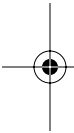


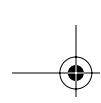
Preface

It was on March 6, 1927, that Bertrand Russell gave a public address in Battersea Town Hall, South London, titled “Why I Am *Not* a Christian.” It made quite a sensation at the time, partly because of the well-known eloquence of the speaker, and partly because of his sheer outspokenness. Thirty years later the speech was published in a collection of his essays. It was chapter one, and it gave its title to the whole book.¹

In his preface Bertrand Russell wrote, “I think all the great religions of the world . . . both untrue and harmful” (p. xi). Although he had some difficulty defining the kind of “Christian” he declared he was not, he was able to demolish to his satisfaction the traditional arguments for the existence of God.

In writing this short book I am not presuming to rebut Russell’s arguments point by point, for I acknowledge his brilliance as mathematician-philosopher, Nobel Prize winner for litera-





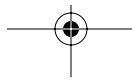
ture, and champion of logic and liberty. But I also acknowledge that there is a case to be made for Christianity that Bertrand Russell did not make or even consider.

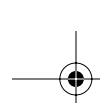
I am grateful to Richard Bewes, Rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, for inviting me to preach four sermons on this topic in 1986. Among those who later listened to the tapes was my friend, the late Miles Thomson, Rector of St. Nicholas' Church, Sevenoaks. He kept urging me to write up those four sermons into a book and to add a chapter or two. Such a book, he wrote, "would provide a fuller introduction than any of the current smaller booklets. At the same time, it would not be too heavy or too big for a genuine inquirer who wants to think through the implications of becoming a Christian."

So, having yielded to Miles Thomson's importunity, I dedicate this modest piece to his memory. *Miles* is Latin for "soldier," and that is what Miles was, a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I thank my friends Paul Weston and Roger Simpson for reading the typescript of this book. They made a number of suggestions, most of which I have adopted. I also thank Stephanie Heald, Inter-Varsity Press's senior commissioning editor, for her attention to detail. In addition, I am extremely grateful to Frances Whitehead, my secretary for forty-seven years, for producing yet one more flawless text.

I confess that I have freely borrowed for this text from what





Preface



I have written in other contexts, especially in *The Contemporary Christian* (1992).² But I have been assured, by friends and publishers alike, that this overlap does not matter, since my personal statement or story in this book can stand on its own feet.

John Stott

