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KNOWLEDGE, THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, AND FAITH: JOHN LOCKE'S INFLUENCE ON ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

KNOWLEDGE, THE EXISTENCE OF GOD,
AND FAITH: JOHN LOCKE'S INFLUENCE
ON ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

By

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This study of John Locke's philosophy is limited to its effect on the rationalistic theology of Alexander Campbell. More specifically, the areas of that influence which will be examined are knowledge and faith. Because both conclude that knowledge of God is possible, their arguments for the existence of God will be outlined and critically evaluated. The central thesis is that the theology of Alexander Campbell, in relation to its fundamental principles, can best be explained by showing his dependence on the writings of John Locke.

Though knowledge of the corporeal world is limited to the ideas gained from experience, it is possible to attain other forms of knowledge by means of deduction. The most important example of such knowledge relates to the existence of God. Both men develop a form of the cosmological argument, but there are fundamental differences in the two arguments. Locke offers a proof which begins with the certainty of human existence. Then using the various qualities of human nature, such as goodness, power and intelligence, he argues that the Supreme Being must be the infinite source of these qualities found in human nature.

He further argues from the assumption that something cannot proceed from nothing and that for every effect there must be an adequate cause to the conclusion that God must be an eternal mind of absolute power and goodness.

In his own development of the cosmological argument, Alexander Campbell criticizes and rejects Locke's form of the argument. He insists, for instance, that it is a fallacy to move from a series of causes to a First Cause. A correct form of the argument must begin with an explanation of how the idea of God originated. His contention is that if man has but five senses by which ideas of external reality are attained, and if God is transcendental, then man could not have gained the idea of God from experience. Since we have the idea, God must be the source. This means God must exist as the causal agent behind the idea.

A clear distinction is to be maintained between religious faith and probable opinion. Each depends on probability and testimony, but religious faith contains at least one element of knowledge: that of God's existence. Nothing in probable opinion reaches the level of knowledge. Also, faith has elements which have been revealed at some point and these have been transmitted to believers by primary witnesses. Faith is above reason, but not contrary to reason because nothing in faith is to be accepted if it proves to be contradictory.

Alexander Campbell's concept of faith follows Locke's basic views, but he goes beyond him in one important point: he shows that faith is an integral part of

human existence. As a result he argues that faith being necessary, the Christian faith is the most natural and reasonable because it alone puts man in touch with ultimate reality and provides him with an absolute system of ethics. Thus Locke drew the boundaries of knowledge and faith and Campbell established his theology on the foundation which Locke determined for him.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study of John Locke's philosophy will be limited to its effect on the rationalistic theology of Alexander Campbell. More specifically, the areas of that influence which will be examined are faith, knowledge and the existence of God. The central thesis of this study is that the theology of Alexander Campbell, in relation to its fundamental tenets, can be best explained by showing his dependence on the writings of John Locke.[1] However, this is not to deny that other sources influenced Campbell as well; it is rather to argue that no other source was so pervasive or as fundamentally important as was Locke.[2] Indeed, it

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[1]The writings which influenced him most are the Essay and On the Reasonableness of Christianity. Quotations from Locke's Essay are taken, unless otherwise indicated, from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, edited with an introduction, critical apparatus and glossary by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975). Two editions of On the Reasonableness of Christianity have been used. The Gateway edition by George W. Ewing (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965), which is unabridged with an introduction by the editor. The abridged edition with a "Discourse of Miracles" and part of "A Third Letter Concerning Toleration," edited by I. T. Ramsey (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967). Robert Richardson, his son-in-law, stated that Campbell had studied Locke's Essay thoroughly. See Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1897), Vol. 1, p. 33.

[2]For Campbell, John Locke was the Christian philosopher par excellence.

will be shown that Campbell's theology begins and is sustained by the epistemology of Locke.

There is little need to defend the desire to write about John Locke. He is recognized as one of the most important philosophers of his time and is generally acknowledged as the father of British empiricism. On the other hand, however, the value of studying Alexander Campbell does need to be explained. Outside the religious group he founded and except for students of American religion, few know anything at all about him. This situation is difficult to understand. Not only did he found the largest religious group indigenous to America, but he was widely recognized as the most astute spokesman for fundamental Christianity during his lifetime. He wrote, among other things, a definitive study of baptism and his debate with the socialist Robert Owen attracted national attention.[3] In spite of his accomplishments, he has been sadly neglected. For that reason, if for no other, it seems appropriate to present this study of his dependence on Locke. In so doing, tribute may be given to an important figure in American religion and insight gained concerning the rationalistic tendency of one segment of American theology--that which

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[3] Christian Baptism with its Antecedents and Consequents (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Company, 1951); The Evidences of Christianity: A Debate between Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1957), hereafter cited as Christian Baptism and Campbell-Owen Debate, respectively.

was founded by Campbell.[4]

As will be demonstrated, Campbell begins with Locke's explanation for the origin and development of ideas (where he takes it as a basic truth that knowledge is certain) and then argues from that to the conclusion that life must generally be lived by faith. In the process, however, Campbell makes some fundamental criticisms of and eventually rejects portions of Locke's philosophy. Primarily, the criticisms have to do with Locke's cosmological argument--which he rejects as logically and empirically unsound. Another important difference in the two men has to do with their attempts to defend the Christian faith as historically sound. Both rely on the standard arguments of testimony, the miracles of Jesus and revelation. But Campbell goes further and gives empirical grounding to some of the basic Christian doctrines.

The two men also differ in their emphases. Locke is a major philosopher and consequently his epistemology is much more extensive and vastly more complex than Campbell's. On the other side, the latter analyzes faith and conversion in greater depth than does the former. Nevertheless, they stand closely together because of the rationalistic tendency

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[4]See, for example, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), who writes of Campbell that he "was . . . a fervent exponent of eighteenth-century rationalism, . . . [and] a disciple of John Locke. . . . An intellectualist bent determined his understanding of faith as the mind's assent to credible testimony. . . . This rationalist note [also] stands out in his views on baptism," p. 449.

which underlies all their most important concepts. Without an appeal to reason, Locke cannot account for substances, other minds, God or external objects. In any case, Campbell sees both sides of Locke's philosophy and uses them to advantage in developing his rationalistic theology.

The study of Locke's writings, especially the Essay, "Letters on Toleration," the correspondence with Stillingfleet and the Reasonableness of Christianity,[5] helps Campbell in two areas of thought. In the Essay, for instance, he discovers the explanation he needs concerning the means by which the mind receives ideas, and thus constructs a cosmological argument superior to that found outlined in the Essay. In the Reasonableness of Christianity he finds support for his views on inspiration, absolutes in morality and the miracles of Jesus. But it is the dual character of Locke's philosophy which proves most significant. He discovers in the empirical method precisely what he needs to explain acquisition of knowledge of the corporeal world. In Locke's underlying rationalism he also attains a critical apparatus to be used in defending the Christian system in all his writings and debates. The following chapters will demonstrate just how pervasive Locke's influence is on Campbell's thought.

In chapter 2 the epistemologies of both men are

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[5]Other writings which Campbell knew and used are the Vindications of Christianity; A Discourse of Miracles; Some Thoughts Concerning Education, as well as the Paraphrase of Paul's Epistles. See chap. 5, pp. 113, 121-23, 141.

examined jointly. This is done primarily because Campbell merely borrows Locke's theory of knowledge in a very crude form. What he does accept are the following elements: experience is the necessary and sufficient condition for knowing; experience involves sensation and reflection. He believes Locke is right in saying that knowledge arises from that which is "given" in experience. Campbell, at least in his theology, strictly limits knowledge to this definition; whereas Locke includes, among other things, the immediate perception of the agreement among ideas, the intuitive certainty of personal existence, a cosmological argument for the existence of God, and inferential knowledge of corporeal objects. According to Campbell, only the first and last item actually fulfill the requirement that knowledge be certain. Serious objections can be raised about each of the others--as formulated by Locke.

Chapter 3 analyzes each writer's proof for the existence of God. Locke offers a proof which begins with the certainty of personal existence. Then using the various qualities of human nature, such as goodness, power and intelligence, he argues that the Supreme Being must be the infinite source of these qualities in man. He further argues from the assumption that something cannot proceed from nothing and that for every effect there must be an adequate cause to the conclusion that God must be an eternal mind of absolute power and goodness. This argument will be critically analyzed and followed by the revised form

Campbell develops to avoid Locke's errors. The former begins as Locke does with the assumption that something cannot proceed from nothing and that every effect has to be preceded by an adequate cause or series of causes. But at this point he insists that any argument which moves from a series of causes to a First Cause is logically unsound. Such an argument cannot account for the idea of God. Thus a prior step, which Locke tries to make but which he cannot without using revelation, is necessary to describe the origin of the idea of God. Locke has already shown how men's ideas are dependent on experience, but the point is men do not have experience of God. Campbell insists that the idea is supernatural in origin and that Locke's failure to appreciate the fact is a serious mistake. Why Campbell believes this will be shown more fully in the text of this chapter.

Chapter 4 will examine Locke's concept of faith. Basically, he distinguishes between religious faith and probable opinion by noting that, even though both rely on probability, faith contains elements which are above reason and therefore depend on revelation at some point. He sometimes speaks of religious faith as the greatest certainty--based on revelation--while at other times he says it is merely probable. He appears to state contradictory things about faith, but his statements have to be taken in the overall context of his proof for the existence

of God. In relating religious faith to the existence of God, he is dealing with certainty because God's existence can be demonstrated by a sound deductive argument. Otherwise, religious faith is only probable because it depends on the testimony of witnesses. His cosmological argument must be sound, therefore, in order to keep him from being inconsistent regarding faith.[6]

Alexander Campbell's concept of faith, as described in chapter 5, takes into account various features of Locke's view. These include the claims that faith is an assent to facts, that it depends on revelation and that it is not contrary to reason. At this point, however, he goes beyond Locke by showing how faith is an integral part of man's existence. He then argues that faith being necessary, the Christian faith is the most natural and reasonable for man to follow because this faith is revealed and contains an absolute system of ethics. These last ideas, of course, are shared by Locke.

In the areas of knowledge, the existence of God, and faith (this is the logical sequence because faith takes over where knowledge ends), it can be shown that Campbell's rationalistic theology depends on his understanding of Locke's various writings. Locke drew the boundaries of knowledge and Campbell built his theology on the foundation which

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[6]It seens to me that there is no consistent means by which Locke can distinguish between faith and mere probable opinion without the cosmological argument being true.

the former laid for him. He found in Locke a philosopher who is sympathetic to religion and one who provides a sound basis for developing a rational justification for the Christian faith.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF KNOWLEDGE

John Locke's Theory of Knowledge

Knowledge and certainty

According to Locke, being certain is a defining characteristic of knowing.[7] His analysis of knowledge indicates its basic constituents are the perceiving mind, sensation, reflection, ideas, and judgments. As James Gibson has shown, genuine knowledge, for Locke, must have three essential characteristics: It must be certain, be instructive and have as its object that which is objectively

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[7] "Where it is not . . . though we may fancy, guess, or believe, yet we always come short of knowledge." IV. i. 2–3. In knowing the existence of God he wants "to show . . . that we are capable of knowing, i.e. being certain that there is a God." IV. x. 1. Again he remarks in the "Elements of Natural Philosophy," The Philosophical Works of John Locke, with a preliminary discourse and notes by J. A. St. John (London: George Virtue, 1843), p. 604, hereafter cited as Philosophical Works; "Knowledge . . . consists in the perception of the truth of affirmative or negative propositions." Where perception means intuitive certainty as described in IV. ii. 1, "the mind is at no pains of proving or examining, but perceives the Truth, as the eye doth light." Locke is even more positive in his "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester" when he states: "With me, to know and to be certain is the same thing: what I know, that I am certain of, and what I am certain of, that I know. What reaches to knowledge, I think may be called certainty; and what comes short of certainty, I think cannot be called knowledge." Philosophical Works, p. 532. Also see IV. iv. 18. This is a very strong position because it means that a knowledge claim is valid if and only if it is certain. Campbell secured a copy of Locke's letters to Stillingfleet

'given' or real.[8] Reduced to its bare minimum, knowledge is "nothing but the perception of the connexion of the agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas. In this alone it consists."[9] Agreement and disagreement among ideas may be analyzed into four basic types: identity, or diversity; relation; co-existence, or necessary connexion; and real existence.[10]

These agreements and disagreements, in Locke's view, contain all the possibilities for knowledge. As he remarks,

> All the inquiries we can make concerning any of our ideas, all we can know or can affirm concerning any of them, is, that it is, or is not, the same with some other; that it does or does not always co-exist with some other idea in the same subject; that it has this or that relation with some other ideas; or that it has real existence without the mind.[11]

Specific examples of each type of relationship are given by him as follows:

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in 1836 and began publishing them in that year's Millennial Harbinger. Alexander Campbell, ed., The Millennial Harbinger (Bethany: By the Editor, 1830-1864), pp. 252-253; 463-465, hereafter cited as MH.

[8]James Gibson, Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1917), pp. 2-4.

[9]IV. i. 1. Stillingfleet questioned this definition of knowledge as being detrimental to the Christian faith. Locke answers this charge in his "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester" by curtly stating that he "will give off the placing of certainty in the perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, if your lordship will be pleased to show that it lies in anything else." Philosophical Works, p. 531.

[10]IV. i. 3.

[11]IV. i. 7.

> Thus blue is not yellow, is of identity. Two triangles upon equal bases between parallels are equal, is of relation. Iron is susceptible of magnetical impressions, is of co-existence, God is, is of real existence.[12]

Intuition (perception--Locke often uses the two interchangeably) is a necessary condition for knowledge because it allows the individual to grasp the relational connections among ideas immediately. With these basic types of agreement and disagreement, together with intuition, Locke believes he holds the key to all knowledge.[13]

The ideas on which knowledge depends are, in the first instance, received by a passive mind. Actual knowing therefore depends on bringing the mind into attentive consideration of its perceptual experience. In every case of knowing "where this perception is, there is knowledge; and where it is not . . . we always come short of knowledge."[14] Moreover, according to Locke, this perception is either mediate or immediate. Mediate perception results from deductive reasoning where each step in the deduction itself is perceived by intuition to be true. But immediate perception is limited to "seeing" the relationship between two ideas; that is, by comparing two ideas in the mind, "We see, or,

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[12] Ibid.

[13] He argues extensively for this view in IV. iii. 1-21. Essentially, he insists knowledge is limited to ideas which may be reduced to one or more of the relations he has listed. Cf. Richard I. Aaron, John Locke (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 225-227.

[14] IV. i. 2.

as it were, behold their agreement or disagreement."[15] This reference to seeing, which Locke uses concerning intuition, gives an important hint as to his understanding of the perceptual process.

Intuition is a kind of internal "seeing" analogous to external vision. Thus, two ideas, according to Locke's theory, can be compared or contrasted in much the same, say, that two external objects can be.[16] His attempts to clarify what he means by intuition are not very successful, showing only that it occurs during introspection so that,

> if we will reflect on our own ways of thinking, we shall find, that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other: and this, I think, we may call intuitive knowledge.[17]

Indeed, he thinks pure intuition requires no proof at all and in the proper conditions will "see the truth, just as the eye needs nothing more than an object and light by which to see.[18] One knows immediately, for instance, "that white

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[15]See his "Elements of Natural Philosophy," Philosophical Works, p. 604.

[16]See R. S. Woolhouse, Locke's Philosophy of Science and Knowledge (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971), p. 36: "When Locke talks of ideas in connexion with perception . . . he thinks of them as mental images of objects and their qualities." Locke states, for instance, "These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted . . . than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce." II. i. 25.

[17]IV. ii. 1.

[18]Ibid.

is not black, and that a circle is not a triangle."[19]

He very often speaks as if perception and intuition are the same thing. But when he is more careful, he makes the proper distinction, as, for example, when he points out that some perceptions may be mistaken.[20] At other times, however, he says, "Where this perception is, there is knowledge,"[21] thereby identifying knowledge with one type of perception. The reason he speaks like this is that he believes perception has various degrees of accuracy.[22] The highest degree of perception he calls intuition--here there can be no error. This distinction avoids the fallacy that since all intuition is perception, all perception is intuition.

Other than saying it has degrees and can be certain, he does not elaborate on his theory of intuition. We must therefore look to the source of his theory as it is found in Descartes and the Cartesians, for it is generally agreed that Locke extensively revised his theory of knowledge

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[19]It is true that Locke knows these are "trifling propositions" and add nothing to our body of knowledge. The only interesting example he can give is that relating to personal existence. (I will come back to this subject later in this paper.) IV. viii. In fact the distinction between "trifling" and instructive propositions is just that the latter add to the body of knowledge while the former do not; see Woolhouse, pp. 10-11.

[20]Especially II. vii. 19-22.

[21]IV. i. 2.

[22]Especially as the problem of perceptual error shows up in children and the aged. II. ix. 5-14.

during the years he spent in France between 1675 and 1679.[23] Justification for taking this position is based, partly at least, on the fact that the section on knowledge and its dependency on intuition found in Book IV of the Essay does not appear in the original drafts of 1671. Moreover, the similarity between Locke's language in Book IV, regarding knowledge, and that of the Cartesians is more than mere coincidence. Intuition and its function in knowledge is a specific example of this similarity.

Thus if one examines Descartes' writing on intuition, expecially "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," it is difficult to believe Locke did not borrow significantly from him. Regarding intuition Descartes wrote that it is "not the fluctuating testimony of the senses . . . but the conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives us so readily and distinctly that we are wholly freed from doubt about that which we understand."[24] He goes on to add, "intuition is the undoubting conception of an unclouded and

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[23]See for instance, Aaron, p. 200-201; J. D. Mabbot, John Locke (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1973), pp. 52-53, 76-78, 84, 98, as well as the whole section in Gibson's "Locke and Descartes," pp. 205-232. Gibson notes that the two agree not only in their positive views but are guilty of the same inconsistencies (p. 212).

[24]Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, The Philosophical Works of Descartes (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 7. Cf. Locke, Essay, IV. ii. 1. Descartes also writes, "This evidence and certitude, however, which belongs to intuition, is required not only in the enunciation of propositions, but also in discursive reasoning of whatever sort." Ibid. Locke agrees, "Certainty depends so wholly on this intuition, that in the next degree of knowledge, which I call demonstrative, this intuition is necessary in all the connexions of the intermediate ideas." IV. ii. 1.

attentive mind, and springs from the light of reason alone; it is more certain than deduction itself . . ."[25] By intuition Descartes means the natural function of the mind in grasping truth. "Intuition is not a fitting together of premises, but a dialectic. Given certain data, they produce out of themselves a further truth; it is a natural process, and that is why it is impossible to make a false inference."[26] In another way, then, intuition is like seeing--it is as natural a function of the mind to think as it is for the eyes to see--but with this important difference, intuition cannot be mistaken. This was the incorrigible element Locke needed for his epistemology. He sought some means by which knowledge might be attained without having to resort to innate ideas or principles, and intuition appeared to answer his needs exactly.

In the first place, according to the Cartesians, intuitive knowledge is direct and immediate, implying that the mind has the inherent power to apprehend truth directly and incorrigibly. This theory was the very thing Locke needed to blunt the challenge brought forth by the sceptics, namely that nothing is beyond doubt. He believed that surely the sceptics could not doubt those things which are intuitively certain, such as the perception that "white is not black" and "that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Norman Smith, Studies in the Cartesian Philosophy (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 34.

right ones."[27] He was so certain, in fact, that he went on to declare that these are examples such that "no one who has the use of reason can miss them, where it is necessary they should be taken notice of; nor doubt of their truth, when he does take notice of them."[28] However, it is only because the first is a tautology and the latter "is a necessary consequence of its precise complex idea" that they are beyond doubt. The first adds nothing to what is already known. The statement about triangles follows from the axioms of mathematics, also falling short of actually giving information regarding the world.[29]

Basically, then, the difficulty with his theory of intuition is that it is empty, at least on two counts: when he tries to describe how it works and in the examples of intuitive knowledge which he gives. What he finally does say is that we know certain kinds of things, knowledge of these is certain and intuition is the method for knowing. But if these premises are true, Locke could have made the same claim without including intuition. More importantly,

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[27] IV. i. 2; ii. 1.

[28] IV. viii. 3.

[29] IV. vii. 6. Also IV. viii. 8. The problem with both examples, then, is their failure to indicate how intuition functions. Woolhouse, however, does argue that the last example, at least, is instructive. He remarks, "the idea of having an external angle larger than the internal angles is not 'contained' in that of being a triangle," p. 15. In this observation he is right, but knowledge is still not extended to what Locke calls "real" existence and this is the area where intuition is needed if knowledge of God and of the world is to be attained.

the identical argument he uses against innate ideas might be applied to his theory of intuition.[30] If innateness is unnecessary, then so is intuition. Because to say that one knows something by intuition is not to say anything more than that one knows. If knowing and intuition are identical, then why use both terms? If they are distinct, Locke must explain that distinction.

Knowledge, however, can be attained in other ways besides direct intuition. Locke designates this second type of knowing as that which is acquired through demonstration. Like intuition, knowledge by demonstration is certain. It is distinguished from intuition by the following: (1) the recognition of agreement among ideas is mediate, (2) intervening ideas or proof are required, and (3) memory is by necessity involved.[31] He says demonstration is:

> The mediate perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas is when by the intervention of one or more other ideas, their agreement or disagreement is shown. . . . For instance, the inequality of the breadth of two windows, or two rivers, or any two bodies that cannot be put together, may be known by the intervention of some measure applied to them both . . .[32]

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[30] I. ii. 1. In fact, his position in Bk. II, which insists all knowledge depends on experience, conflicts with Bk. IV, unless intuition is to be included in sensation. If so, then he needs to indicate how it functions in sensation, and this he fails to do. Cf. Gibson, pp. 124-25; Aaron, pp. 221-24. Neither offers any insight into what Locke means by intuition.

[31] IV. iii. 1-4. Also, an element of doubt often preceeds the demonstration--doubt is totally lacking for intuitive knowledge.

[32] "Elements of Natural Philosophy," Philosophical

The standard by which ideas are to be compared is composed of the relational agreements or disagreements outlined by Locke as identity, relation, co-existence and real existence.[33] If this analysis is true, then demonstrative knowledge can be attained in a precise manner by using these relations he developed.

Locke seems to be saying, for example, that two ideas such as color and shape combined with necessary coexistence lead to the intuition that all things which have shape are extended.[34] The argument, according to O'Connor, can be symbolized in this way: let C stand for an object which has color, S for its shape and E for extension, while r refers to necessary coexistence. As a result

> We then see that these two statements have a common term 'shape' (S) and also that, in Locke's language, the idea of shape agrees with itself in respect of the relation of identity. Then by a further intuition, we telescope CrS and SrE into CrE, eliminating the common term and arriving at the conclusion that all colored terms are extended.[35]

Works, p. 604; cf. IV. ii. 3-7, where Locke says of demonstration that it is not as clear as intuitive knowledge, intuition is necessary for every step in demonstration, and it is not limited to mere quantity.

[33] IV. i. 2.

[34] D. J. O'Connor, John Locke (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), p. 167. The example is taken from O'Connor's excellent treatment of Locke's epistemology. See also, pp. 166-171. Cf. Mabbot, pp. 81-82.

[35] Ibid., p. 168.

If O'Connor is right, however, Locke's approach is mistaken for two reasons: (1) No one actually reasons this way and Locke is attempting to describe empirically how men do indeed think. (2) It is logically inadequate.[36] The validity of this type of relational argument holds only for transitive relations such as "equal to," "greater than" and "subsequent to."[37] In fact, the only area in which Locke's position seems promising is in mathematics, but mathematical truths follow from logical rules and not merely from the relational agreement of the ideas involved. At best then, Locke's method has very limited application.

His account of demonstration would be more nearly adequate if he had recognized the value of the syllogism. Instead he criticized it and failed to develop an alternative form of inference by which his standard of necessary relation could be defended. According to O'Connor, Locke might have gone further and

> done justice to the actual process of inference by two adjustments to his theory of knowledge which would have been made without seriously affecting its basic principles . . . (1) to admit <u>propositions</u> as complex ideas; (2) to admit the logical relations between propositions as ways of 'agreement' between ideas.[38]

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] O'Connor, p. 171. Locke's criticism is found in IV. xvii. 4-6. Essentially, he says that the syllogism is no assistance to reasoning, especially in probabilities, and does not improve knowledge and that inferences are seen better without it. In fact, Stillingfleet made O'Connor's point to Locke. He insisted that one has to rely on the

Failure to make such adjustments left his theory of knowledge much too narrow and logically unjustifiable.

Locke recognizes a third form of knowing which he calls "sensitive" knowledge. He distinguishes among the types or degrees of knowledge by saying that "The knowledge of the Existence of any other thing [besides knowledge of personal existence and the existence of God] we can have only by sensation."[39] Earlier he states:

> There is, indeed, another perception of the mind employed about the particular existence of finite beings without us; which going beyond bare probability, and yet not reaching perfectly to either of the foregoing degrees of certainty, passes under the name of knowledge.[40]

Locke attempts to justify sensitive knowledge but is not really successful. Where general truths are concerned, his claim that epistemological certainty comes by intuition and demonstration is firmly held, but he begins to waver and become unsure of himself when he insists particulars are known by sensation. He defines knowledge as that which is certain, having to do only with relations among ideas, and as long as he sticks to general truths or vague entities

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syllogism by developing an argument from incorrigible principles and basing it on reason. Intuition is not inherently correct; but Locke rejected this conclusion by noting that in so far as the syllogism leads to knowledge it depends on intuition. See the "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," Philosophical Works, pp. 580-83; also, Aaron, pp. 222-23. The second of O'Connor's criticisms is based on the fact that Locke did not include logical relations between propositions as one of his ways of agreement between ideas. See IV. i. 3.

[39] IV. xi. 1.

[40] IV. ii. 14; cf. IV. xix. 1.

like God and self, his use of intuition is at least understandable. But, if knowledge is only of ideas in relational clusters, how can he justify his claim to know particulars without abandoning his theory of knowledge? In order to answer this question--and Locke recognized its seriousness--he appealed to what he called the "real existence" of things.[41]

Knowledge and perception

The basic assumption behind his positing the existence of corporeal objects is a causal theory of perception.[42] Simple ideas, as he has already argued, are neither mind-dependent nor actual creations of the mind. He notes, "it is not in the power of the most exalted wit . . . to invent or frame one new simple idea . . . nor can any force of the understanding, destroy those that are there . . ."[43] The simple ideas require something external. Locke therefore believes he can logically argue for the existence of things as that causal factor:

> In fine, then, when our senses do actually convey into our understandings any idea, we cannot but be satisfied that there doth something at that time really exist without us, which doth affect our senses, and by them give notice of itself to our apprehensive faculties, and actually produce

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[41] IV. xi. 2,3. See, also, Aaron, p. 245: "Sensation carries with it a tang of reality in a way in which imagination does not."

[42] II. viii. 1. "Whatsoever is so constituted in nature, as to be able . . . to cause any perception in the mind, doth thereby produce in the understanding a simple idea."

[43] II. ii. 2. Campbell makes a great deal of this point, as will be seen.

> that idea we then perceive: and we cannot so far distrust their testimony, as to doubt that such collections of simple ideas as we have observed by our senses to be united together, so really exist together.[44]

A further justification for insisting on the "real existence" of external objects is found in the distinction between actual sensation and dreaming. For example, he remarks that there is a vast difference between dreaming about being in a fire and indeed being in it.[45] Although dreams or imagination may arrange ideas into the most extreme patterns, neither of these can enlarge on the mind's store of simple ideas. At the same time, if the mind is not the creative agent (as it might be if innate ideas were possible), then the other source has to be the reality of external things.[46]

Locke's view of perceptual knowledge of external things may be summarized in the following manner:

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[44] IV. xi. 9. See, also, Maurice Mandelbaum, "Locke's Realism," Philosophy, Science and Sense Perception: Historical and Critical Studies (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), pp. 55-60. Objects exist, according to Locke, "in their own right, independently of us . . . [and] they possess the characteristics which . . . cause us to form the ideas which we do form of them," p. 60.

[45] IV. xi. 7.

[46] "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas . . ." II. i. 2. Also, "For whatever we know is all either inscribed in our hearts by a gift of nature and a certain privilege of birth, or conveyed to us by hearsay, or drawn by us from the senses," Essays on the Law of Nature, edited by W. Von Leyden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 125. Locke has no doubt at all that the latter alternative is the correct one. It is simply that this alternation covers all possibilities, or, put in logical symbolism, A v B, and - B, so therefore A.

1. Whatever begins to be is caused [truth of reason]

2. Our sensations begin to be [truth of experience]

3. Therefore, our sensations are caused [from 1, 2]

4. Either we cause our sensations or something else does [truth of reason, viz., A or not -A]

5. We do not cause our sensations, for we passively receive them [truth of experience]

6. Therefore, something else, which we call "matter," causes them [from 4, 5][47]

This theory of perception regarding knowledge of corporeal objects is a wide departure from the strict empiricism Locke has advocated earlier. The use of cause and effect to justify inferring external objects is not a happy result for Locke, but he has been forced into it. If his claim to know is not to be limited to tautologies and personal existence, then he must find some means to connect it with objective reality. In order to do this, he devises a causal theory of perception in which the objects of that perception are inferred.[48] Perceptions must arise from an

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[47]IV. xi., especially 2-4. Locke adds that "those that want the organs of any sense, never can have the ideas belonging to that sense produced in their minds," IV. xi. 4. One of his favorite examples is that of the man born blind who would therefore lack any idea of colors. This example also proves, according to Locke, that the ideas are not created by the organs themselves because a man in the dark cannot see colors, Ibid. See also, Philosophical Works, pp. 600-601.

[48]See, however, Richard Aaron's claim that Locke's theory of sensitive knowledge is not an inference, p. 246. Yet Aaron makes no effort to prove this is a correct view except to say, "the existence of objects independent of us

external stimulus acting upon the various sense organs. Therefore, he insists,

> Simple ideas are not fictions of our fancies, but the natural and regular production of things without us, really operating upon us . . . the idea of whiteness, or bitterness, as it is in the mind, exactly answering the power which is in any body to produce it there, has all the real conformity it can, or ought to have, with things without us. And this conformity between our simple ideas, and the existence of things, is sufficient for real knowledge.[49]

Thus, the perceiving mind and the external world are perfectly matched, according to Locke, to produce knowledge of simple ideas. The concept of knowledge advocated here is a version of the correspondence theory of truth, but it has some similarity to the pragmatic theory that the practical value of ideas determines, to a large extent, their truth. He is saying in effect that as long as simple ideas conform in a practical way to human needs--as in deciding between imaginary and real fire--then this is all that a knowledge claim requires at this level.[50]

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is no inference for Locke . . ." Obviously, though, whenever one knows only effects, and by analogy must construct the cause, then inference is the means by which the causal agent is known. Cf. IV. iii. 29.

[49] IV. iv. 4.

[50] Of course, there is the further condition that it must be consistent with the rest of our experience. But he wants to know "the use of this knowledge" and its limits, IV. iv. 1. "The things that, as far as our observation reaches, we constantly find to proceed regularly, we may conclude, do act by a law set them; but yet a law, that we know not," IV. iii. 29. See, also, Mandelbaum, "Locke's Realism." "The experience to which we must appeal is . . . our ordinary observation in daily life," p. 40. The value of knowledge for its practical results shows up even more

In summary, simple ideas are known by means of sensation, based on the following factors: the simple ideas are not innate, they are not creations of the imagination, often they are perceived without the perceiver soliciting them, therefore they must have an external cause. Moreover, simple ideas are found to be consistent with our practical needs. All of these factors support Locke's claim that some kind of external reality stands behind simple ideas.[51]

The importance of simple ideas for Locke cannot be over-emphasized. They form the empirical basis for the structure of more complex ideas, but the claim to know the latter was much more difficult to defend. Concerning substances, he writes:

> Our ideas of substances being supposed copies, and referred to archetypes without us, must still be taken from something that does or has existed; they must not consist of ideas put together at the pleasure of our thoughts, without any real pattern they were taken from, though we can perceive no inconsistency in such a combination.[52]

The real patterns he mentions here are further described as

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clearly in mathematics and morality. Mathematical entities, Locke says, "tis possible be never found either of them existing mathematically, i.e. precisely true, in his life." Their value is not lessened, however, because they serve their needed purpose. IV. iv. 6. Morality depends on conformity with a rule of action. II. xxvii. 11-14, and expecially 15.

[51]Aaron's guarded statement about Locke's position here is close to the truth, when he notes, "the view that things do exist externally is a satisfactory explanation of our sensory experience, p. 146.

[52]IV. iv. 12.

being those that "are made up of such simple ones, as have been discovered to co-exist in nature."[53] Imaginary substances such as the centaur,

> Having made conformable to no pattern existing that we know, and consisting of such collections of ideas as no substance ever showed us united together, they ought to pass with us for barely imaginary.[54]

There are real difficulties with Locke's epistemology, however. The two problems which have direct bearing on the subject of religious knowledge are those surrounding substance and the related issue of real as opposed to nominal essence. Substance is relevant, of course, because God, though a Spirit, is a substance. If a knowledge claim is more than a fiction or a conventional way of looking at things, it must have reference to some substantial or objective reality. What that is and how it is known depends on whether the real essence of an object can be known. This issue applies directly to knowledge of God.

Locke begins by making a distinction between knowing substance <u>per se</u> and a particular substance. Even here he admits,

> We have no such clear idea at all, and therefore signify nothing by the word <u>substance</u>, but only an uncertain supposition of we know not what. . . .

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[53]Ibid. Gibson's comment here is helpful, "We must be able to show that the combination of qualities, which constitutes the specific content of our ideas, has been actually presented in experience," p. 132.

[54]II. xxx. 5.

> [An] idea, which we take to be substratum, or support, of those Ideas we do know.[55]

At the same time, it is obvious to any observer that certain "simple ideas go constantly together" and as a consequence, "not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom our selves, to suppose some substratum, wherein they do subsist."[56] This substratum, which it is necessary to posit in order to account for the same simple ideas, Locke designates as substance.

For this idea of substance, Stillingfleet insists, Locke has departed from his claim "that the materials of all our knowledge are suggested and furnished to the mind only by sensation and reflection."[57] That is to say, if the idea is conceived and known only by means of reason, then it is a counterexample to Locke's empirical epistemology.

Locke attempts to avoid this criticism by drawing a distinction between the general idea of substance (which does not arise by sensation and reflection) and the simple idea of relation which holds between a support and its accidents (it does enter through sensation and reflection).[58]

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[55] I. iv. 18. Cf. II. xxiii. 1.

[56] II. xxiii. 1.

[57] Philosophical Works, p. 507f. "First Letter to the Bishop of Worcester." Also, II. xxiii. 2-4.

[58] Ibid. There is one problem here, however; in order to perceive a relation, it is necessary to have at least two things, X and Y. But in this situation Locke has only X as a perceived quality (simple idea); the other side Y (substance) is completely unknown. See his discussion of relation in II. xxv. Again Locke is forced to make an exception for his doctrine of substance.

By way of example, he writes,

> All ideas of all the sensible qualities of a cherry come into my mind by sensation: the ideas of perceiving, thinking, reasoning, knowing, etc., come into my mind by reflection. The ideas of these qualities and actions, or powers, are perceived by the mind, to be by themselves inconsistent with existence. . . . Hence the mind perceives their necessary connexion with inherence, or being supported, which being a relative idea, super-added to the red color in a cherry, or to thinking in a man, the mind frames the correlative idea of a support. For I never denied, that the mind could frame to itself ideas of relation.[59]

Thus he tries to circumvent Stillingfleet's criticism by making the idea of substance depend on simple ideas related by perceptual necessity and discovered as a recurring phenomenon. It is true that the complex idea is a logical construct, but it is based on actual perception and serves as an explanation for an otherwise inexplicable mystery. That is, why do the same qualities always appear in the same object? And what serves to hold them together in just these recognized patterns? Substance is the answer which Locke gave to both questions.

The idea of spirits or spiritual substances is conceived in the same way,

> by supposing a substance, wherein thinking, knowing, doubting, and a power of moving, etc. do subsist, we have as clear a notion of the substance of Spirit, as we have of body; the one being supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the substratum to those simple ideas we have from without; and the other supposed (with a like

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[59]"First Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," Philosophical Works, p. 508; cf. II. xxxiii. 3-4.

> ignorance of what it is) to be the substratum to those operations, which we experiment in our selves within.[60]

Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a thing which has or unites in one location the observable qualities of any particular object. All substances have this specific quality in common: they form the unitary core for any object which can be named.[61]

A real as opposed to a nominal essence is this central core which holds the qualities together in order to form a particular object. Consequently, when Locke writes of "some substratum wherein [the qualities] do subsist, and from which they do result," he appears to be identifying the substratum with the real essence.[62] This identification does not really clarify Locke's concept of substance; rather,

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[60] II. xxiii. 5.

[61] See especially, II. xxiii. 6, "Tis by such combinations . . . that we represent particular sorts of substances to ourselves." Cf. J. L. Mackie, Problems from Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 76: "It is in this sense reasonable to postulate a thing which has all these properties. . . ." Mackie also remarks, "it is by belonging to this one underlying something that they are all held together and go to make one complete thing," p. 77.

[62] See II. xxiii. 3; II. xxiii. 1; and Mackie, p. 77. Also, notice John W. Yolton, Locke and the Compass of Human Understanding (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1970), p. 107; who disagrees by saying, "We can never say our ideas are conformable to the real essence of an object." This is not precise, however, if we can say the real essence is that which causes the qualities to recur in the same pattern on every occasion. Mackie is more nearly correct when he says, "The real essence is the particular internal constitution," p. 77. As Locke told Stillingfleet, "it is the relation we perceive and know in particular objects and their qualities." "First Letter to the Bishop of Worcester,"

it introduces another idea which must be defended. Real essences and substances are unknown and unknowable entities. They are clear departures from his empirical philosophy and are necessary because that philosophical position cannot explain all perceptual phenomena.

He introduces a causal theory of perception to justify his claim to know corporeal objects. Once this has been admitted, he is then compelled to explain what could be known beyond the fact that objects do exist externally to the human mind. At this point, he is still confined to intuitive knowledge of his own existence and a vague world of objects which cause simple ideas. That theory leaves too much of the world outside the boundaries of knowledge. He now introduces substance, as a metaphysically necessary postulate, and as the object which makes perception possible. The problem with this approach is that any aspect of Locke's view on substance, real essence, or his causal theory of perception, can be denied without apparent self-contradiction, which would not be true if his theories were incorrigibly certain. In any case, the whole network of problems will recur in his attempt to prove the existence of God.[63] But

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Philosophical Works, p. 508. He also remarks that "a relation cannot be founded on nothing." See, also, II. xxv. 1-10.

[63]Mackie tries to defend Locke by arguing that what is found in the treatment of substance is not Locke's view, but his report of what the common person says about substance. Even if this were true, it does not explain Locke's answer when pressed by Stillingfleet to give a different view; he admits "that [he] can introduce . . . only an obscure, confused, imperfect, inadequate idea of substance."

before going into that problem, it is time to sketch in the theory of knowledge which Campbell took over from Locke.

Alexander Campbell's Use of Locke's Epistemology

Knowledge and certainty

In his religious debates as well as in his various books and articles, Campbell makes a clear distinction between faith and knowledge. He believes much confused thinking, especially as applied to Christianity, is caused by a failure at this critical point. For instance, he charges that Robert Owen's criticism and rejection of religion rests in the main on just this confusion. Of Owen he says, "I am apprehensive that he confounds, or uses interchangeably, the terms belief, knowledge and opinion."[64] As a result, Owen's attempt to explain his reasons for rejecting religion lack precision and show a basic misunderstanding of religious epistemology. His criticism is unsound, according to Campbell, because it relies on an ambiguous use of belief, knowledge, and opinion.

Mackie, pp. 79-80. And see Philosophical Works, p. 512, "We must still talk like children" on the subject of substance.

[64]Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 67. Cf. MH(1836), p. 166: "Faith, knowledge, opinion, are . . . by our best speakers and writers sometimes confounded--they mean three things, not one, or two." Also, see MH(1834), p. 344 for a definition of faith. A Debate between Alexander Campbell and N. L. Rice (Lexington, Kentucky: By A. R. Skillman & Son, 1844), pp. 618-620; hereafter cited as Campbell-Rice Debate.

Writing on this same theme, he explains the various differences among these basic terms:

> Faith is the simple belief of testimony, or confidence in the word of another. Knowledge is the experience we have of things within us; or the information we acquire by the exercise of our senses and judgment on the things without us. Opinion is no more than probable evidence, the view or conclusion which the mind forms by its reasonings and reflections on those things of which there is no certain evidence within one's reach.[65]

Knowledge, in distinction from faith, is the same for Campbell as for Locke. That is, the paradigm for knowledge is the certainty that arises from the immediate perception of the "given" in personal experience, while faith depends on the credibility or testimony found in a reliable document or witness. The criteria for separating the three depends on the faculty or method by which each is attained:

> Belief always depends upon the testimony of others; knowledge upon the evidence of our senses; opinion, upon our own reasonings. . . . I know this desk is before me, I do not (merely) believe it . . . . I know that which is communicated to my sensorium through the awareness of my senses; and all that is thus communicated we dominate knowledge.[66]

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[65]MH(1836), p. 166. Cf. IV. xviii. 2. for Locke's view of faith. Knowledge is limited to our ideas in Locke's theory; these ideas originate in experience, that is, by sensation and reflection, IV. iii. For opinion, see IV. xv. 3, "receiving any proposition . . . without certain knowledge that it is so."

[66]Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 67. The simple ideas serve knowledge in the same way that facts serve faith. Each is the basic constituent out of which the whole of knowledge and faith are constructed.

What he says here, however, should not be taken to mean that all knowledge arises strictly through sensation. This interpretation would contradict what he has said in other places. It would also have the unfortunate result of negating mathematical truths, the general laws in science, and the possibility of proving the existence of God. Along this line he writes,

> All the knowledge we have of material nature has been acquired by the exercise of our senses and of our reason upon these discoveries. All our ideas of the sensible universe are the result of sensation and reflection.[67]

In the context of the debate, he is simply pointing out how Owen's failure to differentiate between faith and knowledge makes it impossible to account for knowing, even at the fundamental level of sense perception. Just as significant, when the claim is made that knowledge arises from sense experience, this does not imply that all sense experience is veridical. On the contrary, some perceptions are deceptive; and just as important, it is a logical fallacy to go from the idea that all knowledge begins in sensation to the converse that all sensation gives knowledge.[68]

The three sources of knowledge, then, are sensation,

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[67] Campbell-Rice Debate, p. 618; cf. MH(1836), p. 166, where he notes that knowledge has to do "with the experience of things within us" (i.e. with reflective thinking and judgment).

[68] Campbell certainly recognized this type of fallacy for he said, "Every man is an animal; but it does not follow that every animal is a man." MH(1836), p. 167.

reflection and deduction. In sensation ideas are "communicated to my sensorium through the awareness of my senses,"[69] according to Campbell. This leads to knowledge of things external and gives the basic distinction between belief and knowledge. An individual believes what he receives on testimony from others, but he knows that which he experiences personally. Thus he writes, "If I hear one say, 'I believe my eyes--my ears,' I am aware he either speaks ignorantly or figuratively."[70] This is a fundamental misuse of language, in Campbell's view, for it shows a failure to understand how knowing differs from believing. As will be pointed out later, the external world causes the ideas which the senses carry to the mind. Without this causal process, there would be no ideas to know at all.

Sensation provides the ideas which reflection arranges into the most intricate and complex patterns. Here knowledge depends on "the agreement of words with their proper meanings . . . and the things which they represent."[71] Deduction is one method of reflection which leads to genuine knowledge. If the propositions expressed in the premises

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[69] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 67.

[70] MH(1836), p. 168.

[71] Ibid., p. 167. Campbell's epistemology, like his theory of language, is a building-block procedure. Knowledge results from simple ideas as the basic constituents out of which complex ideas are formed. Language is the result of words constructed out of the letters of the alphabet. Ideas furnish man with the raw materials for knowing and the alphabet provides him with the materials for words and language. Cf. II. vii. 10.

are true, then the conclusion leads to knowledge. For example, proof for the existence of God is "according to reason" and provides the single element of knowledge which an individual can have regarding religious truth. As a result, man's relationship to God is one of faith rather than knowledge.

Thus Campbell has a theology of faith and Locke is a primary source for this position. This applies to the view that knowledge is extremely narrow, as well as to the possibility of arguing successfully for the existence of God. If God exists, for instance, and if man is to know this truth, then the idea of God must be innate, attained by way of the senses or given through revelation. In order to discover by what means the idea of God has reached man, Campbell analyses the perceptual process. His theory of perception, though naive, is essentially Lockian.

Knowledge and perception

Thus, what is discovered about Campbell's epistemology is that it fails to develop more than a very primitive kind of theory. But it is just as obvious that the theory he has arises from his study of Locke's Essay. He does recognize the complexity involved in the movement from bare experience to actual knowing. The best explanation of this process is a causal theory of perception as found in Locke's writings. It is by means of the senses, Campbell explains, that

> Communications are made to some internal power or principle called the mind. The mind through the senses, by what is called sensation, has the power of perception, by which I become acquainted with all things external. By memory I become acquainted with all things past; by consciousness I become acquainted with all things internal. . . . Now [he continues] sensation, perception, memory, and consciousness are just as distinct from each other as the ear, eye, or hand. But these constitute the mind as our different members constitute the body.[72]

Working together, the various activities of the mind take the ideas received through experience and classify them as truths--from which knowledge arises--or reject them as false or useless.[73]

Speaking on the same topic (i.e., sensation), Campbell notes:

> Our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind, several distinct perceptions of things, according to the various ways, wherein those objects do affect them.[74]

He goes on more specifically to describe the connection between the various sense organs and the ideas conveyed into the perceiving mind. Thus, he states:

> It is not possible, for any one to imagine any other qualities in bodies, however constituted,

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[72] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 75; cf. Locke, II. ii. 1-3.

[73] MH(1836), pp. 166-167: "Faith employs itself only with the testimony concerning some person or fact. Knowledge claims for its province the nature and properties of persons or things." This is in line with Locke's view that knowledge, at some point, has to do with the external world of particular substance and attributes.

[74] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 124. This is a direct quote of II. i. 3.

> whereby they can be taken notice of, besides, sounds, tastes, smells, visible and tangible qualities.[75]

And again,

> I would have any one try to fancy any taste, which had never affected his palate; or frame the idea of a scent he had never smelt: and when he can do this, I will also conclude, that a blind man hath ideas of colors, and a deaf man true distinct notions of sounds.[76]

By following Locke's theory of sensation during the Owen debate Campbell may say:

> The conclusion, therefore, from these premises, is, that a man born without any one of these senses, must ever remain destitute of all ideas derivable through it; that a man born deaf, dumb, blind, and without tactability, has all these avenues to intelligence closed up, and must therefore remain an idiot all his life-time . . . a man blind-born can never acquire any ideas of colors, nor a deaf-born man any ideas of sounds.[77]

Not only does Campbell follow Locke very closely here, but he uses the same examples to make his points. An interesting example is Campbell's use of the infant's observance

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[75] Ibid. Used by Campbell in the Owen Debate, pp. 124-25 from Locke's Essay II. ii. 3.

[76] Ibid., II. ii. 2. See, also, Philosophical Works, pp. 600-603, where Locke gives a more detailed analysis of the workings of the five senses. See also, Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 143-154.

[77] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 149. Cf. II. iii. 1; "If these organs . . . which are the conduits to convey them from without to their audience in the brain . . . are any of them so disordered, as not to perform their functions, they have no postern to . . . bring themselves into view, and be perceived by the understanding." In the Rice debate Campbell remarks, "A blind man has no idea of colors, nor a deaf man sounds. . . . Whatever knowledge, therefore, is peculiar to any sense can never be acquired by another," Campbell-Rice Debate, p. 618.

of candlelight. Locke had written,

> how covetous the mind is, to be furnished with all such ideas, as have no pain accompanying them, may be a little guessed, by what is observed in children new-born, who always turn their eyes to that part, from which the light comes, lay them how you please.[78]

Using the same example Campbell remarks,

> We well know that upon the presentation of a candle to the vision of an infant, there is one distinct and separate impression made upon the retina of each eye . . .[79]

Thus, not only are there important similarities between the two writers in that both assume a causal theory of perception, in which the operations of the senses are viewed as absolutely essential to attaining ideas; but it is apparent that Campbell followed Locke in the development and presentation of his epistemology. Sensation provides the raw materials out of which knowledge of the external world is gained. This knowledge is then stored in the brain by memory, used in reflection by being turned into more complex ideas or merely forgotten. The two men state that the same elements (namely, sensation, perception, memory, judgment and reflection) are necessary and sufficient for knowledge.

Knowledge, then, for Campbell has to do with simple ideas originally gained through the senses and expanded into more complex ideas by reflection. He writes, for instance,

> The mind forms ideas in accordance with the sensations impressed upon the brain. The mind

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[78] II. ix. 7.

[79] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 150.

> is perfectly conscious of the existence of these impressions; they are communicated directly to the sensorium, and here begins the intellectual process of reflecting upon, comparing, and recalling them; then presenting in different views, separating, abstracting, combining, and generalizing them. All this is in the natural operation of the intellect on the subjects presented to it by sensation.[80]

Locke's version of this process is so much like that quoted above that it seems obvious Campbell borrowed heavily from it. Notice, for example,

> This great source, of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call sensation.[81]

Locke goes on to say that, after attaining ideas by sensation,

> The mind receiving the ideas . . . from without, when it turns its view inward upon it self, and observes its own actions about those ideas it has, takes from them other ideas, which are as capable to be the objects of its contemplation, as any of those it received from foreign things.[82]

By this use of reflection, he explains, the mind develops all its complex ideas, ideas of relation, as well as abstract ideas, by three distinct methods:

> 1. Combining several simple ideas into one compound one, and thus all complex ideas are made. 2. Bring two ideas, whether simple or complex together; and setting them by one another, so as to take a view of them at once, without uniting them into one; by which way it gets all its ideas of relations.

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[80] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 151.

[81] II. i. 3.

[82] II. vi. 1.

> 3. Separating them from all other ideas that accompany them in their existence; this is called Abstraction.[83]

The importance to Campbell of this Lockian view of how ideas are gained by the human mind will be seen much more clearly when both men try to give an account of how the idea of God originated. Locke will argue that the idea originates in sensation and then is further developed through reflection, but Campbell will insist this cannot be true, based on that empiricist theory of knowledge which both men advocate.

Ideas, once they have been perceived, have to be put into some systematic and orderly structure.

> Everything is to be submitted to the most minute observation. No conclusions are to be drawn from guesses or conjectures. We are to keep within the certain limits of experimental truth. We first gather the facts, then group them together, and afterwards comes the classification and comparison of them.[84]

A natural and obvious way for beginning this procedure is to follow Locke's method of separating them into categories, each conveyed into the mind by a particular sense.[85]

Still, according to Campbell, there is need for a more systematic classification of all ideas and knowledge.

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[83] II. xii. 1.

[84] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 218ff. See IV. vii. 3, for instance. Also, see IV. xx. 2. for Locke's views on leisure, observation and experimentation.

[85] Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 148-149. Ideas of each sense are clearly spelled out by Campbell, and he concludes, "a man born without any one of these senses, must ever remain destitute of all ideas derivable through it," p. 149. Cf. Locke's version in II. iii-v. They are identical.

He remarks along this line:

> Mr. Locke, the great mental philosopher, was duly sensible of this, and sought to divide the whole world of ideas into provinces separate and distinct from each other. He so generalized ideas as to place them all under three distinct heads. These three *genera generalissima*, or grand generic ideas, are,--*things*, *actions*, *signs*. . . . According to this eminent Christian philosopher, all science pertains to these three, or these three engross all science in the world.[86]

The value to be found in this approach to knowledge and its particular functions is indicated by Campbell in showing what use he found for it.

> Following both Locke and the moderns . . . or rather putting them together and forming a *tertium quid*, a new compound, we would have five sciences of sciences, or five general sciences, which would include the whole area of human knowledge. . . . We should call them physics, metaphysics, ethics and symbolics.[87]

But he goes on to point out this is actually nothing more than what Locke had proposed. When analysed into the two fundamental areas of *being* and *action*, the new classification may be summarized along these lines:

> Thus, according to the division now contemplated, we would have two chapters of science on *things*, two chapters on *actions*, and one on signs; and this, after all, is but the perfection of Locke's views.[88]

All that pertains to man, intellectually and morally, is contained under these various headings. This provided

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[86]"Literature, Science and Art," *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (Nashville, Tennessee: Harbinger Book Club, N. D.), pp. 130-131. A lecture given in 1838. Cf. *Essay* IV. xxi.

[87]Ibid., p. 131.

[88]Ibid., p. 132.

Campbell with a new justification for claiming the Christian religion speaks to the whole man because Christianity reveals God as the basic reality and declares the proper life which the reality of God demands. And in conclusion, therefore, he insists,

> . . . that there is one science, and one art springing from it, which is the chief of all the sciences and of all the arts taught in all the schools. . . . That science, as defined by the Great Teacher, is the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has commissioned. . . . And that art which springs from it is the noblest and the finest in the universe: it is the art of doing justly, of loving mercy, and of walking humbly with our God.[89]

This way of thinking remains constant in the theology of Campbell. He never departs from the view that God is the ultimate reality which man can know. Nor does he ever reject the view that obedience to God is the only valid system of ethics. For both views he was dependent, to an important degree, on the teachings of Locke.

Finally, religious ideas are to be evaluated on the same basis as those in other historical documents. Campbell would have rejected outright the view of some contemporary writers that religious language has its own special logic or method by which its ideas are to be evaluated.[90]

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[89]Ibid., p. 141.

[90]See, for example, Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., The New Essays in Philosophical Theology (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955), pp. 96-130. This section touches on the important problem of how religious statements may be falsified. Since it is concluded that they cannot be, as they are normally formulated, the suggestion is made that they should be revised or evaluated as

On the contrary, he insists that the Bible and its witnesses are to be evaluated strictly by the standard on which all historical documents stand or fall. As he remarks,

> When we enter into an examination of the testimony on which religion is founded, we have no other scientific rules to resort to, than those which regulate and govern us in ascertaining the weight of all historical evidence.[91]

Campbell believes the Biblical record stands the test of history, otherwise he would have rejected it as worthless. He never considers the possibility of revising its statements into something less than statements of fact. Like all true historical claims, the Biblical record must be accepted or rejected on the basis of its primary witnesses. Any proof for the existence of God, therefore, has to conform to the following criteria: (1) It must be in harmony with the empiricist (i.e., the scientific or experimental) method; and (2) The proof has to be logically sound. The second criterion includes among its conditions an account of the origin of the idea of God and any deductions from this idea have to conform to the rules of right reason.

Locke's version of the cosmological argument will be presented first and then Campbell's revised form. Each will be critically analyzed in turn.

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unique statements. That is, religious statements should be reclassified as mythological, poetical, or possibly as emotive: anything other than factual.

[91] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 282. Cf., Robert F. West, Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), pp. 90-104.

CHAPTER III

PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

John Locke's Cosmological Argument

The development of Locke's argument

In their efforts to prove the existence of God, both Locke and Campbell offer a form of the Cosmological Argument. As will be seen, although they start with the same basic premises, namely, that something cannot proceed from nothing and for every effect there must be an adequate cause, they develop their arguments very differently. Essentially, the difference is caused by Campbell's perception of a problem in accounting for the origin of the idea of God, a problem which Locke does not see or fails to appreciate. Because of this issue, Campbell believes Locke's argument is logically unsound for two reasons: first, it is fallacious to argue from a series of causes to a first cause; and secondly, the origin of the idea of God is problematic for an empirical theory of knowledge such as Locke advocates. Locke rejects innateness, but then tries to show how the mind can originate the idea apart from experience. In any case, according to Campbell, the result either contradicts Locke's view on innateness or his empirical philosophy. I will begin by setting out both arguments and end with a critique and evaluation.

Locke's answer to the first problem, of how the idea of God originated, is given in two parts. To begin with, the idea of God is not innate: "If any idea can be imagined innate, the idea of God may, of all others, for many reasons, be thought so . . ."[92] Yet he goes on to note that whole nations have been discovered "among whom there was to be found no notion of a God, no religion."[93] This fact in itself effectively refutes the claim that the idea of God is innate to the human mind. At the same time, he insists that even if the notion of God were a universal characteristic of mankind, this in itself would not prove innateness. Indeed, the names of fire, sun, heat, and number are virtually universally received, but there is no justification for thinking these are innate ideas. Language and communication are a more reasonable means for explaining ideas, Locke argues. As a consequence, therefore, the doctrine of innate ideas is empty of any genuine explanatory value.

In a more positive sense, he believes that experience nature and revelation are the possible sources for the

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[92] I. iv. 8-9.

[93] Ibid. Campbell uses this point in the debate with Rice when he states, "Where the Bible has not been sent, or its traditions developed, there is not one single spiritual idea, word, or action . . . (and) six-tenths or seven-tenths of mankind are wholly given up to the most stupid idolatries or delusions," Campbell-Rice Debate, p. 619. The idea of God is shared by most nations because that idea has been filtered down to them by tradition. But knowledge of God does not necessarily lead to correct worship of Him. This is what Campbell means and it is very much in line with Locke's statement. More specifically they are saying that the idea of God is not innate.

idea of God.

Once the idea of God is acquired, it would have a natural tendency to spread to those who enjoyed a common language:

> For men, being furnished with words, by the common language of their own countries, can scarce avoid having some kind of ideas of those things, whose names, those they converse with, have occasion frequently to mention to them: and if it carry with it the notion of excellency, greatness, or something extraordinary; if apprehension and concernment accompany it; if the fear of absolute and irresistable power set it on upon the mind, the idea is likely to sink the deeper, and spread the farther; expecially if it be such an idea, as is agreeable to the common light of reason, and naturally deducible from every part of our knowledge, as that of a God is.[94]

Locke insists that the idea of God fits into this category because the marks of extraordinary wisdom and power are evident in the creation. These marks are so evident, in fact, that any rational creature who reflects on the creation cannot help but become aware of the supreme deity as the creative source of all things.[95] But this explanation merely shows how the idea of God made its way to the vast

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[94] Essay, I. iv. 9.

[95] Ibid. Cf. A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of Saint Paul (London: Printed by W. B. for A. and J. Churchill, 1706), p. 14: "The invisible things of God lie within the reach and discovery of men's reason and understanding." This is Locke's comment on Romans 1:20. From 1:19 we know he found the creation to be a pointer to God's existence. This idea is brought out with greater clarity in Essay I on The Laws of Nature when he writes, "God shows Himself to us as present everywhere and . . . forces Himself on the eyes of men . . . in the fixed course of nature." p. 109. Also see, IV. x. 7: "Our own existence, and the sensible parts of the universe, offer so clearly and

majority of mankind; it gives no clue to how the idea arose in the first place. In other words, Locke gives a chronological account of the idea, when what he needs is a logical explanation of its origin.

If the idea is not innate as Locke insists, then there was a time when men lacked it. By what means did the first man attain that idea? If it is by experience, which Locke requires to make his epistemology consistent, then what specific experience leads to the idea of deity? This is the central problem he tries to solve and needs to answer even before attempting to prove how the existence of God can be demonstrated.

According to Locke, the idea of God originated through human experience. He writes, for instance:

> Which ever of these complex ideas be clearest, that of body, or immaterial Spirit, this is evident, that the simple ideas that make them up, are no other than what we have received from sensation or reflection; and so is it of all our other ideas of substances, even of God himself.[96]

God as an idea may be accounted for in the same way that any other complex idea is conceived--by sensation and reflection. He believes complex ideas are created

> by enlarging those simple ideas, we have taken from the operations of our own minds, by reflection; or by our senses, from exterior things, to that vastness, to which infinity can extend them.[97]

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cogently to our thoughts [proof for God], that I deem it impossible for a considering man to withstand them."

[96] Essay, II. xiii. 32.

[97] Ibid. 34.

The idea of God, he argues, arises by sensation from the external world[98] and through reflection on the positive human qualities.

He gives this account of the procedure:

> the complex ideas we have both of God, and separate spirits, are made of the simple ideas we receive from reflection: e.g., having, from what we experience in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration; of knowledge and power; of pleasure and happiness; and of several other qualities and powers, which it is better to have than to be without; when we would frame an idea the most suitable we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of these with our ideas of infinity; and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God.[99]

He thus assumes that the idea of God is a complex idea made up of infinite qualities such as existence, duration, knowledge, power, pleasure and happiness. Even if the assumption is granted, a serious problem remains and Locke is keenly aware of the difficulty.

This underlying problem has to do with the question of whether the idea of God, since it is attained primarily by reflection, has any referrent external to the human mind. The question, for Locke, has to be answered in line with what he says about "real existence" and what can be known of particular substances. Ideas may refer to corporeal objects external to the mind, or they may stand for creative images of the imagination. Locke's causal theory of perception,

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[98]Observing the wonders of creation, for example, leads to the further reflections of seeking a cause and then determining the characteristics of that ultimate cause.

[99]II. xxiii. 33.

especially when simple ideas are concerned, assists him in distinguishing between real and imaginary objects. But a whole cluster of problems surrounds his attempt to distinguish between real and imagined substances.

In the first place, the term substance refers to an unknown "substratum, or support, of those ideas we do know."[100] When Stillingfleet insists that this definition means "we must allow an idea of substance, which comes not in by sensation and reflection; and so we may be certain of something which we have not by these ideas,"[101] Locke attempts to avoid this criticism by saying that the general idea of substance does not arise from sensation and reflection, but rather is a creation of the understanding based on ideas which, however, do come into the mind by sensation and are bound into a complex unity by reflection.

> Hense the mind perceives their [i.e. modes or accidents] necessary connexion with inherence, or being supported, which being a relative idea, superadded to the red color in a cherry, or to thinking in a man, the mind frames the correlative idea of a support. . . . But because a relation cannot be founded in nothing . . . the obscure and indistinct vague idea of thing, or something, is all that is left to be the positive idea, which has the relation of a support, or substratum, to modes or accidents; and that general indetermined idea of something is, by the abstraction of the mind, derived also from the simple idea of sensation and reflection.[102]

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[100] I. iv. 18.

[101] Philosophical Works, p. 507, "The First Letter to the Bishop of Worcester."

[102] Ibid., p. 508.

This being Locke's considered opinion, it is possible to conclude that the idea of substance itself is a logical inference. All he can claim to know beyond this is that a collection of simple ideas is found on repeated occasions to cohere in recognized patterns. He attempts to go beyond this position with his theory of real and nominal essences. The former distinction is of particular interest in relationship to the knowledge of God. His definition of a real essence is:

> that real constitution of any thing, which is the foundation of all those properties, that are combined in, and are constantly found to co-exist with the nominal Essence; that particular constitution, which every thing has within it self, without any relation to any thing without it.[103]

Real essences are to be distinguished from nominal essences. About the latter he says,

> it is evident they are made by the mind, and not by nature. . . . For if we will examine it, we shall not find the nominal essence of any one species of substances, in all men the same; no not of that, which of all others we are the most intimately acquainted with.[104]

The specific example Locke has in mind is the idea of man. Though the idea is the same, that is, it has a determinable real essence, the nominal essence--how the idea of man is perceived and defined--may vary from person to person.[105]

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[103] III. vi. 6.

[104] III. vi. 26.

[105] Ibid. Cf. Yolton, Locke and the Compass of Human Understanding, p. 30: "The nominal essence, the collection of qualities, is our epistemic basis for classifying into kinds."

For Locke, therefore, the real essence determines what sort of thing is perceived, while the nominal essence has to do with the class of things wherein the object is to be placed. Yolton's point is well made when he writes, "Real essence is responsible for the observable qualities by means of which things are classified into kinds, but the kinds of things that there are are a function of our ideas, not of the real essence."[106] Knowledge of real essences as a causal factor is based on a logical inference. What is known of nominal essences is determined by the type of classification one gives the sort of thing he wants to identify. As Locke states,

> between the nominal essence and the name there is so near a connexion, that the name of any sort of things cannot be attributed to any particular being but what has this essence.[107]

In order to pick out a sort of thing, therefore, one has to recognize the nominal essence. Consequently, to be recognized a thing must have that nominal essence as a defining characteristic.[108]

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[106] Ibid., p. 31. Cf. III. vi. 7.

[107] III. iii. 16. That is to say, "any particular thing to be of this or that sort (is) because it has that nominal essence," III. vi. 7.

[108] See, for example: W. Von Leyden, "What is a nominal essence the essence of?" John Locke: Problems and Perspectives. Edited by John W. Yolton (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), pp. 224-233, especially pp. 230-31. Cf., Woolhouse, pp. 96-99, where the author argues that a primary motive for Locke's distinction is to avoid sceptical relativism. Peter Geach, on the other hand, says that Locke does not allow individuals to have nominal essences and is

In reference to the knowledge of God, the doctrines of real and nominal essences, as well as "real" existence play a very important role. It is necessary to suppose that the term "God" refers to a real being with determinate qualities. The problem here is that Locke does allow the possibility of an object having real essence without existence. One might, for instance, imagine a perfect circle without existence, as found in mathematics. The critical question will then be whether God, as the most perfect Being, has real existence.

In answer to this question, Locke proposes a demonstrative argument to prove that God does indeed exist. The argument will be set out first in outline form. Then certain premises will be analyzed and critically evaluated. As Locke presented it, his argument has the following form:[109]

1. Something exists [by intuition]
2. Nothing cannot produce something [assumption: Whatever exists must be self-caused or be caused by something else]
3. What exists must have a beginning in time, or have existed forever [by alternation]
4. But if everything had a beginning, then there would be nothing now [from 2 and 3]
5. There must, then, be something which is eternal [2, 3 and 4]

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therefore mistaken. See, Reference and Generality (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 42-46. But if Geach's analysis were true, then Locke could never pick out the same thing on two different occasions--which is absurd.

[109] IV. x. 1-19.

6. This eternal something must be either mind or matter [by alternation]

7. Since matter cannot give rise to mind, and mind does exist, mind must be the eternal principle. [5, 6 and by assumption: effect cannot be greater than its cause]

8. To create the universe, including other minds, this eternal mind must be all-powerful, and all-knowing [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7]

Therefore, God, as the all-knowing, all-powerful, eternal creative force, must exist.

Critique and evaluation

Locke believes the argument to be sound. Yet in spite of his confident assertion that his proof of God's existence leads to certainty, he sometimes wavers. He writes, for instance,

> though this most obvious truth that reason discovers; and though its evidence be (if I mistake not) equal to mathematical certainty: yet it requires thought and attention; and the mind must apply it self to a regular deduction of it from some part of our intuitive knowledge.[110]

In fact, Locke has good reasons for second thoughts, for there are some serious problems regarding his proof.

The first premise, posited on his own existence, he accepts as true beyond doubt. It is based somewhat loosely on Descartes' cogito ergo sum and indicates that Locke believes the formulation sound and took it at face value. "As for our own existence," he writes,

> we perceive it so plainly, and so certainly, that it neither needs nor is capable of any proof. . . .

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[110] IV. x. 1. (my italics)

> If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence, and will not allow me to doubt of it. . . . If I know I doubt, I have as certain a perception of the existence of the thing doubting, as of that thought, which I call doubt. . . . In every act of sensation, reasoning, or thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being; and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty.[111]

Locke, of course, does not see any difficulty with this initial premise; in his mind it stands as secure as intuitive knowledge can be. But still there is a problem, and that is to determine how existence follows from thinking.

At first glance, existence appears to arise from thinking in a straightforward logical inference of the form:

$$B(a) \rightarrow (Ex)\ (x=a)$$

Where, "I think" is an attribute assigned to an individual and "I am" or "I exist" expresses existence of the same individual.[112] Thus, it may be concluded (Ex) (x=a). Put another way, "a thinks" and there exists at least one individual identical with "a." From this by means of Modus Ponens, the conclusion may be drawn:

$$B(a) \rightarrow (Ex)\ (x=a\ \&\ B(x)\ )$$[113]

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[111] IV. ix. 3. Here we have, according to Aaron, "intuitive knowledge of a single concrete existent, an 'internal infallible perception'," p. 241.

[112] See W. V. O. Quine, who states that "to be is to be a value of a bound variable." From a Logical Point of View (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954), p.9.

[113] Following the example given by Jaakko Hintikka in his excellent article, "Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference or Performance?", Descartes: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Willis Doney (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 111-112.

Apparently, then, the argument is sound, but even so, the movement from the single premise "I think" to the conclusion "I exist" has been challenged many times. One of the earliest challenges comes from Gassendi, a contemporary of Descartes.

He suggests that ambulo, ergo sum, "I walk, therefore I am" is as good an inference as cogito, ergo sum.[114] Descartes can argue that walking and thinking are not equally valid, however, because the latter is a necessary attribute while walking is merely a contingent quality. In other words, an individual may exist without walking, but he cannot exist without thinking. In any case, this defense is not available to Locke, for he does not accept the Cartesian thesis that the mind is always thinking.[115] For this reason, if for no other, Locke's version of the cogito argument is based on a synthetic proposition: that a person exists when he is thinking.[116] It is therefore conceivable in Locke's formulation that a person may actually not exist for one

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[114] In the "Objections to the Second Meditation," Haldane & Ross II, p. 137. Quoted by Hintikka, p. 112. Campbell also uses a similar criticism by Thomas Reid and writes, "Now this proof (cogito, ergo sum) was juat as illogical as if he had said, 'I have an eye or an ear, and therefore I am'." Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 44.

[115] II. i. 11-17. See also II. xix. 4: "I ask, whether it be not probable, that thinking is the action, and not the essence of the soul?" A view exactly the opposite of Descartes' own opinion.

[116] IV. ix. 3: "in every act of sensation, reasoning, or thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being; and . . . come not short of the highest . . . certainty."

moment and then exist the next. As a result, personal existence is at best a conditional of the form,

If B is thinking, then B exists.

And a conditional of this type cannot be certain;[117] but if it is not certain, then based on Locke's epistemology, it cannot qualify as knowledge.

This first premise is critical to Locke's argument, however, and if it cannot be salvaged in some form, his argument simply fails to get off the ground. His claim to know that God exists depends on a demonstrative argument, every premise of which must be intuitively certain. Clearly, his first premise as it stands is not certain.

It has been suggested that Descartes' cogito argument may be improved if it is changed from an inference to a performative proposition. The same holds for Locke's argument as well, and by following this suggestion the first premise of the cosmological proof may be preserved. Changing the argument into a performative proposition entails that it be existentially inconsistent for a person to say of himself "I do not exist," because to assert such a sentence is to conduct a performance (utter a sentence) which he could not do if he were non-existent. As Hintikka puts it, "The existential inconsistency of such a sentence ('I do not exist') will mean that its utterer cannot add 'and I exist'

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[117]This is so because thinking is a contingent quality for Locke. Only a conditional of the form " if $1 < 2$ and $2 < 3$, then $1 < 3$" is certain.

without contradicting himself implicitly or explicitly."[118]

Therefore, Locke's first premise can be made acceptable if it is reduced from an intuitively certain inference to make its denial an existentially inconsistent performative statement. He may still assert that something does exist, namely himself, when he is speaking, thinking or sensing. His mistake is in believing more than this can be deduced from the cogito argument. The first premise will now read:

Something exists [The denial is existentially inconsistent]

In the next two premises which call for some explanation and justification, the claim is made that "whatever exists must have existed always or have had a beginning in time."[119] As it stands this is an alternation of the form

A v B

- B

therefore A.

This form is valid, but the following step--that this implies some eternal cause or principle--requires further proof. Locke does attempt to give some further proof. What one finds, however, are two new assumptions.

The first of the new assumptions is: "we know there is some real being and that non-entity cannot produce any

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[118]Hintikka, p. 120.

[119]However, this is not to say that the identical thing must have existed forever; just that the same sort of thing has been in existence forever. In theology the "Death of God" is a case in point; it is conceivable that one god may have replaced another forever.

real being."[120] From this statement he concludes there must have been something from eternity, otherwise there would be nothing now. But surely it is not logically contradictory to claim that something simply burst into existence without any antecedent cause.[121] The point Locke makes is that unless there is an eternal cause posited, then there would have been nothing to start the creative or reproductive process. There could, however, have been a series of causes in place of the single eternal cause he assumes.

What he may have had in mind is the further premise that all things constantly change; and unless something is eternal, one possible change is a return to non-being, because an eternity is sufficient time for all changes to have occurred. A mere series of efficient causes is impossible because they would have been exhausted during eternity, a period when every conceivable change which can occur has occurred. Consequently, something must have existed from eternity.[122] Indeed, as Locke declares elsewhere, "nothing is achieved by reason . . . unless there is first something posited and taken for granted."[123] What is

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[120] IV. x. 3.

[121] And as Alvin Plantinga states, "even if there is a time at which every being fails to exist, it scarcely follows that this time would have to have been in the past; perhaps that unhappy time is still to be looked for." God and Other Minds, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 6.

[122] IV. x. 3.

[123] Essays on the Law of Nature, p. 125. Locke may

taken for granted is the assumption that there can be no infinite series of efficient causes.

Even if this fundamental assumption is granted, it does not follow that a first cause is identical with the idea of a personal God. In order to make the two ideas identical, he insists that the eternal causal agent has to be either mind or matter. This statement is predicated on the view that there is an ontological dualism between mind and matter. For example, Locke states, "There are but two sorts of Beings in the world, that man knows or conceives."[124] The first type "are purely material, without sense, perception, or thought," while the other are "sensible, thinking, perceiving Beings, such as we find ourselves to be . . ."[125] If one supposes the eternal Being to be pure matter, then he has the problem of explaining how any creative process was begun. As Locke sees it,

> it is impossible to conceive, that ever bare incogitative Matter should produce a thinking intelligent Being. . . . Let us suppose any parcel of Matter eternal, great or small, we shall find it, in it self, able to produce nothing.[126]

Simple motion is itself a problem in the view that pure

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also have in mind the view that a first cause is necessary because otherwise no rational explanation is possible for the universe. See William L. Rowe, The Cosmological Argument (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 36. However, there is no necessity at all for believing that everything, including the universe, must have an explanation.

[124] IV. x. 9.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., 10.

matter is eternal. For as he notes, motion is not part of the conception of matter per se. However, should motion be stipulated as eternal with matter, the central difficulty remains.

> Matter, incogitative matter and motion, whatever changes it might produce on figure and bulk, could never produce thought: knowledge will still be as far beyond the power of motion and matter to produce, as matter is beyond the power of nothing, or non-entity to produce.[127]

The summation of his argument as he states it is this:

> if we will suppose nothing first, or eternal; matter can never begin to be: If we suppose bare matter, without motion, eternal; motion can never begin to be: If we suppose only matter and motion first, or eternal; thought can never begin to be.[128]

As a consequence, he argues that the eternal causal agent has to be a cogitative or thinking being.

His primary justification for taking this position is that "it is impossible to conceive, that ever bare incogitative matter should produce a thinking intelligent Being, as that nothing of it self produce matter."[129] That is to say it is logically contradictory to accept either of the following positions: that matter can produce mind, or that matter is self-generating out of non-being.[130]

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[127] IV. x. 10.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., "Matter, incogitative matter and motion, whatever changes it might produce . . . could never produce thought."

If some contemporary views in the philosophy of mind are correct, however, Locke is here confusing an ontological dualism with what is only an epistemological distinction. In other words, to speak of mind and matter is not to distinguish two sorts of entities, but rather to speak of the same thing in different ways.

Professor J. J. C. Smart claims, for instance, that sensations (such as "I am now seeing an orange colored after-image") are identical with brain waves. If he is correct, then ideas may be reduced to electro-chemical discharges of the brain. As he states, "in so far as a sensation statement is a report of something, that something is in fact a brain process. Sensations are nothing over and above brain processes."[131] This is not to argue for or against the truth of the materialistic position over that of Locke's dualism. The claim is, however, when combined with his own admission that God could superimpose thinking on to

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[131] J. J. C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes," The Philosophy of Mind, edited by V. C. Chappell (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 163. Cf. the account of Locke's own confessed difficulty with the thinking process. See his "Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester": "You cannot conceive how an extended solid substance should think," he writes, "can you conceive how your own soul or any substance, thinks? You find indeed that you do think, and so do I, but I want to be told how the action of thinking is performed; this, I confess, is beyond my conception." Philosophical Works, p. 537. As a result of these admissions, therefore, he has no defense against the charge by Stillingfleet that his dualism of mind and matter is inconsistent. Locke holds to a dualism even though he admits the possibility that matter might think. See IV. iii. 6. God could superimpose thinking on matter, but empirically this has never been found to be the case. Based on experience, therefore, he insists mind and matter are distinct.

matter,[132] a serious problem for him because it puts his dualism of mind and matter into jeopardy. If thinking can be identified with brain processes, then it is not inconceivable that matter in motion, which Locke grants, might have given rise to intelligence. In any case, his premise cannot be intuitively certain, even though he believes that it is.

As has been shown, Locke's cosmological argument has problems at every step, and the difficulties are compounded because of Locke's strict epistemology. He claims to know God does exist, and, if so, then he must know this with certainty. His deductive proof is the attempt to undergird that claim with an intuitively certain argument. He says, for example, "Our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth [the existence of God]."[133] And again he remarks, "that we more certainly know there is a God, than that there is anything else without us."[134] Yet not even the first premise relating to personal existence stands beyond question. So the conclusion has to be drawn that his argument for the existence of God fails, at least within the context of his epistemology.

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[132] Works, Vol. 4, pp. 460-65.

[133] IV. x. 6; I. iv. 22.

[134] IV. x. 6.

Alexander Campbell's Cosmological Argument

Criticism and departure from Locke

Although Campbell finds Locke's empirical philosophy acceptable and uses much of it as a rational justification for certain important views regarding faith and knowledge,[135] he believes nevertheless that Locke's cosmological proof is unsound. This conclusion is founded on two considerations. First, any attempt to prove the existence of God that argues from various causes to an initial first cause is fallacious. Secondly, even if the argument were valid, a first cause is hardly identical with a personal, benevolent Deity. For this idea one must look to a source beyond experience because nothing in experience gives any concept of a transcendent God. Commenting on the first criticism, he remarks:

> In the system of causation, natural religionists go upon the ladder of effect and cause, up to the first cause but to reason a posteriori on this subject, is, in my opinion fallacious. It is predicated on a petitio principii . . . it assumes that the material universe is an effect--the very thing to be proved.[136]

A valid proof, therefore, must proceed by an altogether different method: in effect, one must start with an account of how the idea of God originated and only then can an argument be properly formulated.

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[135] Most notable of these views are: faith as assent based on probability, the certainty of knowledge, and the causal theory of perception.

[136] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 125.

Campbell begins by showing how the idea of God cannot have originated from within the context of mere human thought. His argument is not really with Locke because the latter is simply in error in believing he can account for the idea of God without appealing to revelation. The real opponent is the materialist, for materialism poses a genuine challenge to faith. Campbell sees his primary task to be that of demonstrating its shortcomings. Thus he states:

> The materialist has to confess as much ignorance and to believe more mysteries than the Christian . . . and contend for a number of absurd mysteries, besides those which he acknowledges.[137]

Some of these absurdities he outlines in the following way:

1. The materialist asserts that man has no interest in origins; according to Campbell, however, this is contrary to what we find in experience.

2. The materialist asserts that man has no just reason to believe he holds a special place in the nature of things. Again this is contrary to what we know--man does believe in his special place.

3. In any case, the materialist has to assert a first human pair at some time, and assume that these began as infants without parents. The absurdity is in believing such infants, of which man is the offspring, could survive. Campbell insists the primeval pair were adults as the scriptures claim.

4. In materialism, the view is held that contrary to experience, man as we know him is a different species than he was at the beginning.

5. At the same time, the materialist must hold that matter and motion contained powers which they no longer possess to produce new species. This, too, goes beyond experience.

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[137]Ibid., p. 80.

6. A materialist cannot give any rational explanation as to the origin of the idea of God--which idea is nearly universally held among mankind.[138]

In Campbell's view, therefore, materialism is simply inadequate as an explanation for what appears to be true of the world as it is discovered by experience. Although we grant matter the inherent power of motion (which it must have or materialism falls stillborn), the question remains as he sees it, "what gives regularity to motion? Why does it choose to move in order, or in any uniform course?"[139] In the final account, he insists that the materialist cannot answer for he does not know. The materialist must accept the origin of all things as a mere chance happening.

However, the truth surrounding the beginning, according to Campbell's view, lies in the existence of God. The supreme intelligence of the Creator is seen everywhere in the obvious design of the creation. In fact, to argue from a primary causal factor to a personal God requires other elements from nature and scripture. Otherwise, the whole demonstration turns out to be fallacious. Campbell believes a causal argument can be supported by logical

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[138]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[139]Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 80-81. Robert Owen had argued, "We are the creatures of circumstances," and it was this which Campbell took to be the basic principle of materialism and skepticism. See, for example, Robert Owen, Report to the County of Lanark and a New View of Society, edited by V. A. C. Gatrell (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 99-108, where Owen explains how human character is formed by the circumstances in which one lives.

reasoning based on uniformity and design in creation, but only if an adequate explanation as to the origin of the idea of God can be given simultaneously. Locke has already demonstrated that the idea is not innate, and Campbell will try to prove that the idea cannot have arisen from within man at all.

The idea of God is a fact. Men have it, but it did not come from man. The reason for this situation is simple: the idea of God is what Campbell describes as a supernatural fact. It is, therefore, the result of God's revelation to man. To illustrate this point Campbell asks Owen during their celebrated debate how man came by this idea. Owen answers that it arose from man's power of imagination.[140] Campbell insists this was impossible, for by the very nature of its function imagination lacks the power to create any new idea.

> Imagination, all writers agree, has not the power of creating any new ideas. It has the power of analyzing, combining, compounding, and modifying all the different ideas to it; but imagination has no creative power.[141]

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[140] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 123. See also, Popular Lectures and Addresses, pp. 142-162; cf. West, p. 91-92 and Morris S. Eames, The Philosophy of Alexander Campbell (Bethany, West Virginia: A Bethany College Publication, 1966), pp. 51, 60.

[141] Campbell-Owen Debate, pp.123-24, where he quotes Locke and Hume as representatives of those who deny creative power to the imagination. His point is strictly true, however, only within the context of the empirical tradition. Writers outside that tradition did claim creative power for the imagination. For example, in his distinction between the primary and the secondary imagination, Samuel Taylor Coleridge analyzed the power of the imagination in a way

Every idea can be traced back to its origin in experience--either through sensation or reflection--except the idea of God.

Up to this point Campbell follows Locke's position regarding ideas and experience, but now he finds that Locke fails to appreciate the unique nature of the idea of God. Campbell offers, as an alternative to a naturalistic view, the following:

1. All things around us and within us prove the existence of God when that idea is originated.

2. I affirm that all nations have derived their ideas of Deity (and there is no notion without these ideas) from tradition and not from the light of nature.

3. I deny that men, in possession of but five senses, and with no other guide but the light of nature, could ever have originated the idea of Deity.[142]

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which Campbell did not anticipate. The primary imagination, according to Coleridge, pertains to "a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness." See Samuel T. Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria," Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge. Edited by Donald A. Stauffer (New York: Random House, 1951), pp. 191-263. Also, Owen Barfield, What Coleridge Thought (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), pp. 69-91. It is the secondary imagination, therefore, which Campbell had in mind when he wrote that it only has power to arrange and enlarge the ideas provided by experience. If Coleridge is correct, however, it is both experience and the primary imagination which contribute material for the secondary imagination to use. Had he been faced with this problem, it seems certain that Campbell would argue that neither aspect of the imagination could ever begin to function without experience. Because to argue that the imagination might create new ideas would be "creating something out of nothing." Put another way, it would be like trying to create a new English word without using the English alphabet.

[142] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 143. See also, Friedrich von Hügel, Essays & Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926, Second series), p. 100:

The crucial issue as he sees it is this: since men have but five senses and yet possess the idea of Deity, and if this idea cannot be accounted for by experience, how did it arise?

Campbell approaches the problem from the negative side first when he insists that man cannot have originated the idea of God "if he has but his five senses on which to rely."[143] On the positive side, he argues that if all our ideas can be accounted for by showing through what sense (or senses) the idea entered the mind, and if the idea of God cannot be traced back to sensation or reflection (i.e., imagination), then its source cannot be the human mind. He declares:

"I doubt whether . . . the general reading public is vividly aware of the deeply interesting cases of those two deaf dumb-blind girls, Laura Bridgman and Helen Keller--of how their minds and souls were found to be empty of ideas or ideals except in proposition as substitutes for the sense impressions of which they were bereft had, with endless patience and trouble been devised and set going within their psycho-physical mechanism. There appears to have been no trace within them, otherwise and before, of an idea of God, of the soul, of their own identity and personality."

[143] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 147. Campbell's point is clear, if we have to rely on just the five senses for information, then the idea of God is unattainable. Fortunately God has revealed Himself to man so there is a source of information beyond experience. Locke was mistaken in thinking the idea of God, even in a negative sense, could be reached by experience. His attempt is inconsistent, according to Campbell, because the idea of God has no relationship to experience. Essentially what Locke has done is to use an idea he already possesses, the idea of God, and then try to explain how that idea originated. But a philosophy based on experience such as Locke's cannot give an adequate explanation. Experience does not provide the necessary materials out of which an idea of a transcendent Being can be constructed.

> No man ever uttered a sentence more unphilosophic, more contrary to human experience, observation and right reason, than Mirabaud, when he declared that savages invented the idea and name of God. . . . He might as well have averred that savages, without fire, without a mould and without metal, made the first gold coins.[144]

The human intellect cannot reach beyond the boundaries set by experience because experience (i.e., sensation and reflection) supply the mind with the materials from which all its ideas are fashioned.[145]

The ideas which experience furnishes to the mind are stored in the memory. Next in order

> comes consciousness, which is like an internal eye, enabling me to take cognizance of my recollections, reasonings, and all the operations of my intellect--such as reflecting, comparing, discriminating, and judging.[146]

He goes on to insist that this process of sensation, and reflection enables the perceiver to draw conclusions relating only to the material world. They cannot penetrate into the world of the spirit, which is precisely the area into which experience must go to gain an idea of God. Of this spiritual realm he says, it is that

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[144] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 166.

[145] IV. iii. 1. "We can have knowledge no farther than we have ideas," cf. II. i. 3-4. Ideas originate in experience--this is the portion of Locke's theory which Campbell takes literally.

[146] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 161. Cf., "In all that great extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations, it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas, which sense or reflection, have offered for its contemplation." II. i. 24. Campbell is here borrowing almost verbatim from Locke.

> which no man could imagine, and of which these five worlds (i.e. the senses) do not afford an archetype, or sensation, or perception.[147]

The spiritual is by definition outside the range of human experience. As a consequence, he concludes that it is simply beyond the power of the human intellect to originate either ideas of spiritual entities or names denoting such ideas.[148]

Indeed, according to Campbell's theory of language, speech and ideas are logically dependent on each other. To begin with, speaking is not a natural endowment of human beings. Instead of rising from some inherent natural ability, speaking is imitative--it is a learned response:

> How do infants learn to speak? he asks Do they speak as naturally as they see or smell? Surely not. They sigh, groan, cry, and laugh naturally, but imitatively they speak. . . . All philosophers have been baffled in their attempts to account for the origin of language, and all nations have concurred in delcaring that speech was the gift of the gods.[149]

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[147] Ibid., see also, IV. iv. 6: "To make our knowledge <u>real</u>, it is requisite, that the ideas answer their archetypes." This is Campbell's point: to what archetype that was gained from experience does the idea of God refer? In Locke's own philosophy there is no such archetype by which the idea is made real. Notice especially, IV. iv. 12; II. xxx. 5. There is no way in which Locke can distinguish between the idea of God and that of a centaur if he relies strictly on experience.

[148] <u>Campbell-Owen Debate</u>, p. 161. "The human intellect has no creative power." Moreover, he adds, "Imagination, is to the intellectual world, what mechanical ingenuity is to the natural world. In neither can any result be elaborated without a stock to begin upon." Ibid.

[149] Ibid. Cf. III. i. 1-5. Especially section 5 when Locke attempts to give some naturalistic basis for the development of various words. But he offers nothing as to

Any reasonable attempt to account for the origin of speech, he concludes, must accept the fact that it began when God spoke to man:

> There is no speculation on the origin of language to be found in any of the schools, that warrants the conclusion that man, by the unaided exercise of his native, inherent powers, could have attained to the use of speech, or that language could have been communicated to man, in the first instance, by any but a divine instructor.[150]

Furthermore, and expecially as it relates to God, the idea has to be logically prior to naming in human language; possessing the name for God is logically dependent on the idea of God.

Names refer to ideas; therefore, "all nations must have had an idea of Deity before the word God, in their respective languages, could have been invented."[151] Thus the only avenue by which the idea can have originated is revelation. This conclusion, it may be added, was reached by following the epistemology of Locke's Essay. Campbell begins with experience as the source of all simple ideas which are then combined through reflection into all the

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how language itself originated--except that God furnished man with the organs for speech. III. i. 1.

[150] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 161. See also, Popular Lectures and Addresses, "The Anglo-Saxon Language: Its Origin, Character, and Destiny," pp. 17-46; and especially, p. 21. "The most natural or rational conclusion is that God taught him (i.e. Adam) to speak, to give names to things and his conceptions of them." Consequently, language and the idea of God point to the fact that God must exist as their causal agent.

[151] Ibid., p. 163.

complex ideas the mind is capable of forming. The idea of God is a unique idea in every sense of the word. None of the sensations received by the mind could have formed that idea--which by definition is of a Being beyond all experience. The imagination is incapable of creating any new idea; consequently, the only alternatives are that the idea is either innate to the human mind or its origin is supernatural.[152] Both men deny the first explanation and that leaves only the second as a possibility. The idea of God is then a supernatural fact made known to man by direct revelation.

A revised argument

A sound argument for the existence of God, in Campbell's view, must have the following elements:

1. Something cannot proceed from nothing [assumption]
2. There must be an adequate cause or series of causes for every effect [law of nature]

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[152]In fact, Stillingfleet criticizes Locke by saying that if the idea of God is not innate, but arises by experience, then the origin of the idea of God cannot be explained by the new way of ideas, because God stands beyond experience. So Stillingfleet tries to argue for innateness, but Locke easily answers him by saying a single exception disproves this theory; and there are exceptions. See the "Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," Philosophical Works, pp. 506-507. At the same time, however, Locke admits ideas of purely fictional entities. These are not real for the simple reason that they consist of ideas which "no substance ever showed us united together." What is different here, however, from the idea of God? It, too, stands beyond experience because His qualities are never found united together since they are all perfect. Cf. MH(1859), p. 253: "A man could as easily, and, quite as expeditiously, create a second sun or moon in our universe, as an absolutely new idea in his own mind." The idea of God would be a new idea.

3. Every effect is dependent in that it requires a cause to bring it into existence [1, 2]

4. The idea of God is an effect dependent either on God or man as its cause [1, 2, 3]

5. If man is the cause, then the idea must have arisen from experience [all knowledge comes from experience]

6. Man is not the cause since nothing in human experience gives the idea of an absolutely perfect Being [denial of antecedent]

7. The idea did not originate with man [2, 3, 4, 5]

8. The idea of God, then, must have God as its original source [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Therefore,

9. God must exist [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

From this outline it can be seen that Campbell has almost completely reworked Locke's argument. There are some features common to both, however. These similar elements are: something cannot proceed from nothing; for every effect there must be an adequate cause;[153] all ideas have to be derived from experience; and absolutely unique ideas cannot be created by the human mind.

They also share the view that something cannot proceed from nothing and each makes it a basic premise in his version of the cosmological argument. But if this premise is true, then Campbell insists that it applies specifically to the idea of God. To say that it originates

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[153]See, for example, MH(1863), where Campbell uses Locke's distinctions of what "is <u>according to reason</u>, <u>contrary to reason</u> or <u>above reason</u>." He also notes that, "Every proposition is <u>according to reason</u>, when it harmonizes with <u>true</u> or <u>probable</u> deductions from clear and distinct premises. The existence of one eternal, infinite First cause, is according to reason," p. 352.

with man is to contradict the basic premise. In other words, by saying that man created the idea one would be arguing that something (the idea of a perfect being) was created out of nothing. Thus he writes, "This idea (i.e. of God), we contend, can have no archetype in nature, because we have never seen anything produced out of nothing."[154]

Although both accept the primitive notion of simple cause and effect, they differ as to what exactly it implies. Campbell, as has been shown, rejects the view that causation implies a First Cause. Even if it did not beg the question at issue, which it does, the result would not produce knowledge, as Locke believes, because it is "By faith we understand that the universe was made by the word of God."[155] Yet the causal process does play an essential role in Campbell's proof. His argument, like that of Locke, takes an aspect of the phenomenal world as an effect and then argues for the ultimate cause of that effect. The essential difference, however, is very significant. Where Locke attempts to argue for an ultimate cause for the whole causal process, Campbell limits his to the cause of a single effect.

Campbell argues only that the idea of spiritual entities (including God) must be caused by something outside the human mind. This view, he believes, is in line

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[154] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 47.

[155] Ibid., p. 174. See Hebrews 11:1-3 for the source of Campbell's quotation.

with the recognized limitations of the human intellect. As a result, he states:

> that in all religions there are ideas, terms and phrases so supernatural that no human mind could originate them, according to any system of philosophy taught in the world.[156]

In his reconstructed argument Campbell avoids the criticisms which may be brought against other forms of the cosmological argument. His argument, for example, does not beg the question, it does not depend on a series of causes and effects, it is consistent with the empirical philosophy taken over from Locke, and when combined with revelation it gives reasonable support to the Christian faith.

David Hume's arguments against the cosmological proof are usually accepted as unanswerable. He concludes that the cosmological argument fails for the following reasons:

1. At best the cosmological argument would prove the existence of a finite God because finite effects imply finite causes and experience knows only those which are finite.

2. Nothing based on experience is logically demonstrable. That is to say, any proposition relating to experience may be denied without there being a necessary contradiction. Anything know by experience may conceivably be otherwise.

3. As a result, it does not make sense to speak of a necessary being. Any existent thing may be thought of as not existing.

4. An infinite series is possible.

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[156] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 36. This explains his departure from Locke's philosophy. As much as Campbell has learned from him, he recognizes that even Locke has not succeeded at this point in proving the existence of God by pure reason.

5. There is no empirical way to establish the principle of causality. All one can actually know is that event B follows event A, but not that A causes B.

6. And finally, he argues that the universe as a whole does not require a cause. If the parts are explained, then that explanation will suffice for the whole. It is not something more than its parts.[157]

It is obvious that only the criticism relating to establishing the principle of causality applies to Campbell's form of the argument. He does depend on God as the causal agent for the idea of God, but this argument may also be interpreted to mean nothing more than Hume's own theory that ideas arise from impressions. Without impressions there are no ideas,[158] and without God there is no idea of God. In both cases one thing is inexplicable without the other, whether one speaks of causation or not.

All Campbell needs to say to void Hume's argument is that at some time God impressed the idea of Himself upon the mind of one person. Then the idea was transmitted by tradition from that moment. Essentially this is what he does say: God is the source of the idea man has of deity. This being so, then God must exist. His cosmological argument is strictly limited to this point. He has nothing to say about the world, the universe or of God's ongoing actions in the world.

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[157]David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, edited with an introduction by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), pp. 141-202.

[158]Treatise, I. i. 1, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1964).

Conclusion

The argument is logically sound.[159] The alternative to accepting it is to show how the idea of God may have originated within the human mind. Locke's attempt is one method of showing this, but he seems to contradict his own theory of knowledge. In commenting on this problem, Campbell remarks that the mind,

> can abstract, compound and combine the qualities of objects already known, and thus form new creations ad infinitum. But still it borrows all the original qualities from the other faculties of the mind, and from the external senses.[160]

Even within these limitations, however, it still appears possible to deny that the idea requires a supernatural origin. Locke's empirical philosophy, as interpreted by Campbell, may have failed because it is inadequate to begin with.

Thus it may be argued that the failure to believe the mind could have created the idea of God is caused by assuming that the empirical philosophy of Locke is an adequate criterion. If one begins with a different philosophical base, from that proposed by Campbell, for instance, then one can reason that the idea of God originated as described by Ludwig Feuerbach. He wrote that:

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[159] It is sound, that is to say, if one stays within the context of the strict empiricism which Campbell proposes.

[160] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 47. Here Campbell notes that "Locke and Hume admit the almost unbounded power of the imagination." But even so both admit it is limited by experience as to the materials it has for use.

> The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective--i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature.[161]

Although Feuerbach seems to echo Locke, there is this important difference: "God" does not refer to what is objectively real; it applies strictly to a fictional entity. The idea of God, Feuerbach argues, is a creation of the human mind, and then the subjective concept is projected onto the universe. Sigmund Freud takes the view of Feuerbach and shows how man in his desire to have protection from a friendless universe, creates a Cosmic Father figure to give love and protection.[162] Whatever the value of such views, they do offer alternatives to Campbell's position that the idea of God could not have originated outside supernatural revelation.

If faced with these views, it seems certain that Campbell would appeal to other factors as a supplement to his cosmological proof. He does not depend on a single argument to convince others that it is reasonable to believe in God. In fact, he states that there are two avenues by which faith in God may be justified. These are nature and

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[161] See, for example, Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, translated by George Eliot (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 14.

[162] Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion (New York: Liveright Publications, 1953), pp. 28-52.

the Bible[163] Together they give a cumulative set of arguments which he believes adequate to convince any reasonable person that God does exist. The cosmological argument, to account for the origin of the idea of God, he finds necessary, but he knows its sufficiency is still open to question.

Whatever may be lacking in the cosmological argument, however, is supplied in the life and teachings of Jesus (including the beneficient effect of the miracles), the celebration of memorial events as empirical evidence for the veracity of the historical record, and the overall impact of the Scriptures. It should be kept in mind, also, that Campbell is using all these arguments to make a single claim: it is reasonable to believe in God. And moreover, belief in God gives a basis for living not found in either the skepticism of Hume or the atheism of Owen. In the context of what he has offered as proof and the limitation he himself put on what that proof entails, it seems clear that he has been successful. All he asks is that one examine the evidence and its implications for life, and then make the most reasonable choice.

Indeed the implications for life based on the limitations of knowledge and the proof for God's existence are spelled out in each man's concept of faith. As will be seen, Locke's theory of knowledge sets the boundaries of

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[163] Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 136.

faith, and Campbell's theology is determined by these boundaries. First Locke's concept of faith will be developed and then it will be shown how Campbell expanded and systematized it.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANING OF FAITH

John Locke's Concept of Faith

Faith is a central topic in the philosophical and religious thought of John Locke. In writing the Essay, he explained that his purpose was "to inquire into the original certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together, with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent . . ."[164] And the primary basis for distinguishing between faith and knowledge, according to Locke, is this: knowledge refers to that which is certain and cannot be false, while faith pertains to all the judgments which lack certainty.[165] Obviously, from this definition of knowledge, the range of possibilities for knowing is very narrow because we can justify our claim to know, with certainty, only for a limited number of propositions. Faith, on the other hand, covers most of our life and, for Locke, it has various degrees reaching from very minimal faith to that which is

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[164] I. i. 2.

[165] IV. i. 2. Cf., in Locke's "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," he defended his distinction between faith and knowledge by saying, "Faith stands by itself, and upon grounds of its own; nor can be removed from them, and placed on those of knowledge . . . when it (i.e. faith) is brought to certainty, faith is destroyed; it is knowledge then, and faith no longer." Philosophical Works, p. 533.

nearly certain.

In fact, Locke eventually combines faith with reason in such a way that religious faith becomes the highest form of probability. Religious faith, as defined by Locke, is

> the assent to any proposition, not . . . made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication.[166]

Then he quickly goes on to insist, within the terms of the definition, our reason must show that a certain proposition comes from God, before our faith can have any object for assent; and consequently, the certainty attaching to faith can never exceed the evidence on which it stands. Where reason is concerned, and as it relates to faith, he states it is

> the discovery of the . . . probability of such propositions 'as the mind receives' by the use of its natural faculties; viz., by sensation or reflection.[167]

As indicated by him, therefore, the validity of faith depends upon the credibility of its source: that is, upon testimony and witnesses. The highest degree of faith is that which is particular to religion, because God is the source and revelation is the avenue of His communication to man.[168]

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[166] IV. xviii. 2. "Thus Locke's analysis of 'S accepts P by faith' is "S believes P because S believes that God has revealed P to S or to someone else." See Keith E. Yandell, Basic Issues in the Philosophy of Religion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 190.

[167] IV. xviii. 2.

[168] Locke, Conduct of the Understanding, 24,

His use of the word faith needs to be made more precise because he sometimes uses faith, opinion and belief interchangeably. Consequently, a distinction will be drawn between faith as probable opinion and as religious faith. In order to clarify Locke's meaning, the word "belief" will serve as a common term for probable opinion and faith (i.e., religious faith). Locke makes the same distinction by saying that belief (as probable opinion) is "according to reason," while belief (as religious faith)is "above reason." Thus he writes:

> 1. According to reason are such propositions whose truth we can discover by examining and tracing those ideas we have from revelation and reflection, and by natural deduction find to be true or probable.
>
> 2. Above reason are such propositions whose truth or probability we cannot derive from those principles.[169]

Alexander Campbell made extensive use of these distinctions in his theology. For instance, he wrote:

> Every proposition is according to reason, when it harmonizes with true or probable deduction from clear and distinct premises. The existence of one eternal, infinite First Cause, is according to

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"Revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately . . ." Cf. IV. xix. 4. "Through the medium of revelation, we are advanced in our knowledge." IV. vii. 2. Indeed, knowledge of a future life is "established and made certain by revelation." Works, Vol. 3, p. 489.

[169]IV. xvii. 3. The distinction is not absolute, as we have seen, for Locke intends the proof for God's existence to be "according to reason." In fact, it is more accurate to say that religious belief is distinct from probable opinion because in one case at least, the former has an element of certainty which the latter never attains.

> reason. . . . Every proposition is above reason, when its truth or probability cannot be deduced from any ideas which we possess by sensation and consciousness. Such is the proposition that the dead will rise. Truths of this class are purely subjects of faith. . . . These distinctions were first presented to the world by the gifted Locke, in his work upon the understanding.[170]

In any case, religious faith for Locke is belief based on facts, is controlled by reason, and is enlightened by revelation. Each of these will be examined in turn, to be followed by a summary and critique.

Faith and facts

Essentially religious faith is to be distinguished, at this level, from probable opinion by noting that the former implies giving intellectual assent to the historical claims made in the Bible.[171] And since historical claims fall short of certainty, all that faith has to go on is probability. This Locke admits when he writes, ". . . the grounds of probability . . . are foundations on which our assent is built."[172] A central problem here, of course,

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[170] MH(1863), p. 352; cf. MH(1832), p. 99, where Campbell warned that it is a serious mistake to reduce "above reason, contrary to reason, accordant to reason . . . to mean simply above or beyond my experience, contrary to my experience, or accordant to my experience." This is to misunderstand Locke's intention and reduces revelation to the level of personal experiences making it incredible or dependent on the human mind. This also shows the pervasive influence of Locke's Essay on Campbell; approximately thirty-one years stands between the two quotations.

[171] This would include such doctrines as the Trinity, for example, because Locke knows that doctrine from the Bible. It is historical because it is based on testimony.

[172] IV. xiv. 3; IV. xvi. 1.

is finding some means for evaluating the grounds on which probability stands. He gives two criteria by which this may be done. One is an evaluation based on coherence between what the proposition claims and the rest of one's experience. The other criterion is for evaluating the testimony which supports the proposition. Richard Aaron is correct, in my opinion, when he states that Locke's first test is not that of logical coherence, in which one merely examines the propositions for contradictions; rather, it is based on the assumption that the universe is of one piece.[173] This conclusion would follow, it seems to me, because what one knows of the universe, according to Locke, is predicated on personal experience rather than on a rule of logic. As a consequence, therefore, any experience totally foreign to one's experience of the world must be rejected as false. The proposition simply lacks "Conformity of anything with our own knowledge, observation, and experience."[174] The second criterion has to do primarily with the testimony of others, and so he gives a list of things to use in making an evaluation. These factors are:

1. The number of witnesses
2. Their integrity
3. The skill of the witnesses
4. The design of the author--where the testimony is contained in a book
5. The consistency of the parts, and circumstances of the relation of the testimony
6. Contrary testimonies [175]

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[173] IV. xv. 3-6. See also, Richard Aaron, pp. 249-50.

[174] IV. xv. 4.

[175] Ibid.

In Locke's view, therefore, the highest degree of probability is attained when a belief coincides with the whole of one's personal experience and with the testimony "of all men of all ages." Thus, when one is confronted with testimony of any kind, he can evaluate it by the criteria and then respond with the proper degree of assent. The reasonable man, in order to proceed rationally,

> ought to examine all the grounds of probability, and see how they make more or less for or against any proposition, before he assents to or dissents from it; and upon a due balancing the whole, reject or receive it; with a more or less firm assent, proportionally to the preponderancy of the greater grounds of probability on one side or the other.[176]

Locke goes on, in his theory of probability, to state that there are two kinds of propositions involved. These are matters of fact obtained from observation and those which are beyond immediate observation. An example of the first type would be the claim that iron sinks in water.[177] This is a particular fact and it harmonizes with the experience of all men of all times. Such facts are of the highest probability.

The second kind of proposition, which depends on the testimony of others, but which corresponds to one's personal experience, Locke gives the next highest degree of probability. Historical testimony, for example, is filled with facts

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[176] IV. xv. 5.

[177] IV. xvi. 6; cf., Aaron, pp. 250-51. Such events are probable for him for the simple reason that we cannot be certain "whether they will succeed again another time. . . . This hinders our certain knowledge of universal truths concerning natural bodies: and our reason carries us herein very little beyond particular matter of fact." IV. iii. 25.

of this kind. For Locke, history gives us probable information which is "for the most part so."[178] History, then, provides us with the information conducive to belief, in general, and religious faith, in particular, based, of course, on its meeting the independent criteria. When this happens, he states, "Our assent has a sufficient foundation to raise itself to a degree which we may call confidence."[179] Indeed, assent to various historical claims is simply unavoidable because of the human condition itself. It is impossible for any individual to see and experience everything necessary for life. And just as important, historical facts frequently coincide with other historical events; furthermore, historical events do not violate common experience and the testimony regarding them comes from reliable witnesses.[180]

The examples of historical facts Locke gives are straightforward, as he admits. That Rome is a city in Italy and that a man, Julius Caesar, actually lived are facts accepted readily by the vast majority of people. Indeed, the assent of faith to such claims as these may actually be of the highest degree since the evidence on which they stand closely approaches that of demonstrated truth. It is only

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[178] IV. xvi. 7.

[179] Ibid.

[180] IV. xvi. 8. Locke is aware of the problems associated with history, but as he also knows it is "all the light we have in many cases . . ." Ibid., 11.

when testimonies contradict common experience and where the reports of history have a clash of witnesses, that a serious difficulty arises.[181] In such situations, and they are not that rare, one hardly knows what response is appropriate. In fact, as Locke sees it, the kind of response can range from positive belief, to actual distrust or disbelief.[182] There is simply no assurance that one has made the right judgment when experience and testimonies clash. In such cases, he insists,

> diligence, attention, and exactness are required, to form a right judgment, and to proportion the assent to the different evidence and probability of the thing: which rises and falls, according as those two foundations of credibility, viz. common observation in like cases, and particular testimonies in that particular instance, favor or contradict it.[183]

His ultimate conclusion, however, is that the observations, reports, qualifications of witnesses, and circumstances can be so varied it is "impossible to reduce to precise rules the various degrees wherein men give their assent."[184] In the final analysis, therefore, an individual must simply use his best judgment in evaluating all the known variables and then give the proper degree of assent based on the evidence.

Locke, it is true, does expand the discussion by saying that the report of a reliable primary witness, one who actually saw the event in question, is of more value and

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[181] IV. xvi. 9.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

carries greater weight than that of a second-hand report. The principle he follows is: "any testimony, the further off it is from the original truth, the less force and proof it has."[185] Thus it is, for him, that propositions established by direct testimony (actual observation), backed by common experience, and other reliable witnesses have the greater "cash value," so to speak, for belief.

Religious faith, as well as belief in general, is therefore governed by historical evidence and probability. The former, it is true, is distinguished by two important factors: namely, revelation and the historical document (i.e., the Christian Bible) which contains that revelation. For Locke, then, the reasonableness of religious faith, depends on presenting adequate justification for accepting revelation.[186] By his methodology, he must offer that justification within the boundaries set by his criteria for evaluating historical testimony, combined with the added stipulation that revelation, though "above reason," cannot be "contrary to reason."[187]

Faith and reason

In the Essay, Locke wanted to inquire into the "origins, certainty, and extent of human knowledge."[188]

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[185] IV. xvi. 10. Original truth is defined by Locke as "the existence of the thing itself."

[186] See, for example, The Reasonableness of Chrisianity, as well as A Discourse on Miracles.

[187] IV. xvii. 23.

[188] I. i. 2.

But it was apparent to him that most of life has to be lived within the context of belief, in general, and, for Christians, religious faith, in particular. Consequently, he found one important task to be that of drawing out the relationship of faith to revelation and reason. The general tendency among thinkers prior to Locke had been to put faith in contrast to reason, but he argued instead that faith is "an assent founded on the highest reason."[189] By reason, he means the faculty of mind for making inferences or the power of deductive reasoning by which the mind proceeds deductively from self-evident principles or inductively on grounds of probability. Reason, therefore, has two offices or degrees. The first is to judge of things self-evident; while the second is to draw conclusions that are not self-evident from those that are.[190]

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[189] IV. xvi. 14.

[190] See, for instance, Fraser's edition of Locke's Essay, Vol. 2, p. 385, footnote 1; cf., Locke, IV. vi. and xvi. 2. In his criticism of Locke, the Bishop of Worcester had insisted Locke's method of demonstration had two major difficulties: (1) there is no criterion for distinguishing true from false ideas; and (2) the way of ideas and its attempt at certainty is inconsistent with the certainty of deductive reasoning. To the second of these criticisms Locke simply challenges the good Bishop to produce one proposition, wherein he had attained to certainty by means of reasoning, and then if Locke cannot attain certainty for the same proposition by way of ideas, he will admit to whatever inconsistency the Bishop proposes. Locke's answer to the first charge is not very clear, beyond merely saying the Bishop's charges as they stand do not prove Locke has no criterion for distinguishing true from false ideas. What Locke appears to be saying is that properly distinguishing between truth and error is difficult within any system of thought, but less so in his because his knowledge claim is very narrow. Also see Locke's "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," Works, Vol. 3, pp. 398-404.

Reason, according to Locke, depends on two intellectual faculties, sagacity and illation. Their particular functions are to recognize ideas appropriate to a subject, for example, and then to arrange these ideas in a correct deductive order. Sagacity performs the first task, while it is the purpose of illation to do the second.[191] Thus, illation or inference "consists in nothing but the perception of the connexion there is between the ideas, in each step of the deduction."[192] As a result,

> The mind comes to see either the certain agreement or disagreement of any two ideas, as in demonstration, in which it arrives at knowledge; or their probable connexion, on which it gives or withholds its assent, as in opinion.[193]

For him, sagacity and illation, whether leading to demonstrative knowledge or merely to an assent of faith, have to do with reason. But illation (or inference) is of primary interest here, because it pertains directly to religious faith.

In describing the procedure by which one arrives at belief, Locke explains it as the ordering of one's intermediate ideas (the middle terms and implied principles in a syllogism) so as to be able to see what logical connection

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[191] IV. xvii. 2.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid. "Whatever God hath revealed, is certainly true; no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper object of faith: But whether it be a divine revelation, or no, reason must judge, which can never permit the mind to reject a greater evidence to embrace what is less evident, nor allow it to entertain probability in opposition to knowledge and certainty." IV. xviii. 10.

there is between ideas. If the connection is one of demonstration, then knowledge results; while, on the other hand, if the connection is only probable, assent can amount just to belief. But very importantly, where religious faith is the issue, reason makes it possible to know some facts which are beyond the immediate data of external and internal perception. Indeed, this process is essential since Locke has made a primary stipulation that "sense and intuition reach but a very little way."[194] Reason combined with revelation, however, will extend the boundaries further (at least to include knowledge of God), but again it should be noted that this exception pertains only to religious faith.

Faith and revelation

To begin with, an important qualification has to be made where revelation is taken to stand behind a faith claim. As Locke writes:

> though faith be founded on the testimony of God [who cannot lie] revealing any proposition to us, yet we cannot have an assurance of the truth of its being a divine revelation greater than our rationally acquired knowledge; since the whole strength of the certainty depends upon our knowledge that God revealed it.[195]

Since we can never be absolutely certain when these

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[194] IV. xvii. 2. Reason, according to Locke has four degrees: (1) the discovery of truth; (2) the proper ordering or arrangement of these truths; (3) recognizing their connections; and (4) drawing the proper conclusion. See, for example, IV. xvii. 3.

[195] IV. xviii. 2; cf., John Hick, Faith and Knowledge (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 17-18.

conditions actually hold, religious faith has to stand on probability. Though at times, and on this point he will insist, the degree of probability is extremely high for revealed religion.

What is required initially, therefore, is to establish a criterion by which genuine revelation may be distinguished from that which is false. And Locke finds his criterion in the principle of contradiction. As he remarks,

> no proposition can be received for divine revelation, or obtain the assent due to all such, if it be contradictory to our clear intuitive knowledge, because this would be to subvert the principles and foundations of all knowledge, evidence, and assent whatsoever.[196]

What this passage implies for him is clear. Revelation cannot contradict reason. In other words, God Himself cannot violate this fundamental law of thinking. In a wider context he accepted the principle of identity,[197] various axioms of mathematics,[198] as well as the law of contradiction as underlying principles on which the whole of reason and knowledge stand.

In this connection, he explains that revelation, though it originates from God's unlimited power, can never contain any new simple ideas which are beyond what man knows or is capable of knowing through sensation and reflection.[199]

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[196] IV. xviii. 5. Cf. MH(1863), p. 353; "Revelation . . . cannot be admitted against the clear evidence of reason."

[197] IV. i. 2. [198] IV. ii. 1.

[199] IV. xviii. 3; II. ii-iii, vi-vii.

This conclusion follows from the basic fact that men can attain knowledge only from the simple ideas; and if God did reveal such new ideas to some men they could not then communicate them to others. This is because there would be no signs (words) which both the communicants could share, since one would possess new ideas and the other would not. Men are capable of communicating, in his opinion,

> Because words, by their immediate operations on us, cause no other ideas but of the natural sounds: and it is by the custom of using them for signs that they excite and revive in our minds latent ideas; but yet only such ideas as were there before.[200]

He draws the boundaries of genuine revelation more narrowly when he says it has to be in terms understandable to men and, at the same time, insists it is not self-authenticating. Some criterion other than revelation has to be the determining factor.

It is at the point of evaluating revelation that reason plays its most important part in the area of religious faith. Revelation, he insists, may go beyond reason because revelation gives information which reason alone could never attain; but the two cannot conflict. In other words, revelation must not introduce statements that contradict reason. Suppose, however, one were to take the view that revelation can override even our intuitive knowledge. To take such a view, according to Locke, is to court intellectual disaster because:

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[200] IV. xviii. 2; cf., III. i-ii.

> the whole strength of the certainty [of its being a divine revelation] depends upon our knowledge that God revealed it; which in this case, where the proposition supposed revealed contradicts our knowledge or reason, will always have this objection hanging to it, viz. that we cannot tell how to conceive that to come from God, the bountiful Author of our being, which, if received for true, must overturn all the principles and foundations of knowledge he has given us; render all our faculties useless; wholly destroy the most excellent part of his workmanship, our understandings; and put a man in a condition wherein he will have less light, less conduct than the beast that perisheth.[201]

His point is important because behind it stands his conception of God and reality.

Revelation is limited; therefore, in the same way, knowing is limited. Neither may go beyond the scope of intelligible words or symbols of the human ideas. Revelation, it is true, can go beyond what reason has actually presented to the mind regarding events which may lie outside the range of man's experience, but it cannot go contrary to experience since man could not understand it, or the revelation would itself be contradictory to what man knows (intuitively) of his world. So he concludes,

> Whatever God hath revealed is certainly true: no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper object of faith, but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge; which can never permit the mind to reject a greater

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[201] IV. xviii. 5. See also section 6 where Locke argues that if reason has priority in evaluating revelation in its immediate or original sense (such as that which inspired men receive), much more, he thinks, must reason evaluate traditional revelation (as in the scriptures) which is a secondary kind.

> evidence to embrace what is less evident nor allow it to entertain probability in opposition to knowledge and certainty.[202]

By following this line of thinking, Locke believes he has kept the correct distinction between faith and reason, and has allowed each to have its proper function. He has done this without misusing reason, in that it replaces faith entirely. And just as importantly, he resisted the tendency for faith to destroy reason in enthusiasm.[203] When we look at his view of religious faith more closely, we might summarize as follows:

> For Jones to accept statement P on faith is tantamount to Jones accepting (A) 'God revealed P (to me or someone else).' Accepting (A) is appropriate just in case (B) 'the evidence for (A) is better than that against (A)' is true.[204]

The implications of this statement are:

> a rational man will accept any statement of the same sort as (A) if he knows a corresponding proposition of sort (B) is true. Thus a man who accepts a statement P 'by faith' [in Locke's sense of this term], can argue: there is better evidence that God revealed P than that he did not; so it is more reasonable to accept P than it is reasonable not to accept P, since if God reveals P, P is true.[205]

As a direct result of the evidence, therefore, it is reasonable for an individual to assent to the proposition in

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[202] IV. xviii. 7.

[203] See, for example, the whole of his argument against enthusiasm. IV. xix. 1-15. Enthusiasm is faulty for two reasons, namely, it is totally subjective, and it replaces reason as the criterion for evaluating beliefs.

[204] See Yandell, p. 191.

[205] Ibid.

question. But again, the degree of assent is determined by the evidence and by the individual's understanding of that evidence.[206]

Critique of Locke's Concept of Religious Faith

An examination of Locke's view of religious faith leaves some serious questions to be answered. Does Locke believe religious faith is certain or merely probable? In the first place, he says, "faith (i.e. religious faith) is a settled and sure principle of assent and assurance, and leaves no matter of room for doubt or hesitation."[207] This conclusion follows from the fact that God, who "cannot deceive, nor be deceived," reveals the articles of faith to man.[208] Locke goes on to add, however, "If the evidence of its being a revelation, or that this its true sense be only on probable proof, our assent can reach no higher than an assurance or diffidence, arising from the more, or less apparent probability of the proofs."[209] Now it appears that he is saying two contradictory things about religious faith: it is certain and it is only probable.

Actually, the contradiction is only apparent. Locke never wavers from his firm conviction that revelation is certain. It contains "propositions that challenge the

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[206]See, for example, James Kellenberger, Religious Discovery, Faith, and Knowledge (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 113-114, 120-125.

[207]IV. xvi. 14.

[208]Ibid.

[209]Ibid.

highest degree of our assent upon bare testimony . . . that is of God himself. This carries with it assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception."[210] This is Locke's basic distinction between belief (as probable opinion) and religious faith. The latter contains elements which are certain because they are established on revelation. Consequently, it would be just as foolish to hold doubts about a revealed truth as it would be to hesitate in accepting an axiom in mathematics.

The problem arises, of course, and he is well aware of the difficulty, when he tries to determine what exactly it is which God has revealed. It is one thing to say the propositions given by revelation are certain and quite another thing to give examples of such propositions. But if specific examples cannot be discovered, the claim is empty of any real significance. Locke, it seems to me, attempts to resolve the problem of revelation by appealing to: (1) the existence of God; (2) historical evidence; and (3) the miracles of Jesus. I will examine each of these in turn.

Revelation as a mere possibility depends on the existence of God. At this point Locke believes he is on firm ground. He knows God exists by means of a sound deductive argument.[211] With this one fundamental datum

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[210] IV. xvi. 14.

[211] IV. ix. 2. "No existence of any thing without us, but only of God, can certainly be known farther than our

of knowledge, I might add, he effectively prevents religious faith from being reduced to an instance of probable opinion. This element of religious faith he knows. Moreover, with God's existence an accepted truth, it is reasonable to assume that God has revealed, at least, some things concerning Himself to man.[212]

According to Locke, there is a significant body of historical evidence to justify the belief that God has indeed revealed important information about Himself. In fact, various witnesses have insisted they not only experienced revelation, but have become channels through which others may gain information about the actions of God. Still, serious problems remain with his use of historical testimony. Foremost among these problems is that historical evidence is at best merely probable.[213] Some of the problems

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senses inform us." IV. xi. 13. As a result, however, religious faith is a sort of hybrid. It contains knowledge that God exists by demonstration apart from revelation, but for all other aspects it depends on trust in historical testimony. Reason is the connecting link between the two as it governs both demonstration and revelation. Put another way religious faith may refer both to faith as a personal commitment or to the doctrines of that faith. It is the latter which may be spoken of as a hybrid because one element--the existence of God--is known according to Locke, while all else is faith. This one element of knowledge is not sufficient to raise the whole of Christianity to the level of certainty, and consequently, one must "walk by faith, not by sight."

[212]Locke never makes this claim, but his religious writings rest on that assumption. In any case, if Locke is correct in thinking God's existence can be known, here is a specific element of religious faith which does not depend on revelation. This means his argument about revelation is not circular.

[213]IV. xvi. 10-11. This problem leads Richard

associated with revelation and the appeal to history are: the events as they are reported are at variance with our common experience; the reports come from interested parties; the reports come from the remote past; and finally, revelation as a personal experience is foreign to Locke and his contemporaries.[214]

He argues, as we have seen, that religious faith stands with probable opinion, or with belief in general, because each depends on testimony, reason, memory and judgment. He tries to separate religious faith from mere opinion by means of revelation, but this attempt simply pushes the problem back to a lower level because revelation itself has to be justified. Since revelation is not self-authenticating, some external criteria have to be established to distinguish genuine claims of revelation from false claims.[215]

Ashcraft to say that one way Locke distinguishes between faith and knowledge is that "the principles of morality [are] capable of being known with certainty, while the truths conveyed through revelation must be believed by men." "Faith and Knowledge in Locke's Philosophy," in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives, ed. John W. Yolton, p. 197.

[214]See especially IV. xvi. 6-10.

[215]An argument which Locke does not develop very clearly is based on the assumption that there are no gaps in nature. Rather, he insists, "what we find is that in all parts of the creation, that fall under human observation, that there is a gradual connexion of one with another, without any great or discernable gaps between, in all that great variety of things we see in the world." IV. xvi. 12. Man stands somewhere at the apex and reason fills in some of the gaps by inferring minute parts below the corporeal objects known by sensation while reason and revelation contribute to our knowledge of things above man. Some examples of the

Basically, he insists no revelation can be contrary to reason. Then, if there is a corpus of revelation materials as in the Christian scriptures, this has to be internally consistent. In other words, the various witnesses cannot themselves give contradictory statements. Eventually, however, he bases his acceptance of revelation for the Christian religion on the life and miracles of Jesus of Nazareth. If these prove invalid, then not only is the testimony of the Biblical witnesses reduced to the level of mere opinion, but the assent one could give to their testimony would be extremely weak. This conclusion follows from his own criteria for assent. Consequently, he puts heavy stress on the New Testament account of Jesus' life and miracles. In his opinion miracles have a unique role to play in belief. Indeed, the fact that they are unique adds to their weight.

> For where such supernatural events are suitable to ends aimed at by him, who has the power to change the course of nature, there, under such circumstances, they may be the fitter to procure belief, by how much the more they are beyond, or contrary to ordinary observation.[216]

By Locke's definition a miracle is "a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and

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latter are: spirits, angels, devils, etc., Ibid. Revelation is required, therefore, to give a comprehensive view of reality.

[216] IV. xvi. 13. The fact that miracles are contrary to what we normally experience in nature compels us to believe in them. Otherwise, Locke argues, "miracles would lose their name and force; and there could be no distinction between natural and supernatural." The Reasonableness of Christianity, 143 (Ramsey edition).

in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."[217] Thus, no event can be called miraculous, regardless of how impressive it might be if it proves "inconsistent with natural religion and the rules of morality."[218] This appeal to ethical principles in relationship to God's actions is important and Locke develops it more fully in his Essays on the Law of Nature.[219] Moreover, Alexander Campbell uses the same criterion as a proof for the genuineness of miracles. Indeed, both men argue that God's existence is a necessary prerequisite for any claims of absolute moral principles. Locke and Campbell were certain that there are absolutes in ethics. This point will be discussed further in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that God's actions are always in harmony with what is right and good, and any genuine miracle will demonstrate this fact.

Furthermore, a miracle must be a clear manifestation of God's supernatural power. "Supernatural operations attesting such a revelation may, with reason, be taken to be miraculous, as carrying the marks of a superior and over-ruling power."[220] The use of power in this context appears

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[217] A Discourse of Miracles, p. 79 (Ramsey edition).

[218] Ibid., p. 84.

[219] Although Campbell could not have known these Essays, his arguments, based on the Essay Concerning Human Understanding and A Discourse of Miracles, regarding ethics and the existence of God are very similar to Locke's arguments.

[220] A Discourse of Miracles, p. 84. "The marks of a

to be analogous to that which we find, in a lesser degree of course, in our own lives. In the Essay, for example, he wrote, "we have, from the observation of the operations of bodies by our senses, but a very imperfect, obscure idea of active power"; by turning to introspection, however, he believes that the mind receives "its idea of active power clearer from reflection on its own operations, than it does from any external sensation."[221] Some examples are: various motions of our bodies; beginning or ending actions of our minds; and doing or not doing particular actions.[222] What he indeed may be saying, but does not develop in any clear and systematic way, is this: We are able to grasp intuitively the relationship between miracles and God's supernatural power in much the same manner that we perceive a connection between our power and the deliberate movements of our bodies.[223] Moreover, just as God's perfect attributes exceed our imperfect ones, so do His acts of power surpass those of every other being.

Such an argument appears to be that to which he is appealing in reference to the miracles of Jesus:

> the number, variety and greatness of the miracles, wrought for the confirmation of the doctrine delivered by Jesus Christ, carry with

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superior power accompanying it, always have been, and always will be a visible and sure guide to divine revelation," p. 85.

[221] II. xxi. 4. [222] Ibid. 5.

[223] I. T. Ramsey suggests this idea in his introduction to A Discourse of Miracles, pp. 78, 79.

> them such strong marks of an extraordinary divine power, that the truth of his mission will stand firm and unquestionable, till any one rising up in opposition to him shall do greater miracles than he or his apostles did.[224]

The argument might be given more clearly in the following way:

1. The existence of God [by demonstration]

2. His manifestations of power shown in creation [by demonstration: the Creator is greater than His creation]

3. God's power exceeds man's power to the extent that His attributes of perfection exceed man's [by analogy]

4. Any representation of God's power will be greater than that of any other power [from 2 and 3]

5. Jesus is God's representative as shown in His miracles [by historical testimony]

6. His miracles demonstrate power greater than all other demonstrations [from 4 and 5 by intuition and empirical evidence]

Therefore,

7. The miracles of Jesus prove He is from God [from 4, 5 and 6 by intuition]

Assuming for the moment that the above describes Locke's position, and granting the first premise--that God's existence is known (which has been examined in chapter 3)--one serious problem is immediately apparent. What, for instance, is meant by "greater than"? Does it refer to the number of miracles, or is it to be understood in the sense that lifting one hundred pounds is greater than lifting fifty pounds? The correct view is not clear from Locke's writings.

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[224]Ibid., p. 83.

If we assume he means both, there are still difficulties to be answered. Since all miracles are by definition manifestations of the supernatural, what does it mean to say one is greater than another?[225] A supernatural act is just that and no distinction can be made among them.

Suppose one were to examine all the evidence for miracles and even then fail to grasp the intuitive connection between premises and conclusion.[226] This failure to see the actions of Jesus as proof of His messiahship was found even among His contemporaries. Our situation is more precarious in that we are so far removed in time from the events in question. Therefore, we may look at what Locke has proposed and simply deny there is anything to grasp intuitively, as Hume did in effect. He insisted the argument from miracles is circular. The claim that Jesus performed miracles already assumes He is the Messiah[227] although this point is at issue.

In his concept of disclosure events, Ian Ramsey seeks to defend Locke against Hume. A disclosure is the type of awareness that occurs, for instance, when I

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[225]Locke, it is true, does try to illustrate his meaning with the example of Moses' serpents eating up the serpents of Pharoah's magicians. But it is not clear how this example would apply to other miracles. A Discourse of Miracles, p. 83.

[226]In fact, he has already established the criteria for evaluating the claims and evidence for revelation. Judging by the criteria, he has not made a strong case for accepting the miracles of Jesus as valid.

[227]David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1957), Sect. x, part ii.

> consider the kind of situation in which I become aware of myself as distinctively 'I', as being all my observable behavior and more besides, when in exercising some decisive activity I discern what is more in my activity than the observable movement I display. Here is a 'disclosure' situation which breaks in on us when we survey what Hume would call a train of distinct perceptions, when we survey our public, observable behavior.[228]

That is to say, the "I," which emerges out of "our public, observable behavior" and which is more than the simple composite of that which is observable, is known by an intuitive recognition that something stands behind the empirical "I."

Ramsey suggests Locke's concept of substance as that which "is disclosed around a particular set of facts and features . . . a 'something' which cannot itself be further specified."[229] He then argues that Locke uses a similar movement beyond what is actually given to justify the acceptance of the fundamental fact of the Christian religion that Jesus is the Messiah. Like "the holy men of old who had revelations from God," we are given, with the propositions, "outward signs to convince . . . [us] of the Author of these revelations."[230] The miracles of Jesus, Locke believes, serve as "outward signs" enabling us to

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[228]Ian Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, edited by Jerry H. Gill (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 14.

[229]Ibid., p. 171

[230]See I. T. Ramsey's introduction to his edition of The Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 12, cf. Essay, IV. xix. 15.

give our assent in a very high degree to the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah. Ramsey says that Locke may be interpreted to mean something like the following.

"In thinking of the Messiah as a descriptive label which fitted Jesus, Locke was appealing to some kind of disclosure situation which linked ideas and revealed propositions,"[231] just as the "I" or "transcendental Ego" is a disclosure from observable behavior which hangs together and is mine in a unique sense. Thus, an individual who studies the fulfilled prophecies in the life of Jesus and examines the miracles performed by Him ought to grasp the connection between them and the proposition "Jesus is the Messiah." This is not unusual because one intuits the underlying substance for a particular collection of simple ideas in much the same say.[232]

Let us grant Ramsey his point for a moment: Locke is advocating intuition as the ultimate means for knowing that Jesus is the messiah through His miracles. A serious difficulty arises immediately: intuition is rejected today as a means for attaining knowledge, primarily because it is subjective. How, for instance, could one prove he has an

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[231] Ibid., p. 13.

[232] II. xxiii. 1-3; xxxi. 6-11. See also, The Reasonableness of Christianity, pp. 32-34, 39-42; A Discourse of Miracles, pp. 78-79; Locke's controversy with Stillingfleet in A. D. Woozley edition of the Essay (New York: World Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 448-452. See especially, p. 452: "the substratum to modes or accidents, which is our idea of substance in general, is founded on this, 'that we cannot conceive how modes or accidents can subsist by themselves.'"

intuitive grasp of a truth or has reached a "disclosure" event if someone else denies it? Or suppose another person claimed an intuition or disclosure which contradicts the first claim? The only recourse would have to be to some criterion beyond intuition. Then why use intuition in the first place? Of course, the advocate of intuition might appeal to what he calls a special faculty of intuition or spiritual insight which the other lacks. But again, if the faculty is limited to a few, and if they cannot persuade others, the real value of intuition is nullified.

Still, Ramsey believes Locke might have argued with Hume that the fulfilled prophecies combined with the miracles "disclose" to the acute observer that Jesus is the Messiah, much in the same way that Hume argued, "when we talk of <u>self</u> or <u>subsistence</u>, we must have an idea annexed to these terms otherwise they are altogether unintelligible." But, since "we have no impression of self or substance, as something simple and individual," the conclusion for Hume is quite clear, "we have, therefore, no idea of them in that sense." Yet Hume goes on to say that,

> we only <u>feel</u> a connexion or determination of the thought to pass from one object to another . . . thought alone feels personal identity, when reflecting on the train of past perceptions that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other.[233]

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[233] <u>Treatise</u>, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, pp. 635-36.

If Ramsey is right in his interpretation, then Hume is saying "as we reflect on this train of 'distinctive perceptions' a feeling, a sense, of personal identity breaks in on us. As we survey this train of particular perceptions there is a self-disclosure."[234] Locke's point, according to Ramsey, is the same; the miracles and fulfilled prophecies "disclose" that Jesus is the Messiah.

Ramsey's interpretation of Locke's teaching is interesting; but I am not convinced, that Locke intended to use intuition in this way. When he appeals to intuition, as he does in all deductive reasoning, perception of personal existence and knowledge of corporeal objects, he states the fact unequivocally.[235] Had he seen intuition's value, or its possibility, for religious faith and miracles, as he did for knowledge of God, then I am convinced he would have said as much. On the contrary, I believe Locke was convinced, from what he writes in The Reasonableness of Christianity and A Discourse of Miracles, that there is sufficient evidence to convince all reasonable men that the proposition, "Jesus is the Messiah" is true. On the basis of the historical evidence men could make a firm commitment of faith.

What I consider permissible conclusions regarding Locke's concept of faith are: Probable opinion and religious faith are to be distinguished by the fact that the latter,

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[234]Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p. 170.

[235]IV. ix. 2.

though probable, is directed exclusively toward the propositions contained in the Bible. Religious faith and probable opinion are governed by degrees of assent based on evidence from personal experience (and/or the testimony of others) and reason. However, all situations of belief as probable opinion are "according to reason" and thereby contain "truth we can discover . . . by natural deduction to be true or probable."[236] Some aspects of religious faith, on the other hand, are "above reason," because they pertain to "such propositions whose truth or probability we cannot derive from principles."[237] By the very nature of the case, therefore, no element of mere belief can become certain.[238] Again, however, religious faith is an exception. The existence of God, according to Locke, can be known; and consequently, religious faith cannot be reduced to simple belief. Thus, he is led to say that religious faith at times is of the highest certainty because it is above reason, based on revelation and contains the knowledge of God as a fundamental element. It seems to me, therefore, Locke is consistent in his treatment of faith as both certain and as mere belief, but not reducible to probable opinion. Other very serious

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[236] IV. xvii. 23.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Indeed as he told Stillingfleet, if belief were to become certain it would then be knowledge. Consequently, by definition, belief can never be anything more than probable. "Second Letter to the Bishop of Worcester," Philosophical Works, p. 533.

problems remain. Alexander Campbell will attempt to solve one of these by giving empirical grounding to the miracles of Jesus. And so it is to his view of faith that we now turn.

CHAPTER V

FAITH AND HUMAN EXISTENCE

Alexander Campbell's Concept of Faith

According to Campbell, faith or belief (in Locke's terminology) is the fundamental aspect of daily existence. From his study of Locke, he had been convinced that knowledge is limited to that which is certain. As a result, nearly all of life is lived within the boundaries of faith. But faith itself, Locke had shown, can be raised to a very high degree of probability. This is basically what Campbell believed and he used this to give justification for the Christian system.

Central to his efforts, then, as a writer and teacher, was the desire to demonstrate that Christianity as a way of life is the most reasonable available to humanity. In line with this, he stated in the opening remarks of the Owen debate,

> I am determined to present . . . to this audience such a body of evidence as shall put it out of the power of any honest inquirer to doubt the truth and divine origin of Christianity.[239]

In the same vein Locke had argued that the Christian religion

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[239] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 37.

prevailed in the first century "by its own beauty, force and reasonableness . . ."[240] This passage is from "A Third Letter Concerning Toleration." Robert Richardson said that Campbell "learned greatly to admire the character and works of Locke, whose 'Letters on Toleration' seem to have made a lasting impression upon him."[241] Thus it comes as no surprise that his attitude toward faith is influenced to some important degree by his study of Locke. Despite the similarities of view, there are also significant differences between the two men. These differences are not unusual, however, because they approach faith from very distinct perspectives; Campbell as a theologian and Locke as a philosopher. My intention is to begin with the elements which they have in

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[240] John Locke, "A Third Letter Concerning Toleration," edited by I. T. Ramsey, p. 91.

[241] Memoirs, Vol. 1, p. 33. Campbell wrote, for instance, "Few compositions of so humble dimensions as Locke's 'Letters on Toleration,' have exerted a mightier influence in the cause of human liberty and civilization, than this briefest but most puissant production of the great Christian philosopher." MH(1844), pp. 11-12. In his lecture, "Literature, Science and Art," Campbell spelled out the importance of Locke's attempt to subsume all ideas under the three headings of things, actions and signs. "'For,' says he, 'a man can employ his thoughts about nothing but either the contemplation of things themselves for the discovery of truth; or about the things in his own power, which are his own actions, for the attainment of his own ends; or the signs he would make use of both in the one and the other, and the right ordering of them for his clearer information,'" pp. 130-31. Taken from Locke's Essay, IV. xxi. 5. The importance this has for faith is obvious. Christianity contains a system of ethics and speaks to humanity within the context of a basic division of all science--the science of actions. In fact Campbell goes on to argue that Locke's classification of the sciences has never really been improved upon and points out how it influenced his own thinking. See above, pp. 41-42.

common and then to show how Campbell expanded Locke's views. In order to do this, the discussion of Campbell will be developed along three lines: faith as assent to facts, faith and history, and faith and life. Each of these topics will be analyzed in turn.

Faith and facts

The facts on which the Christian faith depends, according to Campbell, are of two basic kinds: historical and supernatural. An assent of faith based on the first type is invariably connected with facts as reported by witnesses and depends on the trust one has in the reliability of their testimony. As he remarked in his book on Christian Baptism, admitting testimony "to be true is in the sacred style, equivalent to believing it." Also, "faith is always but the conviction of the truth of testimony, whether that testimony be human or divine."[242] Similarly, Locke said, "Faith . . . is the assent to any proposition, not thus made out by deduction or reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God . . ."[243]

There is nothing complex about faith at this level.

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[242]Campbell, Christian Baptism, p. 38. Cf. "That testimony is necessary to faith, is a proposition . . . true, evident and universally admitted. He that believes, believes something, and that which he believes is testified unto him by others." The Christian Baptist, printed and published by Alexander Campbell (Brooke County, Virginia: At the Buffaloe Printing-Office, 1827), Vol. 1, p. 256. Reprinted by Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1955. Hereafter cited as CB. Cf. MH(1836), pp. 166-68.

[243]Essay, IV. xviii. 2.

Indeed, it is a great mistake Campbell warns us, .

> to suppose there are many ways of believing testimony or of assenting to evidence. There is but one way, whether the testimony be human or divine; and that is, to admit it to be true. There may be different degrees of clearness and certainty in the evidence adduced in any case. Hence faith is strong or weak, in the ratio of the clearness and force of the testimony adduced.[244]

Faith, then, is the acceptance of various propositions as true based on trust in the testimony regarding those propositions.[245] The source for the testimony may be a person or a document; or, as Campbell writes in making the distinction between faith and knowledge, for instance, something "is known when we have witnessed it ourselves, and it is believed when repeated to us by credible persons who have witnessed it."[246]

All that a man is, psychologically, is involved in the act of faith as assent to facts. "The head, the heart, the will, the conscience are all," according to Campbell,

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[244] Christian Baptism, p. 42; cf. Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 12. Cf. Essay, IV. xv. 2, 3.

[245] See, for example, Eames, p. 40.

[246] Alexander Campbell, Christianity Restored (Rosemead, California: Old Baths Book Club, 1959), p 114; cf. Essay, IV. xv. 3. Here Locke contrasts faith with knowledge by saying "that in all the parts of knowledge there is intuition. . . . That which makes me believe, is something extraneous to the thing I believe . . ." Campbell's view is in line with this, that is to say, Campbell is making Locke's distinction between personal experience which gives knowledge and faith which comes from testimony. See, for instance, II. ix. 15. Also, see MH(1836), p. 166.

"simultaneously exercised in the act of believing . . ."[247] Unless each intellectual and emotional faculty is involved, distinctly yet coordinated as one action, the overall effect will be less than true faith in the Biblical sense. "The head alone believes nothing. Nor any of the others."[248] On the contrary, if Campbell understands faith correctly, each faculty has a unique and essential part to play in the individual who makes a genuine assent of faith:

> The understanding simply discerns truth, the conscience recognizes authority, the heart feels love, the will yields to requisition.[249]

True faith, therefore, is an assent of the whole person (mind and heart) to facts or propositions based on the testimony of reliable witnesses.

Although it is the case that faith is an act of the will, wherein the individaul makes a deliberate choice, and then follows out the consequences of that choice, there is another side of faith. Campbell came to see it as a strict causal relationship, moving from the facts known, to the effects of those facts on the heart and mind of the individual.

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[247] Christian Baptism, p. 42; cf., Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 174-75.

[248] Ibid., p. 43. See also Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 66-67.

[249] Ibid. "Faith, then, I say, has been proved to be as dependent on volition as knowledge or experience because all the faculties employed in examining evidence and acquiring knowledge are subject to our volitions. . . . The moment testimony is presented to me, I call all my faculties to the examination of that testimony; and my volition is just as operative in my examination of testimony, as it is in my researches into any favorite department of science." Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 175.

"Belief," he writes, "is the cause, and trust, confidence, or faith in Christ, the effect."[250] The steps in the causal chain are clearly outlined by him, and once these steps have been taken faith must causally follow:

> There is no connexion of cause and effect more intimate; there is no system of dependences more closely linked; there is no arrangement of things more natural or necessary, than the ideas represented by the terms fact, testimony, faith and feeling. The first is for the last, and the two intermediates are made necessary by the force of circumstances, as the means for the end. The fact, or the thing said or done, produces the change in the frame of mind. The testimony, or the report of the thing said or done, is essential to belief; and belief of it, is necessary to bring the thing said or done to the heart.[251]

To him the whole process is both "natural and rational" and perfectly "consistent with the constitution of our nature."[252]

He further develops this idea, expanding it to show the interconnection of each particular element of faith, namely: fact, testimony, and human experience. He states therefore:

> that testimony without being or fact, is as impossible as testimony without a testifier, that faith, without testimony--knowledge, without experience or the evidence of sense--

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[250] Christianity Restored, p. 115. Cf., Eames, The Philosophy of Alexander Campbell, "Campbell's account of faith allowed him to emphasize two important meanings of it . . . one is to have trust in Christ and the other is the mental acceptance of statements of fact about Christ . . ." p. 41.

[251] Ibid., p. 113.

[252] Christianity Restored. See also, MH(1833), pp. 340-345.

> and opinion, without speculation, are as impossible as an effect without an adequate cause.[253]

Thus we have both sides of his position on the manner in which faith is produced in the human mind. In both cases, the same result is attained. When facts, testimony, understanding, and experience are brought together in an open and honest mind, faith will result. He believes the connection among the separate elements is as causally certain as that which holds in natural events.

Campbell separates the various kinds of facts which play an important role in the lives of men into scientific, moral, metaphysical and supernatural categories. In a lecture presented to the Maysville Lyceum in 1839, he discussed this topic, declaring:

> Besides these facts, [i.e., the physical, intellectual and moral] which are the basis of all human science, there is another class of facts, mysterious and sublime beyond comparison, which, for the want of a more distinctive name, we have called supernatural facts.[254]

The word "fact" is used here with its original Latin meaning of factum, event or action accomplished.[255]

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[253] MH(1836), p. 168. It is true, as Eames suggests, that Campbell made no effort to explain cause and effect in a technical sense (philosophical or scientific) but merely accepted it as "part of the rationality which makes up the 'reasonableness' of the Age of Enlightenment," p. 43. Indeed, I would go further and say Campbell would have thought it absurd to question the causal relationship.

[254] Campbell, Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 143.

[255] Alexander Campbell, The Christian System (Nashville, Tennessee, 1956), p. 90. Cf. MH(1857), p. 577; (1859), pp. 640-44.

Following this particular usage, he draws a further distinction between facts and truth. "All facts are truths," he says, "but all truths are not facts."[256] He gives this example: "That God exists is a truth, but not a fact, that he created the heavens and the earth is a fact and a truth."[257] Thus, in order to be a fact in Campbell's terminology, an action has to be involved--a deed accomplished; whereas truth is "the simple agreement of the terms of any proposition with the subject of that proposition, or the representation of any thing as it exists."[258] What he seems to mean is that a fact is something done and is independent of human experience. Truth, however, is a recognized correspondence between what is and what is experienced. Put another way, facts could exist without anyone recognizing them as such, but there would be no such thing as truth unless some mind recognized it. Truth depends on cognition and is mind-dependent to that extent.

Taking "fact" to mean an accomplished event, a supernatural fact refers to a completed event or action

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[256] Christian System, p. 90.

[257] Ibid.

[258] Ibid. Cf. Locke, IV. v. 2. "Truth then seems to me, in the proper import of the word, to signify nothing but the joining or separating of Signs, as the things signified by them, do agree or disagree one with another. The joining or separating of signs here meant, is what by another name we call proposition." In MH(1836), p. 167, Campbell stated "truth is neither more nor less than the agreement of words with their proper meanings or the things which they represent--the correspondence of the terms of the proposition with the things which they represent."

which lies outside the natural order of things. A supernatural fact cannot be explained from within the realm of natural cause and effect, which does hold for all other facts. The point is made more precisely when he notes that whereas nature means "The usual course," or "The established order of things," supernatural refers to "something above the reach or power of the established connection of things."[259] As a result, supernatural facts have to do exclusively with the actions of God, for He alone, being Creator of all things, has the power to suspend the natural order, and at the same time avoid a chaotic result. Thus Campbell declares:

> Supernatural facts are, then, facts superior to the powers of nature--facts above the established order of things, and which can only be performed by a hand that can control, suspend or annihilate the laws of nature.[260]

Supernatural facts, therefore, play a central role in Campbell's concept of faith. For because of them, actual experience points the mind toward the Creator and sustainer of all things.

It is true that John Locke does not speak of supernatural facts as such, but there are some significant parallels in what the two men say about God's distinctive actions. In fact, the defining characteristic of miracles and supernatural facts is this: they each originate exclusively with God. Locke defines a miracle as "a sensible

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[259] Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 143.

[260] Ibid., p. 144.

operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his own opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."[261] Regarding supernatural facts, Campbell says they are "superior to the powers of nature" and "can only be performed by a hand that can control, suspend or annihilate the laws of nature."[262] When faced with the question of deciding between genuine miracles and false claims, Locke gives one criterion to be that the genuine carries "with it the marks of a greater power than appears in opposition to it."[263]

Both men hold the view that miracles and supernatural facts serve the purpose of confirming Jesus as the Son of God. "A miracle," according to Campbell is needed, "to seal a message, or to attest a messenger, [and] is essential to the credit and acceptance of them"[264] A person such as Jesus, "who controls, violates or suspends any of the laws of physical nature--curing disease by a word, healing the sick, restoring the maimed, raising the dead, or dispossessing demons--gives evidence that he is sustained by the hand of Omnipotence."[265] Locke lists the same sequence of miracles

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[261] A Discourse of Miracles (Ramsey edition), p. 79.

[262] Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 144.

[263] A Discourse of Miracles, p. 82.

[264] Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 157.

[265] Ibid. See also, CB, Vol. II, pp. 106-107. "The works which Jesus did he often said were works given him to do by his Father."

as indicating that God worked through Jesus.[266] It is hardly surprising that Locke and Campbell agree because the majority of Christians hold this view. But it is important to see that the latter's explanation and defense of miracles were drawn from Locke's writings.

When we turn to the contention that genuine miracles have to uphold the moral integrity of God and man, we find a more interesting parallel. Locke states, for example:

> That no mission can be looked on to be divine, that delivers any thing derogating from the honour of the one, only, true, invisible God, or inconsistent with natural religion and the rules of morality: because God having discovered to men the unity and majesty of his eternal Godhead, and the truths of natural religion and morality by the light of reason, he cannot be supposed to back the contrary by revelation; for that would be to destroy the evidence and the use of reason, without which men cannot be able to distinguish divine revelation from diabolical imposture.[267]

In much the same way Campbell says,

> It has often been asked, what necessary connexion is there between a miracle and a revelation from Heaven? If the term <u>miracle</u> is properly defined to be 'the suspension of some known law of nature,' the connexion will be as follows:--The suspension intimates the certain presence of a power superior to the law, and this is all it proves. The miracle, I say, only proves that a power superior to the law operates in its suspension; but the moral character of the agent is to be deduced from the nature of the miracle combined with the end from which it is said to be performed. The miracles of our Savior are chiefly of a beneficent kind. . . . From a consideration of the character of his miracles and

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[266] <u>A Discourse of Miracles</u>, p. 82. "He who comes with a message from God . . . cannot be refused belief if he vouches his mission by a miracle.

[267] Ibid., p. 84.

> the salutary end for which they were wrought, we are constrained by the rules of right reason to believe that they were effected by the Spirit of God, and not by Beelzebub.[268]

Both men are arguing, then, that a display of power in itself has little genuine value. Only when that manifestation of power leads to moral improvement does it show God stands behind it.

The moral quality in the miracles of Jesus distinguishes His from the supposed miracles of His rivals. This is the important distinction which the critics of the miraculous have failed to make. They merely link all miracles together in their criticism and rejection.[269] When it is observed, however, that miracles and morality stand or fall together, then the purpose of miracles becomes much more important. Moreover, finding a reasonable defense for them takes on greater significance. The implication is that ethics, like miracles, depend on God. Without God as the absolute source for ethical principles, morality is reduced to mere relativism. As a result, both men argue for absolute moral principles, binding on all men in every age; and they posit their ethical absolutes on the truth of the

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[268] CB, Vol 2, p. 30. Cf., MH(1836), p. 513, footnote 5, "All the displays of supernatural power in support of the mission . . . of Christ, were either works of direct benevolence or of Justice (which is essential to goodness)."

[269] See A Discourse of Miracles, pp. 81-82; The Reasonableness of Christianity, pp. 62-63; and CB, Vol. 2, pp. 30-32. In these passages both men insist that the distinguishing marks of Jesus' miracles lie in their manifestation of goodness toward man.

Christian religion as coming from God and being confirmed by miracles.

To discover genuine principles of morality, therefore, one must of necessity turn to the Christian scriptures. "It is religion, the religion of the Bible . . . that suggests the master motives and controlling impulses to morality. . . . Apart from this belief, morality is mere policy or public utility, or the hypocrisy of a public education."[270] In keeping with the implications of this view, Campbell denies that moral philosophy is an inductive science as some claimed. The idea that morality can be learned from the principles of reason alone, is, he finds, a theory founded on error.[271] The fundamental error comes from the view that morality does not depend on revelation as an aid to reason. When men attempt to answer the important questions of ethics, as some of the most famous have done, they all fail because they do not have access to revelation. These questions have to do with "the origin, the nature, the relations, the obligations and the destiny of man."[272] After surveying various attempts to develop answers by reasoning alone,

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[270] MH(1836), p. 597. Cf. Essay, IV. x. 7, "genuine morality" depends on God.

[271] Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 99. "The science sometimes called 'moral philosophy', which professes, from the mere light of nature, to ascertain and establish--indeed, to originate and set forth--the origin, nature, relations, obligations and destiny of man . . . I cannot admit." Ibid.

[272] Ibid. "The knowledge of our obligations and relations presupposes a knowledge of our origin and destiny;

Campbell claims they fail because only the Bible as "communication supernatural and divine" has the proper answers.[273]

The language used by Locke and the conclusions reached by him so resemble those of Campbell that it seems apparent the latter borrowed heavily from the former. For example, Locke insists that it is "too hard a task for unassisted reason, to establish morality, in all its parts, upon its true foundations, with a clear and convincing light."[274] Indeed, he goes on to say, "We see how unsuccessful in this, the attempts of philosophers were, before our Saviour's time. How short their several systems come of the perfection of a true and complete morality, is very visible."[275] Again he writes:

> human reason unassisted, failed men in its great and proper business of morality. It never, from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out an entire body of the law of Nature. And he that shall collect all the moral rules of the Philosophers, and compare them with those contained in the New Testament, will find them to come short of the morality delivered by our Savior . . .[276]

The principles of morality are explained and confirmed in

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and, therefore, whatever system of reasoning, whatever science, fails to reveal these, cannot possibly develop those . . . while moral philosophy proposes to do all this, she has never done it in any one instance." Ibid., p. 100.

[273]Ibid., p. 124. Cf. pp. 101-124. Essay IV. iv. 7: "Moral knowledge is as capable of real certainty, as mathematics."

[274]Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 60.

[275]Ibid., p. 61.

[276]Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 61. Cf., Popular Lectures and Addresses, pp. 99-109.

the miracles and teachings of Jesus. In fact, according to Locke,

> To one who is once persuaded that Jesus Christ was sent by God . . . those who do believe in him, all his commands become principles; there needs no other proof for the truth of what he says, but that he said it: and then there needs no more but to read the inspired books to be instructed; all the duties of morality lie there clear and plain.[277]

Although other moral philosophers fail in providing a comprehensive system of morality, Jesus succeeds. Campbell defends this view, and a primary source for his connection of miracles and morality is John Locke.[278]

Faith and history

There is in all religious faith, according to Campbell, an inseparable relationship between faith and historical events. As he remarked, "Faith is, by us, usually defined 'the belief of testimony'."[279] Testimony is the transmission of historical facts, carried forward

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[277] Ibid., p. 67.

[278] Since Jesus' miracles confirm him as the supreme authority in ethics and morality, and because right behavior is a prerequisite for social and religious well-being, the Bible ought to be the center of any educational system. Campbell stressed this view and he found support for it in the writings of Locke. Campbell quoted from Locke's Conduct of the Understanding with approval, "It is virtue--direct virtue--which is hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education. . . . All other considerations and accomplishments should give way and be postponed to this." Popular Lectures and Addresses, p. 465f.

[279] MH(1833), p. 42; also (1834), pp. 344-345. Cf. Campbell-Rice Debate, p. 368, "Faith is necessary first in order; consequently, the principle or facts to be believed must first be propounded."

by the original witnesses to others who accept their testimony as true. Indeed, many vague and uncertain things have been written about faith, when it is in itself a very clear and straightforward concept. For example,

> Some superficial thinkers have spoken and written much upon different kinds of faith. They have 'historical' and 'saving faith', the 'faith of miracles', and the 'faith of devils', the 'faith direct and reflex', 'temporary and enduring faith', etc. . . . By placing historical and saving or divine faith in contrast, and in giving all value to saving and none to historical belief, they have bewildered themselves and their followers.[280]

Thus it is a serious error to divide religious faith into different types; but even more serious is the failure to recognize that "there is no faith worth anything that is not historical; for all our religion is founded on history."[281] For Campbell, the Bible is the supreme example of recorded history.

The essential role of history in the Christian religion is revealed in the question regarding belief in Moses or Jesus. "Is there any man [he asks] under the broad heavens who believes in Moses or in Jesus, who has not first heard of the Lawgiver and the Savior from history oral or

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[280] Christian Baptism, p. 43; cf., "it will be objected by some, that to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, is but an historical, and not a justifying, or saving faith. . . . I allow to the makers of systems and their followers, to invent and use what distinctions they please, and to call things by what they think fit . . . but they must have a care how they deny it to be a justifying or saving faith, when Our Savior and his apostles have declared it to be so." The Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 43.

[281] Christian Baptism, p. 43.

written? Not one,"[282] is Campbell's answer. Historical claims are presented as facts and propositions which pertain to the different events and personages in the sacred writings. True faith is predicated on a knowledge of the facts (events) and trust in the propositions. From the religious perspective (as opposed to faith in general) genuine faith is based on a comprehensive historical view--a view which is, if true, both consistent (logical) and comprehensive. As he remarks,

> Multitudes believe something concerning Jesus the Messiah on mere rational or human authority and prescription, who have not one distinct real conception or apprehension of him . . .[283]

He goes on to add,

> The whole history must be clearly understood and cordially received in its true sense and on its divine evidence . . . before anyone can, in strict propriety, be said to believe it.[284]

Religious faith, therefore, is more than assenting to a few

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[282]Ibid. See also, West, pp. 151-59. See Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity in which he argues for faith in Christ based on the testimony of the scriptures.

[283]Christian Baptism, p. 43.

[284]Ibid. Therefore, Eames' statement that "Campbell seeks to make man's ultimate commitment hang upon the acceptance of a factual statement" is only partially true. A true believer has not only to accept the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, but he must go further and commit himself to the implications of that fact by a life of service and worship. See, for instance, MH(1857), pp. 575-76. Locke also posits belief in Jesus as the Messiah as the basic fact to be accepted by faith. But, if one reads further, Locke insists that "believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the New Covenant . . ." pp. 44, 45; The Reasonableness of Christianity. Cf. The First Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, in which Locke makes the proper distinction between that which is necessary to become a Christian, believing Jesus is the Messiah, and living as a Christian. Works, Vol. 6, pp. 165-69.

isolated concepts: it is understanding the facts and perceiving the significance of those facts for one's life.

At this point Campbell is very much in line with Locke's thinking for Locke also views Christianity as a faith predicated on history and testimony. He writes, for instance, "the whole tenor of our Savior's and his apostles' preaching, we have shewed through the whole history of the evangelists and the Acts."[285] Religious faith, like all forms of opinion, rests on probability, which itself "relies on testimony."[286] But when Locke's criteria for evaluating testimony are applied to the Christian scriptures, they cause a serious dilemma. Either his criteria are unsound or the testimony on which the Scriptures stand is extremely weak. He attempts to avoid this predicament by appealing to revelation and miracles; but here, too, he depends on the same testimony and thereby begs the question at issue.

Campbell, I believe, recognized Locke's problem and saw that it was not effectively solved. By beginning, therefore where Locke started, with historical testimony, Campbell discovers a way out of the dilemma. What Campbell proposes, in effect, is: If one essential miracle in the life of Jesus can be shown to be true--for instance, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead--then the other miracles become

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[285] The Reasonableness of Christianity, pp. 43-44.

[286] Essay, IV. xv. 5. The Reasonableness of Christianity is based on the fundamental assumption that the Bible is a document founded on historical testimony.

acceptable. In other words, he believes it can be demonstrated that this particular event, the resurrection, is not only backed by credible testimony, but possesses an unbroken chain of empirical evidence for it beginning from the moment of its occurrence to the present time.

In the New Testament the resurrection of Jesus is posited as a fact, a supernatural event accomplished by the power of God. Campbell gives four criteria for evaluating the historical actuality of any fact and distinguishing true from false historical claims. He insists, "no fact accompanied with these four criteria ever was proved to be false. Nay, we will demonstrate that no fact which can abide these criteria can be false."[287] This claim is very strong; and, if it can be supported, would establish the resurrection on a most secure historical foundation.

In the order in which he lists them, the criteria are:

1. the facts reported (as in the Bible) must be sensible facts, that is, facts obtained by the senses
2. these sensible facts must have been "exhibited with every imaginable public and popular attestation, and open to the severest scrutiny which their extraordinary character might induce"
3. the facts must have been impressive enough to be the cause of commemorative memorials being established in their honor, and these memorials must continue to be observed even now

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[287] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 185.

4. finally, these memorial celebrations must have started at the earliest possible moment after the event was accomplished[288]

The crucial question in examining the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is: will these events stand the test of the criteria? Campbell insists they will.

The events surrounding the death and resurrection were public and open to examination by man's sensible nature. They were empirical happenings, as the first criterion dictates. Indeed, the New Testament gives eye-witness accounts of the events in question. According to the Biblical record, the crucifixion was carried out under the supervision of the Roman government. It is a recognized fact of history that an individual named Jesus was executed

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[288] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 184. It is possible to put Campbell's criteria into the form and language of contemporary philosophy regarding historical explanation. For example, "The explanation of the occurrence of an event of some specific kind E at a certain place and time consists . . . in indicating the causes or determining factors of E. Now the assertion that a set of events . . . C_1, C_2, . . ., C_n--have caused the event to be explained, amounts to the statement that according to certain general laws, a set of events of the kinds mentioned is regularly accompanied by an event of kind E." Carl Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," Aspects of Scientific Explanation and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 336-37. See also, Patrick Gardiner, The Nature of Historical Explanation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 1-5. The resurrection event would be E (i.e., the event to be explained); C_1, C_2, . . ., C_n would be the celebration of the memorial event; and thus the "covering law" would be any event testified to by witnesses and resulting in a memorial event must be true. The resurrection fits this law and must therefore be true.

by the Roman government early in the first century.[289] In fact, the death of Jesus has seldom been seriously questioned.

Where the resurrection is concerned, however, the situation is different, as might be expected. Campbell realizes that if the resurrection can be established as historically sound, then the Christian faith becomes much more credible, if not firmly demonstrated as true. In his mind, the resurrection of Jesus is the only rational explanation for the whole series of events which followed his death and for the establishment and expansion of the Christian faith. In the first place, the men who testified regarding the resurrection did so only after they had undeniable empirical proof that it had indeed taken place. As a matter of fact, these same men had returned to their former manner of life and prior occupations, because they were certain Jesus had died, never to return. "And," as Campbell notes,

> as for his resurrection from the dead, so far from plotting any story about it, it was the farthest thought from their mind; the female disciples were preparing to embalm the body, when they found the grave empty; and when they

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[289] See, for example, Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 333-49; cf., William R. Wilson, The Execution of Jesus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), for a detailed account of the circumstances, historical, social, and political surrounding the death of Jesus; see also, Tacitus, The Annals, 15.43 and Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars, Claudius, 25, for accounts of Jesus' influence and death, outside the New Testament. A complete list of sources can be found in F. F. Bruce, Jesus & Christian Origins Outside the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1974).

> told the disciples that "the Lord was risen indeed," their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.[290]

Thus a deliberate fabrication by any of the disciples regarding the resurrection would fit neither the recorded facts of history nor human nature.

Not only were the disciples not interested in establishing and propagating a myth about Jesus' resurrection, since they were not convinced by the first reports that he had been raised, they were rather like men who have had a bad experience and want to forget the whole thing. It was only after they were personally convinced that they began to announce that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and believing it so completely that they were willing to die rather than give up that belief. As Campbell remarks, it is psychologically impossible for a group of men to die willingly for a mere fable, when they know it is a fable![291] Still, they might be deceived, and it is a fact that some have died for fables, which they hold as truth. He recognizes this possibility and believes its refutation had to be in the type of individual who testified to the resurrection. Generally speaking, these were simple, uneducated, matter-of-fact individuals. They were realists, men who lived by what their senses told them. Such men would not be persuaded by wishful thinking, expecially not in a matter concerning the death and resurrection of the promised

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[290] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 312.

[291] Ibid., p. 319.

Messiah. At his death they felt they had been deceived; thus at the claim of a resurrection, they would be even more wary by remaining uncommitted until the proof was irrevocable. They were in the presence of Jesus for forty days after his resurrection, and this was the event which convinced them. They had undeniable, empirical proof, the only kind they would accept as totally convincing.[292]

Also to be taken into account in Campbell's apologetic is the testimony of Saul of Tarsus. Here is a true intellectual, a man of great learning and recognized as an authority in the Jewish faith; moreover, he was at first a sworn enemy of the Christian faith. Saul was an individual who rejected firmly any resurrection claim. But he became convinced and his own account of such a remarkable transformation of belief is itself a strong argument for the genuineness of the resurrection event. Paul gives three distinct accounts of his conversion from disbeliever to faithful Christian.[293] When his testimony is taken in conjunction with the others, we have sound evidence on which to base our faith in the resurrection, according to Campbell.

Campbell offers two further criteria for acceptance of the event in question, having to do with the institution and continuation of a memorial to the event. Campbell finds

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[292]Ibid., p. 310. See I Corinthians 15:3-6, for a list of those who testified to the appearances of Jesus following his resurrection.

[293]See Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 9:1-31; 22:4-16; 26:9-18; and Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 313-318.

the memorial in the celebration of a special day and a unique event, the Eucharist. The Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, was instituted by Jesus the night before his crucifixion and has been celebrated from that time to our own day. Again, Campbell insists that men do not build monuments or celebrate memorials for deceptive men nor do they base them on speculative opinions, especially when they are untrue.[294] Regarding the special day, he remarks, "There now exists the institution of a day consecrated to the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus."[295] The vast significance of this day cannot be exaggerated, he believes, if one really understands what lies behind it in the tradition of the Jewish faith. That is, the new day is most interesting in contrast to the Jewish Sabbath, a similar commemorative day. Because, as Campbell notes, since the first Christians were themselves Jewish, "There was the abolition of the seventh day among the first converts, as well as, the appointment of the first [day]."[296] This was no simple, indifferent change for these people; on the contrary, they viewed the Sabbath as a day given to them by God himself, and for generations they felt a deep moral obligation to observe that special day.

Thus, he argues, the fact that so important a change did take place has within it a definite testimony to the

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[294] Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 325-26.

[295] Ibid., p. 235.

[296] Ibid., pp. 325-26.

resurrection of Jesus. What else, he asks, would explain such a radical change in the thinking and the lives of these early Christian Jews? Only an event of such overwhelming magnitude as the resurrection is the answer Campbell gives.

> Now to abandon the observance of that day [i.e., the Sabbath], as every Christian did, and to substitute a new day of the week, having a different object and view, was greatly more difficult than to originate an institution entirely new--more difficult than to institute it co-ordinately with the old Sabbath day, so to perpetuate the observance of the first and seventh day also.[297]

It was not merely a revision in which the seventh day was held sacred with that of the first day, it was a move wherein one turned from a whole way of thinking, from one traditional approach to God, to a radically different apprcach. Psychologically this is virtually impossible to do, except when some significant event has forced a change, as when some new theory or undiscovered truth is revealed in which the old theory is overthrown. To give up the Sabbath day was for the Jewish Christians equivalent to abandoning a whole way of life.

By way of conclusion, therefore, Campbell writes,

> The institution and consecration of the first day of the week, in commemoration of the matter of fact that our Savior rose from the dead on the morning of that day, is a positive commemorative institution, in direct attestation of the truth of the matter of fact and of the unspeakable importance of the occasion.[298]

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[297] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 326.

[298] Ibid., p. 327.

The resurrection event meets the first three of the criteria for determining the veracity of historical events, as Campbell set them up; and as for the last, an ongoing memorial or institution, he insists that from the time of Jesus' resurrection until the present, "all Christians, Jews and Gentiles, have celebrated it."[299] Thus, he believes we can legitimately draw the conclusion, based on the historical record, that the first day of the week, when observed within the context of the Christian faith, implies the factual resurrection of Jesus from the dead.[300]

Faith and life

Since Locke limits knowledge to that which is certain and cannot be false, he finds that most of life has to be

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[299] Ibid.

[300] The second of the commemorative institutions Campbell uses as proof of the resurrection is the Lord's Supper (i.e., the Eucharist), The first is a commemorative day while the latter is a commemorative action. Neither event, Campbell insists, can be explained without the actual occurrence of the specific event it is used to commemorate, and that event must be the resurrection. Nothing else has the importance or the psychological impact to cause diligent observance of such an act. Both memorials, the day and the feast, have been observed without interruption for two thousand years. This singular circumstance is impressive and for Campbell it is proof undeniable. The fact on which these memorials stand must be true. Thus we have an unbroken chain of empirical evidence backing up the historical testimony. Thus Hume's criticism of miracles is voided. He insists that the disciples believed in the miracles only because they already accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but they rejected both until they were convinced he had been raised from the dead.

lived within the realm of belief.[301]

> Our knowledge being so narrow . . . it will perhaps, give us some light . . . if we . . . take a view of our ignorance: which being infinitely larger than our knowledge, may serve much to the quieting of disputes, and improvement of useful knowledge . . .[302]

He continues, "the state we are at present in, not being that of vision, we must, in many thing, content ourselves with faith and probability . . ."[303] Alexander Campbell begins with the same view of knowledge--that it is limited to what we experience--and then shows how faith pervades the whole of life. Locke's view, Campbell notes, is: "that all our original ideas are the result of sensation and reflection . . . our five senses are the only avenues through which ideas of material objects can be derived to us . . ."[304] He adds, "I know that which is communicated

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[301] See the whole of IV. iii. on the "Extent of Human Knowledge." Cf. "The necessity of believing, without knowledge, nay, often upon very slight grounds, in this fleeting state of action and blindness we are in, should make us more busy and careful to inform our selves, than to constrain others." IV. xvi. 4.

[302] IV. iii. 27. Again he writes, "The conduct of our lives, and the management of our great concerns, will not bear delay." IV. xvi. 3.

[303] Ibid. 6. In this context faith means religious faith, but the same would hold for belief in general. See A Paraphrase and Notes on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 157, Works, Vol 7, "Now I have a superficial partial knowledge of things; but then I shall have an intuitive, comprehensive knowledge of them . . ."

[304] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 47.

to my sensorium through the avenue of my senses . . ."[305]

Campbell, it is true, developed the implications of belief much more fully than Locke; of course, the purposes of each were different. Campbell wants to show that belief being a necessary part of human existence, religious faith, as found especially in the Christian religion, is both a necessary and reasonable guide to life. In other words, he simply draws the logical conclusions implied, but never actually drawn, in Locke's philosophy of belief. Put another way, if one takes the epistemology of the Essay in combination with the theology of the Reasonableness of Christianity and the comments on Paul's epistles, he will have the basic elements of Campbell's rationalistic theology.

Life is permeated by faith, as Campbell declares,

> man is obliged to walk through his whole life more by faith than by his five senses, his own observations, or his own experiences--probably more than by these all combined.[306]

If one observes the human condition, therefore, he is struck by the singular fact that life is, from beginning to end, lived by faith. The infant believes and trusts others or it dies.

> The law of nature is as imperious and universal as the law of the gospel. If the gospel says, "He that believes not shall be damned"--the

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[305] Ibid., p. 67. This passage is in line with Locke's statement that we know the existence of things (corporeal objects) by sensation. IV. ix. 2.

[306] Christian Baptism, p. 40 Cf. IV. xvi. 3: "We are forced to determine ourselves on the one side or the other."

> law of man's natural existence says, "if he believes not his mother or nurse he must die.[307]

The same principles of faith hold for each man throughout his span of existence.

Since man must obviously live by faith in the physical realm, he asks, "Why then should it be otherwise as respects things unseen, spiritual and eternal?" In his view, there is no distinction to be made which would indicate that faith is appropriate to the physical and not to the spiritual realm. He continues along this line:

> If man, in things temporal and with respect to his present life, walks by faith, why should it be thought incredible that God would have him walk by things spiritual and with respect to an eternal life.[308]

The really surprising thing, he believes, would be to find that the opposite holds. If faith were common to man in every way except the spiritual, one would think God arbitrary and capricious. This is Campbell's main point and within the context of his argument is a reasonable conclusion.

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[307] Ibid., p. 41. Campbell throughout his writings on faith or belief (he tends to use the terms interchangeably) assumes that the reader understands the distinction he is making between mere belief and religious faith. Belief is the condition under which all men live. Religious faith arises from belief only if the human mind is brought into contact with God's revealed will as contained in the Bible.

[308] Ibid., p. 42. It is not merely that one argues from the premise that God is good, to the conclusion that God must therefore direct men's lives toward the good. But rather one has the empirical fact that men do live their lives by faith and trust. It is arguing then from the observed fact to the apparent cause--from universal faith to the underlying cause of that faith. Cf., CB, Vol. 2, p. 147, "The means are always suited to the end."

Throughout the scriptures there is an underlying assumption that "all must walk by faith." This assumption implied a fundamental and most significant reason why men should accept the teaching of the Bible, and it speaks to the deepest needs of the human spirit. It is also the basis for Campbell's contention that there is a direct cause and effect relationship between the facts of the Christian religion and the response of faith from those who understand.

In order to properly understand the scriptures, he insists on the correct method of interpretation. Since the Bible is written in language comparable to that of other literature, the same rules of literary interpretation are adequate for the scriptures. He found support for this position in Locke's Essay and Paraphrase of St. Paul's Epistles. A fundamental rule is to study each section of scripture in context. A major hindrance here is the division of the Bible into chapters and verses. He writes,

> Locke . . . the celebrated mental philosopher, whose fame is commensurate with the English language and the English people . . . condemns the popular plan of printing the scriptures. This is from the London edition of his work on Paul's Epistles, 1823, recently obtained here. Preface, pages 7 and 8.[309]

This passage is followed by a long quotation which explains why this dividing into chapters and verses hinders rather than contributes to understanding the scriptures. Significantly, Campbell's own edition of the New Testament was not

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[309] MH(1832), p. 274

divided in this way.[310]

Other important rules of interpretation he shares with Locke are these: "there is no divine dictionary, grammar, or special rules of interpretation for the Bible . . . that book, to be understood, must be submitted to the common dictionary, grammar, and rules of language in which it was written . . ."[311] Locke assumes this position although he does not expressly state it. That he recognizes that the original text of the New Testament was written in Greek shows he is conscious of the need to go back to that Greek background for a proper understanding of the text.[312] Moreover, Campbell insists,

> Every word in the Scriptures has some idea attached to it, which we call its sense, or meaning. But this meaning is not natural, but conventional. It is agreement, usage, custom, that has constituted a connexion between words, and the ideas represented by them; and this connexion between words and ideas has become necessary by usage.[313]

What this tells us about the meaning we may attach to words

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[310]Alexander Campbell, The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament (Nashville, Tennessee: The Gospel Advocate Company, 1954).

[311]Alexander Campbell, "Principles of Interpretation," Christianity Restored, p. 22.

[312]Works, Vol 7, "An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, by Consulting St. Paul Himself," Preface, pp. iv-v. "The terms are Greek, but the idiom or turn of the phrases, may be truly said to be Hebrew or Syriac," p. v.

[313]"Principles of Interpretation," p. 24.

is important for interpretation. "We are not at liberty to affix what meaning we please to words, nor to use them arbitrarily: inasmuch as custom has affixed by common consent a meaning to them."[314] These particular views seem to be taken right out of Locke's Essay, for the latter has said, "Words . . . signify only men's peculiar Ideas, and . . . a tacit consent, appropriates certain sounds to certain Ideas . . ."[315] Again Locke writes that words and meanings are not joined "by any natural connexion . . . but by a voluntary imposition, whereby such a word is made arbitrarily the mark of such an idea."[316]

At the same time, in order properly to interpret the scriptures, an individual must distinguish between the figurative and literal meaning of the words used. "In no book in the world," Campbell writes, "is the literal sense of words the only sense; and still less in the Bible."[317] By the literal sense, "we mean no more than its primitive meaning."[318] Figurative meaning, on the other hand, he tells us is any use of a word beyond the literal sense. The various forms figurative language may take which need to be distintuished are: metaphor, allegory, metonymy, irony,

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[314] Ibid. [315] III. ii. 8.

[316] Ibid., 1. See also the whole of chapters ix-x, especially ix. 4-5.

[317] "Principles of Interpretation," p. 26.

[318] Ibid.

and hyperbole.[319] In the Essay the author has said that the difficulty of interpreting some words is found in "the difference of Ideas they stand for."[320] Some, it is true, stand for simple ideas and these are relatively straightforward, but the vast majority denote complex and general ideas which make them much more difficult.[321]

Finally, any accurate interpretation must view the scriptures in their overall connection between the various parts. In every writer of the Biblical record one central aim is in view: to communicate the mind of God to mankind. But because each writer differs in background and circumstance, each approaches the writing with particular levels of natural ability. Since this is true, the interpreter must separate the historical circumstances including the author, title, date, place and occasion of the writing, as well as his aim and how the particular writing fits into the scriptures as a whole.[322] Locke has the same points in mind when he remarks,

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[319] Ibid., pp. 27-50. Most of the errors in interpretation, Campbell believes, can be traced back to the failure to distinguish between the literal and figurative meanings.

[320] III. ix. 4.

[321] See, for instance, III. ix. Cf., chapters 3-6 on the whole complex of problems surrounding general terms, simple ideas, mixed modes, and substances.

[322] "Principles of Interpretation," pp. 17-23; 96-99. See also, MH(1832), pp. 106-111. "All of it is designed to accomplish one simple object . . . to place us, as nearly as possible, in the condition of those whom the sacred writers originally addressed," p. 107.

> the epistles were written upon several occasions: and he that will read them as he ought, must observe what 'tis in them, is principally aimed at; find what is the argument at hand, and how managed. . . . We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the coherence and connexion of the parts, and see how it is consistent with itself, and other parts of Scripture, if we will conceive it right.[323]

Campbell was not so naive as to believe that simply understanding the scriptural writings, in and of itself, will persuade an individual to become a Christian. He taught a strict cause and effect relationship between learning the scriptures and conversion, but only in the event that the learner grasps the relevancy that the message has for him personally. Without this qualification Campbell would falsely be understood to say that every person who reads and understands must become a Christian.

Religious faith results when an individual understands and responds to the facts of God's actions on his behalf as seen, specifically, in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Two individuals could know, according to Campbell, the essential claims of the Christian faith and only one of them actually become a Christian. If both individuals understand the scriptures, then the failure on the part of the unconverted person is a failure of will. Conversion is a matter of accepting the facts, as presented in the Bible, and then through an act of the will one believes and is converted. "I have contended," he says in the Owen debate,

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[323] The Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 71. See also, Locke's First Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity. Works, Vol. 6, pp. 161-62.

"that our will has power over our assent to the verity of a matter submitted to our understandings as a matter of belief."[324] Religious faith can be explained, therefore, in the same way as faith in general. Testimony is received and understood, weighed by evidence and assented to or rejected by an act of volition. There is no mysterious working of grace or other factors in one as opposed to the other. Just as faith plays a major role in life as a whole, religious faith is simply the most fundamental aspect of faith, because it puts one in touch with the absolute principles of morality and with spiritual existence.

Summary and Conclusion

John Locke's influence on Alexander Campbell's theology, in the area of faith, is of a fundamental kind. The former's insistence that knowledge pertains to that which is certain is picked up by Campbell, as is the logical correlative that most of life must then be lived by faith. Although Locke does not make a very extensive analysis of faith, except to show how it is to be distinguished from knowledge, and how it depends on probability, Campbell begins with Locke's position and then carries it to its logical conclusion. By doing so he believes that his theology is

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[324] Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 73; cf. Essay IV. xv. 1-3. Assent ought to be proportionate to the proofs. See also, IV. xvi. 1. "Where the proofs are such as make it highly probable and there is not sufficient ground to suspect . . . fallacy of words . . . nor equally valid proofs yet undiscovered latent on the other side . . . there, I think, a man, who has weighed them, can scarce refuse his assent to the side, on which the greater probability appears."

reasonable and philosophically sound. In fact, Locke's attempt to make faith "an assent founded on the highest reason" becomes the guiding principle for Campbell's theology.[325] This use of reason can be found in such diverse places as the guide for proper biblical interpretation and the explanation of the mechanism of conversion. With respect to the former, no interpretation can be true if it is inconsistent or contradictory; and conversion results from weighing the evidence and then deliberately acting on the basis of the evidence.

This should not be taken to mean that Campbell followed Locke uncritically. Rather it is to say that he took from him just those ideas which served his theological purpose. That purpose was to show that since life has to be lived by faith, the Christian religion is the superior life style. Campbell believes its superiority is shown by its ethics and by Jesus' death and resurrection. Ethically it is superior because Christianity upholds absolute moral principles binding on every person in every age. The death and resurrection of Jesus make the Christian religion unique. In virtually every instance, Campbell has drawn on Locke's thought for some important element in his position on faith. The same holds, as we have seen, for

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[325] Essay, Iv. xvi. 14; cf., "Reason is the eye of the soul to which the light of revelation is addressed," a statement which Locke might have made and which expresses Campbell's fundamental concept of reason and its relationship to revelation. MH(1832), p. 99.

knowledge and the existence of God. In the final analysis, therefore, it is Locke more than anyone else whose influence predominates in Campbell's theology.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

John Locke's influence on Alexander Campbell in the areas of faith and knowledge is fundamental, pervasive and permanent. He is in Campbell's eyes the "Christian philosopher."[326] Not only had Locke successfully defended the Christian faith, but he had provided the essentials out of which a rationalistic theology can be woven. It is obvious that Campbell himself is very naive, philosophically speaking, but what he accepts as important in this area comes almost entirely from Locke's writings.

The first reference to Locke is found in the Owen debate of 1829 and the last is in 1863 just three years before Campbell's death. Both quotations are from the Essay, which Robert Richardson says Campbell had studied diligently. Even the span of time between the two quotations, almost thirty-four years, gives some indication of the respect he has for the philosopher.

In the debate with Robert Owen, Campbell is faced with the challenge of the ultimate skeptic: the anti-religion atheist. One purpose for which Locke has written the Essay

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[326] MH(1844), p. 11.

is to refute skepticism in epistemology. Campbell is convinced that it has successfully accomplished that task. In fact, the arguments he uses to refute Owen are taken directly from the Essay. Man's knowledge, he urges, depends on personal experience. The simple ideas are derived exclusively from sensation, and then the complex arrangement of these ideas is made possible by reflection. As Campbell describes the actual process, he quotes from three different sections of the Essay.[327] Here he describes Locke as "the most respectable in the Christian school" of philosophers.[328]

Thus, when Owen argues that the idea of God is derived from the imagination, Campbell demonstrates that this is impossible for the imagination is unable to create any new simple ideas. It is forced to work on those which experience has given and these do not include ideas of spiritual entities. If we examine the function and limitation of each faculty of sense, it becomes obvious no sensation has given rise to the idea of God. He takes these views about simple ideas and the imagination from the Essay.[329]

Another significant example of Locke's influence is found in the separation of propositions into those which are above, contrary, and according to reason. These divisions are fundamental because they determine what can and cannot

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[327]II. i. 3; II. ii. 3; II. iii. 1. Campbell-Owen Debate, pp. 124-25.

[328]Campbell-Owen Debate, p. 124.

[329]Ibid., pp. 143-154.

be known and how reason functions in knowledge. In theology, for instance, the proof of God is according to reason because it is deducible from premises, while the resurrection of the dead is above reason since it is given only through revelation. Campbell uses the classification for the first time in 1832 and the last time in 1863. Thus he accepts it into his theology very early and it conditions the way he reasons for the rest of his life.[330]

His theology is constructed on the following suppositions. Knowledge refers to just those experiences which are beyond doubt. Through the avenue of the senses the simple ideas are attained, and then by reflection they are arranged into more elaborate patterns. When these ideas are based on personal experience and relate directly to the real world, knowledge results. The only exceptions are found in mathematics, science (as, for example, the law of causation), and revelation. Each of these--sensation, mathematics, science and revelation--provides man with Truths which he can and does know.

Since knowledge is very narrow, it is obvious that life in nearly all respects is lived by belief. Only by believing can anyone survive from one day to the next. Believing has to do with facts and testimony. When an

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[330]In line with this is the classification of all knowledge under the headings of things, actions and signs, which he took over from Locke. By using these, Campbell was able to show the interconnections among all areas of knowledge, faith and language. See above, chapter 2, pp. 23-24.

individual is said to believe something, it means he has given mental assent to what he takes to be factual. His life is conditioned by the importance those facts have for him. The Christian religion provides man with a set of facts. These were given to the first men by revelation (and were known by them), and then these inspired men passed these facts on to others.

The facts on which Christianity is established make this system of faith superior to all others for two reasons. In Christianity man comes to an understanding of God as the ultimate reality, and the Christian religion provides an absolute system of ethics to guide his daily existence. The second reason, especially, Campbell appears to have taken over from Locke. He uses the same arguments: moral principles to be absolute must be from God; and they are superior to all other attempts at creating a system of ethics. Campbell uses the same examples of those who tried and failed to make a system of ethics as Locke has included in the Essay and in the Reasonableness of Christianity.

The rationalistic strain in Campbell's thinking shows up very clearly in his teaching on conversion. From his study of the Essay, he comes to see emotion (enthusiasm) as the major barrier to a correct understanding of how men respond to God. Campbell is convinced that faith depends on examining such evidences as the life and miracles of Jesus and the credibility of the original witnesses, and then deliberately acting on the basis of that evidence. The idea

that God works now in some mysterious way to influence men he sees as irrationalism of the most insidious kind. All types of religious error are founded on the failure to perceive that faith in the Christian sense is merely an extension of believing in the most ordinary way. All things necessary for life and godliness are provided in the scriptures--this is Campbell's view.

The one major area in which Locke fails is in his attempt to prove the existence of God. He is right in thinking it possible, but he goes about it in the wrong way. His efforts here, however, enable Campbell to avoid making the mistake of believing one can argue from a series of causes to a first cause. All that is needed, Campbell believes, is to show that the idea of God can originate only supernaturally. Once this change in the argument is made, the existence of God is proved. God's existence, he goes on to say, is the one religious truth known by men. All else is based on faith.

In respect to knowledge, faith and the existence of God, Campbell's theology is determined in a fundamental way by John Locke. He had studied his works as a young man and these set the pattern of his thinking for the remainder of his life. This is not to say that Locke is the only source of influence, because he is not; nor is it to argue that Campbell always understands Locke correctly. Rather, the point is that no other person influenced him as fundamentally

or as permanently. Campbell's rationalistic approach to theology in the areas of knowledge and faith relies on Locke as the single most important source.

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