Exploring the Territories of Science and Religion

Peter Harrison
University of Queensland
New College Lectures, 2014
LECTURE 1: IS CHRISTIANITY A RELIGION?

1. Religion in Early Christian Literature
2. Religion, Creed, and Belief
3. Religion and the Protestant Reformation
4. Reasons for Religion
Friday, 12 September 14
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Since I see, most excellent Diognetus, that thou art exceedingly anxious to understand the religion [*theosebeia*] of the Christians, and that thy enquiries respecting them are distinctly and carefully made, as to what God they trust and how they worship [*threskeuein*] Him.... You wonder, too, why this new race [*genos*] or way of life [*epitedeuma*] has appeared on earth now and not earlier.

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St Jerome (347-420)
‘Religion’ in the New Testament?

James 26-27 (KJV)

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion [threskos/religiosum] is vain.

27 Pure religion [threskeia/religio] and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Colossians 2:18  King James Version (KJV)

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping [threskeia/religione] of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
‘Religion’ in the New Testament?

John 4:20-23 (RSV)

20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.
Christianity as the true religion?

‘true religion means the worship of the one true God.’

Retractions

‘For what is now called [the] Christian religion existed of old and was never absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh. Then [the] true religion which already existed began to be called Christian.’

Retractions

‘it makes no difference that people worship with different ceremonies in accord with the different requirements of times and places, if what is worshipped is holy....

... different rites are celebrated in different peoples bound together by one and the same religion’

Letter 102, Augustine to Deogratias,
Religion as a Virtue

Religion [religio] ‘is the chief of the moral virtues’. *Summa theologiae* 2a2ae. 81, art. 6

‘Internal acts of religion take precedence of the others and belong to religion essentially while its external acts are secondary, and subordinate to the internal acts.’ (q. 81)

Its principal, interior acts are devotion and prayer. Its secondary, external acts of *latria* include bodily reverence, the offering of things to God such as sacrifices, oblations, first fruits, tithes and vows. (qq. 82-88)

Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)
‘All religion has something good in it; as long as it is directed to God, the creator of all things, it is genuine Christian religion.’

Marsilio Ficino De religione christiana, et fidei pietate (1475-6)
INSTITVTO CHRISTIANAE RELIGIONIS, IN LIBROS QUATRE

IOHANNIE CALVINIO AUTHOR.

OLIUA ROBERTI STEPHANI.

GENEVAE.

M. D. LIX.
THE INSTITUTION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION, vvrytten in Latin by maister Ireno Calvii, and translated into English according to the authours full edition.

See and allowed according to the order appointed in the Queenes most sacred Instructions.


Com privilegio ad impressum fieri.
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I. Of the Knowledge of GOD the CREATOR.
II. Of the Knowledge of GOD the REDEEMER.
III. Of the Manner how to receive the Grace of CHRIST.
IV. Of the Outward Means of Salvation.

By Mr. JOHN CALVIN.

GLASGOW:
Printed by JOHN BRYCE and ARCHIBALD MCLEAN, Junior,
For ALEXANDER IRVINE, Printer.
MDCCLXII.
INSTITUTES

OF

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S LAST EDITION IN FRENCH.

BY JOHN ALLEN.

SIXTH AMERICAN EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
Relative frequency of the expressions ‘Christian religion’ and ‘the Christian Religion’ in English books, by decade, 1560-1700.
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And these few words are known to the faithful, to the end that in believing they may be made subject to God; that being made subject, they may rightly live; that in rightly living, they may make the heart pure; that with the heart made pure, they may understand that which they believe...

*A Treatise on the Faith and the Creed*

10.25

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)
Gk *Pistis* = Lat. *fides / credo / assensus* = Eng. faith / to believe / to give assent

“the first way to worship the gods is to believe in [credere in] the gods”

Seneca, *Epistles* 95.12

believing in God [credere in] means “to love Him, by believing to esteem highly, by believing to go into Him and be incorporated into His members.” To believe in God “is a great deal more than believing what God says: it is to cling by faith to God.”

Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 29, 6; *Expositions of the Psalms* 77, 8

“Unless you believe, you will not understand”


“To believe in [credere in] God is to seek him in faith, to hope piously in him, and to pass into him by a movement of choice. When I say that I believe in him, I confess him, offer him worship, adore him, give myself over to him wholly and transfer to him all my affection.

Faustus of Riez (b. 405), *De spiritu sancto* I.1
Gk Pistis = Lat. fides / credo / assensus = Eng. faith / to believe / to give assent

Credo [I believe?] “to trust to or confide in a person or thing, to have confidence in, to trust.” Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary

“Believe” verb. 1. “To have confidence or faith in (a person), and consequently to rely upon, trust to. Const. in, and (in theological language) on (an obs.); formerly with into, unto, of (rare).” OED, s.v. “believe”
Pronunciation: Brit. /bɪˈliːv/ , U.S. /bəˈliv/ , /biˈliv/

Forms: ... (Show More)

Etymology: Probably an alteration (with prefix substitution: see BE- prefix) of YLEVE u. (compare also (aphetic) LEVE u.²); YLEVE u. is in turn cognate with Old Dutch gilōbian (Middle Dutch gelóven , Dutch geloven ), Old Saxon gilōbian (Middle Low German gelōven ), Old High German gilouben (Middle High German gelouben , glöuben , German glauben , *gleuben ), Gothic galaubjan , all showing a similar range of senses; further etymology uncertain and disputed (see below). The Scandinavian languages lack a cognate verb, using instead the respective cognates of TROW u. in both religious and non-religious senses. Compare BELIEF n. YLEVE u. and its cognates are clearly the etymons of the respective nouns cited at BELIEF n., and presuppose a Proto-Germanic weak Class I verb. Verbs of this class are chiefly de-adjectival or deverbal, although a number of denominal formations are also attested. The base in this case is very uncertain. It may show an ablaut variant of the Germanic base of LOVE u.₂, LOF n., and probably also LOVE n.₁ and (with different ablaut grade) LIEF adj.
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[The?] true religion [*veram religionem*] which is delivered in the Scriptures, and which all ought to hold, they [the Catholic priesthood] readily permit both themselves and others to be ignorant of, to neglect and despise; and they deem it of little moment what each man believes concerning God and Christ, or disbelieves, provided he submits to the judgment of the Church with what they call implicit faith....

*Institutes* (1536) Prefatory Address.

John Calvin (1509-1564)
Cuius regio, eius religio: Whose realm, his religion
Turner’s ‘Religions’

Jewish

Christian

Mahometan

Ancient Heathen

Modern Heathen

Diabolical
Frank S. Dobbins, *Error's chains: how forged and broken. A complete, graphic, and comparative history of the many strange beliefs, superstitious practices, domestic peculiarities, sacred writings, systems of philosophy, legends and traditions, customs and habits of mankind throughout the world, ancient and modern* (New York, 1883), p. 32
Frequency of ‘Buddhism’ (blue), ‘Hinduism’ (red), ‘Taoism (green) and ‘Confucianism’ (purple), in English books, 1800-2000.
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The Reasons of the Christian Religion.

The First Part, of Godliness:
Proving by natural evidence the Being of God, the Necessity of Holiness, and a future Life of Retribution; the Sinfulness of the World; the Defect of Hell, and what hope of Recovery Mercies Intimate.

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By Richard Baxter.

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The reasonableness and certainty of the Christian Religion.

Vol. I.

By Robert Jenkin, D.D. late Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, and Master of St. John's College in Cambridge.


London,
A VIEW OF THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.
Acts xxvi. 28.

BY SOAME JENYNS, ESQ.
The SEVENTH EDITION, corrected.

DUBLIN:
Printed for W. Wilson, No. 6, Dame-street, and R. Moncrieffe, No. 15, Capel-street.
AN IMPARTIAL VIEW OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY:
CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPHUS CONCERNING CHRIST; OF THE ORACLES OF THE SYBILS, AND MEJIAS BEN JOSEPH SO MUCH SPOKEN OF BY THE LATER JEWS; AND MAY SERVE AS AN APPENDIX TO THE LIFE OF MAHOMET.

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LONDON,
PRINTED BY W. DOWNING, FOR MICHAEL JOHNSON:
AND ARE TO BE SOLD BY R. CLAVEL, S. SMITH AND B. WALFORD, T. LEIGH, AND D. MIDWINTER, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; AND J. BARK ON LONDON-BRIDGE, 1699.
AN ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE, NECESSITY, AND EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH, IN SEVERAL ESSAYS.

PART I. OF FAITH IN GENERAL, AND OF THE BELIEF OF A DEITY.

By J. C. D.D.

Vigilo & Clamo
Credo & Loquor.

LONDON,
Printed for William Keblewhite, at the Swan in St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDCXCVI.
Faith is ‘a rational and discursive act of the mind... an assent upon evidence, or reason inducing the mind to assent.’


(Compare Augustine: ‘Unless you believe, you will not understand’)

Friday, 12 September 14
DAVID HUME
THE
NATURAL HISTORY
OF RELIGION

Edited with an Introduction
by
H. E. ROOT
Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge

LONDON : ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

DAVID HUME
DIALOGUES CONCERNING
NATURAL RELIGION
As every enquiry, which regards religion, is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular, which challenge our attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its origin in human nature.

David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*
‘Science and Religion’ in English Books, 1800-2000