

scientific philosophy dictates a method of thinking which is definite and essentially alike among large groups of highly intellectual individuals, and it proposes a rigidity of discipline and offers a set of tangible standards of achievement which greatly reduce the natural variability in methods of work of good minds. The subject-matter of the thought may be various, but it is important to observe that this makes little difference.

"This quality of scientific thought may well show the path to both religion and philosophy," Dr. Haskins said. "Religion, like science, is primarily an attitude and a method, but of feeling, rather than thought. Philosophy is a method for the erection of mental structures from given mental timber. The tasks of both in achieving unity are less definable, more sweeping, and more difficult than those of science, which may well serve as object-lesson. For it is much more difficult to unify feeling than thought on the one hand, and on the other, the structures built by philosophy must vary tremendously with the nature of the timber available, which philosophy offers no way of standardizing. Science, to the contrary, deals with definable thoughts on the one hand, and on the other, can check its basic building materials against a physical world which offers constant if arbitrary standards."

Naturalness and Unity

Dr. Ritter made the point that "man is a speaking, esthetic, religious, thinking, political, economic, moral and idealizing animal more than any of the lower animals" and recalled that Darwin's great work of developing the theory of evolution made clear the naturalness and unity of the living world.

Discussing the relation of science and religion, Dr. Ritter explained that Spinoza's identification of nature with God rules out exactly the aspect of nature with which Darwin produced his theory

of evolution. Dr. Ritter proposed a combination of Spinoza's doctrine and the whole Darwinian conception. This would leave no gap between nature of modern science and the vague conceptions of supernaturalistic existence that all ages and races of mankind have been aiming at under almost countless names.

The new science of democracy proposed by Dr. Lasswell would be concerned, for example, with the waste of man power in the democracies. There is the problem of transferring old resources, material and human, with a minimum of waste and of offense to human dignity. The social and economic status that is now referred to by the expression "the unemployed" should be abolished, with its implication of social uselessness. Man needs more than job security, Dr. Lasswell said. He needs security on a respected job.

"A science of democracy could provide the experience necessary in a world crisis to integrate the need of strength

in directing modern technical warfare, with the need of preserving democratic vitality," Dr. Lasswell continued. "Wise policy is guided by experience, and a science of democracy can provide for the proper application of the fruits of experience, since the full relevance of experience can be distilled when it is patiently observed, recorded, and examined.

"A science of democracy would not inhibit the total growth of science, but would be part of the total enterprise of science, concerned with the totality of human relations, with special reference to the processes that prejudice the attainment, and the perpetuation, of a democratic society. It would be devoted to the timing of knowledge, to the timely application of the available methods and findings of science to the end of realizing democracy in life. Upon a science of democracy depends the fullest realization of both democracy and science."

Science News Letter, September 21, 1940

HERPETOLOGY

Spitting Cobras' Fangs Specialized for Jets

Serpents in Zoo, Provoked to Eject Venom, Projected It So Forcibly It Audibly Struck Glass Five Feet Off

WEAPONS useful in either peace or war are the possession of three species of cobra, Charles M. Bogert of the American Museum of Natural History stated in a paper presented before the meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in Toronto.

The tip openings of the fangs in most venomous snakes are directed downward, Mr. Bogert said. However, in the three "spitting" cobras, the openings are on the front side of the fang, near the tip,

so that a jet of venom can be thrown straight forward, presumably at the face of a threatening enemy. This, however, does not interfere with the use of the fangs for their normal purpose, which is to catch prey, at the same time paralyzing it with an injection of poison.

Mr. Bogert demonstrated the operation of these specialized fangs experimentally. He used museum specimens, carefully cleaned and attached to a hypodermic syringe. When pressure was applied, a jet of water was thrown forward from the tip openings. Cobras of the "spitting" species, in glass-fronted cages in the zoo, were also provoked to throw their venom. They were able to project it so forcibly and in such quantity that it was heard to strike the glass plate at a distance of five feet.

There are three known species of "spitting" cobras, two in Africa and one in Asia.

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A government biologist has listed 200,000 different local names given to birds of the United States.

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