

CHRISTIANITY
AND
MODERN HUMANISM

Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Divinity in the University
of Edinburgh for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Divinity

by

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April 3, 1939



Chapel Hill, North Carolina
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Table of Contents

Preface

i-iii

Chapter One

OUR CONFUSED WORLD

1-14

- A. Anarchy - The Battle of Counterfeit Values
- B. The Uncertain Quest for Certainty
- C. Hope - God and Man

Chapter Two

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMANISM

15-51

- A. The Arrival of a Word
- B. Christian and Non-Christian Humanism
- C. The Christian Doctrine of Man
 - a. The Religious Deliverance of Man from Nature
 - b. The Christian Distinction Between Man and God
- D. The Spirit of Medieval Christendom
- E. The Secularization of Man
 - a. Instability of the Spiritual Enterprise
 - b. Other Sources of Secularism
- F. Our Contemporary Perdition

Chapter Three

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM - IRVING BABBITT

52-78

- A. Two Laws Discrete
- B. The Naturalistic Fallacy
 - a. Utilitarian Naturalism - Bacon

Table of Contents

- b. Sentimental Naturalism - Rousseau
 - i. Neo-Classic Formalism
 - ii. Romantic Spontaneity
- c. The Naturalistic Disintegration
- C. The Declaration of Humanism
 - a. The Need for a Law of Measure
 - b. Humanistic Method - Critical Positivism
 - c. Humanistic Doctrine - The 'Higher Will'
 - d. Humanistic Salvation
- D. Conclusion

Chapter Four

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM JOHN DEWEY

79-105

- A. The Background - Pragmatism
 - a. Individualism and American Culture
 - b. Josiah Royce - Loyalty
 - c. William James - Radical Empiricism
- B. Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics
 - a. Empirical Philosophy
 - b. Instrumentalism
- C. Instrumentalism and Religion
 - a. The 'Religious' displaces 'Religion'
 - b. Instrumental Emancipation

Table of Contents

Chapter Five

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANISM

106-157

- A. The Service of Humanism
- B. The Basic Issue - Revelation
 - a. Babbitt and Dewey essentially secularists
 - b. The Role of Pseudo-Categories
- C. General Weaknesses of Humanism
 - a. The Inadequacy of Babbitt's 'New Humanism'
 - i. The relation of Humanism and Religion
 - ii. Ends for action and the End of life
 - iii. The Negative and Aristocratic Temper
 - b. Fallacies in Dewey's Instrumentalism
 - i. Begging the Question and the Use of Straw Men
 - ii. Rationalistic Illusions regarding Social Change
- D. Humanism and the Despiritualization of Man

Chapter Six

CHRISTIANITY - ITS MESSAGE AND TASK

158-204

- A. The Significance of the Modern Mood
- B. The Ground of the Christian Message
 - a. The Witness to the Concrete
 - b. Spiritual Man and Revelation
- C. The Dogmas of Faith
 - a. Creation - Man's Origin
 - b. Image of God - Man's 'Likeness'

Table of Contents

c. Sin and the Fall - Tragedy

d. The Cross and Forgiveness - Salvation

D. The Church and the Eternal 'Word'.

Bibliography

PREFACE

Christianity has always founded itself upon a gospel of Revelation. It has, therefore, always had to contend with any humanistic philosophy which seeks to domesticate man in either a rationalism or a naturalism, and to preserve Christian values without embracing the Christian world of transcendent realities. At the present time this is particularly true.

The thesis of these pages seeks to show that a humanism which does not acknowledge man's communion with, and kinship to a transcendental world of spiritual reality is inadequate and unstable on the one hand, and is on the other a misreading of the nature of the person as spirit. This paper therefore contends that a Christian humanism is the only humanism that is adequate to the facts of the whole man, and that all other humanism, if considered as exhaustive, is a reduction of man's dignity and his mystery.

For purposes of clarity and space it has been necessary to limit the humanism with which we shall be particularly concerned to current humanism. While the term 'modern' might seem to suggest a scope of several centuries it is in this thesis employed to signify the contemporary form of humanism with which Christianity is confronted.

In order to achieve some perspective of the roots of modern humanism it has been necessary to make a brief survey of its antecedents in order to appreciate its place in contemporary thought and the significance of the Christian contention as to the insufficiency of humanism.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first is a brief statement of the confusion and impotency in our times due to the loss of standards. Note is also taken that within this confusion signs are evident

that many minds are witnessing to a more realistic appraisal of man and his life, and the significance for philosophy and theology of his spiritual reality.

Chapter two is an attempt to set forth the background of modern humanism. There are, we have had to notice, two humanisms, a Christian and a non-Christian, which emerged out of the Renaissance. The attempt to evaluate the true significance of the latter has involved the necessity of stating the Christian doctrine of man, held by the church, and from which the neo-classical form was a departure. The rest of the chapter is concerned with an examination of those forces which contributed to the dissolution of the medieval culture and the religious source of its unity and promise, and aided the rise of both those naturalistic philosophies and the 'higher' naturalisms of rationalistic humanism.

Chapters three and four seek to present respectively the manifesto of humanism as contained in the writings of the two representative leaders of two different humanisms of our time, Irving Babbitt and John Dewey.

While many would not acknowledge Dewey as a humanist, this exclusion can only be maintained by holding that the words 'humanist' and 'humanism' have reference solely to the purely classical interpretation of their meaning as Babbitt holds. Christianity however contends against a humanism more widely interpreted than that would permit. From the Christian point of view Dewey's philosophy is humanistic in that it maintains man's ability successfully to pursue the fulfilments and enrichment of his life, and to achieve the maximum of meaning and purpose without recourse to the world of transhuman and theological reality such as Christianity affirms.

The inadvisability of a too extended paper has been partly responsible for the omission of a separate study of Dr. Paul E. More. The deciding factor lay however in the observation that he no longer represents the humanists, having passed over into the Anglican communion. His importance for us now lies in the fact that his spiritual journey is illustrative of the Christian judgment as to the incompleteness of humanism and its finally unstable character apart from revelation.

In chapters five and six we have attempted to state the essential Christian criticism of the philosophy of humanism in general, and of these two spokesmen in particular. Reference is here made to the pilgrimage of Dr. Paul Elmer More. This section is an endeavor also to suggest, in outline only, the constructive Christian position together with the bases from which the Christian faith arises. Our aim has not been a treatise on theology, but rather to envision what, it is suggested, is both the central ground of the Christian message, and the foremost task confronting the church in a time where order must somehow be achieved within a disordered world, the eternal somehow be acknowledged within the temporal, and, where for that end the Christian cannot but feel that his faith must have some significant word to say, and some influential pressure it can bring to bear.

Chapter One

OUR CONFUSED WORLD

- A. Anarchy -- The Battle of Counterfeit Values
- B. The Uncertain Quest for Certainty
- C. Hope -- God and Man

Chapter One

OUR CONFUSED WORLD

A. Anarchy--the battle of counterfeit values.

Man lives within history, but it is history itself that has pronounced the failure of man and his culture. The events of our time furnish us with the picture of man feverishly attempting to perpetuate an impossible form of existence. Its tempo and intensity are already the indication of man's dim foreknowledge of its doom to frustration. Man reads the handwriting on the walls of contemporary history. But he does not believe it.

In fact the spectre of impotent confusion and defiant self-sufficiency is one of the marks of our modern world.

Man dimly discerns that he has lost the knowledge of himself, and he seeks to regain it in counterfeit knowledge of his being. Modern man is no longer a 'spiritual' creature; he has become an abstraction. The spiritual source of man's life, the conviction that he is related to an eternal world which bestows meaning and order to his temporal existence--this conviction is seriously discounted, and indeed impossible, so many feel.

Bereft of the traditional source of his significance by the gradual dissolution of the spiritual interpretation of his life, man has been forced to erect a substitute, be it counterfeit and fragmentary, nevertheless some alternative, some other 'worthful' and 'holy' reality

in the name of which he proposes to organize his existence.

Like the nature of which he is a part man abhors a vacuum. In the loss of God he has suffered the perdition of his own being, and the disintegration of the world of relations in which he lives. But a disintegrating and disorganized world is obviously self destructive. Its anarchic tendencies in all spheres of life make imperative the necessity that man invoke some new centre as the 'sacred' reality around which he may attempt to reform and reorder his existence. The centrifugal tendency can be preserved from the immediate destruction of everything only by the presence of some centripetal power. Thus even secularism itself involves the acceptance of some 'sacred' reality'. Its pseudo-spiritual nature only succeeds, however, in postponing the sentence of death and in transforming the secular into the demonic. Indeed this is the outstanding feature of our time. The urgent and critical nature of the human predicament in which man perceives himself to be perilously near the abyss of his destruction, individually and nationally, has driven him to seek an escape in the immediate conscription to some counterfeit, because fragmentary, loyalty. Thus the proclamations of some of these new half-gods are all the more totalitarian and exclusive in their claims, and compulsive and regimental in their demands.

So we are confronted with the mixed mood of our modernity. Disillusionment and uncertainty regarding man's nature and destiny in the world on the one hand, and on the other a defiant loyalty to the new 'Gods'; these are the characteristics of the present temper. Yet we must note that even with the hysteria of the new enthusiasms, their impatience with any free enquiry into and criticism of their interpre-

tation of man and his nature, and their totalitarian coercion of the thoughts and actions of all who come under their sway, these traits are all symptoms of a disease that lies within them. Behind the defiant or over-confident worship at the new altars, there lies the suspicion of the intrinsic contradictions and impossibilities of the new loyalties.

Modern man is afraid to ask the question "What is Man?" In the interests of a temporary and immediate victory based on fragmentary and abstract concepts of man we are confronted by the active organization of life around counterfeit values, whose counterfeit nature we are not permitted to scrutinize. Lest man might become appraised of his abstract and inhuman state current life has taken the form of insulating the individual from the possibility of self-knowledge by immersing him in the crowd. The organization of man's life in society becomes such that the subordinate loyalties have become the absolute loyalty. The absolute supremacy of the spiritual is made to appear progressively irrelevant. In fact, to ask about it is not only to appear foolish and naive, but is actually to be conceived as guilty of treason to the truly human--as modernity construes it.

"Man is made a part of the objective world, and is no longer permitted to remain himself, to have his own inner being, to define from within himself his own attitude toward the world and other people." ¹

The psychological significance of the 'mass' movements of contemporary life is that they form a means of escape from all inventory of the individual self. Ceaseless activity replaces meditation and reflection.

1. N. Berdyaev. The Fate of Man in the Modern World. p. 15 S.C.M. 1935. cf. also F. R. Barry. What has Christianity to Say? chap. iv. Harper Brothers. 1938.

In the presence of immediate questions man is diverted from the ultimate question. Preoccupied with the attention to immediate obligations modern man is prevented from either asking or answering the ultimate question: "What is man's chief end and are these immediate tasks consonant with that end?"

Thus the modern defiance seeks to overcome the fear of its disillusionment by proclaiming that the deification of the secular is the spiritualization of the secular.

These political baals are not, however, the only counterfeit values, nor the only 'holy' realities in our disordered world. They are rather the unveiling in moments of extremity of the real conclusions to which man's life tends when based on non-spiritual terms. The 'demonic' is the last attempt of a purely secularized culture to save itself and the nature of society involves that this shall be at the last a political phenomenon.²

There are periods of human existence when the void at the heart of a culture reared upon the unspiritual view of man has not become plain, nor the complexities and impotence of life serious enough to demand the demonic defiance. In these periods man seems to live by an attempt to preserve the 'values' of the spiritual conception of man and the world, while he seeks to make the source of these values and their roots to lie in the naturalistic order alone.

In such periods as these while the imitation of man's

2. By 'demonic' it is meant to describe the feature resulting from the elevation of the secular to religious status, and the investment of secular power with the ultimacy and sacredness of deity; i.e. the disavowal of the truly sacred for a pseudo-sacred. cf. Daniel iii. for Nebuchadnezzar's attempt.

atomization has taken place, its inescapable effects and intrinsic contradictions await the dialectic of history for their manifestation. The break up of man's spiritual unity provides both the atomization of human life and the despairing loneliness which drives man to seek a re-integration at false, because atomic or fractional levels of his being. The half-gods precede and usher in the anti-God. Thus as the extreme moment arrives when the instability of the half-gods is revealed, and the defiant espousal of the anti-god arises, it always finds the field of human allegiance still inhabited by the fractional and counterfeit gods which preceded it and which still persist in the twilight of their impotency.

Thus in our day the pre-demonic altars co-exist along with the demonic, and we find meaning being variously sought. In 'art for art's sake', in 'contemplation', in 'curiosity', in 'pleasure', in mere 'self-expression', in 'social service' etc. All of these give immediate tasks but in none of them lies any realization of a satisfactory end for man's life. Thus dehumanized man is condemned to become a ceaseless peripatetic in the humanistic pantheon. Modern man in search of his soul is really in search of the one true God. Like the Greeks in Paul's day he has altars to many 'gods' down the main street of his life. But none of these is the altar of the 'living God'. No God, no man. This is the sequence to non-being. Bereft of spiritual rootage both man and his humanist credo cease to be. The results of his secularized humanism have confronted man with the abiding spiritual structure that undergirds the world, the 'hidden order' within the visible 'order'. The disturbance of the visible 'order' is the inviolability of the invisible 'order'.

Uprooted from his spiritual, which is his concrete reality, man has secularized himself. Man can know himself only as he knows what he ought to like. But he really knows what he ought to like only if he knows why he should like it, which in turn involves knowing why he does not like it.³ This self-revealing moment when both man's own nature and the nature of the Spirit which claims him are manifested is only possible at the level of Spirit, and in the moment that man can both acknowledge the authentic claim of the Spirit upon him, and confess that he continually disobeys the same. This moment of his confrontation by Spirit is the moment of true self-knowledge. In it he finds both himself and God. Therein he finds the true concept of his vocation as called to be a child of the Spirit and a son of God.

"Human identity, like every authentic reality, is only conferred in that spiritual concretion which puts the seal of divine unity on the whole of human multiplicity. In abstraction and isolation it is lost. The process of modern Humanism is the passage of man in this spiritualized concretion, where everything is organically bound together, to a sundering abstraction, wherein man is changed into an isolated unit."⁴

Man trembles today upon the edge of the abyss created by his self-ignorance. Surely it is not a mere coincidence that our age is one that is largely impersonal. In the name of a fictitious man, man has created a fictitious society. Modern civilization has become physical contiguity without spiritual community. The disorder and incompetency of the outer world of society is but the extension of a more radical and prior disorder and incompetency in the life of man the individual. Man

3. Cf. T. S. Eliot. Essays Ancient and Modern. chap. vi. "Religion and Literature". p. 109. Faber and Faber. 1936.

4. N. Berdyaev. The End of Our Time. p. 37. Sheed and Ward. 1933.

does not know who or what manner of being he is. 'Man the unknown', this is the current dilemma. And upon every sphere of man's activities it has laid the curse of its darkness.

But there is another side to this confusion, namely, 'God the Unknown'. The loss of the knowledge of God has involved man in the loss of the knowledge of himself. It is the Christian contention that modern humanism is a false and anti-human humanism. The proper knowledge of man is possible, according to Christianity, only when he is seen as a child of God. This is his true image. In Him we "live and move and have our being". Man, his existence and all his interests and activities lose their true ontological status and significance apart from this relationship. Though we may have to dissent from what Babbitt means by 'religious' yet from the Christian viewpoint he wrote truly when he said:

"When studied with any degree of thoroughness the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem in turn into the philosophical problem, and the philosophical problem itself to be almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem".⁵

In fact, the gradual devitalization of religion whereby the livingly real became successively first, the inherited sacred, then the perfunctory deed and, finally an irrelevancy, this cycle is both the dilemma and the disaster of our time. 'Incapable of any metaphysical conviction'⁶ man has no adequate instrument with which to order his life. Apart from God, man and nature have no adequate frame of reference. His social, economic and political life disintegrates. As Dawson puts it:

5. I. Babbitt. Democracy and Leadership, p. 1. Houghton and Mifflin Co. 1924.

6. C. Dawson. Christianity and the New Age. p. 22. Sheed and Ward. 1931. (Essays in Order. 3.)

"We have attempted to combine a material organization of the world, more scientific and elaborate than any previous civilization has known, with a disregard of spiritual values and a denial of spiritual order ----- the only way by which our civilization can recover its balance and stability is by the restoration of the spiritual element that is no less essential to modern culture than it has been to the civilizations of the past."⁷

B. The Uncertain Quest for Certitude.

It is not surprising that in the midst of this confusion regarding man and God, life and meaning, that there should be a variety of opinions as to whether meaning exists at all for human life, and if so, as to the particular locus from which it derives. The quests for certainty, or certitude, convey uncertainty not only because of their variety but because they are fragmentary in so many cases. Many of them leave large voids in their inventory of both man and reality and hence do not satisfy man's deepest and most essential being. But then it is fractional man who makes these fractional evaluations.

They vary all the way from those who hold like Bertrand Russell that all values are a temporary creation by man in an "unfriendly universe" which does not underwrite his value-venture with any trans-temporal status and significance, they vary all the way from that, to those who proclaim that in the contemporary breakdown the deeper spiritual foundations of human life and society are being unveiled in drastic and realistic form.

7. C. Dawson. The Modern Dilemma. p. 30. Sheed and Ward, 1933.

Many have not gone so far as to affirm with Bertrand Russell that we sail the tempestuous seas of time with "the flickering light of human comradeship" as our only refuge, and that the "firm ground of unyielding despair" is our only "foundation."⁸ Likewise the followers of M. C. Otto may not be very numerous when he writes, "we are adrift in infinite space on our little earth, the sole custodians of our ideals."⁹ Yet the impact of something like a 'cosmic chill' has sapped the enthusiasm and hope of modern man. He has not the abandon of a child of grace. His characteristic feature is rather the strenuous and nervous attempt to assure himself of his security in a world which he gives all the impression of feeling is not so secure as he would like it to be. Hence the prevalent agnosticism is in its practical consequences as numbing in its effects as the more dreary naturalistic outlook. Much contemporary thought and writing is pitched in a key which strikes one as that of ethical 'bravado', a sort of moral whistle in the dark by a lonely spirit in a purposeless and unspiritual cosmos. The splendid fruits of a spiritual view of the world are withered. Triviality, ennui, frustration and boredom become the dominant attitudes of modern man. The never ending search for 'activities' and 'thrills', anything with which to pass the time of day and overcome the sense of futility and meaninglessness becomes the common trait of a nervous culture. Lady Luck becomes the goddess supreme. Superstition and anarchy of the vital urge thrive in an atmosphere where life's insecurity seems matched only by her vanity.

8. B. Russell. A Free Man's Worship. pp. 22 and 7. Mosher. 1927.

9. M. C. Otto. Things and Ideals. pp. 289-90. Henry Holt Co. 1924.

The serious depths to which the 'acids of modernity' have penetrated may be gathered by a few samples of recent thought and utterance:

"The preceding generations were outstanding worshippers of faith.....Their faith did not fail them till much of the established order failed from incompetency. We do not propose to wait so long.....We are charged with a lack of reverence, but what shall we reverence?"¹⁰

And Walter Lippman has voiced the feeling of many in his 'Preface to Morals' when he writes:

"Modern man wonders whether he possesses any criterion.. any standard....he comes to feel that Aristophanes was thinking of him when he declared that 'whirl is King having driven out Zeus'".¹¹

So acute does the sense of triviality become for Joseph Wood Krutch that he goes so far as to say of man:

"It grows more and more likely that he must remain an ethical animal in a universe which contains no ethical element."

"Our cosmos may be farcial, or it may be pathetic, but it has not the dignity of tragedy and we cannot accept it as such".¹²

He feels that Man's 'value' life can be given no transcendental rootage for man's existence is merely a 'physiological process with only a physiological meaning!

A writer in a leading American monthly entitles his article "After Religion What?" in which he says:

"We who are in our late twenties are simply not interested in religions, social or supernatural; we have outgrown the dilemmas of our parents."

"There is a feeling among us that no Christianity is psychologically suited to our time and our civilization,

10. W. M. Horton. Theism and the Modern Mood. p. 19. S.C.M. 1931. From a Harvard Class Day Oration.

11. W. Lippmann. A Preface to Morals. p. 4. Macmillan Co. 1932.

12. J. W. Krutch. The Modern Temper. pp. 10 and 141, Harcourt Brace and Co. 1929.

that we need less faith in the supernatural and more in the courage and intelligence of human beings".¹³

And one serious young thinker in the process of criticizing the Humanism of Irving Babbitt submits as his estimate of a fair description of the state of our times the following:

"Ideals there are in abundance, the ideals of professions and institutions, but a master ideal ruling over them there is not. There is competition in ideals, but no sovereign aim subordinating all other aims in life to itself." ¹⁴

The unimpressive results of modernity and the idea of the good life are summed up by Frank J. Mather:

"What is in America our accepted vision of all the good life? For upon it must rest our art.... I fear it would come to these few articles of faith; to make a lot of money by fair means; to spend it generously; to be friendly; to move fast; to die with one's boots on.....it naturally gets the art it feeds---the immaculate bank clerk in campus clothes, the sylph-like apparition in the porcelain tub, the beach party in the classy car---the art of advertisement generally. And this ideal finds its authentic expression in the cheap heroics and shallow idealisms of the moving picture, and the pot-pourri of dubious music and eloquence over the radio".¹⁵

C. Hope -- God and Man

But it is not all darkness. Alongside the confused counsel there is an increasing witness to the fact that even through the experience of this humanistic venture the results will be the vindication of the Spiritual aspects of man's life, and the acknowledgment that in God alone does man find his true freedom and significance.

13. Frank S. Hopkins. Harper's Magazine. April 1934. pp. 527 and 530.

14. Gorham Munson. The Dilemma of the Liberated. p. 21. Coward-McCann. 1930.

15. Quoted by Gorham Munson..ibid. p. 27.

"A tremendous problem was raised by Humanism, and the theme of it was man. I see this theme showing itself all through the tragic dialectic of modern history, and the appearance of Humanism cannot be thought of as sheer misfortune, unalloyed evil. That would be a static attitude. The humanist experiment has a positive significance as well. It was in man's destiny that he should live through it. He had to go the way of freedom, and freely to accept God. That was the real meaning of Humanism".¹⁶

Or as Dawson sums it up, the disorder of the contemporary scene indicates that;

"the religious attitude is only possible in the presence of the eternal and transcendent".¹⁷

"Without spiritual order the cosmopolitanism of modern culture.. unites mankind in the common enjoyment of the cinema and Ford car and the machine gun without creating spiritual unity. The recovery of the Christian idea of order would give a spiritual expression to the universality of modern culture.... which secular idealism is powerless to achieve".¹⁸

The theology of Karl Barth, its extremes notwithstanding; the works of such men as J. Maritain, William Temple, Paul Tillich, R. Niebuhr, Emil Brunner, C. H. Dodd, in addition to those heretofore mentioned, who are increasingly witness to man's confrontation by God; the signs of renaissance in the church indicated by the Oxford and Edinburgh and Madras Conferences, with the serious reconsideration of the nature and function of the 'church', and the meaning of the 'Word of God'; the deepened sense of the critical nature of the life of the 'spiritual man', and the urgent necessity to answer the question 'What is Man?', all these are hopeful and significant signs.

There is a marked sense of disillusionment for many with the naturalistic literature that a decade ago glorified the undisciplined

16. N. Berdyaev. The End of Our Time. p. 35. Sneed and Ward. 1933

17. C. Dawson. Christianity and the New Age. p. 57. Sneed and Ward. 1931.

18. C. Dawson. ibid., p. 109.

desires or portrayed only the seamy side of life. The stars of Dreiser, O'Neill and Mencken are on the wane. There are signs that they are even dissatisfied with themselves. The spirit of mere scientific observation and this-worldly emphasis with its monistic naturalism is ceasing to be impressive or effective. Once again the quest for the eternal and universal is making itself felt. In the 'far country' of his 'riotous living' man is coming 'to himself'. Amid the ruins he sees his need of a God. It is profoundly the concern of Christianity that it be the Living God that man finds and not a counterfeit God.

If in a real sense our world is again "without form and void", and if the passage through this devastation shall confront man with the 'sacrament of disturbance' whereby the Spirit of God that moving creatively across this waste shall demand again a living answer to the summons 'Adam, where art thou?', then perhaps yet again there may be in our time, as for the early Christians, the glad realization and witness by the church to the fact that by grace man has been lifted above mere nature, that by the same grace man knows himself to be a child and son of God.

This then is the true 'Image' of man. This constitutes his glad and life giving vocation. In this deep communion with God, the home of his spirit, man can freely live "giving thanks unto the Father... who has delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son and His love".¹⁹ For in God's grace alone have we been "begotten unto a living hope".²⁰

This at any rate is the Christian Gospel in our confused world.

19. Colossians 1: 12, 13.

20. 1 Peter 1: 3.

And to this faith it seeks to give effective witness amid the babel of opposing faiths. With the nature and method of that witness and the features of the world in which that witness must be made, especially the humanistic features, the rest of this thesis is concerned.

Chapter Two

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMANISM

- A. The Arrival of a Word
- B. Christian and Non-Christian Humanism
- C. The Christian Doctrine of Man
 - a. The Religious Deliverance of Man from Nature
 - b. The Christian Distinction between Man and God
- D. The Spirit and Medieval Christendom
- E. The Secularization of Man
 - a. Instability of the Spiritual Enterprise
 - b. Other Sources of Secularism
- F. Our Contemporary Perdition

Chapter Two

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMANISM

A. The Arrival of a Word.

The term 'humanism' has been and is still used with such varied meanings that it is neither possible nor profitable to try and embrace them all under one definition. We shall for our purpose distinguish between two forms of humanism which may conveniently be conceived to demark two main attitudes historically denominated by that word since the Renaissance.

The word 'humanitas' was used in classical times to denote "the civilizing and refining influence of polite letters and of the liberal arts". A person thus influenced was described as "humanus". The Italian scholars were thus led to use a cognate phrase and described the classical literature as "literae humaniores" (humanae). Their use of the comparative meant not "the secular rather than the theological" but "the distinctively humane", more so, that is, than other literature.¹ The 'humanist' thus was a student of humane letters.

B. Christian and Non-Christian humanism.

But we are concerned to establish just what the characteristics of Renaissance humanism were. Was it, or was it not a turning away from medieval culture and thought? Was it a corrective supplementation or a denial of the previous tradition? Or was it both?

1. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 1. p. 538.

One opinion holds that it was an experience of freedom from medieval bondage. "Humanism indicates the endeavor of man to reconstitute himself as a free being, not as the thrall of theological despotism".² On this view, the classical studies were instrumental to this end, and humanism is construed as a reaction against the alleged preoccupation of medieval thought with the "literae divinae".

Professor Babbitt seems to come very close to this opinion when he says: "the word 'humanist' was applied....to the scholar..... who inclined to prefer the humanity of the classical writers to what seemed to him the excess of divinity in the medievals".³

Another view contends that humanism was the immediate descent into unmitigated paganism, and a reaction against the whole Christian tradition.

That humanism was a real reaction to something can hardly be denied. But the names of such humanists as Petrarch, Erasmus, and More alone are sufficient to show that neither the 'pagan' nor the 'freedom - from - bondage' views can adequately characterize Renaissance humanism as a whole.

We would seem to come nearer the truth if we affirm that there were in fact two reactions that produced two types of humanism.

One was a corrective, and was a reaction against a certain aspect of medieval life and thought. The other was in effect a renouncement of the Christian tradition, and was the continuance of a naturalism that indeed had existed within medievalism itself.

2. P. Smith, Art; "Renaissance", Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Ed. Vol. XIX, p. 123.

3. I. Babbitt, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition", Humanism, and America., Ed. N. Foerster, New York, Farrar & Rinehart. 1930, p. 26.

These two are sufficiently distinct to warrant the recognition of two phases that produced respectively, a Christian, and a Non-Christian humanism.

The Christian phase was a reaction against two aspects of medieval culture. It protested, in the first place, against a decadent scholasticism involved in trivial questions and arguments of little import to the spirit, and a travesty upon the great age of scholasticism.

It sought also to overcome the medieval tendency to neglect unduly the study of nature in its devotion to the supernatural. Medieval Christianity which had rightly proclaimed man's supremacy over nature had encouraged a contempt for the world and an ascetic mortification of the flesh which produced a negative attitude to this world and attenuated unduly man's appreciation of the freedom and relative autonomy of his creaturely existence. The emphasis was upon the negative tendency within Christian thought rather than the positive. Both Lactantius and Jerome had advised that Christianity feed at the fountain of pagan poetry and thought while avoiding its evils, what Jerome called "a spoiling of the Egyptians without pollution from the spoils." Tertullian, on the other hand speaking of nature and man's attempt to control and redirect her to his uses has this to say regarding the dyeing of garments to be worn:

"That which he himself has not produced is not pleasing to God unless he was unable to order sheep to be born with purple and sky-blue fleeces. If he was able then plainly he was unwilling: What God willed not, of course ought not to be fashioned."⁴

4. Tertullian. "On Female Dress" Ante-Nicene Christian Library; Edd. by Robert & Donaldson, Vol. XI, pp. 312 f. Edin. T & T. Clark, 1869.

Cf. W. E. Lecky, History of European Morals, Vol. II, pp. 101 f., New York. Appleton & Co., 1879.

E. K. Rand, Founders of The Middle Ages. pp. 62-8, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press. 1918.

Invented things it is felt are not from the Author of nature, but "from the devil, from the corrupter of nature". It is important to remember however, that this tendency was only one aspect of medieval life. It was due not so much to medievalism as it was to the fact that the world of nature was not fully recognized owing to the lack of the scientific attitude, and to the absence of a differentiation of the various activities of man's life and the perception of their semi-autonomous nature.⁵

The Christian phase was an awakening to a yet fuller life of man on earth than had yet been realized. It was a corrective, not a denial; a supplement and not a destruction of the medieval tradition. In this sense there is some truth in the view of Professor Preserved Smith when he writes that the Renaissance contributed to "a firmer grasp on the realities of human nature and the world."⁶

The Christian humanists gladly accepted the impetus and legacy of the classics without intending to compromise the Christian tradition. Probably Petrarch may be considered their representative.

The non-Christian phase was itself a duplex phenomenon. On the one hand there was the revival of a definitely classical and rationalistic humanism. It was very close to Christianity in that it saw that

5. Cf. N. Berdyaev, The Meaning of History. pp. 129-30, "the defects of the medieval consciousness lay in that it did not allow for free play of man's creative energies... Medieval asceticism had strengthened man's spiritual forces, but had prevented their free participation in creative culture.... The revelation of man's forces and creative energies was necessary to religious culture in the world."

Cf. I. Babbitt. Literature and the American College. chap. 1, for a different treatment of the two humanisms.

6. Art. 'Renaissance' op. cit., p. 122.

man's dignity involved mystery. But like its classical ancestor it solved the mystery by setting reason against impulse and the higher man against the lower man. It saw, that is, that man was in God's image, but it blurred the image and opened the door for its consequent loss by omitting any full acknowledgment of man's creaturely status. Representatives of this type of thought are Leonardo da Vinci whose real interest in the outer world of nature is to show the supremacy of man's mind and life to that world which he can thus comprehend. Pico della Mirandola in his famous passage on the Dignity of Man also belongs in this movement. For him, too, man can acquire the stability, which is not given to him, just because man has a will and potentialities to develop. Here too is the classical dualism of reason and impulse and the sublime faith that the former can control the latter. The Christian humanists are very hard to distinguish from the classical, and a hard and fast division is certainly improbable in fact.

On the other hand, non-Christian humanism manifested itself also in a more naturalistic and even pagan form. In this movement not dualism but a naturalistic monism tended to prevail. It was the revival of Epicurean as against Aristotelian antiquity. It encouraged, in its use of the new return to the past, the ideals and morals which were opposed to Christian practice and quite antithetical both to Christian doctrine and to the classical attempt to preserve its dualistic 'mystery' of man and his dignity. Boccaccio may be taken as the representative of this form of humanism.

Much of the debate at and since the Renaissance has been within classicism, a debate that is, between the classical dualism and classical monism, and has therefore been outside Christian humanism.

These two general humanisms then arose and diverged. The Christian form endeavors to place man's free and creative work in relation to grace. Petrarch in giving advice on how to conduct research in the classics says:

"We must be Christians--then we may be what we will. We must read philosophical, poetical historical works in such a manner that the Gospel shall find an echo in our hearts....On the Gospel alone as upon the immovable foundation can human diligence build all true learning".⁷

He advocated the classical studies "as the key to a larger mental life not contrary to the Christian religion but ancillary to it".⁸ Reuchlin, deFeltre, Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More are among the humanists who sought to harmonize the classical learning with the Christian tradition to the enrichment of both.

The 'Divine Institutes' of Lactantius and the Seventieth letter of Jerome urging the adjustment of Christian truth to the good in secular and pagan literature, became part of the reading of the cultured medieval mind and thus hastened the Christian humanism of the Renaissance.

Even the Papacy, in the persons of Nicholas V and Leo X, was unequivocally commendatory in blessing the rising humanism.⁹

7. Quoted by F. E. McMahon in "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt. p. 14. Ph.D. Thesis, Catholic University of America. 1931.

8. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. I. p. 539.

9. ibid., p. 566. Leo X in 1515 wrote:

"We have been accustomed even from our early years to think that nothing more excellent or more useful has been given by the Creator to mankind, if we except only the knowledge and true worship of Himself, than these studies, which not only lead to the ornament and guidance of human life, but are applicable and useful to every particular situation."

cf. E. K. Rand. op.cit., p. 68, for the verdict of Leo XIII in 1885 to the same effect quoted from a letter to Cardinal Parrochi.

Non-Christian humanism on the other hand reverted on one side of its thought to a libertarianism that was an unbounded faith in reason's power, and on the other side it became the unbridled expression of man's lower nature independent of any controls of the spirit. Man's enjoyments became those, not of his real humanity, but of the lower and animal levels of his being. The Decameron of Boccaccio delights in extolling the profligate and licentious. Lorenzo Valla in his De Voluptate affirms pleasure as the highest good and attacks Christian morality for its restraints upon man's undisciplined expression of his appetites.

These were the two strains which emerged at the Renaissance. One was turned toward God and the world of eternal and the other was not. While both professed to be humanism the former alone could give man a spiritual and integral status. Within the latter he became decomposed in the gradual loss of his image.

Yet it must be noted that even the Christian humanism provided at least a shift from the old humility of the medieval 'literae divinae' which made room for some 'pride in man's estate as man'. The ornamentation of life 'through the cult of thought as opposed to faith and of the beautiful unconsecrated to God's service'¹⁰ was made possible. With the awakening of his creative powers man walked anew the knife-edge of the temptation to disavow his creaturely state. Professor Mercier has pointed out that in spite of the generally Christian view point in the

10. L. J. A. Mercier, The Challenge of Humanism. p. 3. Oxford Univ. Press, 1933.

See also N. Berdyaev, The Meaning of History. p. 117 for an interesting comment on the 'Contradictions' inherent in the new Christian gift to man of an 'anthropocentric feeling'.

writings of such men as even Rabelais and Montagne yet,

"There was in Rabelais such a love of life and knowledge and activity that he may be held to have exalted the libido sciendi and the libido dominandi, the lust of knowledge and power into virtues. There is in Montaigne such a sensuous love of the literae humaniores, such a seeking of tranquility through the fear of suffering, such an acceptance of skepticism that the Epicureans of the seventeenth century could look upon him as a model, and on the other hand, such a revolt from all dogmatism that the rationalists of the eighteenth could hail him also as a precursor of their destructive criticism". ¹¹

The Christian humanism of the Renaissance was an admission that man had a wider field of self-determination and creative work to do within his vocation as a son of God than had formerly been claimed. Within this new freedom however it was not possible to preclude man's tipping the scales over to a rationalistic or naturalistic rather than a Christian humanism. The relative autonomy of the various spheres of man's newly widening life were always subject to their treatment as absolutely autonomous. The plausibility of man's self-sufficiency was always to be easier after the Renaissance.

The use of the word 'pagan' must not be construed to infer that Christianity dislikes simply the crudeness of naturalism. Christianity takes issue with the principles of all humanism whether in its cruder, and more obviously naturalistic forms, or whether in its more refined or rationalistic appearances.

The issue is not, after all, the sensuous nature of the pagan extremes. It is a much more fundamental question. It is the denial that man is a spiritual creature subject to an eternal order of spirit; it is this with which Christianity is in irrevocable conflict. This is the question between Christianity and modern humanism. While the results

11. ibid. p. 8.

of the more avowedly naturalistic humanism may have occasioned the emergence of more refined attempts to preserve man as man without admitting the reality of the supernatural, the conflict remains essentially the same.

It therefore becomes necessary to state in some detail the Christian doctrine of man from which the post Renaissance world has gradually receded. With these features clear in mind we can better appreciate both the causes and significance of the gradual disintegration of the modern world and the issue posed by the arrival of the new humanism in our times.

C. The Christian Doctrine of Man.

Christianity was at once the clarification of the secular and the religious in the life of man. In doing so it raised man above nature, but preserved him from the idolatry of himself by confronting him with the unconditioned constraints of the Spirit. It thus provided a living relationship between God, man, and the world. It will help us to note the chief features in this history.

a. The religious deliverance of man from nature.

The knowledge of the secular world of nature was not possible for primitive man. He had no conception of an autonomous natural order. Nature and supernature, material and spiritual, were for him in confused and undifferentiated state, even though there was the dim awareness, in the animistic stage, of sacred powers somehow not themselves

sticks and stones but resident within and distinguishable from them.

Later religions attained two distinctions that have been fundamental to the religious life of man; metaphysical being and ethical order. As conduct and behavior forced man more and more to attend to his nature as a person the world of the spirit begins to be distinguishable from the world of things.

"Primitive man had already found the Transcendent immanent in and working through nature as the supernatural. The new religions¹² found it in thought as the supreme Reality and in ethics as Eternal Law. And consequently while the former still saw the spiritual world diffused and confused with the world of matter the latter isolated it and set it over against the world of human experience, as Eternity against Time, as the Absolute against the Contingent, as Reality against Appearance, and the Spiritual against the Sensible".

It was the progressive delimitation of the Spirit through the gradual deepening of the religious consciousness that made this possible. Man was delivered from nature and raised above her by his discovery that he was not merely a child of nature. Thus the existence of a secular world is the result of what has been called 'the self criticism of religion',¹³ whereby the specifically religious becomes progressively distinguished from the specifically extra-religious. As the spirit and life of man are found to be not of the merely sensible the first step in the deliverance of man has been taken. God

12. C. Dawson, Christianity and the New Age. pp. 44-45. No. 3, of Essays in Order. Sheed and Ward. London, 1931.
by 'new religions' he is referring to Brahmanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and the Eleatics etc.

13. A. A. Bowman, Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. II. p. 39. Macmillan and Co. 1938.

Cf. ibid., p. 42. "The development of a secular standpoint can be understood only from the religious point of view. It is a phenomenon of the process by which religion advances beyond its own animistic beginnings".
(cf. also the fine passage on p. 57.)

and nature have been distinguished and the domains of nature have dominion over man no longer. The recognition of spirit becomes the revelation of nature.

In Hebrew religion we find the creator distinguished from his creation, wherein at last the external relationship of deity to nature becomes the inner moral relationship with man and

"The enfranchisement of the spirit in the world of religious values is at the same time the disfranchisement of nature".¹⁴

Thus man came by the avenue of religion to the concept of the secular. "The discovery of God's supernatural character invests the natural with a certain independence".¹⁵ Nature is now perceived to be below man, and in a measure subject to his control. Thus both the scientific and the idolatrous use of nature become possible.

b. The Christian distinction between man and God.

But there was yet another distinction needed. Man had transcended the animistic stage and its "failure to abstract the person from the natural world",¹⁶ but in the succeeding phase man thinks polytheistically and betrays the features not yet of a son of God but rather of a being who does not yet fully know God and he therefore creates gods in his own image. The secular world is not fully secular,¹⁷

^{14.} ibid., p. 45.

^{15.} cf. I Kings 19; Ps. 115: 5-9; Ps. 135: 16; and the whole of the prophetic message against confounding God and nature. cf. Isaiah I: 10-17;

^{16.} ibid., p. 47.

^{17.} By this is meant that there is a Christian and a non Christian interpretation of the secular. Christianity distinguishes man from nature and both from God. A false view of the secular either dismisses nature as transient or irrelevant to spirit, or else dismisses the spirit and conceives the natural and human world as self-sufficient. I have endeavored to use the word 'secularism' to denote the third of these views. The contexts will I hope make it clear.

in the religious sense of the term. While God and nature have been distinguished, God and man have remained confused and humanity is deified, or tends to conceive itself as supreme.

Thus we find that in the early church, from the time of Apostolic Fathers until Augustine, finds it necessary to combat this tendency of man to think "man is the model and God the likeness".¹⁸ Man perceives that his nature is akin to God's and he proceeds to behave as if he and God were identical. Religion however proclaims both man's relationship to God and the absolute distinction between man and God. And Christianity affirms that the latter is as important as the former. In fact, modern history is a commentary upon the fact that without the preservation of God's distinction from man neither man's relation to God nor his redemption from nature can be sustained. Man's dignity is rooted in his spiritual mystery.

It was in Christianity that this truth already previsioned in the prophets became luminous. It was in its confrontation by the Christ that the Christian church was brought to the recognition of man's subordinate status as a son of God and to the mystery of his quasi-autonomous nature whereby his vocation to sonship involves his free acknowledgment of and obedience to the constraints of the Spirit. Thus Christianity inverted the polytheistic relationship of God and man, and conceived of man as made in God's image. It is therefore the permanent contention of Christianity that the true knowledge of God involves that He be not confounded with nature, whether man or the physical universe, and that in this knowledge alone man comes to the true knowledge of himself.

18. ibid., p. 51. cf., also the controversy with gnosticism which personified all the abstractions of reason.

The Christian gospel was a witness to the fact that man had already been confronted in Christ by the final 'word' of all life--the "Word" of God embodied in living form. In Christ man was faced with the authentic demands of an order of spirit to which man was intrinsically subject, but which he could nevertheless disobey, even though he could not perfectly embody its demands.

In Christ man had been confronted by Life, the Goodness of whose particularised presence was the infinite contradiction of all his 'shuffling insincerities', thus bringing him under judgment. In Christ also man had encountered a Love that was the infinite fulfillment of all his voids and hunger, thus providing him with the reality of redemption. Its appeal was the authentic appeal of the unconditioned, the incapable initiative of the Spirit of God seeking to "reconcile man to Himself." The person of Jesus, the Church was constrained to admit, was somehow the presence of God in its midst. The Spirit by which man is called and to which he is akin had manifested itself. This was the burden of the Kerygma, that God had visited and redeemed his people, that 'the eschaton', the final and decisive act of God had already entered human experience.¹⁹

In the crucifixion human sin did its worst to the Life which had confronted it with such disturbing but wholesome healing. And there, when evil and good were in their closest and darkest juxtaposition, at the very moment that the sinful order was in the very act of transfixing goodness with the spear of her rebellious anger, there, at

19. See C. H. Dodd. Apostolic Preaching, chap. II. Cokesbury. 1937. Cf. II. Cor. 5:16; Col. 1: 13; Heb. 6:6; John 1: 1-14; 3:3; I. Peter 1:2, 23; I John 1: 1-5; etc.

that moment the orders of evil and good were unveiled for what they were, and there, man and the race were confronted with the luminous and indelible features of that other order by which man is claimed, the order of the Spirit.

There, at the cross, was revealed both the Righteousness of God as it stood athwart man's sinful ways in authentic condemnation of all sin, and there too was revealed that Love which was lower than even man's lowest depths in its quest for him. The crucifixion and the church's subsequent reflection upon its significance was a moment in the religious life of the world. No wonder Paul says "it was God that said, let light shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ".²⁰ It was the cross that was the full revelation of the critical and urgent, and yet withall, salvaging relation to grace in which all human life is set. It was the resurrection that ratified the nature of that spiritual reality as victor over the veto and dissolution of the grave.

This was the message of the Christian church. Time had been confronted by the Eternal, man by God, and the order of 'nature' by the order of 'Spirit'. This was the significance of the eschatological form of the gospel. It was proclaimed eschatologically not because eschatology was 'itself the substance of the gospel' but because it was the "form under which the absolute value of the gospel"²¹ could best be conveyed. In and through it alone could the eternal significance of the temporal be proclaimed and the relation of the eternal and temporal orders most clearly suggested.

20. 2. Cor. 4:6;

21. C. H. Dodd, op. cit., p. 64.

"Though we must make allowance also for the real eschatology of the early church along with what Dodd has called "realized eschatology."

Jesus was an internal apocalypse upon man and his history.

Not in the sense of the end of history, but as an unveiling of the inner and spiritual significance of man and history, and as a judgment upon them. The full nature of man's life was revealed as the glad one of vocation to sonship. The bondage to nature was broken by the grace of the Spirit. The creatureliness of man was saved from the cyclic frustrations in the merely natural by his entry into spiritual relationship with God. "We have not received the spirit of bondage", says Paul, "but the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father".²²

Jesus, for the Christian, was and is the final revelation of God and so of the distinction between the finite and the infinite, between man and God. He was man's dazzling confrontation by that spiritual order which while man cannot realize it he must yet always acknowledge, and penitently seek to obey if he is to live a spiritual existence. According to Christianity therefore, man points beyond himself, and his significance lies not in the temporal but in the eternal. The meaning of both man and history derive from that which while it operates within history nevertheless transcends history.

In Christian theology the doctrine of original sin is not in its essence tied up to the question of whether man was once perfect and 'fell' from that state. Its essential significance is the declaration of the fact that man is a creature whose distinction from the creator is shown not simply in his capitulation to lower passions, but much more fundamentally in his spiritual rebellion which insists on denying the validity of the

22. Romans. 8:15;

two orders of creator and creature, of seen and unseen, of natural and supernatural, of nature and spirit, temporal and eternal, man and God. The doctrine affirms that Sin is a spiritual act, and the outcome not of natural necessity but of man's spiritual stature, as the doctrine of the fall indicates. Man sins not by virtue of creation, and his being involved in nature, but by virtue of his spiritual capacities whereby he seeks to deny his limited spiritual status. Sin always involves the aspiration of the contingent and conditioned spirit of man to be unconditioned.²³

This doctrine is the church's witness to the natural man's insistence upon his own self-sufficiency and his belief in dependence upon nothing outside of himself. When Paul says "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive",²⁴ he is not discussing the origin of sin, or affirming that because Adam sinned we sin and die. He is affirming that the human order unopposed by the eternal order leads to the dissolution of human existence by virtue of its unspiritual acknowledgments---Adam is the representative of that order.

By the same token he is saying that the man who has realized the overtures of grace, and obeyed the demands of the spiritual order, and so is 'in Christ', lives within the acknowledgments of his spiritual context--this man is truly alive. The temporal has been eternalized and Christ is the token, yes, the presence of the new order.

There is no escaping this inner significance of the doctrines of sin by dwelling upon its speculative accretions and in rejecting them to seek the dismissal of its permanent truth.

23. Roman I; 18-32.

24. I Cor. 15: 22;

It begs the issue to say as Moxon does, regarding Genesis, chapter three, that it gives no place to the 'fall' because:

"It regards the passions as having been the cause of man's fall, but not the fall as having been the cause of man's passions".²⁵

Granting that the particular fall was occasioned by the passions we are still left with the mystery, "why could not man control his passions?" It is obvious that there is a defect behind the passions in man's will. While it is true that man does not continue to sin, as a sort of punishment for an initial misdemeanor or sin,²⁶ yet it remains that he performs his first evil and all succeeding acts of evil because, we contend, he is in some sense weak from the start. The Christian doctrine of the 'fall' must not be understood to teach that man sins because he is a child of nature. It is in fact a proud doctrine, as Berdyaev has pointed out. It is the doctrine that man misuses his spiritual propensities for selfish ends, to glorify himself, but sin is only possible for the creature that transcends mere 'nature'. In this doctrine we affirm man's dignity, and hence his tragic status. Paul in saying the 'natural man' discerns not the things of the spirit"²⁷ plainly doesn't mean to say that man sins purely as the outcome of natural necessity, as he shows for example in the first chapter of Romans. The 'natural' man means the man who has not acknowledged the reality of the spiritual order and his dependence upon it. The natural man is he who feels no spiritual contingency and conditioned status to his being as spirit. His deliverance from the sinful cycle, according

25. R. S. Moxon, The Doctrine of Sin, p. 225; London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1922.

26. Save in the psychological sense that habit begets itself in repeated acts.

27. 2 Cor. 2: 14;

to Christianity, is by God's grace in confronting man with the paradox of saving judgment. Judgment, because it brings the self-sufficiency of the finite order under judgment as the finitude which it is, and as the unrighteousness which it is in the heart of the natural man. Salvatory, because it opens up to man entrance into the life of spirit which is his true freedom.

The Christian conviction is that "man is a 'theological' being; that is, his ground, his goal, his norm, and the possibility of understanding his own nature, are all in God".²⁸

This then is the doctrine of man held by the church as the core of permanent truth within much scaffolding erected in theological argument. Man's dignity is that he is called to be spirit, and being essentially a spirit he can elect to live within an orbit of interests which excludes God. The paradox of human nature is that it tries to perpetuate a spiritual existence on pseudo-spiritual levels. In trying to be the 'god' that he is not man falls even below the 'man' that he really is. Man's greatest dignity is not that he is above nature but that he is a child of God, and that as a son of the Spirit, and only as such, does the rest of life and its activity fall into its proper place and receive its true perspective.

It is the humanism which denies this concept of man to which Christianity is unalterably opposed. And it is in their lapse from this wherein lies the real significance of both rationalistic and

28. E. Brunner in The Christian Understanding of Man, chap. iv, Willett Clark and Co., p. 142. 1938. Symposium of which chap. iv. is Brunner's summary of his Der Mensch im Widerspruch.

Cf. the prayer often used, "Almighty God in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life."

naturalistic humanism.

D. The Spirit and Medieval Christendom.

While the conflation of the Greek, Hebraic and Christian traditions affected much of medieval thought especially through Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian influences, yet it is true that this Christian concept of man more or less pervaded the medieval world in so far as it was a Christendom.

In fact the increasing universality of the influence of the church upon the life of the Middle Ages made for a baptism of medieval life and thought with a dominant, even a paramount religious flavor. To the medieval man the spiritual order was real, and the sense of man's relation to an unseen world, of which the church was the witness and prophet was a generally prevalent one.²⁹

So markedly was this so, that the Church which in patristic times was a church within a state, dealing with different territorial churches and different monarchies, found itself in the Carolingian empire elevated to the position of the "theological and liturgical organ of a quasi-religious Holy Roman Empire. It had become the "state-church of a church-state".³⁰ Through the monastic orders the medieval church was able to preserve before the eyes of the world a life which was not that of a 'group of individuals' holding similar opinions, as modern sects do; it was:

29. cf. C. Dawson, Medieval Religion, p. 5. "religion and civilization were so closely united that religious institutions were the main organs of culture and almost every form of social activity possessed a religious sanction".

30. ibid., p. 18.

"a true kingdom with its own constitution....it was the true organ of culture. Education, thought, literature, and art all existed primarily in and for the church, and it was the representative of the tradition of Latin civilization and order, as well as of the Christian ideals of charity and brotherhood".³¹

With the increase of prestige in the investiture struggle the Church arose to her greatest heights, and the State could be said to have come to exist within the Church. For the one brief moment of the thirteenth century it looked as if the Spiritual power might become the acknowledged leader and counsellor of the international and political life of man. The prospects of Christendom had never seemed so bright. St. Francis was a type of the new age felt to be coming in. The followers of Joachim of Flora preached "the coming of a third Kingdom and the Eternal Gospel". In his Expositio in Apocalypsin [Bk. i, chap. 5] Joachim divided history into three ages, the ages of the Father and the Law; the Son of the Gospel; the Spirit and ecstasy, or monachism. The latter period was to be the spiritualization of life. The Church and its hierarchy were to give way to the works, its true 'viri spirituales'. The whole world was to be subject to the spirit, to become a sort of sphere of monastic meditation and the sabbath of humanity thus to come into existence. The rule of the spirit was felt to be at hand and the third kingdom was to be the consummation of the Kingdom of God, creation subject without default to God. Men like St. Bonaventura, Roger Bacon, Ramon Lull, and Dante all championed this belief and lived in this hope.

Pope Gregory X summoned the council of Lyons in 1274 to restore

31. ibid., p. 24.

unity by the extinction of the Greek-Roman schism. Thus was the concept of Christendom nurtured and hope for, but it was destined not to be. The council of Lyons was 'the end of an era', and the beginning of quite another than was expected.

E. The Secularization of Man.

The movement of life and thought that from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries had been increasingly centripetal was reversed, and from the fourteenth century on a centrifugal and disintegrating movement set in.

The decline of the great concept of man as a child of God, and the gradual recession of the world of spiritual realities--this denouement, which has marked the path of modern history, is the one notable and distinguishing feature of the period of history since the Renaissance:

"In spite of its extreme diversity, all philosophy since the Renaissance is at bottom the same philosophy..... It all rests on the same conception of the nature of man and exhibits the same inability to realize the meaning of the dogma of Original Sin. Our difficulty now, of course, is that we are really incapable of understanding how any other view but the humanistic could be seriously held by intelligent and emancipated men".³²

Without lingering we must here note those factors which contributed to that secularization of man which modern humanism, from the Christian point of view, is an inadequate attempt to overcome.

a. The Instability of the Spiritual Enterprise.

First among the forces that threatened the spiritual prestige

32. T. E. Hulme, Speculations, pp. 12-13, Kegan Paul, 1924.
 cf. also J. Maritain, Freedom in the Modern World, pp. 116 f. Sheed and Ward, 1935.
 cf. also I, Babbitt, On Being Creative, p. 39. Riverside Press, 1932.

of the church and so of its message in the world was the rise of the national cultures due to the renaissance of western civilization. Under the impetus of this rebirth centrifugal forces gathered way. Vernacular tongues and national governments arose. The territorial churches reasserted themselves in opposition to Catholic universalism. The western states having become homogeneous and strong enough to subdue anarchy, now asserted their coming of age. Thus with the rise of national states, the prestige of the church and the hearing given to her message began to diminish.

Second, we must mention the captivity of the church when it was removed in the fourteenth century to Avignon. Before the eyes of all, the Church had been defeated in her conflict with the national monarchy. The Secular was victorious over the Spiritual. It was this that probably did more than anything else to destroy the Church's super-national prestige. Reformists began to seek aid from the secular powers against the Church and the spiritual was again discounted.

But by far the greatest source of instability was a third factor. This may be described as the confusion in the mind of the church, and its own times, between the religious and secular realms. There was as yet no full realization of the quasi-autonomous nature of man's creative life and activities within the temporal and social order, and no spiritual instrument of thought with which to control them. The church could not force the secular world of politics and society to abide by the spiritual principles, and yet the spontaneous and centrifugal tendencies could not escape a sense of the validity of those spiritual principles. The secular aspects of society and man's functions

within it had been neither clearly distinguished nor effectively related to the spiritual order:

"The symmetry and completeness of medieval social theory was set off by the inextricable confusion of ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions that characterized the actual conditions of medieval society".³³

J. Maritain reminds us that medieval civilization living 'in utero Ecclesiae' attempted 'almost without reflecting to translate the precepts of the Gospel not only in the Spiritual life of the citizens but also in the institutions of the temporal and social order', thus when the differentiations of life later arose,

"there was wanting an instrument of the philosophical and cultural order, an awareness, a discernment of the essential character of the temporal order, and of the life of man on earth, which could enable the Christian mind....to assess in the order of speculative and practical knowledge the value of the institutions of economic and social life from the point of view of the realization of the Gospel precepts in the social and temporal order".³⁴

We have had occasion previously to note the emergence of the secular concept by the progressive 'self-criticism' of religion whereby the specifically religious is distinguished from the specifically non-religious aspects of life. We must now remark upon the imperfect nature of the attitude to the secular due to the one-sided reaction against nature which had marked medieval Christianity. For it is this inadequate concept of the secular which made possible the chief characteristics of the modern world, was the core of the instability of the Church, and the reason for the lack to which Maritain refers.³⁵

³³. C. Dawson, op. cit., p. 27.

³⁴. J. Maritain. Freedom of the Modern World, p. 123. Scribner's 1936.

³⁵. For a stimulating discussion of this whole point, and one to which I am very much indebted see N. Berdyaev, The Meaning of History pp. 112-18; 128-149. Scribner's and Sons. 1936.
cf. also A. A. Bowman, op. cit., chap. II.

Man's original and confused relation to elemental nature wherein he sensed 'natural life as a living organism', and from which he was not adequately distinguished, all this had been replaced in his pilgrimage of spiritual differentiation culminating in his deliverance by Christ, whereby he was inducted to spiritual freedom and supremacy that gave him a dominance over nature.

But the collapse of the ancient world and the birth of Christianity issued in a divorce between man and the 'inner life of nature' which thus became 'deanimated'. 'A gulf now separated the natural man from the man who had entered upon the path of Redemption'. The Christian concept of the natural as within, partaking of and contributing to the purposes of the spiritual order was not yet fully articulate. The heroic struggles of the Christian saints are the examples of a Christian liberation which has reversed the really Christian freedom and has turned against the true use of the natural, thus misconceiving the secular by a false spiritualization of it.

Nature left thus outside the orbit of the spirit, when it is recalled to inclusion in man's life by the rise of technics and the arts, results in becoming the rival and substitute for the spiritual rather than its material instrument. This was the case even though man's ability to examine nature, and the possibility of science were themselves the outcome of the Christian deliverance of man from nature.

This was the source of the instability of the medieval enterprise. The naturism of pre-Christian times which had left man and nature undifferentiated, was succeeded by a 'spiritualization' which admitted no true status to nature or man's natural life.

The centralization of all life under the spirit without distinction of the relative autonomy of nature within the spiritual was the real deficiency of the medieval world.

With the Renaissance the creative forces of man were liberated and the theme of modern history becomes the adventurous reclamation by man of a real relation to nature. The 'secular' was to be found to consist neither in the repudiation of the unspiritual aspects of life, nor in the elevation of the secular to the level of an absolute autonomy.

This lesson it would appear had to come. Man's true freedom could come only by a free acknowledgment of the regnancy of the spiritual order over the soon-to-be-known world of man's creative adventures.

The meaning of the Humanistic era since the Renaissance is precisely this.³⁶ Man had to face again the "ye shall not surely die" of the temptation in the garden of modern technics and the arts, to conceive himself as self-sufficient, and to mistake his relative autonomy for absolute autonomy. His capitulation to this temptation is the tragic reality of modern history, and the source of the disintegration. Man has secularized himself.

"science, art, political and economic life, society and culture now become autonomous. This process of differentiation is synonymous with the secularization of human culture. Even religion is secularized. Art and science, the state and society enter the modern world along a secular path..... the transference of the centre of gravity from the divine depths to purely human creation..... That is the essential character of modern history".³⁷

36. See p. 6. of chapter I of this thesis for a quotation from Berdyaev on this point.

37. N. Berdyaev. op. cit., pp. 130-131.
cf. His Freedom and the Spirit, pp. 214-228.

Thus heavily did the religious bias tilt the scales against herself. The rise of the national cultures; the loss of prestige for the things of the spirit through the Church's 'captivity'; and the instability of the whole spiritual enterprise due to the inadequate valuation of the mutual claims of the natural and spiritual orders, these are the three factors of the intrinsic weakness of the medieval spiritual enterprise itself, which opened the door to the secularization of man in the new life of the modern world.

b. Other Sources of Secularism.

There were, however, many other forces which hastened and contributed to this progressive amputation of man from the spiritual centres of his life.

(i). Urbanization.

With travels which increased very markedly man became fascinated with the wonders of this world. Commercial enterprises netted wealth and the cities began to grow. Urbanized living brought man into closer housed groups. There we find already that beginning of congestion and that insulation which town and city life was to erect between man and the expansive contact with the mysteries of nature. The city is the forerunner of that collective existence lived under a pressure which isolates man from the deeper questions and transfers his attention from ultimate to immediate issues. With the growth of city life there is the beginning of that incarceration within the walls and streets which holds the promise of regimentation and dehumanization. The obvious

features of city life are not the things of the spirit; they are the people who jostle your elbows, and tread on your toes, the magic mystery of its terrestrial masonry and its myriad humanity. The forces which are apt to get the most attention are those of human genius, one's own right arm, and the jungle of political life where man engages in covert war with those he considers the threats to his economic security. Its setting is distinctly a humanistic and this-worldly one.

Man, not God, is the most evident. The secular, rather than the religious, is apt easily to be the focus of attention, and God becomes more and more recessive as man increasingly conceives the relatively autonomous to be the absolutely autonomous.

Not the least of the secularizing forces in the new city life was the advent of measured time. In Europe it was in the monasteries that order and regularity first became widely used. Within their walls the 'erratic fluctuations and pulsations' of the external world were overcome. The ringing of the monastery bells seven times in twenty-four hours punctuated monastic life and gave it a rhythmic beat! It is ironic, as Mumford suggests, that the Church was the forerunner of capitalism in the use of the strictly measured day.

The momentous step was taken when in the fourteenth century the clock was invented and the punctuation of life by the temporal reminder passed beyond the cloister, and everywhere in the towns and villages of the new Europe there was the everpresent clank of the clock. "The clouds that could paralyze the sundial, the freezing that could stop the water clock on the winter night"³⁸ were both overcome. The life of

38. Lewis Mumford. Technics and Civilization p. 14.
Harcourt Brace and Co. 1934.

the peasants, workers, merchants and landlords was lived under the everpresent regularity of measured time.

'Time-keeping' passed into 'time-serving'. Furthermore, with the possibility to measure time arose the possibility to telescope work and to manipulate labor. As time increased its importance in the life of man he came to be more and more a child of the temporal, a time-server, and "Eternity ceased gradually to serve as the measure and focus of men's actions".³⁹ Thus was initiated man's subjection to a routine which has gone on ever since. Is not the bourgeois ideal to be 'as regular as clockwork'? These then are the forces symbolized, we suggest, under 'urbanization' that contributed to his oversight of his wider contexts and led him to substitute a temporal for an eternal frame of reference.

(ii). Isolated Religion.

It is not the place here to assess even if it were possible, the contribution of Protestantism to Capitalism.

We are only concerned here to note that there has been at least enough of an embarrassing complicity with the evil of the world of commercial and economic society to bring the church to repentance, and certainly to judgment.

On the whole there was an attendant evil to the good in the separation of the Church and State. While Luther and Calvin could never have sanctioned many of the practices which later came to nest under the protective wing of the Protestant religion,⁴⁰ yet their interpretation

³⁹. ibid.

⁴⁰. Cf. R. H. Tawney. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, chap. II Penguin Series, 1938.

of religion did have an individualistic outlook. With the encroachment of the growing world of finance and commerce it was natural that the inner and the outer spheres of man's life should become more and more separated and that religion should have had as it were the inner hearth of man's soul for its rule, but the outer world of business etc. became the happy hunting ground where the enterprising succeeded in developing the 'economic virtues'.⁴¹

Calvin says: "If we are cruelly vexed by an inhuman prince or robbed and plundered by one, prodigal and avaricious--let us remember our own offenses against God which doubtless are chastized by these plagues".

It is not hard to see how this principle could be turned equally against all victims of the unrighteousness in society, and against those who might rise against the unjust dispossession of the poor by the rich. Especially noteworthy is Calvin's idea that success in the affairs of the world may be taken as a sign of the blessing of God. The Calvinist, that is to say, could not save himself by his works, but he could, by successful ventures in the world's work, surround himself with the evidence that he wasn't damned!⁴²

This was indeed to play into the hands of the capitalistic individualism, and to open the door to the blessing of economic selfishness with religious sanctions! 'Business is business' and 'politics is politics' come to imply their non-moral nature, and Christians did, and still do, practice double standards without passing judgment upon the evil of their social acts. Protestantism sanctified the secular tasks but found that it 'led inevitably to a sanctification of secular motives

⁴¹. ibid., chap. IV, especially pp. 205 f; and notes, p. 285.

⁴². Cf. F. R. Barry. Christianity and the New World, pp. 28-29. Harper's, 1932.

which it did not desire but could not prevent.⁴³

This will suffice to indicate that one of the strongest factors in secularizing modern life was not merely the tendency of the Protestant Church to conceive the secular as not amenable to the spirit. It was the deliberate involvement of Christians, without protest and judgment, in the unethical ways of the world. What reality could the spiritual order be expected to attain in the eyes of the world under such exposition?

Thus again the reality of the order of spirit passes under a cloud of suspicion and the irreligious secular freedom of the spoilers of this world is only matched by the hatred and disbelief in the hearts of the despoiled, and again man is secularized!

(iii). The Philosophy of Science.

Another aspect that contributed to the secularization of man was not so much the rise of science as the philosophy which was associated with it, though certain effects brought about by science due to misconceptions as to their real effects were also detrimental.

The first effect of the new scientific findings of Galileo, Copernicus etc. was to 'remove the irrelevant supernaturalisms' and to displace much of the detail of the Aristotelian cosmology still associated largely with religious deductions. Not only was the authenticity of religious insight thus brought into question, but nature was progressively conceived as mechanical, thus displacing the need of God, and the deductive approach from universals gave way to the inductive approach from particulars.

43. R. Niebuhr. Does Civilization Need Religion? p. 102, see also pp. 92-95.

Again, in the conquest science made possible over a portion of the physical universe, and still more in the knowledge that he was himself relatively supreme as nature's interrogator and manipulator, here again man was strongly influenced to conceive himself as absolutely autonomous and independent.

More than either of these, however, was the influence involved in the objective approach of science and man's belief that only through this method was truth obtainable. Man the Scientific observer had now looked out upon the universe. In doing so he had excluded himself, man the observer, from observing himself. For you must always use a bit of yourself to look at yourself, so that if you look at yourself with a part of yourself you never really see yourself. This is the limitation of the objective method of science. The importance of this feature for our purpose is that man, the subject in whom values and the qualitative are to be found is himself excluded.¹⁴⁴ Man ceases to be a subject and becomes an object. It is not surprising that the interpretation of man is narrowed down to solely those aspects which admit of 'rational demonstration founded upon sensible experience'.

Upon the objective view of science man comes to be explained by environment, stimulus-response arcs, glands, and physical and biological urges, by anything, in fact, except a free spirit, or will. Man is in his mystery as a subject explained away. The scientific psychologist becomes a physiologist when he conceives man as entirely commensurate with quantitative categories. But, outside of this extreme

¹⁴⁴. See John Macmurray, Reason and Emotion-- especially chapter on 'Art and the Future' for a treatment of this.

See also N. Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, Scribners, chap. I.

type we find the world of values gone. Self-knowledge becomes mere fancy. Man, the subject is no more, and the impersonal principles of the outer and physico-biological world are now by the investigator turned back on man to explain him! And lo, the world of spirit is not in all his thoughts, nor man as subject in any of the experiments. Thus under the weighty authority of a philosophy built up in the name of science God, the world of transcendental reality, and the Spirit are ushered out of the universe. Man alone is the highest there is, and his life has no metaphysical significance!

These then are some of the forces that have led to the progressive disintegration of the spiritual vision, and to the secularization of modern man. Let us sum them up.

The successful challenge of the church's attempt to bring about the Kingdom of God in Christendom by some sort of compulsive and external means; the recession of ecclesiastical and therefore of Spiritual prestige and authority through the church's defeat by the secular powers; the mistaken and unstable conception of the mutual claims of the natural and spiritual orders held by the church, which unduly suppressed the former thus leading to a reaction against the latter; the incarceration of man in this worldly categories of time and space to the exclusion of spiritual and eternal contexts, leading to his 'civilized' preoccupation with immediate rather than ultimate issues; the presumption of the invalidity of religion and the unreality of the Spiritual brought about by the insulation of its ethical import for social life by the individualistic religion of the churches, particularly the Protestant forms; and finally, the materialistic interpretations of man which sprang from the philosophy built upon the findings of the objective

method of science, which acknowledged no metaphysical or spiritual reality transcending man--these are the sources of our current disintegration and the loss of the knowledge of man himself.

F. Our Contemporary Perdition

This is the great loss and the dark void into which modern man has fallen. Man has lost his sense of confrontation with the whole order of Spirit. The mystery of time's converse with the eternal, and of man's calling as a child of the Spirit, and as a son of the living God have been all but obliterated. For this has been substituted a 'flatland' of 'euclidean' dimensions. There is no longer any antecedent reality objectively distinct from and transcending man. The text of modernity as someone has put it is no longer 'now are we the sons of God' etc. but it is 'now are we the sons of Darwin and it doth not yet appear what we shall be! History becomes a neat bannister rail of uninterrupted ascent up the stairs of time, and its hope is an automatic 'Excelsior' crowned with a 'gaudeamus igitur'.

In the great liberation from the religious centre of controls and standards man plunged into an era dominated by Liberalism and Individualism. Economics became the expression of free trade, and unbridled economic individualism, for which the state acted as a policeman whose only duty was to see that no molestation of the traffic of individual enterprise was permitted. Into all the spheres of life, this element of false liberalism entered, and we got romanticism in literature, relativism in ethics, liberalism in economics, idealism in philosophy, modernism in theology, and expressionism in art.

The devastation of this era is now becoming manifest. This liberalism was itself the mother of our abortive times, for it held within itself the seed of its own dissolution, as indeed all mere humanism does.

By the reduction of life to the naturalistic levels, and horizontal dimensions alone it enthrones the principle of anarchy. This was its weakness. Amputated from his spiritual centre of reference man became unstable. The atomization and disintegration of his life, his powers, and his society ensued. Disavowing the centripetal source of spiritual controls man finds no authority transcending the individual in the name of which he can arrest the centrifugal forces of civilization. Here is the 'dilemma of the liberated', and the tragic nature of our contemporary perdition. 'Modern' man is without God and without hope in the world. Herein lies the historical paradox that the hour of her greatest external success and achievement finds the modern world upon the abyss of her inner and spiritual poverty.

This, as Berdyaev and others have reminded us, is the irony of humanism since the Renaissance, that man's belief in himself has not strengthened but weakened him. Man entered modern history confident and rejoicing in the birth of his newly found powers, but he stands at the end of this same modern era a disillusioned soul, frightened at his ignorant impotence, and terrified at his inability to achieve his freedom from the slavery of circumstance, and the rule of his own appetites.⁴⁵

The 'intellectual vagrancy' of man acknowledging no authority above the human has involved man in the loss of his own image. Torn

45. Cf. N. Berdyaev, The End of Our Time. Chapter I, Sheed and Ward, 1933.

P. Tillich, The Religious Situation, Henry Holt and Co., 1932.

P. Wust, Crisis in the West, Sheed and Ward, 1931.

from the centrality of his spiritual moorings he has become a superficial and eccentric creature. The history of the modern world is the tragic story of the disintegration and atomization of man and his whole culture. This is the meaning of the historic moment in which we are now living and through which we are now passing.

Man has lost the living significance of all forms of his life. In the realm of philosophy, sundered from the spiritual mystery of knowledge man turned the logic of his reasoning upon his principles of knowledge. In the hands of Descartes objective being becomes subjective thought and the world is made to exist within comprehension, and not our comprehension within the world. But with rationalism once at work there is no half-way house until man ends in subjective idealism. The loss of man's spiritual image thus brought about the loss of his intellectual status!

So, in all areas of life, the fractional aspects of man become dominant until man as man, is dissolved, and only some of the functions of man remain.

In the economic world he becomes a cog and is reformed in the image of the machine and subordinate to the machine-minded civilization he now so faithfully serves!

In politics he becomes the instrument of the state and subject to its whims. While the state becomes the magnified hypostasis of the human features, the personal life of the real man is lost and confounded by his reinsertion in the nature from which he was once delivered. In the modern state man is sinking back into that natural level of the collective with which history began. Thus does the tailspin ensue as

man surrenders his spiritual world!

In literature the creative forces disintegrate with the loss of the world of eternal. The majority of modern literature compiles and describes, but it does not create. An atomized and pulverized pseudo-man limps down the modern page. Man ceases to be integral man; he now becomes a fractional man, presented to us as a function of one of his functions. He is a function of sex, of the subconscious, of the will to power, or what you will. But these are all functions of man, and not man a function of any one of them. Thus is man inverted and perverted.

The arts become infected with the disjunction and dismemberment of human life and we get painting that is all foreground and no background, or where there is an irrelevant and haphazard juxtaposition of disjunctive half-forms. A bit of a potato, a piece of glass, a nail, a hand, a shoe, a monkey wrench, a wheel, and so on. Thus do some of our modern works of art appear like the weird performances of mysterious high priests standing in the twilight muttering their incomprehensible incantations at the broken altars of a once significant faith.

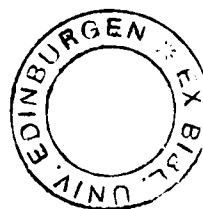
Education herself falls prey to the atomic and separatistic aspects of modernity. Students and professors tend to become searchers with no august sense of the magnificence of living and the interrelatedness or spiritual significance of all knowledge. The secular and irreligious matrix of much educational philosophy produces an activist twist to the modern mind whereby vocational efficiency has displaced the discipline of the spirit of man.

It is when we look at these features that we can measure the distance which modern man has descended from the Christian concept of man.

A secularized man has produced a barbarous civilization. And the salvation hysteria of the contemporary rush to the new collectives is the feverish attempt to arrest the collapse of modern culture by the erection of some god or other, counterfeit though it is, wherein men may seek some kind of communion, counterfeit though it will have to be also. For these external quests for unity are but "the reverse side of man's inner division and deep isolation", ⁴⁶ and the real solution will have to be an interior solution. It was the attempt to overcome this anarchic and disorderly tendency in modern life that prompted the humanism of Irving Babbitt. His was the serious attempt to reinstate and distinguish "law for man" from "law for thing". John Dewey's humanism likewise has an interest in man, but it is directed at salvaging man from being lost in the transcendent levels of spiritual metaphysics, he seeks to do this by denying the validity of the whole sphere of transhuman realities by the sufficiency of the purely human. Babbitt's humanism is a protest against the lowering of man, and Dewey's a protest against the elevation of man by relating him to a God above him. While the two humanisms differ in many respects, they are at one in affirming man's self-sufficiency apart from the invocation of revelation, and are in this sense, to Christian thought, both of them humanistic.

To an examination of these two representatives we must now turn.

46. N. Berdyaev. op. cit., p. 36



Chapter Three

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM

IRVING BABBITT

- A. Two Laws Discrete
- B. The Naturalistic Fallacy
 - a. Utilitarian Naturalism - Bacon
 - b. Sentimental Naturalism - Rousseau
 - i. Neo-Classic Formalism
 - ii. Romantic Spontaneity
 - c. The Naturalistic Disintegration
- C. The Declaration of Humanism
 - a. The Need for a Law of Measure
 - b. Humanistic Method - Critical Positivism
 - c. Humanistic Doctrine - The 'Higher Will'
 - d. Humanistic Salvation
- D. Conclusion

The key to references throughout this chapter is as follows, the initials standing for the respective books:

R and R.....	Rousseau and Romanticism
L A C	Literature and the American College
M M F C	The Masters of Modern French Criticism
N L	The New Laokoon
H A	Humanism and America
O B C	On Being Creative
D L	Democracy and Leadership

Chapter III.

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM----IRVING BABBITT.

A. Two Laws Discrete.

The general contention that Professor Babbitt is concerned to maintain is summed up in the lines of Emerson with which he prefaced his book "Literature and the American College":

"There are two laws discrete
Not reconciled
Law for man and law for thing
The last builds town and fleet
But it runs wild
And doth the man unking".

This humanism may be tentatively described as the regulation of human life in accordance with the realization of the 'law for man' as distinct from the 'law for thing'. Humanism preserves, that is, a critical and positive spirit. Babbitt feels that the humanist is the only "complete positivist".¹ For while he admits all naturalistic interpretations of man in so far as man is a part of the realm of nature and thus subject to the 'law for thing', yet he insists on adding to this the specifically human level and refuses "to deny the duality of human nature",² and thus avoid the 'law for man'. Babbitt launches his whole frontal attack upon the naturalizing tendencies that have led to the overlooking of the 'law for man' in the preoccupation of the post-Renaissance

1. R and R. p. xi.

2. ibid., p. xi. cf. also p. 26. "man is plainly subject to the natural law. What is not empirical is to bring the whole of human nature under this law".

world with the 'law for thing'.

He was led to his life-long task by his perception when elected to the chair of French literature at Harvard, that 'Comparative literature' involved criticism, which in turn involved standards. The latter involved again some theory of human nature that could find "a unifying principle to oppose to mere flux and relativity".³ He saw that one's attitude not merely toward literature but life⁴ was involved in any appreciation of the arts. Advanced learning was otherwise threatened by sterility, he felt.

As far back as 1908 he wrote: "Comparative literature will prove one of the most trifling of subjects unless studied in strict subordination to humane standards",⁵ for "the vital question is, after all, not whether one chanson de geste is derived from another chanson de geste, but whether either work has in itself any claim to the attention of a serious person".⁶

It was Babbitt's conviction not only that some "unifying principle" could be found, but also that naturalistic currents had obscured or ignored it, and that in this loss lay the confusion of the arts, and indeed of the political and social life of man. He felt that the humanism he advanced was the reinstatement of the real man for the naturalistic pseudo-man. Naturalism reduces man but a more 'positive' and 'critical' humanism presents him as he is.

It will be plain from the foregoing that Babbitt will tolerate

3. M M F C. p. ix.

4. N L. p. x.

5. L A C. p. 124.

6. ibid., p.123.

no confusion of humanism with humanitarianism. He is at pains, in fact to distinguish humanism not only from humanitarianism which overlooks or blurs the law for man, but also from Neo-classicism which violates the lower half of human nature in the interests of the higher; from all scientific or romantic naturalism that violates the upper half of human nature in favor of the lower, and also from all supernaturalisms, which Babbitt feels, while they may be justifiable and auxiliary to humanism, are nevertheless not needed to get started, for humanism can establish positivisticly the 'law for man' without the invocation of revelation or any appeal to the metaphysical.

Humanitarianism he defines as "sympathy for mankind in the lump, faith in its future progress and desire to serve the great cause of this progress".⁷ Humanism on the other hand, he points out is neither an indiscriminate sympathy with, or expansive receptiveness to everything in general, nor a merely rigid and selective discipline, a sheer refraining that destroys the spontaneous and creative. If the former is the humanitarian fallacy, then the latter is the neo-classicists error.

Humanism lies in between. It is a 'disciplined and selective sympathy'⁸ in accordance with the 'law for man'. 'Proportionateness', 'decorum', 'nothing too much', and a perception of the "universal centre" are, Babbitt reminds us, the traits of all "genuine humanists ancient and modern".⁹ Humanists therefore are prophets who fight both the neo-classic attempts to arrest life's spontaneity by the reduction of the sympathetic and expansive side through the heightening of discipline alone, and the naturalistic attempts to suspend discipline and establish

7. ibid., p. 7.

8. ibid., p. 6.

9. H A. pp. 26-30.

a life of uncontrolled expansiveness.

Humanism affirms the presence in man as "a psychological fact", as a datum of "immediate consciousness"¹⁰ of a 'higher will' experienced negatively, and in its "relation to the expansive desires, as a will to refrain".¹¹ Positively it is the "higher immediacy that is known in its relation to the lower immediacy---the temperamental man with his impressions and emotions and expansive desires---as the power of vital control (frein vital).¹²

Humanism is a mediation between extremes. As Pascal said, a humanist is one who has the "power to harmonize in himself opposite virtues and to occupy all the space between them (tout l'entredeux)".¹³ Humanism is then the realization of human standards in the world of movement by something in man which stands above the flux. Life is a flexible law, a "balance between unity and plurality",¹⁴ a perception of a "oneness that is always changing,¹⁵ and which is "inextricably mixed up with illusion".¹⁶

The central doctrine of this humanism is thus man's distinctness from nature, and his independence of the transcendent world. It "suffers equally from the excess of naturalism and an excess of supernaturalism".¹⁷ The latter can be superadded to humanism, Babbitt would feel, but it is simply corroborative of humanistic values and not antecedently indispensable for them. If at the Renaissance humanism was a protest against supernaturalism, it is needed now as an antidote to naturalism.

Since Spinoza said that man was "not in nature as one empire in

10. ibid., p. 39.

11. ibid., p. 47.

12. ibid., p. 40.

13. L A C. p. 22.

14. ibid., p. 28.

15. R and R. p. xiii.

16. ibid., p. xiv.

17. L A C. p. 28.

another empire, but as a part in a whole"¹⁸ man has become increasingly conceived in subhuman terms. This reduction of man to purely naturalistic status has led, Babbitt feels, to the obliteration of the realization of the two laws. "A literal obedience to facts has extinguished every spark of that life by which man is truly man", ¹⁹ so that now "for the naturalist there is only one law, the law for thing", ²⁰ and happiness is thought by many to lie at the "bottom of a crucible".²¹

It is as a critique of this naturalistic conception of life that Babbitt was led to the exposition of that humanism with which his name is associated and of which he was the leader. It would be hard to find a more devastating criticism of naturalism, or a more illuminating discussion of the significance of human life, as far as he goes, anywhere in contemporary literature, however much one may have to conclude that Babbitt's own interpretation of human nature was incomplete and inadequate.

The cause of the "eleutheromania" or desire "to throw off not simply outer and artificial limitations, but all limitations whatsoever"²² was traced by Babbitt to two types of naturalism that have marked the post-Renaissance world. It will help us to understand his humanism if we first acquaint ourselves with his survey and criticism of naturalism.

18. ibid., p. 29.

19. ibid., p. 90.

20. N L. p. 200.

21. L A C. p. 89.

22. ibid., p. 196.

B. The Naturalistic Fallacy

The substitution of the Copernican anthropocentric universe for the old ushered man into the physical immensity in which his increasing emphasis became the Spinozistic identification of himself with nature. This led to two interpretations of nature according to one's temperament. The scientific naturalism looked for victory over nature, and the sentimental naturalism looked for the benefits that come from what Wordsworth called a 'wise passiveness'. Corresponding to these there grew up the 'scientific humanitarians' who inspired the positivistic and utilitarian movements and the sentimental humanitarians' who were the forerunners of the romantic movement. Bacon is the type of the scientific, or shall we say, Baconian naturalism, while Rousseau is the type of the sentimental or Rousseauistic naturalism.

a. Utilitarian Naturalism----Bacon

While both Baconian and Rousseauistic naturalism neglected the 'law for man', the former may be roughly distinguished from the latter by its tendency to substitute what Babbitt calls "an outer for an inner working",²³ and the attempt to find in the phenomenal world man's controlling satisfactions. Scientific, or Baconian naturalism therefore became positive and critical but in the purely scientific aspects of law for things, in the external sense. Scientific positivism, unlike its humanistic counterpart, sets up "purely quantitative and dynamic standards".²⁴ In the quest for "dominion over things" the utilitarian naturalist loses

23. H A. p. 34.

24. L A C. p. 40.

"dominion over himself" and becomes 'unkinged'. Babbitt points out that Bacon's prayer in his Novum Organum that "the kindling of the natural light" might not result in a "weakening of faith and blindness to the divine mysteries" was a premonition of this possibility.

The "service of humanity" becomes the typical attitude of the Baconian naturalist. This service is conceived in external rather than in internal terms. Power is conceived in utilitarian ways and not in the humanistic or religious sense of spiritual or inner conquest and poise. Progress becomes false progress visioned as the multiplication and refinement of external 'things'. Scientific humanitarianism exalts the libido dominandi whether it be in the intellectual or practical spheres. Thus we get the scientific misuse of literature itself. Its significance is exteriorized for purposes of intellectual manipulation and cognitive power, and a learned modernity comes to use "a dialogue of Plato merely as a peg on which to hang philological disquisitions".²⁵ Or we get the philologist who reduces his interest in literature to a sheer preoccupation with the linguistic minutiae and grammatical machinery. He becomes unable to distinguish between literature and literary history, and literature becomes a department of philology.

Here again we get the reduction of the two laws to one. Language in so far as it falls under the 'law for thing' and the mechanics of grammar is philology, but Babbitt insists, in so far as it also expresses 'law for man' and is the vehicle for that which is truly representative of man it is literature.²⁶ The latter truth, however, escapes the scientific naturalist.

25. ibid., p. 90

26. cf. ibid., p. 121.

It is this great void that receives in Babbitt's works the great condemnation. He traces its effects particularly upon education where he finds that a modern doctorate too often stands for "a discipline in facts" with too little "discipline in ideas".²⁷ He writes:

"The danger of the scholar of today is rather to philologize everything, to turn literature and history and religion itself into a mere 'circle of tales',---in other words, to make endless accumulations of facts, and then to fail to disengage from these accumulated stores their permanent human values".²⁸

Thus we get in this scientific naturalism its typical product, the hustler. It is this which underlies our activistic temper in the western world. And it is this which involves the loss of the knowledge of man, and the preoccupation with externals that has led to the unfortunate concept of progress with which modernity is now afflicted, a progress which has produced an advanced civilization and a backward culture; a brilliant facade of contemporary life with a blank at its heart. In a characteristic passage Babbitt says:

"the effect on a mature observer of an age so entirely turned from the One to the Many as that in which we are living must be that of a prodigious peripheral richness joined to a great central void".²⁹

This false progress however did not come about without the interaction of the sentimental humanitarianism upon the scientific form. It is to the marriage of these two centrifugal and mutually inspirational forces that Babbitt traces our modern dilemma.

27. ibid., p. 132.

28. ibid., p. 126.

29. R and R. p. 366.

b. Sentimental Naturalism---Rousseau

The modern sentimentalism of the Rousseauistic type Babbitt traces in his 'Rousseau and Romanticism' where he finds its genesis in a reaction to the Neo-Classical attempt to cure the romanticism of the sixteenth century.

i. Neo-Classic Formalism

The exuberance of the Renaissance while at first for the most part 'compatible with humanistic exclusiveness' and decorum soon led to an increasing emphasis upon "the benefits of liberty as compared with the benefits of restraint".³⁰ The consequent release of the imagination thus expansively and anarchicly indulged in led inevitably to an era of 'concentration' or restraint in an attempt to humanize the conceits of the imagination by a reintroduction of the classical controls and thus arrest the 'intellectual romanticism'. The neo-classical movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was an attempt to get something less unique and more representative. In this attempt, however, they misinterpreted Aristotle by construing the 'imagination' as the opposite of 'judgment', and in making 'imitation' a slavish reproduction of models. If the romantic erred in trying to be unique and novel, the neo-classicist sin was formalism. Where Aristotle had said, 'be representative', the neo-classicist had substituted 'a rule of thumb and servile imitation'.³¹

Thus the Neo-classical tended under the tyranny of correctness to reduce art to the artificial. The spontaneous side of life became

30. L A C. p. 15

31. L A C. p. 220; cf. chapter viii.

unduly suppressed, poetry was thought of as mere fancy,³² and only prose was conceived as having to do with sober truth. Neo-classic decorum thus became a parody upon the Aristotelian and truly classical form.³³

The deadness of neo-classical imitation Babbitt repeatedly illustrates by Scaliger's remark, "why imitate nature directly when we have in Virgil a second nature?".³⁴ It was this formal and rigid interpretation of the laws of imitation, restraint, decorum and nature that opened the door for the Romantic protest in the eighteenth century aided as it was by a growing faith in man's progress due to the hopes generated by scientific beginnings.

The reaction to the whole neo-classic regimentation of life especially in poetry was finally bound to come. The formalist denial, for example, of 'feeling' in lyric poetry was soon answered by the romantic affirmation that lyrical poetry was true poetry, containing, that is, a genuine expression of creative feeling, and also that it was not imitation, and by this the romantic meant in reaction to the neo-classical and formal concept, not imitation at all! This was the naked romantic protest, and with it romanticism dismissed all imitation in favor of mere novelty.³⁵ In its new independence it surrendered all attempts to be representative and espoused the cause of spontaneity and uniqueness.

ii. Romantic Spontaneity

Thus as early as 1759 in Young's 'Conjectures On Original Composition', the cult of the original, the free and the untrammelled has

32. N L. pp. 62-63. cf. chaps. 1, and 4.

33. cf. R and R. pp. 26-31, for other formalizing influences.

34. R and R. p. 19. cf. pp. 9-31.

35. cf. N L. p. 14. f. Where Babbitt develops this aspect.

begun. The new devotion to feeling was the opposite of the neo-classic formalism, and did not discern the element of truth in the formalist extremes. Babbitt concludes that if Horace's "ut pictura poesis" (as is painting so is poetry) fittingly sums up the neo-classic doctrine, then we may say that F. Schlegel's saying, "Architecture is frozen music",³⁶ aptly describes the romantic spirit. Romantic genius will have nothing to do with Slavish copy. The "return to nature" comes to mean "let yourself go". Unlike classical genius in antiquity the romantic version did not mean "imitate what is normal and representative in man and so..... become decorous". It meant get rid of decorum, be original, be yourself. Poetry, for Diderot, Babbitt reminds us, "called for something enormous, barbaric, savage".³⁷

Thus the naturalism of the scientific and utilitarian type which betrayed man to the 'law for thing' by substituting "an outer for an inner working", was augmented by a further and twin naturalism that sells man's higher self into bondage to his lower self, within him. The romantic movement is the continual contrast of 'nature' versus 'convention' to the disparagement of the latter. The boredom of neo-classical uniformity and its artificial polish and symmetry were answered by the insistence of the romantics for "variety as the spice of life", and the cult of the picturesque.³⁸

Rousseau thus advanced his appeal for primitiveness, overlooking the fact that even these primitives, who never having seen he thus idyllicly invoked, even they, all had their conventions and taboos,

36. ibid., pp. 3; 61.

37. R and R. p. 38.

38. ibid., p. 55.

and their incipient perception of something in man above the flux. Romanticism thus became "an endless and aimless vagabondage of the emotions with the imaginations as their free accomplice".³⁹ Romantic naturalism matches the false theory of progress in Baconian utilitarianism with a correspondingly false theory of liberty. If the Baconian neglects the law for man, the romantic identifies it with his feelings. The exaltation of the libido dominandi is now joined by the libido sentiendi. Thus in overthrowing the neo-classic the romantic cut himself off, Babbitt points out, from the Aristotelian solution, for the dogmatic Aristotle of the formalists was not the real Aristotle. The positive and critical Aristotle does not suggest that one 'imitate' slavishly. For him imitation is a creative but representative act. "Through all the welter of the actual one penetrates to the real and so succeeds without ceasing to be individual in suggesting the universal".⁴⁰

For the romantic, on the other hand, feeling is supreme (sentio ergo sum), and the sin of the race for him is the eating of the tree of knowledge, for it is reason that divides the life of man.⁴¹

The romantic spirit then was, in the humanist's estimation, a relapse into an uncritical and unpositivistic conception of "nature". In its rebellion at all "keep off" signs, it gave tragic embodiment to what its modern apostles continue to incarnate, namely the spirit which conceives itself as 'emancipated' when, as Mr. Brownell whom Babbitt quotes would say, it is "merely unbuttoned".⁴²

39. ibid., p. 79.

40. ibid., p. 17.

41. N L. p. 67.

42. O B C. p. 208.

The growing faith in human perfectibility and progress which commenced under Baconian influence had been further strengthened by Cartesian rationalism and man's faith in his ability to reason out all things from 'clear ideas'. But the utilitarian 'kingdom of man' did not receive its enthusiastic tone and drive until it was supplemented by the Rousseauistic doctrine of the rights of man.⁴³ The Cartesian world of mechanical and mathematical formulae was not made alive until it was invested with the glory of the unfettered human life. The 'religion of humanity' was made possible by the union in the eighteenth century of these two streams---the scientific and the romantic. The naturalism of the one was augmented by the naturalism of the other. In fact the mark of our modern era is what Renan said it was, "the idea of humanity and the cult of its collective achievements".⁴⁴

The complete destruction of law for man in both streams of thought begets a permanent descent in the value of man and an incapacity to distinguish the specifically natural from the distinctively human. We are treated not to man as man, but to "la bete humaine". In the name of 'nature' we find la Fontaine humanizing his animals, and Zola in the name of the same 'nature' bestializing his men.⁴⁵ Thus realism which is "romanticism going on all fours"⁴⁶ enters the field.

c. The Naturalistic Disintegration.

It is therefore in its effects that the naturalism from which we are suffering most plainly unveils that it has left something out of

⁴³. D L. pp. 66-69.

⁴⁴. L A C. p. 34.

⁴⁵. ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁶. R and R. p. 104.

its doctrine of human nature.

In art and literature the surrealists arrive who say that a writer or painter is under no obligation to convey anything to the reader or observer at all.⁴⁷

Poetry becomes for Byron the "lava of imagination that prevents the earthquake".⁴⁸ In creative work the Aristotelian 'katharsis' becomes not the classic achievement of rendering the universal through the particular where the local has been clothed upon by the suggestion of the universal pointing beyond the particular, not this any more, but 'katharsis' becomes mere relief from tension by 'expressing oneself freely', the sort of relief that Mencken, in ridiculing modern art and literature, described as akin to that which "a hen achieves every time she lays an egg".⁴⁹ The "sense of law...as something distinct either from outer rule or individual impulse is conspicuously absent from the whole modern movement".⁵⁰

Criticism is reduced to the mere aestheticism of a Croce, Babbitt insists, and becomes the sentimental appreciation of whether a writer has said well what he intended to say. There is no interrogation as to whether or not what he did say was either reasonable or sensible.⁵¹

College education is thought of as the democratic curriculum of encyclopaedic range from which a student is free to choose what he wants, with no requirements upon him to take the normative and formative studies. The result is that the laissez-faire system gives an "educational impressionism" producing quantity rather than quality.

47. O B C. p. 16.

48. ibid., p. 18.

49. ibid., p. 18-19.

50. N L. p. 221.

51. O B C. pp. 28-29.

Much of the culture is veneer, for students in this system have learned to express their own mind but have not sufficiently been brought into accord with what Emerson called "the constant mind of man".⁵² They have attained, Babbitt reminds us, what Plato called "encyclopaedic smattering and miscellaneous experiment".⁵³ In its latest forms education has 'pitchforked' the child 'into chaos',⁵⁴ as to the 'law for man' even while it hastens to erect every opportunity for vocational training.

Politics too having grown up around the rejection of 'law and man' now subjects man to its pressures in the attempt to establish a community of nations upon the basis of man as subject to 'law for thing'. The utilitarian politics of Machiavelli and Hobbes is answered by the romantic political theories of Shaftesbury, Cunningham etc. This leads on to the 'pure' democracy of Locks who never faced and so never solved the question of 'the leader', and eventually to Montesquieu the precursor of the "unlimited faith in the efficiency of paper constitutions",⁵⁵ and the people's ability to govern. Thus does the naturalizing of man open the door to "decadent imperialism".

Hence Babbitt sees the modern disease as a radical one. It is the mutual non-recognition by the naturalists, of both schools, of that ground for which the humanist contends---the area wherein man finds within himself that 'law for man' over and above the 'law for thing'. For lack of this our age must find that, as Burke said of the French National Assembly, so of modernity also, "its improvements are superficial, its errors fundamental".⁵⁶

52. L A C. p. 74.

53. ibid., p. 84. (fr. Laws 819 a)

54. R and R. p. 388.

55. D L. p. 66. cf. pp. 17-19; 37-47.

56. O B C. p. xliii.

The critical nature of our modernity tends to be hidden from us both by man's preoccupation with the external successes of science, and by the survival of norms and disciplines after the periods of stability and poise which gave them birth have passed away.

C. The Declaration of Humanism.

a. The Need for a Law of Measure.

So the task of the humanist is plain. "Proportionateness is foreign to us",⁵⁷ said Neitzsche, and it is so, "because we no longer refer our experience to any centre", Babbitt adds. The novel not the normal, uniqueness and spontaneity rather than poise, the Many not the One, this is the set of the modern temper.

But the abandon of the romantic breaks upon the fact that the world of explorative fancy must somehow be "probable" fiction. There is somehow something in life that is characteristically humane. So there is a tether even to liberation. And the question of 'man' returns, and norms cannot be completely overthrown.

The Romantic cult of wonder and the novel, and the praise of the child is, in the humanists' eyes, a pathetic replacement of what Pascal called l'esprit de geometric with something very different from his own l'esprit de finesse. For the latter a centre of reference is needed by which to disengage and enact the representative and normal and thus "bridge the gap between general precept and some particular emergency".⁵⁸

The need for humanism, for some more critical doctrine of man's

57. H A. p. 29.

58. H A. p. 26.

nature is shown by the "fatal facility about creation when its quality is not tested by some standard set above the creator's temperament".⁵⁹ The important thing about man in the eyes of the humanist, "is not his power to act on the world, but his power to act on himself... with reference....to a true principle of restraint".⁶⁰ 'Faustian' man must die if civilization is to live a human existence disciplined by a truly human norm".⁶¹

Humanism, is training fundamentally for wisdom and character, and the culture it aims at is 'difficult and disciplinary', and not an easy abandon to the untested. In fact the humanist in trying to live the humane life finds that mediation leads very close to meditation. Humility is essential as he does "inner obeisance to something higher than his ordinary self, whether he calls this something God, or like the man of the Far East, calls it his higher self, or simply the Law".⁶²

Humanism therefore wishes not "to react to nineteenth century naturalism", but "to define and complete it", and so keep it "within proper bounds".⁶³

"The discipline that helps a man to self-mastery is found to have a more important bearing on his happiness than the discipline that helps him to a mastery of physical nature".⁶⁴

Without self-control we get unethical science and a loss of humility which alone can prevent the "emotional naturalist from treating what is above the ordinary rational level in terms of the subrational".⁶⁵

59. R and R. p. 65.

60. L A C. p. 56.

61. O B C. pp. 31; 22.

62. L A C. p. 60

63. ibid., p. 91.

64. R and R. p. 383.

65. ibid., p. 382.

Humanism insists on the need for an affirmation and practice of the law of measure. It is to reintroduce this unifying element that humanism is devoted as Babbitt conceives it. This is its function and glory.

b. Humanistic Method--Critical Positivism.

Babbitt feels that the answer to this naturalism is to meet the 'positivistic' scientist and remantic on their own ground and to establish the human law on a still more positive and critical basis. We must "turn against them their own principles".⁶⁶ The naturalist, he indicates, is 'not modern enough' and is a 'modernist' instead. The distinction is that the modernist is concerned with "the changeful both within and without himself", whereas the modern bases his judgments "on a perception of the something in himself that is set above the flux and that he possesses in common with other men".⁶⁷

This can be done experimentally and without any appeal to religion. In this method Babbitt follows the example of Aristotle:

"Aristotle has laid down once and for all the principle that should guide the ethical positivist. 'Truth', he says, 'in matters of moral action is judged from facts and from actual life..... so that what we should do is to examine the preceding statements (of Solon and other wise men) by referring them to facts and to actual life, and when they harmonize with facts we may accept them, when they are at variance with them, conceive them as mere theories".⁶⁸

Aristotle thus was a 'positive and critical humanist', and the chief precursor of the true 'modern' spirit. From him foolish modernists might have learned "how to have standards and at the same time not to be immersed in dogma".⁶⁹

66. ibid., p. xi.

67. H A. pp. 32-33

68. R and R. p. xxi fr. Eth. Nic 117a

69. ibid., p. xxii, cf. pp. 16-19.

It is in this insistence upon positivism that one sees more and more clearly Babbitt's insistence upon avoiding any dependence upon religion. He is convinced that the humanist can obtain the essential values of Christianity without embracing Christianity itself. He writes:

"Humanism, however, differs from religion in putting at the basis of the pattern it sets up, not man's divinity, but the something in his nature that sets him apart simply as man from other animals". 70

"I differ from the Christian, however, in that my interest in the higher will and the power of veto it exercises over man's expansive desires is humanistic rather than religious. I am concerned in other words, less with the meditation in which true religion always culminates, than in mediation or observance of the law of measure that should govern man in his secular relations". 71

Thus Babbitt feels that the battle is not between the individualist and the traditionalist but between "the sound individualist and the unsound individualist". The former is one who "plants himself not on outer authority, but on experience". 72

The individual can by a positive and critical self-examination find within himself, and with no use of "metaphysical and theological baggage", a law of measure, a higher will, and by this he lives.

Babbitt does remark that this preference for humanism is 'tentative', that it must be admitted that "humanism cannot get along without religion", 73 that there is evidence to show that humanism "gains immensely in effectiveness when it has a background of religious insight", 74 and that "it is an error to hold that humanism can take the place of religion". 75 He is struck "by the danger of leaving the

70. H A. p. 28.

71. D L. p. 6

72. ibid., p. 8 and R and R. p. xii

73. R and R. p. 380

74. H A. p. 39

75. ibid. p. 43.

humanistic life without any support in religion",⁷⁶ and is convinced that "humanism and religion" are simply "different stages on the same path".⁷⁷

All this would make it appear that a vital humanism indicates a religious dependence for the same. Such however does not seem to follow for Babbitt. Humanism, per se, is for him not ontologically dependent on religion, it is only corroboratively dependent. The independent humanisms of Confucian China and ancient Greece convince him that humanism is neither 'precarious nor parasitical' apart from religion. This insistence on separation has been furthered, he writes, because he notes that the world would have been better off "if more persons had made sure they were human before setting out to be superhuman".⁷⁸

The definitely non-religious significance which he attaches to even such terms as 'religious' itself, and certainly to the humanism he presents is made clear in his way of clearing up what he calls a 'vague' term, i.e. 'religious insight'. Its meaning can be ascertained by asking what that conviction is which the modern man has lost. It is aptly summed up, he feels, by Lippmann as the loss of "an immortal essence presiding like a king over his appetites". But 'why surrender' the affirmation of this "to the mere traditionalist?" Thus the purely positivistic significance of the phrase 'religious insight' is bared. This 'essence' or 'higher will' is affirmed "as a psychological fact", one of the "immediate data of consciousness", so 'primordial' that all else in comparison is a "metaphysical dream".⁷⁹

Thus on purely positivistic and experimental grounds, Babbitt feels, he has arrived at a point where he can answer the modernists on

76. R and R. p. 381

77. ibid., p. 380.

78. ibid., p. xx.

79. H A. p. 39.

their own ground. He thus avoids the 'danger' of falling into a 'metaphysic of the One' in escaping the 'metaphysic of the Many' which is the 'original sin' for humanism.

It is interesting to note that he says nothing to show why the 'higher will' which must be accepted, he says, as 'a mystery', is so much more acceptable to the humanist than the corresponding Christian mystery of 'grace'. He affirms that humanism has "independent validity" and is ancillary neither to theology nor religion. 80

The 'religious background' to which Babbitt refers seems to mean a sense of humility before the higher law and for the inculcation of this humility religious attitudes and insight are merely an aid. He nowhere sets humanism within a religious context, even though he is friendly to religion.

"My endeavor has been to show that even if one dispenses with absolutes, one may still retain standards". 81

"My own purpose has been fulfilled if I have shown how one may, without venturing beyond psychological observation, be rightly eclectic in the defense of something that is essential to Christianity". 82

"One may get humanistic and even religious purpose into one's life without indulging in ultimates and absolutes after the metaphysical fashion of Aristotle, or the theological fashion of traditional Christianity". 83

It is clear then that by a purely positive and critical method Babbitt sets up the Humanist 'mystery' of the 'higher will'. We must now ask more specifically what he means by this 'higher will'.

80. O B C. p. xvii.

81. ibid., p. xxii. cf. D L. pp. 316-17.

82. O B C. p. xl.

83. ibid., p. xxxv.

c. Humanist Doctrine -- 'The Higher Will'

Life is an incessant process of change which man does not observe from the outside but from within that flux for "man is himself a one-ness that is always changing". But though "life may mock the metaphysician the problem of conduct remains".⁸⁴ Life can be managed so that it will not become a nightmare, of naturalistic pseudo-human existence only by understanding "the relation between appearance and reality", which is to say "by the right use of Illusion".⁸⁵

This can be done and reality discerned only as one establishes a correct relationship between the part of himself that perceives, the part that conceives, and the part that discriminates."⁸⁶

It is the 'imagination' that conceives, that "reaches out and seizes likenesses and analogies."

It is the "analytical reason that "discriminates and tests the unity thus apprehended" as to its truth.

It is the 'higher will' that from its place above the flux in man brings all the life thus conceived and discriminated to serve its own refraining and ordering power so that by rightly directing man's emotions and expansive desires the representative and human act is done and human life is made truly humane. Thus man comes to like and dislike the right things.

This higher will is, negatively, not the absolute, nor the categorical imperative, and still less anything mechanical. Positively, it is as we have seen, "the higher immediacy--that is known in its relation to the lower immediacy--the merely temperamental man with his

84. R and R. p. xiv.

85. ibid., p. xv.

86. H A. p. 43.

? impressions and emotions and expansive desires---as the power of vital control (frein vital).⁸⁷ It is felt "in relation to the expansive desires as the will to refrain",⁸⁸ or the inner check.

This higher will, or law of measure is "the supreme law of life because it bounds and includes all others"⁸⁹ and it is for lack of this acknowledgment that naturalism has failed. This is "the keystone of the arch",⁹⁰ and the factor that sets man apart from nature. It is the exercise of this will and the ordering of life around it that enables man to live at the 'centre' and "not on the remote periphery of human nature".⁹¹ This higher will can alone confront the 'subrational' in man with its true opposite, which is not a 'rational' but a 'superrational' and transcendent element in man. Some 'will' above the flux alone can curb man's passions bringing awe into his spirit and representative living into his deeds.⁹²

"Now speaking not metaphysically but practically and experimentally, man may, as I have said, follow two main paths: he may develop his ethical self - the self that lays hold of unity - or he may put his main emphasis on the element within him and without him that is associated with novelty and change. In direct proportion as he turns his attention to the infinite manifoldness of things he experiences wonder; if, on the other hand, he attends to the unity that underlies the manifoldness and that like-wise transcends him he experiences awe. As a man grows religious, awe comes more and more to take the place in him of wonder." 93

The apparently theological import of the above is negatived by many comments that Babbitt makes, many of which we have noted. But among them is the following in his remarks upon Julien Benda:

87. ibid., p. 40.

88. ibid., p. 47.

89. L A C. p. 23

90. O B C. p. xvii.

91. L A C. p. 232.

92. ibid., p. 199. cf. O B C. pp. xvi-xvii.

93. R and R. p. 49.

"His weakness..would appear...to be his failure to recognize that the opposite of the subrational is not merely the rational, but the superrational, and that this superrational and transcendent element in man is a certain quality of will". 94

The 'higher will' is it appears a transcendent aspect of man himself. Man turns not to something beyond him-as-a-man but to that 'higher will' which in presiding over his appetites can, as the higher part of himself in action, now render the half-man the full man. While a Kempis and Christ both espoused a renunciation that involves metaphysical and theological reference, the humanist, Babbitt assures us 'does not carry the exercise of this will beyond the subduing of his desires to the law of measure'. 95

The 'independent validity' of the humanist is possible, we are told, because to perceive unity in things is no justification for the establishment of a world of 'essences' or 'ideas' above the flux. To do this is to fall away from the 'positivistic and critical' attitude, and to replace a metaphysic of the One for the metaphysic of the Many'. 96

Thus the element 'above the flux' is simply an aboveness which is wholly within man. The 'transcendent' is purely an inner affair having no reference to any 'beyond that is within', as Boutroux put it.

The 'higher will' is, thus interpreted, the source by which man is enabled to live at the 'centre' and 'not at the remote periphery of human nature'; to answer affirmatively also the question addressed to all who enter the Buddhist Church, "Are you a human being?". 97

Through this will alone man imposes a scale of values upon his

94. O B C. p. 199.

95. H A. p. 47.

96. R and R. p. xiii.

97. L A M. p. 232.

expansive multiplicities making possible acts of balanced selection.

d. Humanist Salvation

Certain benefits are possible when a man thus comes to organize his life around this 'law for man'.

i. Strategic advantages.

We have already noticed one gain which Babbitt stresses, and that is the ability to confront those who have broken with tradition because it was not sufficiently experimental or immediate, with the now critically and experimentally established 'centre' of controls in the 'higher will'. Thus one can ambush the 'modernists' by a victory over their naturalism, and this, with their own tools. It is a tactical advantage for the humanist over the traditional religionists. Free of metaphysics he now talks the same language, walks the same earth, but wages a better battle than either the naturalist or the supernaturalist.⁹⁸

ii. Sociological Poise.

The humanist alone subordinates to that "part of himself which he possesses in common with other men that part of himself which is driving him apart from them".⁹⁹ Thus the mere contiguity of individuals can become a genuine community. Because of less divisions within their body the humanists can do this more easily than the churches, Babbitt feels.

Further, the humanist can help to heal a serious dualism in

98. H A. pp. 44-46.

99. ibid., p. 49.

life. The Baconian or scientific man involved in work where his imagination and intellect become subject to the 'tyrannical concentration' on 'law for thing', turns for relief from this tension to the world of life only to mistake for a 'vast spiritual illumination'¹⁰⁰ the romanticisms proffered by the other half of society that has indulged in the expansive aspects of man as under 'law for thing'. The humanist alone can witness for, and embody the secret of man's real unity.

"A progressive adjustment to the human law gives ethical efficiency, and that is the proper corrective of material efficiency and not love alone as the sentimentalist is so fond of preaching". 101

iii. Educational Balance.

Where the humanistic 'norm', and 'representative' living is adopted colleges will cease to indulge in 'educational impressionism'. Poetry that is poetic after the 'law for thing' but non-representative of the 'law for man' will not be praised for it will cease to be accounted 'wise'.

Sound critical standards in literature will again obtain, and literary history will not be confounded with literature. It will be seen that

"man hath all that Nature hath but more and in that More lies all his hope for good". 102

With humanist education one can again breed sound individualists. Sound learning will lead to wise living, and no longer, Pabbitt feels, will it be said of the philosopher, as Rivarol did, that he is

100. R and R. pp. 363-364. see whole of chapter x.

101. ibid., p. 378.

102. L A C. p. 112. cf. also O B C chap. 1 and R and R. pp. 353-363.

a "man who casts off prejudices without acquiring virtues....or mastering his passions", ¹⁰³ for humanist life does not flow with nature but is "checked and tempered by some perceptions of the One"¹⁰⁴ and life is a living, harmonious and purposeful whole.

D. Conclusion.

The value of Babbitt's critique is quite considerable. While he is often too general in his condemnations of particular men, and too unwilling to acknowledge perhaps other sides of the writers and thinkers he examines, yet it is indubitable that the tendencies he treats so harshly are realities. His treatment of man shows him to be a strong protagonist of the mystery and dignity of man, though we shall have to insist that man's mystery and his dignity are even greater than Babbitt affirms them to be. Meanwhile let us be thankful for this voice in a wilderness of naturalism crying out, "prepare ye the way of man". In our concluding chapter we shall present the reasons for holding that this humanism points beyond itself to a "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" which is the true context of a genuine humanism.

103. R and R. p. xxiii.

104. N L. p. 216.

Chapter Four

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM

JOHN DEWEY

- A. The Background - Pragmatism
 - a. Individualism and American Culture
 - b. Josiah Royce - Loyalty
 - c. William James - Radical Empiricism
- B. Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics
 - a. Empirical Philosophy
 - b. Instrumentalism
- C. Instrumentalism and Religion
 - a. The 'Religious' displaces 'Religion'
 - b. Instrumental Emancipation

Chapter IV.

THE MANIFESTO OF HUMANISM

JOHN DEWEY

A. The Historic Background - Pragmatism

The philosophy of Professor Dewey is a form of pragmatism which has currently received the name of instrumentalism. Its rise is bound up with that of American culture. It is at once historically rooted, and the representative of a characteristic feature of the American mind.

a. Individualism and American Culture.

The mind of the early American community was a definite modification of forms of ecclesiastical and political thought brought over from Europe. The dominant features of the rising American scene were the democracy of the town meeting and Puritanism. The individualism and freedom resident in both of these were domesticated in the rising community without the restraints of the more feudal society of England from which they had come.

The political structure and authority of the State was for the colonist not an antecedent reality, to which the individual must conform. The colonist himself was the creator of the new State. In fact the larger world of national life was but the lengthened shadow of the town hall meeting. Its reality was an effect produced in the course of solving community problems. Unlike their English predecessors the pioneers did not have to contend with upper and lower classes. There was no weight of proof required with which to confront any long-standing

political tradition. The edifice of political self-government rose upon the authentic foundation of the dictates of liberated individuals who were agreed in giving external and visible evidence of their unity in freedom.

This individualism in the face of a virgin continent of potentialities and expanse, both economic and otherwise, was comparatively absolute. Its immediate interests were political and economic. Security of the natural man was the first task of the new world. The traditions embodied in history, philosophy, and literature in which the deeper facts of man's nature both as an individual and as a member of society had played so great a part, and which entered so deeply into European culture, these traditions were not the dominant interest of the new mind. Instead a laissez-faire of both mind and action prevailed. As one writer puts it, "The American pioneer was spiritually stripped for the material quest of a continent, and the formation of a democratic community".¹

The focus of attention of the new American was around those organs of society most effective in solving his every day existence, and in establishing, operatively, acceptable relations in society. These were naturally the political and economic phases of his life. In interpreting this phase of American life the pragmatists affirms that since the immediate ends of politics could not express the real values of political and economic existence, it was therefore the activities, or the process itself that came to be the ideal around which the new

1. G. H. Mead, in chapter iv of "John Dewey the man and his Philosophy" pp. 80-81. Harvard Univ. Press, 1930. A helpful pragmatist interpretation of J. Dewey's place in American thought.

mind unconsciously settled its ideal and real interests. That is, the problem solving process, the resolution of man's practical and social relations, this process was really the actual focus and centre of the new set of mind and culture. The traditions of European culture which were taught within the academic halls of the American colleges and universities, remained an alien and foreign phenomenon, and were never really indigenous to the American mind.

It was this gulf between the old and the new, and the different poles of their intellectual appeal for the settlement of life's practical tasks that forms the fountainhead of the pragmatic turn in the American outlook. The European was traditionally conditioned and leaned to deductive methods. The American, on the other hand, was "on the make", and was an empiricist in inclinations from the start.

In eighteenth century Europe, one group of the romantics had conceived the laws of nature, now scientifically unveiled in the physical world, to be universal. They had their analogous laws in society also, but they transcended society residing in the inclusive whole, or universal nature, to which the individual and society must conform. Not the rational and intelligent experimentation with the permutations and combinations of particular emergencies, but rather allegiance to given antecedent laws was the doctrine of this romantic appeal. Within the hierarchy of a feudal society this appeal was convincing to Europeans. To the new outlook of colonial America it was an intruder, and a meddlesome interloper.

At the same time, however, the need for some hinterland of reference for human life still remained as an aspect of the American,

as indeed of all of human life. Emerson and others gave voice to it in their day. In addition, the growing political and social complexities made imperative the recognition of an ordered society governed by the objective principles of some rational morality. The romantic appeal however, when transplanted to the American continent, took a different turn. The new interpretation of culture, by virtue of its activist and empirical set was already increasingly alien to an appeal to something transcendental to solve and explain existence.² Had not human courage, brawn, and intelligence advanced the frontiers, declared their independence, and created their own political organization?

Thus there grew up a new culture. The gulf between America and the European tradition was to be overcome by the supplementation of the former civilization by a new philosophy, and history and literature that were to interpret to the American his place in the world and his meaning in society. There had to be an American interpretation of life and thought, process and history, in terms of some reality that was indigenous to the rising community of the American nation.

b. Josiah Royce - Loyalty.

This was one of the problems with which Royce tried to deal. In him the idealism of Europe makes a step toward Americanization. For the European the values of his civilization were largely traditional. They were therefore easily subject to corruption and in jeopardy of destruction through disloyalty to those traditions. Skepticism was for them both a political and a theological possibility. The western

2. Thought the Puritans and the whole church life witnessed of course to another side of this American picture.

world had presupposed an ordered moral and intelligible universe.

Orderly life presumed a rapport between the visible and invisible orders of existence. Science was possible by virtue of the uniformity of nature. The individual life was felt too to be authentically alive as it lived in accord with the universal will of God.

The American culture still imbued with the atomic and individualistic twist of the colonial period was now in need of its own explanation of itself to itself as a whole. Royce offered in his philosophy of Loyalty an interpretation of the individual and his relation to society which was intended as something that could become the directive spirit of a truly American culture, and the steadying power of the individual. However, what he offered was man's realization of himself in a whole where all his conflicting ends are already resolved in this absolute self of the 'Blessed Community'. He provided no satisfactory means by which a man could in his own particular society thus identify himself with this 'Blessed Community'. It was, however, quite contrary to the individualistic and activist temper of the existing culture. Furthermore, as Professor Mead has pointed out, the American "did not think of himself as arising out of a society, so that by retiring into himself he could seize the nature of society.....the communities came from him, not he from the community".³ Royce gave his 'Community' a rather too religious and otherworldly aspect for the already pragmatic mind of the new scene. He writes: "we all need the superhuman, the city out of sight, the union of all with life, - the essentially eternal".⁴

3. *ibid.*, p. 92.

4. The Philosophy of Loyalty. p. 346. Macmillan Co., 1908.

The practical preoccupations of existence on virgin soil had forged an individual whose principles of politics and doctrines of religion were, in the main, vest pocket articles, to be carried around, valued for their potency in achieving ends, and not scrutinized as to their origin or universal reality. A pragmatic culture thus rejected this idealistic solution.

c. William James - Radical Empiricism

In William James the pragmatism of the American mind received its formulation, even as in Dewey it achieved its modification and consequent application to all departments of life.

In James a transition is made from the appeal to a metaphysical reality to the process of life itself in explaining the nature of cognition. It has the functional significance of being the instrument of adjustment. James was here following the influence of Darwin through Spencer. In his opinion idealism was 'inclining to let the world wag incomprehensibly in spite of the Absolute Subject and his unity of purpose'.⁵ He therefore proposed to explain reality not by making 'wholes prior to parts in the order of logic as well as in that of being', which was the rationalistic method, but by what he calls a 'radical empiricism' which 'lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection, and the universal as an abstraction'.⁶

The significance of man and his knowing in this system are placed within the deed. Knowledge is both empirical and creative.

5. Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 40. Longmans Green and Co., 1912.

6. ibid., p. 41.

'Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far as they are bases for human action - action, which to a great extent transforms the world - help to make the truth which they declare'.⁷ Knowledge is pragmatically generated and 'comes to life inside the tissue of experience'.⁸ Man first perceives, then he constructs his concept by attentive selection of the one possibility most suited to his purpose and then acts on that concept. The outcome is a knowing in terms of the relations of the parts of his world acted on, and so, newly related thereby.

Knowing involves no communion with some antecedent truth, but rather simply the discernment of the relations, both actual and potential in the contexts of things and events. Its efficacy is its ability to transmute the varieties in life that are not in accord with one's aims into relations that are. Radical empiricism thus places the potential and actual cognitive unity of things within empirical reality, and not as dependent upon relation to some trans-empirical world. The potential is realized by intelligent action. Truth is that which satisfies.

Yet it must be noted that for James there is already an instability in the concept of the self. The subject which thinks dissolves into a mere succession of thoughts which "are themselves the thinkers". He even speaks of "the knowing of a percept by an idea"⁹ whatever that may signify. There is an unbalanced mixture of a sense of the 'self' which one feels at times may have, and so transcend, the relations of which he speaks, and then again James appears quite definitely to identify the self simply with the passing succession of thoughts themselves. In trying to overcome the separatistic and granular conception

7. The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. XII; 1878, p. 17.

8. Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 57.

9. ibid., p. 56.

of the conscious states held by the 'associationists' James substituted the idea of 'the stream of consciousness'. Life is a flowing that grows by continuous transition. The self becomes, however, not the possessor of this stream, but exists rather at the luminous point where each thought comes to be for its short span, being then succeeded by another. He writes:

"The passing thought is itself the thinker" 10

"Each thought is born an owner and dies owned,
transmitting whatever it realized as its self
to its later proprietor" 11

Here we get the real foreshadowing of the pragmatic relativity. James in his pluralism opens the door to the loss of the relatively autonomous, or permanent self. The individual remains within the flux never quite able, in this phase of James' thought, to control it. As Professor Mercier wrote: 'He merely left him swimming amid the ice cakes of a river while pantheism locked him up in a growing glacier'¹² However, in spite of all this James was truly able to say that he felt his view to be in harmony with 'moralism and theism'. In his outlook as a whole he made room for the transcendental world of Christian faith. God freedom, and immortality were realities. This was so because though on his scientific side James tended to evaporate the self, he yet also acknowledged the spiritual and religious nature of that mystery by which man is sustained and renewed.

As far back as the period of 1880-1895 he felt it was necessary to 'postulate' God as the power that could generate expectancy in man, and appeal to his capacities for effort. God is, "A power not ourselves...

10. Principles of Psychology, p. 401. Henry Holt and Co., 1893.

11. ibid., pp. 338-339.

12. The Challenge of Humanism, p. 54.

which not only makes for righteousness but means it, and which recognizes us'.¹³ In 1902 in his Varieties of Religious Experience, he was led to affirm God from his observation of the phenomenology of religious experience. Here God is not postulated in order to make the activities of men meaningful, but out of the necessity to acknowledge the realistic status of the Object of religious healing, reintegration, and conversion etc., by which men are saved. Unlike Professor Dewey he does not dismiss the 'cause' to which the religious spirit attributes its new life. He still treats the personal subject as a subject. He allows it to speak and in some sense to define itself from within and has not gone so far as to reduce it to the level of an object about which nothing can be affirmed save those features which can be observed in the scientific sense of that term.

Speaking of the 'more' by which he denominates the reality upon which man's life depends he says:

'We have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.'¹⁴

'I will call this higher part of the universe by the name of God. We and God have business with each other and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled.'¹⁵

James' pluralism was a sort of spiritual pluralism. Interested in human freedom and the reality of good and evil, he was intent in overcoming what he felt was an absolutist tendency in the then current theology whose 'God' he called the 'disease of the philosophy-shop'.¹⁶

13. The Will to Believe etc., p. 122. New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1897.

14. Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 515

15. ibid., p. 516. cf. Pluralistic Universe, p. 308.

16. Letters vol. II, p. 269 /from a letter to C.A.Strong/ Boston: Monthly Book Press, 1920.

He wished to safeguard the view of the world that had a proper place for real losses and achievements, and where human effort had real meaning. Thus while he does tend in his treatment of cognition to interpret the self so apart from its spiritual ontology as to give it potentially only an objective and scientific status, and to attenuate its significance and being merely to the living point of the thought-at-the-moment, yet he does not allow it to become in fact so abstract at his hands. For all his interest in the 'part' rather than the 'whole', he does, nevertheless, set the individual life in relation to a spiritual reality which he conceives to be alive and warm with affection and purpose and whose being while not the 'whole' is one that transcends human finiteness, is the source of the life of this world and not to be identified with it, and in knowledge of whom stands man's eternal life.

Biological implications are for him still spiritually conditioned, and part of a picture which has transphysical and trans-human points of reference. James' pluralism made possible the attempt to reduce man by any who might wish to take one aspect of his thought and to develop it without keeping it related to the other aspect of his system. Dewey was influenced by James among others, but in him the spiritual side of James' system is removed, and the biological and organismic concept of the self becomes the dominant feature, and the transition to pure instrumentalism takes place.

B. Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics.

a. Empirical Philosophy -- Darwin

Dewey's particular grievance is with all vestiges of metaphysics.

He seems unable to repeat too often the liberation for humanity that has accrued, in his opinion, by virtue of man's emancipation from any order of fixity or permanance overshadowing our flux.

It is his opinion that the whole metaphysical realm is an outcome of man's religious fears seeking comfort, and of his ignorance which, conceiving according to Greek thought that change was an evil, had posited the residence of perfect forms and the complete idea in some transcendent world. This was simply a form of man's quest for certainty. The transcendent thus postulated was simply a mistaken localization of the source of true certainty. Its true source, we are told, is now discovered to lie in the intelligent application to, and the creative solution of the immediate issues of practical daily living. With the advent of technology and scientific method the metaphysical world of tradition that had been given a 'rational formulation' by theology and philosophy was declared as manifestly invalid.¹⁷

With the rise of the physical sciences the empirical approach began. The glorifying of the "invariant at the expense of change" began to diminish, and the emptying of the realm of an antecedent reality had already started. For its complete victory it awaited the unlocking of the phenomena of life to the scientific method. This was accomplished, Dewey feels, by Darwin. Through his work the biological realm was claimed for the empirical category of process and movement, and he thus "conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition".¹⁸ Henceforth the argument for design was to be impossible as hitherto held and instead "genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking

17. Cf. The Quest for Certainty, chapter I. New York: Minton Balch and Co., 1929.

18. Influence of Darwin upon Philosophy, p. 8. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1910. cf. also pp. 3-6.

questions and looking for explanations"¹⁹ were installed. The outcome of Darwin's work is stated by Dewey as follows:

"the new logic outlaws, flanks, dismisses, - what you will - one type of problems and substitutes for it another type. Philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them". 20

At one stroke, that is, the whole relation of 'here to 'over there', of the natural to any metaphysical or supernatural is invalidated. The locus of knowledge is here embedded in the natural, and is responsive to experiment alone. The meaning of the temporal is in itself. As James had said earlier:

"The essential service of humanism as I conceive the situation, is to have seen that though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in anyone of its several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and rests on nothing". 21

The reservoir of knowledge was not in some mysterious reality behind the changing flux of things. It was in nature herself. What Galileo, Copernicus and Newton had started for man's dealings and understanding of external nature Darwin had now made possible for man's own life. And the task is completed by the instrumentalist turn in pragmatic methods.

With the shift of attention to the world of process and movement, and the recession of the world of final and fixed forms the old question of whether chance, or design by an antecedent cause, was the source of happiness in life became irrelevant. Its premise was now

19. ibid., p. 9.

20. ibid., p. 13.

21. Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 193.

obsolete. Man and his world now have become the scene of explorative process which has been going all the time, but undetected as such hitherto. Within this process alone, and not to anything beyond it lie the boundaries of man's true ground of appeal. To know this reality of man and his world is not to relate them to an antecedent but to participate in them, to be, yes, to act. From now on, for Dewey, philosophy is concerned purely with the "purposes which experience of actual conditions suggest" and the "concrete means for their actualization".²² 'Concrete experience' and the values attainable therein are primal, and these values are to be had from within the temporal process itself.²³ The transcendent is a purely fictitious creation, the outcome of man's lack of proficiency in the arts and sciences. Life is responsible to intelligence alone and there is to be no shifting of burdens to the "shoulders of a transcendent cause".²⁴

Here then is the insistent feature of the instrumental philosophy; we must reduce the dual world of Christian and ante-science metaphysics to a 'flatland' of 'euclidean' dimensions, to what Dewey calls a "naturalistic humanism".²⁵

b. Instrumentalism.

The Spinozistic viewpoint that "man is not in nature as an empire within an empire, but as a part within a whole", now receives its most modern interpretation. Man is conceived as a physical and social being who through maladjustment to his organic and personal environment resorts to the use of his creative intelligence as the instrument to the

22. The Quest For Certainty, p. 17.

23. ibid., p. 35.

24. The Influence of Darwin upon Philosophy, p. 17.

25. Experience and Nature, p. 1. Open Court Publishing Co., 1925.

satisfaction of his needs. The moments consequent upon adjustment are called by Dewey 'consummatory', and in them man enjoys his 'havings' and 'beings'. But we must note that in Dewey's system 'instrumental' has more than the merely workshop connotation of the word. It is meant to denominate the contextual and intermediary aspect of knowing. His instrumentalism is an attempt to domesticate knowledge in action and to avoid the 'honorific' and 'pure' concept of theory as above the world of practice. At the same time, however, the sphere of the practical has become for Dewey something that is so harmonizable and continuous with theory, thought and action so inseparable, and knowledge and experimentation so much part of one another that there is left no room for that reality of the spiritual and ideal factor which can operate upon, but cannot be exhaustively domesticated in the practical world of events and process. Life becomes thus a purely intramural concern, subject solely to the categories of the empirical and instrumental method. "To exist" is to be in process of change. The advent of scientific method which we are told is "the sole dependable means of disclosing the realities of existence ... the sole authentic mode of revelation"²⁶ has done away with the need to find any meaning beyond the flux of existence. The removal of 'fixed' ends for science should logically have led, it is affirmed, to their removal from the theory of human action. Instrumentalism makes complete the scientific change by a "revision of the current notion of ends of action as fixed limits and conclusions".²⁷

The goals and objectives that govern life are no longer man's obedience to a world of Spirit transcending yet operative within history.

26. Art., "What I believe" Forum, Vol. 83, p. 178, March, 1930.

27. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 225. Henry Holt and Co., 1922.

They become simply the successively formed and reformed "ends-in-view", created and followed by the human intelligence:

"the ends, objectives of conduct, are those foreseen consequences which influence present deliberation and which finally bring it to rest by furnishing an adequate stimulus to overt action. Consequently ends arise and function within action....They are terminals of deliberation and so turning points in activity" 28

"In fact ends are ends-in-view or aims. They arise out of natural effects or consequences which in the beginning are hit upon, stumbled upon, so far as any purpose is concerned". 29

It might appear that Dewey is referring simply to the particular 'ends' which the individual must choose, and that he would make allowance for some general 'end' over and above these as the Christian catechism does when it says "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever". This is untenable in the light of the following:

"Not the end - in the singular - justifies the means; for there is no such thing as the single all important end. It is not possible adequately to characterize the presumption, the falsity, the deliberate perversion of intelligence involved in the refusal to note the plural effects that flow from any act". 30

It seems plain that 'ends' and 'effects' are the same reality. Viewed anticipatorily as a set of relations intended as an outcome of an act it is an 'end-in-view', or end. Viewed retrospectively, as result finished, the same reality is an 'effect'. This is the setting for the instrumental theory of truth and knowledge. Knowledge is the discernment of the existent set of relations in man's particular world. Truth is the use of existent relations to form an end-in-view, in such a way that when one acts on the end-in-view the intended set of relations

28. ibid., p. 223

29. ibid., p. 225

30. ibid., p. 229.

does in fact obtain. Truth and knowledge are thus instrumental; they are adequate means in present action to achieve desired goals.

"Like knowledge itself truth is an experienced relation of things, and it has no meaning outside of such relation". 31

"For ordinary purposes, that is, for practical purposes, the truth and the realness of things are synonymous..... Since it is only genuine or sincere things, things which are good for what they pretend to in the way of consequences, that we want or are after, morally they alone are "real" ". 32

For instrumentalism experience is "method not distinctive subject matter".³³ It is the unending process of "showing, pointing, coming upon a thing"³⁴ within the moving series of events that make up life. The empirical method thus shows the 'eventual' nature of choice. It occurs in midstream of the tide of events, in the changing relations of the temporal scene. The world at large sets the problem for man's reason and his moral will. But Dewey absolves both man's logical process and his moral willings from any responsibility for the world that has set the problem. The rational and moral verdicts, are therefore not to be read back into some pre-existent reality; for the unpardonable sin is:

"the conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence: a conversion that may be said to be the philosophic fallacy whether it be performed in behalf of mathematical subsistences, esthetic essences, the purely physical order of nature, or God". 35

This is the meaning of the instrumentalist completion of the

31. The Influence of Darwin, p. 95.

32. Essays in Honor of William James, p. 57.

33. Experience and Nature, p. 10.

34. ibid., p. 10.

35. ibid., p. 35.

deliverance begun by the physical sciences, and widened by Darwin. The axiom of this philosophy is that 'scientific method' can furnish the experience which can "itself provide the values, meanings and standards now sought in some transcendental world".³⁶ Knowledge and action which had been separated in traditional philosophy now cease to be so divorced. For the scientific method shows that the "actual procedures by which the most authentic and dependable knowledge is attained have completely surrendered the separation of knowing and doing".³⁷

'Overt doing' and the 'institution of a definite and specified course of change', these are the womb of knowledge. They are more, they are knowledge for 'doing is the heart of knowing'. In the beginning was not the Word, but the Deed. For we know what we do, we do not do what we first know. Thus the whole problem of knowledge is reduced to one of cognition, empirically conceived, and instrumental in purpose, and so limited to verifiable data. There is no hint of any knowledge concerning the inner man himself who is to effect all these changes.

Mind as the "mysterious something which feels and thinks, is done away. Truth is not lifted above scientific truth, and has no part in any relation with antecedent reality. Things are events and lose their substantival nature. Truth becomes a "name for the experienced relation among the things of experience".³⁸ In fact truth doesn't exist. It is truths that exist, and they are the "specific verifications, combinations of meanings and outcomes reflectively viewed". This is the "central point of the experimental theory".³⁹

36. The Quest for Certainty, p. 78.

37. ibid., p. 79. cf. pp. 81-87.

38. The Influence of Darwin upon Philosophy, p. 109.

39. ibid., p. 109.

Dewey thus turned a complete somersault in his thinking.

In an article in 1884 he had declared that:

"God as perfect Personality or Will, is the only Reality and the source of all activity. It is therefore the source of all activity of the individual personality....the motive, source and realization of the life of the individual". 40

By 1891, however, in his Outline of Ethics man and his willing, thinking and being are all domesticated within the act. 'Nouns' do not represent life in the truest way. 'Verbs' alone do that. As one of Dewey's disciples puts it:

"We no longer have to do with things and beings as conceived in former times, but with doings, since things and beings are now seen to be fleeting situations or events which happen rather than are". 41

It becomes plain then why Dewey insists that all reference of the temporal process of activities to a transcendental is in his opinion the fallacy of "conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence". The good is made. It is neither an existent nor a pre-existent but is actually constructed and put together as it were by the creative intelligence of man. Truth is born within the context of the deed. It is an intramural affair solely as contrasted with the Christian conception of its relation to a transnatural, and in that sense extramural world of recourse enlivening the natural and temporal order. Ethics is not connected to anything 'from above' but is simply man's "intelligence implicit in his act". 42

Thus the pragmatist-instrumentalist philosophy is an emancipation from the heavy incubus of a sterile supernaturalism. The

40. Quoted from an article by John Dewey, by G. H. Mead in J. Dewey the man and his philosophy, p. 100.

41. ibid., p. 164.

42. Cf. ibid., p. 105.

"important thing" is not to get "right" in relation to some antecedent author of life's values, but rather that men should "form their judgments and carry on their activity on the basis of public, objective, shared consequences".⁴³

Life becomes an optimistic venture in human relations which, it is felt, are quite amenable to reason and intelligence. The biological twist, that is, the purely horizontal set and outlook, unmindful of any vertical reference, in this whole position emanating from Darwin upon Dewey can be seen in the following:

"The appropriate subject-matter of awareness or consciousness is not reality at large, a metaphysical heaven.... Its proper and legitimate object is that relationship of organism and environment in which functioning is most amply and effectively attained".⁴⁴

'Moral theory' has nothing to do with anything 'beyond' moral activity itself. 'Moral theory' is "all one with moral insight, and moral insight is the recognition of the relationships in hand....it is the analytical perception of the conditions and relations in hand in a given act, it is the action in idea....theory is the ideal act".⁴⁵

The invocation of a supernatural world is a 'superstition', and an admission that "natural intelligence is such that it cannot rise above a reckoning of private expediency".⁴⁶

Here then we find in brief the meaning of the instrumental and pragmatist view of man and the world. In Dewey's writings and influence it has gained a wide circulation. It is conceived as a great deliverance.

43. The Quest for Certainty, p. 47.

44. Essays in Honor of William James, p. 57. cf. Experience and Nature, p. 68.

45. Art., by J. Dewey. 'Moral Theory and Practice' in the International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 1; pp. 187-8, 1890-1.

46. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 295.

One disciple sees in Dewey "another Atlas struggling to lift a world". The evangelical fervor regarding the new era it is to bring to man is unveiled in the following description of the blessing which this philosophy of 'experience' will bestow upon the world:

"Our unaccustomed eyes would be blinded by the apocalyptic vision. We and our fellowmen would be transformed; old miracles would pale beside new and more incredible ones;... We would find ourselves gazing on a new earth inhabited by new creatures and surrounded by a new heaven. There would be beauties and undreamed of possibilities 'inviting to high emprise'. As yet we are too bewildered, too closely bound to old valuations and loyalties to accept the revelation". 47

With such benefits deriving from this Instrumentalism it is relative to our purpose to inquire into its significance for religion. This, Dewey has stated for us in his Terry lectures at Yale in 1934 under the title "A Common Faith".

C. Instrumentalism and Religion

a. The 'Religious' displaces 'Religion'

That Dewey's humanism rejects supernaturalism is very manifest. But we are assured that this does not mean that 'everything of a religious nature' must go. For the definite goal of instrumentalism is to free the 'religious' aspect of life from the 'encumbrances' under which it now suffers by virtue of the mistaken "identification of the religious with the supernatural" Dewey proposes a conception of the religious that "separates it from the supernatural and the things that have grown up around it".⁴⁸ Thus emancipated the 'religious' aspect of life will

47. J. H. Robinson in J. Dewey the man and his philosophy, p. 160.

48. A Common Faith, p. 2. Yale University Press, 1934.

be freed for more fertile expression.

The possibility of doing this is made necessary and comparatively facile. This is because religions involving belief in transcendental 'unseen powers' have become no longer tenable, owing to the variety in the conceptions of deity, and the equal diversity of the ways in which they have been supposed to exercise their control over man and the world. In the face of this Dewey concludes "that there is nothing left worth preserving in the notions of unseen powers"⁴⁹ as religions have conceived them.

This, however, opens the still further question; "why should it be assumed that change in conception and action has now come to an end?"⁵⁰ This indicates that the purification and emancipation of the religious from the whole scaffolding and structure of religions is now the duty of the hour. "I am not proposing a religion but rather the emancipation of elements and outlooks that may be called religious".⁵¹ The distinction is given as follows:

"a religion always signifies a special body of beliefs and practices having some kind of institutional organization, loose or tight. In contrast the adjective 'religious' denotes nothing in the ways of a specifiable entity.... it denotes attitudes that may be taken toward every object and every proposed end or ideal".⁵²

The difference is fundamental. A religion has a substantial character. The religious attitude is an adjectival one. Hence all reference to a particular 'religious experience' as delimiting one aspect of experience from another is impossible. For by definition the 'religious' suffuses all experience.

49. ibid., p. 7.

50. ibid., p. 6.

51. ibid., p. 8.

52. ibid., pp. 9-10.

The common attribution of the source of personal uplift and strengthening to a Being called God is an 'emotional deposit' from early misguided thinking, and it bars from scrutiny the real causation:

"In reality the only thing that can be said to be 'proved' is the existence of some complex of conditions that have operated to effect adjustment in life, an orientation that brings with it a sense of security".⁵³

That is to say, the adjustment in relations is the true cause of personal reintegration and not a metaphysical God. The really 'religious' quality is the 'effect' produced, life's glad acceptance of earthly adjustments, and not some antecedent 'cause' and man's relation to it. (It is worth noting that Dewey here deliberately divorces the two conjoined aspects of the experience which he is analyzing).⁵⁴

If the 'religious' function could thus be rescued from involvement with the paraphernalia of a religion, then Dewey feels that men could see that the forces for adjustment are much more available than is ordinarily supposed. For when this is done it becomes obvious that the 'unseen powers' to which man is in fact related are "all the conditions of nature and human association that support and deepen the sense of values that carry one through periods of darkness".⁵⁵ The unseen is the "power of an ideal". Everyone who is faithful to his business or calling is therefore a 'religious' person.

"The artist, scientist, citizen, parent, as far as they are actuated by the spirit of their callings are controlled by the unseen".⁵⁶

Faith becomes 'a tendency toward action', a trust "in the power of experience to provide in its own ongoing movement the needed

⁵³. ibid., p. 13.
⁵⁴. ibid., p. 15.
⁵⁵. ibid., p. 14.
⁵⁶. ibid., p. 34.

principles of belief and action".⁵⁷ It is religious to struggle for an ideal "against obstacles". This is true Dewey says because:

"Faith as the continued disclosing of truth through directed co-operative human endeavor is more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation".⁵⁸

Thus man's unification comes about by the genius of a creative intelligence which, it is assumed throughout, can subject man's impulses to its co-operative ends thus integrating the individual himself and his "relation to the conditions of existence".⁵⁹ And so the 'religious' comes to its own at the hands of scientific method "the anchor of the revolution in the content of beliefs".⁶⁰

b. Instrumentalist Emancipation

The frequent references to the relief by virtue of this new outlook and this separation of the 'religious' from 'religion' call to mind a similar feeling of freedom voiced by William James in speaking of the reasons that led him to espouse 'radical empiricism':

"my primary reason for advocating it is its matchless intellectual economy. It gets rid, not only of the standing 'problems' that monism engenders (problems of evil, 'problem of freedom', and the like), but of other metaphysical mysteries and paradoxes as well. It gets rid, for example, of the whole agnostic controversy by refusing to entertain the hypothesis of transempirical reality at all. It gets rid of any need for the absolute....."⁶¹

It is an impressive list that Dewey makes of all the things that have been made 'impossible for the cultured mind of the western world'.⁶² All belief in a 'divine author and authority', a 'fixed

57. Art. 'What I believe'. Forum March. 1930. p. 176.

58. A. Common Faith, p. 26.

59. ibid., cf. pp. 26-27.

60. Art. 'What I believe'. in op. cit., p. 178.

61. Essays in Radical Empiricism. pp. 194-195.

62. Art. 'What I Believe' op. cit., p. 182.

revelation', "the inherited ideas of the soul and its destiny", and 'the supernatural' - these are all dismissed. In place of the futile attempts to achieve security in the certitudes of religion, the religious spirit "substitutes the effort to determine the character of the changes that are going on".⁶³

For the spurious gospel of religion that life is happy if we find the meaning of it in the service of God, instrumentalism offers the verdict that "there are many meanings and many purposes in the situations with which we are confronted, one so to say, for each situation..... the idea of a plurality of interconnected meanings and purposes"⁶⁴ is our only hope and the basis of our real joy. Belief in a single purpose "distracts thought and wastes energy".⁶⁵

Though the fulcrum from which to achieve it is not declared, Dewey insists that "such happiness as life is capable of comes from the full participation of all our powers in the endeavor to wrest from each changing situation of experience its own full unique meaning".⁶⁶

In fact the modern disillusionment with man is, Dewey feels, the outcome not of some intrinsic weakness of man, but of false hopes which have been mistakenly placed in some transhuman power. Modern knowledge has however detected the "illusory character of past hopes" and so can "enable us to form purposes and expectations that are better grounded"⁶⁷ The 'future of religion' thus freed from its connection with any institutional or dogmatic Christianity which it is "hard to say, has even the germs of remedy", now depends on a "faith in the possibilities

63. ibid., p. 179.

64. ibid., p. 179.

65. ibid., p. 179.

66. ibid., p. 179.

67. ibid., p. 182.

of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests".⁶⁸

The old world of disunited and sundered reality brought about by the ignorance which first invented the division is now healed. For unification is 'adjustment' to 'human conditions', and the external world, and not to any antecedent reality. Mystical belief in a direct experience of God is an "importing of a conception that is formed outside"⁶⁹ the mystical experience.

Symbols are permissible only if by them "we mean that these materials stand for something that is verifiable in general and public experience".⁷⁰

Creeds do not concern realities of an invisible world behind phenomena in communion with the visible and entering it. They simply "present events and persons that have been made over by the idealizing imagination in the interest, at their best of moral ideals. Historic personages in their divine attributes are materializations of the ends that enlist devotion and inspire endeavor".⁷¹ This would seem to imply that creeds are the verbal forms given to the precipitates in the historic memory of the race of good ways in which difficulties were met and obstacles were overcome, for the 'facts taken in them to be historic are in reality only symbolic, says Dewey.

'God' becomes a name denoting "the ideal ends....having authority" over one's "volition and emotion". The word "denotes the — unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action".⁷² What these

68. ibid., p. 180

69. A Common Faith, p. 35.

70. ibid., p. 41.

71. ibid., p. 41.

72. ibid., p. 41. 42.

ideals are Dewey plainly states. They are not of 'imaginary stuff'.

"They are made out of the hard stuff of the world of physical and social experience".⁷³ 'God' then becomes the characteristic label for the "active relation between the ideal and the actual".⁷⁴

The ordinary distinction between the religious and the secular is overcome, for all life is one. No 'apologies' will be needed. Religious living now rescued from relation to the dubious world of metaphysics, will be quite convincing to hungry souls. The practical obviousness of justice, affection, etc., will be so clear that no dogma or doctrine will be necessary.⁷⁵ What Dewey purposes to do with individuals or groups who insist upon following ends not in accord with this he does not say. At any rate this is the humanist freedom firm in its faith that it suffers no illusions and no fantasy, for its freedom is due to "the increase of knowledge and our means of understanding".⁷⁶

In a way suggestive of Comte and his three stages that were to usher in the 'Religion of Humanity', Dewey too has three stages of man's purification from the crude in his arrival at the truth:

"In the first stage human relationships were thought to be so infected with the evils of corrupt human nature as to require redemption from external and supernatural sources. In the next stage what is significant in these relations is found to be akin to values esteemed distinctively religious....this is the point now reached by liberal theologians. The third stage would realize that in fact the value prized in those religions that have ideal elements, are idealizations of things characteristic of natural association, which have been projected into a supernatural realm for safe keeping and sanction".⁷⁷

73. ibid., p. 49.

74. ibid., p. 51.

75. ibid., p. 44. cf. p. 66.

76. ibid., p. 56.

77. ibid., pp. 72-73.

This then is the new humanism in its instrumental aspect. Its departure from the Christian conception is obvious, and its away, in America particularly, is very widespread. We must now turn to the Christian critique and evaluation of the two humanisms we have had under review, and attempt also to state in germ, or outline, the constructive Christian position.

Chapter Five

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANISM

- A. The Service of Humanism
- B. The Basic Issue - Revelation
 - a. Babbitt and Dewey essentially secularists
 - b. The Role of Pseudo-Categories
- C. General Weaknesses of Humanism
 - a. The Inadequacy of Babbitt's 'New Humanism'
 - i. The relation of Humanism and Religion
 - ii. Ends for action and the End of life
 - iii. The Negative and Aristocratic Temper
 - b. Fallacies in Dewey's Instrumentalism
 - i. Begging the Question and the Use of Straw Men
 - ii. Rationalistic Illusions regarding Social Change
- D. Humanism and the Despiritualization of Man

Chapter Five

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANISM

A. The Service of Humanism.

Before stating the critical judgments which Christianity must pass upon both the humanisms which we have had under review, it is necessary that we acknowledge a certain respect in which they may be admitted to have given impetus to a feature of human life which is wholly acceptable to the Christian faith, and its doctrine of man, provided that it is not amputated from the theological setting within which Christianity would set it. That is to say, while Christian theism can accept neither the 'new humanism' of Babbitt, nor the 'instrumentalism' of Dewey as they stand, yet it does not follow that they therefore perform no service at all. The humanistic venture cannot be read as merely a negative phenomenon. It does, nevertheless, remain the contention of this thesis that what they have thus helped to explicate is an intrinsically Christian truth, but that this truth if left within the framework of either the new humanism, or that of instrumentalism becomes distorted and eventually vitiated. Perhaps it can better be stated by saying that humanism, for all its misconceptions of man, was yet an attempt to utter a real truth about man's relative and creative autonomy, but that it became the wrong way of saying the right thing.

In Babbitt's position we saw clearly that there is a very weighty, and, we believe, an irrefutable criticism, so far as it goes, of all that secularism that seeks to interpret man in terms of the law

which is commensurate only with the lower part of his nature. The Christian cannot but welcome the searching persistency with which Babbitt seeks to establish the dignity of man, and, to a certain extent, the mystery of man. His plain insistence that he has no wish to deny the reality and validity of the religious experience even though he does insist that humanism is self-sustaining, this, while it poses problems which we must entertain later, is nevertheless a generous and not a hostile attitude. In Babbitt there is much that can function as the ally of Christian ethics rather than as its opponent. His humanism is an attempt to lift man. He arrives at it as the antidote for the naturalistic wallowing that is all too prevalent. If he stops at the half-way house of a humanism which is, by itself from the Christian standpoint, neither self-sustaining nor adequate to the fulness of the spiritual nature of man, that is no cause for the uncharitable denial of such service as he has performed.

In Babbitt's theory the 'flexible standard' is somewhat analogous to the creative freedom of man as spirit, and as the child of God, as conceived in Christian theology. In fact the deep-seated distaste of Babbitt for metaphysics and therefore for supernatural religion seems to have been due to the early influence of some theological rigorism to which he was exposed in his youthful days, which led him to feel that the mystery of man and his creative life had been seriously distorted. He thus fights on two fronts, the naturalistic, and the supernaturalistic, while attempting meanwhile to preserve a high doctrine of man. The wistful way in which he comes to the border of religion, even admits the need of humanism for religion, but then falls back into purely humanistic

thinking seems to betoken one who, in struggling with the problem of man's freedom and discipline, feels that man points beyond himself but yet can see no way to affirm this 'beyond' without running the risk of corrupting man by subordinating him to some deadening determinism in the system of some 'metaphysic of the One'.

Babbitt fails to make the transition to the realm of religious realities because he does not come to grips with the fact of sin, and hence fails to grasp the deeper significance of man's spiritual being. In spite of this, however, his critique of western culture, his championship of the unique status of man, and his mordant challenge to all undisciplined and inhuman living are, so far as they go, all to the good, and lest we seem only adversely critical we here make note of this.

The contribution of professor Dewey, on the other hand, was an attempt to establish man not by reclaiming him from the slough of naturalism, but by preserving him from what we might call a celestial evaporation in the sphere of the supernatural. Babbitt was elevating man and stopped at the borderline of the specifically religious by invoking the self-sufficiency of positivistic method. Dewey is reducing man from what he feels is an overexpansion that has destroyed him. While the former tends toward the doctrine of spirit but never quite arrives, the latter moves away from it and becomes increasingly naturalistic in his interpretation of man. Where Babbitt's concern is to reinstate man as supreme over nature and to deliver him from the lower world, Dewey's concern is liberate him from what, in his view, is the restricting dependence upon anything above him. We have in the preface noted the reasons for calling Dewey's view a humanistic one.¹ The convergence

1. p.iii

upon their respective humanistic credos is thus made from opposite extremes, and the directions in which they are travelling in their thought have influenced their judgments differently in regard to the supernatural. With this we must deal later on. For the present we must note that Dewey's instrumentalism was partially the outcome of an attempt to reinstate man's genuine freedom on the levels of creative action, which freedom and status had been lost, Dewey felt, not by the naturalistic reductions of man, but by the supernaturalism that had unduly submerged man's part in the process of living the humane life.

Dewey is the spokesman for many who cannot tolerate a religion that lives in the clouds, or involves attitudes and attentions that are irrelevant to the actual conditions of life. He writes:

'The objection to supernaturalism is that it stands in the way of an effective realization of the sweep and depth of the implications of natural human relations.' 2

While we cannot exempt him from the inexcusable unwillingness to distinguish between the unfortunate expositions of the Christian gospel and the essential heart of that gospel, still less excuse his complete failure to deal with Christianity in a way that understands her message, yet it remains true that Christianity has had its share of those who have indulged in mystical reveries as substitutes for the tasks that have confronted them. By the doctrine of the omnipotence and omniscience of God many have been led to pass over entirely the responsibilities devolving upon them as individuals. This exposition, however, is not representative of Christianity or the Judaism out of which it arose as witness the prophets and their concern for society, the early church, and

2. A Common Faith, p. 80.

Paul's letters to go no further. Dewey quite misconstrues the nature of God of religion, and the necessary effects of the supernatural. Where the world of transcendental reality has resulted in congealing and constricting the creative and ethical it has not been as something intrinsic to theism as such. It has arisen from man's misconception of God, and what God requires of him. Yet when Dewey writes:

'Men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life because they have waited upon some power external to themselves and to nature to do the work they are responsible for doing', 3

One has to admit that many have so conceived of religion as to make this its effect. We must also admit that where this view has prevailed it has often had retarding effects upon scientific experimentation. History is full of instances where men have delegated their participation in the active and creative work in the world to God as if He had not called them to a role of partnership in creative freedom. Tertullian who, as we have seen, took a stand against man's creative and manipulative experimentation with nature, is not quite alone in this static conception of man's relation to the world of matter and process.⁴

Allowance must also be made for the fact that Dewey swung over to the pragmatic orbit from certain philosophical convictions which were the prime movers in his abandonment of the earlier Idealism of 1884. One cannot rule out, therefore, the very strong presumption that his dislike of the metaphysical is not due solely to the effects of religion in its supernatural form upon him. It seems to lie partly in something that happened to Dewey, namely, to the incompatibility of the empiricism of scientific method with the system of thought involved in the absolutist

3. ibid., p. 46.

4. Compare the fight against chloroform; machines of faster travel, etc.etc.

philosophy. For him apparently the absolute of Idealism and the God of supernatural theology are equivalent in significance and both alike destroy the freedom of man. Much of his diatribe against supernatural religion is the outcome of his experience with the philosophical absolute and not with the God of Christian faith. In fact the contention is strengthened when one notes that Dewey argues against the world of religious faith mainly on the grounds that it derived from Greek philosophy. He never once mentions the religious category of the holy, the sense of sin, or the experience of grace as having anything to do with the belief in the supernatural. He conceives of religion purely in terms of intellectual cognition, and not in terms of spirit. He treats the supernatural as if it had come into existence simply as an epistemological reservoir which can now, because of the increase of knowledge, be done away with.

In spite of the respective insufficiencies of both Babbitt and Dewey, however, they have contributed to a heightened sense of the relative autonomy of man. This is true even though the humanistic movement as a whole has been swept on to extremes that have undermined it. In them one aspect of man, a fraction of his reality that had been unduly submerged - his relative freedom - receives compensatory, even if onesided, expression. The reactionary nature of this testimony, particularly in Dewey, results in a truncated, and hence in a distorted man. The unfruitful terminus of humanism is the result of an abstraction. A real and permanent truth - man's dignity and freedom - receives exposition in a framework of reference that has amputated man from any wider and deeper aspect of his meaning and existence. Modern humanism may be conceived to have established positively that man has a certain autonomy

and freedom whereby his spontaneous creativity can be exercised in a way not sufficiently envisaged in the life and practice of the Christian Church. On the other hand it has established negatively, by its own failure, that man's autonomy is relative, and that man is not an unconditioned creature. Modern humanism is the outcome of the divorce that took place at the Renaissance between the Biblical and Classical traditions. The instability of current humanism is evidence of the fact that there is a large omission at the heart of the classical concept of man. This constitutes the negative phase of the meaning of modern humanism. But contemporary humanism is a compound of instability and creativity, and in its partial success in calling attention to the majesty of man in his freedom and creativity lies the positive phase of its meaning.

This is the service of humanism. To overlook or minimize, and thus to forget this aspect of man and its permanency for the Christian doctrine of man would be simply to duplicate the corresponding error whereby humanism in seeking to affirm man's creative and finite life and its attendant goods overlooked the permanent importance of man's spiritual and metaphysical significance embodied in the religious traditions against which it revolted. This fact of man's creative life, his nobility and lofty estate, while intrinsic to and finally sustained, we believe, only by the theological interpretation of man as contained in the Christian gospel, this aspect we must acknowledge as one thing that humanism has helped in its one-sided way to reemphasize.

B. The Basic Issue - Revelation

a. Babbitt and Dewey essentially secularists.

With all their differences, for we must remember that Babbitt

was unequivocally opposed to Dewey,⁵ it yet remains true that they are essentially alike in one central point, their secularism. They both champion the self-sufficiency of the ongoing process itself. There is no 'discontinuity' between God and man in the sense of a radical spiritual distinction between creator and creature. There is no differentiation between the conditioned and contingent human being and the unconditioned ground of his existence in God. Even though Babbitt permits the religious affirmations to those inclined to them, he insists that the potency of living is available without recourse to the God of religion. His 'higher will' is purely an immanent reality in spite of the fact that it is spoken of as transcendent to man's lower nature and his reason. Its transcendence is purely an intramural affair, having its place simply within the economy of the structure of human nature itself and does not refer to any reality transcending man himself as a whole. It is therefore not indicative of an order above man as man, of which he partakes and with which he communes.

As we have noted, both of these men are the apostles of views that are antimetaphysical. The world of persons and values is an affair of this world and confined within its walls needing no transmural⁶ appeal in order to transact successfully its pursuit of potency, direction and

5. Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. xiii, see also Humanism and America, p. 42, for his attitude to pragmatists.

6. By transmural it is not meant to refer to some 'beyond' as outside of the visible world of process and events. Rather is it a transition from the dependent to the supporting, from the contingent to its ground that is meant. It is not intended to suggest by intramural a sort of walled in world separated from an outer and isolated world of transmural reality. The idea is that interpenetrative within the visible order is the invisible and distinctly other order which is its ground. These two are qualitatively rather than quantitatively related. The idea of mural disjunction is meant simply to convey the separatistic independence of the conditioned from its ground, which has come about by virtue of the paradox that the modern mind has so united these two aspects as to make all reference to the one as distinct from and as basic to the other quite unintelligible.

meaning. While they allow a distinction between man and nature so that man is not simply continuous with nature but in some sense a novelty, a discontinuity (though in Dewey this distinction is seriously attenuated), yet they make it plain that they do not admit the reality of any such like discontinuity between man and God. Where Babbitt is friendly to supernaturalism and revelation, feeling however, that he can attain the essentially Christian fruits on grounds other than those of revelation, Dewey is unalterably the foe of all revelation and all appeals to any transhuman, or superhuman reality. Unlike Babbitt he has no good word to say for it. Babbitt denies its necessity but leaves its reality open to those who are convinced of its existence. Dewey denies it on all counts. Thus revelation becomes the basic issue. In fact it would seem to be the point in the dividing of the ways, and the central dispute between Christianity and modern humanism.

Babbitt is definitely intent upon preserving a 'modern' attitude, by which he means a 'positive and critical' one that is thoroughly 'experimental' and unimpeded by any 'metaphysical and theological baggage'. In his essay on Buddha and the Occident, appended to his translation of the Dhammapada after noting that the principle of control for both Buddhism and Christianity is based upon a 'transcendent will' he adds, that while this is so they differ in that for Buddhism this 'will' is not associated with that of a personal deity but with man's intuitional reflection.⁷ Babbitt in his 'experimental' attitude shows himself still under the limitations of the scientific approach. Discovery not revelation, continuity rather than discontinuity is the basis of the

7. The Dhammapada, p. 121. Oxford Univ. Press, 1936.

humanistic sufficiency. He is right in saying that to avail oneself of metaphysics is to be no longer positivistic. Instead, however, of inquiring as to whether or not there is ground for believing that man does point beyond himself in the religious sense of that phrase, Babbitt seems to be governed by a phobia of all theological and metaphysical reality, intent upon preserving at all costs the positivistic interpretation of man. The contention which we must later advance is that Babbitt, who criticizes the naturalists for not being 'positive enough' in their inventory of man's nature, is himself open to a like charge of fragmentary evaluation. In Babbitt's hands the integral man is fractionalized.

For the present let us note that he appeals for ratification of his intramural ambit of reference to the humanisms of Confucius and Buddha. Of the latter he says that he 'denies the soul in the Platonic sense and does not grant any place in his discipline to the idea of God'.⁸ He describes Buddha as a 'critical and experimental supernaturalist'.⁹ Babbitt is therefore in favor of Buddhism because he feels that his attempt to attain the Christian controls without embracing the theology and metaphysics of Christianity is illustrated as a feasibility by the experiment of Buddhistic humanism. In this way Babbitt believes that on purely 'experimental' grounds one can live the 'supernatural' life which, it is important to note, is defined by him as consisting in 'the achievement of certain virtues'.¹⁰

Likewise when we turn to Dewey the emphasis upon continuity versus any discontinuity is very apparent. The allowance of any otherness,

8. ibid., p. 77.

9. ibid., p. 78. see especially pp. 80-81.

10. ibid., pp. 78-79.

however similar to man, entering to supplement his living is quite unthinkable. Starting with his hatred of the epistemological dualism of mind and matter, Dewey dismisses all psycho-physical dualism as the preposterous invention of a gulf where in fact there is none. 'The fundamental assumption is continuity'.¹¹

"There is no separate 'mind' gifted in and of itself with a faculty of thought; such a conception of thought ends in postulating the mystery of a power outside of nature and yet able to intervene within it".¹²

It is quite plain in this recurring strain of thought that Dewey is without any real ontology of the self. The subject which knows and thinks is already sundered from its central being qua subject. The mystery of man, the subject, is explained by reducing him to purely 'objective' terms and the inner depths of his being are lost. The whole of 'causal explanation', we are told, is simply a device to bridge an artificial gap arbitrarily and gratuitously created.¹³ The world of morals is in science, for science is simply the extended manifestation of the concern for 'good and bad, prosperity and failure, and hence with choice'.¹⁴ The implications regarding revelation can be seen in the following:

'The greatest dualism which now weighs humanity down, the split between the material, the mechanical, the scientific, and the moral and the ideal will be destroyed, when the consciousness of science is fully impregnated with the consciousness of human value'.¹⁵

- That is to say there is no world of spiritual reality from which stem the 'values' embodied in the praxis of life. For Dewey values are

11. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 87.

12. The Quest for Certainty, p. 227.

13. Experience and Nature, pp. 273; 275; 99-100.

14. ibid., p. 32.

15. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 173.

simply judgments of practice, and the function of philosophy, he feels, is to show that science is just the growth of man's moral endeavor.¹⁶ Religiously speaking this means that man is confined to himself. There is no transhuman world of recourse, and no undergirding structure of a spiritual order of reality which reveals itself to man, or with which he communes. His own intelligent and creative genius is the sole source of inspiration.

That we are not seriously misjudging the instrumentalist position, but rather that this is in fact where it does eventuate was indicated in the 'Humanist Manifesto' published in 1933 and signed by John Dewey, Harry Elmer Barnes and thirty two others. In it there was a clear statement of what amounts to a repudiation of all concepts of revelation, and a firm adherence to the theory of the self-sufficient and self-explanatory nature of human life and existence. It reads in part as follows:

Fifth: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values...

Sixth: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism and the several varieties of 'new thought'.....

Ninth: In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life, and in cooperative effort to promote social well being.¹⁷

The foregoing is sufficient to demonstrate that in both Dewey and Babbitt revelation is the one central issue as it is between Christianity and all humanistic culture. Man and God, says Christianity. Man alone with the explanatory genius of his experimentation and his

16. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 358.

17. Quoted by Wieman and Horton in The Growth of Religion p. 192, New York: Willett Clark and Co., 1938.

self-imposed discipline in human relations says humanism. Revelation and discovery; God's gracious initiative towards man and man's response to God, says Christian theology. Discovery alone, man's heroic, expensive but never-failing upward striving, says humanist philosophy.

Here is the cardinal issue of our time. On the one side, Humanism as a purely intramural affair, played strictly within the confines of the temporal and with no resort to the environing eternal for by definition they do not exist. Humanism is what Dostoevsky called a 'flat-land' of 'euclidean' three-dimensional proportions. Christianity, on the other hand, has place for a Christian humanism which provides for an integral rather than a fractional and truncated man. It has both intramural and extramural aspects. For it there is a world that is neither contained in, nor identical with the world of man and nature, but which speaks within this sphere in revealing radiance in the incarnation, and sustains a continued and revelatory relationship to the world of men through the Spirit, this is the Christian conception. The former explains man from within himself with no self-transcending significance. The latter places man in the context of God in whose image he is created. Christianity adds to 'humanism' a fourth dimension of Spirit, and thereby makes true humanism a possibility.

The existence not simply of these two particular philosophies but the rise of the new demonic forms of religion themselves founded upon the explicit disavowal of man's spiritual nature, and the belief in the non-existence of any revelation, these events of our time are bringing to a focus the fact that the great division in our days is no longer between the political right and the political left, but between the whole secular and demonic order of our culture on the one hand, with

its denial of God, and its faith in the fractional and unspiritual man and on the other hand, the Christian faith wherein man's significance derives from his stature as a child of God, whose image and likeness he bears in corrupted form, and whose saving and renewing presence he receives by grace, so that from God both man and his world receive their meaning. This is the field of the present warfare. T. S. Eliot has rightly said that 'the profound division between human beings' is that 'between those who accept and those who deny Christian revelation'.¹⁸

b. The Role of Pseudo-Categories.

The central difficulty of the 'modern' mind lies in the fact that it has become saturated with the categories of science to such an extent that it is now impervious, and temperamentally blind, to the categories involved in the spiritual experience of man. Accustomed to the rational concepts of process and continuity that manifest themselves in the world which is subject to man, and in which man is also partially rooted as a child of nature, we have come increasingly to regard these concepts, especially since Darwin, as both regulative of truth, and the constituent of reality itself including man. Thus the presence of discontinuities in reality are either disallowed or glozed over. If man is in fact a spiritual creature wherein the mystery of self-knowledge involves the confrontation of the human spirit by the divine, where the distinction between man and God can coexist with communion between the same, and where discontinuity between man and God can be real, involving distinction without disjunction or isolation of the one from the other, if this

18. Revelation, p. 2. J. Baillie and H. Martin Edd., London: Faber and Faber, 1937.

is so, then it is plain that the use of the category of continuity in such a way as to disallow this factor is to explain man by reducing him. The mystery of the whole man is emasculated by the interpretation of the whole in a category that is in fact commensurate with only a fractional aspect of man.

Yet as T. E. Hulme reminded us twenty years ago this has actually been the case. We moderns have actually become unable to 'look at a gap or chasm without shuddering'.¹⁹ Our humanistic culture has no room in its thinking for the radical imperfection of man. In its romantic naivete it feels that man is intrinsically good and that he is capable of indefinite improvement by intramural appeal in reliance upon reason and intelligence. So 'sin' has largely disappeared as a reality in much contemporary thought. The category of continuity is alien and hostile to the possibility and fact of revelation. The significance of a category which thus becomes regulative for thought is that it becomes the premise and presupposition of all our thinking. We are thus unconsciously governed by a basic conviction which underlies the whole of our deliberations. We are seldom conscious of the category we use for we see all things through it, and we are therefore unaware of that through which we see them. The case between Christianity and Humanism is then a fundamental affair. It lies not in the superficial area of the edifices of the two respective systems, it resides in the sphere of their foundations that are presupposed by their visible superstructures of theology and humanistic credo respectively. It is of vital importance that we see this, for it is apparent that all cross-questioning at the

19. Speculations, p. 4. London: Kegan Paul, 1924.

higher levels will always fail to get to the root of the real difference. An accepted category influences unconsciously our idea of the truth, so that all our deductions derived from it appear to us to be unquestionable facts and not opinions. Dogma, as Hulme pointed out, becomes 'a way of intellectually expressing a basic category'.²⁰ The character of a category thus incorporated as fundamental colours the entire thinking of the civilization over which it holds sway, and influences all spheres of thought and action, ethics, economics, politics, education, philosophy and religion etc. Hence a civilization which is built upon naturalistic interpretations of life surrounds the individuals within that civilization with patterns of behaviour, and constructs of thought which are in reality derivations from a premise which thus receives indirect exposition.

Hence the role of a category is very important. When it is a false one, a 'pseudo-category', its effect is to pervert the life and thought of the civilization or the individuals who espouse it. Its damage is in direct proportion to its unsuspected presence and the extensiveness of its prestige. Each age detects what it feels is the non-inevitable character of the categories that have dominated other ages, but is always subject to blindness regarding its own presuppositions. This is due to the fact that its own categories always appear as objective and inevitable, in fact even unquestionable. To think in categories that contravene or transcend the dominant category of any particular period always appears to that age as the unpardonable sin, the height of impertinence, and the depth of folly.

20. ibid. p. 68. See the whole of chapter one for a stimulating presentation.

It is the contention of this thesis and, we submit, of Christianity everywhere, that the category of continuity, the premise, that is, of the self-sufficiency of the merely intramural resources of man and nature, this category which characterizes modern humanism in general, is a pseudo-category. The contention of Christianity against humanism is centralized therefore in the issue of revelation, the affirmation that the existence and meaning of human life have extra-mural resources and that those living resources have actually entered the sphere of man's temporal scene in likeness unmistakable, but in difference equally undeniable, and that in dependence upon that providence of the Spirit of God lies the whole purpose, meaning, and promise of every human venture. Christianity affirms the derivative, dependent and creaturely status of man. Humanism affirms the independent, autonomous and self-sufficient nature of man. Christianity in holding to the dogma of creation subscribes to a discontinuity, an inescapable distinction between man and his ground of being, God. In Christianity there is therefore a real differentiation between time and eternity, between the conditioned and the unconditioned. Humanism in proclaiming a dogma of continuity rubs out this cardinal distinction. In its more naturalistic form as in Dewey, it reduces man to nature and then invokes the dictum that 'nature makes no leaps', certainly no radical ones. In its more classical form as in Babbitt, it construes man as a compound of reason and imagination and interprets his life as adequate on positivistic levels apart from religion. Both of these are dominated by the category of continuity, a purely rational concept, neither of them therefore has any place for the spiritual interpretation of man, are alien to the

phenomenon of sin, the reality of grace, and the whole range of those aspects of man as spirit wherein he is confronted by the evidence that leads him to the venture of faith in God.

The unveiling of the fallacious nature of this regnant category in the thinking of modern humanism is the foremost task confronting Christian theology. It is also the next step that we must venture upon, however inadequately, in this thesis. We are faced by the necessity of convicting a secular generation of the non-secular verities. Somehow we must confront modernity with that which can rob the false categories of their prestige and their character of inevitability. It is a fruitful suggestion of Hulme's that a negative approach to this task can be made through history. He suggests that since ideologies always have histories, and since the central ideas that rise to regulative positions from time to time have all existed before our time, it is therefore possible to shake the prestige of pseudo-categories by a review of history in which their assumed inevitability becomes exposed to the weakening effects of other and contrary categories of previous civilizations. In history ideas can be seen in 'objectified' and 'extended' form as it were, so that if man can preserve his balance by always preserving a 'library of a thousand years' it will be possible to 'vaccinate ourselves against the possibility of harbouring false categories'. By a study of the periods of Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern thought it is possible not only to discern for ourselves the central core of religious truth and therefore the religious category from which it derives, but even if we cannot thereby convince the humanist of the intrinsic truth of the religious category it will at least be possible Hulme feels,

"to destroy in the mind of the humanist the conviction that his own attitude is the inevitable attitude of the emancipated and instructed man", and thus "to destroy the naivete of his canons of satisfaction." 21

This negative approach has been at least partially served in the second chapter of this paper where we traced the transition from the Christian to the secular concept of man. But our task requires more than this type of negative answer. In so far as we can, we must indicate the actual inadequacies of humanism in presenting the 'man' whose interpreter it professes so successfully to have been. We must then try also, in so far as we possibly can, to give a positive account of the nature of man that shall endeavor to be a truer because a more inclusive statement of the whole nature of man. That the spiritual interpretation of man may be unconvincing to aught save the eye of faith may be true, but witness to it must be borne nevertheless. We must find a way not only to contravert humanism merely by the statement that Christianity affirms the position that man is made in God's image, that he is a creature who stands at the juncture of nature and spirit, that he sins and that grace through Jesus Christ is his means of redemption. To indicate this will no doubt make it evident that other views than those of the humanist are also in the field. We must pass beyond this and say on what grounds the Christian belief rests. There must be some attempt to state clearly the meaning of such words as 'sinner', 'grace', 'image of God', 'the fall', etc., and what all this involves for the nature of man and his life in the world.

21. ibid., p. 38.

C. Some Weaknesses of Humanism

The central and crucial issue has already been indicated.

It is one which is common to both Dewey and Babbitt and with it we shall attempt to deal later on. For the moment we must concern ourselves with some of the general weaknesses which appear in different forms in each of them.

a. The Inadequacy of Babbitt's 'New Humanism'.

i. The Relation of Humanism to Religion.

We have had occasion to note that Babbitt appears sometimes to acknowledge that humanism must be supplemented by religion, as when he writes, 'Humanism can't get along without religion'.²² He also states that he ranges himself unhesitatingly 'on the side of the supernaturalists'. But Babbitt equivocates on this question. In 1928 T. S. Eliot had asked concerning this humanism, 'does it not bear the same relation to religion that 'humanitarianism' bears to humanism? Is it in the end a view of life that will work by itself, or is it a derivative of religion which will work only for a short time in history and only for a few highly cultivated persons like Mr. Babbitt - whose ancestral traditions, furthermore, are Christian .." To this Babbitt had answered that a 'broad survey of the past does not, however, confirm the view that humanism is either precarious or parasitical'.²⁴ He continued to affirm that positive and critical experimentation could demonstrate for

22. Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 380.

23. For Lancelot Andrews, p. 128, London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928.

24. Humanism and America, p. 37.

man the 'higher will' by which life could be controlled without invoking religion. There seems to be no way of avoiding the conclusion that Babbitt meant that humanism can of itself provide the necessary controls for life. Yet he often writes as one who is not quite sure of his security in this belief. For example, if humanism is thus self-sufficient what can be meant by the statement 'humanism cannot get along without religion'. It would seem to follow that if it is self-sufficient it has no need of religion. If, on the other hand, humanism 'gains immensely in effectiveness when it has a background of religious insight',²⁵ it would appear impossible to deny, as Babbitt does, its 'precarious and parasitical' character, in some sense at least. In spite of this inconsistency Babbitt continued to feel that the humanist could not be accused of wanting to live at the humanistic level while claiming at the same time to achieve results that were in fact only possible at the religious level. He affirmed that humanism could postulate as 'one of the immediate data of consciousness' something that was considered by some as intrinsic to the religious level but which was in fact possible to attain without recourse to religion. In saying this he never faced the question which must have been asked many times and which Mr. T. S. Eliot put in writing after Babbitt's death, namely, how can we agree on the 'immediate data of consciousness' without recourse to some reality transcending man? Without this do we not end by 'making one man's data turn out to be another man's constructions',²⁶

25. *ibid.*, p. 39

26. Revelation, J. Baillie and H. Martin Edd., p. 18, London: Faber and Faber, 1937.

Furthermore, Babbitt's attempt to make Confucius and Buddha examples of self-sufficient and unprecarious humanism is made highly dubious if one stops to realize what Eliot also points out, namely, that 'Confucianism endured by fitting in with the popular religion, and that Buddhism endured by becoming as distinctly a religion as Christianity - recognizing a dependence of the human upon the divine'.²⁷ We are naturally driven to inquire whether Babbitt's 'broad survey' of the past had been really deep enough, and whether he had pondered sufficiently the implications involved in the fact that humanism has flourished historically only where religion has preceded it, and that as religious acknowledgments have faded humanism has always tended to pass into naturalism.

Because of this unstable relation in Babbitt's writings between humanism and religion he gives us a confused and vague picture of what he means by the 'supernatural' on the side of which he declares himself to be in the final analysis. In denying the Christian and religious metaphysic he yet wishes to claim some sort of supernatural benefits on a non-metaphysical basis. As Paul E. More reminded us, Babbitt's love of Buddhism was due to the fact that he felt thereby corroborated in his belief in the supernatural without at the same time having to believe in the 'superhuman'.²⁸ It is a curious paradox, however, that the arch foe of the romantic vagaries should have said this, for it presents us with the idea of a supernatural man in a godless universe which is surely to come very close to that romanticism which the humanist cannot abide.

27. Selected Essays, p. 422, New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1932.

28. On Being Human, p. 38. Princeton Univ. Press, 1938.

Thus it is precisely the instability engendered by the lack of transhuman reference for the 'higher will' that provides us with the humanism which is unable to prevent its capitulation to the purely naturalistic levels, where the 'supernatural' means simply the 'acquiring of certain virtues'. For the attempt to distinguish the humanist from the naturalist by positing the higher will while still leaving the source of the same purely within man is to open the door again to the individualism of the expansive desires with their atomizing consequence. By avoiding the transhuman affirmations the humanist left to his own resources comes out with sub-human results, certainly in the long run. It is therefore an apparently inescapable judgment that Babbitt's humanism is itself a form of the modern decadence. It is a desperate attempt to heal the disease of the world by a subtly disguised, but nevertheless kindred form of that same disease. But it is obviously impossible to heal the contemporary chaos by means of a 'special aspect of that chaos'.²⁹

ii. 'Ends' for action and the 'End' of life.

A second deficiency we must note in Babbitt is his failure to provide any adequate conception of the 'end' of life itself. Where there is no religious setting for existence, no light of cosmic purpose, and no hope of divine providence there is left only despair or else the heroic attentions to immediate goals and ends either to drown the sense of irrelevancy, or as the proximate satisfactions in lieu of the more ultimate ones. History has always been full of these gospels

29. H. N. Fairchild in The Review of Religion, p. 220. Columbia Univ. Press, January 1938.

of 'practical activity', And it is no spirit of unfairness, we trust, when we observe that with all his gestures of the open door to religion, if and when, yet Babbitt's humanism remains an attempt in a jaded and unpoised world to offset its inability to answer the question of ultimate meaning by providing it with those immediate ends that can be worthy of the devotions of man even in his religious loneliness. The goal of the humanist is happiness, primarily his own happiness, for Babbitt tells us 'the real humanist consents, like Aristotle, to limit his desires only in so far as this limitation can be shown to make for his own happiness'.³⁰ But the humanist does this, he hastens to assure us, because he sees that the best for the good of society will be an ennobled individual. The control of himself becomes the means to his poised and cultured state of being thus ensuring a richer contribution to society. This discipline is effected as we have seen, by the veto power applied in accordance with the law of measure and results in the humanist's crowning grace of 'decorum'. This is all to the good so far as it goes. But if that is all, if decorum is the final term, as indeed it must be unless humanism is to be implemented by something from the religious sphere, if there is really nothing 'anterior, exterior, and superior' to man, then we seem to be left with no ground for meaning. As Eliot puts it, what are all these people controlling themselves for? Restraint for restraint's sake, and proportion for the sake of proportion, may give immediate ends for action, but are likely to present rather chilly prospects as to any meaning, or any adequate purpose, and all-controlling end for man. If all that the humanistic

30. Humanism and America, p. 48.

exhortation is to lead to is the discovery that self-control is good it is no wonder that even Babbitt admits that humanism is seldom enthusiastic. The mountain has laboured to bring forth a mouse. Is the 'higher will' simply to go on willing the self-control of the immediate and expansive impulses? If this is all, it provides no purpose commensurate with man's status as spirit. Like all philosophies which overlook to start with the self-transcendent capacities of man's spiritual nature, humanism does not see, in spite of its admission of religion as an appendix, that man as spirit can live meaningfully only in the service of that which is beyond him, for his nature has more than human reference. Humanism is bankrupt when we ask the question, what is man's end? In fact humanism overlooks the fact that man can ask such a question. Having evaded the spiritual nature of human life it comes out with a pseudo-salvation, and answers, or attempts to answer, the spiritual problem at sub-spiritual levels. Here again Babbitt's failure is due to his inability to appreciate the radical distinction and yet the spiritual kinship between man and God, the fact of sin, and reality of grace. Babbitt does not conceive the mystery of man to be as great as in fact it is. Hence he cannot establish a stable dignity for him for he oversimplifies the nature of man. Babbitt's thought is alien to the central issue and nature of the human personality as spirit, and therefore can make no room for the proper treatment of the tragic aspects of the case which find so central a place in the Christian gospel. The 'new humanism' is, we feel, an attenuation of man because of its essential misreading of the nature of man.

iii. The Negative and Aristocratic Temper

Particularly hard is it to feel very enthusiastic about the dominantly negative and aristocratic aspects of the 'new humanism'. The veto power functions to negate, and the 'higher will' seems to be too exclusively the instrument for reining in and checking the expansive desires of the natural man. Hence the 'man' who emerges from the pages of Babbitt's books is rather an austere creature. The freedom of the spirit seems to fall short of its abandon in real but disciplined creativeness. This 'decorum' produces sedate and self-controlled men whose affirmative and positive side appears rather in the minor role. There is no abandon and no singing in this humanism. One can't imagine the new humanists singing in the catacombs, and Babbitt admits that 'humanism is not primarily enthusiastic whereas religion is'.³¹ The whole of life takes on a rather grim and legal aspect where one walks the thin line of the law of measure, trying to abide by the representative deed. This legalistic strain appears in spite of the fact that Babbitt makes the plea for the imaginative use of judgment as for instance when he says, 'To work according to the human law is simply to rein in one's impulses'.³² Here the emphasis is plainly upon not doing the uncontrolled. While Babbitt undoubtedly means to include the creativity of life which springs presumably from the right use of illusion and thus to open up the wider freedom of the life that is lived in a truly human way, yet it is also true that his new humanism is not in its own way unlike a sort of faint neo-classicism itself.

31. ibid., p. 41.

32. Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 366.

Its negative tone lends a formalistic trait to the whole system of thought. It counteracts the naturalistic philosophy not so much with a positive as with a prohibitive outlook. The 'law' is held too consciously in mind ever to be transcended by a spirit which is above the law. Avoidance of onesidedness, and the attainment of proportionateness, and moderation may be good definitions of a humanist but they fall very far short of describing the living human being. The fault we must find here is not with the validity, but with the supremacy and primacy of this law of mediation. Self-control if it is to be more than mere moralism must involve some adequate statement of the end of human life for which the controls are invoked.

Furthermore, there is a note of proud elevation in the sense of attained poise. In the man of the inner check one seems to detect a not very distant cousin of the pharisaic legalist and the pride that accompanied perfunctory righteousness. The humanistic doctrine is an aristocratic one. It is not primarily for the many but for the few. It is a philosophy for leaders who may be good models for the slothful multitude. It is thus by the very nature of its requirements for intellectual and moral finesse, an esoteric discipline. How many can be counted on successfully to 'mediate between some general principle and the infinitely various and shifting circumstances of actual life'?³³

Its aristocratic nature is manifested even more plainly in its essentially rationalistic features. It is a belief in the power of man to achieve by himself, by his own higher will, without the aid of any transhuman power, the ordering of his own life. Babbitt really

33. Democracy and Leadership, p. 25.

believes in the unaided power of man to control his impulses. There is nothing more calculated to produce the snob than this secularism that thoroughly believes in its own ability to control the expansive emotions, and especially when it feels that so few can reach by their own right use of illusion this blissful state.

These are some of the general counts upon which Babbitt's humanism is wanting. It is unsatisfactorily vague, if not double-faced in presenting the relation of humanism to religion. It has no doctrine of the end of man's life that lends significance and meaning to the multiple ends of particular activities. And finally, its predominant tone is negative, its spirit tending to produce not humility but aristocratic pride and the feeling of superiority.

b. Fallacies in Dewey's Instrumentalism

i. Begging the Question and the Use of Straw Men

Dewey has many annoying characteristics and not the least of them is his quick dismissal on a priori grounds of phenomena incompatible with his position. The scientific spirit and method we had thought would involve the candid admission of its own limitations. This Dewey denies, feeling that nothing that is extra-scientific can have the status of reality. We have seen how in disposing of discontinuities and gaps in reality he conceives all talk about the mind-body relation to be about a figment. He affirms that, 'It is not exact, nor relevant to say, 'I experience', or 'I think'. 'It' experiences, or is experienced; 'it' thinks or is thought is a juster phrase'.³⁴

³⁴. Experience and Nature, p. 232.

But one would have thought that the problem as to whether there are minds that have the 'faculty of thought', and whether awareness involves factors that cannot be described in physical terms, these issues are not to be decided by simply beginning with the premise that dualism of no kind is to be accepted and that therefore it does not exist.

In denying the reality of anything metaphysical, and by reducing all knowledge to mere cognition of empirical dimensions he finds it possible to say, 'every reflective knowledge in other words, has a specific task which is set by a concrete and and empirical situation'.³⁵ That is to say, he starts by making knowledge purely a question of the relation of the epistemological subject to the epistemological object. He does not go behind this to the ontological issue of self-knowledge, thus arriving at spiritual knowledge. Non-functional knowledge, that is, knowledge distinct from a particular context of empirical relations is impossible, he feels. No antecedent reality is involved. 'Reality unconditioned by any concrete and practical problems of the knower'³⁶ is not admitted as a referent of meaning. Thus man is attenuated and the 'scientific' man becomes the whole man, and the tragic fallacy of man's despiritualization occurs.

Dewey is also guilty of often misrepresenting the opposing view which he intends to demolish. What he is pleased to call 'spectator' theories of knowledge do not imply, as he suggests, that knowledge is not conditioned by natural factors, or that the knower is outside the world to be known. They only assume, as one writer puts it, 'that there exist some cognoscenda (things-to-be-known) whose

35. J. Dewey, Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 12.

36. W. T. Feldman, The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 8, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932

characteristics are not modified by the cognitive process by which they are known'.³⁷

Dewey insists that knowledge is purely an intellectual thing, and that the postulate of another world arose from man's sense of lack in rational understanding. 'Existing ignorance', we are told, 'or backwardness is employed to assert the existence of a division in the nature of the subject matter to be dealt with'.³⁸ Dewey seems temperamentally blind to the non-cognitive, that is, to the spiritual phenomenon in which religion is born and in which the human realization of the holy takes its rise. He criticizes Christianity without understanding it, lumping it without distinction with all religions, and then proceeds to dismiss it for holding positions it has never invoked, as for example when in the Quest for Certainty he assumes that the Christian belief in the world of metaphysical reality was an outcome of an intellectual vacuum the insufficiency of which man sought to avoid by postulating the world of perfect knowledge from which he might draw to supply the earthly lack in knowledge. This is a very obvious inability to comprehend the spiritual basis for this belief and it is caused by the limitation intrinsic to the scientific method and outlook.

Again, Dewey plays fast and loose with the nature of the self. We shall deal later on with the fact that he dissolves the self. We must here note that his scientific method and technique render Dewey incompetent to speak upon the experience of other selves, or indeed the self at all. He reduces the self to an object. It is treated and explained on grounds that are externalistic. Hence the subject ceases

37. ibid., p. 84.n

38. A Common Faith, p. 34.

to have a truly subject-ive centre of reality. The self does not know itself any longer from within itself. Thus, for example, there is high-handed dismissal of the experience reported by a missionary wherein on his own testimony he overcame a nervous breakdown by relating his 'life to its ultimate source', thereby regaining what he describes as, 'the consciousness that in God I live, move, and have my being'.³⁹ This witness Dewey describes as an illustration simply of how our experiences 'carry a superimposed load of a particular religion'. The religious source of strength is not the deep mystery of God to which the subject attributed it. We are assured that the scientific answer must be the truth here, and that not God, but the 'stable outcome' is the really religious thing and that the cause, as the subject states it, is simply 'The reduplication of the thing that has occurred, plus some name that has acquired a deeply emotional quality'. Again:

"The actual religious quality in the experience described is the effect produced, the better adjustment in life and its conditions, not the manner and cause of its production".⁴⁰

This bland dismissal of the testimony of the subject to its own experience in favor of an obviously less intimate because quite external verdict characterizes Dewey's utterances on religion throughout. The measure of sophisticated flippancy involved in some of the remarks of Professor Dewey would perhaps be more easily detected if only he did not write in such a ponderous style and language. At the hands of his rationalistic positivism everything, selves, minds etc., are reduced to mere events. Man, the subject, is attenuated to extinction because the

39. ibid., pp. 11-12.

40. ibid., pp. 13-14.

evidences for his status as a subject do not submit to the categories whereby Dewey can compute man the object!

Perhaps a more inexcusable treatment of religion is his pronouncement that 'god', as religion means that term, must go on the grounds that the ways in which men have conceived their gods to have controlled them have been too 'radically diverse' and the nature of their conceived powers too incompatible with human morality.⁴¹ He admits that men's conceptions have been the variable element, and yet with this admitted, there is nowhere in his writings any sustained and sympathetic attempt to inquire into the possibility of some common spiritual reality which men were thus confusedly thinking about and worshipping. One cannot help asking where would Dewey come out if he was consistent in this method. A like treatment would surely do away with science herself; and philosophy most certainly.

He pays little painstaking attention to Christian theology, and indulges in sophistications which charge it with implications some of which it has never taught, and which plainly have been attributed to it by Dewey because of his inability to distinguish between the Christian God and his own earlier philosophic absolute. This is made very apparent in his contention that the theistic position involves perforce a God whose realization of all values makes all human choice irrelevant. Now Christianity even where it has posited the definite foreknowledge of God has never been involved in this dilemma, for the difficulty arises only for the position which assumes that logic is final. Faith affirms a mystery here. But rationalistic humanism treats the matter of man's

⁴¹. ibid., p. 7

spiritual self-hood in terms which end by reducing the trans-rational to the purely rational. The rationalist not only does not see the issue in the same light as the man of faith, but in evaluating the outlook of faith he attributes to the latter in his blindness his own estimate of the position of faith as if the latter stood there with the resources of only the rationalist!

Again, it is surely a quite superficial view of theism to say that it is a way by which men 'feign a powerful and cunning God as an ally who bends the world to their bidding and meets their wishes'.⁴² The suave way in which magic is treated as intrinsic to all supernaturalism is hardly the sort of reasoning one expects from a fair and understanding critic of religion. It is a needed rejoinder to this tendency in Dewey to say that 'one can't refute advanced theism by preferring to talk about something else'.⁴³

Dewey is also apparently blind to the fact that his own empirical method smuggles in 'values' that are not scientifically arrived at. He continually states that science is the method of all possible knowledge. The basis of the 'activity' centred education is that all knowledge is pragmatic. (Though in his latest utterances he ventures some inklings that he notes a lack here). But there is no contemplative aspect of moral values that lends them a trans-praxis status as well. All judgments are judgments of practice. There is simply an operative context, and hence no reflection upon any antecedent 'given'. In the beginning was the deed, not the word. Pragmatism as an instrumentalism thus purports to build its whole theory of truth and knowledge around the

⁴². Experience and Nature, p. 419.

⁴³. C. Hartshorne, Beyond Humanism, p. 46. Chicago: Willett and Clark Co., 1937.

conative aspects of man conceived as implying only naturalistic contexts. Yet Dewey makes use of norms that do not arise from the purely rational and scientific matrix as he evidently imagines. He writes:

"Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect of race, sex, class, or economic status, and this is all one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of his possibility".

'Democracy' has a moral meaning only if it involves the 'all round growth of every individual'. 44

Here obviously the norms 'growth' and 'social' are presumably good because they move in the direction not of destruction of society but of mutual community. But if one asks by what empirical test 'the good' should mean that and not something else, say, anarchic individualism, the answer is there is no empirical test. The acceptance of this norm of mutuality is an acknowledgment of the claims upon life of a spiritual order. It is the simple witness to one's confrontation by an objectively real order of the nature of spiritual structure. This order is an antecedent reality even though we may come to realize our indubitable confrontation by it through the dialectic of social history and individual experiment. At the same moment therefore, that Dewey denies the non-empirical nature of 'values' and declares them dependent solely on human desires, he uses 'social growth' in a normative way for which there is no justification except upon premises which he does not admit. He smuggles in a scientifically non-empirical reality which is from the instrumental standpoint a contraband article.

44. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 186.

Cf. E. W. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, Chapter VIII, New York: Scribner's, 1933.

Furthermore Dewey's reduction of everything to "an indefinite multitude of 'heres' and 'nows', and perspectives", his denial of any ordering reality transcending the flux is hardly tenable. A valuable warning as to the tentative nature of scientific judgment becomes a dogmatic obliteration of antecedent reality altogether. But on this basis scientific procedure itself is destroyed. If knowledge is only referrable to the particular 'locus' where a given fact appears, it means that there is no general knowledge. The context of each particular 'knowing' differs from every other context of every other 'knower'. Therefore there can be on this showing, no general knowledge or truth, no system of general laws. and the structure of science becomes negated. Surely it is evident that, for all its penumbra of shadow, science presents data which involve some structuralizing norms that are permanent, some realities the knowledge of which, while it is born in the empirical moment, indicates a world of truths that is not to be identified with the process of events by which it becomes known. Without antecedent laws how could scientific predictions, as in astronomy, or inventions take place?

The instrumentalist confusion is still more marked in the moral realm. It is strange advice indeed to be told that "such happiness as life is capable of comes from.....the endeavor to wrest from each changing situation of experience its own full and unique meaning".⁴⁵ If there is not some universal end or reality transcending the process of which we are a part, if there is no One amid the Many, no element of fixity and permanence amid the changing flux how can we expect to arrive at 'intelligent direction' or 'unique meaning'? This pluralistic outcome is more

45. Art. What I Believe, p. 179, Forum: March, 1930.

likely to be a confused pattern of atomic meanings a succession of separately postulated 'meanings' too 'unique' for social coherence. In fact the humanistic decadence of our contemporary civilization would seem plainly to confirm this. It is becoming more and more patent that it is nonsense to talk about 'coherent' meaning that can be in any sense coherence or meaning unless there be some trans-individual, and trans-social source of our normative reflections.

Instrumentalism would seem to be a philosophy of rugged individualism. In this connection it is worth noting that the philosophy of Professor Dewey has had a tremendous vogue in America, where the dominant trait of culture seems to be typified in the business venture which stops short of no high pressure methods it can conceive in order to 'wrest' the 'unique' meaning for itself out of every situation. The results do not speak so very well, however, for such a philosophy. Our rugged individualism, here, as elsewhere has produced ragged individuals!

We cannot avoid noting here that this instrumentalist way of dealing with meanings ends apparently in reducing life's significance to very attenuated proportions. Where 'every existence is an event', and where meaning derives from the simply eventful there is a complete absence of any ontological self, the reality for whom the meaning is originally invoked. The recessive 'subject', which Dewey's thinking always assumes, but whose scientific method always misses is never caught up with. The ontological status of the subject, qua subject is always in doubt, and never admitted, and its future is apparently one of dissolution. Dewey is quite content with this and is apparently temperamentally insensitive to the incommensurability of Spirit with cessation or

annihilation. That things 'crumble' away is something over which we need neither 'repine' nor 'gloat'. It should be simply 'noted and used':

"If it is discomfiting when applied to good things, to our friends, possessions and precious selves, it is consoling also to know that no evil endures forever; that the longest lane turns sometimes, and that the memory of loss of nearest and dearest grows dim in time." 46

Thus easily does Dewey attempt to settle the spiritual question. But this is based upon a lack of an ontological concept of the self. Instead it is strictly instrumental. Furthermore it does violence to the spiritual nature of man it thus easily seeks to dismiss. The sophisticated spirit may possibly abide this outlook. We shall shortly inquire into the truth of this view of the self, meanwhile it is certain that no lasting enthusiasm can be reared upon so dismal a foundation.

ii. Rationalistic Illusions regarding Social Change.

In conformity with the lack of acknowledgment regarding the spiritual nature of man and hence the radically tragic nature of all evil, Dewey attributes the imperfections of society to the cultural lag between the social and the physical sciences. This gap can be spanned by the creative intelligence. Instrumentalism has an implicit faith in the power of reason over impulse, and thoroughly believes in the power of the rational man to control the emotional man.

The romanticism of this view becomes unveiled for the naivete that it is when it is confronted by the history of human relations. It is the inevitable corollary of the purely cognitive view of all knowledge, and hence of the lack of any place for man as a spiritual creature, both

of which features dominate Dewey's philosophy.

On this view it is held that man's non-mutual acts, his selfish and egoistic impulses are the outcome simply of his natural and contingent condition. Man, who for the Christian is a compound of nature and spirit, is explained upon this view in terms of nature alone. Man's misdeeds are interpreted as the outcome not of man's spiritual stature but of natural necessity viewed as a rational limitation. Man's pretensions to power thus are conceived as the outcome of mere ignorance. Selfish motives can be overcome by rational reflection, but no issues of the defective will is envisaged on this view.

Salvation consequently ensues via the avenues of education, arbitration and discussion. The conference table, for example, will do away with the maldistribution of economic wealth. While full allowance must be made for the amelioration that such methods can bring about it is a superficial reading of the source of the trouble. There is no perception here that man's reason is subject to his interests and that where privilege reasons with non-privilege the verdicts of privileged reasoning are always twisted by the covert service to the continuance of privilege. The surrenders are merely peripheral, and they can become radical only upon spiritual premises. But the spiritual premises are not the product of reason, they are the acceptance by natural reason of the authentic limits of spiritual living, whereby the covert selfishness of natural reason comes under a judgment of universal righteousness.

The rationalistic oversimplification omits any necessity for reason to be confronted by the authentic demands of the spiritual order that are antecedent and transcendent to the order of the rational.

Utopian rationalism does not acknowledge the bankrupt nature of reason apart from spiritual foundations. It does not see that the reason which by scientific knowledge has provided man with a marginal conquest over nature and a more materially advanced civilization, is the same reason which has reduced the spiritual community of man to a mere contiguity with little or no real community. At the same time that the complexity of civilization has made it doubly imperative that man live spiritually and humanely, it has provided man's egoistic impulses with more devastating, because more efficient, means of achieving his selfish ends.

The spiritual nature of the human predicament is wholly alien to Dewey's philosophy. His naive oversimplification and consequent superficiality in this regard are evident in the following:

"It is our human intelligence and our human courage which is on trial; it is incredible that men who have brought the technique of physical discovery, invention and use to such a pitch of perfection will abdicate in the face of the infinitely more important human problem..... Just as soon as we begin to use the knowledge and skills we have, to control social consequences in the interest of a shared, abundant and secured life we shall cease to complain of the backwardness of our social knowledge." 47

Here is a good illustration of the confusion whereby the

47. J. Dewey. Philosophy and Civilization, pp. 329-30, New York: Minton Balch and Co., 1931.

Though we must admit that a view of skepticism finds a sporadic voice in Dewey as when he says that because intelligence as critical method is "the stay and support of all reasonable hopes" we must remember that this "is not to assert that intelligence will ever dominate the course of events; it is not even to imply that it will save from ruin and destruction.....What the method of intelligence and thoughtful valuation will accomplish, if once it be tried, is for the result of trial to determine".

Experience and Nature, pp. 436-7. This note, however, is quite certainly a peripheral one and quite swallowed up in the major emphasis of a romantic rationalism.

scientific 'pitch of perfection' in the cognitive and material world is treated as making 'incredible' a capitulation to any anarchic tendency at the personal level. There is a complete oversight of the radical difference between persons and things due to the treatment of man as an object. Consequently there is no admission of the deep implications involved in the radical nature of man's will to power that prostitutes knowledge to its own ends 'incredible' as this may be. Instrumentalism is devoid of the realization of any aspect of man which, in proving intransigent to the scientific method, calls for an acknowledgment that man must be conceived in other than purely rational terms.

The omission of the spiritual factor of man's being is a deep and serious fallacy in Dewey's system. For example, while cooperative inquiry and discussion may reduce the coercive elements and make for a peaceful approximation to more equitable relations between individuals and groups, yet mere cooperative procedure never transcends the level of conflict because the judgments and decisions of the more powerful group can never be purged of their will to power by mere suasion. When society is organized it is always organized by certain individuals, and when they organize it they either lean it in their favor or leave the door open for its immediate manipulation in that direction.

The contest between the weak and the strong cannot be resolved by mere experiments, for the simple reason that the experiments which are the outcome of even a conference table will, with minor concessions, remain largely representative of the interests of the strong.⁴⁸ The naive assumptions underlying the rationalistic idealism of instrumentalism

48. Cf. R. Neibuhr. Moral Man and Immoral Society, Introduction. esp. p. xvii. New York: Harper's, 1933.

must come to closer grips with that aspect of man's nature to which Lord Acton had reference when he said, "power always corrupts, and absolute power always corrupts absolutely."

The instrumentalism of Mr. Dewey is, we contend, unrealistic in its doctrine of man. Its optimism is therefore likely to flourish only in periods when the economic pressures are not sufficiently painful to force the selfish nature of man to play the role of overt barbarism. But the recurrence of crisis within civilization manifest most plainly the void at the heart of the humanistic doctrine of man. The illusions of the new humanism all centre around this issue, and it is concerning this, as we have already noted, that the cardinal antithesis between Christianity and humanism arises. To this we must now more specifically turn.

D. Humanism and the Despiritualization of Man.

We have already noted that the affirmation of a division, or a distinction in reality, what we have called a 'discontinuity', so that man is marked off and distinguished from a transcendent reality upon which he is nevertheless dependent for potency and meaning, all this is most distasteful to Professor Dewey. While Babbitt refrains from denying it he nevertheless regards it as not essential for the practical purposes of living. The dislike of the transcendent order is common to both but

is much more deeply seated in the former than in the latter.⁴⁹

Dewey fairly early rejected, as we have seen, his Hegelian idealism wherein he detected a threat to the freedom and the spontaneity of man's creative life. From this he moved to a pluralistic view which affirmed the individuality of each human life and its sole dependence upon its own autonomous experiments in a system of interconnected relations. This pluralism was completely opposed to all metaphysical thinking, and therefore to any idea of the twofoldness in reality. In all such systems Dewey feels that 'the gap may only reflect, at most, a limitation now existing but in the future to be done away with'.⁵⁰ The assignment of the objects of religion to 'some realm of Being', we are told, 'weakens their claim', for it is based 'upon matters that are intellectually dubious'.⁵¹ Here the role of the pseudocategory is plainly manifest. The superstructure of thought built upon the foundation of 'continuity', cannot allow the inclusion of any material which depends upon the foundation of 'discontinuity'. It is quite plain that having once espoused a

49. By 'transcendent' is meant not a spatial 'beyond' but the spiritual ground of existence. It is an attempt to indicate that spiritual order which while it lies beyond time and history as their ground is yet operative within both, and with which man by virtue of his spiritual stature can commune, finding the meaning and purpose of his life derived therefrom. In the same way there is no spatial or quasi-physical disjunction implied in the use of the word 'discontinuity'. It is simply the attempt to denominate the real distinction between the human and the transhuman. The affirmation of the existence of the spirit of God is a religious verdict and possible only to the experiencing subject whose spiritual witness is an acknowledgment of his confrontation by the eternality of the overtures of the spirit of the Eternal to him. It is in the realization that obedience to the constraints of the Holy Spirit alone provides both the temporal and eternal significance of man's earthly life from which arises the ground for the doctrine of the discontinuity between man and God, or creation, and also the basis for the reference to the transcendent.

50. A Common Faith, pp. 34-35. cf. also ibid., pp. 23-26.

51. ibid., p. 41.

pluralistic view Dewey was driven in the interests of an organismic unity, the hunger for which was born under his discipleship to Hegel, to explain reality by rejecting the metaphysical world thus making philosophy a part of natural science, and man and his life understandable in purely naturalistic, or as we have said, intramural terms. That this is what happened is borne out by his own description of his pilgrimage where he describes the influence of Hegel upon him as follows:

"My earlier philosophic study had been an intellectual gymnastic. Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was however no mere intellectual formula, it operated as an immense release, a liberation". 52

Later on when the empirical studies began to claim his serious attention, and with them the reality of novelty and choice, then the issues of human freedom became for him impossible to solve under the system of Hegelian Idealism. At this juncture he found in James and Pierce, and particularly in Darwin the aids to the establishment of his new views. All of them made place for a pluralistic rather than a monistic world-view. Dewey was able to avoid a spiritual pluralism by emphasizing those elements in James and Darwin that helped to explain the novelty, freedom, and individuality in terms of the organism in action. Thus the prior unification of man in spirit is replaced by one where man is unitary with the organic, natural and social level of being. Dewey's unification was achieved by the satisfaction of a temperamental inclination which Christian thought must always feel was in fact a reduction of man's true stature. That this is not a forced reading of what happened

52. Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. 11, p. 19, New York: Macmillan Co., 1930.

is borne out by Dewey's own references to his aims when he says:

"I became more and more troubled by the intellectual scandal that seemed to me involved in the current (and traditional) dualism in logical standpoint and method between something called 'science' on the one hand, and something called 'morals' on the other. I have long felt that the construction of a logic, that is, a method of effective inquiry, which would apply without abrupt breach of continuity to the fields designated by both of these words, is at once our needed theoretical solvent and the supply of our greatest practical want. This belief has had much more to do with the development of what I termed, for lack of a better word, 'instrumentalism', than have most of the reasons that have been assigned'. 53

In speaking of James' influence he feels that in spite of his 'subjective tenor' due to a 'prior psychological tradition', his return to 'the earlier biological conception of the psyche' constitutes the new advance, for James, unlike his forerunners, interprets it not structurally and hence 'statically' but 'in terms of life in action'.⁵⁴ Thus the way was opened for the reduction of man by explaining him in merely organic terms. This was followed by the reduction of man's knowledge and thinking to the proportions of mere 'observation' without the elements of 'contemplation'.⁵⁵ Knowledge thus comes to consist only in the discernment of the physical and social relations in things and events, for we are told:

"Everything that exists in as far as it is known and knowable is an interaction with other things'. 56

"All this in effect is equivalent to seizing upon relations of events as the proper objects of knowledge'.⁵⁷

"It is hence contradictory for an instrumental pragmatism

53. ibid., p. 23.

54. ibid., pp. 23-24

55. The Quest for Certainty, p. 83.

56. Experience and Nature, p. 175.

57. ibid., p. 264.

to set up claims to supplying a metaphysics or ontology... the origin, structure, and purpose of knowing are such as to render nugatory any wholesale inquiries into the nature of being'. 58

A study of knowing in the physical sciences shows, it is held, that scientific method can furnish the experience which can 'itself provide the values meanings and standards now sought in some transcendental world'.⁵⁹ This concentration upon the 'observer attitude' of scientific method as the adequate sphere for the inventory of a complete theory of knowledge is a typical manifestation of the void at the heart of this system. By virtue of the ruling category of continuity Dewey is precluded from seeing that the belief in the transcendental is the outcome not of an attempt to overcome the ignorance of the mind, but of the inescapable acknowledgment involved in the confrontation of human life by the constraints of the Divine Spirit upon the spirit of man. But for Dewey the whole realm of spirit is treated as if it were composed of bastard phenomena, not the least of which is the acknowledgment itself of the distinction between man and his ground in any transcending spirit, that is, the whole distinction envisaged in the concept of discontinuity, including the imperfect and sinful state of man apart from grace: ('belief in the supernatural' involves 'a pessimistic belief in the corruption and impotency of natural means. That is axiomatic in Christian dogma').⁶⁰ Hence the whole view of man as sinner has no place in Dewey's philosophy. He is interpreted solely in terms of an epistemology whose boundary of appeal is strictly limited and confined within the act of knowing, the latter being itself connoted in simply intellectual terms. There is no

58. Journal of Philosophy, Vol. vii; (1910) p. 479.

59. The Quest for Certainty, p. 78.

60. A Common Faith, p. 46.

aspect of the self which transcends the cognitive process as thus conceived.

We must note also that the 'instrumentalist' pragmatism was occasioned by another factor than the biological concept of the psyche which was followed out from the positions of James and Darwin. Theology has always tended to objectify the reality it conceives and thus to make easier the tendency to crystallize and to rigidify both the character of the mystery thus conceived, and its relation to the freedom of man. When this has occurred God has become either a threat to human freedom and the reality of individual choice, or else has been felt as comparatively irrelevant to the problems of human living. 'Faith in the supernatural' means, according to Dewey that 'goodness in all its essentials is thereby established'.⁶¹ For reasons which we have already stated there is much that must lead us to feel that in utterances of this sort we cannot but feel that Dewey the Hegelian is speaking. On the other hand we cannot exclude the fact that religious thinkers have treated God's relation to man and the world as if God were a reality in which the details of the earthly course of events were somehow already preexistent. It is this oversight of the creative and active role of man's responsibilities in living by a persuasion to leave to the will of God alone the function of the human agent against which Dewey is in revolt. 'The objection to supernaturalism', he writes, 'is that it stands in the way of an effective realization of the sweep and depth of the implications of natural human relations'.⁶² It would appear to be the case then that Dewey's instrumentalism was occasioned both by a love for unity or unification, which while

⁶¹. ibid., p. 47. cf. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 22.

⁶². ibid., p. 80.

permitting a hierarchy of differing levels within the unitary system, yet saw no radical distinction between time and eternity, man and God, and by the strength which was lent to his appeal for the obliteration of the world of theological reality by the manifest irrelevance of the transcendent in the form in which it was sometimes conceived in the thought of current religious persons. He plainly feels that the God of metaphysical religion was a defense mechanism and an interpolation upon the text of reality interjected by 'a few persons with leisure and endowed by fortune with immunity from the rougher impacts of the world'.⁶³ The verities and sanctities posited by religion are 'abstract and remote', having 'no concern nor traffic with natural and social objects', and to resort to them is 'a refuge not a resource'.⁶⁴

It will be evident from this that the system of professor Dewey is an attempt to take time seriously. Delivered from what he feared as the deadening service to the One he ends, however, not by preserving the balance between the One and the Many, but by destroying the real status or permanence of man through his inability to admit a 'discontinuity', or ontological difference between man and God, thus losing all sense of the true ground of man's existence and being. The whole idea of 'causal explanation' is a device, we are told, to bridge an artificial and arbitrary gap.⁶⁵

63. The Quest for Certainty, p. 292. See also p. 47 where he writes: 'Suppose that men had been systematically educated in the belief that the existence of values can cease to be narrow, accidental, and precarious only by human activity directed by the best available knowledge. Suppose also that men had been systematically educated to believe that the important thing is not to get themselves personally right' in relation to the antecedent author and guarantor of these values, but to form their judgments and carry on their activity on the basis of public, objective and shared consequences'.

64. ibid., pp. 305-6.

65. Experience and Nature, p. 273. Cf. also pp. 99-100.

That is to say, this simplification, which has in our opinion over-reached itself, involves the transition from the conception of man as the finite expression of the Universal Idea, a conception which he felt denied the reality of time, freedom etc., to a conception whereby in safeguarding these man comes to be conceived in purely scientific terms, and in the categories of the natural and intramural world of 'events' and 'relations':

'The real existence is the history in its entirety, the history as just what it is. The operations of splitting it up into two parts and then having to unite them again by appeal to causative power are equally arbitrary and gratuitous'. 66

Dewey sees the need to overcome the duality of subject-object relations as being in itself the adequate port of entry into the interpretation of man and the world. He solves this difficulty, however, not by the affirmation of the ontological self, but by an attempt to describe the self purely in the phenomenological terms of the relations of the epistemological subject and the epistemological object. The spiritual 'being', the truly central mystery of the self is thus altogether lost. The self whose relations are under consideration really is never studied. It is approached solely in terms of its functions and relations, but the self which performs them never enters the picture. The self becomes an activity without real 'being', an event, a process with no spiritual dimensions. It is for this reason that we have already described Dewey's system, in the words of Dostoievsky, as one of 'euclidean' and 'flatland' proportions.

It is this reduction of man to subspiritual dimensions which

66. ibid., p. 275.

constitutes the real issue between Dewey's humanism and the Christian verdict upon man and his nature--or Christian humanism. In Christian theology man comes to know himself not primarily in relation to the world of things, but in relation to that spiritual ground which constrains him to a personal and spiritual use of the world of things and events. His centre of reference is operative, in, but not identical with, the phenomenal world. For Christianity therefore, man is a real subject with essential status. His functional aspect is real because it is the function of real being or 'ens'. Devoid of the inner mystery of the spirit where man knows himself to point beyond himself through his confrontation by the Spirit of God, instrumentalism descends into naturalism, and integral man is replaced by the fractional man. The deliverance of man from nature by his enfranchisement in the world of spirit to which we referred earlier,⁶⁷ is reversed and man begins the tail-spin back into nature. The effects of the misuse to which sometimes the transcendent had been put led Dewey to the summary dismissal of any justification for its existence at all. This was perpetuated and sustained on the basis of a partial and fragmentary inventory of the nature of man. We must note that for Dewey, as for James, man comes to have an indeterminate, or vague status. But where James' man was never fully naturalized because of his recognition of the subject as a subject, having a knowledge of itself from within, Dewey's man is reduced to naturalistic levels. Here we are confronted not with 'thoughts which are themselves the thinkers', but with a self which has become apparently just a moment in the relations of things and events. Commencing not with the ontological issue of man's being but with the epistemological

67. See pp. 23 f.

question of man's knowledge of the phenomenal world Dewey is forced to refer continually to a being who is never in fact admitted to the status of an entity. Discarding the spiritual concept of man, because that would involve the admission of a world of trans-scientific reality, we are left with a knowing which takes place within the acts performed by whatever it is that the doer who performs them really is. In construing this knower we can be either materialistic, or, since idealism of the monistic variety and any duality are equally unacceptable, we can interpret this knower as an event within a series of events. The latter is the conclusion of instrumentalism. Scientifically, and empirically, all that can be adduced is a continual change in the context and particulars of the series of relations which compose the world of events. The self receives nowhere any other denotation in this system. Dewey writes:

'There is no separate 'mind' gifted in and of itself with a faculty of thought; such a conception of thought ends in postulating the mystery of a power outside of nature and able to intervene within it'.⁶⁸

Hence man the 'subject' disappears. Man is left in undesignated because undifferentiated state:

'Experiencing is just certain modes of interaction of correlation of natural objects among which the organism happens, so to say, to be one'.⁶⁹

The naturalistic and biological implications of the above are plain. Experiencing is simply 'interaction' and 'correlation'. There is no reference to any experiencing subject. The further we press for some satisfactory treatment of the 'self' at the hands of this philosophy the more we are driven to the conclusion that it is not there to be found. Experience, we are told, 'recognizes in its primary integrity no division

68. The Quest for Certainty, p. 227.

69. Creative Intelligence, pp. 36-7, (Essays by J. Dewey and others)
New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1917.

between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in unanalyzed totality'. When, however, 'reflective analysis' breaks up this compound of subject and object we are told that we get 'external conditions - air breathed, food taken, ground walked upon; internal structures - lungs respiring, stomach digesting, legs walking'.⁷⁰ Here again we get a manifest estimation of man in terms of organism and environment. He becomes a predominantly biological reality. The self, qua spiritual subject, is gone. Every existence is an 'event', and apparently it is simply an 'event'. The grim prospects that may be expected from this outlook for the personal subject are instanced in the attitude toward death to which we have already referred.

This then is the instrumentalist reduction of man. Its outcome is the complete despiritualization of man by sundering him from his spiritual foundations. Its simplifications we are bound to feel are oversimplifications. It leaves man confronted with the radical mystery of his being and significance absolutely unanswered. The deeper issues of the question 'What is Man?', escape the instrumentalist temper. The ease with which the philosophy of instrumentalism has permeated American thought is, one ventures to suggest, because its naive optimism is consonant with the uncritical because still comparatively undisturbed 'progress' of this civilization. When crises and straightened circumstances shall overtake us then we shall be forced again to ask the deeper questions of life's meaning, and to open again the question as to the nature of man. Perhaps then, peradventure even now, men in increasing numbers are beginning to

70. Experience and Nature, (2nd Edit.) pp. 8-9, quoted by W. T. Feldman op. cit., pp. 19-20.

ask the question 'who am I?', and through that interrogation will be led to the acknowledgment of other than scientific knowledge, in the realization of the fact of spiritual knowledge.

Chapter Six

CHRISTIANITY - ITS MESSAGE AND TASK

- A. The Significance of the Modern Mood
- B. The Ground of the Christian Message
 - a. The Witness to the Concrete
 - b. Spiritual Man and Revelation
- C. The Dogmas of Faith
 - a. Creation - Man's Origin
 - b. Image of God - Man's 'Likeness'
 - c. Sin and the Fall - Tragedy
 - d. The Cross and Forgiveness - Salvation
- D. The Church and the Eternal 'Word'.

Chapter Six

CHRISTIANITY - ITS TASK AND MESSAGE

A. The Significance of the Modern Mood

No attempt to evaluate the Christian task in our time can be satisfactory unless we comprehend the serious and widespread nature of the modern mood, and realize adequately its implications for Christian theology and preaching. It must be understood that we are dealing with an outlook that concerns a much wider context than simply the views of Professors Babbitt and Dewey. Only as we truly discern the deep-seated defalcation regarding spiritual realities can we come to the appreciation that it is no mere outpost of Christian belief, it is not just a consequent of theistic premises which has been called in question, it is the central ability to refer to God, in the Christian sense at all, it is the fundamental premise that there can be a demarcation between man and God, this is what is now denied. Two radically different views of the world have come actively into view. No attempt by the proponents of the one to convince those of the other, if done at the level of their respective superstructures of belief and thought can hope to succeed, for the foundation assumptions of each are antithetical to one another. Humanism opposes Christianity in its foundations. It quarrels not with how we are to conceive God, but with the idea that God can be conceived at all in the sense of any reality as 'beyond' man. It is the 'what' which each will admit as the starting point in which their difference lies.

It must also be borne in mind that the temper and weltanschauung of modern humanism is no mushroom growth appearing overnight, and drawing

its life from roots that lie lightly upon the surface of our civilization. It is a much deeper phenomenon than that. It is the culmination of a way of thinking of man and his world, his nature and his capacities that has been 'on the make' for some four centuries.

Ever since Giordano Bruno ripped off the roof of the world and opened the vista of infinite space, it has become increasingly difficult for man to frame for himself what is meant by such terms as 'transcendent', 'beyond', 'above' etc. With no spatial 'beyond' in which to conceptualize God, the whole issue of immanence and transcendence became irrelevant for modernity.¹ Ever since then, that is to say, the boundary line between time and eternity, the 'here' and some 'beyond' has been felt to be increasingly unreal. But it is important to note that the fact that this change in spatial concepts should thus displace the conviction regarding the transcendent God is itself indicative of a spiritual void. For belief in God's transcendence is not certified by the ability to give him as it were a spatial and quantitative location, rather is it the outcome of the spiritual and qualitative difference felt to exist between man and the world on the one hand, and their ground of being on the other. The affirmation of God's transcendence is a spiritual conviction and not simply an intellectual concept. The disturbance in ideas need not involve the loss of that reality formerly conceived in the discarded concept. This would follow only if the sources of spiritual conviction, due to a change of spiritual attitude, were also lost. This latter, however, is just the tragedy which has overtaken the modern man. The growth of the 'modern mood' is the result therefore not simply of the displacement

1. An excellent treatment of this phase of our difficulty is given by K. Heim in *God Transcendent*, London: Nisbet and Co., 1935. Also E. Brunner, *The Mediator*, chapters iv, and v. London: Lutterworth Press, 1937.

of the spatial concept of the 'beyond' and its consequences for man's ideas about God. It is the result of the convergence of this intellectual impasse upon the simultaneous phenomenon of the growing conviction that man's life and the world are self-sustaining, and self-explanatory realities. It is the outcome of the loss of the whole sense of man's derivative status. The spatial void was compounded with the spiritual void, and the disturbance of ideology concerning the structure of the universe was augmented in its effects by the corresponding loss in man's reading off his own nature whereby he became progressively less able to discern the mystery of his being. Divorced from his spiritual dependency man failed more and more to see the necessity for any distinction between his being and that of the world on one hand, and the ground for their being as distinct from, and so 'beyond' them in some sense, on the other hand. So to quote David Friedrich Strauss, "The housing problem for God became acute".²

Hence increasingly modernity came to solve the problem of God's existence and abode by reference to man and the world as the source and residence of whatever power might be available or necessary either to conduct life or to explain it. God became simply a 'tension' or 'polarity' within the scheme of things and not something 'beyond' or behind the whole scene. The solution of modern civilization has thus been to evaporate God in the theistic sense. This is why all questions about the transcendent God of Christianity have come to be felt as questions about a problem which in fact no longer exists.

2. K. Heim, op. cit., p. 31. "Die Wohnungsnot ist für Gott eingetreten."

We have already attempted to trace in our second chapter a part of the story of this secularization of life and its meanings. We saw the roots of those features whereby man became progressively incarcerated within the immediate problems thus losing awareness of the ultimate issues. We noted also the increase in the sense of the autonomy of man accruing from the partial mastery of the world through scientific technique. We saw lastly the eventuation of the purely scientific interpretation of man so that the final removal of all spiritual³ aspects of man's being left him with no appeal to any Divine Spirit 'above' him. We were confronted by man ushered into the world of atomizing and centrifugal forces wherein he found his integral being sundered from its deep centrality in spirit.

But probably the clearest evidence of the naturalistic reductions involved in the whole outlook of modern thought, together with its complete blindness to the concepts and facts underlying the dogmas of Creation, the Fall etc., is seen in the religio-political experiments of our time. In these we can see very clearly that the 'modern mood' is quite alien to the whole concept of an 'other' world in, with, and under this one. The humanist temper of our times has no sense of the verities to which the Christian refers. In these contemporary movements we are presented with the spectacle of the spiritual man once lifted above nature, performing

3. The word 'spiritual' is used in this thesis to mean that feature of man's being whereby he is related to God, and from which creaturely relationship his own spiritual nature devolves. Hence in saying that modernity has destroyed man as spirit it is this feature to which reference is made. We are not unmindful that there is what purports to be a 'spiritual' interpretation of man, which involves reference solely to some intramundane tension or polarity as the locus for man's spiritual being, as in Rosenberg for example. It is our contention that the former interpretation more truly describes the spiritual basis of man's being.

the tail-spin back into the world of nature from which he was formerly delivered, as we have tried to indicate, by his 'enfranchisement in the world of spirit'. In the loud claims of these new religions we see the everlasting 'Nay' of man to the 'word' of the Gospel.

Now the political phenomena of our times were preceded by the disintegration of Christendom. In that disintegration the sense of some spiritual source 'beyond' existence, as in any sense regulative of man and his world gradually disappeared. But even man's secularity involved the invocation of some principle of explanation of man and his world to himself. Man can only understand and explain existence either by something 'beyond' it; or by elevating some part, or aspect of this existence to the point where it comes to be conceived as the holy reality and source of all meaning, and we get idolatry; or else by conceiving the totality as self-explanatory and we get a Pantheism. It is this explanation of history and existence in terms of either an aspect of that same history and existence, or in terms of the totality of that scene, together with the conviction of the 'modern' mind as to the sufficiency of this explanation that constitutes the spiritual void previously referred to. The marks of our time have been summed by Prof. R. Niebuhr as follows:

"The avowedly secular culture of today turns out upon close examination to be either a pantheistic religion which identifies existence in its totality with holiness, or a rationalistic humanism for which human reason is essentially God, or a vitalistic humanism which worships some unique or particular vital force, in the individual or community as its God, that is, as the object of unconditioned loyalty". ⁴

It is in this sense that when God goes, the half-gods arrive,

4. Art. 'The Christian Church in a Secular Age', The Student World, Geneva, Switzerland: Fourth Quarter, 1937, p. 292.

and the self-glorification of the creature ensues. The darkening of the foolish heart of man described by Paul in the first chapter of Romans takes on political form again in our time. The significance of the modern mood is that in it we see an overt and concentrated manifestation of what always exists in covert, and hence in less extreme form, namely, the reduction of the spiritual man to the natural man with the consequent deification of the natural.

The two types of humanism just indicated above constitute, we suggest, the two steps in the tail-spin of man back into nature. Chronologically 'rationalistic humanism' was the first movement in that descent. It was the form taken by modern culture in its initial emancipation from all dependence upon any transcendental spirit, or presence of God. In it man as spiritual creature becomes man as reason. Here the disavowal of the sacred in its religious and Christian sense is replaced by the sanctification of reason. The meaning of life and the world becomes, on this view, not the relation of one plane of being to another, such as is the Christian view, but the ordering of the one plane by an element within that same plane. Reason conceives itself as self-sufficient, and its sovereignty as absolute. It acknowledges no ground for its own being in anything 'beyond' itself. This naked reason does not see that the same reason which, under the control of that not itself reason, may be the instrument of man's well-being, is, in its anarchic and irresponsible independence, the means of man's destruction. Thus rationalistic humanism generates individualism, and a 'rugged individualism' at that, a sort of laissez-faire in all spheres. This pulverizing and centrifugal tendency of modern culture was able successfully to conceal the impossible premise at the heart of its

philosophy only while the economic and political frontiers, so to speak, were open. But as soon as the frontiers of land and resources were preempted its impersonal and impossible character was unveiled. Hence modernity was confronted with the tragedy of a rugged individualism that produced ragged individuals in the economic sphere. In the presence of a civilization increasingly compact by virtue of its physical contiguity, the real lack of spiritual community became apparent. Politically, representative democracy was hamstrung so that political democracy was in fact managed by an economic oligarchy, and the advanced democracies of the west in the name of their rationalistic assumptions justified their political and economic ascendancy over their competitors. Even now in the hour of its breakdown the culture of rationalistic humanism is persuaded that intelligence is all that is needed. There is no acknowledgement of another world to which reason must be subject. The kingdoms of this world do not thus easily acknowledge the kingdom of God. If rationalist humanism admits any sphere beyond itself it tends to identify that other world with its own goals and aims, and tries to conceive its particular insights as the universal truth, which is to say it does not in fact discern the real 'other world' of faith. Instead it projects its own bias to metaphysical dimensions for the sake of prestige in a precarious world. Rationalistic humanism is the dominant characteristic of the prosperous nations of the west, and is the typical philosophy of a complacent bourgeois culture. But this philosophy has its victims. The first steps in living without God always involve a reaction which replaces the half-hearted godlessness with a defiant denial of God. Rationalistic humanism is only a halfway house in man's expedition into the 'far country' of his prodigal

independence. Its goddess of reason is only implicitly invoked, for the lack of a critically precarious existence in the goods of this world has not pressed it as yet to the need for an explicit declaration of its independence from the control of the spiritually transcendent. Consequently its disavowal of the sacred has not yet led to the explicit avowal of the holiness of the pseudo-sacred reality, or the self-glorification of the secular creature. The reason for this is that a rationalistic humanism so long as it can preserve a measure of robust existence is that moment in secularizing process which is still coasting upon the impetus of values which, in spite of the denial of their premises, yet continue to bless the world for a while with the afterglow of their diminishing light. Rationalistic humanism is a sort of semi-robust decadence which has as yet seen neither the inner vacancy of its own position, nor the inevitability that it is part of a movement which must in the end invoke the worship of the purely secular as the holy reality. Hence rationalistic humanism is that moment in the prodigality of our culture which fails to perceive the radical departure involved in the attempt to live its life apart from its Father's house. It does not see that in denying the true ground of its existence in something beyond itself it must inevitably end in declaring itself to be its own ground.

The inner meaning of the secular denouement becomes apparent in unmistakable form in the religio-political movements of our time. Here the 'vitalistic humanism' succeeds the 'rationalistic' form, and man comes to the real 'famine' and the 'husks' of 'riotous living'. In the totalitarian experiments we see the quintessence of life apart from God, where life without God comes to be conceived as itself the life of God. This is the second movement in the tail-spin of man back into nature. In them we see

the previous descent from the concept of man as spirit to man as reason succeeded by the further descent from man as reason to that of man as simply a part of the vital aspect of nature herself. And so by a twofold movement does man's redemption from nature by spirit come to be succeeded by his reinsertion in the nature from which he was originally distinguished. The loss of the knowledge of God leads inevitably to the loss of the knowledge of man. Hence in Marxian Socialism man becomes an 'economic' man. The disintegration of his individual being is compensated for by positing his centre of being in the social collective. But this is plainly the impossible attempt to overcome man's interior division by an exterior and counterfeit source of integration. 'Materialistic sociological theory', as Berdyaev points out, 'is the reverse side of man's inner division and deep isolation'.⁵ Man's spiritual significance, his individuality and his integral being qua man are all lost. Man is sacrificed to the collective. Socialism is thus the outer and larger form of the inner and individual disintegration. It is simply another aspect of the same decadence, a non-spiritual solution for the spiritual dissolution at the heart of man's being. The messiahship of the proletariat and the sacred 'class' become the holy of holies in the rising tide of conscious God-denial and the fervent worship of the half-god.

But the most explicit and unabashed self-glorification of the creature, the most violent faith in the self-sufficient nature of human life is seen in the ideology, dogmas and practice of National Socialism. Here the 'demonic' is unveiled in all its defiance. Here too the covert idolatry of 'rationalistic' humanism, and the still religiously inarticulate

5. The End of Our Time, p. 36.

nature of 'vitalistic' humanism in its Marxian form passes into a jubilant and enthusiastic self-glorification where 'race', and 'blood' become the sacred emblems and the 'glory of the incorruptible God' is changed into the 'glory of corruptible man'. Rosenberg in his 'Myth of the Twentieth Century', writes:

'Today a new faith has arisen: the blood-myth, the belief that to fight for the Blood is to fight for the divine in man; the belief - embodied in a vision that leaves no possibility for doubt - that the Nordic Blood presents that mystery by which the ancient sacraments are superseded and transcended'.

'The God whom we reverence, would have no existence but for our soul and our Blood'. 6

'Rome -Yahweh implies supernatural despotism, magical creation out of nothing (a notion, for us, absurd). The Nordic West says: I and God are the spirit's opposite poles; the act of creation is each completed union of the two; their interaction brings new dynamic forces into play'. 7

Here is the frank unequivocal exposition of the complete inability of the modern mind even to frame to itself any question about God as 'beyond'. Creation is a concept unthinkable. God becomes simply a tension, or a polarity within the self-contained scheme of things and events.

Herein lies the deep significance of the modern mood. It is unable to conceive the dependence of the visible world upon any invisible and transcending order of reality. In our time there is a clear contrast between two radically different views of God, man, and the world. For the one there can be no distinction between the immanent and the transcendent. All such boundary questions are meaningless and arbitrary for the world

6. Quoted by K. Heim, op. cit., p. 7, from the 3rd Edit. of Rosenberg's work, pp. 129, and 685.

7. K. Heim, op. cit., p. 15, from Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 255.

is self-sufficient, self-sustaining, and self-explanatory. It is not derived and certainly not created. It just is. For the other view, all existence has meaning by virtue of its ground in something other than itself. It is called into existence from moment to moment by a providence which thus prevents its falling back into the abyss of nothingness. For the first view God is simply either the totality of the universe, or else that element in it chosen as explanatory and in relation to which the rest receives its meaning, i.e. 'blood', or 'class', etc. For the second interpretation God is no part of creation, and certainly no 'image' of man. Rather man is the 'image' of God. Worship in this case is given not to the creature but to God who stands in unconfused differentiation from his creation, the ground of all that is, and the only Subject of man's worship. For the former, the dogma of creation has no significance whatever, and all talk of reference to any 'world' other than this one, or any order of reality other than that of the process of life and events is regarded as utter and meaningless nonsense, or else as the subtle machinery for the priestly control over the consciences of men.

'The extraordinary opinion... that the world and men were created out of nothing by a Divine Being who is above the world or was before the world.... is still taught (in the Church) as if the work of modern science had never been heard of'. 8

'An international God is a phantom... No! A thousand times no! No one comes to our aid save the divine that is in us, namely, ourselves and our sacred will'. 9

Here is the central feature of the outlook of modern humanism. It is this of which Babbitt and Dewey are symptomatic. The unbroken belief in the conviction that the Christian idea of God is an unwarranted

8. A. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 11 quoted by Heim, op. cit., p. 16.

9. Ernst Bergmann, The German National Church, pp. 369, and 15.
quoted by Heim, ibid., pp. 12-13.

answer to a problem which has been outgrown is characteristic of the humanistic temper of the moment. Professor Dewey, for example, was very plain in denying the attempt by Professor H. N. Wieman to attribute to him any approximately theistic conception of God. In the discussion over his book A Common Faith, Dewey wrote:

'There is a fundamental difference between that to which I said, with some reservations, the name God might be applied and Mr. Wieman's attribution to me of something 'that holds the actual and the ideal together'. What I said was that the union of ideals with some natural forces that generate and sustain them, accomplished in human imagination and to be realized through human choice and action, is that to which the name God might be applied, with of course the understanding that that is just what is meant by the word. I thought that the word might be used because it seems to me that it is the union which has actually functioned in human experience in its religious dimension'. 10

It is evident that we have passed from an era of atheism which at least understood the concept of God even though it denied God's existence, to one of nihilism in which the whole aspect of reality denominated by the distinction between God and the world is considered a useless gloss upon the text of the universe. This has real and serious significance. It means that we have arrived at the wholesale 'Nay' to the Creator. The features of our time are those that Nietzsche foresaw. The increase of the nihilistic faith is no despairing futility, or gloomy resignation to the dark eventide of a godless world. Rather is it the jubilant, abandoned, and enthusiastic affirmation of the greatness of life without God. Nihilism is an unclouded 'Yes'. A 'Yes' to the world of independent individual and national life, all the more jubilant and unleashed because no longer haunted by the presence of the other world. It is an emphatic 'No' to the

10. From Dewey's letter in 'Is John Dewey a Theist?', Christian Century, Vol. 51, p. 1551, Chicago: Christian Century Press, Dec. 5, 1934.

Creator. He is no longer thinkable. The faith of this nihilism was expressed in its negative verdict by Nietzsche as follows:

'We need not concern ourselves for one instant with the the hypothesis of a created world. The concept 'create' is today indefinable and unrealizable; it is but a word which hails from superstitious ages; nothing can be explained by a word'. 11

Here speaks the spirit of the time with which Christianity must deal. It is the spirit that feels we have outgrown not only the old answers but even the old questions. As the concrete and spiritual is succeeded first by abstract 'reason' and then by abstract 'Blood' we see the white light of being broken up into the spectrum of counterfeit imitations of the integral unity of the original beam. Our modern chaos is the attempt to establish the whole man upon fractional bases. This is the deep defalcation in spiritual matters which must affect our preaching and thinking, our speaking and our methods. Today morals and faith enter an era of chilly significance where man is widely regarding as the creator and sole custodian of his ideals, and where standards change with the whims of the moment. In the nihilistic emancipation of the present hour no idea can be framed and therefore no doubt entertained of the 'beyond', or of the God of Christian faith. But the dilemma of the liberated has been aptly described by Ernst Junger as:

'No longer to be able to doubt, to have lost even the shadowed side of faith, that is the state of being without grace in its full realization, the state of cold death, in

11. The Will to Power, vol. ii, Bks. iii and iv, sec. 1066, Eng. Tr. Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910.

Cf. 'It is quite plain that we must give up..this idea of the God who came down from heaven in order to become a human being, an infant, a crucified man, and then for the second time become God. Our historical science is different, our way of thinking has become more sober'. Keim in Geschichte Jesu, p. 265. quoted by Brunner, The Mediator, p. 103.

which even corruption, that last grim vestige of life has ceased'. 12

Even so it is. 'Without hope and without God in the world' describes not the Pauline world alone, but ours too. The depths to which our spiritual denudation has gone may make our task easier in some respects. Some will no doubt hear the word. It has its serious difficulties however. We must witness convincingly to a secular generation regarding the non-secular verities. We must persuade that faith in the penultimate realities cannot be substituted for faith in ultimate reality. This is what was meant by saying that the issue is fundamental. The Church must repent again, and begin anew to fulfil her vocation of ministering with spirit and power the living presence of the Eternal God to a hungry and jaded world. Only so can modern man who feels the bankruptcy at the heart of all the counterfeit altars of the half-gods come again to the true knowledge of himself. He must return to his spiritual home in the Father of spirits.

B. The Ground of Christian Faith

a. The Witness to the Concrete

We shall attempt in this concluding section not to expound at length but simply to indicate the ground of the Christian faith and witness. We have presented the reasons for our belief that the present inability to conceive the 'transcendent' and the 'beyond' is due to the disturbance in this religious concept arising from the belief in the spatial infinity of the physical universe, and from the compounding of this with the inner and spiritual conviction as to man's absolutely autonomous and

12. The Adventurous Heart, p. 88. (1929) quoted by Heim op. cit., p. 37.
(Italics mine)

sovereign existence. The latter is the determining factor, and it is in their interpretation of man that the humanist credo and the Christian faith stand in sharpest contrast. Hence our defection is primarily spiritual rather than intellectual. The difficulty for Christianity is therefore a radical one. It lies partly in the fact that we are dealing with a dimension which has been so largely denied by a sophisticated modernity that all appeal to it sounds like unconvincing credulity regarding something problematical, and even irrelevant. The dominant climate of thought is not as hospitable as we could wish to the spiritual declarations of the Christian gospel. But our difficulty is due also to the intrinsic impossibility in trying to demonstrate the truth of an ultimate reality. Its finality involves us with something that can be only self-authenticating. In treating of this aspect of our subject therefore, we can act only as witnesses to a reality which does in fact obtain for Christian faith. Our task is one not of philosophy essentially, but of testimony to something which can in turn condition our philosophizing. We must endeavor so to witness, that the gap between reason and faith may be bridged by confronting our hearers not with what we say, but with the authentic reality of God to whom we refer in what we say. We are witnesses primarily and not attorneys. The man upon whom the 'transcendence' of God has never forced itself and for whom the finality of Christ in the religious sense has not broken through is simply one upon whom the reality of the final and spiritual dimension has not yet dawned. The pathway to this dawn is not intellectual argument but spiritual vision engendered by the inescapable confrontation of man with the Spirit of God. The reality which Christianity proclaims cannot be 'proved'. But neither can it be disproved, for the ground of

disproof is always the absence of the reality in question in the lives of those who deny it. Thus reason reaches an impasse where 'positivism erects ignorance into a very principle of knowledge and confers the prerogatives of the latter upon those who are destitute of spiritual experience'.¹³ But reason can explicate only an already acknowledged 'given'. Faith alone can establish it so that the rational illumination can proceed. We must therefore be under no illusions. All affirmations regarding the existence of a 'boundary line' between God and Man, between Eternity and Time so that there is a real and fundamental spiritual distinction between Creator and creature must seem invalid to the outsider. The spectator cannot be convinced unless he hears the 'Word' of God with which our language is concerned, and thus ceases to be a spectator. Unless from within the concrete manifold of existence a man is simply constrained by the spiritual testimony of his experience as a subject to admit the reality thus referred to we shall not expect to lay him under conviction. For this business is an inside job and 'every theoretical understanding is in its very inception a misunderstanding'.¹⁴

This does not mean, however, that reasoning can perform no service in aiding the Christian to present the ground of his faith. There is much it can do in a prefatory field. We can at least point out that the humanistic 'man' is an abstract and not a concrete man. We can thus help to clear the air for the direction of man's spiritual antennae to the concrete, nature of his being out of which his spiritual faith arises. In doing this we can at least hope to strengthen the 'insider' and to witness

13. N. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 14. New York: Scribner's, 1935.
See also D. Lamont, Christ and the World of Thought, pp. 140-153, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Co., 1934.

14. E. Brunner, The Theology of Crisis, p. 37.

as effectively as possible to the 'outsider'.

Thus, for example, the complete acceptance of the 'observer' attitude which characterizes modern thought has excluded all truly intimate knowledge of man and his essential being. Man is construed by the canons commensurate with thing-knowledge and not by those relevant to self-knowledge. Dewey, for example, reduces man to an object. The inner and subject-ive factors that open up the realm where decision is a serious affair involving the spiritual distinction between the human 'I' and the transcendent 'Thou', all this realm is ruled out. All reference from within the self to the life of the self is disallowed because it cannot be objectified. Man the subject is denied in favor of man the object. This is plainly a movement away from the concrete mystery of being toward abstract simplification. It is an explanation by reduction, and consequently false. It is possible rationally to discern that something has been oversimplified. The central meaning of the inner mystery of being, however, awaits the venture of faith in response to revelation. For the moment let us note that the 'observer' attitude evades the truly 'existential' nature of the self. The Christian cannot but regard this as a truncated view of man where we get only the 'shell-man', the subject construed in categories that have been derived solely from the subject-object world. The subject's own testimony is discounted. Thus, Dewey interprets the knower, or subject, from without and never from within the citadel of mystery--the spiritual self. In his bland dismissal of the missionary's reference to God as his resource for peace and integration, referred to earlier, we had an obvious example of the displacement of the subject's testimony in favor of an objective interpretation by the observer. What is true of Dewey is

true, on slightly different grounds, of Babbitt. Neither of them conceive the self in terms which allow for the transcendent reality which Christian faith regards as indispensable to the true understanding of man. Dewey fails to allow the subject a truly subjective existence and therefore necessarily fails to discern the 'serious' ¹⁵ aspect of man's spiritual experience whereby he knows himself to be confronted by another and trans-mundane 'world'. Babbitt, on the other hand, allows man a comparatively rich subjective being. His failure to allow for the religious dimension is due to his inability to discern the categorical difference between man and the spirit whereby he is claimed. He does not see the existential seriousness of man's spiritual life. Hence the whole meaning of Sin and its tragic reality finds no place in the humanist interpretation of man. His ontological self is confronted therefore not by the word of God, but simply by a sort of polar tension between the expansive desires and the 'law of measure'. This is an intra-individual affair, certainly only intra-social. It takes place within a universe of concourse resting and moving in itself, and having no suggestion of any creative Power or Ground beyond this positivistically established arena.

Thus from slightly different aspects of a fundamentally similar positivism both Babbitt and Dewey are disqualified from the realization of that world of spiritual verities which is so deeply bound up with the Christian doctrine of man. It is our contention that the humanist 'man' is an abstraction: a diminished, externalized and objectified fraction of the concrete and integral mystery. We submit that 'humanism' fails

15. Cf. E. Brunner, The Mediator, p. 419, footnote: "It is not sufficiently recognized that 'serious' is a categorical and not merely a psychological definition....The Christian faith is the only thing which is absolutely serious....because it alone takes God seriously, because it alone knows decision."

because it does not see the radical nature of the act whereby homo sapiens becomes a humanus, and that this failure is due to its inability to allow for the spiritual man--the trans-scientific subject. The Christian view involves the suggestion that humanism has based itself upon an epistemological foundation which has ignored the primary ontological reality of man's being, involving perforce the inability to admit of revelation in the Christian meaning of that term.

b. Spiritual Man and Revelation.

Our task is to declare as unconfusedly as possible the ground for the Christian distinctions arising from Christian faith. Now, as Heim has pointed out,¹⁶ we are always demarcating some 'here' from some 'beyond'. We do this either in the spatial sense as when we distinguish two objects in space or time; or again when one infinite plane is distinguished from an intersecting infinite plane, as in solid geometry. We are accustomed daily to draw boundary lines in the spiritual realm also as when I distinguish my Ego from the world which I behold, or when I differentiate between my conscious world, this 'ever-mineness', and the conscious world of another person, that 'ever-hisness'. Hence in everyday life we are continually referring to 'beyonds', 'transcendents', which lie in regions 'beyond' some other reality. These 'beyonds' of course have purely intramundane significance and refer to distinctions, cantons of reality, within one plane of being. But Christianity affirms that there is a transmundane boundary line as well, and that there is need to distinguish between this world with all its internal distinctions, and the ground of all being.

16. Op. cit., p. 44.

The basis of this affirmation is not analogy or reason, but revelation. We argue not to it but from it. However, in starting with it we do not assume it arbitrarily. It is given in the concrete realm of spirit. It is for this reason that ontology is so important and its lack in current humanism so devastating. The Christian belief in the transcendent though immanent God is a postulate resulting from the confrontation of man's spiritual being with the ground of its derivative being in the Creator Spirit. The doctrine of creation is thus the inevitable corollary of a religious revelation and not the outcome of natural reason. It is the product not of an epistemology--man's attempt to know and understand the phenomenal world--but rather the result of a prior ontological establishment, whereby being and Being have been finally and centrally distinguished and related as the derived and the original, creature and Craator. Analogies may help to corroborate the fitness of such a demarcation but they are powerless to establish it. Faithful acknowledgment of the spiritual 'thereness' of this mystery alone can witness to that upon which reason can eventually reflect. It is a 'given' of revelation, and confronts man in the deeps of his spiritual being. Apart from the self-disclosure by God the distinction would be impossible. And apart from the response of faith the acknowledgment of its existence cannot be made.

The rise of the Christian distinction from the response of the spiritual man to revelation becomes even clearer, and its ontological and spiritual rather than its epistemological and intellectual derivation even more certain, when we note that the merely rational demand for a transcendent ground of this visible universe is impotent to uphold successfully that position against its alternative interpretations. It is quite true

to say, as Heim does, that,

"The causal relation, indeed the whole mode of existence in Time, within which alone the causal relation is possible, can itself be conceived only if this temporal mode of existence has been made by a creative act to issue out of eternity and is sustained every moment against falling back into nothingness." 17

This conviction, however, is a purely theoretical verdict, and a spectator judgment as it stands. It suffers the limitation that if it is to be cogent at all it must be so on other than rational grounds alone. On simply rational grounds, for example, no spiritual and therefore no deeply authentic foundation exists upon which to base a denial of the alternative pantheistic interpretation of existence. That is to say, at the rational level the pantheistic affirmation that the visible and causal nexus is just the phenomenal side of the immanent ground can be met by the opposing contradiction of those inclined intellectually to an interpretation favoring a transcendent ground. But this contradiction remains purely a theoretical affair. It never becomes an existential one. Logically both have equal merit. In neither is there any experiential urgency that can help to outweigh the opposing view. Thus are we driven to the very concrete centre of our problem. For the Christian something happens in being whereby he reads the world as he dies. He does not make his affirmation at the more superficial levels of rational argument. The Christian conviction regarding a transcendent ground for man and the world stems from the serious and existential view of Christian faith regarding man. In taking time seriously it is led in its appraisal of man's spiritual life to acknowledge not only the categorical difference between time and

17. Op. cit., p. 16.

eternity, man and God, but also the initiative of the eternal in its self-disclosure to the temporal and thus to proclaim a kinship and communion between God and man from God manward. Hence a 'discontinuity' of ontological status is established in spiritual experience between the creature and Creator dimensions, not by destroying the continuity of communion, but precisely because of the communion through revelation. 18

The whole belief in Creation, the Fall, Salvation is the outcome of the fact that God speaks to man in the midst of his spiritual tragedy in such a way that man hears the 'word' of what he is constrained to realize is his Lord and Creator, the ground of his being and the source of his spiritual peace. Thus man becomes the clue to the world because God is the clue to man's true identity. Man turns the key of his own explanation upon the world and affirms that the ground of all finite existence is to be found in the same ground as that of his own spiritual being. The dogma of Creation is thus a religious affirmation, and based upon the spiritual dimension of existence, felt to be the doorway to the meaning of all existence.

We must now do what we can to witness to the nature of man's spiritual being, we must endeavor to give a faithful though brief account of what transpires in man's existence as spirit. We must also try to

18. Thus we agree with Prof. Lamont when he says: 'the continuity of Revelation with revelation is a continuity between different dimensional levels.' op. cit., p. 143. He denies the discontinuity of revelation as do we, but would seem to concur with our use of 'discontinuity' to mean that the human and divine dimensions are really different so that God is not man just magnified. As Archbishop Temple puts it; 'In so far as God and man are spiritual they are of one kind; in so far as God and man are rational they are of one kind. But in so far as God creates, redeems, sanctifies, while man is created, redeemed, and sanctified, they are of two kinds. God is not redeemed sinner; man is not redeemer from sin. At this point the Otherness is complete.' Nature Man and God, p. 396, London: Macmillan, 1935.

indicate the vital and truth-bearing significance of the consequent dogmas of Christian faith, indicating their validity as interpretations of man's dignity and creatureliness which together constitute his essential mystery.

The difficulty for the modern mind arises from the almost complete loss of spiritual knowledge. Man has become increasingly uprooted from his centrality in spirit. Knowing has therefore become an epistemological rather than an ontological reality. It has ceased to be an existential act, a knowing of the being of self. It has become instead a problem in the relation of the subject to the object. Thus man has substituted a secondary form of knowledge for a primary. Knowledge has ceased to be "something" and is now "about something".¹⁹ The initial and concrete being where spirit cognizes itself vanishes. Both the subject and the object come to stand outside being. Existence 'slips away' from both, and knowledge comes to be a peripheral affair of subject-object relations, quite unconcerned with the central mystery of the meaning of being itself. It is imperative that we realize what Berdyaev insists on, namely, that all cognition of an object by a knowing subject is a secondary form of knowledge resulting from reflection. The initial and fundamental knowledge is an act whereby 'being cognizes itself, and through this cognition expands and is lit up from within',²⁰ For 'knowledge is spiritual life, the activity of the Spirit'.²¹ Man is rooted in this 'initial life' of Spirit. The whole attempt to make the bifurcated world of epistemological relations central is the result of the 'humanist' experiment which claimed to

19. N. Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, p. 5, New York: Scribner's, 1937.
See whole chapter, especially pp. 13-14; 16-17.

20. ibid., p. 4.

21. N. Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, p. 4. See John 17:3.

be independent of the concrete facts of life. This duality can be overcome, and its findings put in their proper context only by the realization that we must start with being, and that in starting with that we must commence with the spirit for being is fully revealed only at the spiritual level.

Now it is at the truly personal level that the real significance and presence of the spiritual begins to emerge for man. Here at the un-resting edge of 'becoming' which continually gives way to the 'already-become', which in turn gives birth to a fresh 'becoming', it is here at this moving edge, in the pulsing intensity of this succession of decisions that man actually lives. It is here that he really knows that it is his own meaning which is at stake. This is the spiritual seriousness of man's existence. It is at the level of his personal relations that man first becomes aware of the impossibility any more to ask simply the dispassionate question 'what do I think of the world?', as he does in science, and to a lesser degree in art. For at the personal level man enters a new dimension whereby he both evaluates and is evaluated. In every act he not only declares what he thinks of the world but he encounters inevitably the verdicts of others, and even of himself as to the real character and status of his own being. To ask, "what manner of man am I?" is to know oneself to be confronted with the existential issue of one's destiny. The spiritual dimension has dawned. It is at the level of personal relations that man becomes aware, however dimly at first, that he is a citizen of two 'worlds'. Upon one of these he imposes his will, conforming that world, within the laws of its dimensions to his ends. This is the world of nature. Concerning the other he is confronted with the fact that it is

is the world whose dimension is that of his own being, it is the 'world' of spirit. Yet the paradox occurs that he does not abide by its spiritual demands, he lives not by even the little he knows of the 'law of the Spirit'. The admission that we are aware of the mutuality with which the other fellow should treat us, for example, though we violate it in our treatment of him, is palpable witness to the fact that while we are aware of the spiritual, however imperfectly, yet we do not obey its constraints. Our real standard and measure of insight is not revealed in what we do to others. It is more nearly seen in what we will permit them to do to us.²² This means that personal life is intrinsically spiritual and at the same time is possessed of a capricious and arbitrary factor that insists upon evading the spiritual, an evasion itself the outcome of something in man's spiritual condition and status. This is the supreme paradox of man's being, that the second world of man's citizenship is marred by a radical cleavage within it. In disobeying its spiritual law for himself, and in knowing that he does so, as is shown by his attempt to prevent others from following his example in their treatment of him, man really admits indirectly that he belongs to the world of Spirit even while he seeks to live apart from it. He knows that his integral being is possible only under the 'law of the Spirit', the features of which he sees, though only darkly apart from grace.²³

But this 'law' becomes not concrete and living but abstract and its essential inner mystery and vitality lost if it is interpreted apart from spiritual dynamics, which is the same as saying apart from

22. Hence the astuteness of Jesus' remark: Matt. 7:12.

23. Rom. 8:2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death".
Cf. II. Cor. 4:6.

Christian revelation. This is true even though it may still be conceived as God's presence in the world, for apart from the context of dynamic revelation the 'law' is read in such a way that it violates the 'serious' and urgent nature of man's spiritual existence. The 'law' remains law and never is Spirit. Thus, whereas pagan thought interpreted man in terms of the course of nature, where fate rather than responsibility reigned, Idealistic philosophy of religion makes the timeless Idea the ground of the world. History becomes the explicit activity of the implicit spirit. Immanence without 'crisis' rules. The Idea is timeless in that it provides no moment of serious decision. The existential, in-mid-stream nature of human existence, and its critical nature is removed by the idea of 'unfolding or development' so that 'the actual Christian event becomes a state of being, final decision becomes development, the ideas of the Fall and of Redemption are changed into an evolution'.²⁴ Man's converse becomes not a face-to-face affair, but rather, the expression of an underlying reality which is always there but never breaks through into a spiritual distinction, so that man is confronted by, rather than merely expressive of this underlying spirit. Thus in Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Hegel decision is not the 'serious' and confronting reality that it is for Christianity. This is true also of John Macmurray. Time is not taken seriously and History ceases to be the sphere of radical decision. It is a pertinent suggestion that professor Brunner makes²⁵ when he observes that Idealism is related to space and desires to see (*ἰδέα* or *εἶδος*). Space, he suggests, is 'the category of that which is always present.'

— Spatial interpretations permit the uninvolved contemplation of reality by

24. E. Brunner, The Mediator, pp. 381-2. See Chapter II also.

25. Op. cit., pp. 382-6.

the 'seer'. Even 'time' becomes a 'notion'. The responsible existence of living in 'time' gives way to the spatial setting of the beholding 'observer'. At the hands of Idealism therefore the existential and personally decisive character of man's spiritual being is reduced to a sort of automatic ascent by virtue of an inevitable internal dialectic of development.

For the spirit, however, life is a serious and time-related reality demanding personal commitment, and spiritual urgency. A deep reading of the spirit involves the admission that time confronts one not so much with seeing as with deciding. Our verdicts must be given. Thus at every moment it is 'hearing' not 'seeing' which is paramount; 'Time' not 'Space' which is the characteristic dimension; and the 'Word' rather than the 'Idea' with which man is confronted. This revelation broke through, Christianity affirms, into the final Revelation of the Word, which was a living Word. Hence in Christianity man is confronted at every moment by the personal demand of the Divine 'Word'. The gradualism of Idealistic philosophy of religion gives way to the importance of decision where personal destiny is involved and genuine responsibility incurred. Thus for Christianity Revelation is the full unveiling of the deeply existential nature of man's existence. 'Wherever man begins to 'listen' seriously in the moral realm', Brunner writes, 'there Idealism has ceased and faith in revelation has begun'.²⁶

The Christ is therefore determinative and regulative in Christian faith. In him the prophetic 'word' becomes the self-disclosing word of the self-revealing God. Confronted by the cross the Christian is

26. Op. cit., p. 386.

constrained to hear the word of authentic Life speaking so that his own meaning as responsible spirit is revealed to himself. At the same time that the clue to his disobedience by virtue of his freedom as created spirit is borne in upon him he is confronted with the Love that can heal his inner cleavage by winning his consent to 'be made whole'. This is the light that shines in man's darkness. The Spirit of God enters into the dimension of man's existence and confronts him with its own self-revealing and therefore with the revelation of man to himself. In telling us his secret God tells us the real secret about ourselves.²⁷

It is the authentic and inescapable responsibility that in knowing Life men cannot evade the responsibility of being called to live in the life of the Spirit, it is this which constitutes both the essential power and the central difficulty of Christian Revelation. There man realizes that the word brokenly heard apart from Christ has now become a Word of disturbing clarity, spoken once-for-all with inescapable and final authenticity. Yet man does not easily admit the limits this puts upon his pretentious pride. In this miracle of Life's gracious invasion man's greatest difficulty is not so much the theoretical paradox with which his reason is confronted. This is the 'Greek' mind's 'folly'. It lies rather in the necessity of admitting the impotency of his moral disposition. The essential difficulty of human life is its spiritual pride. The commonalty of this 'stumbling block' indicates that spiritually we are all Semites. The admission of his dependence and the surrender of his absolute independence is the central difficulty in man's spiritual life. His last act of surrender where he 'lays down his arms' is strenuously resisted:

27. See Matt. 4:16; John 1:14, 17; II Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13; I Peter 2:9; I John 1:1-10.

'Whenever a man is earnest and serious in his striving after ethical purity and religious faith he also makes the discovery. This is why everything in Christianity pleases him save its central truth-belief in 'justification by faith alone' and reconciliation through the Mediator.' 28

This then is the knowledge which is itself something and not the reference to something else or talk about something. This is the 'eternal' life of the New Testament. It is direct participation in the Life of the Spirit. It is man's being awakened to the true nature of its own being through immediate spiritual communion with God, its ground and its home. This is spiritual knowledge and its very intimacy and directness makes all demand for objectified proofs of God simply the indication that we know not what spirit we are of. Spiritual truth is always foolishness to the 'natural man'.²⁹ It is because Christianity alone allows for the full acknowledgment of the paradox of man's dignity and his weakness that in it alone the inevitable entry of the tragic obtains. If the eternal is 'the moment of time which is invaded by eternity',³⁰ it is also the unveiling of the serious and categorical difference between God and man. It is the moment in which man's creaturely and derivative status is spiritually revealed with unmistakable clarity. This then is the meaning of the Christian Revelation in affirming that it is the authentic reading of man's being. It solemnly proclaims that in his

28. E. Brunner, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

29. See I Cor. 2:14. cf. Rom. 7:14; Rom. 8:1; John 17:3; cf. Lamont, op. cit., p. 133. 'people find it easy to employ the senses which they happen to have, but not so easy to employ the whole soul which they happen to be.'

30. See P. Tillich's interesting Kairos theory in The Religious Situation, pp. 138-9, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1932.

concrete life as spirit man encounters the ground of his being in God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ. It affirms that this is the real concrete as distinguished from the general life and history of the race which though often referred to as 'concrete' is in fact so only as lived within the acknowledgment of this spiritual and religious significance of life. For Christian faith therefore, man's meaning lies 'beyond' himself in Spirit, whose 'transcendence' is not that of spatial distance but of spiritual ground. This fact is unveiled to man in his concrete experience as a spiritual subject. This is why we have insisted so much upon the importance of ontology. Only as man seriously confronts the witness of his spiritual life does he see the true relevance of Time, and come to find the personal and living Word--the Christ--as absolutely decisive for his existence.

C. The Dogmas of Faith.

It will be plain then, that the answers of Christian faith concerning man and his destiny are not easily shaken by the onslaughts of modern 'humanism'. They are rooted in the fundamental and profound facts of man's spiritual life and provide the ground for a true, because Christian humanism. In the 'humanist' structure there is a void in the realm of foundations and though to the 'modern mood' the dogmas of the Christian faith must appear absurd, yet their centrality in truth is none the less sure to the man who has heard the 'word' of the Lord. The real meaning of Augustine's remark is still true: there are some things which we cannot believe unless we understand them, there are other things which we cannot understand unless we believe them. The Christian faith involves the following:

a. Creation

The dogma of creation is the outcome not of any requirement of reason as such. It is the interpretation of the world and man in terms of the ground of man's spiritual life already encountered in the hearing of the word of God as Lord. It is a consequent of Christian faith. It affirms that the explanation of the world lies not in itself but in God who stands related to this world not as one thing related to other things. He is not just an additional 'beyond', just another distinction, or canton in reality, such as we are accustomed to make in this world of finite 'I-Thou' relations. "God stands over against the whole 'I-Thou-It' world which has hitherto confronted us, an indivisible unity, as something Wholly Other. As the Wholly Other, He is present as the One, 'from whom and through whom and for whom are all things.'³¹

Revelation and man's response to it alone provide the fundamental source whereby man is constrained to acknowledge his own derivative and creaturely status and that of the world of which he is a part. Revelation - this confrontation by the Spirit - alone can persuade man that his oscillation between the alternatives of pantheism and idolatry as explanations of the world are false and that he has at last encountered something which 'breaks through the Either-Or' of this dilemma by presenting him with a new dimension which transcends nature, illuminating it, yet without denying its subordinate dimension. Thus the whole belief in a Creator is not an arbitrary solution but a spiritually authentic one. This is why only the religious spirit can rest in God as the Alpha and the Omega of being. Man's clue to his own being in the Being of Spirit

31. K. Heim, op. cit., p. 187. See also pp. 194; 202-3.

as its child, is turned upon the world as the key to its meaning too. The dogma of Creation thus puts the seal of divine origin upon all temporal reality in such a way that it is not an emanation, nor yet God coming gradually to self-consciousness, nor yet partly the work of God and partly the work of a demi-urge, but the work of God issuing out of the invisible so that the world was made out of no-thing, a creation.³²

This doctrine therefore involves the explicit recognition of the goodness of creaturely being. Man is a dependent and contingent being, but on the Christian view man's evil does not arise from his finitude. Creatureliness is a good. Even death itself is not an evil. It is the fear of death which leads to evil. The whole creation with its incomplete and fragmentary nature is redeemed from meaninglessness by virtue of its relation to the one central reality of the Creator to whom the whole and its parts are related and from whom they derive their significance. But a living faith alone provides this. When, for example, Jesus remarked upon the 'lilies of the field', and the inability of man to 'add a cubit' to his height, he was calling attention to the fact that both man and lower nature have their existence in time with its limitations by an ineluctible necessity as derivative creatures. But when he added therefore 'be not anxious' he was noting that while creatureliness is a good yet man, being spirit, transcends his limitation and insecurity and in seeing it becomes 'anxious'. He is thus tempted by his spiritual stature to deny his contingent status through the fear of it. Hence in this respect the biblical doctrine of creation is a reminder that this is God's world and that man as a child of God need not fear. His finitude is a fact and while it is emphasized yet man's creatureliness is never

32. Cf. Heb. 11:3.

treated as the cause of any belittling of human existence: 'and God looked upon everything that He had made and behold it was very good.'³³ Christianity affirms that man can gladly accept his finite status.

b. Image of God--Man's 'Likeness'.

In this doctrine of imago Dei one aspect of the central mystery of man's being is affirmed. Man stands at the juncture of nature and spirit. He is not just a child of nature for he has pretensions to power and the expansion of his ego which are unknown to the natural world apart from man. Yet in being spiritual neither is he God for the 'word' of God by which he knows himself to be akin to God when he hears it, produces a tension and self-knowledge whereby his difference from God is clearly manifested. The mystery of this fact is stated in Christian faith by saying that man is created in the 'likeness' of God- in his 'image' which has since been marred by sin. This fact is attested in that man can hear the disturbing and yet gracious 'word' of God which is addressed to him. The dogma of the 'image of God' is a way of affirming that man is a creature living in time who carries deep within him a spiritual dimension which transcends time. It means that man's distinctive feature is a capacity involving self-transcendence whereby he is akin to the Eternal ground-- to God whose word he 'hears'. That man bears the likeness of Spirit is the meaning of this doctrine. It thus opens the doorway for the realization that man's true life is the knowledge of God which means cherishing godly affections for the right and good.³⁴ In 'hearing' the word man perceives that he is a creature, potentially, of

³³. Gen. 1:31 Cf. Heb. 1:10-12; Is. 40.

³⁴. I John 1:6.

eternity, that he has its 'likeness' set in him. But his attempt as eternal subject to relate himself satisfactorily to eternity brings us face to face with the mystery of human sin.

c. Sin and the Fall - Tragedy

Just as the dogma of Creation is the affirmation of the divine origin and ground of man and the world, the seal of God upon temporality, so the dogmas of the Fall and Original Sin are the qualification which affirms the mystery that there is within creation a negation of God which while it exists within His creation is not caused by God but is a radical mystery within man himself. The dogma of the Fall safeguards sin from being conceived as synonymous with Creation. It affirms a fact of man's spiritual life, namely, that man's sin is not the outcome of his finitude, or creatureliness and contingency, but of man's vanity and pride whereby he denies his spiritual dependency and ground in God. It is the attempt of the conditioned creature to become the unconditioned. "Sin is not a necessity of man's natural condition but a possibility of his spiritual stature".³⁵ Naturalism would destroy man's dignity. Idealism dismisses man's mystery. Christianity alone preserves man's dignity in mystery and thus opens the doorway to the acknowledgment of the really tragic aspect of man's existence as a created spirit. Man stands at the juncture of spirit and nature. He alone knows that he is in 'time' and therefore transcends 'time'. He alone of all creation can make both himself, 'time', and the world, the objects of his reflection. Man alone knows that he has limited and precarious existence. Only he perceives his insecurity

35. From a lecture by R. Niebuhr. Cf. Rom. 1:20 ff; Gen. 3; Is. 44:6; 47:10; Ezek. 28.

and can therefore be truly 'anxious' about finitude, fearing death and all potential terminations to his existence that surround him in daily life. But he is more than 'merely' 'anxious' over insecurity. He alone by virtue of his spiritual stature can vainly imagine himself to be able to be greater than he now is. He alone has the will to power that is unknown to the animal world. Hence anxiety and pride are both possible by virtue of man's spiritual stature. Man's sin may take the form of self-deification, the attempt to overcome his finitude by the universalization of himself. But since he stands at the juncture of nature and spirit it may also take the form of the indulgence in fleshly lusts and we get the self-gratification of the debauchee. But in both cases the direction chosen is possible only because man's spiritual stature provides the possibility for each. In both cases it is a clear will to live subject to the prodigal impulses apart from, though not ignorant of, the demands of Spirit. Sin is a revolt of pretentious human vanity and pride, the conviction that man can manage his own affairs as a sovereign being. Anxiety, or physical desires may provide the temptation, but the act of sin itself is one of wilful God-denial and self-sufficiency. It is a denial of the responsibility of human existence. The Christian doctrine of Sin, involving the Fall, Original Sin, and Perfection before the Fall are mythological attempts to do justice to the facts of man's life not only as a creature living in the two dimensions of Time and Eternity, but also to do justice to the truth of his existence as a free spirit in the making. Its mythological form is necessitated in that there is no other way to tell the story of something that cannot be compressed within merely rational categories. The rational involves orderliness, sequence,

causality. It cannot encompass the irrational or capricious. But the spiritual dimension of freedom involves necessarily the capricious and unique. That portion of the myth which refers to a prior 'Perfection' is a way of safeguarding the paradoxical truth that the ideal possibility hovers over man. In fact when man became 'a living soul', he was and continues to be appraised of the demands of the spiritual dimension. That is to say man as a homo sapiens on the threshold of becoming a humanus does conceive the ideal, or at least a fringe of ideal spiritual obligation. He can conceive the ideal in his capacity as a transcendent spirit, but 'he acts as a historical force'. Man's 'perfection' is not a historical period of paradisaical existence. It is man's knowledge of the good by which he is claimed, the spiritual discernment of the ideal by virtue of man's spiritual stature. This is the perfection before the Fall. The creation of man is at once the creation of the knowledge of good and evil. Hence the Fall means to assert not the pollution of prior perfection but man's confrontation by, but refusal of, the good of Spirit. It declares man's greatness as spirit, whereby he both knows the demands of spiritual life and can deny them. Creation involved the passage from preconscious being, to the arrival of Spirit and man 'became a living soul'.³⁶ But this level brings man to the knowledge of the demands of Spirit but not to the obedience to them. There is no limit to man's spiritual ambition for self at which he can rest. He chooses apart from grace either an act of pride that will not admit the limitations of the creature, or else one

36. Cf. N. Berdyaev. The Destiny of Man, p. 51. 'There are three stages in the development of the spirit: the original paradisaical wholeness, preconscious wholeness which has not had the experience of thought and of freedom; division, reflection, valuation, freedom of choice, and finally superconscious wholeness and completeness that comes after freedom, reflection, and valuation.'

of sensuality which is the paradoxical attempt of the spirit of man to evade the tension of living at the juncture of nature and spirit. This fact is a part of man's pilgrimage as free creature and yet due neither to freedom, nor to creation, nor to his spirit as such, but to a radical mystery of will to self-assertion which is a possibility of his spiritual condition. Thus Original Sin affirms not that we are the victims of a hereditary guilt which would, if it were true, immediately destroy the moral aspect of Sin. It is rather the reaffirmation of what is a very great doctrine of man, namely, that he is spiritual. He has therefore spiritual pretensions to become unconditioned, and uncontingent being. Even though he knows sufficiently that his is not being true to the real significance of spiritual existence, as we have tried to show, he paradoxically insists upon the experiment. Man, qua spirit, is 'tempted by his strength to deny his weakness'³⁷, and also tempted by his weakness to forego his strength. Sin is a paradox and the outcome of an essential mystery in man, but nevertheless a fact. It is an arbitrary and capricious act, quite irrational and therefore has no history. It is unique. Christianity acknowledges the mystery of man's 'radical evil' which, as Kant said, 'corrupts the foundations of all his maxims', but it cannot explain it. However in incorporating this mystery as a component part of man she submits that she has come closer than modern humanism to evaluating man truthfully. The whole doctrine of Sin is thus not simply a chronological affair of past history. It is a commonplace of the contemporary life of man as spirit-in-the-making. Christianity alone treats of sin in terms which because they are paradoxical are true to the nature of man's

37. I owe this phrase to Prof. R. Niebuhr. I was greatly enlightened in listening to eight lectures which were eventually to be the Gifford lectures for 1939, which bore upon this subject.

spiritual existence, and involve the 'myth' as their medium of expression for thought. There is a real truth to the contention of Berdyaev that the Fall is a 'proud doctrine'. It fastens upon our attention the fact that man is a spiritual being. Yet it also is a paradox in that the exaltation involves a humiliation. Hence Christianity alone furnishes the basis for a full anthropology. For man is spiritual and natural. All other anthropology is true only in an abstract sense and upon a lower and less inclusive aspect of man's being. Christian faith alone does justice to man's dignity and his low estate, to his spiritual stature and his 'radical evil' which together constitute his essential mystery.³⁸

d. The Cross and Forgiveness - Salvation

Freedom is the ground of possibility for man's sinning, though his capacity to sin would seem to lie in his will to be sovereign and autonomous. The Christian interpretation of man's tragedy is therefore a profound one. It holds that it comes about precisely because man is not a child of necessity and fate. Christianity disconnects man from fate, but it does so by viewing him as a creature possessing a freedom which is fraught with real danger because with real responsibility. Man's tragic state is the paradox of human responsibility which is impotent of itself to live responsibly. By virtue of his spiritual stature man

38. See Psalm 8. Also Pascal, Thoughts, Wight, O. W., Ed., New York: Derby Jackson, 1859. 'It is dangerous to make man see too clearly how nearly equal he is to the brutes, without showing him his greatness. It is dangerous to make him see too clearly his greatness without his baseness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to represent to him both'.

transcends himself and therefore knows his temporality. He both fears his insecurity and contingency and can imagine himself possessed of unlimited and unconditioned existence. In knowing himself to be spirit suffering the frustrations of finitude he is tempted to deny his finitude and to become absolute Spirit. His fear of his insecurity drives him to seek to overcome it by multiplying natural resources in the hope of destroying the precarious element of his natural existence.³⁹ Yet more than fear is at the bottom of it. It is the outcome of the self-transcendence of spirit which can by that token imagine itself to be greater than it is. The pride of the human spirit is tempted by its ability to conceive the unconditioned to become the same. It becomes a God to itself by self-deification. Man's pride is the outcome of his imagining the 'likeness' of God in him to be the identity of himself and God.⁴⁰ Thus man's fear and pride unite to make man live without the hope or presence of God in the world. But he never succeeds for he knows each act of self-expansion to be inherently unmutual and contrary to the demands of Spirit, as is shown by his attempts to get others to abide by the more mutual treatment of himself. Hence whether as will to power or as will to the indulgence of the appetites he is further disturbed by the finger of a self-accusing conscience, and the tragic impotence described by Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans ensues. He is involved in the inevitable paradox that his attempt to become more secure or independent ends by making him more insecure and more dependent. He becomes a slave.

Man's tragedy is the outcome, whether indirectly through fear

39. Cf. Jesus' call to man to give up his fears. See Luke 12:13-40.

40. Rom. 1:18-32.

of contingency, or directly as the naked will to self-sufficiency and sovereignty, of his unwillingness to rest in his creaturely existence as limited and derivative spirit. He needs a certification that he can so rest and yet it can come about only by a true judgment upon the evil of his present ways which yet assures him that it is Love which has judged him and can therefore win his heart for newness of living.

For Christian faith this miracle took place in the person of Christ. In His person the Spirit was encountered as it stood athwart man's evil pretentions. From the first to the last Jesus was increasingly seen as the everlasting 'Nay', the infinite contradiction of man's attempt to live apart from the 'law of the Spirit'. But it was not until the moment of the Cross when human sin impaled Him upon the points of her own hatred, it was not till then that the deep and unmistakable authenticity of that Spirit whereby man was being sought was fully revealed. There at the Cross the 'Word' which had been in process of utterance through history, and had for the period of his ministry⁴¹ disturbed the people, was now uttered in its profoundly disturbing because self-authenticating nature. It was in the very moment when human sin did its worst to the Spirit of Righteousness that the spiritual basis and authority of Life was unveiled for what it was. In Christ the 'No' of God to all ungodly, and so uncreaturely living is finally and fully pronounced.⁴² There man is for all time confronted with the authentic negation of his unspiritual living. The 'order' of his independence encounters the spiritual 'order', enlivened by its embodiment in human life.

41. See J. Baillie, The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity, p. 165-6.

42. Rom. 1:16-18. Cf. the remarks of the centurion at the Cross: Matt. 27:54; Lk. 23:47.

But this alone would constitute not rest but profound disquiet. Hence the profounder 'secret' of the Cross is the unimaginable and undeducible secret that the same power which judges man's evil is also the power which Loves him. The Cross cannot be understood in vacuo. It was the inevitable consummation of the loving-judgment which had already lived and moved among men and it went to its inevitable crucifixion. Wherever Goodness meets sin there a cross is set up, and when the Life of absolute Goodness and Love met the wave of human sin, it stood against it till the Cross remained as the symbol of its unswerving judgment. But it also loved the sinner so that it gave itself to the last expensive moment and the Cross remained as the symbol of the astonishing miracle that man is sought and claimed by the Spirit, and that that Spirit is both Love and Judgment. It is the confrontation by this supreme mystery of Grace, and the knowledge that man 'hears' this Word of God speaking to him now, it is this that leads him to God. He is forgiven in the sense that now no barrier exists between him and God. The impotency of man's nature is taken up and resolved in God's own Life, so that in the suffering of the Christ man sees and accepts the judgment of God upon all Sin--for sin is a family catastrophe. In the encounter of the Love that speaks, the weakness also of his own will to good is overcome and he is won by grace to righteousness through faith. This is the mystery of Redemption which fills the New Testament page.⁴³ The Cross is the eloquent though bleeding 'Word' of God who is Love and whose supremacy over man is attested only to him who 'hears' in the Word of the crucified the everlasting Word of the God of all speaking to him in the miracle of Loving-

⁴³. Cf. John 3:16; 12:32; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:8, I John 4:9.

Goodness.⁴⁴

It is this confrontation by the unspeakable arrival of 'grace and truth' as God's, which constrains man to the realization that his limited and conditioned state is not an orphaned and isolated existence and so his fear is overcome. It is the inescapable acknowledgment that in Christ God has stooped down to reconcile him to unexpected Love, it is this which overcomes his pride. Man is at last won over to the assurance that the Lordship of life is not his, but rests in the hands of God who is a Loving as well as Righteous Lord. This mystery is a self-disclosure taking place in the Word 'that was made flesh'. God enters History.⁴⁵ This is the new and vitalizing element in the Christian gospel. Creation is now seen as a mystery of Love and Freedom. God resolves the paradox by taking it up into himself and entering man's estate. Salvation is not the overcoming of man's finitude but that 'justification by faith' whereby man is brought to concur in the judgment of sin that was made possible by the death of Christ through the grace whereby the sinner is not dismissed but sought, even in the moment of his sinning.

So man arises by grace to newness of Life by faith in the 'word' which confronts him at the cross.⁴⁶ This is the new and 'living hope', and the 'marvellous light'. Man is empowered and his will energized to the good and to the spiritual because LOVE which has convinced him that it is the ultimate reality and he a penultimate reality

44. Cf. The saying of W. Herrmann in his Ethics, "Whenever the experience of Goodness as it judges you and of Love as it lifts you are experienced at one and the same moment as the effects of one and the same personal will, that moment is the moment of your forgiveness."

45. Augustine reminds us, Confessions VII: 9:19 that this was no part of Platonism. The Incarnation is a Christian truth.

46. Rom. 5:8; 8:3-12; II Cor.5:17; Gal.2:20; Eph.2:13; I Peter 1:3;2:9.

has won him to abide by the life of his status as spiritual creature. Salvation is a living hope and man sees now that he is a child and son of God. He is no longer anxious, fearful of his security and seeking autonomy, at least this is his deeper resting place though he still violates it in that he is still sinful and imperfect. He rests in the faith that this is God's world and he is God's. 'All things are yours, ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.'⁴⁷ Man's work in the world is not thereby cut off, it is simply placed in the context of God's will and not in that of his own sovereign and prodigal impulses. Christian salvation from sin involves the enfranchisement of man in God's world. Man is a 'new creature' in Christ, and is made 'nigh by the blood' in a profound sense. He becomes God's 'lost' son now returned and living in God's house. Thus though the Christian speaks 'the wisdom of God in a mystery' nevertheless it is a mystery of light and hope, of joy and peace, for 'now have we received not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God'.⁴⁸

D. The Church and The Eternal 'Word'.

The Church is the fellowship of those who have 'heard' the 'word' of God. It is therefore the vehicle of God's witness to himself. This does not mean that the Church in its visible form is a perfect society, but rather that she alone carries the sentence of the Eternal 'Word' which can judge both the Christian society and the world. Christian faith is not against humanism as such, but against a humanism which interprets man in a truncated and fractional way, against pseudo-humanism. Even when due correction has been made for the medieval

⁴⁷. I Cor. 3:23.

⁴⁸. I Cor. 2:7, 12.

restriction of man's relative autonomy, and after all the real gains that the humanist experiment has brought are acknowledged, it still remains that the attenuated 'man' of modern culture can find his true humanism only within the context which Christian faith provides, at least this is the contention of Christianity. History would seem to point the same lesson.⁴⁹

The Greek saying, 'Know thyself', and the Hebrew admonition, 'Know God', are conjoined in Christian humanism. The Church, therefore, holds that the humanist movement has oversimplified the mystery of man. She has no quarrel with the view that 'the word humanism should be confined to a working philosophy seeking to make a resolute distinction between man and nature, and between man and the divine'.⁵⁰ Her quarrel is with the attempt to follow the distinction with the attempt then to remove the level of the divine and to construe the specifically human as independent and sufficient apart from God. The Church therefore cannot cease to call attention to the fact that modern humanism, in spite of a real service rendered within limits, is nevertheless an attempt to make man prematurely and so truncatedly a *causa sui*. This is the reason why Christianity insists upon confronting the modern mood with man's mystery in his spiritual dimension which is overlooked precisely because partaking of it man oversimplifies the real mystery at the heart of its meaning for him.

'The truth is masked sometimes, since man, who carries within him the same realities - soul, freedom, the call to destiny - which metaphysics has to study and know, who thus lives the life of metaphysics before his mind has grasped its principles, man, I say, can afford the luxury

49. See P. Wust, Crisis in the West, Essays in Order No. 2. Sheed and Ward, 1931

50. N. Foerster, Humanism and America, pp. vi-vii.

of denying in theory the metaphysical truths of which in practice he makes considerable use. It is plain, however, that such a situation is not normal and that it is of supreme importance for man to take cognizance of all things that integrate him; and of the true dimensions of his being'. 51

This is why the church preaches against all that would enthrone the purely world-regarding outlook. She preaches that while man's citizenship is in heaven yet he partakes in rational life, culture and the burdens of society as the materials whereby 'in the body' he manifests himself as 'a member of the 'ecclesia militans'. 52 The Christian thus lives from faith to faith never 'confusing harbour with home', and he does not interpret the external and formal changes of social revolution so that the central illness of the modern mind is masked by superficial readings of its spiritual cause. For him the real ground of his meaning and that of all human existence is both 'beyond' and yet within history, it is the eternal impinging upon the temporal. 53 Christian man thus lives by a faith which can do justice to the incoherence and evil of the world and yet find meaning in existence. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed but not unto despair'. 54 He neither denies history's meaning nor yet finds it within the sphere of history alone. Its meaning arises from the fact that eternity operates in, while it yet transcends time. This is grasped by faith alone. The pilgrimage of Professor Paul Elmer More is significant in this respect. He arrived as a young man at Romanticism as the alternative to the

51. J. Maritain, Freedom and the Modern World, pp. 13-14. His latest book True Humanism came to my attention too late to benefit by it in time for this work.

52. E. Brunner, The Philosophy of Religion, p. 190.

53. See P. Tillich, op. cit., p. 139. For his interesting statement that some societies are 'turned away from', others 'toward', but none 'possess' the Eternal.

54. II Cor. 4:8; See Eph. 6:10-17.

materialistic view of life. Becoming more and more aware of man's dual aspects he turned to the East and tried to overcome the dilemma in Oriental mysticism with its monistic Idealism. However in the The Great Refusal and in A Century of Indian Epigrams, he declared the impossibility of this 'way'. After attacking all the monisms the last of them being 'modernism', he closed the Shelburne Essays and began the study of the Greek Tradition. A study of Platonism convinced him that all monism is an attempt to avoid the paradoxes of the dual aspects of human life by denying the more mysterious side of the case and by affirming only that which could be fairly well defined. His study of the Greek Tradition led him to affirm the need of a revelation if the mystery was to be satisfactorily faced, 'if there is any escape for the restrictions of probability in the religious sphere of theology and mythology', he wrote, 'it cannot be achieved by the guidance of unassisted reason but must wait on revelation which comes with its own authority of immediate conviction'.⁵⁵ Plato he felt had established the metaphysical realm which was a reasonable hypothesis but, he felt, an unprovable one. Hence he turned to the study of Jesus. In him he found the vagueness of the Platonic Idea clothed upon and made intimately conversant with earthly existence without destroying its transcendent meaning. Thus in the quest for standards Professor More came to write The Christ of the New Testament, Christ the Word, and The Catholic Faith. With a critical spirit that never left him, he came to rest at last in the Anglican communion accepting the grace of God in Christ the 'Word'.

Here in epitome is the highway from man's darkness in reason

55. P. E. More, Hellenistic Philosophies, p. 370.

to the light of faith. In the midst of all the modern fears born of our secularized culture the Church bears witness to the Eternal Word of the Gospel that 'we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father'.⁵⁶ This faith alone can walk with a real abandon which yet treats not irrelevently or disinterestedly the obligations and duties which history and time impose upon the spirit of man. It alone possesses in the darkness, the Eternal 'Word' which is her inextinguishable light, the source of her faith, her hope, and her love, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'.⁵⁷

Upon the spiritual foundations of Christian faith alone does homo sapiens become really a humanus, growing up into the fulness of stature of the whole man in Christ.⁵⁸ For the reasons given, and on the basis of her faith Christianity proclaims that, as opposed to modern 'humanism', the spiritual foundations of Christian faith provide the ground for the only true humanism.

56. Rom. 8:15.

57. I John 5:4.

58. Phil. 3:12-14; Eph. 4:13.

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