Christianity Questioned Essay, Research Paper

In ?Christianity and the Machine Age,? Eric Gill attempts to prove that

Christianity is true. To answer this question, Gill turns not to philosophers,

theologians or archaeologists, but to his own consciousness. ?If there be God,

if there be Christ,? it is to man, to the individual man that he calls.?

(Gill, 219) Gill bases his argument on the presumption that the truth is the

correspondence of thought with thing. ?In Christianity thought and thing

correspond. It is in that sense that we say Christianity is true, is the

truth.? (Gill, 219) Gill says that what he knows of Christ corresponds with

what he knows and desires and loves as a human. Gill also asserts that he has no

reason to suppose that he is any ?different in kind or in powers or in

experience from other men.? (Gill, 219) Gill says it follows that since

Christianity is true for him, it must then also be true for all men. According

to Gill, those who do not accept the truth of Christianity are simply wrong.

Gill continues, asserting that Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and all other faiths

are lesser because they are ?more partial, less profound, and therefore less

widespread.? (Gill, 219) This is a poor argument considering that Christians

were a minority group for thousands of years. While Gill does not feel that

other faiths are untrue, he says that the only faith with a clear view of

reality is Christianity. ?Observe, for example, an object under a microscope.

Attempt to get it into focus. But, unless the object be absolutely flat, you

will get one level in focus and not another. You will not be able to see it all

at once, and you will perhaps pass some levels altogether.? (Gill, 219) This

metaphor is an excellent way to explain why so many differing religions exist

when there is only one Truth. Gill does not, however, provide any reason to

assume that Christianity is seeing the truth any more clearly than the other

major world religions. The argument that Christianity is more correct because it

?affirms? more sets Christianity as the lowest common denominator. This does

not prove that the truth as seen through the Christian ?microscope? is any

clearer that when the truth is viewed through any other religion?s

?microscope.? Gill?s point about denials is well made, however. ?The

only thing to beware of is denial. It is on the plane of denials that we fall

foul of one another.? (Gill, 219) I agree with Gill that it is more productive

to examine the commonalties than the conflicts when comparing religions.

Gill?s purpose in attempting to answer such a profound question is tied to his

definition of proper work in the Age of Machines. ?Christianity?must imply

something as to the object of human life and the object of human work.? (Gill,

220) Gill says that if Christianity is removed from the process of work, the

work(wo)man will be lowered to a subhuman condition by degrading labor and

focusing on profit-gaining ends. For Gill, this is the true threat of the

Machine Age. ?The effect of the Machine Age is to secularize human life, to

abolish the Christian criterion of holiness, understood both morally and

intellectually.? (Gill, 235) Gill does allow that machines may help to

alleviate some of the suffering that exists in the world, but he has no

confidence that the influence of capitalist industrialism will be overcome.

?The spirit which has animated merchants and industrialists and financiers

from the beginning of the Machine Age, whether in big business or small, is not

the provision of social amenity or the relief of suffering, but the

aggrandizement of themselves.? (Gill, 235) For Gill the only hope for humanity

lies in the creation of a Christian world, a world based on ?Christian faith,

ruled by Christian thought, and moved by a Christian will.? (Gill, 236) I

agree with many of the values and ideals that Gill espouses. It is obvious that

something must change, particularly with regard to the overemphasis on the

profit motive. I do, however, disagree with his notion that these ideals can

only be applied through the template of Christianity. Christian leaders have

shown themselves to be no more fair or humane than non-Christians. Neither has

the influence of Christian religious leaders, particularly Catholic leaders,

been proven superior. If fact, the countries most deeply entrenched in

industrial capitalism are predominantly Christian. Any challenge to the status

quo, whether issued by a Buddhist or a Christian, would be an excellent start in

the effort to change the way the world views work and working people. Gill?s

presumption that only Christianity holds the answer is misguided.

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