CRISIS OF MODERN ORTHODOXY

SIR,—A news report in your August 1 issue concerning my views on "Modern Orthodoxy's identity crisis," was accurate in summarising my position on the need for "Modern Orthodoxy" to interpret its outlook religiously and unapologetically.

Your editorial on the subject, however, misstates my views *vis-à-vis* the differences of opinion that prevail in England. While I appreciate your flattering remarks, I fear that your concluding paragraph vitiates the kind things you said about me. Any objective person who is acquainted with my views and those of Rabbi Louis Jacobs will be astonished to learn that "Rabbi Lamm's thoughts are almost a paraphrase of the approach of Dr Jacobs which made him unacceptable to our Orthodox Establishment."

I suspect that Dr Jacobs will take exception to this assertion equally with me. I have consistently insisted that Judaism must be based upon the halachic commitment and the acceptance of *Torah min ha-shamayim*, and have opposed Franz Rosenzweig's approach permitting a subjective selection of which laws and observances to perform. For this reason I am clearly "Orthodox," and am so affiliated, whereas Dr Jacobs has apparently abandoned this position and has so indicated by his membership in the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly.

There is no need to belabour the issue. To be critical of Orthodoxy does not and should not make one's Orthodoxy suspect, nor is it grounds for declaring one's views a "paraphrase" of one who is dissociated from this community. Indeed, without in any way committing Dr Jakobovits to prior approval of my opinions, I feel that the Chief Rabbi would not disagree with my contention that our engagement with the world, and particularly our involvement in higher "secular" education, should be based on a solid religious basis rather than on undignified vocational excuse.

I regret that my views, which you apparently found worthy enough to bring to the attention of your readers, should have been obfuscated by your editorial relating them to your local polemics.

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