 'esse est percipi', where for something to be conceived to exist, a perceiver of it is deemed to be required. My point is linked with that openness towards fresh understanding which I believe epistemological enquiry requires. It seems to be consistent with this view to speak of my present perception of the bushes as being occasioned by concepts of bushes and numerous cues relative to sight which have been accumulated during my life, and thus are conceptually stimulated. By careful attention I may, then, acquire a glimpse of hues, colours, characteristics previously not noticed in the bushes. The 'given' factor will be the concept of a physical object, taken to be a fundamental proposition in the sense previously discussed. 'Exists' as a second order predicate, as it has been termed previously, will serve to indicate that my perception of bushes refers to instantiated patches of green, degrees of lightness and darkness, measures of height and breadth etc, as well as specific details such as leaf shapes, colour variations etc. Integral to the concepts firstly, of a physical object and, secondly, of a perceiving agent is the concept of extension and distinctiveness appertaining to what a physical object is taken to be. Thus the logical foundation for my talk of bushes which I see before me is the constitutive concept of a physical object, and the logical relations relative to the act of perceiving refer to eyes which function normally. The empirical requisite which permits me to use, if appropriate, the verb "exist" is my being in a position to see the bushes on one occasion in suitable circumstances. My description of the colour, shape and size of the bushes would suffice to satisfy an enquirer as to my act of witnessing such and it would be superfluous, in most possible circumstances, to add that the bushes 'exist'. Yet in so far as existence was mooted or impugned in respect of these particular bushes, it would be apposite to
describe their location and characteristics to make it clear that that is indeed the case.

When we are examining the question 'who or what is god?' or the question 'Is the question of god's existence begged in the Theistic language game?' comparisons with the use of 'exists' so far discussed are relevant. It will be recalled that I have taken the proclamation of the kerygma and the form of life emanating from it (or inspired by it, perhaps) as the 'given' element in Christian belief. This was said to be, in effect, a fundamental proposition in so far as belief in God, with its constative and commissive aspects, was held to be illuminated and informed by the proclamation concerning Christ. It has been argued that the word 'god' has been given content by the kerygma which, as Pannenberg suggests, proclaims the Christ-event, the central happening in human history: that is history as interpreted in the light of the Judaeo-Christian concept of divine initiative and soteriological activity in the world. Logically, there can be no language game or form of life from a Christian point of view (as traditionally understood) if one impugns the kerygma, understood to be at least a part of the ontology of belief. It might perhaps be considered one among two or three fundamental propositions upon which all that is said within the language game rests. As such it is not hypothetical and does not require logical analysis in order to ascertain how the verb 'exists' is to be used. In so far as 'exists' as a second order predicate is summoned to enable intelligibility to be given to empirical representations of God's putative encounters with men, its location is among those first order predicates whereby generations of believers have endeavoured to describe the sort of God whom they believe they have met and in whom, as a pre-requisite for such encounter, they have come to believe. Thus they would speak of His love, compassion, forgiveness, warnings, corrections etc as
experienced in their relationship with Him through prayer, Bible study, worship, service of others etc. I would want to say that by analogy, and clearly not by existential parity, these predicates may be said to refer to God in a similar way to the predicates of greenness, toughness, glossiness etc referring to the leaves on the bushes.

If it be accepted that the kerygma helps to constitute what is meant by Christian belief in God, with its twin characteristics of constative propositions (historical propositions and assertions about what is taken to be the case, and theological propositions about creation, redemption, salvation etc) and commissive response to such, any claim about encounter with, or experience of, God is logically dependent upon such. My doubts concerning what it is which I believe I am encountering within that form of life, and how I can objectivise the subject of my assertions in such a way that a genuine knowledge claim can be made may be compared with doubts about physical objects and sense data. There is a logical gap in respect of saying that I perceive S and being able to be sure that my sensations enable me to know that p in respect of S. To say this indicates an understanding of concepts e.g. of a bush and what is meant by seeing, feeling, etc. There is a logical gap likewise in whatever assertions I might, as a believer, make about encountering what I take to be God when I worship, pray, read the Scriptures etc, and my ideologically aroused concepts about God.

I think that the comparison is satisfactory. I must now try to demonstrate why I think this to be so. My attempt will be to utilise what I have said about Wittgenstein’s discussion of the autonomy of grammar which a language game evinces. Such autonomy does not imply detachment from other games; Wittgenstein makes this point plain. It does, however, suggest that learning how words are used and the rules which enable the learner to use them correctly, by mastering the
technique of producing samples and showing how what one says relates to one thing rather than to another (by suitable comparisons and contrasts), is a pointer to one's being able to explain the meaning of what one says. It is obvious that talk of physical objects or talk of moral responsibility not only presupposes concepts which yield talk about sense data and talk about moral values respectively, but shows the mastering of the appropriate language by which such talk can be intelligible for all those who, through acceptance of the basic presuppositions of that talk, are able to indulge in it. Each area of discourse has its own autonomous grammar, the intelligibility and coherence of which is logically bound up with those concepts which can be aroused by suitable criteria - sense data and ideas of right and wrong respectively.

The Theistic language game, I have argued, when given its definition by reference to the kerygma, similarly has an autonomous grammar - a depth grammar - enshrining fundamental propositions which is learnt by Christians. In so far as the concept of god is constitutive of belief, it does not make sense to challenge or to deny the part played by God in the events and teachings around which the kerygma is constructed. The 'gap' therefore, such as it is, between what believers say about encounter with the deity through their response in faith to what Christ is believed to have done and said, and the corroboration of specific empirical events or the veracity of specific teachings (if such corroboration can be in any way considered to be feasible) need not be a damaging factor in respect of the case I am seeking to establish. It is not inimical to the coherence of scientific talk or to moral talk that gaps exist between, in the former case, my talk of sensory perception and the existence of physical objects which I believe to reside in the assumed phenomena to
to which they point; or, in the latter case, between my talk of moral values and the assumed principles of morality which are taken for granted or found to be written into the concept. Taking something for granted, to be sure, can be dangerous. This is precisely what the attempt to apply Wittgenstein's doctrine of the autonomous grammar of different language games has sought to avoid.

There is an important distinction to make here which is particularly perspicuous in respect of talk of physical objects in relation to talk within the kerygmatic language game. It is one which has been carefully drawn out already. I refer to the distinction which needs to be made between 'belief that' and 'belief in'. For whereas my assertion that I am now seeing bushes before me involves me in the claim that I believe 'that' there are bushes to be seen (as a matter of fact), my assertion that I am encountering god through kerygmatic activity indicates that I believe 'in' god. And while the former claim may be taken to be a knowledge claim, although I would be unwise to say that 'I know' that there are bushes before my visual field (given that others might equally well perceive the same bushes), it would appear that any such knowledge claim in respect of the putative facts in which I am said to believe when I speak of belief in Christ etc is not at all lucid. Yet it is precisely through the medium of the autonomy of grammar (which must embrace the concepts of uniqueness and distinction) that talk of knowledge by encounter, or acquaintance, can (I believe) be shown to be viable.

Who or what, then, is god? is a legitimate question in the context of speaking of the kerygma, conceived to be a language-game reflective of a community of believers whose form of life enshrines the working out in practical ways, and in meditation, of the implications of that belief. At the heart of our enquiry there exists the
question of identity. And since God has been defined or understood to be bodiless agent, of spiritual rather than corporeal nature, knowledge of him through human physical sensory perception has been ruled out. Of necessity we cannot, logically, speak of physical encounter and the category mistake implicit within demands for perceptive 'evidences' for his being must be borne in mind constantly. Yet such caution bedevils the issue, apparently, in respect of meaningful talk of human encounter with the divine. It is salutary I think, as a consequence of the appropriateness of heeding this caution about category mixing, to analyse carefully the concepts of knower and known respectively, and to seek to understand how these concepts may be related to talk of revelation. In assaying this task I would like briefly to allude to Don Cupitt's recent work.

Cupitt reduces the idea of God, as traditionally conceived in Christian Theism, to spiritual energy within us. Christian faith, for modern man, thus becomes response to principles of dynamic spiritual influence about which Christ spoke. It is essentially a liberating and creative energy which sets us free to practise 'disinterested' love. I think that Cupitt comes near to D. Phillips' definition of God here, whereby the releasing of new powers of feeling and deeper realizations of our capacity to love others and rise above our banal, self-centred preoccupations, are taken to be what the word 'God' means for today's believer. What I think is particularly interesting for my purpose is Cupitt's view that the church has, in the past, tended to be identified with power structures. A hierarchy of authoritative figures has been shown in the claims made by bishops, priests etc. And still today the church seeks power over the lives of its adherents. Believers, instead of being led in to the 'liberty of the spirit' through encouragement from Jesus' teachings about a non-legalistic formula, based on the development of spiritual potential
for disinterested love, continue to be under authority. In this structure of power, God himself is seen to be the apex. To win a convert to Christianity, therefore, involves the acceptance by the convert of a power structure to which he submits. Fears of hell and judgment reinforce this emphasis upon the power exerted by some men over the lives of others. Psychologically, preachers and evangelists, clergy and popes establish a hold over their flock and hearers in so far as the submission to a powerful elite is effected.

Cupitt is anxious to replace all this by a genuine spirituality in which the freedom of the soul is made possible through the achievement of individual apperception of a truth which lifts one beyond the mundane and the ordinary. Disinterestness becomes a possibility as personal spiritual growth—through prayer, meditation, altruistic concern for others etc—is practised as Jesus recommended. The concept of a god who is above us or beyond us is unnecessary and made redundant by dint of one’s recognition of that new dimension of living which a deeper awareness of the self can bring. For God is now found to be within in the sense of that spiritual power to which the believer is admitted, or made aware of, as he responds to the teachings of Jesus. The Law and Power structures no longer form the basis of religious belief and activity. Freedom of the individual and enrichment of human experience go hand in hand with ethical demands which willingness to learn from what is said of agapeic love and its communal implications inspires. Cupitt, I believe, is happy to accept the appellation 'Christian Buddhist' and clearly his views have affinity with Buddhist ideas about meditation, ethical demand and a deeper level of being within the self. I do not wish to discuss Cupitt's views except in so far as they bear upon my view of revelation. I think that I have sought to establish that in the kerygma we find religious language which appears to elucidate, through the medium of the
Apostles' faith, the concept of a god who is understood to be apart from men, and graciously seeking communion with man through the life and teachings of Christ. Cupitt subjectivises and internalises 'god' and thus offers a different interpretation from mine, and thus of traditional Christian Theism. He does, however, support my contention that the dunamis of that spiritual awareness spoken of in the kerygma is essentially a liberating, agapeistic power, experienced by, and through, believers in response to proclamation. I think that I would agree with him in his claim that the Church has (at least in some instances) reinforced the concept of human power (exhibited in governments and structures), with the idea of god being used (again, in some respects) to further the power of some men over the lives of others. What, of course, runs counter to my thesis in Cupitt's argument is his contention that Jesus did not intend to speak of God as being the altogether other, or whatever phrase one might adopt. I have, by contrast, attempted to see in the kerygma, understood as that proclamation originated by Christ, and interpreted and conveyed further by his followers, a path-way to intelligible talk of God, deemed to be Bodiless Agent, Divine Spirit etc. Cupitt, I feel, rightly deplores that dogmatism within Christianity, traditionally understood, which stifles openness towards new vistas of understanding.

Since my whole venture has endorsed the idea of openness in respect of epistemological enquiry, I hope that I may be exonerated from Cupitt's criticism of dogmatism in Christian Theistic apologetics. I have been concerned with meaning, in respect of the concept of revelation and in respect of those philosophical principles which guide one in seeking to explicate the meaning of that concept. Such principles include those relating to the concepts of knower and known, first person observer and experiencer and third person report of
interpretation of putative knowledge. Cupitt's brave attempt to meet the secularisation and the scientific materialistic assumptions of our day, draws attention to the importance of cultural determinants, psychological elements and prescribed doctrines in helping to shape what people have believed, and continue to believe, about the relationship between themselves and 'god'.

One thing which emerges from my brief mention of Cupitt's recent thinking, is thus the importance of noticing the part evaluation plays in our making of knowledge claims. To this extent I must concede that there is a hint of circularity in what I have said of the encounter-response juxtaposition within the kerygmatic language game. For according to my experiential view of revelation, a believer learns to experience of 'know' god by learning to play a game in which the necessity of responding to linguistic formulations which are held to contain the roots of meaning in regard to the concept of encounter with the divine, is integral to the rules of the game.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN (B)


CUPITT, Don: The World to Come London, SCM, 1982
CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFYING GOD - RUSSELL'S REDUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE BY DESCRIPTION TO KNOWLEDGE BY ACQUAINTANCE

Russell demonstrated in detail that to describe something is to be less accurate than to name the constituent parts of the thing described. In 'On Denoting' he indicated how a particular variable X might be ascertained by the reduction of a universal or universals so that its identity could be indubitably established. His formula for this purpose was: 'There is something which alone is so-and-so, and that something is such and such'. In the example he provided: 'The father of Russell was a viscount' there are two universals, father and viscount. Russell analysed this proposition to show how the variable X (here the two variable universals) might be reduced to the required particular to identify him. Thus he wrote: 'Something was father of Russell, not more than one thing was, and that something was a viscount'. His use of an existential quantifier further enabled him to show that a deputy proper name was intimated here. Thus he forwarded another formula: 'X is F, or Y is F, or Z is F, ... or n is F (and X, Y, Z ... n are all the particulars there are)' taking 'F' for 'a father of Russell'. We shall not here attempt an enquiry into the success of these formulae in respect of descriptive perspicuity, nor become involved with the problem as to whether Russell really clarified the juxtaposition of universals and particulars. (Do we regard the word 'something' as a particular whose meaning is a universal, or do we acknowledge that, as understood, he has given us no particular?)

Suffice it to say here that Russell became convinced that all knowledge starts from particulars: "Understanding the particular is prior to understanding the universal" he proclaimed. So to be able to denote a specific particular enables us to name a putative constituent of
fact. Russell observed that it is a mistake to assume that denotation can take place outside of a sentence which gives such denotation its proper contextual setting. Here he anticipated Wittgenstein's idea of use being the determinant of meaning in linguistic understanding. That is why a descriptive proposition per se (in so far as it is considered in isolation) according to Russell, will be inadequate to establish the truth of what it describes.

Can we denote and understand the particular in respect of the object of Christian theism? Certainly the Christian claim is of a unique person: a particular. Something was the Christian Messiah, not more than one thing was, and that something was a first century Jew. Here the first descriptive phrase comprises proper names, as found within the Jewish religious tradition. If with many modern scholars we take the view that Jesus himself did not use the title 'the Christ' or 'the Messiah' it would remain true that the tradition points to the fact that the early church used this of him. He was so named. It was he and not some other Jew who merited the title 'the Christ'. The second phrase 'a first-century Jew' is a universal which would qualify for the other part of Russell's formula 'X is F' etc. This would enable us to establish the claim that it was one and only such a man who was identified as the Messiah. To reflect Russell's first proposition we might construct one having the universals 'religious leader' and 'first century Jew' 'Something was a religious leader etc.' By substituting the name the Messiah or its equivalent we introduce a particular which purports to say who the first century Jew is. It singles him out from all the others. Since history has confirmed that Christianity owes its being to the belief of the apostles that Jesus was the Messiah, doubting this tradition does not seem to be wise. There is, of course, the question of scholarly enquiry into the roots of the tradition. What we must ask is whether a philosophical attempt
to construct descriptive propositions, which seem to contain denoting elements, may qualify as knowledge by revelation. Or are we left with the sort of presumed non-existent classification provided by the "King of France" example? A fine distinction might be drawn between a doctrinal and historical proposition about a first century Jew who was conceived to be Messiah, and a present day proposition concerning the validity of belief in him. 'The present King of France is bald' is an example Russell gives us. Could we intelligibly substitute "The present Christian Messiah saves men"? In asserting descriptions about a king who neither exists nor subsists (and whose baldness is therefore a non-sequitur), might be thought by the sceptic to be akin to trying to reconstitute an historical figure (a first century Nazarene) in order to attribute present attributes to him. We seem to salvage a doctrine and little else from this analysis. Obviously, we have strayed into the territory of using the verb 'to know' - or attempting to use it in respect of the concept of revelation and descriptive propositions - where we may more correctly use the verb 'to believe'. And yet we did observe that to say one knows X of a present sensory experience is but to express a belief about X. All of this suggests that my reference to Russell's 'King of France' paradigm for meaningful non-existent, non-substantial propositions seems now to be inappropriate. It is not the case that the theist who sets out to describe events pertinent to God's purposive saving activity in the world, is attempting to speak of past happenings which are no longer fraught with psychological significance for mankind today. 'The present King of France is bald' was analysed by Russell to show that it is possible to create meaningful propositions which lack present existential or substantial content. Christians speak of the presence of Christ - in the Communion service, during prayer or more generally - to indicate that their belief about his presence is in continuity
with the historical events and the ages beyond them. They have to concede that in expressing such beliefs, relative to descriptive historical propositions which purport to have present existential content, they are conveying by their beliefs something other than that which they express in everyday epistemological propositions about their sensory experiences.

Whatever complications surround mundane pronouncements like 'That is a tree' (or I see a tree over there) and 'I have a visual image of a red patch before me', clearly the difficulties relative to my uttering theistic historical propositions are of a different order. Questions of authority occur. Philosophical questions about the logical status of doubt in respect of putative historical propositions must be examined. An attempt to understand how the verb 'to believe' is being used when theistic propositions are existentially affirmed must be made. Thus I must ask what is the historical authority upon which the basic facts are founded? Secondly, I must see whether it is reasonable to doubt these facts, recognizing that I have learned them like other historical facts, gleaned from books or teachers. Thirdly, I may understand their significance by acknowledging that their context is that of the theistic language-game where 'belief in God' is a condition for its being played. Fourthly, I must recognize that in the speech-acts which comprise the language of theistic belief, illocutionary and perlocutionary propositions are to be discerned. Fifthly, not only must I analyze the descriptive propositions which form the essential material of the language-game, I must also look to see what it is which is being denoted within those propositions. And so, sixthly, I must ask what sense does it make to speak of these items as being objects of knowledge within the structure of epistemological understanding.
It is in respect of the final question that I shall be judged most plainly to have begged the question. My plea has been to cite Wittgenstein in his remark that knowing entails my being in a position to know X. By various circumlocutions, I have continued to follow Wittgenstein in regard to how one comes to know theistic propositions and more significantly the One about whom such propositions purport to speak and in regard to their placing within a specific language-game where doubt, though not excluded by any means, is understood to be the logical counter-foil to belief. I have further analysed the latter psychological word in its relationship to another namely, the verb to know. It has not been easy perhaps to find one overall interpretation of what it means to believe that p, for existential, historical and theistic elements have become inter-woven. It would be precarious in the extreme to claim knowledge-by-description has been shown to define the sort of knowledge which theists profess to be intended when they speak of God making himself known by revelation. Having used Russell's 'Theory of Description' and mentioned his argument 'On Denoting', it is appropriate to look further into his pronouncement that knowledge-by-description may be, in the last analysis, reducible to knowledge-by-acquaintance. I have examined the view that knowledge by acquaintance might be adopted as the view most appropriate for theistic talk of knowing God. Although I reached the conclusion that the kind of knowing implicit in the Christian language game is knowledge by description, especially as that which is pertinent to the ideas expounded by the kerygma, it would not do to dismiss altogether the concept of acquaintance.

What would it mean to say that a believer may know God by acquaintance? Clearly ostensive definition of the object of knowledge is ruled out. Theism has established a descriptive picture of what God is like: his is said to be omnipotent, holy, righteous,
loving etc. Does it make sense to speak of someone knowing one who, having the attributes mentioned, yet remains beyond physical sensory perception? To say that I know that John is kind and thoughtful cannot be abstracted from some sort of picture of John which also comprises his having long legs and brown hair etc. The logical complement of characteristics which make up his personality is a set of physical characteristics by which he is recognised as a separate individual. My acquaintance with John embodies a knowledge of what his appearance is as well as the attributes of his character. It would not be thought to be rational to speak of moral characteristics abstracted from physical components. Of course, my saying of Nicholas Nickleby that he evinced stalwart concern for the ill-treated and a magnanimity towards the unfortunate, is not beside the point or deemed to be senseless, when we realise that he is a fictional creation of Dickens. In describing him thus I am acknowledging a prior acceptance of his being the hero of a novel. Sceptics would not worry if a similar pre-condition was attached to propositions recited by theists concerning God. His being said to be knowable by acquaintance is held to mean that knowledge of a real, not fictional, being is intended by the assertion. Yet it is clear that no such acquaintance can be established such that confirmation of the one possessing n attributes may be pointed to or otherwise shown to exist as John may be given living identification. In recognising that to speak of acquaintance with God is to play a particular language-game, we show that the word acquaintance is being used as a vital complement of the verb 'to believe'. My saying that I believe in God, in the sense of Christian understanding of relationship with him, entails a belief that I am acquainted with him. It is by revelation that he is said to be known. He has taken the initiative in enabling an
acquaintance with him to be made. And the corollary of knowledge of him is understanding of his nature. Now it would not do to speak of a believer knowing by acquaintance unless an experience of God could be established. What would this experience include? What would it contain to indicate that it was an acquaintance with the divinity and not an illusion or invention by the one making the claim to the experience? The issue of what can be said of the 'self' and experiences thereof awaits further investigation. The experience which theists speak of as a feature of revelation suggests the experience of encounter. Any sensible use of the word 'acquaintance' must imply an encounter with the one with whom one is said to have that acquaintance.

The critic may say with good reason that if acquaintance with a man, namely Jesus, is ultimately being spoken about, the Christian has no grounds for speaking of acquaintance with "god". Also it should be acknowledged that, in the case of Russell's example of the present King of France being bald, the concepts resident in the proposition are intelligible, even though there may be no existential referent. The concepts of king, baldness and the present day are each perfectly acceptable in everyday parlance. What of the concept of god, however? Attempts to offer substitutes for "god" in the form of agencies deemed to be channels of god's revelation to man - the Bible, prayer, human agency through the sermons of ministers etc - would not qualify for the sort of knowledge by acquaintance which Russell believed to be the medium of assurance. So the problem of showing that what counts as an acceptable form of encounter with God turns out to be a hopeless reduction of talk about humans - Jesus, or priests or human writings and words.

Yet those writings I have held to be crucial for the making of knowledge claims by the Christian. Worship, Bible study and
instruction enable the ideas at the heart of Christian belief to be given in propositional form. Wittgenstein, however, points out that my saying that I believe X is not to be confused with my claim to know X where it would be inappropriate to go beyond an expression of belief. He acknowledges that claims to certainty are fraught with difficulty in the empirical sphere, while doubting common-sense perceptual experiences may be unsound. A rational man is able to differentiate 'only believing' that p from making a claim to knowing that p.

Within the appropriate language game expressions of belief, where doubt is a logical corollary of such, make good sense.

It follows that to try to say of the Christian revelation that it provides a basis for knowledge by acquaintance is to speak analytic truth, as long as the boundaries of the language-game are acknowledged. For to be a believer who plays that game it would be singularly inept to say that aids to worship and growth in knowledge of the faith, precluded acquaintance of the One who is held to have revealed himself to believers - that is, has made himself known through word, sacrament and prayerful communion. Obviously this gets us no further in giving intelligibility to the notion that the universal concept 'God' can be reduced to a particular 'God' known through some kind of reference to Jesus of Nazareth. It might not seem to take us beyond Brentano's intentional inexistent object: i.e. that which is willed by human thought but which lacks existential or even substantial content. Unicorns, centaurs and Russell's 'present King of France' provide examples (although in the latter case, historical identification of the object was a reality, not an illusion). Following Russell, it would be possible to discover some sense in Christian talk of God, although there would not be knowledge by acquaintance. Lack of existential reference would ensure that this is so and reduction to talk of Jesus would be inadmissible. A deity who is
believed to be beyond sensory perception, however, could hardly qualify for the kind of empirical identification which always figured so prominently in Russell's attempts to ground knowledge in discernible entities.
a RUSSELL, Bertrand: On Denoting in Mind 1905 and Logic and Knowledge 1956, and analysed by R. Jager The Development of B. Russell's Philosophy opus cited (p 154 above) p 278 ff

b RUSSELL, Bertrand: On the Nature of Acquaintance in Logic and Knowledge 1956 and analysed by Jager opus cited p 278


d RUSSELL, Bertrand: Discussion in Jager opus cited (p 154 above) p 275

e BRENTANO, Franz: The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomena first published 1874; printed in Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind ed. H. Morick, New York, 1970 p 119 where Brentano refers to the Medieval concept of "the intentional (and also mental) inexistence of an object."
This raises the question as to whether biblical—and other—events may be said to be sufficient conditions for speaking coherently of God, conceived to be divine agent, doing actions within the spatio-temporal environment in which we, as human beings, function. What would count as evidence in favour of the presumption that divine energy has been at work (or is at work) in particular, identifiable events in history (or today)? To attempt to answer this question, we must see whether it makes sense to postulate the proposition that God as Bodiless Agent could (logically) be said to act within a world, where actions appear to depend upon bodies being present to implement intentions to act.

Hudson thinks that such a state of affairs is logically possible. He illustrates his view by drawing a distinction between a man's situation, say being in debt, and his standing back, as it were, to review that situation. There is a logical distinction between the agency involved in Uncle Fred drawing a cheque to send to his needy nephew and the actual hand movements involved in writing the cheque and its being delivered by the postman. The cheque's arrival is consistent with the nephew's knowledge of his uncle Fred's generosity. Such is registered by specific acts. So Theists take certain occurrences in the world to reflect God's agency, since such are believed to reflect His character. Hudson attempts to show that the theistic belief that a non-bodily agent may be said to act in the affairs of men, and in the world, has logical consistency. In the Bible there are said to be events, observed by men, which were hailed as the work of God. In so far as such events are putative events in the world, they might be taken to qualify for the status of a necessary condition for divine
agency in the world. Could they qualify as a sufficient condition for such agency being known to men? I do not think so. To say that it is essential that there should be something in the world, known to and by men, as counting as evidence of divine initiative is one thing. To say that putative historical events, like the Exodus or Return from Exile, can count as sufficient evidence of such agency seems to beg the question decisively. However, Hudson is not discussing necessary and sufficient conditions for some kind of supra-historical happenings which might be thought to demonstrate godly intentions towards mankind. He attempts to show that it makes sense to say in respect of the theistic claim that a bodiless agent has acted (or acts) within the world. The crucial issue here concerns the question of self-contradiction. I must make clear a distinction here between a contradiction and a self-contradiction. The former may be illustrated by the idea of God being said to be man in the person of Christ: this forms one of the paradoxes of Christian belief. As such it plays a legitimate part in the theological talk of God. Here I am concerned with that apparent self-contradiction of attempting to speak of God, as transcendent being or Bodiless Agent, who is yet conceived to act spatio-temporally. Hudson points to the logical distinction which must be discerned between the concepts of agency and the overt actions attributed to such. In his 'uncle Fred' analogy, this distinction finds expression in the contrast between receiving uncle Fred's cheque and the action performed in the cheque being signed and drawn by him which may be seen as purposive agency at work. Hudson acknowledges that it would be possible to see uncle Fred signing the cheque in a way in which it would not be possible to see God initiating some action in the world. If the logical distinction between the effects of a specific initiation of action and the initiating action itself can be sustained, it would seem that logically some intelligibility may be given to the concept
of bodiless agency acting spatio-temporally. Can it be sustained? Here we are facing a theistic problem of fundamental import.

The first thing to be noticed is that there is not, fundamentally, an attempt to argue from events in the world, or from natural phenomena, to the existence of a creator. Here, we are intent more on showing how what we say about God's agency may be given support from within the 'form of life' which may be said to constitute the philosophy of Christian Theism. Given the theistic understanding of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, his activity in, and on behalf of, the world he has made is a corollary implied by that concept. The picture presented is of a god unbounded by space and time ('the Holy One who inhabits eternity') upholding and energising specific events in the world. This picture may fit the scientific picture of inter-action among and within atoms and molecules, planetary systems and inter-stellar space. Unbounded, in so far as it is held that divine spirit is not subject to limitations of human life or cosmic conditions. Rather it is the case that human beings and all that occurs in the world are dependent upon and kept in being by God's power. It would seem to be logically necessary to extend to certain events in the world the concept of the unlimited (or self-limiting) power of God. Having created the world and instantiated free responsible beings within it, his wish to intervene on their behalf would be justified. The ultimate intervention in the person of Christ may be seen within a framework of events initiated by divine agency. Here reasons are being provided to explain divine intervention - theological reasons. Can we also speak of causes of events in terms of that agency? Granted that there are reasons why God should initiate events in the world, is it intelligible to speak of his causing those events to happen? A causes an object B to roll down a hill by projecting it with his foot. The gradient of the hill in the reason
why, at that particular situation, B moves as it does. In addition to the physical factors involved in B's projection forward, there is the possibility of A having resolved to kick it, although he might have done so accidentally. If the former is the case, we say that A had an intention to kick B. He deliberately caused it to roll down the hill. Had there been no hill there, his intention would have been frustrated. It is conceivable that B might have been moved without either an intentional act of a human or by human agency at all. Some sort of earth upheaval, severe weather conditions or a chance hitting of B by a force generated by some other natural cause might account for the event taking place. Clearly it is not a necessary condition of object B rolling down a hill that intelligent agency should be associated with it. Were it the case that A intentionally kicked B to see it roll, a sufficient condition for its movement would be provided.

In attributing certain events in the world (e.g. the return of the Jews to Jerusalem after 538 B.C.), to the intentional activity of God, we recognise that a sufficient condition rather than a necessary condition is being stipulated for such an event. It can only be such when the theological interpretation put upon the event by Ezra, and by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, is accepted as an intrinsic part of the story of the event. Cyrus' decree to liberate the Jews from Babylonian captivity would be just as relevant a sufficient condition for that happening, were it not for the divine attribution accorded to it by the narrators. They go beyond naming Cyrus as a sufficient cause of their return home. They establish a reason for the event in the providence of Yahweh for his people. In our example of A propelling B down a slope, the reason for its occurrence was said to be the nature of the terrain, namely the gradient of that hill. Beyond such a reason lies the prior one concerning the
gravitational pull on the earth's surface. It would be sensible to speak of Cyrus' diplomatic reason for liberating the Jews as being compatible with, and inspired by, God's purpose in saving his people. We have seen that there may be intentional or unintentional causes for B rolling down the slope. There is some X such that the conjunction of X with the position of B causes action C to occur. It is of course not unreasonable in the light of predictive prophecies by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (as well as those of Deutero-Isaiah), and of the overall covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel, to postulate that the X factor was divine agency. If Cyrus' diplomacy and God's purposes coalesced, the idea of God influencing Cyrus' decision to release the Jews is perfectly in order. We return here to the acknowledgement that the event itself is to be construed as a spatio-temporal event engineered by bodiless agency, untrammeled by the limitations of space and time. The ultimate instigator of the event is unseen by men. Only the historical phenomenon exists to proclaim his action. In Biblical terms, Cyrus' defeat of the Babylonians was a divinely executed act which is presented as the necessary condition for the return home. Without such a victory, they were prisoners of a foreign power. Their chances of liberation were probably no better than those of the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt in Moses' day. The prior condition for speaking of God's purposes, expressed through covenant cult, law and prophet, is seen once more to be a logically necessary condition for theistic discourse. Logically the X factor in both the Exodus story and that of the Return from exile could be human agency. Within the 'form of life' which directed and informed the editors of the biblical tradition, it was inconceivable that such events could occur apart from divine agency. Wonder may be excited by the enormity of the odds ranged against Israel on either occasion. Talk of miraculous happenings may be in order. Alternative human
explanations as to causes are possible. The notion that men communing
in their spirits with God - the establishing of the covenant at the
Exodus: the tightening up of the ritual laws during the Exile - and
receiving spiritual help is recorded each time. In Hudson's distinc-
tion between the causal factors of the action performed and the effects
of it, we were shown that an interpretation inevitably was involved.
The recipient of the cheque understood that had happened. The
Israelites understood (or came to understand) because of their
spiritual experiences and perception (or at least that of their
respective leaders) what events such as the Exodus and the Return from
Exile entailed. They were participants in dramatic episodes which
showed to them, by the interpretation they placed upon them, the
instrumentality of the One who was without peers among the gods of his
day, and whom to represent by any form of image was anathema to them.
Thus it is within the boundaries set by linguistic rules, here the
confines of the Theistic language-game, that speaking of human spirit
and divine spirit meeting through specific physical events may be
found to make sense.

**WHAT KIND OF GOD IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE INTELLIGIBILITY TO
THE CONCEPT OF AN ACTIVE BODILESS AGENT?**

While it would not make sense to speak of a human action in the
absence of an existent perpetrator of the action, it is less than
satisfactory to attempt to establish in respect of divine activity the
validity of the concept of necessary being. That a performs action b
is a contingent matter, causally dependent upon prior conditions and
antecedent factors of which the decision of a to do b is a primary one.
It is performed in a world where empirical verification or falsification
enables appropriate propositions to be formulated and tested. Theistic
belief in a God who acts in the world presupposes, however, something
different. Suitable descriptions are Pannenberg’s concepts of ‘the origin of freedom’ and ‘the power of the future’ (or Tillich’s ‘ground of our being’) for they enable us to move away from talk of ‘existent’ or ‘necessary’ being to concepts which offer some logical basis for understanding the idea of God. He is not here conceived to be one among a number of objects, but rather something other than a spatio-temporal entity. That is to say, although theists speak of divine agency at work within the events understood by men to constitute cosmic creativity and human history, they hold that this agency is itself independent of the media through which it is expressed. Although criticism has been directed against the attempt to speak of a bodiless agent conceiving of and implementing physical events, the suggestion that such agency could be conveyed in certain spatio-temporal effects possesses logical coherence. For just as the message written on a letter is logically distinct from the paper upon which it is written or the ink used to write it, so the effects of divine creativity may be seen to be logically distinct from the agent who instigated their manifestation as in the example cited from Hudson. It is for this reason that Pannenberg’s concepts provide suitable models for the principle of God’s ultimate control. Man’s free-will is seen to be dependent upon a larger freedom (‘the origin of freedom’) from which it originates. And man’s use of his freedom to make decisions for his future is subject to that ‘power of the future’ which his limited freedom prevents him from utilising. The necessity of speaking of power relates to the idea of taking an initiative, rather than to authoritarianism. It is of course, within the field of human experience – be it that of the people of Israel, of Jesus of Nazareth, the Apostles or Christians through the centuries – that theists maintain their belief about God’s activity is focused. The sceptic may not be impressed by such putative claims to divine
agency in human affairs. Such agency is marked by love and justice, not by despotism: Cupitt may wish to recall that the 'power' is that of love not might. The theistic philosopher is concerned to demonstrate the logical soundness of the concept itself. Only by so doing may he be saved from a charge of unintelligibility. In seeking to show that it is not self-contradictory to postulate divine agency through certain spatio-temporal effects, some logical status for the concept may be accorded it. For the concept of revelation, and especially the experiential view which I am adopting, requires that the notion of encounter between God and man be given a coherent foundation in respect of what it makes sense to say of God as Bodiless Agent.

In speaking of God's motivation to act on behalf of man in self-revelation, we are referring to those dispositions of his character which Christian Theism holds to be fundamental: love, concern, passion for justice etc. Thus when we try to speak intelligibly about God, as understood within the definitive language which that theism holds to be constitutive of its beliefs, we are not postulating an abstraction behind the manifestations of those characteristics in overt acts. It is as though I am here suggesting a behaviourist model in respect of God's redeeming acts. We have already spoken of the verb "exists" as a second order predicate, and so here. To be sure, it would be inappropriate to speak of God learning how to love, forgive, care, judge etc as we might do in describing a man's character. But the analogy holds sufficiently to enable us to say that God's actions in the world stem from, and express, his nature just as we might say of a gracious human that his kindness and compassion are reflections of his loving disposition. Thus there are reasons for holding God to have made man, guided, redeemed and saved him. The principal one is God's character. By being what he is, he has been motivated to love his creatures, to redeem and draw them to himself. In the words of the
Bible God is spirit is love and is good. He is defined as such. Thus we are able to subsume under a general law what may intelligibly be said of God having motives in his dealings with mankind. This is to say something other than to speak of God causing X to happen. Heavy rainfall may cause a river to burst its banks; that is an explanation as to why it occurred on that occasion. It is to say something different, however, to refer to the river's tendency to flood when surplus water flows along its bed. Thus a general rule may be applied in this case to the effect that, whenever excess water is added to the normal flow of a river, it will tend to burst its banks. The heavy rain was the cause; the nature of the river, qua river, was the reason why it overflowed. So we speak of a man's tendency to lose his temper as a dispositional feature of his character. Psychological and conditioning, perhaps genetic, factors will play their part in helping to shape that character. An observer will predict, on the basis of his knowledge of that man's character that, given certain circumstances, he will lose his temper. Any one of a number of causes for this happening may obtain; the reason can be given as the disposition of his character. So, God's tendency, as understood within Christian Theism, is to love men and to seek to convey that love to men by revealing himself to them. In a sense, it might be said that man's sinfulness has been a cause of God's intervention on man's behalf, although the Bible tells us that God intended to reach out towards his creatures in saving power prior to those events associated with human wrong-doing.

dG. Ryle in his 'Concept of Mind' taught us to avoid the conceptual error of 'the ghost in the machine' principle. Thus he demonstrated how in speaking of the motives for a man's action we should not search for 'occult' explanations, abstractly believed to reside in the mind, but to recognize that such motives are dispositionally.
founded. He cites the instance of a hotel proprietor who, in his
desire for more money, cultivates politeness and consideration for his
guests. Ryle points out that motives may be complex and in a way in
conflict. The proprietor's greed, therefore, might not seem praise-
worthy yet his good manners, designed to facilitate the pursuance of a
baser motive of greed, would be accorded praise. I have tried to show
how in speaking of God's motives in taking action on behalf of man (by
revealing himself in a number of ways), we do not need to seek for
hidden, mysterious or even (because they are said to relate to God)
essentially unknown entities to explain his motives. That is not to
say, of course, that man's understanding is capable of grasping God's
mind in all its fulness. Rather is it to show how, in linguistic
terms, what we are saying of God having motives for revealing himself
to man is simply to rehearse those basic attributes which the Christian
religion has ascribed to him.

It will be said that I have really spoken of human motivation in
speaking of God. The problem of making sense of talk of the divine
through the medium of language reserved usually for human affairs,
bedevils philosophy of religion. I have spoken analogically. So,
likewise, the bogey of mind might be thought to be irrelevant in
referring to the concept of bodiless agent. I can only here draw upon
Wittgenstein. He stresses the shifting of the issue. Intelligibility
is to be sought, therefore, in the direction of looking to see how we
use language in a specific language-game. Here it is that of Theism
and Biblical exposition. For it is a defining feature of Revelation
that God himself has made known the characteristics which enable us to
discuss his motivation in so revealing himself. To be sure, theologi-
cal scholarship would have us recognise the human element seen in the
redactive editing of sources and in the prophetic voice, etc. Again,
however, we must reply that it is a constitutive fact of Theistic
belief that, in some way or another, these editors and proclaimers, through their faith and insight, were able to speak godly thoughts. Does this reduce attempts to speak of the divine voice to that of human talk? I have tried to analyse this problem. Hudson stresses the need to view our speaking about the concept of God in the light of the content given to that concept by Christ: this, he points out, is the distinctively Christian element. I have looked at Wittgenstein's acceptance of fundamental propositions as a basis for language games: also his contention that our beliefs ultimately rest upon others which lack presuppositions. I shall now examine Wittgenstein's philosophy in relation to the problem of identifying God.
CHAPTER TWENTY


b Ezra Chapter one: Cyrus' decree concerning Judah
   Haggai chapter one: The rebuilding of the Temple in time of Darius
   Zechariah chapter one, verse 16: the rebuilding of the Temple

c PANNENBERG, Wolfhart: opus cited chapter three (p 35 above)

   Chapter one: Descartes Myth
Sense, explanation and meaning

Wittgenstein's belief that the mystical could not be spoken about, only shown, might seem to preclude talk of God. However, his later philosophy provides us with an intelligible medium for theistic discourse: the appropriate language game. As we have seen, this centres upon the constitutive concept of religion, namely belief in god. Considered to be a fundamental proposition of theistic discourse, we may say that explanation and meaning are to be discerned within the boundaries of that language game. What it makes sense to say hinges upon the intelligibility of propositions which acquire coherence by reference to their use there. However, it is to be recalled that, in his Tractatus, Wittgenstein spoke both of bedeutung and sinn (reference and sense) as being required to give meaning to a proposition: such meaning was inherent in the truth-functional calculus conditions which obtain within logical space and are demonstrated by logical form. That is to say, the sense of a proposition is subject to verificationist testability in events of the world (a state of affairs), yet the method of indicating such is itself shown and not stated. Wittgenstein spoke of the propositions of logic being tautologies or contradictions: symbolically they are significant, although they say nothing. They lack sense, yet are the method of showing how events in the world may be spoken of in propositions which, as he believed at the time of the 'Tractatus', mirror reality.

Now while his position shifted dramatically in his later philosophy, we may wonder whether his talk of the mystical and of this being shown rather than being capable of manifestation in
objective terms may not analogically be connected with what he says of
the propositions of logic being without sense, yet symbolically
significant. If we are to take the view that the mystical in some
way embraces what we have held to be 'god', it may make sense to speak
of this concept as lacking sense yet having significance. For by
definition, we are not trying to say something about contingent facts
of the world. There is neither bedeutung nor sinn in regard to the
mystical. But our concern has been to discuss traditional Judaeo-
Christian beliefs in the light of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: as
a language game in which it can be shown that intelligibility resides
within the discourse itself, not in respect of points of reference
beyond it. 'The explanation of meaning is the meaning.' The sense of
theistic propositions is something about the world, given the idea
that God reveals himself to men in the world. Yet we have not solved
the issue, inevitably, of sceptical criticisms about evidence beyond
Theistic claims concerning putative historical events. We should be
informed that, even on the later Wittgenstein's terms, the concept of
god lacks sense. It would of course be conceded that talk of Jesus of
Nazareth is an empirical matter. 
So historical propositions as such
are one thing; trying to make sense of theological ones is something
quite different. Is the situation saved by putting them beyond sense?
I mean by this question, that there might seem to be a way towards
achieving a modus operandi for speaking about God here. It would
enable us to avoid the charge of unintelligibility as would be the
case if such were associated with what turned out to be mere gibberish.
That theistic assertion is not this, is widely, I believe, recognised.
Implicitly it is accepted that believers maintain an honourable
tradition of human thought and practice. It would be conceded, by
many humanists, I think, that the word 'god' possessed more than
circumstantial placement in the ideologies of earlier ages. Now, however, they might aver its lack of sense in a technocratic, secular world. Without wishing to suggest that unbelievers should be encouraged to call the tune as to what can count as theistic propositions, it might appear that meaning requires that attention be paid to the concepts of reference and sense.

It will be recalled that Wittgenstein spoke of bedeutung and sinn - reference and sense - as being the criteria for demonstrating that an empirical proposition can occupy a position in logical space. They likewise depict logical form. If it be said that theistic propositions lack sense, but do not reduce to gibberish, is it conceivable to speak of the logical form of theistic belief as being shown but not stateable? Just as a tautology or a contradiction say nothing about the world (a state of affairs) yet display logical form and evince the logical space in which empirical (contingent) claims about the world can be made, so perhaps what Wittgenstein calls the mystical, as he himself tells us in the Tractatus, may, by its being shown in some way or another, point to the logic of theistic concern. I cannot see how such a construction could take us into the prolix sphere of theistic dialogue, characteristic of philosophy of religion. It might conceivably provide a link, however, with Wittgenstein's emphasis in 'On Certainty' upon fundamental propositions which are said to be about those things which are there 'like our life' and at the 'bottom of all our language games'. By seeking to find an exit from the labyrinth of the quest for sense in talk about God, we may be taking a step in the right direction. If the mystical, logically speaking, may be conceived as being beyond (as empirically it is seen to be), truth or falsehood, in its not speaking of contingent matters of the world, it might gain significance, rather than sense, by being understood as the foundation for what then can be said e.g. historical
propositions, propositions purporting to give experiences of believers, propositions about forms of religious observance and worship etc. If this is so, it would then be possible to investigate the second-order data which form the material comprising the theistic language game or games. What is capable of being said in a sensible manner is then discovered to be that which relates to human experience. And this, of course, is to be expected and is both the ground for my attempting to find the 'roots of reference' in the kerygmatic proclamation, the didache etc of the early Christian communities, and the source of understandable scepticism in the minds of unbelievers, who are inclined to accuse theists of reducing talk about God to that of humans. If, however, the explanation of the meaning is the meaning, some attempt at explanation of theistic propositions is required and, necessarily (given Wittgenstein's remarks about the mystical) they will be explanations of that meaning disclosed in the use to which theistic propositions are put. As in the case of the early church, it will be in the context of the modern Christian community and in the discourse which is there adopted that the meaning of such propositions may be ascertained. But this is simply to reiterate the point that rational men indulge in a particular language-game, and thereby are enabled to discuss and, through worship, practise their beliefs.

This can be set out schematically in accordance with the later Wittgenstein's teachings. Suppose, for example, we acknowledge his shift from any attempt to identify simples as being the referents of atomic propositions (of which complex propositions were held to be truth functions) to the request for samples to show how a word is used - where it has its 'home'. It would enable Christians to seize upon the fact of Christ as the example or examplar without equal, whom his followers over the centuries have sought to emulate, and to point to 'Saints' who have come nearest to achieving that objective. They
would have Biblical and ecclesiastical support for such a procedure: 'Let this mind be in you, that was in Christ Jesus' (St Paul); 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Epistle to the Hebrews) and the theme of the 'Imitatio Christi' by à Kempis, being examples.

We might further seek to show that the rules which regulate what can and cannot be said within Theism and the criteria by which those rules have become established, emanate from the Christian communities, past and present. This would be seen to be so once we were able to appreciate the depth grammar which the form of life, characteristic of Christian faith, manifested. Thus we would be led to understand that the logical status of Theistic language is discernible, not by dissection of believers' assertions by means of the propositional calculus which would permit the respective signs of the propositions themselves to be interpreted aright, but by correct learning of those words and phrases which constitute the essence of Christian belief. In this way understanding of what is said within the Theistic language would be demonstrated.

All this, however, might appear to leave the central issue implicit within the concept of revelation untouched. If by his early analysis, Wittgenstein in at least partial agreement with Russell, might have spoken of a failure to interpret a sign in the proposition adequately in speaking of God, (and so by implication, as far as Logical Positivist thought was concerned, for example as stated by Ayer in his early philosophy a failure to eliminate unanalyzable or wrongly analysed concepts); in his later philosophy we find that the notion of God is to be regarded as an integral element of what theists have to say. Reference (Bedeutung) and Sense (Sinn) have now become ineluctibly bound up with linguistic criteria. To discover the meaning of what one intends when one speaks of God's activity (especially, in
our case, his revealing activity) one must look and see how the
doctrine is spoken about by Theists. Willingness to learn alongside
Christians what is said of this doctrine will enable one to come to
an understanding of what is entailed by it. Explanation of meaning
is the meaning.

We have argued that Wittgenstein's adoption of the notion of
fundamental propositions to elucidate epistemological questions, such
as those relating to the juxtaposition of belief, knowledge, doubt
and certainty, has given us the lead in adopting, as Hudson does,
the concept of god as a constitutive concept for religious belief.
This simply means that without belief in god, in some form or another
(however or whatever he is conceived to be) nothing can be said by
Theists - there could be no Theistic language game. It would seem
that the sceptic's barb has been blunted if not put out of action by
the adoption of this procedure. For if we are entitled to take for
granted the notion of god, just as we take for granted physical
objects in our scientific discourse, or the idea of moral judgements
in our ethical discussions, we are 'home and dry' in respect of
seeking philosophical ground for speaking of God and his alleged
activities.

It will be clear that my suggestion earlier that Wittgenstein's
treatment of the mystical and his contention that logical form can
only be shown and not stated would seem to be reflected in that aspect
of his later philosophy which, finding meaning not in reference beyond
language but within language itself, saw fundamental propositions to
be the indispensable factor in providing a logical terminus for what
we are able to say. The later Wittgenstein uses the phrase 'there
is no such thing as ...' and spoke of the sense of a proposition as
being demonstrated by its method of representation. I attempted to
explore the possibility of the word 'god' being conceived to be significant although lacking sense in so far that, like the propositions of logic, it cannot be a matter of contingent facts in the world: no state of affairs could be conceived to exist to which we may adduce evidential criteria. It looked as though the concept of god might be placed in this area. This being so, we can see how the form or method of representation of theistic propositions, especially those which refer to, and stem from, the kerygmatic proclamation through which the Christian concept of revelation has been historically transmitted, has again and again drawn us into the net of linguistic practice. Thus it has been to the extent that words have been clarified that understanding has been cleansed. Wittgenstein speaks of language remaining closed in within itself and so autonomous. The way we see the world, the method of our representation of the picture we hold, exhibits those grammatical rules which appropriate learning avince.

In the light of this it seems to be inescapable that the conception of revelation we have endeavoured to analyse is ineluctibly bound up with our method of representation, grammatically projected from the collective understanding of participation in the theistic language game.

Something is now required of Wittgenstein's concern about the method of representation and its capability of being confused with what is being represented, thus perpetuating illusion instead of providing insight. Wittgenstein's insistence upon the 'autonomy of grammar' is related to our forms of representation. Given a particular form of representation, prompted by the exigencies of societal and ideological formulations, it is in effect our language which constitutes that form of representation. What we must not do, however, is to take our grammar as a projection of reality. Instead of this,
Wittgenstein asks us to take our conception of the structure of reality to be a projection of our grammar (presumably what we conceive 'reality' to be).

When I endeavoured to use the Tractatus concept of logical form being shown rather than said, and noting the corollary of this assertion, namely that propositions of logic (tautologies or contradictions) lacked sense yet had significance, I postulated for the concept of 'god' a similar placement in 'logical space'. I also tried to show that what can be said, rather than simply shown within Theism were all those propositions which express various aspects of belief associated with the kerygmatic proclamation, through which Christian Theism initially was formulated, enabling rules to be established for a language game, the criteria for which resides in empirical events of early Christendom. I have been able to show that the doctrine of the 'autonomy of grammar' enables us to erect an intelligible structure or edifice of theistic discourse for which its fundamental propositions are determinative. Because it would not make sense to doubt a fundamental proposition, since it lies beyond empirical verification or falsification, but is rather 'there like our life', that which we are obliged to take for granted (for to fail to do so would be to plunge us into a quagmire of unintelligibility and incoherence), we are lifted above the rigors of truth-conditional formulae. We are not however removed from the necessity to observe that a fundamental proposition logically yields criteria for enabling a language to be learned, and necessitates the formulation of rules which indicate the various moves within the appropriate language game.

Our talk of god, then, conceived to be axiomatic for theistic discourse, is the starting point for all that is to be said, whether by way of empirical facts as to the origins and development of Christianity, or
the minutiae of devotional worship, or the nexus of propositions whereby logical coherence is sought. Once established, Theism can be seen to appeal to those concepts which the "autonomy of grammar" permits to be verbalised as being integral components of a language-game. All the tension and worry, badgered as one is by agnostic demands for tangible evidence in support of Theistic assertions as to God's revelation to man, is dissipated once it is clearly seen that evidence is not the criterion for speaking of God. This is to say no more, as has previously been indicated, than to say of other areas of discourse that evidence is inappropriate in physics, for example, where the uniformity of nature or the existence of physical objects are not subjects for dispute or concern in the task of testing hypotheses and enlarging our understanding of physics. The historian, likewise, in his research into a particular period of time and into the influences, social, economic, political etc which helped to shape events of that period, does not find it intelligible to ponder whether the earth existed then. What is at stake is the coherence of what is said within the respective language games of physics and history. Fundamental propositions concerning the uniformity of nature, the existence of physical objects (or sub-atomic particles?), or the great age of the world all enable sensible things to be said by the physicist and the historian in their respective spheres of interest. So the Theist, with the fundamental proposition concerning belief in God as his accepted basis for discussion is able to debate important issues of belief. By putting the problem of the existence of God beyond empirical truth conditional methodology, he is able to proceed with other matters. Does this mean that, within Theism talk of God is intelligible and capable of use in numerous Theistic proclamations and assertions of belief, while without or outside
Theism, it could be argued that the concept of god, given the general assumption of evidential criteria for empirical propositions used by people in daily life, lacks sense but not significance? It lacks sense because it has nothing to offer to the empirical enquirer, subject as he is to space-time criteria, and dependent upon observation, hypothesis and testing procedures. It has significance in so far as even he, qua modern, secular man, can, although he functions outside the boundaries of theistic thinking, recognise that rational people indulge in worship, exhortation and morally guided social activities which fall within his frame of reference. 'God' is not a referential entity, but no matter; language in the broad day-by-day exercise of human communication, has criteria and rules for its use and reference is to be discovered by learning correctly how to use phrases words and sentences in their appropriate setting. The unbeliever has the opportunity to translate that which lacks sense but which has obvious significance into a something new where understanding and meaning stem from a correct learning of the language, and so come to appreciate how autonomous grammar, not dependent upon reference points in empirical observation can, in this particular matter, show the sense of theistic assertions.
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

a I have used Wittgenstein's *Tractatus, Philosophical Investigations* and *On Certainty* and have also drawn upon W. D. Hudson's discussion of the twin concepts of bedeutung and sinn in his book *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief* MacMillan, 1975 in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

JUSTIFYING AND VALIDATING CLAIMS TO A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

From the views discussed appertaining to existence in a philosophical sense, I would like to draw some conclusions concerning Theistic talk about God's existence and activity in the world. Since I presupposed at the start of my dissertation that God exists, my interest is in seeking rational criteria for speaking of God, as some way being said to be known by man, as a consequence of His revelation to man.

I rejected Cupitt's proposition that the concept of god as existent beyond the self is no longer tenable by arguing that, in my view, the kerygma and its attendant language game can provide a logical setting for the concept of god, as traditionally understood by Christians. I thus related what I have subsequently sought to say about God to Wittgenstein's request that it is as we examine the depth grammar of a language game that its system of representation can be ascertained. The representation of the god about whom the kerygma speaks is to be discerned by due attention being paid to that grammar, and those fundamental propositions upon which it rests.

I discussed the view, held by Russell and others, that the verb 'exists' might properly be called a secondary predicate and, as such, serves to establish the location of primary predicates which describe a particular object. To the extent that I have accepted this view, it is necessary to establish the primary characteristics of God. It would therefore be in the attribution of those character identifications which Christians ascribe to God (his loving nature, his justice, his goodness etc) that the verb 'exists' would find meaning. No sense could be granted this assertion, I believe, unless the prior acceptance, by response in trust ('belief in' - the commissive
element of beliefs about the Christian God) to the kerygmatic proclamation was made. Hence it is in the playing of the appropriate language game of Christian Theistic belief, and in being involved in the form of life of Christian persuasion, that 'exists' in respect of divine attributes of love, justice, goodness etc can be applied; and the issue turns upon whether it can be shown to be rational to play that game.

However, I discussed at some length, Russell's request that a knowledge claim by description must be analysed in terms of a claim to acquaintance with the constituents of that description. I believe that my attempt to apply his formula, using universals in relation to a specific instance of a particular to enable identification of that particular to be established, to Christ was not entirely mistaken, once the stipulation about the language game is acknowledged. So talk of acquaintance with Christ through faith, and so through the kind of response the Apostles required, to enable unbelievers to step over the line into an assured position of 'knowing' the One in whom they had exercised trust, became intelligible. All this requires a descriptive framework to clarify theological ideas. Yet I conceded, as indeed I must, that Russell would no doubt wish to refute my application of his doctrine to an assumed existential encounter with some-one whom, for him, mere historical location might be secured. The fact that Russell changed his mind about knowledge by acquaintance, while retaining an empiricist view of knowledge, was duly noted.

It was thus, to Wittgenstein's discussion of the 'mystical' and to his teaching that bedeutung, in addition to sinn, must be indicated for an empirical proposition to be valid that I turned. Recognizing, as in the case of Russell's earlier preoccupation with acquaintance with the immediate contents of our sensory faculties, that the
doctrine of the Tractatus was clearly intended to provide criteria for speaking of putative knowledge of God, I pursued Wittgenstein's distinction between the sense of a proposition and its possible significance even where sense could not be made of it. In doing this, I moved with Wittgenstein away from a referential theory of meaning (which appears to have dogged Russell's efforts) to his view that the explanation of the meaning is the meaning and that the prerequisite understanding to provide such an explanation necessarily (logically) depends upon one's grasp of the grammar of a language game. However, I felt that Wittgenstein's earlier talk of significance where existential reference could, for logical reasons (e.g. in the case of tautologies) obtain, was not without value in my efforts to pass from a discussion of problems relative to existence, per se, to a discussion about the object of revelation, conceived to be about what is existent. Man's knowledge is considered possible to the extent that God is believed to have disclosed Himself to receptive men.

The latter aspect of the matter does of course point ahead to further discussion of the part played by the knower in the process of coming to know, and in being persuaded of one's right to make a knowledge claim in a given situation. I shall argue that although the distinction between first person and third person assertions is important, my experiential view of divine revelation to man requires both first and third person aspects to enable an intelligible view to be maintained. However, if, as I argued in a previous chapter the verb 'to know', while having general usage in our language and, while suggesting 'success' rather than the inquisitive and exploratory character of the verb 'to believe', requires logical placing within a language game to enable us to discover how it is being used, it is in the uniqueness of the kerygmatic language game that attempts
to grasp what 'knowing God' means will be appropriate. If, further, the logical kinship of believing, knowing and doubting is acknowledged, one's being in a position to know will reflect that openness to a situation which a first person concept presupposes. It might be said that this is a move to blur the distinction, which I appear to have made by my reference to 'know' being a success verb. I do not think that this should be so understood. For the prior condition which I have specified as to the need to investigate how the verbs to believe and to know are being used within a language game helps to clear up this apparent confusion. And so it is with the discussion I have undertaken in respect of the verb to exist. The knotty problem of its application for Theism has, I have argued, ultimately to be resolved, as in the case of physical objects, in relation to those fundamental propositions which are beyond empirical justification.

In his, perhaps hesitant, attempt to make a knowledge claim from the position of 'belief in' which the Christian commissively adopts, he may say that he is justified in his attempt. For to deny a form of knowledge in respect of having understood what God's saving acts mean for him would involve him in a self-contradiction. That this is to say no more than that acceptance of the idea of God's initiatory activities in the Christ event and in its precursors of the Old Testament dispensation, is incumbent upon him, qua believer, is to state a truism. It will be objected that an idea is logically distinct from a putative empirical event. Yet given the presuppositions upon which the concept of revelation rests the believer could do no other than assent to the proposition that, in Christ, he believes that he has encountered God. In assenting to this proposition he thus lays claim, however tentatively, to the further proposition that, in some way or another, he has (and he does) have an experience of (or with) God. Can he, or is he required,
to validate the claim?

What would it mean to validate this claim that, in response to the kerygma, and in entering into a form of life which is mirrored in the Christian language game which he plays as a consequence, he has some (perhaps very limited) knowledge of God Himself? To avoid the question by claiming logical immunity, in the sense of making the matter a purely verbal one, would not seem to suffice. For a knowledge claim to be a bone fide one permits a sceptic to challenge the claimant as to how he is in a position to know in this respect. This request takes us once again into the arena of Wittgenstein's discernment that meaning is ineluctibly bound up with the use to which words are put. It is not in the 'idling' of language that we shall discover pragmatic usage. Any demand for validation, therefore, of Christian claims to know God through encounter with Him requires the kind of scrutiny of the language game which I have indicated. The avoidance of the charge that such a procedure is a purely verbal one, and as such cannot qualify as a genuine knowledge claim, can be made here. For the language game, as we have seen, is that verbal expression of response to the Apostolic proclamation, which advert to and emanates from a form of life wherein, in principle, questions of falsification and verification apply.

I do not think that I am confusing conceptual with empirical propositions or indulging in category mistakes. For it has been central to my argument to stress the factual data which form the basis of the kerygma. The Apostles proclaimed a proclaimer who had announced to the Jews of Galilee and Jerusalem a gospel of love and justice, and eventually died for his views. His coterie of followers found in Him the clue to the identity of the God in whom they had been taught to believe. Their ancestral belief was in God who was said by the narrators and prophets of their Scriptures to have
revealed Himself through theophany, legal enactments and prophetic voice. Now they were convinced, at least in retrospect, that God had disclosed Himself more fully than hitherto in the person and teachings of Jesus. In the light of all this, it would not seem to make sense to say that a believer in God who has identified himself with the form of life established by the Apostles and, in some measure, perpetuated in some ecclesiastical fellowships, could ignore the implications of the response his commitment demonstrates. The modern believer, qua believer, assents to those propositions which his willingness to heed the gospel led him to entertain in a positive way.

Such a positive approach is entirely in keeping with Wittgenstein's idea of religious belief being a matter of holding a picture - a worldview - ever before one. For the participant in the Christian form of life today may be said to be influenced cognitively, affectively and volitionally. If he is sincere, he is necessarily (that is, logically) committed to both those constative and commissive elements to which his 'belief in' God lead him. It makes sense for him to say that he encounters God through those practices within the form of life in which he participates. Some would put emphasis upon communion with God through the Eucharist; others would stress prayer or fellowship or perhaps consciousness of being guided or possessing peace. In the light of his belief that God is Ultimate Demand and Final Succour (two notions which I mentioned in my introductory chapter) all of this would make good sense. My concern has been to try to argue that in attempting to make a knowledge claim in respect of encounter between himself and His Creator, the Christian utilises verbal criteria to establish experiential validation. Not only may he be said to be justified in making the claim, but he may claim validity for it within the logical structure of the game he plays.
It may be said, then, that the 'knowledge that' element has been shown to be historical, concerning events long ago which provided a basis for the kerygma, wherein modern believers are able to discover understanding concerning the importance of the Christ-event for belief in God. The 'knowing how' aspect has been corroborated in the company of believers who find assurances of the presence of God through worship, fellowship and service. Here they utilise performatives to express praise and petitionary supplication to a God about whom they have learned and to whom they have conscious awareness of being related in a bond. In pointing to empirical manifestations of what the knowledge is to which Christians lay claim and in arguing that the form of life in which it finds practical expression demonstrates where reference and meaning may be sought today, I have given to the word 'experience' something of its customary usage. In so doing, I believe that I have countered the kind of philosophical thinking of T. Miles, D. Phillips and D. Cupitt. They want to deny to extant Christian religious observance and practice anything other than an expression of unconditional commitment. While each one gives his own exposition of what he conceives Christian belief to be, they agree in avoiding or negating the traditional view of an existent God who enters into a relationship with his human creatures through response to Him by faith and trust. I have attempted to find logical support for my view that to say that one has an experience of God is to use words normally, while allowing for the largeness and the complexity of the subject. I have principally done so by examining what it makes sense to say within Theistic discourse. It has been a salient feature of my attempt to elucidate this that not only a language game but a form of life exist. To the question, how can one know God? I have been able to reply, look and see how the game is played. And it has been made clear, I hope, that when one looks one finds
the language of encounter and response. The encounter cannot be written off as mere imagination for the notion resides deep within the autonomous grammar of the game and is thus an integral and crucial element of it. An experiential view of revelation requires some reference beyond the self to justify it.
CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

CONCLUSION

KNOWING GOD WITHIN THE FORM OF LIFE OF CHRISTIAN THEISM

My experiential view of revelation has led me to a position wherein an assumed knowledge by acquaintance has been transformed, or at least considerably modified and qualified, to become Knowledge by description. I have shown that first person claims to know that p, when conceived to be claims concerning encounter with God through personal, direct experience, require third person descriptive accounts to explicate them in conceptual terms. Reference to concepts has been shown to specify learned understanding, which enables the one who describes to indicate whatever intelligibility attaches to them. This, in turn, has been seen to be ineluctibly bound up with the autonomous grammar of a particular area of discourse, in this case that pertaining to Christian Theism. The system of representation does not project on to reality that grammar, but is informed by it and enables a sincere enquirer to ascertain and to identify crucial guide-lines. It has been at the centre of my argument to locate in theologically interpreted historical events - the so called Christ event or kerygma. Since this has a clear empirical element in respect of certain historical propositions, to say that my experiential view of revelation is determined by rules which the criteria of the autonomous grammar impose is not to conceptualise a non-referential entity. The distinction which philosophers recognise between empirical and logical propositions is found here. I have attempted to examine the logic of a language game to seek meaning for the concept, in a Christian sense, of encounter between God and man.

Knowledge by description will require conceptual landmarks but
also empirical reference. I believe that my twin categories mentioned above provide these two requirements. Thus there is a state of affairs without which concepts alone could not explicate the idea of experience of God. Yet it has been found to be through pertinent ideas, instantiated through long usage and refinement within a form of life, that explanation for a believer today is to be achieved. It would be relevant to say that the knowledge by acquaintance which the Apostolic encounter with Christ presupposes, has become the knowledge by description which features in the Christian language game today. As Russell moved from an adherence to knowledge by acquaintance (in the sense of direct awareness of the constituents of a proposition) towards a concern for 'basic propositions' (being those which are caused as immediately as possible by perceptive experiences), so, with Wittgenstein's prompting, I have attempted to explicate knowledge of God by providing for ideas of the Christian language game, a denotation determined by rules. Such rules have been shown to be uniquely determined by an autonomous grammar, kerygmatically instituted and theologically sustained. To the extent that such description is able to be demonstrated as a description of reflexive verbs and nouns, I agree with Moore that to describe accurately is to lend to the concept of knowledge a greater perspicuity than to trust fallible perceptive verdicts of what one takes to be the case. In any case, it has been shown that the pure sense datum postulate finds little support in regard to issues of perception. And I have argued that the unadorned acquaintance with God through first person experience can only, I hold, be given meaning when set within a descriptive framework. The kerygma proclaimed events theologically interpreted. That interpretation was not only of the Christ event, although it centred on such, it also harked back to prophetic utterance, the Law
and even to creation. Putative happenings, considered to be set in motion by divine agency provided the substance for theological explanation of what precisely experience of God can be said to be. The consequent 'grammar' of the 'game' therefore focuses upon those vital elements which a modern believer would need to grasp, to some extent, to understand the explanation of the meaning of propositions concerning encounter with Christ.

But what does the believer know? My reference previously to knowledge of ideas relative to the kerygma would appear to be damaging if such ideas are segregated from the form of life of Christian belief. How, then, can the participant in that 'form of life' stake a knowledge claim concerning God? I think he may do so in so far as a number of threads of my argument for an experiential view of revelation are brought together. Firstly, I have studiously avoided a referential theory of meaning, and tried to expound Wittgenstein's doctrine that the explanation of a proposition is the meaning, by careful analysis of his contextual theory of meaning. From this I have attempted to say that for 'god' to find a logical placing in human verbal communication, the concept itself must be seen to be a fundamental proposition which constitutes religious belief. Secondly, I have argued that, in one sense at least, the 'roots of reference' may be said to be found in language (to quote Quine). To this assertion may be added the caveat (as in the cases of Quine, Russell, Ayer etc) that an empirical proposition must never be allowed to be too far removed from perceptual entities for which some kind of direct observation would be possible. While stressing the distinction between the logic of propositions relative to an experiential concept of revelation and empirical elements in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, I have been able to postulate a dual foundation for knowledge claims in this sphere. This provides a kind
of empirical and, in principle, verifiable element. The first is encapsulated in those historical propositions which enable the kerygma to be viewed as the sine qua non of Christian Theistic belief. These are, of course, not only those which speak of the life and work of Jesus, but events depicted in other parts of the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments. The second has been discussed in relation to the practice of religion: ceremonies, devotions, prayers, activities and in relation to the performative language which gives to the sentences, phrases and words of the kerygmatic language game, and associated form of life, a certain ultimacy for the believer. They enable him to feel, ponder and reflect upon those emotions, thoughts and wishes which comprise the ideological body of the Faith.

Thirdly, I have attempted to say that in place of (or perhaps in harmony with) sensibly aroused concepts, there are ideologically aroused concepts which inspire, comfort, guide and stimulate those who are involved in the form of life. It can, I have argued, be said in this respect that ideas are instantiated and so acquire an objectivity appropriate to their source and subject matter. By being implicated in the procedure, by dint of his having responded to the proclamation of God's self disclosure supremely, although not only, in the Christ event, the believer as knower has been found to play an important part in the process of knowing God. He does not originate this procedure but by assenting to its primal challenge, to trust and obey him of whom the kerygma speaks, he confirms its truth claiming capacity. I suggest, therefore, that the idea (supreme among the several ideas which may be said to be instantiated within the Theistic language game concerning God and Christ) of God revealing Himself to free humans, carries positive connotations of an epistemological nature.
First, the believer is privy to ideas which his involvement in a way of life and his indication thereby of absorption of moral imperatives and compassionate concern for others, establishes. Secondly, these ideas are positive in speaking generally of God’s interest in humanity and particularly of specific acts of creation, redemption and salvation which it would not be logically possible to distort or deny within the area of discourse given concretion by those ideas. Thirdly, while people outside the form of life, and the strictures and constraints imposed by it, may dispute the credibility of the knowledge claimed by believers concerning God’s revelation to them, they cannot refute it. This is not because it is so esoteric as to be beyond human contradiction, as some might hold. It is because to refute knowledge of God by experience, it would be necessary to have some kind of experience of a countering nature. The traditional counter arguments of Flew and others as regards suffering are not, given the line I have followed, damaging. They cannot in case constitute contradictory experiences as such. Only if the moral and spiritual ideas resident in the teachings of Christ and the Apostles be declared inimical to the concept of a loving God would this be so. The ideas would have to become redundant in human society. But this is far from being the case, in spite of prevalent secular influences and agnostic ideologies. And we have found that it is not perhaps by acquaintance but by description that, principally, the pertinent ideas are known.

What would it be not to possess the knowledge or forms of knowledge to which the Christian believer lays claim? It will be gathered from my experiential view of revelation, that to be said not to know God would be to be deficient in understanding of ideas - soteriological ones in particular and, generally, ideas appertaining to the concept of God taken to be creator, the preserver and the
power of the future. These ideas emanate from, and acquire their logical status in, the proclamation of the Christ event by which the Apostles indicated what encounter with God means. Not to know God is to be unaware of those teachings ranging from the principles of the Law, through to the Prophets and culminating in the theology of the New Testament which, as Pannenberg shows, finds its focal point in historical events relative to the life of Jesus. Such ideas, I have maintained, may be considered instantiated in so far as they generated a form of life of the believing community. Since this is not a mere tautology, to be a believer and to be in a position to experience God, or to encounter God, is to be in a position to apprehend how the fundamental propositions which lie at the bottom of the Christian Theistic language game inform one in this respect. It is to recognise in these propositions an ultimacy which takes care of the issue of contention between believer and unbeliever, namely the existence and extant activity of God in human affairs. It leads to a situation which I have attempted to discuss, wherein to deny experience of, or encounter with God, would place the Christian in a self contradictory position.

Lest I be yet again accused of failing to identify anything other than ideas which comprise the substance for a knowledge claim, I must again point to a possible confusion in such a criticism. It has been a feature of my case to accept as a truism of Christian dialogue that physical, perceptive identification for God is a meaningless concept. Admittedly, I have not found it a simple task to give coherence to the notion which must replace the request for extant clues as to God's identity, namely the concept of bodiless agent. My answer to this has been to find in the ideas of the kerygma and its associated doctrines (and the earlier ideas of the Jewish covenant) the sufficient clues to identify God's activity in the world, especially as that activity focuses upon Jesus.
Although it has been my constant endeavour to stress the conceptual foundation for my view of revelation and so to eschew attempts to find for that concept some kind of empirical ultimacy, I have not been able to put aside the essentially empirical grounding in historical and contemporary events. Yet because priority has been given to the logic of what it means to say that, in Christ, men are able to meet God in a realistic manner, it has not been necessary to try to show how prediction might apply to Christian Theistic propositions in this area. I have, of course, frequently alluded to the predictive element in the Biblical literature itself, and have discussed Pannenberg's idea of God as conceived to be the Power of the Future, presiding over this and every age. I have indeed argued that there is a sense in which it would be intelligible to say that, in responding to the kerygma of the Apostolic message concerning Christ, a hitherto agnostic might become aware of new vistas and understanding which correctly earn the title of knowledge. To that extent one could use a predictive formula in respect of such propositions of the nature 'If then'. As regards the central issue of my study, however, it has been clearly impossible to define the verb to know apart from logical connotations. This has been, in part, because I have recognised, along with several philosophers, the significant rôle played by the knower in the process of, and in the production of, knowledge. But more strongly it has followed from my consistent wish to use Wittgenstein's notion of fundamental propositions allied to his contextual view of meaning, and his reference to the form of life as being explanatory of what that meaning is. Hence, there cannot be a predictive quality in saying as I have done that, to speak of God making Himself known, would require confirmation in hypothetical terms. It cannot be achieved as it must in respect of any empirical proposition, where some confirming or denying fact must be capable of
being displayed. But I do not believe that this could count against the assertion that Christians may, legitimately, make a knowledge claim, consequent upon their understanding of the concept of revelation.
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