

Editorial

Zygon's search for significant religious and moral beliefs by the light of the sciences is seriously blocked for many who are near the forefront of twentieth-century cultural evolution. One barrier is the doubt that religion is any longer necessary for man; and this inhibits further search. A second barrier is the fear that religiously satisfactory beliefs cannot at the same time be true; and this also makes the effort seem futile. The seven papers in this issue wrestle implicitly and explicitly with these and related problems, pointing toward a clearer scientific view of human meaning and motivation.

Our psychosocial scientists are making some of the clearest, and even scientifically compelling, arguments why we must have religion. The first two papers, by anthropologists, help us understand the nature and necessity of religion in terms of human purpose or values. A third paper further stresses religion's necessary function as a cultural guide for emotional control or motivation beyond what is genetically provided.

The problem of religious truth, already raised by these three, is further treated by a theologian's analysis of some present weaknesses of the Christian apologetics that, since Kant, have sought to save religious truth by segregating it from scientific truth. Then three physical scientists present some grist for theological mills: a call for a natural theology, a call for theological recognition of new moral problems brought about by the sciences, and a clear argument that traditional religious knowledge has essentially common sources and validations with contemporary science.

One of the anthropologists' papers had suggested that we are forced to have religious beliefs that satisfy certain psychosocial requirements for human life, even though at the same time we may be forced to find such beliefs unsupported in the reality pictured by the sciences. Must religious beliefs be "fictions"? Or, do the physicists open up a way of finding religious belief that meets the requirements both for psychosocial life and for validity in cosmic reality?

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