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CHRISTIAN AND CONTEMPORARY DOCTRINES  
OF MAN

by

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## C O N T E N T S

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Chapter 1

Confusion

A new and thoughtful English literary critic, making an enquiry into the assumptions as to the nature and purpose of Man which underlies much modern literature, opens his work with these words: "In the Middle Ages, however much people might disagree about all sorts of things, they had one doctrine in common -- they agreed on the whole as to the nature of Man. Since the Renaissance there have been conflicting views on this, and in our own century, in particular, few writers can assume that their readers will have this common ground to build on." <sup>1</sup> A realization that all political philosophy, and that the conditioning fact in the shaping of all human institutions are rooted in this basic fact of the nature of man betrays the urgency and the insecurity of such a situation. At the moment when humankind is in dire need of an integration of all the forces that make for community, we are divided on this fundamental issue. In particular, the Western world, caught in the midst of the greatest inner crisis in its long and varied history, is utterly confused in its thinking about man. We hope to create some sort of "brave new world" without having any coherent idea about the nature and worth of the being

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1. Nicholson, Norman, Man and literature, S.C.M. Press, 56 Bloomsbury St., London W.C. - 1943, p. 5.

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who would build it and inhabit it.

The unity of a former age has passed along with its authority. But instead of achieving a new integration, we have been, and are, faced with the impasse of chaotic confusion. Authoritarianism in morals has gone, but instead of a true freedom, we have become submerged in the quagmire of moral relativism. This has been the result, not only of an increased intermingling of different groups and races possessing different ethical codes and cultural values, but also of the widespread belief that man is not a moral being, but a creature of impulse, or a mere psychological animal whose "good" is achieved and determined by a faithful application of the individual's own hedonistic calculus. In like manner, we have despaired of philosophical systems and have turned to the spare dish of fragmentary thought which mistakes its own excellent specialization for integration. "The most conspicuous lack of our times," says Flewelling, "in spite of our intellectual prides and self-sufficiency, is a dire mental incapacity, and inability for continuous or profound thought, and incapacity for mastery of many complementary facts. We suffer from the provincialisms of overspecialization. This is discoverable in the growing innocuousness of our educational curricula, in

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the meaninglessness of our amusements, in the journalistic reign of our mob psychology, in the overflooded presses issuing the latest fiction, in the detonations of our jazz orchestras, the popular crooning of the radio, in the newspaper exploitation of those who seek a cheap and easy notoriety as scientists, and in the popular connotation of the word 'Philosophy'. This last intellectual leadership is the philosophical quagmire<sup>1</sup> of today."

The fragmentary nature of contemporary thought and living, against which Professor Flewelling registers his complaint, is but a part of the confusion that has resulted from our inability to face squarely and to find an answer to the constant question of the nature and seat of, authority. Man must seek some effective balance between authority and freedom. Failure to achieve such a balance, will face him with the choice between an absolutism that knows no responsibility and a relativism that knows no direction. A society of moral, religious and intellectual relativism is a society that cannot long endure. Authority is a necessary fact of existence. Such a society will shortly take the easiest solution to its need for a purposive and directed dynamic -- polit-

1. Flewelling, R.T., The survival of Western culture, Harper's, 1943, p. 156.

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ical authoritarianism. In precisely this way, has our modern confusion about the nature of man become the wedge of decadence.

Inasmuch, then, as our conception of the nature and purpose of man governs the shaping of our institutions and is the yardstick by which we measure the value of any philosophy, institution or enterprise, our subject is a very vital one. And since this basic question has been the source of utter confusion in our time, it becomes a most urgent one. The following pages will thus be an attempt to grapple realistically with the human situation and to consider the principal positions with regard to man adhered to in contemporary society. But first we must gain a clearer insight into the nature of the day's confusion.

Creative literature both mirrors and interprets the life of man in the age in which he lives. Literature presents us with a portrayal and a criticism of the ethos of an age and an evaluation of man's relationship to it. A confused picture reports an age that is socially, politically, and spiritually confused. Our purpose is not that of making a survey of our social and cultural history nor of literary criticism but rather that of making a few observations about the conceptions of the nature of man as revealed in modern writing. The scope of our

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enquiry thus narrowed it would seem that these estimates of man fall roughly into three categories -- liberal man, natural man and imperfect man.

Liberalism developed as an insistence on the rights of the individual against institutions which arrogate to themselves an importance and a power which they have no right to assume. Indigenous to the development of Liberalism, however, was another most important dogma, that of man's power for self-perfectibility and progress. Given apparent scientific backing by the theory of evolution, this creed became in Spencer and Tennyson, to mention only two representative thinkers, the doctrine of inevitable progress. Although this easy and attractive doctrine still lingers, albeit in modified forms, in the thinking and feeling of millions, particularly Americans, the fact that it could not be squared with the times has accounted for its not being embraced by any of our recent leading writers.

Yet the essentially optimistic liberal credo is preserved and expressed by the inimitable Shaw in his faith in the Life Force, which is a sort of Bergsonian elan vital a la Lamarck and Shaw. The Life Force is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. It proceeds by trial and error. "If we could realize," Shaw remarks, "that though the Life Force supplies us with its own purpose

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it has no other brains to work with than those it has painfully and imperfectly evolved in our heads, the peoples of the earth would learn some pity for their gods." <sup>1</sup> Colborne goes on to say with a naive confidence equalled only by Shaw himself: "Looked at in this way, many problems become understandable, if not immediately soluble: the problem of evil, for example. For if all our crimes and cruelties are in truth errors, or gropings, or unintentional accidents, then all malice is banished from the universe. The Mind may be slow and dull and clumsy, but at least it is not malicious, and what we call evils are seen only as happenings which the Life Force regrets as much as we do, but which it cannot prevent until we help it to prevent them, since we and it are one, indivisibly embarked in a co-operative alliance on the same long, adventurous, and untrod journey." <sup>2</sup> Such a philosophy, when cloaked in more conventionally religious dress, has been the substance of many a modernist sermon. Of importance for our purpose is the typical liberal assurance that sin is due to ignorance. Sin is the mere

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1. Colborne, M., The Real Bernard Shaw, J.M. Dent and Sons, London, 1939, p. 159.

2. Ibid., p. 160.



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"not yet." It is not a corruption of the spirit or a violation of freedom. Man is not yet perfect, but by co-operating with the urge of the Stream he may become so. If we might anticipate later discussions, Shaw, as a literary representative of the liberal estimate of man, fails to assess properly the power of self-interest and the abortive will-to-power impulse of man. The Life Force may be able to explain the slowness of progress -- it cannot explain the diabolical depths of the human spirit and the destructive ends towards which the human spirit can be turned.

The essentially liberal creed that the purposes of history can be fulfilled within the limitations of history by a re-ordering of our social and economic life is admirably illustrated in Shaw, as indeed it is in the bulk of the left-wing literature of our time. Social questions take the central place in his thought and the sense of duty which his characters show is always strongest when the problem has a social significance. And it must ever be to Shaw's credit that he has kept constantly before the public this great question: "Are you pulling your weight in the social boat?"

Whether H. G. Wells has ever seriously believed in his scientific Utopias may well be a debatable question. But his readers believed them, and seriously. For such

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a belief is a pleasant sedative. In one book after another, Wells developed the idea of the inevitable progress of man, of a planned world, of eugenics, of mechanized labour, "scientific" diet, "scientific" education, and so forth. In keeping with the mighty advances being made in applied science, Wells made articulate in the minds of his readers -- and of many who never heard of him -- their conception of this "brave new world." It was built up of skyscrapers, airships, girders, racing motor cars, streamlined trains, neon lights, men in shorts and fair girls with fair hair. Over it all was a bright, yet misty, light as of dawn beyond the mountains. People began to literally look for the coming of a Wellsian world. In a sense, it has come, but whether it represents progress is quite another question. The Wellsian picture still fascinates us. Hollywood has taken it over, not only in the scenario, The Shape of Things to Come, but in Henry Aldrich going to Australia one afternoon for a picnic, in his helicopter. Progress is a spiritual achievement, be it in a family, a personality or in a civilization, which is difficult to gain and easy to lose. The swiftest way to lose all hope of real progress is to be deluded by the illusion that scientific advance is itself progress.

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But in Wells, we have again the essentially liberal, optimistic view of man. He is a being capable of becoming perfect in an incredibly perfect world. There is not only a denial of Original Sin, there is a misunderstanding of the power, the permanent power, of Sin.

Although the liberal view of man may have retained its hold on the majority of the reading public, natural man has bulked the largest in the best writing of the twentieth century. The emphasis on impulse was taken over by the Naturalists from the nineteenth century Romantics. There is, however, a great difference, as Nicholson has so clearly pointed out: "The Romantic writers still preserved the sense of Christian values, even when they had rejected Christian doctrine: they still conceived Man as having his true reality in relation to a world of transcendent values, and Man therefore becomes a highly developed animal fulfilling his natural impulses or being frustrated by them."<sup>1</sup> Out of the naturalist movement, two prose styles were developed -- the rich, sensuous prose of D.H. Lawrence, to suit the romantic and emotional aspects of natural man, and the stripped prose of Hemingway, to suit the animal aspects.

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1. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 63

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Naturalism arose in literature just at the time when the scientists were beginning to realize that there were areas of scientific study that went beyond the slide rule and the test tube. It was no wonder that the shift from a metaphysical, philosophic discipline in thought to a popular and vague psychologizing should greatly influence literary expression. "The revolt against the confinement of thought within the limits of a dry materialism was headed, naturally enough, by the poet and the metaphysician. But later on they were joined by the scientists too, for the development of psycho-analysis and anthropology shows that scientists were beginning to realize that there were more things in the universe than could be put in a test tube or measured by calipers. The cult of the irrational took many forms, some of which scarcely seem to deserve to be called irrational. There was surrealism and its allied -- isms: dada-ism, symbolism, etc. There was psycho-analysis, and the study of the unconscious mind and its symbols. There was the revived interest in myth, and folk-lore and what is called the 'racial mind'. And there was the deliberate seeking for mindlessness, the 'blood-consciousness' instead of the head consciousness. This, like the interest in myth, is obviously closely connected with

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primitivism."<sup>1</sup> The influence of this philosophy, and particularly the impact of Freud, is clearly marked in D. H. Lawrence.

The influence went deeper than the obvious Oedipus complex with which Lawrence was quite obsessed. He was driven, in his search for the real, to describe his characters in terms belonging more to the subconscious realm than to the conscious personality. He explains this himself in a letter to Edward Garnet: "But somehow -- that which is psychic-non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element -- which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turgenev, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoievsky, the moral scheme into which all the characters fit -- and it is nearly the same scheme -- is, whatever the extraordinariness<sup>2</sup> of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead".

It might not be out of place to observe that the Russian masters have succeeded in creating immortal characters, because of, or despite, their moral scheme: while Lawrence whose natural man lived in no moral

1. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 72

2. Ibid, p. 77

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scheme and with no reference with which to carry out his natural desires, failed to create any really great characters. Yet, as he himself said, the creation of character as we know it was not his aim.

Inevitably his search for the non-human, for the consciousness that was not mental, led him away from human beings to animals. But even the consciousness of the animals was too mental, and he turned to plants, flowers and trees, as in the volume, Birds, Beasts and Flowers, until, logically enough, he reached the oblivion of death:

"And everything is gone, the body is gone completely under, gone, entirely gone.

The upper darkness is heavy as the lower, between them the little ship is gone

It is the end, it is oblivion."<sup>1</sup>

"And this is the end to which Lawrence's denial of the intellect has brought him, to the negation of all consciousness, to the negation of all life, to death. His genius draws him to the logical conclusion of his thought, to the death-will."<sup>2</sup> Even when a person has no faith in transcendent values, he cannot live permanently in the ensuing despair. Some purpose must be

1. "The Ship of Death" from Last Poems.

2. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 82.

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created, such as politics, social reform or something. "But Lawrence found purpose by drawing on a mystical faith in the values of blood and soil -- a faith which had appeared in the Rousseau romantics, and which has its obvious connection with Fascism, though it would be a mistake to presume that if Lawrence were alive today he would be a Nazi. This mystical significance of Man appeared for the first time in The Rainbow, and from then onwards it was scarcely ever forgotten."<sup>1</sup>

The connection between Fascism and Naturalism will become clear when we later study the social effects of Naturalism.

We have mentioned the stripped prose of Hemingway. A writer's style, as much as his characters and ideas, is a clue to his values. For Hemingway's world is stripped also -- stripped of standard human spiritual equipment. His characters are gangsters, smugglers, bull-fighters, boxers, soldiers and occasionally men of culture. They are never articulate, however, and scarcely able to think. "It was Henri Bergson who advised his pupils to think like men of action and act like men of thought. With Hemingway the axiom has been somewhat simplified. His people act as if

1. Ibid., p.67.

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thought were unthinkable."<sup>1</sup> His characters live almost entirely in the world of sensation -- greed or lust to kill or rape. One of the truest remarks that Nicholson makes about Hemingway is the quality of the fear that his characters experience. He says: "Even the fear they feel is not the imaginative fear of the ordinary man, but the sharp, sudden fear of an animal that is cornered, a fear that arouses a desperate effort to fight free."<sup>2</sup> They are courageous, but their courage is the courage of desperation rather than reflection.

Hemingway's natural man is an animal that is driven by purely animal impulse. He is a fighting, lusty creature. War and love are his two principal occupations. He is always active: but the action has no meaning except the fulfillment of his impulses. Although there is no moral tension in his characters to precipitate frustration, Hemingway's people are always frustrated. The escape is, of course, sex and drink. "For the true illumination of the destructive impulses in life, he has substituted the emphasis on meaningless action, the reliance on the drugged consciousness to avoid thought and now the final nada --

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1. Geismar, M., Writers in Crisis, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942, p. 63.

2. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 116.



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the emptiness which covers the frustration of the writer who is unable to cope with this true material."<sup>1</sup> Although Margaret Culkin Banning's complaint about the centrality of sex and gin in modern literature has much pertinence, the sex and gin are easier to take with Hemingway than with other authors who have neither his superb style nor picture of man. Hemingway cannot be accused of introducing sex and gin just to entertain and thus to sell his books. However, Miss Banning's words express a growing weariness, on the part of the public, of literature that fails to rise above the levels of sensation. She says: "Alcoholism is all right as a fictional setting for a while; but anyone, even a reader, gets tired of being with people who are tight all the time. He gets tired of being with people who keep on going to bed with each other. It stops being interesting and credible."<sup>2</sup> But it would seem that Hemingway is changing. For Whom the Bell Tolls has its imperfections, but it possesses power because implicit, if not explicit, in the story is a purpose which is related to political and

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1. Geismar, op. cit., p. 66

2. The Saturday Review of Literature, July 1, 1939.

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consequently transcendental values. However that may be, Hemingway has presented the age with a view of man as a lusty, fighting animal, which a great number of lesser imitators have also tried to represent to the reading public. Many other leading authors have given us Hemingway's natural man, chief among which are William Faulkner and Henri de Montherlant. Behaviorism may be a discredited psychology, but the natural man of contemporary literature will be with us for many years.

Ernest Renan made the rather profound prediction that the twentieth century would spend a good deal of its time picking out of the waste-basket things which the late nineteenth century threw into it. There has been a considerable amount of searching in the waste-basket for something resembling the God who was so lightly discarded by many in the hey-day of scientific optimism. Edna St. Vincent Millay has expressed the frustration of naturalism in the words: "Man has never been the same since God died. He has taken it very hard." <sup>1</sup> Gamaliel Bradford has expressed the same wistful longing in his poem: "I Sometimes Wish That God Were Back." Waldo Frank, in his Chart for Rough Waters,

1. Millay, Conversation at Midnight.

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brings an impassioned if somewhat cloudy, argument to the support of our need to return to the "great tradition," that is, the Judean-Christian religious tradition. "The individual soul," he writes, "fed and grown great by its awareness of the divine within it believed it could dispense with the divine..... This rebellion of the ego brought about man's humiliation." There has been a deepening conviction that naturalism and optimistic liberalism are too simple and therefore inadequate conceptions of man; it is becoming increasingly realized in the literary world that man is an imperfect creature. However far its phraseology may be from that of Christian expression, it is coming near to Christian thought.

Although the ingenious James Joyce will influence literary technique more than modern thought, it is significant that he was not satisfied with the simplifications of the naturalist school. In spite of his obscenity, which might prove odious to many Christian readers, Joyce, as Nicholson says, "reaffirms the traditional Christian view of the nature of Man: that Man is an imperfect and sinful creature who has being not only in the material world, but also in a world of transcendent values. And in doing so it was inevitable that he made a sort of restatement in fiction of the

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doctrine of Original Sin."<sup>1</sup>

In the works of Kafka we come across one of the most serious and most fruitful attempts to gain some answer to the problems of life which the Christian has consistently considered under the problems of Sin, Original Sin and Guilt. Kafka's The Castle is a modern Pilgrim's Progress written by a religious man who was not quite sure of dogma. Here is imperfect man -- man with a divine destiny but who is justified by faith alone.

The most profound and most excellent expression of the Christian view of man has come from the pen of T. S. Eliot. In The Waste Land, we are presented with man as fallen, his society rotten at heart and crumbling, his pleasures corrupt, his spirit dead. But we are told no less forcibly of the need for spiritual rebirth:

"What are the roots that clutch, what

branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? Son of Man,

You cannot say, or guess, for you only know

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the

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1. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 151

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cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water."<sup>1</sup>

We need only mention here that when we see one of the greatest, if not the greatest writer of our time, wrestling with such problems as the relation of time to eternity or of the apprehension of eternity through time, the purgation of the will,<sup>2</sup> and the need of the soul to "divest itself of the love of created things,"<sup>3</sup> we can be confident that a more serious and more disciplined approach to the real and eternal problems of human existence will appear in literature. "At heart I believe there is a new humility, and new realization that man is an imperfect, sinful, dependent being: that planning and politics, however necessary and important, are not in themselves enough. This does not lead to pessimism; instead, it gives a new value to love and friendship, to the pleasures of the countryside and the achievements of simple lives."<sup>4</sup>

Even from this superficial survey of representative writers, it is clear that there has been complete

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1. Eliot, The Waste Land
2. See Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral.
3. See Eliot, Sweeney Agonistes.
4. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 214

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confusion as to the nature and purpose of man. The Christian religion fared no better. Various schools, which might roughly be divided and designated as Humanism, Liberalism, Realism and Barthianism, have sprung up within the fold, with, in some cases, sufficient differences and divergencies as to have no common ground.

Humanism is, loosely speaking, religion without God. Religion for the humanist is consciousness of and devotion to our highest social values. Irving King took up this position in The Development of Religion, in which he asserts that "The highest religious concept, that of deity," is not "a statement of an existence," it "symbolizes the worth of human endeavour." That is, religious ideas have only functional value. They do not refer to ontological realities. Professor Ames assumes and elaborates the same position. "The idea of God when seriously employed, serves to generalize and to idealize all the values one knows .... The 'attributes' in the conception of God are as numerous as the ideal interests of those who use it, for it signifies the totality of our purposes and values." <sup>1</sup> God is here

1. Ames, E.S., Psychology of Religious Experience, Houghton, Mifflin, Co., 1910, p. 318.

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reduced to the God-idea, which does not even symbolically represent an Existence but is merely an integrating concept for certain human values which even the most irreligious would not dispute. In the same manner, Dr. Haydon went to war with the gods. "The Christian God is like all others. He came to be in the tribal desert life. He grew and grew moral as his people advanced .... Man projects his ideals into an invisible Socius which, as God, helps him in their realization .... He is the symbol of our highest social value .... Religion becomes enthusiasm for social ideals." <sup>1</sup> Or again, religion in the new age, Haydon asserts will be a religion without God or the idea of God. It will simply "seek a synthesis of the sciences in the service of human ideals." The ironic reply of MacIntosh to such arguments being presented as a support to religion is irresistible. "It seemed welcome news that now the atheist was 'down and out.' The victory had been won, and all so simply. The old defenders of the existence of God against the atheists had taken up with the wrong definition, it seemed. They had imagined that God was a superhuman being of not only great power but also great intelligence, and

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1. Haydon, E., Quoted in MacIntosh, D.C., The Problem of Religious Knowledge, Harper's, 1940, p. 128.

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thus presumably a conscious and essentially personal being; and those much-misunderstood individuals, the so-called atheists not knowing that any such being existed, naturally enough had talked as if they knew that he did not exist, thereby 'getting in wrong' with the respectable members of Christian society. But now someone had been quick-witted enough to see that if we re-defined the term 'God' so as to make it mean something the 'atheists' already believed in, the wind would be taken out of their sails and great would be the victory -- that is, of course, the verbal victory -- of the faithful defenders of belief in the existence of God. This was what seemed to have been accomplished; the enemy's flank had been turned, his guns had been spiked, the procession of disarmed prisoners might be expected to appear at any minute, and all was over except the shouting, of which it seemed there was likely to be a good deal. But somehow the expected celebration doesn't seem to have 'come off.'<sup>1</sup>"

Dietrich assumed the same position as Haydon. "In short," he says, "I would set up the ideal of a perfected humanity as the symbol or metaphor which

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1. MacIntosh, op. cit., p. 131



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best expresses my idea of deity .... I affirm nothing -- because I know of nothing -- higher than the real but invisible influence of good men and women, both past and present."<sup>1</sup> The salient features of humanism are put succinctly by Dr. Potter: "Humanism is faith in the supreme value and self-perfectibility of human personality."<sup>2</sup> There is no realistic appraisal of the fact and power of evil in this position. There is no understanding of the demonic, to say nothing of the diabolical.

It was inevitable that such shallow optimism, so insecurely based, should shortly turn to despair. Joseph Wood Krutch, because he is a more honest and more logical thinker, carried the humanist creed to its inevitable and pessimistic conclusion. "We are disillusioned with the laboratory, not because we have lost faith in the truth of its findings, but because we have lost faith in the power of those findings to help us as genuinely as we had once hoped they might help."<sup>3</sup> To this problem Krutch has no answer, but it must be laid to his credit that he saw clearly the meaning and the conclusion of humanistic

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1. Quoted in MacIntosh, op. cit., p. 140.

2. Quoted in MacIntosh, op. cit., p. 140.

3. Krutch, J.W., The Modern Temper, Harcourt and Brace 1929, p. 76.

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premises. Humanism that begins with the optimism, devotion to and faith in man, of genuine liberalism, shortly ceases to be optimistic, has its faith in man shaken, and eventually loses its humanism for the cult of selfishness, as in George Jean Nathan: "To me pleasure and my own personal happiness are all I deem worth a hoot. The happiness and welfare of mankind are not my profession; I am perfectly willing to leave them to the care of the professional missionaries of one sort or another; I have all that I can do to look out for my own happiness and welfare . . . . I am against all reform and reformers."<sup>1</sup> And this is the logical culmination of humanistic assumptions.

Humanism is a tender-minded creed; it is a dish of fine (at first anyway) sentiments. It begins with a high estimate of the worth of man, but shortly leaves it because such an estimate is untenable and illogical when his value has no transcendent worth. It is devoted to progress, but lacks a philosophy for progress. How many humanists with zeal for human betterment burning in their hearts have ended up embittered, crying, "Vanity of Vanity, all is Vanity."

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1. Nathan, G.J., Living Philosophies, Simon and Schuster, 1931, pp. 222, 223.

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Humanism just cannot understand that man is a finite creature involved in sin. It assumes that religion is a consciousness of our highest social values. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Religion is a profound uneasiness with all our social values. It is most difficult to express the theological position of Liberalism because it is fundamentally an attitude, and an attitude which has had a complex historical experience. Beginning with the break-up of the feudal world and the rise of a new merchant class, Liberalism has passed through the Arminian phase, the era of rationalism, migration to virgin America, commercial expansion and the phenomenal growth of Science; it gathered still further strength with the hopes for the success of the League of Nations and is now experiencing inner convulsions of a most disintegrating nature.

Notwithstanding the enormous influence of men like Bushnell and Parker on American liberalism, the real fountainheads of modern liberal thought in religion have been Schleiermacher and Ritschl. "The modern liberal movement in theology inaugurated by Schleiermacher at the beginning of the nineteenth century did not enjoy an undisputed sway throughout the rest of that century in the land of its origin.

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After a period of mounting prestige that carried it -- with the aid of Hegel and his school -- well past the middle of the century, it met with a sharp reaction, and gave way to a rival liberal school, the Ritschlian, whose cautious scientific temper and ethical emphasis were more akin to the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century or the 'positivism' of Auguste Comte than to the mystic piety and romantic idealism of Schleiermacher. Oddly enough, the influence of Schleiermacher and Hegel upon British and American religious thought began to be operative just about the time that their influence began to wane in Germany; and the influence of Ritschl instead of being subsequent to that of Schleiermacher and Hegel, was simultaneous with it. The result was important: the two schools of German theology neutralized each other in the British and American mind, and left as their residual deposit a very moderate and tolerant type of liberalism, in which the mystical emphasis of Schleiermacher and the ethical emphasis of Ritschl were both to be found, side by side.<sup>1</sup>"

Liberalism has always been more of an attitude than a system. As such, when it assumed the position of a system it suffered from the weaknesses that always

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1. Horton, W.M., Realistic Theology in Theology in Transition, Harper's, p. 31-32.

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attend the attempt to make a noun out of an adjective. But it is precisely because the motivating power of liberalism has been a liberal attitude that it possesses values and truths which we lose at our very peril. Doubtless Horton is correct when he says: "Strong in the faith that all truth and all value belonged to a single harmonious system, of which the religious insights of the Bible and the guiding conceptions of modern science and philosophy were mutually consistent parts, liberal theologians were convinced that the great task of Christian thought was that of 'restating' the Christian Gospel in terms 'acceptable to the modern mind'." <sup>I</sup> In spite of the weaknesses of a purely integrating procedure, this remains a constant task of thought. There can be no question that religious liberals too often reduced their faith to an attenuated appendix of modern culture; but that was a betrayal of a fundamentally sound attitude and a partially correct procedure. The inner weakness of liberal theology has been that its theology was but a projection of its attitude. Liberalism begins with a faith in the supreme value of man and assumes a good and loving God and a purposive life. That is surely Christian; but it is

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1. Ibid., p. 1

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not wholly Christian. It lacks the Christian sense of Judgment, Original Sin and the need of a Saviour as well as a great Teacher. Its "God the Father" too often becomes so fatherly as to be really grandmotherly. In short, without the iron of a thoroughly Christian theology its attitude is in constant danger of ceasing to be truly liberal and of becoming merely sentimental. The darker, diabolical, sinful side of man was never sufficiently appraised or appreciated in liberalism, but its emphasis on the worth of man, the purposiveness of life, the fact of communion, the need for an open mind, its hatred of obscurantism and above all the idea of unity and continuity that permeates and colors all liberal thought, must be retained if man is to know any salvation, personal or social.

Our age is one in which "the times are out of joint" and the fact has served to remind us that the times are always out of joint and necessarily so because man is a finite creature involved in sin. The events of our time and the realization of the weakness inherent in liberal theology have conspired to give rise to the theological school of Realism whose principal representatives are Reinhold and

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Richard Niebuhr, W. M. Horton, Paul Tillich and D. C. MacIntosh. In times of prosperity, we tend to the Greek view in our thinking, and in hours of tragedy we tend to be Hebrew; the Realist movement belongs to the Hebrew rather than to the Greek tradition.

As I understand it, the Realist estimate of man is this: Man is a finite creature involved in the limitations of finiteness but possessing the capacity for self-transcendence; man is a being of infinite worth, but he is so by the grace of God; man is a sinner -- universally and thus empirically inevitably -- yet responsible;<sup>1</sup> human history is meaningful, but its meaning cannot be fulfilled within the limitations of history. The Realist has a deep appreciation of the power of human sin and the peculiarities of the human situation in the scale of existence. He knows and appreciates, unlike the humanist and sentimental liberal, the possibilities for both creativity and destruction that lie in the human spirit. His difficulty is that of providing a convincing exposition to an age and a culture which is shot through with rationalistic presuppositions and humanistic standards of value. Yet in this very fact lies

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1. This difficult conception, it is hoped, will be made more explicit in the chapter on The Christian Doctrine of Man.

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the hope that the Realist movement will prove to be most fruitful; for without the presence of this difficulty it could only too readily lose its insights by becoming mere logical nonsense. The presence of logical yardsticks will help this position to avoid the self-destruction of its own truth.

Professor Horton, following Adolph Keller, points out that wherever the Barthian teaching has gone, discussion has passed through three stages. In the first, the sole effort is to understand the new theology objectively; in the second, a heated discussion arises (mostly hostile) as to its merits and dangers; in the third, a mood of humility falls upon the critics, and they recognize that here is a movement of thought which cannot be answered with arguments and accusations, but only through a thoroughgoing self-examination and a complete reconstruction of life and thought. It is Barth's contention that a truly reverent theology, which knows that God is in heaven and man on earth, must never pass directly from human thought and experience to God, as Schleiermacher and Hegel sought to do. There is no way from man to God, there is only a way from God to man, the way of revelation and grace; and

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1. See Horton, W.M., Realistic Theology in Theology in Transition, p. 36.



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even here God's Word envelops itself in paradoxes and mysterious antinomies when it impinges upon the human plane. Thus he claims that a dialectical theology must persistently be a critical theology. No argument for God is possible; there can only be a constant polemic against human perversions of the revealed Word of God.

Perhaps our purpose here can be best served by referring to Brunner's statement of Barth's truths and his false deductions. Horton relates them as follows: "It seemed to him [Brunner] that Barth was drawing from six fundamental truths -- truths which he had done more than any recent theologian to restore to their rightful primacy -- a series of unwarranted deductions, which plunged him into absurdity: (1) From the truth that man is a sinner, who can only be saved by divine grace, he was deducing that the image of God in man is completely obliterated by the Fall. (2) From the truth that Scriptural revelation is the sole norm of our knowledge of God and the sole source of our salvation, he was deducing that there was no general revelation of God in nature, conscience and history. (3) From the truth that we must acknowledge the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only saving grace, he was deducing that there was no expression of God's grace

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in the creation and preservation of the world. From the same truth he was deducing (4) that there was no expression of the divine will in the so-called 'law of nature' embodied in the basic social institutions; (5) no Anknüpfungspunkt (point of contact) or 'divine image' in human nature to which divine grace could make its appeal; and (6) no developmental relations between nature and grace, the natural man and the new man in Christ, but only one of 'substitution'.<sup>1</sup> In reply, Barth heaped such vitrolitic vituperation on Brunner that it was nothing short of being scandalous. Nevertheless, we have here in Brunner's analysis one of the most succinct statements of essential Barthian theology and its conception and estimate of man.

We have made a skeleton sketch of the confusion that exists in the modern conception of the nature of man as revealed in the literature and the religious thinking of the day. Even a worse attendant confusion exists in the realm of political philosophy which will be dealt with during the development of this study. There is one fact which seems to be clear at this point, that "there is a striking parallel between the most significant religious and theological thinking of the

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1. Horton, W.M., Contemporary Continental Theology, Harper's, 1938, p. 112.

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period and much literary interpretation of life and the world. In both there has been a forswearing of an easy and superficial optimism. There has been a sense of the evil forces under the surface of life. Theology has taken a clearer look at evil; it has escaped from the bog of romantic sentimentalism into a religiously realistic appraisal of the evil in man and in society. There is nothing in the spiritual life of our time more interesting than this double exploration by religion and literature of the deeper and darker aspects of life beneath the surface. This new sense of the fearful aspects of mind and society and the universe is found in religious thinking. It is also found in cruelty, the violence of O'Neill, Jeffers, Hemingway, Faulkner. It is no accident that our time has rediscovered and reappraised Herman Melville and the tragic sense of life that he profoundly felt.<sup>1</sup> One might add that it is significant that Dostolevsky is the favorite author of theologians, and that many have publicly expressed the debt that they owe to him.

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1. Luccock, H.E., American Mirror, MacMillan Co., 1940, p. 51.

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### Eastern Mysticism

The realization that physically we have already "One World" has been thrust upon us most forcefully in the last few years. However much East and West may still be sundered by thought and spirit, we have an alarming physical proximity which is pregnant with both good and evil possibilities. Just as there can be no isolation in a political or military sense, there can no longer continue an uninhibited cultural isolationism. The military might of such Eastern nations as Japan and Russia, and the potential power of China and India, are such prodigious facts that we are compelled to examine the ethos of both Eastern and Western civilizations as never before. Inevitably, a sense of urgency governs our thinking. The possibility of a split in the United Nations, as victory comes into sight, serves as a jarring reminder that there could quite conceivably be formed an Eastern bloc of nations, sufficiently powerful to endanger the very existence of Western civilization. The world will never again be an Anglo-Saxon play-ground. Increasingly Asia and the Orient will assert themselves in the world of actual affairs. Increasingly their thought forms, evaluations of life and institutions

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will gain expanding expression and acceptance. Consequently, it becomes imperative that we more thoughtfully study the thinking of the Eastern mind. To fail to do so could result in our becoming engaged again in internecine warfare, or in our unwittingly succumbing to the Absolutist tradition so firmly established in the Oriental past. That which is learned most readily from another race or civilization is generally not worth learning. Japan is an illustrious example of the fact that what the East has learned from us is of dubious value. Conversely, although the East has much that would enrich our way of life, it must not be assumed that we will readily absorb those worthy features of her civilization. On the contrary, as we proceed through the dark and troubled waters of political confusion, it may be that it will be those features of Eastern civilization which make for and give sanction to despotism, that we will find it most convenient to absorb.

We Westerners are so proud of our mechanical genius, so preoccupied with the world of active, practical, mundane affairs, and we so uncritically accept the adequacy of the scientific approach and spirit, that we may find it difficult to achieve a sympathetic understanding of Eastern attitudes. That in the East

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religion is a fact of profound importance for every social and economic problem surprises, and perhaps offends, the Westerner. The religious fact extends, moreover, beyond the institutions of the various faiths and their relationship in, and contribution to, the social order; it is rooted in the very thought-forms and life-attitudes of the Easterner. The fact that the mystical religions of the East are so indigenous to the life of the people makes them of such central importance in any consideration of the problems of the world of tomorrow.

A detailed study of the religions of the East is beyond the scope of our study. However, it is of the utmost concern to thinking Westerners that they have a clear idea of the meaning and social effect of those basic elements of Eastern religions which all hold more or less in common. It is the focal doctrines of God, man and the meaning of life which determine the evaluations of the worth of man and the ensuing social effects. It is to this central question that we address ourselves.

The religion of the Rig-Veda rarely reaches beyond the magical stage. The gods of the Rig-Veda pantheon are in the main the great powers of nature which affect human welfare or the objects and phenomena in which

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these powers are manifested -- the bright sky, the enlivening sun, the rosy dawn and the storm which brings the long awaited rain. The hymns of praise and supplication to the Maruts or storm-gods are typical of the Veda religion. Numerous of these hymns end with the supplication, "O may we have an invigorating autumn, with quickening rain!" Or as in Hymn VI, "The Maruts charged with rain, endowed with fierce force, terrible like wild beasts, blazing in their strength, brilliant like fires, and impetuous, have uncovered the rain giving cows by blowing away the cloud."<sup>1</sup> Placating of the gods and sacrifice to the gods are always interwoven into one. And, as we might expect, propitiatory sacrifice bulks large in the Veda. The gods are conceived as being like men -- full of vanity. They, like men, enjoy hearing their praises sung and are pleased with the gifts men bring them. Out of gratitude, they favor their worshippers with the gifts which fulfil human needs, such as health, good fortune, children and cows. Mechanics always gives rise to a division of labor and a mechanical, sacrificial religion is no exception. In this respect, primitive religion is the ancient spiritual

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1. Vedic Hymn No. VI, The Sacred Books of the East, p. 12.

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ancestor of the modern factory system."<sup>1</sup> The modern manager has fallen heir to those special qualities of insight, organization and command which in ancient times were the exclusive possession of the priest who, like the manager, because of such a rich endowment, was exalted above his fellow-men. The more complex the machinery of a mechanical religion became, the more potent were its social effects. "The belief in the effectiveness of sacrifice to propitiate the gods and procure their blessing tends everywhere to become a faith in the unfailing efficacy of the rites and the formulas themselves, when duly employed, to secure the desired good; and in the hands of the Brahman priesthood sacrifice becomes a veritable power over the gods, which logically ends by exalting the possessors of this power to the rank of human gods who constrain the gods of nature."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the fact that much of this primitive, cultic, magic remains in Eastern religions and that its

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1. If we accept Professor Burnham's thesis of the Managerial Revolution, a rewarding as well as humorous parallel could be struck with the conditions providing for, and the social results of, the rise of the Brahman priesthood and the contemporary rise of the managerial class.

2. Moore, G.F., History of Religions, Vol. 1, T. and T. Clark, 1914, p. 264-265.



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social effects have been securely welded by time, the religious thinking of the East has progressed far beyond the devotional poetry of the Veda.

It is a tribute to the dignity of man that he is never done with the search for salvation nor ever fully satisfied with easy, mechanical methods of attaining it. He is never content with a method; he must needs have a Gospel. This creative capacity of man for spiritual unrest, usually finds its most fruitful expression in certain ages when in the fulness of time an inspired religious leader meets and fills this need. The sixth century was such an age in India and the Buddha its profoundest teacher. It was a spiritually quickened era which, like most Great Awakenings, produced numerous heresies and new religious systems and philosophies.

Buddhism, like all the religions and philosophies which flourished in that age, is a way of salvation, holding in common with all of them certain fundamental assumptions and some striking peculiarities. In common with the rest, is the conviction that salvation must be achieved by each man for himself. No god can deliver him. The Vedic gods, the new faiths contended, have no powers beyond the sphere of the natural good; they are themselves not exempt from the cycle of re-birth, and stand, like men, in need of salvation.

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And with slight changes in emphasis, Buddhism agrees with the other religions in the nature of the evil from which man is to be saved -- the bondage to the ills of corporeal existence and the endless repetition of these ills in the infinite series of rebirths in which man enters every new existence laden with the consequences of former deeds.

One of the most peculiar and certainly one of the most complicated of Buddhist doctrines is that of the nature of the self. Although Buddha spoke much about the nature of the self, he was not as explicit on the subject as we would like him to have been. It is commonly considered that for Buddhists "the so-called ego is not a genuine personality, but only a temporary worthless conglomeration of desires and psychic tendencies."<sup>1</sup> This is also the conclusion of Moore: "That there is no ego, no soul, we should say, is thus a fundamental tenet of primitive Buddhism."<sup>2</sup> Professor Pratt, on the other hand, strongly disagrees with this widely accepted Western conception of Buddhism. "I submit that the obvious conclusions from the Buddha's argument are the following: First, the real self is not the phenomenal personality. It is neither the

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1. Hume, R.E., The World's Living Religions, Scribner's, 1941, p. 71.

2. Moore, G.F., op. cit., p. 293.

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body nor the consciousness, nor the functions of the mind, nor the peculiarities of the character. Second, it is not an animistic double, nor identical with the 'soul' of several other religions. Third, there is a real self which is none of these things. One cannot say, however, that the self exists; for existence is a term that means having a position in Samsara, the stream of becoming. This is perhaps, only another way of denying the identity of self with the stream of consciousness or with any of its parts, and is directly related to my next conclusion from the Buddha's way of presenting the matter: namely, Fourth, the self is enduring, not subject to change, and as such, when by itself not painful.<sup>1</sup> Professor Pratt argues that "the moral earnestness of the Buddha and his insistence on responsibility would seem to demand some kind of real, identical,<sup>2</sup> and abiding self."

Out of this confused controversy certain positions appear to be relatively clear. For one thing, the real self (if there is one) is not the actual self. The inevitable question arises: Then what is it? There is no answer forthcoming. Whatever it is, you cannot find it. "The Buddhist soul would seem to be like the

1. Pratt, J.B., The Pilgrimage of Buddhism, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1928, pp. 80-81.

2. Pratt, J.B., op. cit., p. 81

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Upanishadic in this, that it is always subject and never object."<sup>1</sup> If our conclusion that the actual self is not the real self is correct, then a very serious question is posed. How can one hold to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, when there is no permanent entity called the soul to migrate? The answer seems to be that all that passes from one life to another is karma and only karma; karma being, "the individual's store of merit and demerit laid up in the past, and which one carries with one till it is worked out in reward and punishment, or till an end is put to all becoming by enlightenment."<sup>2</sup> Thus karma is the chain by which one existence is linked to another. A new existence cannot be a re-incarnation. The actual self does not exist to be re-incarnated. Yet it is not a new existence. One man's karma cannot be saddled on another. That would be an intolerable offence to the moral emphasis and sense of justice so strong in Buddhism. Moore attempts to explain the Buddhist formula of "dependent origination," which formula appears to me to be an effort to solve a most vexed and impossible problem by the means of further complication.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 82

2. Ibid., p. 73

3. See Moore, op. cit., pp. 293-294

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Moore concludes with a footnote in which he says, "Some European scholars see in it [the formula of dependent origination] an illogical attempt to couple the genuine Buddhist doctrine that desire is the root of misery with the common Indian philosophy which made nescience the origin of all evil."<sup>1</sup> Certainly, it is the Buddhist doctrine of the self and its coupling of this doctrine with the transmigration of souls which defies logical solution. The formula may satisfy the devout Buddhist but it can only drive the logician to despair.

We come still closer to the Buddhist conception and evaluation of man when we consider its view of the source of evil. It is not karma, the fact of evil action, which is the source of evil and the cause of re-birth. That one's karma is the cause of rebirth is a Brahmin and Jaina conception; hence the ideal of worklessness as a means of salvation and the attempt to extinguish acquired karma through ascetic practices. It was against this conception that Buddha set up his new theory that it is Tanha, the craving for life, or the will to live, not karma, that is the cause of rebirth and the source of evil. Only by rooting out

1. See Moore, op. cit., p. 294

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desires and the will to live can one escape from re-birth regardless of the karma one has brought with one to this life. "It is not action itself that does the mischief, the mere functioning of the physical and psychical mechanism, but the motivation, the craving for what men in their ignorance call the good things of this life, the blind clinging to life itself as a good, the desire for another life, the will to be."<sup>1</sup> He who has succeeded in obliterating these basic cravings, has reached Nirvana, the state of peaceful bliss. And what happens to such an one upon death? Buddha was strangely silent about such a question, perhaps, as Professor Pratt suggests, because of moral reasons. Buddha conceived his mission as being a completely practical one. It was not his purpose, apparently, to gratify men's curiosity about metaphysical questions. The question to which he addressed himself was the very practical problem of salvation from a miserable life -- how to extinguish birth, rebirth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair. The logical implication of his teaching about the self and salvation from Tanha would seem to be that

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1. Ibid., p. 294

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there would be nothing left at all.<sup>1</sup> But all that we can say with certainty about the Buddha's conception of Nirvana is that it is a peaceful end unhaunted by the fear of rebirth.

It is clear that Buddhism has a very low estimate of the worth of the actual human personality. For all practical purposes, existence itself is inherently evil. "To be is to be miserable." The source of evil is not in evil action, the misuse of human freedom, but in the desire to live and other basic human motivations. Salvation is not a salvation of life but FROM life! The social effects of such an evaluation of man are obvious. Karma is not basic to the fact of rebirth but it determines the kind of rebirth. Thus, if one is born into a certain strata of society, the fact is not to be considered either his good or ill-fortune but his due reward. His estate, and the necessity for him to acquiesce in it, is the imperative of the moral order. This is an evaluation most attractive to absolutists and political despots and should move freedom-loving men and women to think more deeply upon the metaphysical basis for the Christian evaluation of man

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1. It would be interesting to bring Bergson's discussion of the notion of nothing to bear on this concept.

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as a sacred personality, an end in himself.

Hinduism is the complex and gradual growth of a religiously minded people. Under this comprehensive term are gathered many diversified sects which are yet bound together by a harmonizing principle or essentially common *Weltanschauung*. "Hinduism is therefore a protean phenomenon; every attempt to describe it must confine itself to certain salient features, but in so doing runs the risk of making an impression of simplicity and unity which is widely remote from the truth."<sup>1</sup> Bearing this warning in mind, we will proceed to address ourselves to the salient features of this great religion.

Acknowledging that every conceivable religious belief and practice has prevailed within the structure of Hinduism, it may be safely said with Hume that "the fundamental theological belief is in one immanent, all inclusive Being or Spirit, Brahma."<sup>2</sup> The metaphysics of the Upanishads must not be taken as normative of Hindu thinking; they may, however, be rightly considered the articulation of the general Weltanschauung.

1. Moore, C.F., op. cit., p. 329

2. Hume, op. cit., p. 32



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and ethos of Hinduism. To the Upanishads, Brahma is the sole reality, without attributes, distinction or determinations. Nothing more or less can be said of it -- it is pure being. It cannot be known, since it is both the sole reality and pure being and thus is universal subject without object. The true self of man is identical with the Universal Brahma. Thus the external world does not really exist. It is illusion. Likewise man's individual consciousness is an illusion. "The essence of the illusion is man's failure to distinguish the true self from the faculties of mind and sense, the principle of life, the subtle body, and the substratum of moral character, which seem to make him a person distinct from other persons and things, an individual ego."<sup>1</sup> Only by the knowledge that the real self is identical with Brahma can the tedious cycle of birth and death be broken. This knowledge is an intuition rather than a systematic and reasoned conclusion. He who is thus saved by knowledge is at death absorbed into the Absolute. The individuating principle manifested in self-consciousness returns to the state or the primal spiritual substance out of which it eman-

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1. Moore, op. cit., p. 316.

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ated. Man is not a created fact; his actual self is an illusion, his real self is an emanation. Or, as Hume states in his summary of the essential doctrinal position of Hinduism, "In Hinduism the supreme Being is the impersonal Brahma, a philosophical Absolute, serenely blissful, beyond all hamperings either ethical or metaphysical ... In Hinduism the human individual is an emanation or temporary manifestation of the impersonal Supreme, is not inherently or permanently worthless, is not responsible before God, is not permitted to be brotherly with all fellow human beings."<sup>1</sup> God, then, is the All-inclusive and the individual man a temporary emanation whose destiny is re-absorption upon his attaining true, intuitive knowledge. These are the basic convictions of this pantheistic religious philosophy.

The doctrine of karma or cosmic power of justice fulfills an important part in Hinduism. This doctrine exists quite independently of Brahma. However, without a doubt the attendant caste divisions of society constitutes the greatest single blight of Hinduism. And caste is the one feature which has been present through all the multiple historical phases and scriptures of

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1. Hume, op. cit., p. 37

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the faith. The Yoga method, by which the ignorant may gain the requisite knowledge for salvation, is a popular feature of Hinduism which provides a further impetus to quiescence in all social evils and inequities.

Even from our brief survey of the principal theological positions of these two great religions and philosophies it is clear that they have much in common. Everywhere we meet a turning away from the particular fact of man as a distressing manifold of illusory appearances, to the undisturbed unity of the eternally unchanging. "The essential marks of this mysticism are, first, its attitude towards the Natural, as in no form a manifestation of the Supernatural, but a mere confusing manifold, the illusory evanescent; and second, its attitude towards the empirical personality as the source of the Unreal. It is the mysticism for which the task of religion is to rid ourselves of the Natural, both as the world and as concrete personality."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the fact that India has been the spawning ground of every conceivable and contradictory religious philosophy and practice, this feature runs through all the strands and provides the principle of unity. "The soul may be conceived as all Brahma, as part of Brahma,

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1. Oman, Natural and Supernatural, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1931, p. 411

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as alongside Brahma, and even by being full of Bhakatas to have some semblance of a personal relation. But the idea of salvation, as absorption in this oneness, remains the same, and in the end it is mystical and pantheistic of the acosmic type, with a passive and even negative morality.<sup>1</sup> We might further our purpose by breaking down these points of agreement as Professor Hume has done in connection with Hinduism, Buddhism,<sup>2</sup> and Jainism:

1. General pessimism concerning the worth of human life in the midst of the material and social world.
2. The specific worthlessness of the human body.
3. The specific worthlessness of human activity.
4. A common tendency toward asceticism.
5. No program of organized social amelioration.
6. A common ideal of the greatest good as consisting in subservience, quiescence or passivity, certainly not universally beneficial.
7. A common ideal of salvation to be obtained by methods largely negative or repressive, certainly not self-expressive.

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1. Ibid., p. 419

2. See Hume, op. cit., p. 77

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8. A common appreciation of a certain religious value in suffering borne, self-imposed for self benefit.
9. A common belief in karma and transmigration.

Whether we consider the intellectualism of the Upanishads, or the reaction against it of Buddhism, or the mystical cosmology of the Taoists; whether the stress be laid on metaphysical speculation or on moral discipline or on silent meditation, we are faced with the same evaluation of life. The thinkers of the Upanishads were primarily interested in their speculations concerning Brahma and the true nature of being: deliverance was a secondary question. To the Buddhists, on the other hand, deliverance is the one vital issue and metaphysical speculations are anathema. Yet to both of them, life is of no inherent or permanent value. Such a conclusion is, however, the only one which would be consistent with their governing conceptions or the nature of God, the nature of man, and the meaning of life. It makes no real difference to our estimate of man whether we say that the actual self is the source of all evil by virtue of its existence or to say that the actual self is illusion; it makes no real difference whether we say that the destiny of the self is

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annihilation or absorption into an undifferentiated unity of Being. The result is the same. The life of the individual man is ultimately worthless and a temporary curse from which, unfortunately, because of karma and transmigration, we cannot "our own quietus take with a bare bodkin."

The purpose of our study is to find where there is sufficiently realistic grasp of the totality of life and of the nature of man in order that we may find a foundation for a free and functioning society. These religious philosophies fail to satisfy that search. T.R. Glover has said somewhere that "the canker at the heart of heathenism is the absence of any certainty that life has a permanent value." That is why our search is not satisfied in Oriental faiths. You cannot build a free and functioning society on that estimate of life! We have seen that the aim is either the elimination of life's natural desires or absorption into the great cosmic One. In either case, there is cast a blight over life in its present form. The sa<sup>n</sup>ctions of religion are detached from the common goods of life and social reform, and attached to ascetic practices. The religious life is made to a large extent a life of negations and principally a negation of life. The casting of such a blight on life is always the result

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of viewing the material universe and the empirical self as a part of it, as a kind of cosmic nightmare, believing that the only true reality is to be found in the intuition of the Absolute which the ascetic attains in trance or ecstasy. Life is not valued, for the relationship between the created world and the Creator is not a relationship of value! If we believe that the relationship between God and man is a value-relationship, then we cannot help but question the Indian method of salvation. "Is the true religious task of the reason to undo the elaborate web it has woven; of the will to cease from its task of conquering the world and have peace in quiescence; and of the feeling, to abandon its endless effort and aspiration, and realizing that all desire is misery, to sink itself in the bliss of one impersonal and empty awareness? In short, is the right way of finding the eternal to be quit of the evanescent?"<sup>1</sup>

Oriental mysticism appreciates what Western Naturalism has never been able to appreciate and that is the transcendent freedom of the human spirit. However, it finds no more, if as much, meaning in history as

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1. Oman, op. cit., p. 426

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Naturalism does. The natural and temporal process is merely something from which to be emancipated. That emancipation is of the fulfillment of whatever meaning life may have, but it is a meaning that is a negation of life and history. Thus history is a meaningless and repetitive cycle. Eternity, not time, has meaning. And here we have perhaps one of the deepest divisions between Occident and Orient. As Flewelling has well said, "The striking contrast of space-time to the circular cyclic concept of the Orient might well be taken as a fundamental difference between East and West."<sup>1</sup>

And East and West are drawing ever closer. We began by observing this fact and by asking the question of what we could gain from the East. The emphasis of the East on the transcendent should serve to remind us that we have that emphasis also in Christianity, even though in this age of increasing secularism we have neglected to cultivate it. On the other hand, it will be to our ultimate interest to realize that although the evaluation of man of Eastern religion and philosophy may tend to produce the state of mind desired by pompous imperialists, it does not provide either the

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1. Flewelling, The Survival of Western Culture, Harper's, 1943, p. 20.



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motivation or the basis for a free and functioning society. Too much of reality is left out of its scheme.

## Chapter III

Idealism

Idealistic philosophy has made a potent and permanent contribution to the thought and life of man. No pretence, however, will be made of a critical study of Idealism in any of its multiple forms. But inasmuch as the major emphases of Idealism have entered into the whole fabric of our Western civilization, we can profitably make some evaluation of its major positions and consider its contribution to the social movements of our time.

Idealism is a philosophy of many shades and varying emphases. However, in spite of the divergencies of many of the protagonists of Idealism -- both classical and modern -- they have one conviction in common, namely, that man is to be understood primarily from the standpoint of his rational faculties. The fact that man is capable of transcending the natural and historical process is the avenue by which an understanding of man's nature is to be reached. The function communicated by the word  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  is the signature of man's uniqueness and the right cultivation of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  the way of salvation and progress. And although this word may be translated "spirit", from Plato to Bosanquet the emphasis has been on the capacity of man

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for rational thought. It is this emphasis that distinguishes the Greek tradition so clearly from the Oriental, however similar they may be at some other points. "Platonic mysticism differs from that of the Oriental religions in that it is essentially a mysticism of the intelligence which seeks illumination not so much by asceticism and ecstasy as by the discipline of scientific knowledge. The Platonic ideal has been well defined by an ancient writer as to seek after the mysterious Good and to be happy by Geometry."<sup>1</sup>

Inasmuch as Idealism has injected rationalism and moral optimism into our mode of thought, we will consider these two facets of Idealistic philosophy with particular reference to the view of the nature of man made explicit or implicit in these positions.

In Idealism the essential man is the rational man. It is man's capacity for reason that is the source of an harmonious functioning of all the vitalities of life, or, as in a dualistic Idealism, the power which curbs the anarchic forces of nature operating in man. In short, if man indeed be made "in the image of God," it is by virtue of the fact that he possesses the capacity of rational thought. That is the stamp of both

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1. Dawson, C., Progress and Religion, Sheed and Ward Co., 1938, p. 147.

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his uniqueness and his kinship with God. Essential as this emphasis is to any understanding of the uniqueness of man, we are forced to raise the question of its adequacy for a comprehension of man's nature. Is not idealistic rationalism guilty of taking an aspect of man's nature -- a most important one, to be sure -- and of making it a principle for interpreting the whole? The fact that idealistic philosophers, from their initial premises, are forced to too easily identify man's capacity for self-transcendence, or his "spirit," with reason, is, we believe, a most legitimate criticism. In like manner, God is too simply identified with Universal or Cosmic Mind. There is lacking a sufficient understanding of man's organic relation to nature and to the whole complex of irrational factors which form a large and permanent part of the stuff of human life and experience.

Perhaps the most striking historical illustration of this is to be found in the rationalists (one could not call them strictly Idealists) of the eighteenth century. Working on the presupposition of the omnipotence of reason, these philosophers naturally aimed at clarity in their rational explanation of life. As Mumford has so characteristically said, "Clarity at the expense of life. But what clarity! Read Galileo,

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Descartes, Spinoza, Newton, Locke: it is like taking a bath in crystal clear water. Their universe is clean, neat, orderly, without smells, without flavours, without the rank odors of growth, impregnation or decomposition: above all without the complications of real life ..... But this new world picture gives no hint of the soil, the bacteria, the mat of vegetation, the animal life: it retreats from the dense atmosphere of actual experience to the stratosphere of its own rarefied abstractions. All the forms and processes of reality, to which other ages had given a full, if muddled, expression by means of fable, superstition, myth, allegory, now dropped off in the fresh water bath of science, as the barnacles that impede a ship drop off when it casts anchor in the channel of a mountain stream.<sup>1</sup> This determination to treat as real only that which is amenable to immediate rational explanation, coupled with an equally resolute determination to ignore, or to treat as illusion, all those irrational and mysterious but nevertheless most real facts that make up so much of our personal and communal experience, is the error into which every dogmatic rationalism must fall. Too many profound facts of life, such as the nature of

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1. Mumford, Lewis, The Condition of Man, Harcourt and Brace, 1944, p. 260.

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sin, the position and function of the will, the nature of freedom, the conditioning fact of experience and the whole business of the subconscious are, of necessity, given too facile a treatment by idealistic rationalism. No wonder Paul Tillich, with his emphasis on the demonic, protests that "It is no accident that the Enlightenment in the battle against the superstitious understanding of the demonic (a well founded protest), lost not only the concept of the demonic but also the religious concept of sin."<sup>1</sup> Which they most assuredly did. To explain the fact of sin, on rationalistic principles, as the result of ignorance, a miscalculation, or a misguided application of a hedonist calculus, is to be perversely trivial and to reveal the impotence of a strict rationalism in its understanding of the behavior, let alone the nature, of man. This matter will be considered, more fully, later.

Obviously, moral optimism or confidence in the goodness of man is a result of the idealistic view of man. The power of reason is considered sufficient to master the irrational forces of nature and transform them into a meaningful and functioning coherence. Thus the rational man becomes the good man, because the

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1. Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, Scribner's, 1936, p. 95.

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rational function serves a moral end. That can be true, but it is not necessarily true. The primary and basic fact of human freedom has not been duly considered. Idealism implies clearly that the rational man will successfully control his freedom. Immoral actions are the consequence of the failure to bring man's freedom under the control of his rational process. Here is the crux of our problem. Sin becomes for idealistic rationalists the triumph of the irrational, the physical. Such a view, we contend, has failed to plumb deeply enough the matter of human freedom. Sin and righteousness are not merely a matter of subduing or transmuting animal desires, for we have no pure animal desires. There is no pure nature in humanity. Nor have we any right to assume with the Idealists that mind and spirit are essentially good. Sin is not the result of the failure of reason (conceived of as essentially good) to control the physical (conceived of as being the locus of evil); it is the result of a violation of the good within freedom itself! It is at this point that the Christian doctrine of man is so much more superior in its realism than idealistic rationalism. It is freedom -- which embraces and transcends both nature and reason -- that is the essence of man. And that great Biblical insight the modern age has lost and as yet has

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not fathomed the relationship that exists between that loss and the events of our time. Because of its more realistic approach to man's freedom and the perils involved, the Christian faith has not the moral optimism of Idealism, though its ultimate optimism is more securely founded than that of Idealistic philosophy because of its doctrine of a personal God.

This boundless optimism about man long outlived the rationalist movement which had given its birth. It was just this feature of its creed that rationalism bequeathed to modern liberalism. As we might expect in an expanding republic, optimism became a part of the American disposition which as yet financial panic, political corruption and war have failed to seriously disturb. An optimistic view of the nature of man is thus deeply rooted in our very thought processes. It has been part of the mental pabulum on which we have been nurtured. Ignorance, not sin, constitutes the barrier to Progress Unlimited. There is no wonder that education was supposed to perform undreamed of marvels! We are already skeptical about the ability of universal education to usher in Utopia, but inasmuch as our basic attitudes are still conditioned by the premises of rationalistic idealism there remains within us an optimistic faith in the ability of the



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mind of man to find the solution to the human predicament.

The Idealist's evaluation of man becomes more explicit upon consideration of his conception of the ultimate destiny of man. As has been previously remarked, Idealism has a deep appreciation of the capacity of man to transcend the natural and historical process. However, this insight, it seems to me, is vitiated when Idealism identifies this capacity as being a mere aspect of universal mind, a fact most prevalent in Idealistic philosophy. Reinhold Niebuhr has stated this idealistic position and penetrated into its weakness in a most succinct manner when he says, "In Idealism the true self is that reason which relates the self to the universal. But since the true self in idealistic thought is neither more nor less than this universal reason, the actual self is really absorbed in the universal. The actual self is, however, less, as well as more, than reason; because every self is a unity of thought and life in which thought remains in organic unity with all the organic processes of finite existence. Failure to recognize this latter fact falsifies the problem of sin in all idealistic philosophy. Sin becomes the inertia of man's animal nature in contrast to the universalities of mind.

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Idealism fails to recognize to what degree finiteness remains a basic condition of human spirituality. The self has in other words a narrower natural base and a higher and narrower pinnacle of spirit than the breadth of perspective of its rational process. The self is a narrow tower with a wide view. In Idealism the self is lost in the breadth of its view; and the breadth of its view is identified with ultimate reality. Idealism conceives the self primarily as reason and reason primarily as God.<sup>1</sup> In short, the rationalistic principles and premises of Idealism, if followed out to their logical conclusion, renders it almost inevitable that the individual is lost in the universal mind. Thought is equated with being or reality and the individual is a meaningful and real being only because he participates in reality thus conceived. The ideal self, that is the rational self, is thus the only real self. But the actual self is obviously something different from a rational self. And inasmuch as the actual self is not rational, it is not real, because reason and reality are one. The actual individual self is annihilated by deification. The absolutism inherent in all idealistic

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1. Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Scribner's Sons, 1943, Vol. 1, p. 75-76.

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philosophy reached its supreme consummation in the philosophy of Hegel, where such emphasis is laid upon the essential unity of Absolute Mind that the finite selves, the human personalities, are almost, thought not completely, ignored. An individual is not a whole in himself; he is only a fragment of a greater whole and is of importance only because he is a fragment of this greater whole. From this metaphysical doctrine it is but a step to the political doctrine that the state, the concrete embodiment of the Universal Mind, is far more real and far more important than are the individual citizens of the state. Social as well as spiritual absorption is implicit in this evaluation of man.

A most scholarly contemporary political philosopher has observed: "The type of statism and authoritarianism advocated by the members of the idealist school has had a profound effect upon all subsequent political thought and has led directly to the Fascist and Nazi ideology of the present day. Between the twentieth century Fascists and the seventeenth century absolutists there is only a remote and indirect connection. But between the twentieth century Fascists and the nineteenth century idealists the connection is close and intimate."<sup>1</sup> Professor McGovern has made a

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1. McGovern, W.M., From Luther to Hitler, Houghton Mifflin Co., P. 131.

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very thorough analysis of the various streams of thought which have converged and commingled to mould the Fascist ideology and tradition. Particularly enlightening is the chapter given over to a study of the contribution to the Fascist ideology, made by the nineteenth century idealists. The political philosophy of such giants as Kant, Fichte and Hegel, along with such lesser greats as Green, Carlyle, Schelling and Bosanquet, are searchingly examined. Any thoughtful consideration of the political philosophies of these idealists is beyond the scope and purpose of this essay. Our purpose is merely that of raising the question as to what the idealistic evaluation of man as an essentially rational creature, implies in the relations of the individual to the state.

The moment we assume, with Hegel, that "the rational is the real and the real is the rational," then we must conclude that anything in the universe which is irrational or contrary to the laws of reason is ipso facto false -- a delusion of the senses. It follows then that the rational is the good. Obviously any system of government such as democracy is not rational and hence is not good; whereas, on the other hand, Hegel felt that he had proved that the Prussian system of government was more or less ideal when he had proved that it was essentially rational in character.

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The state was for Hegel "the Divine Idea as it exists on earth." And the next step is inevitable, namely, the complete subordination of the individual to the will of the state. The state being the supreme unfolding or embodiment of Universal Mind thus becomes an end, or the end in itself. "Were the characteristic features of the state to be regarded as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, the interest of the individual as such would be the ultimate purpose of the social union . . . . But the state has a totally different relation to the individual. The state is the objective spirit and the individual has his truth, his real existence and ethical status in being a member of it." Or as Hegel has elsewhere expressed the same idea, "All the worth which the human being possesses, all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the state." The individual is a meaningful being because, and only because, he possesses the capacity of reason and is thereby related to the Real. His raison d'etre is found in his relationship to an impersonal principle, from which he derives his total worth. Likewise the rights of man are neither inherent nor natural, but privileges derived from the

1. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 240; quoted in McGovern op. cit., p. 299

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state, the embodiment of the rational Reality. "True rights are the rights which reason says that a man ought to have in order that he may best develop the divine capacities within him. But the person who lays down and defines these rights is not and should not be the private individual with his mass of petty wishes and desires, but the general will, the rational will behind all individuals, embodied in the dictates of the state." <sup>1</sup> Likewise the dictates of the state are seen to be higher than the claims of morality and the individual conscience.

Even among the critics of Hegel, and of the Idealist school in general, the extent to which the social consequences of Absolutist Idealism are a direct result of its defective doctrine of man, has not been fully appreciated. Man is, and is more than, a rational creature. To interpret man, and from man, reality, in partial terms is to distort our understanding of life, its meaning and its value. To conceive man's ultimate destiny as an absorption into an impersonal principle is to diminish both his present and his eternal worth. To thus cut away the metaphysic necessary to a meaningful and dynamic individualism is to play into the hands

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1. McGovern, W.M., From Luther to Hitler, p. 307.

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of authoritarianism. We are reserving our discussion of the Christian view of the nature of man till later, but it may be worth while suggesting that there are certain features of the Christian doctrine which are capable of rectifying the deficiencies of Idealism and of providing the basis for the realization of its many great values.

It is significant that early Christianity faced squarely the very real problems posed by a civilization permeated with idealistic presuppositions. The first five centuries must indeed be understood as a conflict of ideas and of the ways of life embodied in and sustained by these ideas. In classical thought, with which Christianity was forced to contend, there was the alternative of reducing the meaning of life to the comparative meaninglessness of the natural order (Naturalism) or of emancipating life by translating it into the dimension of pure reason (Idealism) and to again lose all real meaning. And Christianity was able to do so because of its superior realism, its ability to grasp the totality of life and to thereby transcend the limitations of both naturalism and idealism. The whole conflict of these centuries was gathered up in the soul and mind of Augustine. He abhorred and despised as an explanation of life the mechanistic naturalism of his day.

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Neo-Platonic Idealism remained to the end within him, disturbing always his peace of mind. Cochrane, in his profound analysis of the inadequacy of the classical mind to meet the problem of the age, sums up classical idealism and how it appeared to the Christian in these words: "The one-big-soul cosmology was in classical antiquity much more prevalent than naturalism, and at the same time, much more seductive and dangerous, inasmuch as it appealed to the spirit of devotion and self sacrifice, which is one of the fundamental and most deep-seated instincts of the race. Yet it evoked this spirit only to degrade, pervert and ultimately destroy it. For, as it implied an impossible idea of unity, so also it pointed to an effort of unification through identification or submergence, the consequence of which could only be morally and physically disastrous to whoever undertook it. What it demanded was, in effect, that the individual should abnegate his God-given status, in order to prostrate himself before, not a reality but a figment of his own imagination, the so-called 'group spirit' as exemplified in family, class, or state."

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 1. Cochrane, C.N., Christianity and Classical Culture, Oxford, At The Clarendon Press, 1940, p. 508-509.



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The premises of classical and modern idealism are for all real purposes, the same. The social consequences we have seen to be similar. The Christian in that ancient world assumed that all men were sinners -- a permanent feature of the Christian doctrine of man -- and consequently he rejected the claim of the superman-Saviours "to whose virtue and fortuna mankind is invited to commit his destiny."<sup>1</sup> In like manner, the Christian doctrine, unlike Idealistic philosophy, is ever a safeguard against widespread acceptance of the belief that any one despot can, by virtue of his superior insight or other qualities, be in possession of the whole of truth.

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1. Ibid, p. 512

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Naturalism

It is the permanent and worthy function of Naturalism to remind man that the object and substance of real thought is life. Its aim thus becomes the waging of relentless war against delusion and vain sentimentality, against mere decorum and mean propriety. Always, a naturalistic revolt is intensely inspired by moral ardor.

During the past century, however, the limitations of such a necessary function and praiseworthy approach were blandly overlooked with the development of the cult of Science, the "religious arm" of naturalism. Science came to be idealized as the exclusive source of our knowledge of reality. Following the success of the method, came the conquest of the myth! And the myth was far too inadequate to lead such a complex being as man into his true heritage; particularly when the problems raised by his complex humanitas were being so seriously aggravated by the ever-increasing complexity of his world caught in the frustrated struggle of the death of an age with inadequate values and without direction. "The great gains that were made in technics during the last few centuries," says Mumford, "were largely offset by a philosophy that either denied the validity of man's

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higher needs or that sought to foster only that limited set of interests which enlarged the power of science and gave scope to a power personality.<sup>1</sup> The myth that a method is the avenue to omniscience has been the speedily constructed modern tower of Babel.

Physical science, in fact, is nothing more or less than measurement. It does not and cannot reveal the intrinsic nature of things, but deals simply with their quantitative relations and variations. Instead of providing an exhaustive explanation of reality, it offers a translation of reality into mathematical symbols. Nevertheless, the naive trust of multitudes, amounting to almost religious submission, in the complete adequacy of science "to unscrew the inscrutable" and solve the riddle of the world, has predisposed the common man to accept the presuppositions of science which lead him inevitably to a materialistic philosophy. The result is that a number of generations have been educated in biology, psychology and the social sciences, as well as in the physical sciences, on the uncritical and tender-minded assumption that the scientific method harbors no limitations, let alone defects.

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1. Mumford, Lewis, The Condition of Man, p. 414

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Fortunately, the day of self-examination has arrived. The original high priests of the cult of Science, the physicists, have become renegade heretics bolting from the fold. This fact portends a profound revolution and perhaps a new liberation in thought. For the solid world of the materialist has vanished in a tenuous web of mathematical formulae. "The Victorian physicist felt that he knew just what he was talking about when he used such terms as matter and atoms. Atoms were tiny billiard balls, a crisp statement that was supposed to tell you all about their nature in a way that could never be achieved for transcendental things like consciousness, beauty or humor. But now we realize that science has nothing to say as to the intrinsic nature of the atom. The physical atom is, like everything else in physics, a schedule of pointer readings." <sup>1</sup> One thing would appear to be certain. The cult of Science cannot continue to flourish on the abstractions and colorless imagery of the new physics, nor does the principle of indeterminacy provide an effective war cry for rallying laymen to do battle with religion and other such fortresses of superstition. The more rigidly the province of

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1. Eddington, A. S., The Nature of the Physical World, p. 259.

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science is defined and its claims limited, the more urgent becomes the need for a metaphysical explanation of life. Moreover, the scientific myth has lived a much shorter life than most myths, for the important reason that, unlike most other myths, it provided merely an intellectual technique and not a moral dynamic. It was clear to the most humane minds of the nineteenth century that science could serve well the cause of humanity if, and only if, it was the servant of the humanitarian spirit which is the product, not of science, but of a religious tradition and estimate of value. That surely is clear to all men today. As it becomes clearer, we shall witness the decline of the cult of Science and perhaps the revival of a richer and more comprehensive search for a solid basis for the renewal of life on earth.

The philosophy of Naturalism is not to be equated with the cult of Science, but it was under the aegis of the cult that Naturalism gained such a strong rootage in the thinking of contemporary Westerners. Acknowledging no transcendental reference, man became the measure of all things in the least profound sense of that classic phrase. Swinburne composed the melody of the movement in the heyday of its optimism, which had for its theme,

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"Glory to Man in the highest! For Man is the Master of Things." But the seeds of despair were in the theme; it did not take long to perceive that if man was the most significant being in the universe then he was a most insignificant creature indeed. In a few short years the theme had changed and even the metre betrayed the frustrations of jazz:

\*It's all Nothing.

It's all a world where bugs and emperors  
Go singularly back to the same dust.<sup>1</sup>"

The "Lords of Creation" had so swiftly become the "hollow men" of the twentieth century -- in a manner not unlike that of T. S. Elliot's poem,

"We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw."

It is worthwhile giving a hearing to one of America's most eminent literary critics. He has been tracing the effect of a naturalistic, pragmatic philosophy on creative literature in America. He says: "The dominant national philosophy tried to give the lie to

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1. From Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem, "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford"

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the reality of spiritual values. And this had two results: the stronger novelists and poets of our contemporary period are more philosophical than the philosophers for the reason, so admirably put by Simmel, that he who reaches the depth of his own soul is at the core of the world. But the less robust and resisting spirits in our letters, finding themselves in a world hopelessly discrete, without inner relations, without value, form or good, have wandered from one eccentricity of helplessness to another, from confusion to worse confusion in a chaotic multiverse and have finally abandoned meaning and hence communication as a conscious or unconscious act of metaphysical despair. For meaning and communication are impossible without certain agreements and the dominant philosophy and dominant vital forces of America had conspired to break down the eternal spiritual and moral agreements of mankind." <sup>1</sup> Creative art, like creative living, is dependent upon an integration of life within, and a meaningful integration implies a faith in the reality and perhaps the objectivity of spiritual values. But we must be more explicit about Naturalism and its evaluation of man.

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1. Lewisohn, Ludwig, The story of American Literature, Modern Library, p. 338-339.

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Naturalism, like most philosophies, covers a variety of interpretations of life. There are, however, two principal naturalistic schools -- the classical, rationalistic naturalism and the more modern Romantic naturalism. The classical naturalists seek to equate the stature of man with the dimension of "nature" and to understand him as a being imbedded and submerged in natural causality. The romantic naturalists are less rationalistic and interpret man primarily from the standpoint of his sub-rational vitalities.

The position of the older, rationalistic naturalism has been well stated by Oman when he said: "The naturalistic theory regards the individual as continuous with a universal mechanical system of cause and effect. In mind this energy is transformed into knowing, somewhat as an electric bulb transforms into light which is seen, the current which, though it is not seen, is continuous with it in the wire. Thus the individual mind, though as a form within the world it is of some consequence, has no real frontier across which knowledge of the world can only come as its meaning, but is continuous with physical energy, so that knowing is an effect of it as flame is of heat."<sup>1</sup> This older

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1. Oman, Natural and Supernatural, p. 156.



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naturalism which Oman criticizes regards man not as a spiritual being made for freedom but as a mere engine. The modern fountainhead of this school of thought was Thomas Hobbes who, naturally enough in his mechanistic metaphysics, could find no real place for a spiritual self. For as Hobbes asked, "What is the heart but a spring; and the nerves but so many strings; and the joints but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body?" Reinhold Niebuhr has a comment on Hobbes and the naturalism that stemmed from him which is most pertinent to contemporary thought: "Beginning with Thomas Hobbes a fairly consistent denial of the significance of selfhood, certainly of transcendent individuality, runs through the empirical and naturalistic tradition. In Hobbes sensationalistic psychology and materialistic metaphysics there is no place for human individuality. His individuals are animal natures whose egohood consists in the impulse of survival. Human reason serves the purpose of extending this impulse beyond the limits known in nature, thus creating conflict between equally valid claims of various individuals; but there is no rational transcendence over impulse where these claims might be arbitrated. They must therefore be suppressed and arbitrated by a political

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power, which is the sole source of all morality. Fear of mutual destruction prompts the historical decision, the social contract, by which government comes into being. But this decision lies significantly in a mythical past. This philosophy may be regarded as symbolic of the curious vagary of naturalistic thought which throughout subsequent ages, interprets human history as the consequence of pure human decisions without having an individual with sufficient transcendence over the social process to make significant decisions.<sup>1</sup> And again with equal powers of insight: "This difficulty in the thought of Hobbes perfectly illustrates the conflict between the voluntarism of modern social theory and the determinism of its psychology, a contradiction which becomes a permanent source of confusion in modern thought. Man actually has a greater degree of freedom in his essential structure and less freedom in history than modern culture realizes."<sup>2</sup>

Of all the penetrating insights in Oman's monument of erudition, there is none more interesting

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1. Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. 1, p. 70-71.

2. Ibid.; p. 101

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than his perception of the parallels existing between a mechanistic naturalism and Buddhism. He points out that both assume that an invariable equivalence is what is meant by the order of the universe; that both understand this equivalence as the measure of all reality; and that neither can assign any real meaning or existence to the soul of the individual, the world as we experience it, or to God as personal. "It is true that they start from diametrically opposite points. Though both deal with fixed sequences, Buddhism starts with an act of freedom, while naturalism begins and ends with events which are only the sequence of former events. But practically this makes little difference. The Buddhist feels himself caught in a terrible, relentlessly unrolling destiny as much as the Naturalist, while the Naturalist, having no considered place for freedom, has all the more to introduce it abruptly, in the same kind of atomic way as Buddhism, before he can begin with anything. The main difference is that, to Buddhism, it is the material series which is a mere epiphenomenon of the mental series; whereas, to Naturalism, it is the mental series which is a mere epiphenomenon of the material."<sup>1</sup> The individual is

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1. Oman, op. cit., p. 227-228

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thus lost in Naturalism, as he is in Buddhism, because it does not view life in sufficient depth to comprehend the self-transcendent human spirit. The spirit of man is a reality which does not fit into the category of natural causality which is Naturalism's sole principle for comprehending the universe. Thus its evaluation of human life is but a little higher than that of a Buddhist ascetic.

The older Naturalism had never suspected the depth and complexity of vital impulses below and beyond the motivations and control of reason with which romantic naturalism is primarily concerned. This movement protested that reason is not the organizing principle of human life. Conscious reason, it is contended, is a divisive and to some extent disintegrating process, whereas it is the unities of nature that afford a true interpretation of man and which constitute the basis for social cohesion.

Bergson made a great contribution to this movement in emphasizing that there are many phases of reality which the intellect is unable to grasp. Intuition is more fundamental and is therefore the basis for philosophy and for all forms of artistic endeavor. Schopenhauer contributed greatly to the movement with his

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fundamental doctrine that the only ultimate reality in the universe is will, blind, struggling will, which manifests itself in all the multitudinous phenomena we see around us. Nietzsche took Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will and developed it further and differently. He saw that this will is not merely the will to exist or survive but the will to control and dominate. Or as Nietzsche himself puts it, the universal will is not merely the will to live but the will to power.

Perhaps the most far reaching contribution to the development of romantic naturalism and the widespread acceptance of its emphasis and presuppositions was made by the work of Sigmund Freud. By recognizing the role of sexuality and by charting the dark, repressed side of life, Freud added many great insights to our understanding of life. Unfortunately, however, his flashing originality as a psychologist was offset by an uncritical mediocrity as a philosopher. His materialistic philosophy, aided by the effects of the cult of Science, assisted greatly in the advance of the popular idea that to be scientific, to be an up-to-date psychologist, was to accept a basic materialism that worked many weird results in the human psyche. "For Freud the super-ego has the role of the hostile

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patriarchal father, denying the sexual activities of his rivals, his sons, forbidding, threatening, punishing; it never assumes the mother role of nurturing and liberating the positive expressions of life. He even said that the object of psychoanalysis is 'to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego.'<sup>1</sup> Aware of the need for reclaiming neglected portions of the id, he passed over the coeval task of replenishing the exhausted super-ego of the contemporary personality."

Freud, like Darwin, is not to be reproached for the conclusions drawn and simplifications made by his disciples. One of the most sinister conclusions drawn by a generation seeking easy explanation by sweeping generalizations from Freud's teachings, was that the needs of the id were more important than the curbs and illuminations of man's culture and religious faiths, or to use Freud's word, the super-ego. Mischief and evil, it was contended, were the result of the tensions set up within the self by the super-ego. Such tensions were a hindrance to unlimited self assertion. This produced two outstanding results. Any sense of a valid objective scale of values became impossible. The good

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 1. Mumford, L., op. cit., p. 363

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and the bad, the true and the false, the ugly and the beautiful, became mere words that served nothing and described nothing but the ego's appetites. This is found in Hemingway who, for all his worth, symbolizes a large school of writers who attempted to give some meaning to life by grafting a spiritual quality on the vitalities and impulses of nature, by spiritualizing the role and function of the primordial slime. Life without tensions thus became the ideal of romantic naturalists. But a life without tension is a life without direction and without purpose, without a fountainhead of energy. The net result of such a philosophy was a luxuriant crop of despairing cynics and bewildered futilitarians. The other result was "the fascists' effort to create a positive super-ego out of the raw elements of the id: blood and carnage and booty and copulation as ideals."<sup>1</sup>

Romantic naturalism avoids the error of equating the vitality of man with the laws of nature, mechanically conceived, which was the error of rationalistic naturalism. The basic error of romantic naturalism is, as Niebuhr has so clearly put it, "Its effort to ascribe to the realm of the biological and the organic what is

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1. Mumford, op. cit., p. 365.

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clearly a compound of nature and spirit, of biological impulse and rational and spiritual freedom. Man is never a simple two-layer affair who can be understood from the standpoint of the bottom layer, should efforts to understand him from the standpoint of the top layer fail. If rationalism tends to deprecate the significance, power, inherent order and unity of biological impulse, romanticism tends to appreciate these without recognizing that human nature knows no impulse in its pure form. Every biological fact and every animal impulse, however obvious its relation to the world below man, is altered because of its incorporation into the human psyche.<sup>1</sup> It is a popular conception that sexual looseness is the result of the inability of the moral reason to control the animal urges. The thoughtful thinker will, however, note that such action is the result of a violation of human freedom aggravated by man's spiritual imagination. "The difficulty which man experiences in bringing his various impulses into some kind of harmony is therefore not caused by the recalcitrance of nature but occasioned by the freedom of the spirit."<sup>2</sup> Romantic naturalism thus errs in

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1. Niebuhr, R., op. cit., p. 40

2. Ibid.



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interpreting nature by purely human categories and in ascribing to natural impulses an organization unknown in animal existence.

The great insights of Romantic Naturalism will serve, however, to remind the Christian that a Platonized Christianity has grave limitations; limitations that are overcome by the balanced interpretation of man given in the Bible. On the other hand, the inadequacies of naturalism, particularly in its social consequences, are everywhere manifest today.

With the development of the scientific cult and the spread of romantic naturalism, people began to identify the natural with the savage, the organic with the primitive, the progressive with the death-serving. "Hence it was not as a biologist but as a mythologist that Darwin triumphed: he lent to the brutal assertions of class, nation and race the support of a holy "scientific" dogma. The industrial world was flattered to find its own reflections in this mythical black tarn of nature: it found the shabby tricks of the factory and the counting house justified in the stratagems of field and forest: luck, force, ruthlessness, greed were what the ruling classes took to be the secret of

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survival."<sup>1</sup> Man's contemporary inhumanity to man became justified by placing the whole process on nature. On Darwin's sanctification of brutal industrialism and in his providing a "scientific" impulse to imperialism we find the secret of his popular influence.

Social Darwinism, the belief that human history is the story of the eternal and inevitable conflict between groups, especially between nations, has become a clearly articulated political philosophy in our time. Let us glance a moment at some of its representatives.

A traditionalist and an ostensible Christian, the eminent historian of the so-called Prussian school, Heinrich von Treitschke, did much to advance both the cause of Social Darwinism and totalitarianism in Germany. "To Treitschke the doctrine that all nations are equal was sheer moonshine. Inequality is the law of the universe. Just as individuals are unequal so are nations unequal. Some are strong, others weak; some superior, others inferior; some worthy to survive and to dominate other nations, others rightly destined to subjection or to extinction. Needless to say Treitschke is thoroughly convinced that the Germans as a nation are far superior to all the other peoples of

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 1. Mumford, L., op. cit., p. 350

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Europe. His books are full of examples of phrases in which he pours scorn upon the English, the French, the Italians and the lesser nationalities and lauds the Germans." <sup>1</sup> In the name of traditionalism, Treitschke lifted the "survival of the fittest" theory out of anthropology to make it do service to political philosophy. As he himself put it, "In short, all social life is built upon class organization ..... To put it simply; the masses must forever remain the masses. There would be no culture without kitchen-maids.....Millions must plough and forge and dig in order that a few thousand may write and paint and study.....It is precisely in the differentiation of classes that the moral wealth of mankind is exhibited." <sup>2</sup> This doctrine of the inequality of man in every sphere constituted the basis of Treitschke's whole philosophy.

It is of sufficient significance to note in passing that Treitschke was thoroughly Lutheran in his philosophy. He spoke much of the need for religion and religious instruction but it was a religion that knew nothing but a vertical relationship. That religion might have horizontal, that is, social impli-

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1. McGovern, W.M., From Luther to Hitler, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941, p. 367-368.

2. Treitschke, Politics, I, p. 41-43, Quoted in McGovern, op. cit., p. 381-382.

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cations and results, was to him a spurious conception to be constrained and condemned. The state was supreme and any thought to the contrary was anathema. We can learn today from the Lutheran experiment that although it may be all very well to say that Caesar shall not enter the Church when this is interpreted to mean that Christ shall not enter the World, then Caesar will and does enter the Church and the Church has no weapons for defence other than its futile and impotent pleas for the recognition of the doctrine of the spheres. The doctrine of the spheres is based upon a bifurcation of man's life, a division that can take place, not in real life, but in imagination and abstract thought alone. The concern of the Church is the whole man; the concern of the state is the whole man. The Church and state have the same sphere. They have different functions in relation to that one and the same sphere. The only fruitful working principle of the relationship between the State and the Church is the principle of tension and co-operation, not a doctrine of separate spheres.

Social Darwinism leaped ahead with Nietzsche and his philosophy of the superman. For Nietzsche, democracy meant the rule of the base and the sordid. Creative genius is crushed by the numbing weight of mediocrity. Democracy, he vehemently contended, is

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contrary to the whole principle of evolution, for evolution is the development and survival of the fittest, while democracy is the control of the fittest by the great mass of the unfit. Nietzsche's basic conviction was that human beings are unequal, fundamentally and biologically unequal. And naturally once such fundamental inequality be granted it follows that the only reasonable society is a totalitarian and Fascist one. The slaves have their world and the masters a different one. The masters also have a new and different master morality. In master morality the good is synonymous with brave, powerful and beautiful, to be sure, but it is also synonymous with ferocious, hard and cruel when it comes to handling the slaves. It is important to notice that Mussolini was greatly influenced by Nietzsche and accepted his version of Social Darwinism by insisting that life is not merely a struggle for existence but also a struggle for domination and power. As Mussolini himself put it, "The value of Fascism lies in the fact that..... it has a will to exist and a will to power, a firm front in face of the reality of violence.....The Fascist state is an embodied will to power." <sup>1</sup> How often in

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1. Mussolini, Benito, Fascism, pp. 13, 16

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Mussolini's writings do we find the ideas of Social Darwinism and of Nietzsche in particular, explicitly stated! "Strife is the origin of all things....Strife will always remain at the root of human nature, like a supreme fatality. And on the whole it is well that it is so. Today strife is possible in war, in economics, in ideas, but the day in which there would be no more strife would be a day of melancholy, of the end of things, of ruin. Humanity is still and always an abstraction of time and space; men are still not brothers, do not want to be, and evidently can not be. Peace is hence absurd or rather it is a pause in war. There is something which binds man to his destiny of struggling. The motives of the struggle may change indefinitely; they may be economic, religious, political, sentimental, but the legend of Cain and Abel seems to be the unescapable reality while brotherhood is a fable.....The Christian and Socialist "men be brothers" is a mask for the eternal and immutable "homo homini lupus".....and man will continue to be a wolf among wolves for a bit of land, for a trickle of water, for a crumb of bread, for a woman's kiss, for a necessity -- or a caprice."

1. Mussolini, Benito, Quoted in McGovern, op. cit.  
p. 539

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England made her contribution to the expansion of the philosophy of Social Darwinism in Herbert Spencer. Not that Spencer was an authoritarian or an etatist; his influence lay rather in the idea, now popular, that history is not in the least dependent upon the conscious actions of individuals at any time or place. <sup>1</sup> "What are the causes that make communities change from generation to generation -- that make the England of Queen Anne so different from the England of Elizabeth, the Harvard College of today so different from that of thirty years ago?.....The Spencerian school replies, the changes are irrespective of persons, and independent of individual control. They are due to the environment, to the circumstances, the physical geography, the ancestral conditions, the increasing experiences of outer relations; to everything in fact, except the Grants and the Bismarcks, the Jones and the Smiths." <sup>2</sup> Authoritarians were quick to say that Spencer was saying in biological language what Hegel had already said in metaphysical language

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1. For a contemporary exposition and acceptance of this position see Bruce Hutchison's article on the editorial page of The Winnipeg Free Press of January 8, 1944.

2. James, William, The Will to Believe, Longmans, Green and Co., p. 218.

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and that the same implications could be drawn. Thus, "The later statisticians took over from Spencer the doctrine that individual man and social groups are the products of evolution, of evolution governed by the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest even though they rejected with horror Spencer's doctrines of extreme individualism and of absolute laissez-faire in politics."<sup>1</sup>

One of the most influential apostles of Social Darwinism was Ludwig Gumplowicz of the Austrian school of sociologists. "The basis of Gumplowicz's whole sociological theory is that the state and all other political institutions originate in the conflict between groups and more especially in the conquest of one group by another. As a result of this doctrine Gumplowicz felt that it was necessary to accept etatism the authority of the state over the individual, and authoritarianism, the control of the state by a small number of its citizens."<sup>2</sup> Out of this struggle it is of course the fittest that survive and consequently this struggle is the basis of all real progress. It inevitably follows, of course, that the strongest

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1. McGovern, op. cit., p. 463

2. Ibid., p. 474



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nation and the upper strata of a given society are also the best and therefore have every moral right to exercise undelegated and irresponsible power over their lesser fellows. Moreover, the "rights of man" are not inherent; they are derivative and they are derived from the state. In Gumplowicz's own words, "That man is a free being is pure imagination..... The premises of 'inalienable human rights' rest upon the most unreasonable self-deification of man and overestimate of the value of human life, and upon a complete misconception of the only possible existence of the state. This fancied freedom and equality is incompatible with the state and is a complete negation of it."<sup>1</sup> The evaluation of man held by Gumplowicz and his doctrine is so obvious that it needs no comment.

The fact that the one time powerful Mussolini "sometimes played with the idea" of turning Italy into a giant eugenic laboratory reminds us of the importance of the role played by the eugenists and racialists in the development of the Fascist ideology. For our purpose, however, we need only state their basic position and name the leading exponents. The eugenists claim that superiority and inferiority are innate and

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 1. Gumplowicz, Outlines of Sociology, p. 180, Quoted in McGovern, op. cit. p. 480

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hereditary. The racialists agree and go further. They claim that not only are certain family stocks better than others but also that some human races are infinitely superior to other human races. Control and domination of inferior races thus becomes a moral duty.

One of the most outstanding racialists was Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a renegade Englishman, who made Germany his actual and spiritual home. It was a cardinal conviction with him that a man's race and his ability and quality were intimately related. Is not all history "there to show us how personality and race are most closely connected, how the nature of the personality is determined by the nature of its race, and the power of the personality dependent upon certain conditions of its blood?"<sup>1</sup> The whites are, of course, the superior race -- far surpassing the yellow and black races -- and the Teutonic branch of the race is the very peak of civilization's advance. Another leading apostle of racism, Karl Pearson, says in effect the same: "History shows me one way and one way only in which a high civilization has been

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1. Chamberlain, H. S., The Foundation of the Nineteenth Century, Dodd, Mead and Co., p. 260.

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produced, namely in the struggle of race with race, and the survival of the physically and mentally fitter races." <sup>1</sup> Even a scant perusal of the writings of such advocates of racial inequality as Stoddard, Galton, Gunther and Gobineau, throws the social and political implications of their doctrines of inequality into clear relief. Stoddard, for example, emphasizes that the very preservation of civilization is dependent upon the banding together of the superior groups in order to keep the inferior people in the places destiny has decreed for them.

From this brief survey and digression it has become clear that Social Darwinism has been a principal strand in the weaving of the Fascist and Nazi ideology. The science of the Darwinists may now be "bad science," but the political philosophy generated by their conception of the nature of man is still rampant in all its destructive fury. Nor can it help but be destructive. Social Darwinism, in all its forms, is based fundamentally on the naturalistic conception that man is to be interpreted and understood by his sub-rational vitalities. Naturalism can never fully

1. Pearson, K., National Life From the Standpoint of Science, Cambridge Univ. Press, p. 20

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appreciate the fact that man is a being who is capable of transcending both nature and himself and that there is no pure nature in man; that the human self is capable of modifying, sublimating and directing all his sub-rational vitalities. Moreover, such a viewpoint allows for no other destiny but death and annihilation. Now if I have no other destiny than to be born, create, procreate and to die, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, what rational reason is there why I should not exercise irresponsible power over my fellows? All talk of the good of the social group and so forth ceases to be impressive, for such a being would, quite logically, as naturalists do, conceive the good as being subjective, that is, as being whatsoever satisfies my appetite and desires, chief among which is the lust for power. This natural inclination toward political despotism lurking in all naturalistic doctrines of man is further aggravated by the sense of insecurity which is brought about by a doctrine which does not satisfy a man who is driven by his nature to transcend the natural. The subtle working of the frustration which follows when a need has been inadequately met, always seeks a substitution in some form of tyranny. This is an area of study to which it would appear the serious study it merits has

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not been given. The reason may be that those capable of it, by virtue of having the requisite psychological training to do the work, have had their methods warped and insights vitiated by an inadequate view of man themselves. In short, the fruits of much modern psychology have been barren because many psychologists proceed on an uncritical acceptance of the outmoded metaphysics of Darwinism.

However that may be, we must seek elsewhere for an interpretation of man which will be, with naturalism, realistic enough to do justice to the organic cohesions of life, but which will be, unlike naturalism, strong enough to maintain the individual against the pressures of history and nature.

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The Christian Doctrine of Man

Man is a being who is as strangely, as he is wonderfully made. He is a creature existing at the juncture of mind and matter; a curious compound of nature and spirit. He is at one with the animals in that he is involved in the limitations and necessities of nature and history, yet, unlike other animals, he is able to transcend and transmute the limitations and necessities of history and nature. "Man is a creature of time and place, whose perspectives and insights are invariably conditioned by his immediate circumstances. But man is not merely the prisoner of time and place. He touches the fringes of the eternal. He is not content to be merely American man, or Chinese man, or bourgeois man, or man of the twentieth century. He wants to be Man. He is not content with his truth. He seeks the truth. His memory spans the ages in order that he may transcend his age. His restless mind seeks to comprehend the meaning of all cultures so that he may not be caught within the limitations of his own."<sup>1</sup> Man, like other creatures, shares with nature his finite and dependent existence; man shares with God, his

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1. Niebuhr, Reinhold, Beyond Tragedy, Scribner's, 1937, p. 28-29.

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reason and freedom and hence a measure of self transcendence. We have seen that modern man, in following the lead of Naturalism or Idealism, fails to do justice to man's complicated nature. The assumptions upon which both philosophies are based are too narrow and restricted to comprehend the unity of mind and nature, of freedom and necessity, that is present in the actual life of man. Either the height of and capacity for human self-transcendence, or the organic unity between man's spirit and his physical life, is not fully appreciated. The ensuing result of an insufficiently realistic estimate of man is, as we have observed, to dissipate the basis for a true individualism and thus to corrode the foundations of a free society of men. The Christian doctrine of Man thus becomes urgently relevant to all serious, contemporary thought.

It is precisely because the Christian doctrine tries to do justice to the complex nature of man that it is often very difficult either to comprehend fully or to state clearly. And still more difficult is the problem of stating the Christian doctrine of man on the premise that truthful statement must conform to all the principles of logic. Our effort is not that of examining the Christian doctrine of Man in all its facets; rather the endeavor will be that of showing the

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appreciation of the Christian for the whole man; man as a finite creature, and as a sinner, yet as a being made in the image of God, a child of the Father. In short, instead of a meticulous discussion of details we will keep before us in as bold an outline as possible the Christian viewpoint as to the more critical facts of man's nature and the social consequences which stem from such a view. As before, so here, the principle of integration will be given precedence over that of detailed study. Our aim is essentially one of interpretation. Our attention will thus be focused on the doctrines of man as creature, man as sinner and man as a child of God. Inasmuch as the last two have bulked the largest in Christian theology and preaching, they will be emphasized; and inasmuch as the doctrine of man as sinner is the source of the greatest confusion at the present time, it will be given the most detailed study.

### Man as Creature

Throughout the Bible, the fact that man is a finite creature, dependent upon God for his very existence, is emphasized. Nothing is more typical of the Old Testament than, "All flesh is grass and all the goodliness



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thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth....but the word of our God shall stand forever." Jesus, too, affirmed this dependence of man, by comparing it to the dependence of that of the lower creation: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" (Matt. 6:27) The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, following the Psalmist, most strikingly throws into juxtaposition the infinite and eternal God with His finite and mortal creation: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands; they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." (Hebrews 1:10-12; Psalm 102). Endless Biblical passages could be cited to reveal the same position. The point is clear: the obvious fact that man is a finite and dependent creature is the starting-point for the Biblical and Christian estimate of man. A fact which, however obvious, the forces of modern urbanity have tended to obscure. Simple and obvious as the finite creatureliness of man may be, this fact has been a permanent source of confusion in the thought of the ages. The reason for this is that it raises a thoughtful question

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and prompts the most subtle of misunderstandings.

The question raised is whether or not finiteness is the source and cause of evil and sin. The subtlety of the question is obvious to any-one who thoughtfully listens to theological discussions (or discussions on any human subject) in which there is a carelessness about noting and observing fine distinctions. The tenacity with which dualism and mysticism maintain their hold upon the religious thinking of man has greatly increased the perplexity and difficulty of the problem of the relationship between finiteness and evil, creatureliness and sin.

The Christian view, however, is securely based in the conviction that man and his world are not evil or sinful by reason of finiteness. "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). However, "It must be admitted that sometimes the authority of this simple dictum in Genesis was all that prevented Christian faith from succumbing to dualistic and acosmic doctrines which pressed in upon the Christian church. Nevertheless Christianity has never been completely without some understanding of the genius of its own faith that the world is not evil because it is temporal, that the body is not the source of sin in man, that individuality

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as separate and particular existence is not evil by reason of being distinguished from undifferentiated totality and that death is no evil though it is an occasion for evil, namely the fear of death."<sup>1</sup>

Wherever the influence of Hellenism has been strong in Christianity we see the progressive importance of the idea that human sin is due to finiteness. Origen, for example, combined Platonism with Christianity in such a manner as to interpret the punishment of the Fall as involvement in mutability and finiteness. Clement defined sin as the weakness of matter. And Gregory believed that our love of pleasure took its beginning from our being made like to the irrational creation.<sup>2</sup> That human finiteness is the source of all evil was the fundamental idea of one of the earliest and most dangerous heresies -- Gnosticism. We are not concerned here with the bewildering complexity of Gnostic cosmology, on the one hand, or the subtle problems of the origin of the Gnostic movement in religious syncretism, on the other. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that Gnosticism was a dualistic,

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1. Niebuhr, R., The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. 1, p. 167.

2. See Gregory of Nyssa, On the Making of Man, in The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. V, pp. 387-428.

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"gnosis" philosophy applied to the moral problems of human life as a practical gospel. It was a serious attempt to explain the felt opposition of body and soul and to save the soul by delivering it from the slavery of the body. Redemption was to be achieved by a separation of spirit from matter; and matter was a substance to be destroyed rather than to be used or transformed. This position was instinctively opposed by the Church, which rightly felt that her historic faith could not be drawn into this dualistic circle without ceasing to be a Christian gospel. The instinct of the Church was sound, that what God has joined together, no man should put asunder; and although the ascetic practices of the Christian Church and some features of Christian mysticism are to be regarded as a partial surrender to a false view of the body, this early triumph over the Gnostic heresy was of such significance that we may say with assurance that had she lost the struggle, Christianity would have suffered the fate of the Mystery religions.

The Christian Church faced shortly another challenge from Manichaeism, which was based on the old Persian dualism, with other added features. Again the Church rightly sensed that the very nerve of its gospel was being cut by Mani's introduction of a naturalistic

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basis for moral distinction, in that his movement presented evil as an attribute of nature rather than as a product of freedom.

Although Augustine's thought was often vitiated by Neo-Platonic assumptions, he had a deep appreciation of the Christian conception of man as a finite creature. Man is dependent. That fact is emphasized categorically by Augustine, but the dependence and finiteness of man is not the source of evil or sin. The created world is God's world, and is therefore good, or at least not the cause of evil. As Augustine puts it in his *Confessions*: "And what is this? I asked the earth and it answered me 'I am not He'; and whatsoever are in it confessed the same. I asked the sea and the deeps and the living creeping things, and they answered: 'We are not God, seek above us'.....I asked the sun, moon, stars. 'Nor (say they) are we the God whom thou seekest'. And I replied to all things that encompass the door of my flesh: 'Ye have told me of my God that ye are not He; tell me something of Him'. And they cried with a loud voice: 'He made us'.....I asked the whole frame of the world about my God: and it answered me 'I am not He but He made me.'"<sup>1</sup>

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1. Augustine, Confessions, Book X, par. 9.

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As Augustine rightly perceived, the Christian doctrine contrasts the dependence and insufficiency of the created world and the freedom and self-sufficiency of God. Nevertheless, although the finiteness of man is emphasized, it is not deprecated. Finiteness is never a corruption of an original unity and eternity as in Neo-Platonism; nor is it evil because of the desire, pain and inconvenience which are a permanent feature of dependent finite existence, as in Buddhism. "The whole import of the Christian doctrine of creation for the Christian view of man is really comprehended in the Christian concept of individuality. The individual is conceived of as a creature of infinite possibilities which cannot be fulfilled within terms of this temporal existence. But his salvation never means the complete destruction of his creatureliness and absorption into the divine. On the other hand, though finite individuality is never regarded as of itself evil, its finiteness, including the finiteness of the mind, is never obscured. The self, even in the highest reaches of its self-consciousness is still the finite self, which must regard the pretensions of universality, to which idealistic philosophies for instance tempt it, as a sin."<sup>1</sup>

1. Niebuhr, R., op. cit., p. 170

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Man is a being at the juncture of the necessities of nature and the freedom of spirit. He is finite, but a finite creature that has a perspective on the eternal. His is an ambiguous position. The ambiguity caused by his position in the scheme of things is not, according to the Christian view, the cause or source of sin. But it is, we contend, the occasion for his sin. For there is temptation in this position of being both finite and free. Man is mortal. That is his fate. He is tempted by his freedom to pretend that he is not mortal. That is his sin (pride). And conversely, man is free. That too is his fate. He is tempted by his limitations to hide his freedom and lose himself in the vitalities of life. That is his sin (sensuality). His position is an anxious position. As Niebuhr has observed, the whole genius of the Biblical view of the relation of finiteness to sin is summed up in the injunction of Jesus, "Therefore I say unto you be not anxious." "It is not his finiteness, dependence and weakness but his anxiety about it which tempts him to sin." Finiteness then is not the source of evil, the cause of sin, but the fact that man exists in an ambiguous relationship between finiteness and freedom is the occasion, while

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1. Niebuhr, R., op. cit., p. 168

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not the cause, for sin. To the problem of man the sinner we now turn.

Man as Sinner

Of all the problems of Christian theology, there is none more tangled than the issue of human sin. The subject, by its very nature, presents grave logical problems and has been a permanent source of controversy throughout the ages. The contemporary scene has further complicated the problem, inasmuch as the instability of the time has contributed to the splitting into a thousand fragments of our intellectual centre. Modern liberal theology and preaching has tended to emphasize the "sacredness of human personality" and "the divinity of man" to the point that both the problem and the issue of sin have been obscured. European theologians, caught in the maelstrom of the cruel events of a nihilistic revolution, regarded liberalism in all its forms as an anaemic creed. Quickly they seized on the weakness of liberal theology and debunked the liberal creed as one impotent in the face of the facts of life. Everywhere about them they saw how the demonic was part of the creative and how readily the demonic could become



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 satanic. The spirit of man, they were forced to realize, could be such a diabolical thing that it was almost cruel mockery to speak of his divinity. The voice of Karl Barth was raised in Germany and travelled speedily around the world. Man is a sinner. That is the signature of his nature. He is a debased being; a creature destitute and lost. In humanistic, optimistic America, where human aspiration and hope themselves were stamped as sacred, such an extreme cry could only fall on unresponsive ears. But what Barth's unaided voice could not do, the onrushing events of the world achieved. The perilous posture of the world's affairs jarred American theologians to pick up Barth once more. Reinhold Niebuhr's prestige grew greater, and Professor Horton wrote Theology in Transition. The very word liberalism fell into distaste and was replaced by that ever magic word, "realism." Many tired thinkers, anxious to give up the struggle, climbed into the Barthian fold, only to find that their leader was not a tired man at all, but a vital exile. The Realist movement spreads, while Knudson, Brightman et al keep trying to convince a confused and discon-

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1. For a profound exposition and analysis of the meaning of the demonic in human nature and history see Paul Tillich's chapter on the demonic in his The Interpretation of History.

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certed public that the cause of liberalism is not yet dead. There is left but little basis for common thought, with the result that the sensitive thinker is forced, as never before, to think for himself. For the urgency of the time which has motivated the rise and spread of theological camps betrays the fact that there is finality in none of them. Modern theological thought, of every stripe, is too obviously nervously argumentative to be uncritically accepted. And the argument has been centred on the Christian doctrine of man and particularly on the subject of his sin. Into this tangled web we go.

We must recall the Christian view of finiteness. Our position is that sin does not root in finiteness, but that the ambiguity of man's finiteness as a compound of freedom and necessity, of nature and spirit, is the occasion for sin. That our Creator must take the responsibility for the occasion of sin must, it seems to me, be conceded. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the ambiguity of man's position which would, on a priori grounds at least, render it necessary that he should sin. The responsibility, then, for sin itself rests on man rather than on God. But the human situation is such as to prompt man to be anxious about his position and anxiety is the beginning of sin. God is responsible for the

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situation but it is man that becomes anxious about it and who thus becomes responsible for sin. We are thus already on the threshold of the myth of the Fall and the doctrine of Original Sin. Obviously, it is going to be most difficult to fathom the meaning of this doctrine without becoming hopelessly illogical on the one hand and without obscuring factors in Man's moral experience on the other.

Let us begin by saying that the myth of the Fall is not to be considered as an event of history which corrupted forever an original perfection. "Whenever orthodoxy insists upon the literal truth of such myths it makes a bad historical science out of true religious insights. It fails to distinguish between what is primitive and what is permanent, what is pre-scientific and what is supra-scientific in great myths." Or again more positively, "The relation of man's essential nature to his sinful state cannot be solved within terms of the Chronological version of the perfection before the Fall. It is, as it were, a vertical rather than horizontal relation. When the Fall is made an event in

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1. Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Truth in Myths, essay in The Nature of Religious Experience, (ed) Bixler, J. S., and others, Harper's, 1937, p. 124

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history rather than a symbol of an aspect of every historical moment in the life of man, the relation of evil to goodness in that moment is obscured." <sup>1</sup> The only real value that a construing of the Fall as an event may have would be that of underlining the fact of the universalism of sin throughout the history of man. It may have the further value of reminding us that the social institutions of man have been reared by a sinning being which further complicates the problem. The doctrine of Original Sin is thus not to be construed as an inherited defect in his nature or a bias toward evil, but rather an inability to appreciate or an unwillingness to accept his position, aggravated by the weight of the historical past which makes it inevitable that he should sin. This is the only way that I can see of holding the universalism of sin and the responsibility for it, together. There is an empirical inevitability, but not an a priori one. And although there is a verbal defiance of the vocabulary of logic here, I cannot see that the principles of reason are violated. "Original sin, which is by definition an inherited corruption, or at least an

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1. Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. 1, p. 269.

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inevitable one, is nevertheless not to be regarded as belonging to his essential nature and therefore is not outside the realm of responsibility. Sin is natural for man in the sense that it is universal but not in the sense that it is necessary.<sup>1</sup> The defect lies rather, we submit, in his will, which is tempted to sin and error by the human situation and which in the face of all the circumstances of the human situation, aggravated by history, is unable to overcome all temptations. He is thus in need of a Saviour as well as a Teacher. This position, it is hoped, will become clearer and more convincing as we study the nature of sin itself and meet theories opposed to the one submitted here.

As has been previously suggested, the precondition of sin is man's anxiety prompted by his position as both a finite and free being. His position prompts him to deny the contingent character of his existence and to gain some security by pretending to be what he is not and thus to commit the sin of pride which Christianity has always conceived as being the basic sin. Or he is prompted to avoid the responsibilities of his freedom by devoting himself to limited values and thus give

1. Niebuhr, R., op. cit., p. 242

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himself over to natural vitalities directed toward a spiritually corrupted end and commit the sin of sensuality. Both pride and sensuality are often closely and inextricably intertwined. "When anxiety has conceived it brings forth both pride and sensuality. Man falls into pride, when he seeks to raise his contingent existence to unconditioned significance; he falls into sensuality, when he seeks to escape from his unlimited possibilities of freedom, from the perils and responsibilities of self determination, by immersing himself into a 'mutable good', by losing himself in some natural vitality."<sup>1</sup>

The first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans is much more than an explosion of vitriolic rhetoric from a man fired by righteous indignation. There is the most penetrating religious insight. In a few bold words rushing from the tough and wrestling mind of Paul we have the very essence and summation of the Biblical doctrine of sin: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the

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1. Niebuhr, R.1 op. cit., p. 186.

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uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."<sup>1</sup>

First the sin of pride which is followed and further aggravated by the sin of sensuality, is the penetrating insight of this passage. Basically, the sin against which Paul rages is "a pride of power in which the human ego assumes its self-sufficiency and self-mastery and imagines itself secure against all vicissitudes. It does not recognize the contingent and dependent character of its life and believes itself to be the author of its own existence, the judge of its own values and the master of its own destiny."<sup>2</sup> It is the sin of all humanistic, bourgeois societies as well as that of aristocratic circles.

One suspects, however, that the pride of power is more often motivated by a subtly conscious realization

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1. Romans I:21-25

2. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 188

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of insecurity. Particularly is this true of contemporary society, for obvious, and many not so obvious, reasons. The pride in power, when motivated by some realization of a basic insecurity, is quickly turned into a lust for power as an end in itself. The insecurity, economic, social and psychic, of our day has made this a common and terrifying phenomenon. Niebuhr has made an incisive comment on a social manifestation of these two types of pride that is worth repeating. He says, in a footnote: "In modern international life Great Britain with its too strong a sense of security, which prevented it from taking proper measures of defense in time, and Germany with its maniacal will-to-power, are perfect symbols of the different forms which pride takes among the established and the advancing social forces. The inner stability and external security of Great Britain has been of such long duration that she may be said to have committed the sin of Babylon and declared, 'I shall be no widow and I shall never know sorrow.' Germany on the other hand suffered from an accentuated form of inferiority long before her defeat in the World War. Her boundless contemporary self-assertion which literally transgresses all bounds previously known in religion, culture and law is a very accentuated form of the power impulse which betrays a



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marked inner insecurity."<sup>1</sup> But how common is this sin in personal life! It is the sin of everyman who, feeling himself to be insecure, seeks sufficient power to establish his security and in the process tramples in some form or other on the lives of his fellows. Here lies the motivation of most gossip and petty criticism. It is an attempt on the part of one to make himself secure by belittling and adversely criticizing those whom he suspects are more secure or more highly esteemed than he is. Most sensuality, particularly of a sexual nature, betrays the same inner insecurity. Most sexual promiscuity is motivated by the desire to make oneself appear strong in one's own eyes by the method of conquest and in the process to display to at least one other evidence of the strength and security which he is so feverishly trying to attain. Whether we consider nations attempting to assert world domination by deceiving themselves by a cult of innate superiority, or a youth rushing from one night club to another for the purpose of displaying to himself and others a true security and strength he does not possess, or a preacher or statesman somewhat nervously relating the work that he has done in order to convince someone who he feels suspects him of not having performed what he should have performed, or

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1. Ibid., p. 189

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an old gossip draped over the back fence generating fictitious tales in order that he might more readily thank God that he is not as other men are, we see that, "The will-to-power is thus an expression of insecurity even when it has achieved ends which, from the perspective of an ordinary mortal, would seem to guarantee complete security. The fact that human ambitions know no limits must therefore be attributed not merely to the infinite capacities of human imagination but to an uneasy recognition of man's finiteness, weakness and dependence, which become the more apparent when we seek to obscure them, and which generate ultimate perils, the more immediate insecurities are eliminated. Thus man seeks to make himself God because he is betrayed by both his greatness and his weakness; and there is no level of greatness and power in which the lash of fear is not at least one strand in the whip of ambition."<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's Macbeth has a sociological relevance for contemporary society that is rarely dreamed of.

The fact that Pharisaism was a special object of the indignation of Jesus, serves to remind us that it is another manifestation, albeit a sublimated form, of

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1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 194.

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human pride. Pharisaism assumes innumerable forms corresponding to every walk and enterprise of life. However, in this day of propaganda it is of particular importance that we remind ourselves that knowledge is rarely sought for itself alone. Knowledge is power. And the possession of knowledge is nearly always tainted with intellectual pride. This pride in knowledge often becomes the besetting sin of instructors and authors. It extends, moreover, far beyond the professional academic. The material and scientific triumphs of the past century have tempted us to assume this form of pride, almost universally. What could better express the intellectual pride of a generation that was so ignorant as to naively believe that business executives were the very oracles of wisdom, than this aphorism of America's Ed. Howe: "Select the wisest and best man in your community, and he knows more than Adam Smith.....Did Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Whitman, or Buddha, or Tolstoy, or Confucius, or Rousseau ever teach you as important lessons as you learned from your parents, from your worthy and intelligent neighbors, from the leading men of practical affairs in your own country and age?"<sup>1</sup> There is something very ironic about such

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1. Quoted in Luccock, American Mirror, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1940, p. 7-8

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genuflexion in the temple of Business whose priests had so happily emancipated modern man from the ignorance that blinded our unfortunate ancestors! Whether it be the wisdom of a Calvin Coolidge to the effect that "the business of America is business," or the pontifical statements of some pale academic or columnist, we have the sin of pride issuing in the will-to-power. Human knowledge is finite; it is gained from a particular perspective. But it pretends to be final, that is, it pretends to be what it is not. And this is the sin of pride. "Intellectual pride is thus the pride of reason which forgets that it is involved in a temporal process and imagines itself in complete transcendence over<sup>1</sup> History."

That Jesus was ever so critical of the righteous and habitually showed compassion for and cultivated friendships with the "publicans and sinners" reminds us that moral pride was the object of his severest strictures. Moral pride is in essence the pretension that our relative standards and conditioned virtues are absolute. Inasmuch as we judge ourselves by our own standards we find ourselves good. When we judge others by our own opinionated standards, to the degree

1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 195

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that they do not conform to ours, we find them evil. We find them evil, rather than different, because we tend to assume that our standards are God's standards. This is the secret of the relationship between self-righteousness and cruelty. The history of bigotry and inquisitions revolves about this issue of moral pride. And although one does not wish to join the ranks of those who, when they have called a thing "puritan" or "puritanical," naively believe that it is ipso facto damned, it must be recognized that there is this tendency within Puritanism. The moment people cease to be Puritans and become merely puritanical, the rot of self righteousness has set in and the impulse toward cruelty is given full leash. We often note the mental cruelty that is so readily inflicted by narrow, bigoted Protestants on, for example, one of their members who marries outside the restricted boundaries of the sect. The moment the self makes its own virtues absolute, mistakes its own standards for God's standards, it becomes natural to attribute the very essence of evil to non-conformists. This is not to say that we should not develop our powers of moral discrimination to the highest possible degree. Nor does it mean that we should hesitate to make moral

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judgments every waking moment. That we must do. It does say, however, that we will judge in a spirit of humility and penitence, because the standard of Christ is something other than our own individual judgments and standards. Only in this spirit can we achieve a high degree of moral discrimination without succumbing to moral pride. For moral pride is the assumption that "my good" is "the good" without always bringing the searchlight of the Gospel to bear on "my good," As St. Paul so perfectly put it, "For I bear them record that they have the zeal of God but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto<sup>1</sup> the righteousness of God." Implicit in this sentence is the process by which moral pride issues in spiritual pride. We cease to regard ourselves as sinners and rightly under the judgment of God, and claim Him rather as the exclusive ally of our contingent selves. This is the ultimate sin of which Kraemer complains when he says, "What goes by the name of 'religion' in the modern world is to a great extent unbridled human self-

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1. Romans, 10:2-3.

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assertion in religious guise."<sup>1</sup> "Christianity," says Niebuhr, "rightly regards itself as a religion, not so much of man's search for God, in the process of which he may make himself God: but as a religion of revelation in which a holy and loving God is revealed to man as the source and end of all finite existence against whom the self-will of man is shattered and his pride abased. But as soon as the Christian assumes that he is, by virtue of possessing this revelation, more righteous, because more contrite, than other men, he increases the sin of self-righteousness and makes the form of a religion of contrition the tool of his pride."<sup>2</sup>

Sensuality is so obviously anarchic in character that we often tend to regard it as a phenomenon apart from the motivations that enter into selfishness and the sin of pride. Yet all that has been said above in relation to the sin of pride has its application in any consideration of sensuality. Indeed the whole Pauline tradition regards sensuality as a consequence of the more basic sin of pride and self-deification.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine, following Paul, assumed the same position:

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1. Kraemer, H., The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, Harper's, 1938, p. 212.

2. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 201

3. See Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly Chapter 1.

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"We should therefore wrong our Creator in imputing our vices to our flesh: the flesh is good, but to leave the Creator and live according to this created good is mischief."<sup>1</sup> There is much implied in this position. Sensuality is the result of a violation of man's freedom and not the result of purely animal impulses. Christian theology has not consistently held this position and we may profitably digress for a moment to look at rival theories within the faith.

Christian theology was, as might have been expected, greatly influenced by the theory of evolution. The genius of Darwin was destined to affect every realm of speculation. When evolutionism came to deal with the problem of sin, it inclined to exclude any possible discontinuity between man and brute. The result has been the Brute Inheritance view as represented in theology by Pfleiderer in Germany and Dr. Tennant in England. Evolutionism declares that the aim and function of morality is to

"Move upward, working out the beast

And let the ape and tiger die."

Not that the Brute Inheritance, or animal impulses, are to be regarded as in themselves evil. They are non-moral.

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1. Augustine, De Civ Dei, Book XIV, Ch. V.



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Sin is the failure to moralize this non-moral material. "The most clamorous passion which invites to sensual indulgence is just as little to be described as evil in itself as the sublime work of art which may goad a man to extravagance and debt. It is equally non-moral and indifferent.....It is the deliberate refusal to reject the impulse, the wilful surrender of the government of conduct to the non-moralized sensibility, in which evil takes its rise." <sup>1</sup> The weakness of this position is most apparent in our time. There is no recognition here of the diabolical evil to which the human spirit may be turned. Sin is not merely a failure to moralize the raw material of our animal natures; it is rather a corruption of spirit. The devilish deeds performed in Polish towns are a crying witness to this fact. Such evil is not the mere hangover of the brute; it is a contribution of the human spirit. The fact is, as has been previously observed, that there is no pure animal raw material in man. Man is a compound of nature and spirit and not a simple two-storey apartment. A much more fruitful approach is that of regarding sensuality as a derivative of the more primal sin of self-

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1. Tennant, F.R., The Origin and Propagation of Sin, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1908, p. 104. Although Tennant's naturalistic bias makes his position unsatisfactory, Niebuhr's dismissal of him as a modern Pelagian is flippant and altogether unjust.

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love, which is essentially the Christian position.

Although Christian theology has in the main (excepting the extreme Hellenistic and naturalistic emphases) held this position, its psychological analysis of the relationship between sensuality and pride has never been precise. It is never clear whether sensuality is to be regarded as an extension of self-love to the point where it defeats its own purposes or whether it is a flight from the self. "Is sensuality, in other words, a form of idolatry which makes the self god; or is it an alternative idolatry in which the self, conscious of the inadequacy of its self<sup>1</sup> worship, seeks escape by finding some other god?" It may be either, or more likely, both. "Luxurious and extravagant living, the gratification of various sensual desires without limit, is on the one hand a form of self-love.....But sometimes luxurious living is not so much an advertisement of the ego's pride or even a simple and soft acquiescence with the various impulses of the physical life, as it is a frantic effort to escape from self. It betrays an uneasy conscience. The self is seeking to escape from itself and throws itself into any pursuit which will allow it

1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 233.

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to forget for a moment the inner tension of an uneasy conscience." <sup>1</sup> Thus drunkenness may be motivated by the desire to produce a sense of power which normal life does not give or it may, on the other hand, be the method by which self makes its escape. <sup>2</sup> The same is true of sexual promiscuity. It is often followed for the purpose of making oneself appear strong by becoming a conqueror, or, on the other hand, it may be motivated by a wild inner confusion that seeks an elimination of tension in debauchery. "This is what gives man's sex life the quality of uneasiness. It is both a vehicle of the primal sin of self-deification, and the expression of an uneasy conscience, seeking to escape from self by the deification of another." <sup>3</sup>

Whether our attention is centred on the sin of pride or sensuality, we see clearly the logic of sin. Man stands in an ambiguous position. Anxiety about his position tempts him to sin. The sin increases and aggravates the very insecurity which it was intended to alleviate until some escape from the whole tension of life is sought, the tension which is the very

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1. Ibid., p. 234

2. See Karl Menninger's discussions of Drunkenness in Man Against Himself.

3. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 237

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signature of his nature.

Imago Dei.

Although man is constantly tempted to the sin of idolatry and constantly succumbs to the temptation, it is precisely those qualities in him which are designated as "the image of God" that keep him from being satisfied with a god who is made in the image of man. It is obviously difficult to state with precision the endowments or faculties of man that are considered to constitute "the image of God." The Biblical doctrine is never given any real psychological elaboration in the Bible; nor is the method of consistently making careful psychological distinctions adopted.

The Christian conception of man is rooted in the Hebraic refusal to divide the human personality into different, closed, compartments. "The Hebrew conception of personality on its psychological side," says Robinson, "is distinctly that of a unity, not of a dualistic union of soul (or spirit) and body. It is true that we have two principal terms (nephesh and ruach) to denote the lower and higher levels of the inner life respectively, whilst various physical organs, together with a psychological conception of 'flesh', denote by their usage the more outward and visible aspects of human personality.

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But our study of these terms has shown the impossibility of dissecting the conception into 'soul' (or spirit) and 'body'. Man is what he is by the union of certain quasi-physical principles of life with certain physical organs, psychically conceived; separate them and you are left not with either soul or body in our sense but with impersonal energies on the one hand, and with disjecta membra on the other."<sup>1</sup> Or, "The Biblical psychology, minus the Genesis doctrine of the image of God in man, does not therefore lay the full foundation for the subsequent Christian view of man but it does fit into the general outline of subsequent emphases by not making too sharp a distinction between body and soul and between soul and spirit, and by not defining spirit in terms of such sharp intellectualistic connotations as are found in Greek philosophy. The Hebraic sense of the unity of body and soul is not destroyed while, on the other hand, spirit is conceived of as primarily a capacity for and affinity with the divine."<sup>2</sup>

Although it must be admitted that this Hebraic emphasis upon the unity of the human personality has

1. Robinson, H.W., The Christian Doctrine of Man, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1911, p. 69

2. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 152

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made it most difficult, if not impossible, to make a concise definition of the "image of God" in man, it has served to maintain the Christian faith against dualistic explanations of moral evil and to hold in true balance the doctrine of man as a child of God and as a creature, as a being involved in the necessities of nature yet possessing the freedom of self-transcendence. In a sense, the Hebrew forsook the Greek demand for clarity of distinction for the sake of holding the fulness of truth.

Inasmuch as Patristic theology was under the influence of Platonism, it was quite natural for its exegesis to emphasize man's rationality and freedom as the central constituents of his kinship with and likeness to God. In the words of Justin: "In the beginning He made the human race with the power of thought and of choosing the truth and doing right, so that all men are without excuse before God; for they have been born rational and contemplative."<sup>1</sup> The same emphasis is to be found in Gregory of Nyssa's works, particularly in On the Making of Man and The Soul and the Resurrection. "For that which is 'made in the image' of the Deity necessarily possesses a likeness to its prototype in

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1. Apol. I.28, Quoted in Robinson, op. cit., p. 164

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every respect. It resembles it in being intellectual, immaterial, unconnected with any notion of weight, and in eluding any measurement of its dimensions; yet as regards its own peculiar nature it is something different from that other."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to argue in true Platonic fashion and style (the very words are Platonic) that the mind is not the same as God. It is an image, not something identical with the Prototype. "It will regard this essence of the Mind as an object of thought only, since it is the 'image' of an Existence.....but it will not pronounce this image to be identical with the prototype."<sup>2</sup> Although Gregory retained the Platonic view of the soul's essential independence of the body, he also retains something of the Biblical emphasis on the unity of the personality by making the body itself spiritual through the working of the Mind. His thinking at this point appears to have been somewhat confused.

Augustine likewise was much influenced by Platonic or Neo-Platonic assumptions. "We must find," he says, "in the soul of man, i.e. the rational or intellectual soul, that image of the Creator which is imortally im-

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1. Gregory of Nyssa, On the Soul and Resurrection, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. V, p. 436-437.

2. Ibid., p. 437

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planted in its immortality."<sup>1</sup> But it must be observed that Augustine meant by "the rational or intellectual soul" something more than the capacity for discursive reasoning or the ability to form concepts and argue from premises. Augustine was primarily interested in the power of transcendence which he observed in man. He concluded that this fact placed man so much outside of everything else that he can find a home only in God.

Modern liberal theology has not deviated far in its conception of the "image of God" except that the intervening centuries have tended to cloak its expression in more dynamic terms. "In the capacities of the human spirit," says Clarke, "is found the image or likeness of God, the biblical suggestion of which has been so fruitful in Christian thought. The constitution of man as a spirit is like that of God as a spirit. The qualities that distinguish man from other beings on earth are in some true sense qualities that he shares with God. In his measure, he differs from the creation below him as God does. His body is akin to the material universe, and bears the likeness of terrestrial organization, but his spirit is akin to

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1. Augustine, De Trin. XIV.4., Quoted in Robinson, op. cit., p. 165.



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the eternal creative Spirit, and bears the likeness of God."<sup>1</sup> Like most contemporary liberal theology, its fault lies in its smug, smooth expression. The Hebrew emphasis on the whole range of spiritual forces making for integration is retained, but without the ruggedness of Hebrew thought. There is not a sufficient wrestling with the question of whether "the image of God" means a similarity in constitution or a capacity that makes for orientation towards God. Is God's image in man like that of George VI on a piece of silver, or is there a dynamic quality within the image that makes for a real relationship between it and the Original? One hesitates to use the word instinct, but there is obviously a religious capacity in man that is something other than his rational faculty. The Biblical conception of "the image of God" has influenced Christian thought, particularly since Augustine, to interpret human nature in terms which, to be sure, include his rational capacities, but which suggest something beyond them. The "image of God" in man then, we suggest, is a capacity of man for a living relationship with God, made possible by

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1. Clarke, W.N., An Outline of Christian Theology, Scribner's, 1911, p. 191.

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the right integration of his spiritual capacities of reason, emotion, will and worship with which he has been endowed by God. Both the fact of constitution and the inclination to orientation must be included in the conception.

Standard texts on systematic theology invariably insist, with considerable justification, on treating the subject of immortality as part of the Christian doctrine of man. Nevertheless, it is a deceiving practice. Any discussion of immortality is profitable only when it is conceived as the outgrowth of the Christian doctrine of God and the Christian Weltanschauung or view of the nature and purpose of the world, as well as the Christian doctrine of Man. Herein, I believe, lies the reason why most discussions on immortality within a chapter on the Christian doctrine of man are, no matter how wordy, 'stale, flat and unprofitable.' The subject of immortality is but a part of the larger issue of the Christian interpretation of the meaning and fulfillment of history. The Christian interpretation of history is the integration or synthesis of the dogmatic philosophy which has been empirically developed from the focal points of Man, God, the world of things, and Christ. In short, the Christian's faith

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in immortality is the result of its being a part of the synthesis rather than a necessary fact about man. Man's capacity for self-transcendence may be the fact in which our faith in immortality is rooted, but without the Christian concept of God and the quality of his purpose, there would be no reason to believe that man's ability to transcend self was ipso facto the basis for his immortality. Thus, it is felt that the subject of immortality cannot profitably be considered within the boundaries of this essay. We choose rather to state in a paragraph, without development or elaboration, what this writer believes to be the meaning of the Christian interpretation of history, for the purpose of more clearly drawing the social implications of the Christian estimate of man.

The Christian religion has always contended that there can be no meaning in life unless there is an immediate meaning. But with equal force it has held that there can be no sufficient meaning in immediacy alone. Thus the truths, without the errors, of both Naturalism and Idealism are held in effective balance. The meaning of life cannot be found in a negation of history as with Absolute Idealism and Oriental Mysticism. However, the meaning of history cannot be

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fulfilled within history, as in Naturalism. Meaning is of the quality of an ultimate and anything to be ultimate must transcend what is temporal but not necessarily negate it. History for the Christian is neither in itself the God of redemption (Naturalism and particularly the inevitable progress doctrine of utilitarianism) nor is it a meaningless repetition of cycles (Oriental interpretation). History has meaning, says the Christian, but it has meaning because it has relation to a meaning beyond history.<sup>1</sup> Such an interpretation does justice to the two great facts about man as a being involved in necessity, yet possessing the powers of transcendence; as limited, yet free. The fulfilment of history resides in the purpose of God revealed in Christ. It is only reasonable to believe that the purpose of God has a peculiar relationship to man, the most purposive being of his creation. But such a purpose cannot be fulfilled in man within the limits of history. If man is right in assuming that he plays an important role in the

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1. The wisdom of the mythical idea of the resurrection of the body of early Christianity is here evidenced. The early Christians saw clearly that implicit within the disembodied spirit conception of immortality was a negation of history. The truth of the myth, however, is lost if we fail to understand that a myth is a vehicle for philosophy and not science.

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unfolding of God's purpose, then the fulfilment of it would appear to necessitate some other destiny for man than that of ashes to ashes, dust to dust. For the Christian, this a priori reasoning is given empirical authority in the person of Christ. That such an adventure will not be all bliss may be assumed. Whatever the purpose of life may be, it is not that near fulfilment, if bliss is fulfilment anyway. Beyond this, man walks by faith, for his thought is about "a bourne from which no traveller returns."

That the Christian philosophy and the Christian doctrine of man have contributed greatly to the attitudes and even the technique that have made for the advance of the physical sciences and material progress is a fact that is becoming increasingly recognized. Such a claim is no longer made only by preachers and theologians anxious to draw attention to every possible fact that will support their raison d'etre. Alfred North Whitehead, for example, has emphasized the importance of the belief in a universe ordered by God as one of the foundations of modern physics. And Lewis Mumford, in tracing the development of the machine and the multiple historical origins of our modern machine age, has shown us that modern technics has had centuries

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of cultural preparation, in which not only the pre-suppositions of the Christian faith, but also the habits, manners and customs of the Christian life, have played a most influential role.<sup>1</sup> Professor Flewelling stresses the importance of the religious dynamic for the maintenance of Western civilization, while Professor Hocking traces the relationship between Christian detachment and the development of the scientific spirit. To this end, Professor Borgese calls for a "new theology." "It seems," he writes, "that no anti-Machiavellian movement can become socially effective without a new theology; or, if the word is unwelcome, without a unitary and therefore religious, conception of the world and man."<sup>2</sup> Walter Lippmann writes to the same effect more explicitly in words that seem a bit strange from the author of A Preface to Morals. "The liberties we talk about defending today were established by men who took their conception of man from the great central religious tradition of

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1. For a most fascinating and thorough study of the history of technics, see Mumford: Technics and Civilization; Harcourt and Brace, 1934. He has drawn upon every aspect of social life, religion, art, science philosophy, custom and manners to explain the origin of the machine and to trace its social results.

2. Borgese, The New Republic, December 4, 1938.

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western civilization, and the liberties we inherit can almost certainly not survive the abandonment of that tradition. And so, perhaps the ordeal through which mankind is passing may be necessary. For it may be the only way in which modern man may recover the faith by which free and civilized people must live."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this essay, it has been implied that the Christian doctrine of man is the cornerstone of a functioning democratic society. However, this foundation has been corroded by indifference and by the fact that democracy during almost the whole of its development has been informed by a hedonistic rationalism which lacks the realism of the Christian doctrine and hence cannot be expected to sustain the democratic way of life through succeeding crises.<sup>2</sup>

It is becoming daily more evident that democracy cannot survive if it continues to be informed by the philosophy of "rugged individualism" and the assumptions about man that underlie that philosophy. The presuppositions about man rooted in the rationalistic and

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1. Lippmann, W., Quoted in Luccock, American Mirror, p. 254.

2. Since writing the above paragraph I have read Niebuhr's new book, The Children of Darkness and the Children of Light, Scribner's, 1944, only to find that this thesis has been developed with singular penetration. To this book I am indebted for any sharpening of my "feeling thoughts" on the subject.

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hedonistic philosophy which has guided, and been sustained by, the building of the bourgeois world are no longer adequate to face the realities of the contemporary world. "Bourgeois democracy, as we now have it, was established primarily to give the individual freedom from the traditional cultural, social and political restraints of the feudal-medieval world. The democratic idealists of the eighteenth century did not anticipate any significant tension between the individual and the community, because they failed to gauge the indeterminate vitalities and ambitions which may arise from any centre of life, whether individual or social. They did not fear the peril of anarchy which might arise from individual ambitions, because they estimated the forces of human nature in terms of man's relation to "nature" or to "reason" and thought these were adequate checks upon inordinate ambition in either one or the other. They believed, in short, that men were essentially tame, cool and calculating and that individual egotism did not rise beyond the limits of nature's impulse of self-preservation." <sup>1</sup> Thus bourgeois democracy has always maintained that the powers of government should

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1. Niebuhr, The Children of Darkness and the Children of Light, p. 42-43.



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be only negative, like that of an adjudicator in disputes, or as a policeman. The commotive function of the state, to use Hocking's phrase, was both unnecessary and dangerous. It was unnecessary, because man was conceived as being an essentially harmless creature. It was dangerous, because such a being ought to have unqualified freedom to assert himself. "The survival impulse, which man shares with the animals, is regarded as the normative form of his egoistic drive. If this were a true picture of the human situation, man might be, or might become, as harmless as seventeenth and eighteenth-century thought assumed. Unfortunately for the validity of this picture of man, the most significant distinction between the human and the animal world is that the impulses of the former are "spiritualized" in the human world."<sup>1</sup> Thus both the capacities for evil and for good, for destruction and for creativity, have never been appreciated by the bourgeois estimate of man. In either case, the battle-ground is not that of the animal herd, but the human community and the contestants are armed with powers which have been drawn from the historical and communal process. Men will

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1. Ibid., p. 18

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fight for power and glory as much as they will for bread; a fact which Marxists fail to fully appreciate in their hope that an economy of abundance will readily resolve the tension between the selfish interests of sinful individuals and the welfare of the community. Thus we see that at the beginning of the bourgeois era, which was destined to develop highly collective forms of commercial and industrial wealth, there developed the hedonistic philosophy that man was essentially a rational, wise creature from whom no great harm need be expected. "Utilitarianism's conception of the wise egoist, who in his prudence manages to serve interests wider than his own, supported exactly the same kind of political philosophy as Adam Smith's conception of the harmless egoist, who did not even have to be wise, since the providential laws of nature held his egotism in check. So Jeremy Bentham's influence was added to that of Adam Smith in support of a laissez-faire political philosophy; and this philosophy encouraged an unrestrained expression of human greed at the precise moment in history when an advancing industrialism required more, rather than less moral and political restraint upon economic forces."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 30.

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In other words, the secularist hedonistic philosophy, from which liberal democracy has in the past drawn its sanctions, possesses many grave weaknesses and limitations which, we contend, are remedied in the Christian doctrine. Historically and intellectually, democracy and its bourgeois philosophy have betrayed a marked inability to assess rightly the power of self-interest within both the individual and the community. This inability has been at the bottom of all naive democratic trust in the power of the franchise, free and universal education, social reforms and reactions and panaceas of every sort, to solve the permanent problem precipitated by the fact of self-interest and the concern for the general interest. "Modern democratic civilization is, in short, sentimental rather than cynical. It has an easy solution for the problem of anarchy and chaos on both the national and international level of community, because of its fatuous and superficial view of man. It does not know that the same man who is ostensibly devoted to the 'common good' may have desires and ambitions, hopes and fears, which set him at variance with his neighbor." This

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1. Ibid., p. 11

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was the fact that the Nazi propagandists used to the utmost of their diabolical intelligence. Today we speak glibly of an international conscience but the enemies of free men know the dark side of human life and more clearly assess the power of self-interest in our pretensions of preserving order for the good of the world.

The philosophy of modern liberal democracy has utterly failed to take sufficient cognizance of the fact that man is a sinner, and that being such, he attains no level of human achievement in which there is not some corruption of inordinate self-love. Indeed, the spokesmen of bourgeois democracy have been completely unaware of the extent to which, in the history of democratic development, the ideals voiced were corrupted by middle-class interests. The particular perspectives of a bourgeois society have been fondly conceived as being ultimate. "If we survey any period of history and not merely the present tragic era of world catastrophe, it becomes quite apparent that human ambition, lusts and desires, are more inevitably inordinate, that both human creativity and human evil reach greater heights, and that conflicts in the community between varying conceptions of the good and between competing

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expressions of vitality are of more tragic proportions than was anticipated in the basic philosophy which underlies democratic civilization."<sup>1</sup>

The great sin -- which to the Christian is the quintessence of sin -- of self interest and the pride of claiming that the interest of self is the interest of all (such as civilization), that is, of pretending that a particular interest is an ultimate one, has had a perfect illustration in a recent international event. When Oliver Lyttleton, wishing to pay the United States a compliment, stated that she was not forced into the war by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but rather, because of her aid to Great Britain, she had really provoked the attack, America resented the statement, for it challenged the official statement that she was in the war because her interests were threatened. Which seems to say that a modern nation cannot go to war except out of self-interest, but once in the war must claim to be motivated by higher interests.

The Christian doctrine of man as a creature enables us to appreciate fully the perennial power of particularity in human culture. The perspectives of every culture have a particular historical locus, and the pretension

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1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 22.

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that they are universally valid and final, the Christian will consider as a manifestation of the sin of pride. The doctrine that man is a sinner enables us to have a secure basis for not accepting a dictatorship. No one man, nor any group of men, can assume that they are in the possession of the whole of truth. This doctrine's measurement of the depth of evil in man acts as a constant bulwark against tyranny. The Christian doctrine that man is a child of God is an assertion that man has an eternal destiny which is already in process. Or as Temple has so characteristically put it, "If man is indeed destined for eternal life in fellowship with God, that is a fact so important in his whole nature that the State must take note of it, and have a care that the facts of life which fall under its own control are not so ordered as to hinder the citizens from qualifying for their eternal destiny.....The Church is fully entitled to say to the State, 'You must not let men starve!'"<sup>1</sup> These basic points in the Christian doctrine of man are thus surely absolutely essential to the survival of democracy in an age when the trend is inevitably towards a greater centralization of power.

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1. Temple, W., Citizen and Churchman, Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd., London, 1941, p. 81

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Democracy, moreover, if it is to really function, requires what is one of the first fruits of the Christian religion -- humility. "Democratic life requires a spirit of tolerant cooperation between individuals and groups which can be achieved by neither moral cynics who know no law beyond their own interest, nor by moral idealists, who acknowledge such a law but are unconscious of the corruption which insinuates itself into the statement of it by even the most disinterested idealists." <sup>1</sup> The fact that Christ is the final norm for human existence will keep Christians from ever becoming satisfied with either social ideals or actualities. The fact of human sin in every level of achievement will save us from the sentimental idea that what is worth doing in our time will be done easily. The Christian faith in a God who can complete what finite man can never complete will save us from the despair to which so many sensitive idealists and reformers, lacking such a faith, have been driven in our time.

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1. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 151.

## Chapter VI

Postscript:        The Rights of Man

"I go

Lost in a landscape of the mind

A country where the lights are low

And where the ways are hard to find".

Geoffrey Scott

Our study has led us to the conclusion that the Christian doctrine of man is a more realistic and therefore more truthful estimate of the nature and purpose of man than is offered in secular philosophies. If this be true, then the Christian religion ought to be capable of providing some direction as we face our principal social issues.

There are many great social issues confronting us, but the one outstanding issue in our day is that of the rights of the individual in relationship to the rights of the community. The individual is organically related to the community, yet he is capable of transcending the community and indeed the whole historical process. The question thus becomes that of finding an effective balance between individual freedom and communal order. The fact that modern civilization has nervously oscillated between



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an anarchic laissez-faire individualism and a collectivism which regards the community as an end in itself and as the sole arbiter of truth, would suggest that our problem has not been plumbed with sufficient thought.

The hour of day, moreover, makes the question most urgent. Without a doubt, the trend of the time is irrevocably towards a greater centralization of power. Collectivism is spreading and will continue to spread its power over what previously has been the exclusive domain of individual enterprise. The problems posed by contemporary industrialism necessitates such a course. And its justification will lie in its being an attempt to preserve the integrity of the community of individuals from the tyranny of a few individuals made possible by the power placed in their hands by modern industrialism and technics. With much justification, then, it is contended that the scope of individual enterprise must be restricted for the purpose of communal order and incidentally to provide a greater scope of enterprise to a greater number. Collectivism can thus mean either Fascism or democratic Socialism. There are many factors that will determine which will be the result, but there is none that will

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be more determining than our conception of "the rights of man," what they are, and what their basis is.

The thought of John Stuart Mill, one of the greatest prophets of liberalism, is pertinent to this subject. Mill considered that man's freedom to speak his mind and to argue for his opinion was of particular importance. Discussion itself, he contended, is the sifting process by which the more foolish variants among proposed ideas are killed off, and the more promising ones handed on to the later stages of the tourney. Society may thus be safely expected to eliminate "dangerous thought" in its struggle for survival and progress. This freedom might be called the "right to know,"<sup>1</sup> as Norman Angell designates it. Untrammelled discussion, freedom of speech and press, and free access to all other means of knowledge, are thus included in this basic freedom. The basis that Mill gave this freedom was, however, that it was in the interests of the public welfare. The basis is not an inherent right, but a social utility. This basis has been most attractive down to the present day, and it possesses many values, but it has two principal weak-

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1. See Angell, N., Why Freedom Matters, Penguin Book, 1940.

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nesses which have been glaringly revealed in our time. First, this view suggests that all ideas and theories shall remain on equal footing, with the result that all ideas in principle are emasculated. The germ of anemia is harbored in this view of liberalism and we are reaping the consequences. With such a view, the liberal, if he is true to Mill's principles, should be liberal to even anti-liberal theories. Its practical result is inevitably appeasement. The second weakness is of a different nature, but results in a similar consequence. Freedom is not so much a right, an end in itself, it is a means to an end, the end being the social good. The whole point of his argument is not that intolerance infringes upon a "right," but that society is likely to lose by it. Civil liberties are not "rights," they are merely privileges. On this ground, as Hocking points out, "the moment it can be shown that society stands to gain by intolerance Mill can have no word to say in behalf of liberty. Once adopt this standard of measure, namely, that the individual has no rights in the literal sense of the word, but may have such privileges as are consistent with the public welfare, one is but a step away from the question, who is to

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decide what is consistent with public welfare? And then we are at the door of Leviathan and Mussolini."<sup>1</sup> In other words, if liberty is dependent upon the social welfare, then people have no real right to answer a dictator with an unconditional "No." They can only debate as to what is the social welfare, which in a society where the social realities are the realities of power, does not amount to anything very potent.

We have no quarrel with Mill's contention that the "right to know and express" is a fundamental human right. We would instead emphasize the conviction that such a freedom is a "right," and not a social privilege. It is a right, because man is a being who is more than a communal animal; he is a being who has a destiny beyond that of the social group. Having, as the Christian firmly avows, an eternal destiny, he has the "right to know" by virtue of that fact which is independent of his communal privilege. In short, the horizontal relations of man are an insufficient basis for inherent rights. It is man the worshipper, not merely man the biological fact and man the member of a group, that possesses rights. And his rights are the rights

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1. Hocking, E., The Lasting Elements of Individualism, Yale Univ. Press, 1937, p. 83.

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of spiritual growth, which is the purpose of his existence and his raison d'etre. Such a being has the right and the duty to think and speak, and, if needs be, organize, when he is suppressed as well as when he is unmolested. The right to know and express, to worship and to work creatively, are thus inherent rights.

This raises the perplexing and serious question of the nature and extent of the "rights" of the community. Our contention is that the community or state as such has no rights inherent within its structure. It has the "right" to direct, restrict, control, govern, and so forth, but they are derivative rights. That is, they are derived from the expressed will of the majority of the people. A clear recognition of this fact may save us from being confused when a state power assumes the "right" of undelegated powers. Moreover, the community has the "right" to seek the "delegated right" of exercising its commotive as well as its executive function. The old individualistic liberalism, believing that that government is best which governs least, tended to overlook this important function of government. If we are to be realistic, we must realize that the state today is and must be, more than an umpire. The state

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is more than an umpire, because through it we must move for the achievement of a common purpose. What then are the "rights" of the community or state exercising its commotive as well as its judicial, legislative and executive functions, in relationship to the inherent rights of individuals?

The community has the "right" to so organize its economic life as to provide creative work for all its members. The community has the "right" to restrict the commercial activities of any individual which interfere with the realization of this or any other legitimate social aim. The state has the "right" to enforce its will in regard to these and any other matters which are delegated to it by constitution and election. But it must again be emphasized that the rights of the community or of the state, as a particular form of community, are at all times derived from the people. The rights of the community may, at a given time, be very strong and far-reaching, but they will be such because they have been derived from the people who individually alone possess inherent rights and by virtue of this fact have the further "right" to revoke the powers delegated to the community.

Obviously, with the extension of the "rights" of

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the state and the enlargement of the commotive function of the state, every check, such as the franchise and regular elections, must be kept open and free from corruption. Otherwise it will be only too readily forgotten that the rights of the state are derivative.

It is clear from the above sketching of the problem that the thinking of contemporary people is strongly conditioned by a realization of both the requirements and the perils of strong government. Both the need and the peril have been graphically revealed in the last decade. "Any definition of a proper balance between freedom and order must always be at least slightly colored by the exigencies of the moment which may make the peril of the one seem greater and the security of the other therefore preferable."<sup>1</sup> That is particularly true of the present social scene. It has thus seemed necessary that the inherent and inviolable human rights of man as man should be held in the clear light of day in the moment when the need for the exercising of the commotive function of the state with all the powers pertaining to it, is emphasized.

In other words, the task of modern society is that

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1. Niebuhr, R., The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, p. 78.

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of maintaining the essential and eternal values of the old social liberalism in a society possessing new social realities and in which the peculiar economic and social system, with which liberal values have heretofore been intertwined, will be superseded. If these values are to be maintained, the Christian conception seems to be the only one strong enough to withstand the pressures of the social realities already vigorously operating within our social structure. The "rights" of man can be successfully upheld only when man is conceived as a being with a more than temporal destiny and possessing a relationship with a world of transcendent value and being. A purely temporal and insignificant animal like "man the biological fact" could lay no claim to inviolable rights and could not be considered under obligation to perform certain duties. Since man is also a sinner, the Christian must be against every kind of totalitarianism. The assumption of a position of irresponsible power will suggest to him, not the authority of wise leadership, but a sinful pride feverishly attempting to make itself secure against the perils of social vicissitude. The need for this metaphysical and theological foundation for the "rights of man" as the precondition of a free and functioning



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society is unnerving in its acuteness. In the words of Professor Hocking, "Liberalism at its root has been an invisible futurity embedded in the human present, together with an obligation upon each man to make himself aider and abetter of that possible future both in himself and in others as a divine destination, not as a 'pursuit of happiness' in the fields of property, pleasure and motion. Given this rootage, liberalism can supply the iron most essential to civilization, that obligation which is the point of supreme worth outside every racial and national limit.....Cut away from this rootage, liberalism loses itself in futility and mischief, in the self flattery of foolish masses, in the endless stewing and log rolling of private interests waving the false flag of rights, in the futility of compromising parliaments and the endless hypocrisy of international professions. In recurring to its original source, liberalism finds the nerve of genuine universalism in reverence for human reverence, not for the abstraction 'man' as a biological fact." It is man the creature of God, man the worshipper, who has rights. Realization of the potent relevance of

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1. Hocking, E., essay in Liberal Theology, (ed) Roberts and Van Dusen, Scribner's, 1942, p. 56.

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this truth to the world, will serve to remind Christians and the Christian Church of the spiritual and social might of their high calling.

FINIS.

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