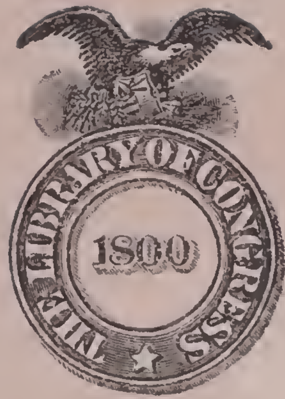


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# FAITH OF THE FREE

# FAITH OF THE FREE

*By*

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*Edited by*

WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON

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*Dedicated to*
EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES
*in Appreciation of his Ministry in the*
*University Church of Disciples of Christ*
*Chicago*
*1900–1940*

# INTRODUCTION

THE immediate occasion for the writing and publication of this book is the completion, in October 1940, of the forty-year ministry of Edward Scribner Ames with the University Church of Disciples of Christ, Chicago.

A theme which has been central in his preaching and which may be considered as the dominant and unifying theme of this volume is this: " A religious value is always also some other kind of value." The implication is that religion at its fullest does not cultivate a specific area apart from practical and cultural interests, but expresses itself in and through these interests, nourishes them, is nourished by them, and furnishes to them a unifying point of view and purpose. Values become religious in proportion to their felt importance in relation to men's deepest, highest and most general interests, and especially as they represent a shared experience and involve a recognition of social responsibility.

Only free minds can find this concept of religion congenial to their thinking, and only a free church can be hospitable to the varied interests which it embraces. It is, to be sure, possible for an authoritarian church to attempt to extend its control over all phases of man's life. Ecclesiastical totalitarianism is an old and ugly story. Finding religious values in all the areas of experience is very different from imposing priestly rule upon them. We have to do here with the religion of free men trying to live and think in such a way that their living and thinking will be religious in quality.

It is one thing to hear this idea stated and elaborated from the pulpit; it is another thing to observe the reaction to it by members of the congregation. Under Dr. Ames's ministry the church has drawn into its fellowship an extraordinary number and variety of men and women who have made noteworthy contributions in the fields of philosophy, education, social studies and work, literature, journalism, politics, economics, agriculture and the several sciences, as well as in many forms of what is commonly called religious work. It is believed that statements by members of this group will, in a unique way, illustrate the fruitfulness of an interpretation of religion which, including but not limiting itself to theology and the operations of the church, finds expression in all the areas of our contemporary culture.

The contributors to this volume are all present or former members of the University Church of Disciples of Christ. They came to it with religious backgrounds scarcely less varied than their professional interests and occupations. Those invited to participate in writing the book were selected from a much larger number who were equally eligible. The editor's only regret is that limitations of space forbade the inclusion of others. He takes this opportunity to thank the contributors for their generous cooperation, and to introduce them.

Van Meter Ames, Ph.D., associate professor of philosophy, University of Cincinnati. Author of *The Aesthetics of the Novel, Introduction to Beauty, Out of Iowa,* etc. Son of Dr. E. S. Ames.

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It will readily be understood that, as there is no regimentation of opinion in this church, so there was none in the preparation of this volume. Each contributor speaks for himself. There was not even an attempt to enforce upon the writers

an obvious relevance to what has been called the central theme of the volume. It was not insisted that each should demonstrate specifically the relation of religion to his special field. Some have done that. Others have written about aspects of their fields which they consider interesting and important to all intelligently religious people. In doing this they have, even if indirectly, illustrated the theme and have borne witness to the rich variety and the wide inclusiveness of religious values.

W. E. Garrison,
*Editor*

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# FAITH OF THE FREE

I

# A FUNCTIONAL CONCEPT OF RELIGION

WILLIAM CLAYTON BOWER

WITHOUT DOUBT one of the most fruitful insights into the nature of religion in recent years has arisen from an understanding of its functional relation to human experience. It is equally significant that this insight has come from a source outside the tradition of orthodox religion, one which is regarded by many conservative religionists as secular. It has resulted from the application of the methods of modern scientific inquiry to the phenomena of religion.

Only a free religion can be in the deepest sense functional. To the degree that religious thought and life are warped into the rigid molds of theological tradition or institutional habit they tend to become dissociated from the crucial issues of contemporary living. Under such conditions the chief concern of organized religion is to recover and reproduce the end-products of past religious living rather than to face creatively the situations of the living present in terms of their spiritual possibilities. Only the faith of the free can be a creative faith, functionally related to life.

The scientific study of religion had its origin quite unintentionally in the researches of anthropology and ethnology, which are devoted to the study of man's origin and the rise and spread of his culture. Discoveries in these fields dis-

closed the fact that religion played a fundamental role in the life of primitive men. It was and is, in the judgment of one of the most astute students of the history of civilization, man's oldest and most fundamental reaction to his world. The dawn of culture witnessed also the dawn of conscience.

Somewhat later the historical method was applied to the study of the world's great religions. At first these were studied comparatively for the similarity and differences of their beliefs and practices, and in their cultural settings. But it soon became evident that each of these religions had a natural history which could be traced through definite historical stages. Consequently, it became clear that it was impossible to speak, except in the most general terms, of *the* religion of the Greeks, of the Hindus, of the Hebrews or even of Christians. Instead, it was necessary to speak of specific historical stages in the development of these religions. They were in each instance historical processes in which change was united with continuity. Moreover, change in the religion of a given people was always related to change in the people's total culture.

The latest phase of the scientific study of religion has brought it under the searching light of modern psychology. These studies have demonstrated that religion is rooted in man's constitutional nature. It is one aspect of his interaction with his world. In this respect it is comparable with his science, his art, his philosophy and his technology. Once believed to arise from his instinctive nature, it is now judged to spring from his highest capacities to act intelligently and to discover values in his experience and to use them for the refinement and ordering of his life. As long as man is man it is likely that as his knowledge increases and his competence

in dealing with his world grows, he will be not less but more religious. This is because religion performs an indispensable function in his existence.

The concept of function is itself derived from the biological sciences. It could not have invaded the field of religious thought until these sciences had arrived at some degree of maturity. The derivation of the word at once suggests the implications of the concept. Function is concerned with use. Every function in an organism serves some end either in the survival or in the well-being of the organism, as in the case of vision, hearing, nutrition or respiration. In the lower forms of organic life all functions are performed by the simple protoplasmic mass. In the higher organisms functions become highly specialized and differentiated. As functions become more highly specialized, specialized organs are developed for carrying them on, as in the case of the eye, the ear, the digestive system and the lungs. The development of the organism depends upon its ability to respond to new aspects of its environment, to develop new functions and to grow new organs. This is the biological account of the way in which man has arrived at his present state of development. Failing to meet the new possibilities of the environment or its new demands, the organism remains static or perishes in times of crisis.

It will thus be seen that there is the closest possible relation between function and structure. Thus vision is a function that serves the purpose of enlarging the extent of the organism's perception of the environment, beyond the limited range of touch, taste, smell or even hearing. To take care of this function of seeing the eye has been developed as the organ of vision, with its retina, its lens, and its muscles for

focusing the seeing eye upon near and distant objects. So also the bones and muscles of the hand are arranged for the hand's functioning as an organ of manipulation. But in every instance the structure is subordinate to the function and serves it.

More recently the idea of function has been applied to various phases of man's activity and culture. Intelligence is best understood in terms of the ends it serves in enabling man to interpret and give direction to his experience. Language is best understood as a means which civilized man has developed for clarifying his thought, for communication and for record. Similarly, mathematics is not appreciated until it is seen as a method for dealing with the quantitative aspects of experience. The nature of law is not known until it is seen to be a constantly evolving procedure for securing equitable adjustments of human rights in constantly changing social relations.

In no area of man's experience has the concept of function been more fruitful than in its extension to his religious life. The fact that religion has occupied such a fundamental place in man's individual and collective life throughout the history of civilization would lead one to suppose that it serves a useful, if not indeed an indispensable, purpose in his survival and well-being. Why is man so "incurably" religious? The answer to this question is the same as that for all other phases of his culture — his science, his philosophy, his ethics, his art, his technology, his language, his laws. And it must be in terms of the ends for living which religion serves — of the needs which it satisfies.

The chief concern of the scientific students of religion for more than half a century has been to discover what the nature

of religion is. As was to be expected, the earlier attempts were chiefly based upon the structures of religion — its beliefs, its ceremonials, its institutions. But since the beginning of the present century this question has been asked in terms of the function of religion in meeting human needs which the structures of belief, ceremonial and institution serve. In the same way the physiologists a generation ago studied the hand and the eye from the standpoint of structure, whereas they now begin with the question, What uses do the hand and the eye serve in the life process of the human being? Before men like Roscoe Pound, law was studied from the viewpoint of its content, its form and its precedents; now it is beginning to be considered as a living instrument that has its origin in human relations and undergoes continual modification as the needs of society change. It is not to be wondered at that the definitions of religion resulting from the earlier attempts were confusing, because they were based upon the fallacy of mistaking theology, ceremonial and the institution for religion. We are beginning to see that the hope of understanding religion lies in discovering its functional relation to the life process.

A survey of the search for the understanding of religion in terms of its service to life-needs during the present century discloses an unmistakable trend. It is significant in connection with the present volume that no one has done more to further this trend than Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, the pastor of the church by the members of which this publication is written, in his earlier book on *The Psychology of Religious Experience* and in his later volume on *Religion*. This trend has been to see religion as operating within the field of man's valuational attitude toward his experience. But there are

many orders of value, as in science, economics, art, morals and politics. How is religion related to these other values? How does it differ from them? These are the questions that have set the direction of the latest phase of thought concerning the nature and function of religion.

It may be said to be the prevailing view that through religion persons and societies achieve an integration of all the specialized values of their varied interests and activities into a total meaning and worth of life viewed in its cosmic setting. "A religious value," in an oft-repeated phrase of Dr. Ames, "is always also some other kind of value." But it is never that other kind of value in isolation from other values. It is always that value when intellectually viewed and emotionally felt in relation to the fusion of all values into a total meaning and worth of life. In that fusion, through heightening, idealization and completion, something new and creative emerges. The result is not an entity. It is a *quality* that diffuses itself through the entire range of experience, inhering in any and every practical interest and activity that is brought into vital relation with this living center of comprehending, fundamental and enduring values. An experience in any area of living is religious when it is interpreted, judged and carried through in the light of these comprehending and fundamental values. It is non-religious when it is pursued without reference to them, anti-religious when it is pursued in violation of them.

It may be said, therefore, that the function of religion is twofold. On the one hand, through it man has achieved an integration of personal and social experience. Other means by which he has integrated his experience are art and philosophy. Though its earlier emphasis upon analysis has

tended toward the fragmentation of experience, science of late offers some hope of becoming an integrating influence through the stressing of the interrelatedness of natural and social phenomena. Religion differs from these in that it is concerned with practical and operative values rather than with speculative thought or appreciation.

From the standpoint of the self, religion has been one of the most important factors in the resolution of tensions within the personality arising from conflict between desires, between impulses and the demands of society, and between the roles the person plays in different groups. This unification of the self is accomplished through organizing the whole personality around compelling convictions and motives, and the seeing of one's life whole. At the same time one of the most creative services which religion has rendered is to create tensions between ideal values and desires as they actually exist and to resolve these tensions by bringing all desires into harmony with a higher order of values. When this shift of values is sudden and radical it is known as "conversion." When it is gradual and continuous it results in growth. In the deepest and most creative sense this is salvation — the continuous transformation of life under the influence of the highest spiritual values.

From the standpoint of the objective world, through religion man has been able to weave together his scattered and often conflicting experiences in interacting with that world into a comprehending and consistent pattern of reality — a *universe*. It is of great significance that the periods of cultural synthesis have been those of religious faith. It is interesting that at the present moment when leaders of thought are casting about for principles for the unification of our

modern fragmented culture in metaphysics and science, there is an unmistakable turning on the part of many to religion. To the religious mind intelligence and values lie at the heart of the universe, endowing it with order and moral purpose. So vivid and compelling is this conception of the nature of reality that the religious mind has reserved for it the term most freighted with meaning and value in man's vocabulary — God. In such a universe man has sought and found security and support for his moral and spiritual aspirations. From it he derives help-giving strength for meeting the demands which life makes upon him. His highest and most vivid religious attitude arises from a sense of responsible participation in, and identification with, the processes of the universe that make for the growth of values — working with God for a better world of justice, love and peace.

On the other hand, creative religion brings a critical and reconstructive influence to bear upon every event and process of personal and social living. It sets each particular activity in the light of the cross-criticism of all the values involved in each specialized area of living — economic, intellectual, social, political, aesthetic and moral. This is why exploitative industry, imperialistic nationalism, race discrimination and war have drawn the thunderbolts of prophets, from Amos down to Rauschenbusch and "The Social Creed of the Churches." It is of the utmost significance that Jesus launched his trenchant criticisms against a priestly, scribal and institutionalized religion that had lost its capacity for social criticism in terms of the realities of living issues. In all its creative epochs Christianity has maintained a radically critical attitude toward the social processes that frustrate or destroy personal and social values.

But creative Christianity is not content with mere criticism. Since it is primarily concerned with practical and operative values, it looks beyond criticism to social reconstruction. From the prophets on through Jesus and the great religious leaders of modern times the Jewish-Christian religion has cherished the vision of a Kingdom of God in which justice and love will prevail in all the relations that bind men together into a social community. The problem on which men of prophetic religious passion are not clear is whether this reconstructive influence should be exercised through the organization of blocs of power or through the functioning of Christian men and women who, in their capacity as citizens, bring to bear the reconstructive influence of Christian ideals and motives upon the management of industry, the making and administering of law, the formulation and execution of national policy, or the ordering of international relationships.

It will thus be seen how vital and creative religion is an integral part of the common life in its every dimension. From the practical interests and activities of the common life religion derives the specific and concrete content and pattern of concepts, practices and institutions. These are the structures through which religion gets itself expressed. They change as the practical interests and activities of the common life change. It is in the relationships of the common life that creative religion functions through the integration, cross-criticism and reconstruction of all the processes of everyday living.

Throughout its long history religion has shown a tendency to move from the center of the life process where it operates as an integrative and reconstructive influence to the margin of the common life where it becomes only another specialized interest and activity, pursuing its values in isolation from

other values. It then becomes preoccupied with its theology, its ritual and ordinances, its sacred literature, its institutions. It has become priestly and scribal. It has become institutionalized. By this process of withdrawal from the issues and stresses of the common life religion loses its essential quality as creative religion and becomes secularized.

In that event, religion not only loses its capacity for criticism and its power to influence the common life, but has often become a disintegrative influence in culture and personal living. It may, and often has, set itself in opposition to new discoveries of truth and emerging values in a constantly changing social experience. It dulls sensitivity to moral and spiritual issues. It becomes a bulwark of tradition and a champion of the *status quo*. It substitutes the end-products of past religious living for a religious experience of life in a real and present world.

Creative religion, on the other hand, derives its dynamic character, as with the eighth century prophets and with Jesus, from fresh and immediate contact with reality as it appears in the experience of the common life. For it God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. He is now as creatively at work as ever he was in any epoch of history. Without discounting the past and its heritage of tradition, creative religion focuses its attention upon the living present as the growing-point of reality. It is even more eager to discover and explore the possibilities of our contemporary experience than to follow its precedents. It is here in the ongoing experience of living men in interaction with the real and present changing world that we of this generation must find God if we are to find him at all.

But in such a search for the religious meaning of life in the

present creativity in religion is not set in conflict with tradition. Our own religious experience of life is set in a long tradition which has gathered up into itself the faith, the aspirations and the achievements of countless generations. In our search for religious values the funded experience of past religious living becomes available as a resource for interpreting, judging and redirecting our own experience of the modern world at the point where it moves out into an uncharted and undetermined future, and where both culture and religion are being re-created.

Religion, so conceived, gives promise of becoming in our day an influence of increasing importance in shaping the new phase of culture into which we seem to be moving. There are not wanting evidences that the new epoch will be one of synthesis which will bind into a living unity our present dismembered culture. And it is a deep conviction on the part of many that at the heart of the new synthesis will be a vital and creative religious faith.

II

# AN APPLIED PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

ARTHUR E. MURPHY

IT IS an article of faith in many quarters today that philosophical reflection remains abstract, unverified and incomplete until it has been tested by its capacity to clarify the problems of men as these arise in the course of their practical behavior, and to provide, or substantially help to provide, a working solution for such problems. Deweyites and Stalinists, agreed on so little else, are at least at one in insisting on the "union of theory and practice" as essential to a respectable philosophy, and there are still plenty of old-fashioned idealists with us to remark that in this respect both groups are only rediscovering — in a somewhat distorted version, to be sure — a truth asserted long ago by the philosophers of the "great tradition" and maintained by their disciples ever since. A doctrine so widely preached should, particularly in this instance, have been as frequently put into practice. Yet when we look for instances of applied philosophy we find, in recent times especially, very few that have been able at once to maintain their philosophical integrity and also to offer practical guidance of a specific and enlightening sort. It is an impressive fact about Dr. Ames's philosophy of religion that it does achieve such a synthesis. It has operated over a period of years as an experiment in applied philosophy and it thus

provides a specimen of this much desired and rarely found species worthy of careful study from a logical as well as from a "practical" point of view. It is from this standpoint that I propose to discuss it in this paper.

The philosophy to be applied was, in general, that of the "Chicago school" of Mead and Dewey, a school in which Dr. Ames, as pupil and colleague, had a vital and constructive part. It was a major tenet in that school that reflective thinking arises when activities are blocked, that it has for its subject matter a problematic situation objectively dubious and indeterminate in that the forces there operative cannot continue satisfactorily without the clarification and readjustment that only critical thinking can supply, and, finally, that such thinking justifies itself to the extent to which action, under its guidance, does in fact achieve a result in which the conflict has been removed and a unified situation achieved. Effective thought, including philosophical thought, thus finds its place within ongoing activity; and the measure of its success in enabling action which, without it, would be impeded and blind, to continue harmoniously and fruitfully, is the final measure of its cognitive validity.

If this theory is to be evaluated by the tests which it declares to be finally authoritative for all theories, we must look for the fruits in which its meaning and empirical warrant are to be found. Dr. Ames's use of philosophy in clearing up the difficulties confronting Protestant Christianity in the early years of this century and directing the energies of a religious group toward an intellectually cogent and practically effective reorganization of faith and doctrine has shown, I believe, in a very concrete way, how a philosophy thus applied will actually operate. To the fine abundance of its fruits in all

fields of religious activity the other essays in this volume will testify, as the work of the University Church of Disciples has testified for forty years. My present interest is first of all, however, in the logic of the procedure by which such results were accomplished and the criteria by means of which its philosophical adequacy can be determined. For I believe that philosophy, as well as religion, has something to learn from the unique cooperation of philosophy and religion here achieved.

### A PROBLEMATIC SITUATION

The "objective situation," in response to which Dr. Ames's theory was developed, is well known and requires here only a brief reference. The ongoing activity of Protestant Christianity, especially in more liberal churches, was, in the period in question, radically impeded by conflicts of traditional doctrines and preconceptions with ideas and procedures accepted as genuine and authoritative in other aspects of human experience. The "warfare between science and theology" was of course an old story, and there were in the field any number of plausible theories dedicated to the proposition that between science (properly interpreted) and religion (rightly understood) there need be no opposition. On the dialectical level these theories were often effective, but it was not on the dialectical level that the real difficulty was felt. *In practice* men concerned in their daily lives with the ideals of democracy and social reform, and committed in their secular beliefs to the acceptance of scientific procedures, were finding the churches, their worship and their doctrine increasingly isolated from and irrelevant to the "realities" of their experience. The danger was not so much that religious beliefs

would be rejected as that they might simply lapse into innocuous irrelevance through failure to make effective connection with the interests and ideals elsewhere at work in the modern world.

For those deeply concerned with the continued effectiveness of the religious values of which, in America, the Protestant churches were the recognized repository, the basic problem was to find a way of linking these values with those of secular life, and of drawing on the resources of secular experience, in science, in medicine, in the work and ideals of an American city, to revitalize religious faith. That "religious experience is always at the same time some other kind of experience" and that the church can find in these other kinds of experience sources of genuinely religious insight, was evidently the doctrine required. For those whose faith was robust enough to face with enthusiasm the reconstruction required to give this doctrine a sound intellectual basis and an adequate religious expression, the persuasiveness and hopefulness of a religion of shared experience, social reform, and confident delight in and reverence for those forces in nature, and man as a part of nature, that conserve human values, were very great.

Yet this reconstruction was by no means an easy affair. The factors in religious belief and practice which had operated to cut the churches off from secular activities were a genuine part of the objective situation and strongly intrenched therein. If these factors were an essential part of religion, as in the history of these churches they had regularly been supposed to be, then the needed reform would have been very difficult indeed. But were they essential? Or could they not rather and more accurately be regarded as accretions, understand-

able in terms of the social and intellectual atmosphere in which these churches had developed, but no part of the primary and basic meaning of religion as such, and hence no barrier to the reconstruction of the religion in question along lines suitable to the needs and ideas of the time? To maintain sufficient continuity with the religious tradition of Protestant Christianity to carry over what was essential and abiding in it into the new synthesis and, at the same time, to establish that continuity with secular ideals and beliefs which that tradition had lost, was not an easy task, nor one to be accomplished merely by dialectical ingenuity. It required a conception of religion at once intellectually defensible in the light of the best sociological and psychological information obtainable, and also practically adequate to the needs of the liberal churches in the circumstances in which, as religious organizations offering guidance and inspiration to those in need of them, they were required to operate. The notion of what constitutes religion *essentially* that emerges from this situation is likely to combine theory and practice in a striking way.

### REDEFINING RELIGION

How are we to decide what religion is essentially, or which among proposed definitions ought to be accepted? It is commonly held that a definition cannot be either true or false, and that we are free to use any word, including the word "religion," as we please, provided that we are honest and consistent in that usage. And yet there has been no subject more hotly debated in the last forty years than that of the proper definition and use of terms like "religion" and "God." What, in these cases, have the disputants really been

arguing about, and how can the issues between them be empirically and practically settled?

The usage of these terms in Dr. Ames's philosophy of religion not only gives rise to this question but also provides us with a means of answering it. There are, I think, three closely related but distinguishable issues here. The first has to do with the proper usage of the *word* "religion." Words and their associations have a profound influence on men's thoughts and actions. In the tradition of Protestant Christianity the beliefs and practices habitually termed "religious" have, on the whole, been linked with doctrines about supernatural powers, the way in which these powers influence men's lives, and the proper attitude to be assumed toward them, which Dr. Ames and other liberal theologians have wished to eliminate from the "religion" which they propose. It is clear that the proposed "religion" is in some respects different, even radically different, from what in these religious groups has normally been called by that name. It is also in other respects continuous with traditional usage. Is it, then, right and proper to go on calling the reconstructed product "religion," or not? This must mean, I take it: Is it on the whole more enlightening than misleading to emphasize the continuity and minimize the differences between the traditional and the revised usage by the continued use of such terms? If this leads the hearer to suppose that this is "religion" in the sense in which he has traditionally understood it, if it even leads the liberal to carry over into his new attitude emotional associations appropriate only to religion in the unrevised version, then it is misleading. If, on the other hand, it seems to emphasize the continuity between traditional religion and the version proposed, and harmoniously

to redirect the worshiper's energies and enthusiasm toward a more fruitful issue, then it is enlightening. Its adequacy, in other words, is to be judged by its role in the ongoing activity in which the forces of an "impeded" and confused religion are to be redirected to a satisfactory issue. This is even more obviously the case with the use of the term "God" in preaching to designate entities or processes other than those with which the believer has normally associated it.

The second issue is a factual and historical one. How universal are the beliefs and practices which the traditional usage treats as essential to religion? If we look beyond the limits of Christianity, or indeed of any religion in its developed form, we shall find much that is historically continuous and psychologically akin to "religion" as we know it, in which such beliefs do not occur. Thus a study of the history and psychology of religion will enable us, as Dr. Ames said in *The Psychology of Religious Experience,* to "dissociate the permanent principles of religion from its accidental content, and gain a perspective in which the developed, historical religions may be interpreted." If the result of such a study is to show that men's manner of worship and idea of God are essentially mediated through their social life and vary with their secular habits and needs, we shall naturally be more hospitable to a further variation, deliberately introduced to express the aspirations and meet the needs of *our* time, and thus, in its very departure from the ideas of the past, in harmony with what we should expect of a religion evolving and developing in response to demands of life. It is another evidence of the union of theory and practice that the liberalization of a particular religious tradition should here be accompanied and supported by a factual generalization as to the pervasive traits and conditions of religious behavior.

With the support of such a generalization it can be said that an activity in which men cooperate to idealize and serve the highest social values of their time is appropriately termed a religion, since it embodies the generic character common to all types of such behavior, specifying it, as all others have done, in those terms which are required by the needs of the time.

There is a third level, however, on which the issue arises. A statement of what religion " really " is may very frequently be a statement as to what religion *ought* to be in order to be worthy of acceptance. Dr. Ames was not only describing religion in general, he was also proposing a special form of religion as that appropriate to and sufficient for the needs of enlightened men in the contemporary world. Such a proposal involves the claim that the elements selected as essential to religion are in this instance sufficient to meet the needs of a working religion under the conditions described. This claim refers specifically to the future, and can be tested only by its fruits. Can a religion that eschews all special and unique religious objects and is willing to assert that " the religious life has no peculiar content of its own, for it is just a way of meeting and entering into all the basic relations of common life " actually maintain those attitudes of reverence, devotion and confident security in the face of a world still held, in spite of all its evils, to be " friendly at heart," which a religious way of meeting the relations of life is held, even by the liberal, to involve? This is not a question to be settled dialectically. It must be put to the test of practice, with all the imagination and enthusiasm which a mind at once deeply religious and philosophically enlightened can bring to the task. And in the University Church of Disciples it has been tested in this way.

### GOD AND REALITY

It is here that the idea of God assumes a crucial role in this philosophy. Dr. Ames, unlike other liberals of a more humanistic persuasion, has been unwilling to give up this notion, and for a very practical reason. God is used religiously, and this use is too important to surrender so long as a meaning can be given to statements about God which leaves them both empirically true and religiously inspiring. What men have said of God — that he is mindful of man and concerned to sustain the best in human life in its relation to the cosmic processes, and that as such a power making for righteousness in man and nature he can be loved and worshiped — can be said with literal truth of nature or the life-process in those aspects in which it does in fact conserve human values and so sustain the good life. Men in their social relations act to conserve such values, and men are a part of nature. Moreover, they could not act as they do unless their efforts were sustained (though not consciously or by design) by forces in nature outside their control. Men have looked to God for security. They must find their security in nature. And nature, conceived as including the human process of foresight and adjustment, does guarantee such security, not unqualifiedly to be sure, but with increasing reliability as men of good will and good judgment are inspired to act with religious zeal for the attainment of good ends. Thus God acts through men, and for those who are prepared to translate their faith into such terms as these that faith is not in vain.

It is clear, to be sure, and Dr. Ames has always made it clear, that such a faith involves an " idealization " of a nature which in many respects is not ideal, and a personification of

what is not, in any ordinary sense of that term, a person. Such a procedure has its risks, for it may lead the credulous to take in a more usual sense what is held to be true only in a somewhat special one. The idealizing process is a part of nature in its social dimensions, and a very important one, but the way in which this process operates to achieve the good is very different from the way in which the God who was believed to exist outside that process and to guarantee its success was supposed to operate. There is much, even in the idealizing process, that is *not* good, and if we choose to select what we approve of, together with the forces which fortunately make its functioning possible, as more " real " than the other aspects of nature and human nature, that is an indication of our idealistic preference, not of any other favored status which the forces thus preferred possess in the actual course of events. Can God, thus identified with those processes in nature of which we approve and used as an object of reverence and devotion in the procedures of a liberal religion, actually be used in the manner desired? *Calling* such processes " divine " changes nothing. If, however, the use of the word in this sense calls men's attention to the conditions on which their salvation actually depends and inspires them to respond with enthusiasm to the possibilities for good which nature as we know it does actually present, then it has justified itself in use.

Dr. Ames's applied philosophy of religion proves thus, on examination, to be neither a system of independently ascertainable truth about reality nor a merely sentimental projection of what we should like to believe or, perhaps, find aesthetically pleasing in religions whose doctrines we cannot accept. It is a way of solving a particular problem — that

involved in adjusting a continuing religious tradition to the dominant social and intellectual trends of the time — in such fashion as to continue what is still usable in the old and to connect it as fruitfully as possible with those secular agencies which are working for the enrichment of human life. It thus settles no theological issues in any final way. There might be a supernatural deity of the sort whose existence scholastic philosophy, e.g., has so frequently tried to demonstrate. Dr. Ames's philosophy does not prove that there is not. It accepts the methods of science and the ideals of secular social reform as defining the limits within which religion must work. It does this for a cogent reason, that only on this basis can religion maintain its continuity with the common life of men in the contemporary world. This does not constitute a proof of any assertions as to the existence or non-existence of God in the more traditional sense. It does, however, provide a basis for the maintenance of a religious attitude toward those processes through which the values judged "highest" in modern America are sustained. And it holds, finally, on well supported empirical grounds, that this is the way in which religion has consistently operated throughout its history and that, in consequence, its contemporary adaptation to dominant social ideals is not an abandonment but a recovery of its meaning.

### DOES IT WORK?

Does it work? This evidently is the final question, and the only one which enables us to judge this philosophy of religion on the terms its own doctrine acknowledges as appropriate. That it has worked for a very considerable period and for many people there can be little doubt. It has solved the prob-

lem with which these people were confronted, enabling them to accept advanced ideas and share fully in the ideals and aspirations of their time without ceasing to be devout. Moreover, it has given that devotion a new outlet, linking it up with constructive forces of the greatest value and bringing to generous and concrete expression in the affairs of life a religious idealism which might otherwise have remained narrow, frustrated or sentimental. In its time and place this doctrine has functioned as the basis for a religion, and the best sort of religion, I believe, of which men in that place and time were capable.

Will it continue so to function? The danger that now confronts it is twofold. Having accepted so wholeheartedly the presuppositions of its own time, it stands at something of a disadvantage when those presuppositions are being radically questioned. " Science " and " democracy " and the philosophy which is prepared to accept them as final measures of what is credible and valuable are less secure in their status than they were forty years ago. Questions which then appeared to be settled have been reopened with acrimony and much that could be taken for granted must now be justified again, and to a disillusioned generation. Will deeper roots and a sterner doctrine be needed for a faith that can weather the bad times ahead?

Again, will this religion be able to maintain itself when the sources of inspiration in traditional faith, on which it extensively drew, are no longer available? It was, in its earlier stages at least, a way of *redirecting* a religious enthusiasm already present. The question it answered was how men could go on being religious in a world where the objects of traditional religion had largely lost their meaning. It bor-

rowed from the psalms read, the hymns sung and the holidays celebrated, a richness of emotional content which it knew how to transfer with sympathy and imagination to new objects and occasions. Was it in this respect the genial and mellow Indian summer of a faith whose seeds had been planted long before and whose fruits could now be enjoyed in serenity and ease of mind? Or was it the beginning of a new period in religion, with creative forces sufficient to inspire as well as redirect the basic energies and allegiances on which a vital religion must depend? Here again the future must provide the answer, and it would still be premature, I believe, to pronounce a verdict.

And this, surely, is what the theory itself should have led us to expect. All adjustment, it tells us, is directed to the solution of problems of a particular time and place, and change is to be expected as conditions alter and new problems arise. But whatever the future may hold, we are wise, I think, at this time to celebrate the achievement of the past and to rejoice in it. It is good that there should be periods of serenity, of optimism, of genial friendliness toward men and ideas, of liberalism and liberality. It is such periods that show us something of the possibilities of good in human nature and of secure happiness. There need here be no conflict between theory and practice, no "chasm" between ideal and actual, for the world which men desire and can understand is in substance the world in which they find themselves, and the good life presents itself as the natural fulfillment of tendencies already at work and in need at most of some forethought and care to be securely maintained. Dr. Ames's religion is one of the finest expressions of such a fortunate period. It is good, humanly and religiously, to have had a part in it.

III

# " AS INTELLIGENT AS SCIENCE "

## DONALD DOOLEY

THOUGH it ill behooves us to prophesy in our times, one of the most interesting promises of the future in my opinion is that we will ultimately learn how to ask the right questions concerning the world of spiritual reality that lies all unexplored about us and to interpret rightly the answers nature gives to our questions. Our present status in this respect resembles that which prevailed in the scientific world before the days of Galileo. There were then available as guides to an interpretation of the physical world the speculations of the Greeks and a few scattered deliberate, purposive scientific experiments, but the world awaited the impact of Galileo's mind to turn it upon a course of experimental investigation of the physical world, to ask discerning questions of nature and thus to decipher her replies. It had never before occurred to man, for example, to determine experimentally whether heavy stones fell more rapidly than light ones merely by shoving two such stones off a window sill and noting the results. Aristotle had simply postulated that the heavier would be the speedier because it seemed reasonable, and this was accepted as an established fact. With Galileo it dawned upon the race that experimentation was the superior means of exploration in the physical universe and that its data

provided the only valid answers to our scientific inquiries. Is not the time ripe for a religion as intelligent as science in this respect as well as in others?

## I

A student of the physical sciences writes today with great hesitancy and reserve on any theme directed at the foundations of science. Time was, and not longer than a generation ago, when a natural scientist, especially a physicist, felt justified in the vigorous exposition of his own scientific conclusions, convinced that the model he had devised was a valid likeness of nature itself. Today all such confidence has deserted him and his very character has changed. A deep humility has come over him as a result of the destruction and rejection of some of his surest conclusions.

The physicist's confusion and uncertainty can be laid to two principal causes. The first of these is to be found in the series of experimental discoveries which ushered in the twentieth century. X-rays, radioactivity, photoelectricity and other such phenomena unknown and unsuspected by a former generation compelled the enlargement of the scope and content of physics beyond the bounds set in the nineteenth century. Growth is always disturbing for it involves the reorganization of a subject and the reopening of many old questions long since laid to rest. But the inconveniences accompanying growth could have been accepted philosophically if they had come alone. The worst reaction evoked by these discoveries in themselves might well have been one of irritation.

It remained for mathematics to deal "the most unkindest cut of all" to its bosom companion, physics, for it is a funda-

mental concept originating in the field of mathematics which has forever made impossible the return of dogmatic certainty to physics — the certainty, that is, of nineteenth century physics — and thus suggests the position of this paper.

This far-reaching and disturbing but illuminating concept deals with the place of *postulates* in our thinking, not only in mathematics but in all other realms. For an understanding of the meaning of a postulate one naturally turns to the history of mathematics. The geometers of Euclid's day, for example, were greatly troubled by obvious contradictions in their conclusions. No two could reach the same ends and it was Euclid's role to clarify the situation by setting up a list of necessary definitions, axioms and postulates. His postulates consist of statements which are taken for granted, concerning which no proof is asked or expected. Presumably they are obvious. Thus one of Euclid's most famous postulates states that through a given point one and only one line can be drawn parallel to a given line. This postulate is the foundation for the proof of a number of theorems in geometry. One does not ordinarily question its truth, as no proof for it seems necessary. Such are the postulates of Euclid and it might be added in passing that an axiom is distinguished from a postulate in that the former is merely a logical statement, one which sets forth a common conception of thought, as, for example, the statement that if equals are added to equals the sums are equal.

Until a century ago mathematicians assumed that the postulates of geometry were unique and that while there conceivably might be others yet to be added to the list by future developments, still those already established would remain forever valid, undisturbed by substitutes or alternates. In

the early part of the nineteenth century, however, curious mathematicians went so far as to examine the consequences of removing certain of Euclid's postulates and replacing them with new ones. The surprising result of this inquiry was to show that, without a doubt, the new sets of postulates were quite as defensible as those of Euclid. It was no more obvious, for example, that only one line could be drawn through a given point parallel to a given line than that any number could be so drawn. A new set of theorems could be proved with the new postulates just as logically as the old theorems were proved with the old postulates. The ultimate conclusion seems to be that, so far as mathematics is concerned, one is free to choose his postulates as he pleases and no one can gainsay him the right. Of course it will soon be found that some choices will lead to no valuable extensions of knowledge, whereas other sets may be much more profitable.

This then is the situation in the field of mathematics. But when one turns to a consideration of the natural sciences, a slight difference is noted, for in addition to being logical a scientist must be cognizant of experience and of the data of his researches. He must therefore limit his postulates to statements beyond the realm of investigation by direct experiment, since they must be statements acceptable without question as to their proof. There seems to be also another restriction imposed upon the postulates of science which is very effective though its justification may be open to debate. This has been lucidly stated by Professor W. D. MacMillan of the University of Chicago. "Notwithstanding the fact that each of us is free in the choice of his postulates," he writes, "so that no system of postulates merits the claim of exclusiveness, still, on account of our common heredity and experience, it is true

that certain postulates are commonly made, and have, therefore, something like a universal appeal to our aesthetic sense."[1] Professor MacMillan proceeds to list a few such postulates, the first of which, for example, states that there exists a physical universe, external to myself, with which I have experience.

Such a statement is obviously beyond final proof or testing. One considers it and accepts or rejects it according to taste. However, it is equally obvious that the acceptance or the rejection of it will determine, in a large measure, one's interpretation of one's sensory reactions. Our very interpretation of existence itself will be colored by it and by other such postulates that we adopt. MacMillan further points out that the basic criterion at hand to guide us in the selection of our scientific postulates is the fact that some sets will be found barren of results while others will be fertile to a greater or lesser degree. This test of the fertility of the postulates we select and adopt is a great boon to the scientist, and it should be added that the test is of equal validity in all fields of thought.

Lest the function of postulates be left too vague in the minds of any, let us liken a set of postulates to the framework upon which a department store show window display is arranged. Underlying the exhibits in such a window is some sort of structure which supports the goods on display. The goods themselves are unaltered by their arrangement in different ways or even by a grouping in their original containers, but the value of the goods and their utility can be impressed upon the minds of shoppers much more vividly by one arrangement than by another. By analogy the data of scientific observation are the goods on display and the postulates con-

stitute the framework upon which the data are arranged. The postulates greatly clarify, if indeed they do not completely determine, the meaning, the value and the utility of the data. In an earlier day the data garnered from observations of nature — the sunshine, the wind, the storm and the ocean waves — were made meaningful in terms of the actions of spiritual beings presumably in sympathy with or opposed to the purposes and hopes of men. Such a framework served remarkably well for a time but the accumulating data revealed so many contradictions and required so many auxiliary postulates that finally a new framework was necessitated and a much less anthropomorphic set of postulates was adopted to explain the physical universe.

This therefore is the status of natural science as a product of the human intellect. It is a structure, elaborate in many details, lacking in many others, but erected upon a foundation of postulates that are accepted without ultimate proof and without the hope or expectation of such proof. These postulates cannot be imposed without our consent, but we are constrained, in intellectual honesty, to subject them to the test of fertility, discarding without regret those which are found unworthy in favor of those more valuable in terms of productivity. Such a picture of contemporary science may come as something of a shock to the layman who, too easily, has come to think of natural science as a field which provides convincing proof for its current theories. Even such a universal postulate as that of the orderliness of nature, that effect always follows cause, can be expected to survive only so long as it proves capable of extending the knowledge of men and of broadening their interpretation of the world. One would not be fundamentally disturbed, nor would one lose

faith or confidence in the significance of science, if one found this postulate in disfavor tomorrow and its place taken by another postulate concerning the procedure of nature.

II

Assuming now that contemporary science as described here can be termed intelligent, what features will characterize a religion as intelligent as science? The first is rather obvious. It need scarcely be said that postulates must constitute the basis of a religion so described, and, as with the postulates of science, they must be accepted without the requirement of experimental proof. This I dare say has been a characteristic of religion through all time, but in view of the esteem which science enjoys it is now doubtless to the advantage of religion that it shares this characteristic with science.

A second condition, however, is one which may prove more embarrassing to much traditional religious thinking. It requires that the postulates of one's religion shall be alterable or removable for sufficient cause, being subject to change or replacement even as are the postulates of science. The moment a religious postulate is found unfruitful or even less fruitful than an alternate it must be discarded without regret. Indeed the satisfaction growing out of the possession of a superior postulate must ever compensate for the passing of an inferior one, however fondly it may have been cherished or however long.

Even so, this replacement of religious postulates is not strictly modern. "Ye have heard it said to them of old . . . but I say unto you. . . ." Some still may be unwilling to meet this demand of an intelligent religion through the fear that the very foundations be overthrown. Science and mathe-

matics, however, have not merely survived such experiences but have prospered meanwhile and through the restatement and clarification of their postulates have become more virile. Wherefore should we fear the consequences in our religious thinking? "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Truth is always beyond, more of it is yet to be discovered and freedom is a larger good.

As in science, one has, moreover, a criterion to guide in the selection of one's religious postulates. In science the fertility of the postulates in leading to an explanation of physical phenomena was the cue. So too in religion, the domain of which is man's relation to the universe and to his fellow men in the broadest spiritual sense, the test of the postulates shall be their fruitfulness in the development of man's inner spiritual life and his outward relations with his fellows. It can likewise be said with equal fitness here, as MacMillan has said of the postulates of science, that there are those postulates so commonly made in the realm of religion that they have something like a universal appeal to our aesthetic or moral sense. Perhaps it should be emphasized also that while one is free in the choice of postulates after a fashion, yet to be acceptable in any sense of the word they must be reasonable. In fact those which we incorporate into our philosophy of life are the *most* reasonable of all that have been brought to light by our personal and social experience to date.

Judged by this standard of productivity, the superlative effectiveness and grandeur of the postulates of Jesus' religious teaching challenge all mankind. At best one can be but dimly aware of the possibilities inherent in such postulates as that of God as Love, of the eternal worth of human personality, or of the social values implicit in the reinterpretation

of the Ten Commandments through the Beatitudes. Human life truly predicated on such postulates would attain the sunlit heights. A troubled world and our own troubled neighborhoods alike attest our inexcusable failure to adopt them and to begin the exploration of their possibilities.

If, in spite of all this, one can imagine the time when the human race will have exhausted the realms disclosed by Christ's precepts, a scientific religion must postulate the appearance of a new messiah who will formulate still nobler goals so that an onward and upward course will unfold itself throughout an infinity of time as the race advances. A religion so conceived must appeal to man's mind as being just as intelligent as any natural science or even as mathematics itself. Dissension and strife between science and such a religion would be impossible. Both would be equally essential and fundamental in human life, coordinate in their contributions and value. By becoming as intelligent as science religion would surrender its supernatural features to gain a new dignity of equality in every sense with science. Perhaps it could as well be said that religion would then have shared its own supernaturalness with other domains of human thought. Such a religion would seek no priestly privilege, claim no special exemptions, plead no mysterious revelation; but like all other realms of life would walk in its own strength, subjecting itself to scrutiny, testing and verifying on the basis of its fertility even as all else in life is tested. For of religions is it not also true that "by their fruits ye shall know them"?

As one of the fundamental postulates of a religion as intelligent as science I should propose, in conclusion, the statement, closely akin to the fundamental postulate of science

already mentioned, that there exists a spiritual world both within and apart from myself with which I have valid experience. The adoption of such a postulate and the experimental exploration of its suggestions and promises will enrich human life to an extent that will dwarf its present level. " Now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

## NOTE

[1] W. D. MacMillan, " Some Mathematical Aspects of Cosmology," *Science,* July–Aug. 1925.

IV

# RELIGION AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES

ELLSWORTH FARIS

THE ATTITUDES of a man are his tendencies, dispositions and predispositions to act in a generalized manner toward some object. Included are the preferences, convictions and loyalties as well as the negative tendencies such as bias, prejudice and antagonism. The term "attitude" has been adopted from our common speech by the sociologists with no essential change of meaning. We speak of the attitude of a voter toward the New Deal, or the arms embargo, or Japan, or Hitler. We attempt to instill in our children desired attitudes toward the home, the school, money, the Constitution, careful driving. We know that the right attitude is desirable in order to insure right conduct. The meaning of the term is, therefore, clear.

It is necessary to emphasize the generalized character of the tendency which an attitude involves. In this respect an attitude differs from a fixed habit, for a given attitude may lead to an indefinite number of actions varying widely, but all consistent and in line with the generalized tendency. Thus, a Christian with a strong attitude of loyalty to the church will, under the influence of this attitude, make a speech in favor of the church, give money to its support, attend its services, or do any one of many acts so long as they

are consistent with the attitude. This is what is meant by a generalized tendency.

Attitudes are related to action somewhat as a cause is related to a result, but the reverse is also true: our attitudes exist in us as the result of the actions we have done. Our attitudes may be thought of as the residues or deposits left over from our prior actions, remaining to affect in turn what we shall subsequently do. While it is often difficult to recall just when or just why a given attitude has been acquired, yet it is certain that each one of the enormous number of the attitudes of every one of us is the result of one or more definite and specific events in which certain definite things were said or done to us to which we responded and on which we reflected. It is the task of education to say and do to children those things that will cause them to respond appropriately, thus inculcating approved attitudes. The political campaigner is endeavoring to strengthen the attitudes of his adherents, to change the attitudes of his opponents, and to enlist the support of the neutrals. The missionary is trying to displace old religious attitudes by new ones.

When the various tendencies of a man are organized into a consistent whole we say that he has character. A man of good character has good attitudes; a man of bad character has undesirable attitudes; a man of no character may have attitudes but they are not organized, being contradictory, uncertain, undependable. Patients afflicted with certain forms of insanity may be said to have no character at all, since there is no counting on them. And because character is the organization of attitudes, a well organized man can be depended on; we can predict the general form of his future conduct. We cannot know exactly what he will do or say, but we can

be very certain as to many things which he will neither do nor say.

Attitudes result from action and predetermine action, but since action is toward objects, attitudes are inseparably connected with objects. An object may be defined as something toward which we know how to act, or what to say, since speech is a very important form of action. If a man does not know what to do with a thing or what to say about it, it is hardly an object to him. It may be a puzzle, a problem, a difficulty, or that which arouses curiosity, but hardly an object, certainly not an organized object. This point deserves emphasis.

What is implied is not only that all objects are related to action but that all objects result from action, including talking and writing. We have our objects as the result of our experience and all our objects are relative to that experience. This may sound paradoxical but it is, in fact, very familiar. What is the Bible? What sort of object is it? To the militant society of the godless it is a book full of errors and superstition and is worse than useless, being harmful. To the devout Christian the Bible is a light to the feet and a lamp to the path, holy, divinely given, to be treasured and revered. It is a different book to different people, depending on their attitudes.

Now there was a time in the life of every Christian when the Bible was unknown and there was no attitude toward it. This book does not enter into the life of infants. A life history would not need to be impossibly detailed to permit the tracing of the first appearance of the Bible in the life experience of the child, from the time when, as a little Sunday school pupil, it meant something but not very much, to the

period when it came to have a rich meaning and a sacred character.

Objects are thus relative to individual experience, but the uniqueness of the object is strictly limited and in the case of normal persons the sanction of a group is necessary and makes communication possible. Only among the paranoids and schizophrenes are objects wholly idiosyncratic.

We may, therefore, think of attitudes and objects as two aspects of an established relation. Things that have never been eaten are made into food by those who decide to eat them, as love-apples became tomatoes. To get a new attitude is to acquire a new object or at least the transformation of an old object; to acquire a new object is to get a new attitude. Object and attitude are correlative.

This may well bring us to the subject of religious attitudes. The attitudes of religious people differ from those of non-religious ones, else there would be no difference between religious people and others. It is not easy to state just what the difference amounts to, for many who are not religious are admittedly kindly, honest, highly esteemed and of good character. In what respect, then, are the attitudes of religious people different? The answer may lie in the consideration of the objects which are defined and emphasized in the different religious groups. The different religious denominations and sects have been compared to clans and tribes — spiritual clans and tribes of course — and each of these groups has selected certain objects, peculiar to itself in some degree.

The religions of Japan and India are concerned with very different objects from those which occupy the attention of the Western world. In the Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, we may discover certain common objects

and also many objects peculiar to each. They all accept the authority or value of the Hebrew scriptures, differing in their attitude toward other sacred writings. Each of the three grand divisions of Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism and Protestantism, is obviously characterized by attention and devotion to characteristic objects, easy to set down in a list but too well known to warrant mention here. In America, where many differing Protestant sects have been formed, there is a characteristic selection of objects of attention for each group. Religious attitudes are thus group attitudes, or attitudes shared by differing groups, each attitude directed toward its own specific object.

Some of these attitudes are positive and impose obligations to do certain things. The good Catholic attends mass, goes to confession, has his children christened, and summons the priest in the hour of death. The loyal Protestant attends church, supports missions, sends his children to the Sunday school. In the rituals and ceremonies and public services there have risen differences, some minor, others more important. The value attached to these objects gives them a sacred character and each religious communion has some differences from every other.

There are negative attitudes also, perhaps greater in number than the positive and affirmative ones and of great importance in the life of each religious group. Indeed many of these groups might almost be distinguished by the things they do not do. Catholics do not eat meat on Friday, Jews avoid pork, many Protestant sects forbid the drinking of intoxicants, to which the Mormons add tea and coffee. Conservative religious groups are severe against "worldliness," meaning card games, dancing and the theater. The negative

attitudes are important in relation to group consciousness and morale for they usually imply conflict, and conflict is an important condition of unity. The call to a better life and to good deeds has its appeal, but the summons to fight, even with spiritual weapons, is perhaps far more appealing.

But even if we were to compile a complete list of all the church observances, ceremonies, rituals, and the acts of avoidance as well as the good works that are peculiar to religious folk, it would leave out of account the far greater number of the attitudes of Christians or even of the adherents of any of the civilized religions.

If by religious attitudes we mean the attitudes or tendencies of religious people which distinguish them from the non-religious, it is necessary to include forms of speech. Spoken and written language are as truly forms of action as giving bread to the hungry or the rescue of a child from drowning. The exhortation to hold fast the form of sound words was no idle or unimportant precept, and religious phrases and statements, declarations and professions have, at least among Christian sects, always had an important place. The requirement to talk in a certain manner is essential. Sometimes the required words represent professed intention to live in a certain way, but a very large part of the required verbal declarations represent statements which refer to specific historical events. There are a number of statements about the Prophet which every good Mohammedan must be prepared to make. A Mormon who will not declare that Joseph Smith received his revelation as recorded in the sacred book is in danger of being cut off. In some fundamentalist sects one must declare, if challenged, that the whale swallowed Jonah, that Eve held a conversation with a snake, and that a great

flood destroyed all but eight people some four thousand years ago.

An unfriendly critic of Christianity has declared that the gospel in America (he was discussing only America) exists as something to be talked about and nothing more. While this may be set down as hyperbolic, yet the large part that verbal agreement does play is worthy of note. To declare that there is no God, or to deny the divinity of Christ, or to express disbelief in the virgin birth is often the most serious of offenses, more serious than an infraction of the moral law. This insistence on correct statements and declarations is, indeed, held to have a close relation to conduct and the good life, but it would be difficult to establish the claim that one who insists that Jesus walked on the water or ascended into heaven is invariably superior in character to one who denies these statements.

In this respect, the religions which sprang from the Jews differ from other religions, in which the emphasis tends to be on ceremonies and ritual. Indeed the religions of primitive people, from Eskimos to Bantus and Australian bushmen, attach no importance to verbal acquiescence. This verbal emphasis would seem to be due to the existence of a sacred inspired book whose every numbered sentence is widely held to be authoritative and unalterable. The outstanding exception appears to be in the writings of Confucius, who did not claim divine inspiration for his words.

The existence of a sacred book has an interesting effect on the minds and characters of religious people. If absolute loyalty is demanded to its words and hearty acceptance of its precepts is required, there may arise difficulty when conditions change. Sometimes this results in a different interpre-

tation of the text, as in the case of the anti-slavery reformers or the prohibition advocates. More often the words are left undisturbed and are even uttered and endorsed, while the practical life with its secular attitudes goes on in a separate compartment of the soul.

Thomas Linacre, sometimes called the father of English medicine, was a noted scholar who flourished in the days of Henry VII and lived into the next reign. Of him it is told that he came upon the Greek Testament only when he had reached middle life. What he read amazed him. The Sermon on the Mount in particular was startling with its exhortations to humility and meekness, forgiveness of enemies and love of them. When he had finished reading he declared, "Either this is not the gospel or we are not Christians." The second alternative was unwelcome to him so he discarded the book and refused to take any more interest in it. The more common tendency in our own time is to ignore the inconsistency and to lay chief stress so far as religion is concerned on the form of words, meanwhile acting in the practical world as practical men.

We have seen that religious attitudes are group attitudes and that each sect or religious group has its own characteristic religious objects and their corresponding attitudes with the resulting tendencies to action, sometimes verbal and sometimes other forms of action. But it is also true that the attitudes and sentiments of the total community assume a religious character. This has been a matter of interest and even of concern to students of the subject. It would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that, for the most part, the ideals and values more often arise in the political state and are accepted by the church than the reverse. There are some small

sects who hold out for a time and even for a long time, but they seem gradually to yield. The Quakers are unwilling to go to war and the Dunkers are unwilling to vote, but these are definite exceptions. Nationalism or war or social reform may become the objects of religious attitudes if religious men come to hold them as highly important.

One of the functions of religion is clear: the giving of emotional sanction to the more intensely held sentiments and attitudes of a people. We are so formed that whatever is vital and imperative to us comes to have divine approval. Indeed it is almost psychologically impossible to devote one's self with all the energy of one's being to a cause which is considered contrary to religious teaching. If war breaks out through the blunders of politicians or as a result of effective propaganda, it becomes necessary to justify the enterprise by assuming that it is approved by God.

Examples of this type of conduct are very familiar but the following may be cited to make the discussion concrete. A Chicago daily paper published on June 17, 1940, two dispatches, one from London and one from Rome. Both were dated June 16, which fell on a Sunday. The London story told of a sermon by the Roman Catholic Cardinal Hinsley delivered in Westminster cathedral that day, when high mass had been celebrated. He urged his hearers to "pray, pray now, pray daily, pray always for France, since on God depends the victory." He reminded them of the fact that their prayers had been marvelously answered at Dunkirk. The story from Rome told of a pastoral letter issued to his people by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Gorizia in which he urged the faithful to obey Premier Mussolini in the war he was waging for the welfare of the Italian people, who were

seeking nothing other than the goal assigned to them by divine providence.

The tendency to fight on the side of the Lord should not warrant any cynical condemnation of religion. If men risk their lives in fighting they must feel that their cause is justified. And if the cause is just God must surely approve it. If there is any indictment it should be an indictment against human nature itself, though it must be admitted that a calm consideration of the facts might weaken the force of some of the more extravagant claims that are made in the name of religion.

There was a Confederate chaplain in the Civil War who was reproached for not telling the men in his sermons that the Lord was on their side. His answer was doubtless accurate, however it differed from that of most chaplains. Said he: "Sir, the Almighty has not informed me on which side of this conflict he has aligned himself." Still, if soldiers believe in the Lord and if they feel that he is fighting on the other side, one would expect their martial spirit to weaken. Religious feeling comes to the rescue of religious men when they do their utmost. Religion can thus be depended on to energize men more than to direct them to the right course of action. Ideally it should do both, but this is a world of very fallible men.

We may say, then, that religious attitudes may be divided into two classes. The first of these includes those attitudes which are peculiar to a specific religious group, such as the attitude toward circumcision among the Jews or toward pacifism among the Quakers. These attitudes are maintained in spite of the opposition or indifference or at least the divergence of the rest of society. The source of these attitudes is

in the group or sect, and religious education, training and preaching serve to perpetuate them.

The second class of attitudes consists of those shared by the community outside the church and often originating there. What gives them their religious character is the conviction that they are vitally important and are therefore sanctioned in heaven. And while this sometimes leads to appeals to the same God by both sides of a conflict, it only calls attention to the fact that the world is far from united. Until there is agreement on what is right and just there can hardly be any concord as to the will of God, for God must approve the right and the just. When the Europeans accepted the God of the Hebrews they did not abandon all their customs; and the consciences of men, all men, bear a close relation to those ways of life that have been familiar and long approved.

It is true that men strive earnestly for the accomplishment of their purposes without making any claim that these purposes have the sanction of religion. If this were not true there would be no difference, at least in our society, between the religious and the non-religious. Some apologists have used this fact in the attempt to prove that all men are religious, but such a conclusion leads to serious difficulties. It would make the professional thief or the efficient gangster a religious man, and the effect of such a contention would deprive our words of all meaning.

We have tried to show that attitudes are the result of experience and that they predetermine the generalized form of our conduct. Attitudes are directed toward objects, the object being the external aspect of the relation, the attitude being the inner or subjective side. Religious attitudes are the

attitudes of religious people that are concerned with religious objects and these religious objects are different in the differing sects and religious groups. Religions are sometimes in conflict with other religions and this conflict brings theoretical and practical difficulties. What is common to all religious attitudes is the accompanying sentiment and conviction that the object is sacred and precious and approved by the deity.

When the ideals of the human race are unified, we may expect all religions to be harmonious and there will no longer be religious strife. That this time will come has been the dream of the prophets. It is a most attractive dream. The prophets have been sure that such a day will dawn, but it hardly needs a prophet to tell us that it will not be in our time.

V

# ECONOMIC GROUPISM AND THE CHURCH

HENRY C. TAYLOR

THE MAJOR economic problem in the United States today concerns maladjustments in the interoccupational distribution of incomes. Although problems of efficiency in production and of justice in distribution have long been with us, they have entered upon a new phase in the last twenty years. This new phase of the problem derives its major characteristics from the limitation of competition by organized groups.

This groupistic activity has resorted to means of controlling income distribution which have seriously reduced efficiency in production. The more powerful groups may have gained something, but the less well organized groups and the unorganized groups have lost heavily, both because their share has been reduced and because the productivity of the nation has been reduced. This new phase of our economic life, which has here been called groupism, manifests itself especially in the limitation of competition to control prices and wages. These groupistic controls are largely responsible for mass unemployment and for the acute phases of the American youth problem.

The term "groupism" is here used to designate group activity directed toward securing a share of the national in-

come which is more than commensurate with the services which the members of the group render to society. The term is not applied to group action in general but to those forms of group action by corporations, labor organizations, farmer organizations, bogus reformers and racketeers which are detrimental to the general welfare. This paper distinguishes between desirable and undesirable group activity, encouraging the one and discouraging the other.

With the growth of our national life, group action has more and more displaced individual action. During the early history of this country, economic relations were chiefly those of individuals. While these individuals were motivated by economic interest, their interrelations were personal and were tempered by religion and a sense of the brotherhood of man. Thus free enterprise, freedom of contract, freedom of speech, and the democratic form of government flourished; economic conflicts were relatively unimportant, and the distribution of wealth was reasonably just.

But with the evolution of the economic life of the nation, the organized group has more and more replaced the individual. In many lines of production and distribution it has become increasingly difficult for the individual enterprise to compete with the group or corporate enterprise. This is due in part to the greater efficiency of large-scale production, but also in part to the greater effectiveness of the large-scale organization in acquiring profits by the limitation of competition. In the adjustment of economic relations, the corporation has manifested too largely the characteristics of pure economic motivation, little restrained by those influences arising from close personal contacts with employees and customers and from religious motivations, which modify the economic motive in the individual economy.

Resistance to the power of the industrial corporation over its employees resulted in the organization of labor to protect its interests. Socially minded people favored the growth of labor organizations. The government has granted special privileges to labor with the hope of providing a means of insuring justice by balancing the power of organized capital with the power of organized labor. But organized labor has not limited the use of its power to the attaining of social justice. Organized labor, just like organized capital, tries to get all it can for itself, even at the expense of potential fellow workers as well as of members of other groups.

In overreaching the goals of efficiency in production and justice in distribution, capital and labor have produced an unbalanced distribution of the national income. The effectively organized groups have been able to demand too large a share and the unorganized elements have suffered. Farmers, unable individually to cope with this situation, have organized and have secured government aid in their struggle for a fair share in the national income. Thus the economic struggle in modern life has taken the form of intergroup conflicts. Production has been limited to maintain prices; unemployment has been preferred to reduced wage scales while the unemployed swelled the relief rolls. Each group, striving to secure an ever larger share of the national income, receives less and less, because the methods of the intergroup conflict reduce the efficiency of the national economy.

These limitations in production in the interest of maintaining price scales and wage scales have hindered the free entry of capital and labor into production. High wages induce high prices; high prices reduce consumption; reduced consumption leads to a reduction in the employment of capital and labor in production. The application of the program

of limitation of production to all fields brings idleness to much capital and labor and malnutrition and poverty to a large portion of the people. This is due not to the capitalistic system of free enterprise but to the paralyzing influence of groupism upon free enterprise. To solve our present economic problems we must eliminate the evils of groupism. A central problem is how to secure a balanced production of goods and services, and the exchange of these goods on a basis that will provide comparable real incomes for men of given skill and energy employed in different occupations.

Our major economic difficulties have arisen because of our failure to hold in mind the goal set up by the Constitution. Under the theory of our government, individuals and groups are protected in the exercise of many rights and privileges. In return they have many obligations to society. Every right granted to individuals or groups should promote action in harmony with the general welfare.

This, for example, is true of property rights. In accordance with the social theory of property, "private property is a social trust."[1] That is, private property is established and maintained for social purposes. Changing conditions may require the adjustment of property rights. The test for determining whether private property should be limited, extended or abolished is the effect such action would have on the general welfare. The government grants privileges to a corporation for the same reason: it is a social trust. The grant is justified only in so far as the existence of the corporation aids society to function economically, socially or educationally to promote the general welfare. The grant to laborers of the privilege of concerted action is likewise a social trust. The granting of this privilege is justifiable on

the ground that society as a whole will benefit. Likewise, the right of farmers to organize to promote their common interests can be justified only in so far as their group actions promote the general welfare also.

The use of capitalistic corporations, labor organizations or organizations of farmers for private gain should be permitted in so far as their economic activity promotes the general welfare. When a great corporation, because of its size and corporate form, can produce goods or render services more efficiently, and provides these goods and services to the consumers at a correspondingly lower cost, the grant of corporate powers is justifiable. But when, and in so far as, this corporate power is used to acquire additional profits for its possessors without rendering additional services, its activities should be restricted. The question is: How can society secure the benefits of the corporate form of economic organization without suffering the losses due to the limitation of production?

All that has been said of capitalistic corporations applies to labor organization. The right of labor to bargain collectively for a fair wage and reasonable working conditions is generally conceded. On the other hand, the use of the power of the organization to secure for a privileged group better wages and working conditions than can be had generally by other workers of comparable skill and energy is harmful to the general welfare. Society looks upon unsocial action which reduces efficiency in production or unduly enhances costs to the consumers as bad, whether it be initiated by capitalists or by laborers.

Farmers and laborers have claimed exemption from laws which are intended to hold group action in line with the gen-

eral welfare. They have endeavored to make a distinction between property rights and human rights and have argued that whereas capital-owning organizers and operators of business are rightly subject to public control as provided for in the anti-trust laws, agriculture and labor, because they sell their own labor or the products of their own labor, should be free to act in their own interest even in restraint of trade. That their exercise of " human rights " in restraint of trade deprives other people of *their* human rights, they have apparently overlooked.

In fact, in the intergroup struggle it would seem that laborers in particular have thought only of fighting capital, and have overlooked the effect of their action upon consumers and upon potential employees. The capitalists have usually been able to pass on to the consumer in the price of the goods any addition to wages of labor. This has been particularly easy where all the labor of a given line of production insists on the same wage rate and the same hours and working conditions in all plants owned by competing companies. Thus while labor organizations and the management of capital struggle over wage rates, the ultimate issue is between capital and labor on the one hand as producers and the general public on the other hand as consumers.

There is also another issue. When production is limited to the quantity of goods which will sell at the higher price, fewer people can be employed. Thus labor organizations, while helping some workers, may be damaging other potential workers and throwing a relief burden upon the public composed of the same people who pay the excessive prices.

It is socially desirable that farmers, industrial laborers and all other classes of working people have larger incomes so

that their standards of living may include all the advantages of modern civilization. To bring this to pass, every worker needs to produce more goods. When more goods of each kind are produced and an increasing variety of new kinds of goods and services are produced and exchanged on such a basis as will give all working people of comparable skill and energy fairly comparable real incomes, the well-being of the nation will be enhanced. On the other hand, when workers in one line of production insist on compensation that is two or three times as high as can be given in other occupations, an adequate supply of the goods of that occupation cannot be purchased. The resulting unbalance in production and distribution is detrimental to society as a whole.

When the limitation of production in industry raises prices and creates an army of unemployed, the farmer suffers from the reduced demand for his products because of the low buying power of the unemployed. Because of the higher prices of the products of industry, he can buy less goods with the dollar he does receive. His first reaction is to ask the city industries to return to the system of free enterprise, produce competitively and efficiently, employ all workmen, produce more goods, and exchange them for more farm products. The strong resistance of both labor leaders and industrial management to this sound economic policy has resulted in the acceptance by farmers of the principle of restriction. With the help of the government, they have met with some success in the limitation of competition. They hope by this means to raise prices so that their products will exchange for city products on a fair basis.

Thus it has come to pass that the three groups, capital, labor and agriculture, are all striving to get better incomes by

producing less. Since it is obviously impossible for society as a whole to get more by producing less, these restrictive programs are in conflict with the interests of society as a whole. Many of the wisest men in all groups see the fallacy of the present program of limitation of production, but say: "No one group can abandon the policy and turn to the economics of abundance unless the others do likewise." The obvious answer is that the groups should come to a mutual understanding of this problem and cooperate in abandoning the restrictive system and in restoring free enterprise, with capital, wage and price competition safeguarded in the general interest. Such cooperative action would restore full employment at increased average real wages for labor as a whole; it would put idle capital to work and allow the farmers to produce freely to their own advantage and to the advantage of all consumers.

The economic depression of the 1930's resulted largely from limitation of competition through the control of the flow of capital, labor and goods, with a view to maintaining wage rates and prices. The continued mass unemployment of that period was not due to overproduction resulting from mechanization; it was due to the limitation of competition. Many people would have liked to consume far more goods and wanted work in order to earn an income with which to buy more goods, but groupistic controls over capital and labor barred these people from normal activities in the economic life of the nation.

If there had been freer flow of labor, capital and goods, and if each able-bodied person had been free to work for himself or for what someone else could afford to pay, producing goods and services that someone wanted, labor might have

been fully employed, the total production of goods greatly increased, the standards of living of the people raised, and the muscular and moral fiber of the people conserved.

But this was not possible because of the paralyzing influence of shortsighted groupism. Too often this unwise group action was aided and abetted by the government; in some cases its will was enforced by heavily armed racketeers. Public police power was at times overpowered by private police power, and anarchy prevailed. The government itself seemed by and large to move helplessly in whatever directions it was impelled by the pressure of selfish groups. Social goals were forgotten by politicians who espoused class interests with a view to re-election. Human resources were tragically wasted. Mass poverty in the midst of plenty characterized the decade.

To solve this problem, balanced abundance through full employment must take the place of unbalanced scarcity and unemployment. To bring this to pass, selfish groupistic policies must be supplanted by statesmanlike national policies. The only safe route is intergroup cooperation in formulating and effectuating national policies to replace separate, conflicting and paralyzing groupistic policies. If those in each group were all of one mind, enlightened self-interest should provide adequate motivation to accomplish this. But all are not of one mind. Under the present groupistic regime some individuals in each group are benefiting at the expense of many others of the same group. Those who benefit most, usually dominate the groupistic organizations. Not being imbued with the spirit of fair play within the group, they make intergroup cooperation difficult. The alternative to intergroup cooperation is the use of a strong hand by the

government in promoting the general welfare by setting positive limits to the sphere of action of all organized groups. Under the former policy, freedom, restricted primarily by wise self-control, may be enjoyed. Under the latter, public control takes the place of self-control and freedom disappears. But if the government should fail of the strength to control the groups, failure of intergroup cooperation and self-control would mean intergroup warfare and ultimate disaster for all.

The major task is that of educating, democratizing and Christianizing the groups so that intergroup cooperation may succeed. An educational program will lead to a better understanding of our complex economic life. This educational program should promote the application of the principles of social justice to intra- as well as inter-group action. An effective educational program would promote intergroup cooperation and thus help restore the principles of free enterprise and parity of opportunity for those of equal skill and energy — essential principles of a democracy.

Economics, although providing an understanding of these problems, will not solve them. For their solution the people, as individuals and as groups, must have righteous attitudes and emotions which will make them desire and promote Christian principles in their economic relations with individuals, with groups and with society as a whole. Wallace has called this "a religion of the general welfare."[2] It is fundamental to a sane national economy. It is essential to international peace.

The government, the greatest of cooperative undertakings, has important functions to perform in the economic life of the nation. First, it is the function of government to lay down the rules in accordance with which individuals or

groups may carry on business, and then to provide the police power to insure the enforcement of the rules. These rules must be in the interest of society as a whole. Unfortunately the government, by participating in the groupistic fight on the various fronts, has become a part of the groupistic struggle and thereby weakened its position in performing its proper functions. Connivance between group leaders and politicians who disregard the public interest must be eradicated by an educated public opinion if the democratic form of government is to survive. But everything should not be left to the government. Every individual and every group must help if we are to solve this problem of maintaining efficiency and justice in our economic life without sacrificing freedom and democracy. The individual and the group must promote good citizenship both in government and in business.

The church, by tempering the leadership and the membership of all groups with a religion of the general welfare, can do much to eliminate the evils of economic groupism. Unfortunately churches, by taking sides in the intergroup struggle, have at times made the same mistake that the government has sometimes made. The churches can be helpful in the solution of this problem only by bringing their moral influence and their teaching to bear upon all groups alike, in order that group action may be divested of its narrow selfishness and become adequately motivated by an interest in promoting the general welfare, which is at the same time the individual welfare of most of the people.

The church can render its greatest service in this generation by preaching the gospel of the general welfare so vigorously and insistently that it will not only be heard but will become dominant in the minds of all group leaders, whether they

be leaders of economic groups or of political groups. Since the antidote for groupism is intelligent intergroup cooperation motivated by a religion of the general welfare, economists and ministers should work shoulder to shoulder to bring about this cooperation. Thus the problems of the groupistic regime could be solved without the dangers of anarchy on the one hand or of fascism on the other.

Economics and religion both have to do with the adjustment of the individual to his environing world. They are both concerned with the adjustment of the intra- and inter-relations of family, social, industrial and political groups. Economics deals with those relations which arise out of the activities of men in their efforts to satisfy their desires for food, clothing, shelter, education, recreation, and other forms of goods and services. Religion deals with those values which make the life of the individual and of society abundant in the things most worth while, from the standpoint both of the present generation and of future generations. Economics focuses upon personal gain; religion focuses upon the quality of life of the individual and of the race.

When economists who are thinking in terms of the general welfare and religious leaders who see beyond the confines of a given church in a given denomination learn to work together, the vision and the goals of human progress may be clarified, and activity promoted which will further the highest present ideals of life and the ideals which may grow out of these activities. The clarification of human relations and the dynamics of vital Christian motivation will cure the ills of groupism and achieve a Christian civilization.

In spite of many discouraging elements in the situation, hopeful signs can be found. Leaders of many corporations

have sought better public relations in recent years. This may open the way for intergroup discussions looking toward intergroup cooperation in promoting the common interests. Labor leaders, counting upon the sympathy of the public for the working man, have gone too far in recent years in disregarding the consumer, and public opinion is beginning to demand of them more consideration of the public interest. Workers themselves have shown some tendency to rid their organizations of the worst elements in their leadership. The farm group, which has never been entirely convinced of the desirability of limiting production, will be ready to abandon the restrictive program at any time when capital and labor are ready to harmonize their group efforts with the general welfare. Representatives of these three groups have been considering plans for quietly getting together for the purpose of considering their common interests, with the hope of reducing conflicts.

Conditions like these give ground for the hope that progress may be made in the next few years in eradicating the evils without relinquishing the benefits of group action. This hope should encourage economists and religious teachers to redouble their efforts to clarify the vision and motivate the action of all the people in the interest of the general welfare, to the end that efficiency in production may be accompanied by justice in distribution as the essential basis of a better life for all the people.

NOTES

[1] Richard T. Ely, *Property and Contract* (The Macmillan Co., 1914), Vol. 1, Chap. VI.

[2] Henry A. Wallace, *Paths to Plenty* (National Home Library Foundation, Washington, D. C., 1938).

VI

# RELIGIOUS VALUES IN COOPERATIVES

LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS in China have always been faced with the problem of economic relief to the people. Free relief is a hopeless task but must be resorted to in certain cases and in times of great catastrophes. The Christian missionary is thus continually faced with the problem of how to help the people economically and at the same time make their economic life facilitate their Christian living. In the past ten years the Chinese government has done a great deal for the economic improvement of the lot of the people. Consequently, while there is plenty that remains to be done, the missionary's effort should be directed more and more toward Christianization of economic life.

The cooperative form of economic organization is very suitable for this purpose. Consumers' cooperation made a successful start with a store at Rochdale, England, in 1844. A decade later cooperative agricultural credit societies were satisfactorily organized in Germany. In the 1880's cooperative marketing by farmers was begun in Denmark. These three forms of cooperation have proved very effective means of improving the economic condition of the city worker and the farmer. In 1937 there were 810,500 cooperative societies of all types throughout the world. In these societies were

143,261,000 members. The total cooperative trade was U. S. $18,600,000,000.[1]

The cooperative movement started in China in 1918 and 1919 with credit, consumer and producer cooperatives. Consumer and productive cooperatives were first promoted by Kuomintang leaders who gave political backing for the whole movement. Having proved very successful in India and Japan, the farmers' credit societies were first started by missionaries in north China, by the China International Famine Relief Commission in which missions cooperated, and by the University of Nanking. Through promotion by these agencies and by provincial government cooperative commissions, the number of cooperative societies in China increased rapidly from one in 1918, to 722 in 1928, to 37,318 at the end of 1936, and to 90,738 societies with over 4,000,000 members in February 1940. In 1938 the agricultural credit societies were 86 per cent of all societies in China. Loans to these societies during 1939 totaled Chinese $140,109,321, of which $65,131,272 had been repaid.

The newest development in the cooperative movement in China is the association called "Chinese Industrial Cooperatives" which now has about 1,500 societies with 18,000 members and a production amounting to Chinese $4,000,000 per month in 15 provinces of free China, reaching from Lanchow in Kansu to the outskirts of Canton in Kwantung. The Bank of China has now set aside $20,000,000 for loans to industrial cooperatives during 1940 at the same rate of interest as to the agricultural credit societies, 9.6 per cent per annum. In other words, both the agricultural credit societies and the industrial cooperatives have proved themselves a business success in China.

But even with this rapid growth of cooperatives there are very few persons in the country who have a real understanding of what cooperation really means. Much better training of members in the true meaning of cooperation is urgently needed.

### 1. CHRISTIAN LIFE NEEDS ORGANIZATION

As Professor C. E. M. Joad of the University of London says:

> It is extremely difficult to be a good man in a bad community. Since the form of our moral judgments is determined by our environment, a member of a bad community will hold actions to be right which are not right, and judge consequences to be valuable which are not valuable. Admittedly, he may be morally virtuous to the extent that he may try to do the good that he sees, but, if his community is bad, he will lack that faculty of right valuation which enables him justly to appraise the value of the consequences of his actions.[2]

If a man is a member of an organization working for private profit, he will work for private profit. If he is a member of an organization working for the common good, he is more likely to work for the common good.

Therefore, as I stated at the Disciples' World Convention at Leicester, England, in 1935, the Christian program, on the mission field as elsewhere, involves three fundamental approaches: living of a Christlike life by the individual, helping all those in need, and organizing all life into a Christian brotherhood. While character is fundamental to all the rest, all three of these approaches so interact with one another that argument regarding priority is beside the point. In general, the first two have been more commonly recognized by Christians in efforts at evangelism and practical philan-

thropy. While the conscious recognition of the third phase is quite recent, its presence has been shown in the many attempts at local Christian brotherhoods throughout Christian history.

Christian leaders have always been suspicious of economic enterprise, especially of the trader and the money-lender, but little has been done except to preach against it. Now, "the chief battleground between good and evil is at the heart of the economic order and there the battle must be won or lost."[3] A reorganization of the economic order is needed not only to relieve poverty but also to make it possible for individuals to live a more complete Christian life. Cooperative economic organization is a great help in attaining both those objectives.

## II. COOPERATIVES AID RELIEF WORK

Cooperatives were first started in China on a large scale as means to constructive relief work. The China International Famine Relief Commission, which began its work with the flood sufferers in north China in 1921, decided that cooperative credit societies were not only the best means for putting the farmers back on their feet after the losses from the flood, but also would meet a real need during normal times. The flood in the Yangtze river valley in 1931 led them and others to extend their work of organizing cooperatives to that area. The Chinese government met the devastation, as well as the communist ideology in areas retaken from the communists in Kiangsi in 1933, by promoting cooperatives as a means of aiding the farmers and winning their allegiance. We were able to make very little use of cooperatives as a means of relief to farmers around Nanking after its fall to

the Japanese because of Japanese opposition to such work. In free China, industrial cooperatives have been very successfully organized among many worker refugees from war areas. In "occupied territory" some industrial cooperatives have been organized and many agricultural credit societies are able to carry on in areas beyond the reach of Japanese guns.

My first interest in the rickshamen's cooperative and the wool weaving cooperative, which we organized in Nanking in 1933 and 1935, was a relief interest. Where suitable occupations can be found, cooperatives are the most constructive form of relief. They are even better than "work relief" because they are more permanent and organize the workers to carry on their own business. Funds loaned to a cooperative are returned and become self-perpetuating so that the people are really "off relief" and the funds are available to help others. Because of this banks are interested in loaning to them and thus much larger funds can be secured. Cooperatives are real self-help and thereby increase the self-respect of the individuals concerned. Individuals are in a better economic position when conducting their own business as a group instead of remaining separate individuals hunting for work. Entirely apart from the benefit to the members, cooperatives in China have proved of great social value because they provide a much healthier outlet for bank funds than is furnished by land speculation in the foreign settlements. It is a basic requirement of any form of economic relief that to be lasting it must be a sound economic solution of people's difficulties.

### III. COOPERATIVES A HIGHER ORDER OF VALUE

But cooperatives are more than either a relief measure or a sound economic improvement. They are a more moral and equitable form of economic organization than either small capitalist enterprise as found in most of China or monopoly capitalism as found in America. C. R. Fay, professor of economic history at Cambridge University and well known analyst of the cooperative movement, states this point in the following terms:

> It associates economic enterprise with moral values of a distinctive order. It is business motivated by a desire for social betterment with all the risks of failure and fullness of reward which such a combination presents. It comes midway between movements of pure philanthropy in which business plays no part, and movements in which commercial advantage is the declared purpose; and by appealing to the altruism in man, it commands from its members, servants and friends effort which exceeds their personal reward. . . . A cooperative society is a voluntary association in which people organize democratically to supply their needs through mutual action, in which the motive of production and distribution is service, not profit, and in which it is the aim that performance of useful labor shall give access to the best of rewards.[4]

How the different nature of the cooperative affects its business is best shown by the four "Rochdale Principles." These are: (1) Open membership; (2) democratic control, or one member, one vote; (3) dividends distributed in proportion to patronage; and (4) limited interest on share capital.

There are four fundamental reasons why cooperatives are a higher order of value than capitalistic enterprises:

First, cooperatives eliminate the practice of a few profiting from the many because profits are divided according to pa-

tronage or use. In a consumers' cooperative store this is in proportion to purchases during the year. In an industrial cooperative it is usually in proportion to wages earned during the year. In other words, the " profit " is returned to those who made it. Consequently, even the dividends to members of industrial and marketing cooperatives are not profits on the labor of others nor on capital invested. However, capital is paid its just " wage " in the form of a limited dividend equivalent approximately to the minimum rate of interest at which funds could be borrowed locally. Ethically, we would say cooperatives are more equitable.

Second, cooperatives organize collective economic action but retain the principle that the individual is the chief ethical end. This is a result of its democratic control because a cooperative is an organization of members rather than an organization of shares. Its practice is " one member, one vote " rather than the capitalistic practice of " one share, one vote." In such a democratic organization, " personality is valorized." Contrast this with the

> trend of modern industry towards autocracy, an enlightened autocracy, perhaps, with generosity and just dealing behind it, but emphatically not a manifestation of control from below. Cooperators believe, and their case assumes, that such democracy is a good thing in itself.[5]

Third, cooperatives inspire individual initiative but direct it into serving the larger group. Cooperators set out to help themselves and not to seek state aid. All they ask of the state is fair enabling legislation. " Cooperation is organized liberty."[6] And as Mr. T. W. Mercer, a well known English cooperator, states, " liberty is the sole guarantee of continuing economic efficiency in the cooperative movement."[7] As long

as societies are under necessity of securing patronage on their merits, there cannot be any serious fall in their general level of efficiency. But instead of giving the benefits of this individual initiative to a few, the resulting gains are distributed among the members whose use of the society made the "profits" possible. Thus the cooperatives combine unity and liberty.

Fourth, cooperatives require education of members because of their democratic principle of operation. This brings a cultural interest back into business enterprise. It is education in cooperative principles and how to manage their own business rather than merely how to perform a particular job to the better profit of the owner. Cooperators learn by doing. Professor Fay says that even if cooperation brought no economic advantage to members it would still be a social gain that they are in successful business for themselves. It is a school of self-government and at the same time produces a more equal distribution of wealth. Mr. W. K. H. Campbell, former League of Nations adviser in cooperation to the Chinese government, says the same thing of the poor peasant cultivator who becomes a member of an agricultural credit cooperative: "At first, they survey the results of their own action with half-incredulous amazement, but gradually the conviction is borne in upon them that they are not nearly such helpless creatures as they had always been accustomed to suppose."[8] Most ethical writers agree that the living of the good life entails the full development of the best elements in the personality. Cooperatives do this.

To these four basic improvements of cooperative economic organization over capitalistic organization, I might add a few words about the cooperative strategy of social change

which differentiates it from many other movements for socio-economic change today. (1) Cooperatives are voluntary and based on reason and persuasion. Therefore they spread without coercion. Members join the society voluntarily and are free either to stay in the organization or withdraw from it. They are under no compulsion to purchase from their society. And what is a greater difference from capitalistic chain stores and combines, the retail society is under no compulsion to purchase from the cooperative wholesale society of which it is itself a member. (2) Cooperatives can start small and grow big. Some will ask if this is particularly Christian. But surely in a day when so much emphasis is placed by other socio-economic movements on " getting power," a movement that can start with a statutory minimum of seven members, as in China, and has the capacity to spread over the whole country and, through the International Cooperative Alliance and future international wholesales, the whole world, is closer to the spirit of him who could found his church on groups " wherever two or three are gathered together." These two characteristics together mean that (3) cooperatives bring about a peaceful social revolution. This is because " cooperation touches no man's fortune, seeks no plunder," as another early interpreter of cooperation, George Holyoake, put it. Rather, cooperation seeks to build up within the old order a new system which creates its own wealth as it goes. Not only does cooperation eschew all forms of confiscation but it also seeks no " gifts " through socialistic legislation which taxes the rich to benefit the poor.[9]

Now if we accept Professor Wieman's theory of value, that " the process by which the world is made better is the forming of connections of mutual support, mutual control, and

mutual facilitation between appreciable activities,"[10] it is quite evident that all cooperative activities are "appreciable." The above summary shows that there is more mutual support, mutual control and mutual facilitation between these appreciable activities in the cooperative organization of economic life than in the capitalistic organization. Furthermore, on the score of democratic control, individual initiative, education, voluntary and peaceful social change, the cooperative movement is better than either the fascist, National Socialist or communist movements for socio-economic improvement. It is true that these other movements attempt to use cooperatives as a means of state control and many governments are now tending toward the same practice. But true cooperation is voluntary. State regimentation is quite another thing. At the same time, cooperation meets another test of value in that it can achieve universality through open membership and through federation.

At present, it is true that its universality of application is partly limited by a division in function between the consumers' cooperatives and agricultural marketing or industrial cooperatives. But cooperators think that through its fundamental interest in equity and liberty, the cooperative movement can work out solutions for these problems.[11]

In order to preserve its principles of democracy and liberty, cooperation admits that it cannot integrate all economic activity and must leave certain economic processes to a market relation. But in this minimum of a free market they see a better chance for both efficiency and respect for human values than in a state-controlled system. Furthermore, they admit that there are rights of society as a whole which fall within the sphere of government. And in China, while putting my

available energies into the cooperative movement, I realize that good government is just as important and that the work of James Yen and his colleagues in improving *hsien* (county) government in China may bring as much benefit to the farmers and workers as cooperatives. While cooperatives may not provide a grand scheme by which all economic, social and political problems can be solved, the cooperative movement does show how to combine democracy with the elimination of profit — in the sense of exploiting the labor of others or large returns on invested capital — and efficient business operation. In twenty-five years a cooperative wholesale was built up in Sweden that could break the prices of trusts dealing in galoshes, bread, matches and light bulbs. The cooperatives in Sweden now handle 20 per cent of the entire retail and wholesale trade of the country and 10 per cent of its manufacturing.[12] In England, six million out of eleven million families do part of their domestic purchasing in a cooperative store.[13] Given an extensive application of that solution, many of our political and social problems will be more easily solved.

### IV. CHRISTIANITY AND COOPERATIVES

Both the Christian movement and the cooperative movement face the same problem: how to persuade individuals to desire to do what they think right and to think right what is in fact right. Proper organization will greatly encourage individuals to act in this way and will make it easier for them to do so. But the fact remains that every cooperative society must have a nucleus of members who are honest, hard-working and sincerely interested in cooperative principles. Otherwise its constitution will be so twisted in practice that the result will be far from the cooperative ideal.

Education in cooperative principles helps in bringing about this devotion to making better business a part of better living. And it may become almost a religion with some people! As one government leader recently told a relief worker, in China there is a great lack of the service motive outside of Christian and communist circles! In wartime when the nation seems to have found its soul, there is considerable reduction of this difficulty. But every attempt at either social reform or social, economic and political reconstruction faces this problem. The cooperative movement envisages a comparatively long and slow process for reducing capital to the service of man. Any short cut may bring greater disaster and misery than real gain to the masses. On the other hand, "indifference may stifle, or skepticism paralyze, the attempt to build up this better state of higher forms of social institutions freely developed." [14] Therefore, the cooperative movement will benefit from a religious movement that deals with the fundamental relations existing among men and with the universal power whereby man is sustained in his effort for improvement of his life and that of his fellows.[15]

If religion and especially Christianity can get people to commit themselves to finding the highest good for all mankind, to feel a sense of sin in not perfectly attaining it (and therefore be less critical of others), and to have a world-transforming interest, it will help the cooperative movement as well as all movements working for human improvement.[16] Since evangelization in this sense has proved to be a very slow process, it is necessary as well as natural, because of the interaction between individual character and social organization, to carry on both movements, the Christian and the cooperative, at the same time. In this way these two great movements for the welfare of mankind can now help each other.

The cooperatives can offer the churches and missions the technique whereby to practice brotherhood in the economic realm, and the churches can provide the individuals in co-operatives with the dynamic of the Christian religion for good character and for strengthening the practice of the idea of service and brotherhood.

Shall the church as a church put itself on the side of the cooperative order as opposed to the present capitalistic order? While many enthusiasts for cooperation may feel that the ethics of cooperation are so much closer to Christianity than the ethics of capitalism that there should be no question about the church's choice, there are many in the church who do not feel so. In this I prefer to follow the Christian social philosophy suggested by Professor H. N. Wieman in *Normative Psychology of Religion* that the church should stimulate its members to open-minded consideration of all the moral issues involved but should leave these members as small or large groups to organize as they see fit for carrying out any political or economic actions.[17] However, if the members of any particular local church can agree to form a local credit union or health or mutual aid association, they should be free to do so. This is particularly true since the cooperatives do not require political action.[18]

In working with cooperatives on the mission field, I have urged that so far as possible mission and church workers should concentrate their efforts on social education of co-operative members. This is where the religious worker can make his chief contribution, rather than in technical fields. But social education should include cooperative principles and the bearing of religion and ethics upon the principles and practice of cooperation.[19]

## NOTES

[1] *Co-operative Societies Throughout the World, Numerical Data* (International Labor Office, Geneva, Swtz., 1939), pp. 18, 58. Of the above totals, 286,600 societies, 60,389,000 members and $8,850,000,000 trade were in the U. S. S. R.

[2] C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics* (Victor Gollancz, Ltd., London, 1938), pp. 466–67.

[3] Henry Nelson Wieman and Regina Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1935), p. 124.

[4] C. R. Fay, *Cooperation at Home and Abroad* (P. S. King & Son, London, 1939), II, 41.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[7] Cited by V. S. Allane, *Fundamentals of Consumer Cooperation* (Northern States Cooperative League, Minneapolis, 1936), p. 27. I have also indicated the place of Mercer's principles in my analysis.

[8] W. K. H. Campbell, *Cooperation for Economically Undeveloped Countries* (League of Nations, Geneva, Swtz., 1938), p. 38. This is a booklet prepared especially on the basis of the author's work in China.

[9] Thomas Hughes, *Foundations, A Study in the Ethics and Economics of the Co-operative Movement* (The Co-operative Union, Manchester, Eng., 1879; revised ed., 1916), p. 58.

[10] Henry Nelson Wieman and Walter Marshall Horton, *The Growth of Religion* (Willett, Clark & Co., 1938), p. 330.

[11] Cf. F. Hall and W. P. Watkins, *Co-operation, A Survey of the History, Principles, and Organisation of the Co-operative Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (The Co-operative Union, Manchester, Eng., 1934), pp. 315–17; and Fay, *op. cit.*, I, 267–68.

[12] Marquis W. Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way* (Yale University Press, 1936), pp. 12–13, 24, 33–41.

[13] Fay, *op. cit.*, II, 111.

[14] Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 132–33.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[16] I am here following H. N. Wieman's description of the marks of the distinctively religious way which he thinks underlies devotion to any specific moral ideals (cf. Wieman and Horton, *op. cit.*, pp. 287–97). I have taken the liberty of combining Wieman's " great decision " and " unspecific objective " in my statement of commitment.

[17] H. N. Wieman and R. Westcott-Wieman, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–26, 522–30.

[18] In this and the first section of this paper I have followed very closely some statements I made in an article on " Cooperatives in a Christian Social Order " which I published in the *Chinese Recorder,* Dec. 1936.

[19] Recently developed in an article, " Cooperatives and Christian Missions," soon to appear in the *Chinese Recorder.*

VII

# RELIGION AND SOCIAL ACTION

MARGUERITTE HARMON BRO

RECENTLY in one of the largest of the counties which front the northern border of our United States there occurred an amazing example of the church in what we have come to call "social action" — amazing for its temerity, for its practicality, for its success. A minister of scholarly achievement, as sensitive to social influences as litmus paper to an agent, decided that his town and countryside had had enough of the slot machine racket and all its flailsome appendages. But in order to clean up the town he had to buck his friends the various storekeepers and his friends the resort-keepers and their many dependents, all of whom profited by the slot machines. Not only to buck these fellow townsmen, but to buck them so openly, so logically, so righteously that he and his church could still exist in the community. Moreover, to get purchase on the local problem, he had to clean up the rest of the county with its indifferent county board and its inactive judiciary. The minister was seventy years old. What he lacked in youthful energy he made up in wisdom compounded of humor, experience and knowledge of the law.

On the first Sunday of the campaign when the minister addressed his congregation on the subject of slot machines, one seemed to see Isaiah standing at his right hand and Amos at his left, while the three of them gave that congregation

a vision of the holiness of God in terms of social righteousness. They talked about *sin,* sin in the group which directly profited by slot machines and sin in the group which countenanced their corroding influence in the community. To be sure, the minister used some of the modern phrases about "environmental influences" and "subconscious motivations," but he was not speaking for modern science that day; he was speaking for God.

At the end of four months of consistent labor there were no more slot machines operating in that county nor have they returned in a year and a half.

There are three things of note about that particular social action campaign: (1) In spite of the minister's sermons, a relatively large proportion of the members of his small church were not too sure about the God who was being preached to them. They had no great vision of his holiness; they had no keen sense of social responsibility; they were not permanently overwhelmed by a sense of their sin. (2) In the midst of the campaign for social righteousness, that minister took an occasional hour out to make long distance calls about selling some stocks which were taking a flop on the market. (3) Relatively few of the church members worked on the slot machine cleanup but those few were enough. These three facts yeast disturbingly in the mind of one who believes that the church has a necessity laid upon it to express itself in social action.

Relative to the first fact — that the minister had a difficult time, in spite of marshaling the assistance of the prophets, in convincing his congregation of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man — one ponders anew on what has happened to the vision of God which prostrated Isaiah with reali-

zation of his own unworthiness, filled him with holy zeal and authenticated his mandate of social responsibility. There was a time in the life of the church when, however slow men might be to acknowledge their sins, they at least believed in the vision of God. Certainly the vision was never overthrown by evolution nor banished by fiat but nevertheless it has as largely disappeared from American life as have our natural forests, our top soil and our Indian pennies.

The dimming of a vision can seldom be dated, partly because it never happens instantaneously in one place nor simultaneously in many places. There is always a time and space lag complicated by the group process of becoming self-conscious and articulate. But perhaps among the first men to tamper destructively, although innocently, with the prophet's idea of God was the daring Florentine named Galileo, whose curious contraption of tube and lenses began to pluck from the skies four moons for Jupiter and other arguments for the immensities of the universe and the earth's humble place among the planets. Immediately the church, in valiant self-protection, outlawed a cosmology which made man so infinitesimal in a universe so vast. To be morally responsible, man needed to be more obviously the center of his God's concern. But through the decades the church has had to make room not only for Galileo but also for Kepler and Newton, hammering further dimensions for space, giving new properties to matter; for Comte, Descartes, Kant, Locke, daring to predicate laws for the mind as well as for the outer universe; for Darwin, reading humanity's life story from primordial ancestors; for Schliemann and Brugsch, stretching time into incredible yesterdays and unimaginable tomorrows; for Leeuwenhoek, Pasteur, Koch, lifting out their

microscopic universes. Space-time, matter-energy, mind-body — man and his entire outreach governed by laws he could do comparatively little about. Physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences all saying to the religious man, "What do you mean, a 'personal' God? What do you mean, man responsible for his own actions, let alone responsible for the actions of his neighbors?"

At last the religious man, in some embarrassment, felt compelled to answer honestly if somewhat wistfully, "I suppose you are right, you scientists, although — although — there are moments when something within me seems to transcend your findings, moments when I lay hold on power which emanates from something beyond the categories."

But it is difficult even for a religious man long to hold himself morally responsible in a universe whose morality at best seems predicated upon a mere hunch, upon an intuition of ethical grandeur. Difficult, and not conspicuously successful. If the preponderance of findings by the wisest men of the time fails to supply a sufficient basis for the concept of a personal God and a moral universe, then where today may the religious man get his imperative for social action?

He has at least three possibilities, and they are not mutually contradictory. He may stubbornly and not illogically hold that the vision of God, delineable in satisfactorily intellectual and scientific terms, is only veiled for a time behind incommunicable certainties. There *are* the new physicists opening new doors with their present conclusion that matter is energy which does not behave with strict causality. Is there then a possible margin where "spirit" and "matter" are interpenetrable, where the imponderables may govern the more easily measurable aspects of nature? Certainly it is

hard to assay a categorical " no " so long as there remains the whole realm of secondary qualities which Galileo never got around to and no one since has really got around to; the qualitative imponderables which should never have been abstracted, perhaps, from " things." May there not yet be a new language, as serviceable as mathematics has been to science, which will express experiences of thought, beauty, sorrow, joy — and ultimately of God? Also, beside the advance-guard physicists, there *are* the mystics whose vision continues to appear no less powerful and no less contagious after the empiricist has explained it away.

There is a second group, also religious, who find their imperative for social action in man himself. The fact that mankind feels the impulse for brotherhood is justification enough, they think, for its necessity in society. If men are able to vision a just society, are able to devise schemes for giving the vision actuality, and are also able to apply themselves selflessly toward that end, then the kingdom of heaven on earth is altogether possible if not imminent. The evolutionary process of a struggle toward perfection is no slower and no less " divine," they feel, than a dispensation from Perfection. Men may choose brotherhood not because of any supernatural fatherhood which supposedly motivates a way of life in which all children of God are members of one family, but because they are happier when dwelling together as brethren. Or at least they believe, from their experience in small areas of brotherhood, that widening the scope would eventually spell spiritual well-being and happiness for all. Certainly there is sufficient imperative for social action in so courageous and honest an affirmation of the transcendent possibilities of human nature. The proof of the imperative lies in the lives of great humanitarians who so believe and so act.

But there is a third and darker imperative for social action in behalf of the well-being of the whole of society. It is the imperative of stark necessity. We have tried to make a safe and pleasant world by every other means except religiously impelled social action. We have tried all the forms of unrestricted competition and individual license on the scale of the small community, the state, the nation, the world order. We have tried limited philanthropy and partial justice. But we have never tried such religious social action as equality of opportunity for all in matters of health, housing and education. If war, the final fruit of all injustices, sweeps us near enough oblivion, if fears lock our bodies and cripple our minds to the very threshold of insanity, perhaps our numb lips may acknowledge the elemental necessity for becoming our brother's keeper. It is difficult to call this sort of forced consent "religious." But even the good man sometimes acknowledges expediency in ordering his ways, while the indifferent man may have his first taste of generosity when, forced to part with a cloak to save his own skin, he discovers in the sacrifice a warmth of appreciation more comforting than his cloak. The church has utilized expediency before. So far as America is concerned, the church is not yet beaten to her knees in sufficient desperation to cry out in fear or humility or both, "Let us *try* concern for our fellows before it is too late." Force is easier, as yet; competition is easier; war is easier. Even for the individual who thinks himself religious they are easier. But the day may be near when the church will be overwhelmingly concerned with economic justice and interracial brotherhood for the conclusive reason that nothing less will be feasible if humanity is to endure.

However, today it is not altogether the lack of an adequate imperative which keeps religious persons from participating

more actively in social salvation. Probably today the majority of religious men and women feel that they do have, in the abstract, sufficient imperative for righteousness in terms of social responsibility. They reason that *if* there is a God or *if* there are unfathomed spiritual resources in man or *if* life is to move smoothly and safely, then it would no doubt be a fine thing if we could have a little more social righteousness. Indeed, *if* they had a blueprint for social justice they would get up and go to work to give it verisimilitude in daily life. But they have no blueprint. They have only the ideals and the chaos of Christianity and democracy. No branch of the church, Protestant or Roman Catholic, seems able to fix specific responsibility for social sin: which, for instance, is the greater sin against society, the rapid growth of horse-racing and betting in this country or the leaning toward war? Or is the first only a sport gone astray and the second sometimes an honorable necessity? Do the two have any relation to each other? Do they stem from a common root? If so, what is the root? And how does one man, or one church, begin to grub it out? Only a mind highly sensitized to the forces which destroy or build up a personality can be sure of socio-economic cause and effect. Most of us, however eager and earnest, lack both training and insight. Moreover, we know that we lack these prerequisites and we feel intellectually embarrassed when we find ourselves swatting gnats and swallowing camels in the name of reform. We are acquainted with too many social actionists like the minister who cleaned out the slot machines while he played the stock market. If we tamper with the social order at all we want to feel that our reforms are basic.

Our confusion is genuine and so is our humility. But

nevertheless they are overrated as reasons for inaction. In every community there are abuses — *sins* — which enough people agree upon to make them a starting point for social housecleaning. However, when it comes to the first move, we are right back where the prophets were, facing the facts of unpopularity and ostracism — measuring individual security and recognition against possible oblivion for the sake of filling a social need. Those who decide to go into action in behalf of the need are the religious people, whatever their sign or creed, whatever their mistakes. It is possible, of course, to be ignorantly religious or wisely religious and probably no man can be absolutely sure in which category he will eventually be card-filed. He can only be sure that an attempt to redeem a social wrong is his own guarantee of personal integrity.

Obviously, the church's becoming engaged in social action is quite a different matter from the religious individual's dedicating his own life to social justice. For as soon as individuals get together in a group and begin to act in the name of something — an organization, a principle or a leader — they tend to set up absolutes, offer rewards, inflict penalties, prescribe the minutiae of ways and means. They tend to proclaim their infallibility and to overlook their own mistakes. However, these drawbacks of organized movements have never restrained men from joining political parties, community councils or yacht clubs. Why then should they deter the one organization whose only objective is the redemption of humanity?

As a matter of common sense, like-minded individuals must get together in order to act effectively. They may get together as members of a church dedicated to a specific re-

form. Or the church, through its sacraments and fellowship, may be the source of their inspiration to act under some other group-name, or no name at all. The religious imprint lies in the individual's perceiving a human need and committing himself to its fulfillment.

Or is social action "religious" because of the miracle which happens anew whenever one man becomes concerned for his brother? The minister who cleaned up the slot machines was a miracle of power in his not so small community. Not absolute or all-wise power, to be sure, when viewed against society's total needs; but his mind, his hand, his might were magnified a thousandfold above his fellows. *Through* his fellows. Probably he himself will never revamp the economic order. Probably he will never see or understand all the social sins of his day. But he sees a long way beyond his neighbors and *he is disciplined to hold his vision.*

That is where the prophets stood — ahead of the vanguard, building their convictions into the social structure of their time. Whether their vision came of God or of men, they moved ahead on their own two feet. They kept themselves fit to march by marching, fit to build by building. Their power was the immeasurable, contagious power of the religious man gone into action in behalf of his vision.

After all, there was a great deal of food in Galilee when the five thousand turned hungrily to Jesus. But he could bless only the loaves and fishes which were at hand — ready. This is the law, the law of life. Perhaps religious men have enough of proof and promise in this recurring miracle of human brotherhood that multiplies and transcends itself whenever one individual — even one — is ready to be used to answer the need he apprehends.

VIII

# A FREE CHURCH BESIDE A FREE STATE IN A FREE SOCIETY

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON

THERE ARE four ways in which the church may be related to the state. First, the church may be above the state. This is the theory held by the Roman Catholic Church. In its view, the church is itself a supernational state. Second, the church may be subordinate to the state. This is totalitarianism, represented in fascist, nazist and (in so far as any church is allowed to exist) communist societies. Third, the church may be organically united with the state, two aspects of the national community. This is the theory of the established or state church.

The fourth way in which church and state may be related is the American way. Here church and state exist side by side, but completely separate, in a free society. Separation of church and state also obtains in Canada and other free dominions of the British empire. This arrangement is peculiarly congenial to democracy. Indeed it is a natural and necessary expression of the democratic principle.

The American Constitution does two fundamental things. It sets up a form of government, and it sets forth and guarantees a forum of freedom. The form of government is designed to embody the doctrine that all just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed. This is

political democracy. The Constitution as originally submitted to the thirteen states rested upon the theory that the powers with which it clothed the government were granted to it by the people, and that only such powers could be exercised by the government as were specifically provided for in the text of the Constitution.

To the fathers in the constitutional convention this seemed sufficient. But their document was no sooner released and submitted to the several states for ratification than it encountered widespread dissatisfaction and apprehension among the people. This Constitution, they reflected, only provides a form of government. But government does not cover the whole field of democracy. The Constitution should definitely provide that all powers not specifically granted to the government are reserved to the people. Not only so, but certain basic rights of free men and free society should be specified which the government may not invade.

The Constitution was finally ratified with the general understanding that amendments embodying a bill of rights would be submitted to the states by the first session of the Congress, which was done, and the amendments were ratified. The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The tenth of these amendments absolutely restricts the government from exercising any powers which are not delegated to it by the Constitution. The other nine amendments specifically enumerate certain rights as inviolable and positively guaranteed.

The most fundamental of these rights are listed in the first amendment. It forbids Congress to make any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging freedom of speech, or of the press, or of

the right of assembly, or of petition. I wish to direct attention to the broad principle which embraces all these rights and liberties. If the original draft of the Constitution set up a form of government, it was the Bill of Rights which set forth the inviolable forum of freedom. The forum of freedom is just as truly a part of the American system as is the form of government. Its area is wider than the area of government. The democratic process operates in both. In the government it operates by the consent of the governed. In the forum of freedom it operates, without let or hindrance from the government, by the free exchange of opinions, ideas, ideals and cultural values in a manner that is intended to keep always open the possibility of reconciling differences by argument, persuasion and example.

The fathers were determined that the new American state should not be a "totalitarian" state. True, they did not have that word, but they very clearly had that idea when they insisted upon a bill of rights. They were determined to keep the whole cultural domain outside the scope of government — the domain of belief, of conscience, of speech, of publication, of scientific research, of assembly, of worship, together with the institutions which embodied these liberties. They drew a circle around the state, and proclaimed that the whole domain outside that circle was a realm of freedom — free action, free opinion, free inquiry, free discussion, free persuasion, free decision. Religion and the church were specifically envisaged as lying outside the state's jurisdiction. This is religious liberty.

What do we mean by the formula, "separation of state and church"? Many persons pay tribute to the formula who do not stop to inquire what it means. Does it mean that the state

must be indifferent to religion, that it must not be responsive to the considerations which religion may bring to bear upon its policies, that church and state must exist in separate water-tight compartments and can have no contact with each other? Does it mean that the church may not try to influence the state in the direction of just laws and their righteous administration, that the church may not criticize the state or its laws or their administration? On the other side, does it mean that the state may not recognize the Deity, or open the sessions of its legislatures with prayer, or employ chaplains for its soldiers and sailors, or otherwise confess the dependence of the state upon the guidance of divine providence? Surely we do not mean any of these things by the separation of church and state. Surely the makers of the Constitution did not so intend.

Our confusion arises from the tendency to substitute other words for "church" or "state." We do not mean separation of *religion* and the state, nor separation of religion and politics, nor yet separation of the church and politics. We mean separation of *church* and *state* — a concept quite different from any of those just mentioned. The church is the organized institution of religion, just as the state is the organized institution of political life. It is these two *institutions* which must be kept separate, according to our Constitution and our American tradition. But it is a separation which still leaves room for moral and social responsiveness and interaction. In what respect, then, are these institutions to be kept separate? The answer is that they are to be kept separate — completely separate — *in their official or institutional functioning.* There must be no entanglement of their respective processes by law or by the administration of law.

Separation of church and state means that the church shall not participate in the official processes of the state — for example, by having a representative of the church in any legislative, administrative or judicial department of the state; and that the state shall not participate in the official institutional processes of the church — for example, by prohibiting the free exercise of the church's proper functions or by special recognition of one church or its representatives whereby that church is given a unique relation to the state.

The Constitution does not merely forbid the *establishment* of religion, it forbids the making of any law *respecting* the establishment of religion — that is, pointing in the direction of such establishment, or carrying implications that might develop into such establishment. Any law, or any official act in the administration of the law, which *tends toward* the establishment of religion, or recognizes a particular religious organization as having a claim to a special relationship to the state, is a violation of the constitutional prohibition "respecting the establishment of religion," and therefore a violation of the constitutional guarantee of full religious liberty. It is obvious that if one church is given special privilege or recognition by the state, the religious liberty of all other churches is thereby prejudiced and curtailed.

The American system is sometimes described by the formula, "A free church in a free state." But this is an inaccurate and dangerous formula. In the American system, the church is not "in" the state. So to conceive it is to go over bag and baggage to totalitarianism. In totalitarian countries the church is indeed *in* the state, for the state is the comprehensive institutionalization of the whole social order. But the American state is not totalitarian. It is not coterminous

with the national community. It leaves broad areas of cultural and social life which it may not invade. Society keeps its own freedom and has granted only a specified domain or jurisdiction to the state. The true conception of the relation of church and state in America is that of a free church *beside* a free state *in* a free society.

How has this principle fared in actual practice — this principle of a free church side by side with a free state in a free society? By and large, it has fared well. It can be truly said that both church and state have, in the main, kept faith with the fathers. There are, however, certain points at which it is recognized that the principle is being violated or imperiled. Some of these violations, or near-violations, are less important than others; but none is unimportant if the principle of separation of church and state is compromised. We may mention them under four categories which call for study and vigilance. These are (1) taxation, (2) education, (3) diplomacy and (4) war.

1. Under taxation, there is the major question of the exemption of church property from its share of the burden of supporting the state. The grant of exemption is not discriminatory — it applies to all churches. It thus cannot be argued that it impairs the freedom of one church in relation to other churches. But it may compromise the dignity of the church, and perhaps its freedom in relation to the state. So long as the state derives its revenue, or a portion of it, from the taxation of real property, the acceptance of this exemption by the churches shifts to each citizen taxpayer the burden of making up the difference. He is thereby compelled to contribute to the support of the churches.

Religion in a democracy rests upon the principle of volun-

tarism. Does not the principle of self-respect unite with the principle of voluntarism to demand that each church shall pay its own way? Additional considerations arise in the practical working of this exemption. Is it not subject to such serious abuse as to constitute a danger to public welfare — first, by stimulating an inordinate accumulation of property by some churches, thus giving them an unhealthy stake in the economic order, and second, by encouraging an inordinate and socially wasteful multiplicity of church organizations?

There has recently arisen the question of the positive taxation of churches in connection with the new social security and pension legislation. Here the question is whether the churches should allow their ministers to be included in the government's provisions. Is it compatible with the church's freedom to allow itself to be taxed by the government for the benefit of its clergy and to accept on their behalf the support of the state? The alternative, of course, is for the church voluntarily to make a provision for its ministers at least equal to that which the government offers. This has already been done in the larger denominations by a denominational pension system. In the case of their non-ordained employees, however, there is a difference of opinion. The question seems overnice to some, but to those who are sensitive to the principle of voluntarism in religion on the basis of the complete separation of church process from state process, the issue involved will not lack substance or importance.

2. On the educational front, the temptation for an interlocking of church and state arises because the function of education is exercised by both church and state. Public education, supported by taxation, is firmly established in the United States. But the forum of freedom is not invaded.

Private schools under church or other auspices exist side by side with public schools. Parents are free to send their children to the private in preference to the public schools. These private or sectarian schools derive their support from those who patronize them and those who have a religious, an educational, or even a commercial motive for maintaining them. Their fostering and operation are purely voluntary.

The public school, on the other hand, is an expression of public policy, embodying the principle that democracy requires for its own protection and development an intelligent and educated citizenship. For this purpose all citizens are taxed. They are not taxed as beneficiaries of the educational system, nor is their tax graduated in proportion to the benefits received, nor canceled because their choice of private schools leaves the benefits of the public schools unappropriated. Public education is projected as a public benefit and derives its support without discrimination from the entire public. Private or sectarian education rests upon private or sectarian motivation, and its support must therefore be voluntary on the part of those who desire to maintain it.

In the practical operation of this dual system of education, numerous issues arise. On the side of the public school, the outstanding problem is that concerned with the content of teaching, especially in matters relating to religion, morals and scientific doctrine. Another question concerns the indirect influence of the teaching personnel or the school management with respect to the favorable or unfavorable orientation of pupils toward specific religious organizations, toward the state itself and toward the social mores.

On the side of the private or sectarian schools, the issues are chiefly those which arise from the attempt of such schools

to secure aid from the public treasury. The burden of voluntary support is admittedly a heavy one, especially in the case of Catholic parochial schools. Departures have already been made in some states of the union from the principle of voluntary responsibility. The most plausible first step in this encroachment upon the public treasury is in the carrying of parochial pupils in busses provided by public funds for public school pupils. This step once taken, the next is to include the parochial schools in the free textbook system provided for the public schools. When these precedents are once established, little argument is left to withstand the demand that the public treasury also provide the salaries of parochial school teachers, or the upkeep of buildings. Eventually, the claim takes the form of an outright demand for an allocation of public school revenue to the sectarian school on the basis of relative school age population.

At many other points in the educational process the state is tempted to obliterate the line between education as a public policy and education oriented toward particularistic ends. The examples cited are sufficient to make the distinction clear and to call for vigilance wherever the principle of separation of church and state is compromised or threatened.

3. A clear instance of the violation of the separation of church and state has recently arisen in the field of diplomacy. This was the appointment by President Roosevelt of an ambassador to the pope as head of the Roman Catholic Church. Quite aside from the fact that this appointment was made without the advice and consent of the Senate, it seems obvious that such diplomatic relations are contrary to the American Constitution. In an ambassadorship to the Vatican the diplomatic process of the state is interlocked with the

diplomatic process of the Roman Catholic Church. This constitutes an actual *union* of church and state — not, of course, a complete union of church and state, but an actual union of their respective diplomatic processes. In terms of the Constitution, the President's action in appointing an ambassador to the head of a church is, in fact, an action respecting the establishment of a particular religion. The Roman Catholic Church is thereby given a privileged position in relation to the state, an official access to the ear of the state, a power or influence over the state, which no other church enjoys.

Not only so, but such a relationship to the state invests the Catholic Church with an unfair advantage *in the forum of freedom*. It enters the forum of freedom with a prestige which no other church enjoys, and thus exercises an influence over the cultural life of the nation which is not derived, as in the case of other churches, solely from its inherent character as a church, but from its special relation to the state. Obviously, this is a curtailment of the full religious liberty of all other churches. Their religious liberty is curtailed because all other forms of religion are compelled to pursue their work in the shadow, and against the prejudice, created by the special privilege and the official prestige enjoyed by this particular religious organization.

Religious liberty means more than the individual's right formally to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Individual worship is only one aspect of religion, and freedom in its exercise is only one aspect of religious liberty. Freedom of individual worship is hardly forbidden even in those nations whose governments are most notorious for their denial of religious liberty. Religion by its very na-

ture embraces the whole cultural order as the scene of its functioning. Its ultimate aspiration is to create a social order in conformity with its faith.

Religious liberty, therefore, includes the liberty of each religious group or church to mold the social or cultural life of the national community — its education, its politics, its business, its morality, its family life, its relations with other national communities — by its particular faith, and to do this unaided, but also unimpeded, by law or the administration of law. This social or cultural aspiration of religion finds expression, in the American system, in the forum of freedom where the democratic process operates by argument, persuasion and example. The American state has guaranteed this forum of freedom and each citizen is bound to protect it, not only for himself, but for his faith; and not for his faith only, but for all other faiths no matter how widely they differ from his own.

To consent to a diplomatic relationship with the Roman Church is to consent to a principle whose development spells ultimately the predominance of Catholicism in American culture. By as much as the Catholic Church is given a special position in the processes of the government, other churches will find themselves in a subordinate and prejudiced position in American life. By as much as the Catholic Church is accorded a special access to the ear of the government, the access of other churches will be restricted and embarrassed. By as much as the Catholic Church uses its special position and its unique access to the ear of the government to achieve its own ends in American society, other churches will awake to find that their influence in American society is being undermined.

The spirit of the forum of freedom is the spirit of tolerance.

And the spirit of tolerance depends upon the legal and official parity of the participants. When one church enters this forum clothed with the trappings of an official status, or with public money in its purse, tolerance flies out of the window.

4. The question of the relation of church and state in wartime has arisen in America only within the present generation. For the most part it has been traditionally taken for granted that the duty of the church was to lend its sanctions and practical support to the state in any war in which the state engaged. This duty is now being challenged. The challenge arises within the church itself. The issue has been obscured in American democracy by the misleading dictum, "A free church in a free state." In the American system, as we have said, the church is not *in* the state. If it were, it would not be a *free* church. Only as the church exists in a free society, side by side with a free state, can the church be free. Our democratic system leaves the church outside the jurisdiction of the state in that sphere of freedom which society reserves to itself. The church is as truly independent as is the state. It does not exist in the state, nor function in the state. It exists in and functions in the forum of freedom. In terms of democracy, the church is not here because the state allows it to be here, but because a free society allows it to be here. In terms of the church's conception of its own inner genius, its independence derives from the fact that *God* put it here. To surrender this independence is to go over to totalitarianism.

The church therefore, in American democracy, has not only the right but the duty to determine by its own principles its attitude toward state policies and undertakings. Its attitude toward war in general, and toward a particular war,

must be freely determined by the principles which the church embodies. If the principles for whose regnancy it stands — such as the brotherhood of all men under the universal fatherhood of God — can be so interpreted as to allow it to sanction and support the state in making war, it may do so. But if not, the church must claim its right and duty to oppose the state, or to criticize the course the state is taking, or to remain silent and uncooperative. In either case, the church, if it is a free church, must make its decision freely in the light of its own genius — and take the consequences.

It is of the utmost importance that the church shall define for itself, first, the fact of its independence, second, the ground of its independence, and third, its determination to act in accordance with its independent character and status. The state itself should be left in no uncertainty as to the church's conception of its own inner freedom and its liberty of action.

IX

# CONSCIENCE AND POLITICS

## T. V. SMITH

> When two, or more men, know of one and the same fact, they are said to be *Conscious* of it one to another; which is as much as to know it together. And because such are fittest witnesses of the facts of one another, or of a third; it was, and ever will be reputed a very Evill act, for any man to speak against his *Conscience;* or to corrupt or force another so to do: Insomuch that the plea of Conscience has been alwayes hearkened unto very diligently in all times. Afterwards, men made use of the same word metaphorically, for the knowledge of their own secret facts, and secret thoughts; and therefore it is Rhetorically said, that the Conscience is a thousand witnesses. And last of all, men, vehemently in love with their own new opinions (though never so absurd), and obstinately bent to maintain them, gave those their opinions also that reverenced name of Conscience, as if they would have it seem unlawfull, to change or speak against them; and so pretend to know they are true, when they know at most, but that they think so.
>
> THOMAS HOBBES

OUR TEXT is from that curious masterpiece of Hobbes's, the *Leviathan.* It constitutes one of the most pregnant comments upon conscience in the literature of morality. It is perhaps substantially true logically, whatever may be thought of it etymologically. The conclusion that Hobbes himself draws from the truth the text contains is, however, largely antithetical to the conclusion which we ourselves shall suggest. Hobbes concludes that conscience as private is morally

pernicious as well as lexicographically anomalous. He proceeds lengthily and ponderously, quoting Scripture all the while just like the devil, to argue that a " Christian Commonwealth " would be one in which the fanaticism that he associated with individual conscience has given way to the peaceable and orderly fruits of totalitarianism. The " Kingdom of Darkness " he then proceeds to identify with the commonwealth that historically has been called Christian, one in which private conscience is glorified.

This almost complete transvaluation of values has of course its own natural history. Suffice it to say here that Hobbes had no little justification in the book of his times for this harsh judgment upon private conscience. If our assessment can be more generous, it is largely because we live in times themselves more generous and orderly. Or do we? The shadow of Leviathan is upon us and the stench of his refuse is brought by the winds of the world to our very nostrils. Every other pulsation throbs to new forebodings of his approach; but as yet we Americans live in a blessed oasis and we may celebrate that blessedness by talking still as though reason yet prevailed in the world.

That conscience may be and usually is the source of fanaticism is of course true. That fanaticism is bad for society is not to be gainsaid. But that conscience *must* lead to fanaticism is hardly true. The risk of fanaticism we must indeed run in order to escape the private danger of sterile authoritarianism. This danger can be lessened without the complete sacrifice of advantages associated with fanaticism. Politics is but our general name for the technique through which happy accommodation is made between this risk and this danger. Let us now give orderly attention to these thoughts.

I

We shall hardly indulge in the ease of arguing that fanaticism is dangerous and that conscience is its normal parent. Not while Hitler's conscience continues to fulminate against the Jews. Not while Stalin's conscience continues to threaten the whole of traditionally religious cultures with liquidation. To deny their convictions the name of conscience would be to convict ourselves of disingenuousness. What Plato in the *Laws* wrote large against the atheists and Calvin indited in blood against opposing sects, these modern connoisseurs of conscience do but bring up to date.

The complexity of the problem resulting and the general way to thread the maze are both sufficiently suggested in Ruskin's sage advice: "Obey thy conscience! But first be sure it is not the conscience of an ass." This advice, like other advice, unfortunately is most necessary where it is least likely to take effect. Human asses, of the high order of fanatics, take their consciences neat. When men become sophisticated enough to lay asininity aside, they sometimes become anemic enough to compromise their consciences in the pinches of social demands. Both aspects of Ruskin's advice are sound, but they need to be taken together. So difficult is it to take them together, however, that Ruskin, like most littérateurs, solves our problem merely by restating it, the major problem of politics. How *can* an ass get an enlightened conscience? And how can a man follow it (so variegated are its pointings) when he does achieve one?

II

There is for a fact no pain like the pain of a new idea, especially if it be an ethical or a religious one. Almost by definition the good conscience already knows the right, and the clearer that knowledge is the more it shuts out everything else as wrong. To the conscience headed for fanaticism the matter is almost as simple as that. How to break that shell without crushing the kernel? It is perhaps safe to say that the perseveration (it is a word from the lexicon of pathology) of moral ideas is such that the final cure must be homeopathic: it requires a fanatic to get a fanatic ready to be cured. If the two be let alone, however, the cure takes the form of a killing. Carl Sandburg particularizes it in his lines about the two men who " shot it out over who owned one corner lot," and now lie side by side in one grave as " two accommodating neighbors." There is nothing, I mean to say, which the claims of the fanatical conscience may not cover — from a corner lot to the Trinity — and it smothers whatever it embraces. So long as in our religious ambit conscience banned only dancing, it left a streak of social awkwardness in its wake but did perhaps no irreparable harm. Nor was it so bad when it banned only poker, or dime novels, or smoking. The catharsis of such " vices " usually produced virtues ambiguous enough to prevent too saccharine a splurge in saintliness.

But those who perfect themselves in the pusillanimous will practice their will to perfection on things infinitely more important as their power increases; for their " knowledge," like knowledge more nobly named, grows from more to more, and that always from the same thorny stalk. Raise a peasant

to power, and revenge is just as sweet internationally as it was when he beat his faithful dog or murdered his devoted mother-in-law. Malevolence is quite as magic in its spread as is benevolence. Finally the conscience that drums innocent amusements from the lives of the young will protect the morals of the old by circumspection equally sinister. Beliefs about religion or economics will surely strike such a mind as proper material for its stewardship, all the more proper the less malleable it prove to be.

The psychology of sincerity is a most interesting study. A week end, more or less, especially if spent in fasting and prayer, is enough to make sincere enough for bold action against others any belief that involves matters concretely important for the believer. Personal prejudice, professional pride, financial possessions — these are all materials easily made sacrosanct by the law of progression inherent in the claims of conscience. The fanatical conscience secretes sincerity as the "bilious liver" secretes its bile.

As I saw once upon a time the subtle processes whereby a beautiful "nobody" had become an important "somebody" through hobnobbing with the spirits, I could not really doubt the sincerity of Margery, the Boston medium. Nor have I ever been easily inclined to charge insincerity to any man's account, not unless his stubborn sincerity balked my own sincerity ambitious to be about my ego's business.

It is indeed this latter line to which I have been slowly coming. Conscience meets its nemesis only in conscience. As long as a fanatic is allowed to have his way with only opposition enough to keep him in exercise, all seems (to him) well enough. Conscience is so far forth an instrument of order: he is converging the world around his own career-line

and a pattern is precipitated by his practice. No argument will be half as strong *against* as his continuous success will be *for* the rightness of his will. Such an attitude is not an achievement; it is the animal inheritance of each of us human end-products of evolution. We are all natural egoists in the sense that our own activity is taken for granted and from that vantage creates its own certification of integrity. The flag which each man flies upon the masthead of his own soul is this: " Get out of my way, or fall in behind me! "

It is only when this natural egoism is questioned that it becomes *questionable*. It cannot usually be questioned until it is stopped, and hardly anything can stop it which is less imperious than itself. At any rate, whatever stops a claim of conscience save the claim of another conscience leaves conscience uncorrected, indeed leaves conscience untouched. We may be estopped by practical obstacles or even arrested by superior might; but a challenge of right is the only challenge recognized by conscience. Such a challenge is not itself enough to correct fanaticism. Indeed, nothing so infuriates conscience as to meet a conscience equally dogmatic. But if a killing does not take place from the meeting, an arrest does ensue. Delay can under the circumstances be made fruitful for the influence of impulses less imperious than those labeled conscientious. A sense of humor may come into play. Fatigue may dull the edge of determination. Effluences of beauty, as many will testify, may mitigate the despotism of the moral. " Beauty," says Plato's Socrates, " is certainly a soft, smooth, slippery thing, and therefore of a nature which easily slips in and permeates our souls."

It is not my purpose here to elucidate, but only to insinuate, such subsidiaries as might counteract the moral. Moral

knowledge grows, as any knowledge grows, from a strange intermingling of motives. But moral knowledge does not automatically enlarge into generosity while it drives narrowly toward a predetermined goal. The dominant conscience gets arrested usually only by such narrowness and determination as match its own. There is always mutual desire to climax the arrest with a massacre. As Kipling delineates the process for the Neolithic Age:

Then I stripped them, scalp from skull, and my hunting dogs fed full,
And their teeth I threaded neatly on a thong;
And I wiped my mouth and said, " It is well that they are dead,
For I know my work is right and theirs was wrong."

Fortunately for us, the Neolithic Age is over, for us in America at least. Through the long continued influences of humaner motives, we do not now normally give vent to the full fury of the conscience of an ass, or panther, or bear. Certainly we have got beyond John Cotton in religion. But have we metamorphosed John Cotton into John L. Lewis or into William Green? It is clear that in economics we run now nearer the brink than in religion; and we cannot but suspect that in the name of patriotism we may now and then look over the precipice. In an election year we will hear voices so sincerely strident as to cause a momentary wonder whether the will to win has not become more important than the will to play the game.

Whatever be the outcome of such a historic moment, the important thing to see here is that the great American " game " is politics and that the " will " to play it is democratic citizenship. Politics is, as we have said, the general name we have given to the processes of social accommodation

whereby the public drives of private conscience get publicly fulfilled in law, privately sublimated, or outright aborted. We speak, in this larger sense of the term, of the " politics " of churches, of schools, of lodges, etc. The truth is, of course, that democratic politics in the larger governmental sense is possible only in a type of society where continuous adjustment of the same sort goes on in voluntary groups both to relieve tensions at their sources and to train citizens in the abc's of give-and-take. Governmental compromise at the level required by democracy and on the scale necessitated by crises is possible of acceptance only among a democratic people. While it is true (if I may echo Edward Scribner Ames's characterization of religious values) that " there is no political value which is not at the same time some other sort of value," yet this neither authorizes a politician to spread the " slime of politics " over the activities of teachers, preachers, parents and other luminaries in our galaxies of prestige, nor permits him to escape responsibility for common human processes where they become, as they will in our division of labor, his very own. Let us, therefore, now turn to *politics as such.*

III

If we were to present the realm of politics as completely divorced from this gentler social life in which it exists, we should have something like the state of nature which Hobbes envisaged, " a war of all against all." There are times, internationally, when such seems to be the most accurate description of the relationship obtaining; and there come times, nationally, when fear of a worse seems to be the prime motive leading men to make the better of the bad. Hobbes is

valuable to us because he does peel the thing down to that very core of fear. At its worst, the conflicts of interest (as covered by conscience) do become so bad that direct confrontation of those opposed only makes the conflict worse. Intermediaries are then required to operate between the sides with whatever code of honor has been born previously of the process of mediation. At its worst, politicians are these intermediaries preventing actual violence by spreading from one group to the other the fear of violence. Sinners against ideals they seem to be, but in a sick society they operate to prevent the saints from cutting each other's throats. All that, however, represents politics at its very worst, represents it where war is avoided only by the constant threat of war.

Mostly in our society, of course, the political process operates on hope rather than from fear. Then the intermediaries throw off their dark robes of spiritual blackmailers (threateners of violence to estop violent men from outrage) and put on liveries of light. They become the professional promisers of things to men so well off that they can preoccupy themselves with the hope of becoming still better off. Competitors in the business of pandering to conflicting cupidities — that might serve as another epithet to hurl at the professional practitioners of the art of democratic accommodation. But whatever we call our politicians, here they are — to come or go at the call of the electorate.

While they stay, it is their professional business to compromise such conflicts of interest between competing groups as the groups cannot themselves settle directly. Since conflicts of any and all interests, however, involve adjusted feelings of conscientiousness, politics becomes the art whereby consciences in contradiction escape fanaticism. Politics is indeed

the final school to bring private consciences to the gracious test of public agreement, or as compensation, that failing, to sublimate the energy involved in impetuous feelings of uprightness. I say "final school" because many consciences that can rise to generosity enough to accept agreements achieved in friendly groups will nevertheless balk at such crass proposals as the politicians have to resort to as between groups deeply inimical. Politics is therefore a sort of post-graduate medicine prescribed for moral education. It may be a bitter medicine, but it tests the patient's will to get well, even if left slightly crippled. Always behind the politician's worst prescription is the skull-and-bones of "Take it — or else!" But attending his easier exercise are the peaceable fruits of justice to those who are exercised thereby.

Face to face with inevitable conflicts of judgment as well as of interests, conscience reluctantly stretches itself upon the rack of growth, a rack intolerable if there were an alternative other than killing somebody. There have been cases, however — let each reader reach back into himself for the pat illustration — in which men have done under such semi-duress what later they came to regard as among the better acts of their lives. It is safe to suggest that nearly every hard-fought law on matters of pressing moment involves some such accommodation, if we regard it from the time it is broached as a "trial balloon" by some leader until it is accepted as one of the social advances of the period.

To return to our text in Hobbes, what men "know together" they know more securely than anything they know apart. "Law," as Hobbes had it, "is the public conscience." It is the maximum of what men know together. While law represents at any given time this maximum of what men

can be got to agree to, the merely legal is subminimum at the same time to every private conscience. The process whereby this subminimum becomes more acceptable *as public policy* than the private maximum of ideality — that is the whole story whereby the consciences of asses leave off braying and mount to the dignity of human forbearance.

But the story seems to fall into two parts: the outer part, to which I have been referring as politics, and the inner part, whereby conscience bends its neck without breaking its heart. Dismissing the external alternative of violence if one does not come to terms, let us concentrate for a moment upon the terrain of the more fully inner. Whatever faiths men live by are worth fighting for, and even dying for. Let us agree to that, if these faiths be attacked. But are they worth attacking? They are, you see, generally attacked in the name of conscience as well as defended in the same name. But if not attacked, they need not be defended. It is the dynamic conscience that makes necessary the defense, because it is such a conscience which engineers the attack.

Now what is worth attacking? Surely nothing that is entirely private. Well, things genuinely important publicly get publicly agreed upon. It is safe to say that, in every culture, the most important actual duties are publicly recognized by law and all that consciences can agree upon as downright bad are forbidden by law or custom. What, then, is the utility of the private conscience? Its public utility is that only through its pressures does law grow from more to more. Through it the process of agreement is extended, and law moves on ahead. But this mobility is not the function of any given private conscience. Orderly change implies agreement by the majority, if not to do then at least to accept; and prog-

ress is tested by whether there is general approval in calm retrospect. If enough want change, they can get anything done or undone. They can and will make their wants the law of the land, or, in matters less pretentious, the custom of the community. What cannot be so made may be of the last moment to the private individual, but not of the first importance to any community. What is publicly important, and it only, gets publicly recognized. It is not publicly important that gentlemen prefer blondes, though it may be of great private importance. Only when it is made publicly important by fanatical decree does it prove incompatible with my own deep preference for the brunette. It is not publicly important what a man privately believes about economics. What men privately believe about religion is of little or no public importance until private men make it so by trying to extend their private beliefs beyond their own privacy. What remains private is of only private importance; and the moment it becomes publicly important, it is on its way to becoming a law. This as a matter of social fact.

As a matter of right, I hazard the observation that that society is best which keeps publicly important things to the minimum and keeps at the maximum the number of things which are privately important alone. This is the sort of philosophy which is implicit in our Bill of Rights — as thoroughgoing divorce as possible between private fact and public responsibility. Whoever bids in the name of conscience to make publicly important what could yet be restricted to private importance, is inviting politicians to take custody of his conscience by thrusting his conscience into the preserves of the politicians.

It is amazing how many beliefs make really no public dif-

ference so long as they do not claim the right to dominate the field. With that claim anything and everything becomes publicly important. So long as tolerance abounds, variety can proliferate; and variety is after all the spice of life. This thought lays upon conscience one inviolable injunction: conscience must so prize what it does prize as to be willing to suffer in itself alone most action indicated by moral belief. It is not a test of the depth of a man's convictions that he is willing to make converts to them. Quite the opposite: it is the test of the inner fiber of a man's beliefs that he still hangs on to them though the whole world pass him by. It is the animal in us which says otherwise, not the human spirit. A man who is willing to fight and die to promulgate his way of life may, for aught that double fact declares, be fighting and dying to inflict his might rather than to enjoy his right. The lives of conquerors do make it seem plausibly so. The real test, then, of how precious a thing is to a man, right down on the inside, is whether he is willing to keep it to himself and enjoy it rather than to inflict it. When tested thus, all too many of the gestures of conscience become a bid for power through claims of rightness rather than a reverent appreciation of ideals in their own right and for their own sake.

It is in this understanding that we may affirm with George Santayana that the " spiritual life " consists in complete " disintoxication " from the worship of values. It is the willingness and the capacity to suffer one's own private preferences, rather than the will to impose them, which renders men spiritual. The disciple of conscience may, as Santayana further suggests, " speak for others with authority when he knows them better than they know themselves, but not otherwise." And we must add, for a democratic society, " when others

admit that he knows them better than they know themselves" — which is seldom or never. It is in this mood that we may, in all earnestness, ask with Santayana: "Is not morality a worse enemy of spirit than immorality? Is it not more hopelessly deceptive and entangling? Those romantic poets, for instance, whose lives were often so irregular — were they not evidently far more spiritual than the good people whom they shocked?"

Politics — which is the mediation of private consciences in conflict by those who accept majority agreement as the only path to public right — politics is the schoolmaster who provokes moral growth by confronting private conscience with this alternative: *Stay strongly within and enjoy yourself or come outside and weaken yourself with the will of the majority.*

X

# RELIGIOUS FICTION

## VAN METER AMES

MY FATHER accepts the philosophical position that value arises from interest or need, and that degrees of value depend not merely upon desire but upon a critical survey of conditions and consequences. He agrees that impulsive blind liking (or disliking) must be supplemented by reflection on what is fundamentally and broadly good for us and for society before we can establish anything like a scale of importance in our valuations. And he regards scientific method as the best procedure for establishing ends as well as means of conduct. Thus science merges with his religion, which is simply devotion to the highest values — the effort to discover most clearly what they are, to secure them most firmly and to share them most fully. I think he agrees that art is insight and technique by which value is focused for contemplation; and that, since art may or may not select highly important values, it may or may not be religious.

The relation between the art of literature and religion in this sense cannot be settled by distinguishing writing on traditionally religious topics such as God, immortality, the life of Jesus, from writing on supposedly non-religious themes such as farming, seafaring, vanity in high society, degradation in the slums, the anxiety, delight or disillusionment of love, the coils of introspection. Ostensibly religious litera-

ture may not be religious for my father, as when Papini told the story of Christ in a hysterical fashion that obscured the realities and distorted the ideals of life. Goody-goody stories in old Sunday school papers failed through similar obscurity and distortion. In both cases the failure was in respect to art as well as to religion. But writing which succeeds in being religious must also be artistic; for if the highest values are effectively presented for imagination, some values are so presented.

The art of fiction facilitates the awareness of value through words. These are amphibious things. They have a sensuous and a significant aspect. Words can be heard and they can be understood. They are bits of sound and arrows of indication. This duality is overcome in so far as the import of a word is felt in its impact; yet the aesthetic effect of literature depends largely upon maintenance of its bipolarity. Any work of art needs two feet to stand on, or two wings to fly with, because it derives balance and propulsion from two sides. Art must focus attention on values by bringing them steadily within the myopia of interest, while holding them off enough to keep them in the far-sighted focus of contemplation. Value can be contemplated only when fixed within the range of interest, yet inaccessible to the sort of practical response which would make it disappear from attention. Contemplation is insured when value is indicated by signs, because then value is reached by continuous heed to the signs of it, while they keep leading to value without bringing it close enough to dispense with the mediation of the sign process. Nearness is managed by the sensuous appeal of the medium; distance is maintained by using the material stuff as a basis for signs. Thus part of the experience of art is im-

mediate, and part is mediated. What can be sensed directly stands for something to be reached indirectly.

A story is composed of words. Whatever these are for sense, they are also elements in a scheme for mind. And in literature it is easier than in other arts to keep the surface inviolate for contemplation, because it is too thin to invite more than a delicate approach of sense. What there is to hear is so limited, what there is to see is so little, that the physical medium of fiction is negligible compared to the volume of what is signified.

Words may refer to things utterly unlike themselves, thanks to usage. The English words for light and air stand for them by agreement, not by resemblance. Onomatopoetic words imitate their objects, as in the tintinnabulation of the bells. Countless combinations of words echo or image forth what they refer to, though taken separately their reference would be purely conventional, as in descriptions of the sea. Rhythms and sounds of words may catch those of nature; natural qualities may be surprisingly reproduced in language, but seldom to such a degree that a conventional reference becomes superfluous. When we know what words are saying we often feel that, taken together, they have some properties of the things they represent — enough to make the choice seem especially appropriate. But when we turn from literary treatment of inhuman things to verbal rendering of human experience, fluctuating from the inner forum to the outer spaces, then we see how far words can go toward identity with what they stand for. The charm of writing lies in its being and not being what it seems; and it is never what it seems in so far as it seems at all. Words are pervious and self-transcending. In themselves they are empty, intangible.

Not they but their tracks are visible. Not they but their wings are audible. But as words conjure up the absent they pull together a verbal pattern that is there. Thus the actual substantiates the imaginary while being etherealized by it. The paradox of literature is that what is physically present is a paper-thin matrix of signs less palpable than paper; while what they represent may be the whole of human experience, and the more than human universe as far as man can conceive it.

Writing which succeeds in being artistic, in focusing values through words, may fall short of being religious if the values it presents do not answer to deep or comprehensive desires, and so are not commensurate with the position and vision of man. One cannot deny the artistry of D'Annunzio, but his absorption in lust, luxury, violence and death amounts to irreligion. The same is true of the *Arabian Nights.* Writing, to be religious, must present values in a way that aids living, by making life seem worth living. Denial or glossing over of the truth, in so far as it is ascertainable, is not indicated. But the religious attitude, being one of affirmation rather than of analysis or doubt, seizes upon every source of encouragement that is available to natural experience and scientific method.

My father is willing to do without supernatural salvation because he does not recognize metaphysical evil as that from which we need to be saved. For him such terms belong to an artificial view, a pre-scientific tradition he repudiates. He rejects Calvinism because instead of fitting man to face his real difficulties it discourages him with the fear of a hidden order he cannot understand or cope with. Thus for him the fiction of Franz Kafka would not be religious, though it is

very much so in the Calvinistic sense of depicting the futile struggle of a finite creature to approach the infinite authority which alone might afford solution for the awful enigma of existence. To one holding that life is good here and now and can be made ever better, Kafka is irreligious, because he is defeatist, disbelieving in the possibility of right action. The hero of *The Trial* and *The Castle* finds life a nightmare. His night is blacker than that of Louis-Ferdinand Céline's narrator in *Voyage au bout de la nuit,* because the devaluation of all values here is caused by the horror of war, whereas it is theology that haunts Kafka's hero. No doubt Kafka's conception of the human lot was shadowed by Europe's anxiety between two wars, but it was overshadowed by a religion which kept him from being religious as my father understands being religious — kept Kafka from hope and love and joy, because it kept him from accepting life in terms of its own natural values.

If a self-enclosed pattern of self-transcendent signs makes writing artistic, a heartening interpretation of life makes writing religious when it studies the conditions of our being to build on them a solid edifice of ideals. Since it is by means of scientific method that our most reliable knowledge is had, there is no conflict between science and religion. Devotion to the good and faith in the possibility of attaining it ever more abundantly is religion. Study of the conditions and consequences of behavior as the basis and justification of such religious faith constitutes science. The link between science and religion is art, wherein the means and ends of life are fused for contemplation. Art renders accessible values more available for appreciation, and brings those which are yet unachieved within the reach of imagination, thereby provid-

ing refreshment from past effort and stimulation for future endeavor. The role of art, as thus understood, is especially evident in the art of fiction. As our circumstances and possibilities are altered by science, fiction reveals the correlative new opportunities and pitfalls — in so far as fiction rises to the level of a responsibility and prophecy that can be called religious. A rude religion may be possible without much art, as a bare science may be. But that either science or religion could develop without the service of some art, or without flowering to some extent into art, seems improbable. The existence of science and religion presupposes and predisposes an awareness of means and ends which is naturally expressed in art, as well as fostered by art. And in our time it is through the art of literature, chiefly in the novel, that the grasp of immediate situations in the light of a larger setting, and the suffusion of remote considerations with immediacy, is most generally and effectively felt.

Stories in the Old Testament are religious, not because they happen to be included in the Bible, but in the degree that they illuminate human life, indicating attitudes and action to be selected and cultivated. In the same way contemporary fiction is religious in helping us to know, with some inspiration, what we are and what we ought to do. Conrad's work has a sailor's respect for the water and wind that encircle, love for the vessels that enable us to make highways of oceans, and emphasis on the sense of duty and loyalty underlying the achievement and dignity of man. Knut Hamsun, in *The Growth of the Soil,* shows how humanity has been rooted to the earth, and how meeting the problems of clearing and developing a piece of ground grows character. How decent and kind, as well as resourceful and courageous, such

farm-grown character can be is manifest in *The Grapes of Wrath*. There John Steinbeck reveals the capacity of man almost to hold his own in a losing struggle with nature and to incorporate the values of the good life, with the meanest of equipment. The moral would be plain, even if not underlined by the author, that, at least in our country, the adversity which overwhelms the Joads and their like might be overcome by an infinitesimal increment of social responsibility on the part of the people as a whole. Readers who are shocked by the language of the Joads and not by their plight, with the implicit indictment, must have shock absorbers in the wrong place.

The same may be said of James T. Farrell's work. Though his city dwellers, presented in unvarnished vulgarity, are less appealing, one is moved to sympathy by the realization that the harshness of civilization is more blighting to the human spirit than the indifference of nature. The implication is that an aroused social conscience could make life worthy of man even in the city. André Malraux, in *Man's Fate* and other novels, upholds the idea that human dignity is something to fight and die for. Believing that social conditions need to be changed, and can be, by concerted effort, he adopts a revolutionary attitude which might not seem religious to people who expect religion to justify the established order or to promise remote compensation for injustice now. But one must feel otherwise who identifies religion with martyrs and crusaders, with a love of humanity that does not count the cost of the ideal. And it is religion, and its churches with all their faults, that are the chief support, not only of the good there is in the midst of present evil, but of the Promethean spirit of reform.

Love, fundamental to religion, is basic in most fiction. While it is conventional to separate sacred and profane love, it is also customary to feel something divine in any experience worthy of the name of love; even to feel that divine love must be more or less human. In a novel like *Anna Karenina* it seems natural and right that the enjoyment of normal domestic bliss should be suffused with thought of God. Perhaps the Freudian obsession with sex in the work of D. H. Lawrence seems less properly associated with ideas of God and salvation, though in his mind the connection is deep. But Lawrence's very preoccupation with sex is evidence that human love is not reducible to biology. That when love is brought down to its lowest terms in the effort to avoid a sentimental romanticism, it yet rises to something ideal or palls, is a fact affirmed by fiction deserving adult readers. The incongruity between the physiological basis and the idealism indissoluble from the emotion has unending interest. Conflict is the source of emotion and of our problem-solving intelligence, and it is out of problems that values are thrown into relief. So the tension between the egoism and the altruism of love is a theme of serious fiction. In *Man's Fate* the finest affection between individuals rivals the love of humanity at the same time that the intense narrower love tends to overflow into the larger. Thomas Mann holds, in one of his essays, and illustrates in his Joseph story, that self-love, if deep enough, will develop into concern for general welfare. And out of the introspective egoistic passion of D. H. Lawrence was growing a missionary zeal, however neurotic, to lead all men to a wholesome sun-filled life.

The fiction of Thomas Mann has been preoccupied with the religious urge to appreciate the real, as represented by

normal persons, without neglecting the equally religious impulse to dream and shape a world more congenial to imagination. Like himself his heroes are torn between these two tendencies. Immersion in life and escape from life lead him to the conception of the human being as loyal to nature, yet bent on pushing beyond the given limitations of experience to further fulfillment. The religious quality of Thomas Mann's outlook has fitted him to rewrite the story of Joseph, in a way to bring out explicitly what was implied in the familiar incidents, with the help of modern archaeology, psychology and biblical scholarship, but especially with imaginative insight into the meaning of the covenant between Abraham and God. My father likes to point out how the idea of God is refined according to the development of the people in the image of whose life he is conceived to be the underlying reality and overarching ideal. So, in Thomas Mann's novel, God is both the power of nature out of which man arose, and the sense of perfection emerging in man's experience; created by him to some extent, but also creating and re-creating man through increasing recognition of possibilities that kindle his aspiration, as he slowly breaks from the inertia of tradition to elevate both himself and his idea of God. Like his mother before him, Joseph wavers between the ever more spiritual religion of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and a primitive nature cult most hypnotic in the Egyptian worship of the dead. Thomas Mann's novel suggests that not only the children of Israel, but all who hope for a future of humane living, must escape from Pharaoh. This religious-minded writer feels that excesses of nationalism today constitute a reactionary attachment to nature; that is, to the matrix we should be outgrowing toward a world

community which, since it lies ahead, appealing to our idealism, he identifies with spirit. He does not wish repudiation of one's own people, but believes that loyalty to the best in anyone's heritage is compatible with yearning for an order based on common humanity. Thomas Mann, more than Malraux, values the past attainment of the race, especially the humanism of Western civilization, but feels that the good things of this tradition can be preserved only through reconstructive social thought and effort.

Marcel Proust is often considered the epitome of European decadence in his morbid introspection alternating with exaggerated interest in the etiquette of lingering aristocracy. But, however snobbish he may have been at the outset, his disillusionment with the life about him led him to expose the vanity of it with the wrath of a prophet whose denunciation is a " thus saith " of the conviction that there is or ought to be a better way of life.

The tendency of the best in recent fiction to have social significance does not mean that the world-saving aspect of religion is all that concerns writers today. Despite the influence of Jules Romains and John Dos Passos in looking over any one man's head to the crowd, the importance of the individual, not only as the focal point of society but as the locus of indefeasible value in himself, is recognized by many authors, including those already mentioned. Among literary folk the continuing and growing admiration of Henry James is to the point. How can he, expatriate, chronicler of idle lives, be taken seriously in a world of social crisis? Escape is too easy an answer. Horror at what is happening in public is not the only reason for absorption in what is private. The explanation is that his concern with the individual, the

person, the self, the soul as it has been called in religion, is not obsolete or peculiar, but is shared by everyone who is at all self-conscious. If, as Whitehead says, religion is what we do with our solitariness, then even the subjectivity of James, Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and even of Dorothy Richardson, has a religious quality. The self is social. It comes from company and returns to it. Yet, as George H. Mead has remarked, it is not at home in the universe the way the physical organism is, or a machine.

The habitat of the self is society, which is located in a setting of non-human phenomena. How society arose there and what its relation is to the larger environment, we cannot see clearly. We must represent the vast impersonal and inanimate realms in such symbols as we can. In mystical vein we may even feel akin to whatever the surrounding reality is. But only in speaking of other people can we have a strong sense of knowing what we are talking about; only in addressing them can we feel that we are not wasting our breath. That is why religion, to save us from isolation, posits ideal persons to commune with, and interprets them as central in the apparently alien universe, so as to raise its moral temperature to a degree we can bear. But ideal persons would be small comfort to us if they were inhuman, if they did not extend and strengthen the redeeming aspects of personal relationships in everyday life. These at their best are the best of life. They constitute life as we love it. And in the religion of my father, life as we love it is God.

Characters in the fiction of Henry James are not ideal beings, and their relations are strained. He is not a prophet, a philosopher, or even a psychologist. He has no remarkable ideas. But he feels acutely the attraction and repulsion of

personalities. Following social interplay through an observing self, he shows the observations of this central self to be the main drama. People talk and act, they notice the background of city or natural scenery, but the hub of interest is in the self whose awareness envelops other persons and draws them to a private room where the action is reflection. This inner process is itself social, being peopled always with a dramatis personae, yet solitary in having absorbed others into itself.

Does consciousness exist? William James asked. And as fast as we can state its content objectively, we do so. In some ways it is helpful to think of consciousness as a function, a mode of behavior, rather than as an entity or substance. But however it is to be described or accounted for, it is this strangely reflexive activity, constituting the essence of what it means to be a person, which interests Henry James. He wrote fiction filled with the truth that human life is a mystery focused in consciousness. The organism which becomes conscious is lodged in nature. But all the paths and milky ways of nature are lanes in the experience of a self which entertains not only the not-self but itself. Being aware, and awake to what is involved in being aware, feeling the personal, interpersonal and superpersonal quality of such more than physical sensitiveness, makes Henry James a very religious writer, in the respect in which perhaps my father also is most religious. It is this quality in the work of Henry James which justifies his conviction of the high seriousness of the novel as a form of art; for art is the means of making values vivid to imagination.

Values are the goals of need and desire. Religion is devotion to the most important of these. None is deeper than

the need to appreciate the essence of ourselves and of our relation to other selves. None is higher than the desire to transcend the animal organism with its physical environment, to live in a society of sympathy and understanding. Fiction based upon this appreciation, and contributing to this transcendence, is religious.

XI

# ART AND RELIGION

B. FRED WISE

RELIGION and art are slippery words, and difficult of understanding because they represent such complex sets of ideas and practices. To some religion may mean the church and its organizations, or it may mean a practice that is individualistic or, on the contrary, some practice entirely social. Ethics, morality, philosophy, practices, activity, contemplation are all involved in the word religion.

So it behooves one to define the terms. For the purpose of this paper, religion is an activity of life that seeks to bring a certain quality to the world of men and affairs. This quality is recognizable and describable. When we say that a man is religious we mean that he uses, practically and with intention, the general principles of both intelligence and love as he adjusts himself to his fellows and to the cosmos, and that he uses them constantly and consistently.

We know men who are successful in making money because they have been ruthless; business and labor organizations have won values which they deemed necessary by using force; nations war with each other, killing and destroying. None of these activities brings a quality to life that could by any stretch of the imagination be called religious. But

schools, churches, settlements, hospitals, railroads, science, industry, all may bring a quality to life that is religious because in their evolution they may apply a technique of love and intelligence.

Art is that activity in man's life that seeks to bring a quality of beauty and loveliness to the world. To some this statement may seem to restrict unduly the meaning of art. Some feel that art is expression, and so it is, but art defined as expression will include much that is ugly. Such a definition also excludes nature, and nature is lovely. She is the first teacher of loveliness. But nature is not an expression of art because art is a man-made invention.

Religion and art are then, by definition, two man-made activities, one seeking to qualify the associated life of man with love and intelligence, the other seeking to organize a complex body of sense impressions, techniques and natural phenomena into something lovely and beautiful.

The sincere devotees of art and religion have sought to extend these values to all men. This fact involves an understanding of the techniques of both their practice and their extension, and thus technique becomes very important.

The importance of technique among artists is an old story. Conscious technique among religionists is new. Technique in art is the method by which an artist obtains his results. If we could be realistic, the same observation would hold for religion. The technique of religion could be developed and passed on in the same manner as that of the arts has been. Religious education has tried to do this but because of tradition and lack of vision it has accomplished little in this direction. However, the religious educator will show the way as he continues to study human nature as it operates

and as he studies the technique for realizing the ends of religion.

The intelligent aspect of religion with respect to technique consists of both the ends and the means. These techniques lie in the realm of ideas which, when emerging into action, are motivated by love. This means first, of course, that ideas are functional, active, in flux, and not static. It means that ideas must be shared and not held in some kind of objective suspension. Ideas from this point of view must be operative in life among and between men and groups.

What are these ideas that are usable as religious techniques and instruments? In the Christian religion they are, from this point of view, such as are found in the Golden Rule, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount. These are great words. If they remain in a book or suspended in our minds, they are not functional. If used as techniques and instruments and applied by men and women and larger social groups, they would change the face of our civilization from a society dominated by competition to one of creative peace. These ideas must be handed down from generation to generation and tested by each individual. The religious genius will find them easy to operate while others will find them difficult.

Now similarly with art. Art has had a slow growth, as has religion. Techniques have arisen and canons or ideals have been established. In art as in religion it has been the genius who has pushed forward the frontiers. It was a genius who scratched in simple line, and possibly in some color, the animals on the walls of caves in Spain and Provence. He had had an impression and recorded it with the simple tools at hand. His work set a standard and developed

an idea. Others followed and slowly an art developed to bring loveliness and beauty to the world. A man had really seen with his eyes, and a purely sense impression had been placed on a flat surface by the organization of simple lines, culminating in a structure and a form. The basis of all art is similar. There is a sense impression of hearing, of seeing, of feeling, and this impression is recorded by the artist working in the medium of his choice. For example, a painter by observation has built up for himself his ideas of line, of color, of value, of form, of structure. These ideas used in some kind of organization will constitute a further idea of the whole impression which he is reproducing. The musician with his ideas of rhythm, melody and harmony will throw these lesser ideas into a composition which is a more complete idea of the impression he wishes to reproduce. So the artist is one who brings these organized sense impressions into being, as the religious man is one who brings love and intelligence into practice.

The dissimilarities of art and religion are in terms of the mediums in which they work. Religion works with, in and through people. Its object is always the person, real or idealized. The artist, however, works with a different medium. Art comes through a person working with sound, stone, paint, wood or bronze. The artist works on these inanimate things and by organization brings something into being that is beautiful and thereby adds a quality to our total life. An architect organizes stone, wood and steel into a building. Consequently, where inchoate space was, now organized space obtains. The composer-musician by the use of scales, harmonies, rhythm, organizes his tonal ideas into a structure and gives it written form. The violinist, organist or singer

adds his violin, organ or voice and all the techniques involved to make the music live, creating and adding a quality of loveliness to the world.

Religion also differs from art in that it must be social. Religion is actuated in its inception by individuals, but its practices must work out in society. It is the genius of religion to be evangelistic and all-inclusive. Most art also is social and it is important from the functional point of view that it be so, but it is not necessarily so. Art can be practiced in solitude. A man may work at his painting in the quiet of his studio; he may sing his songs on the mountaintop; he may build his house on an island in the Pacific, taking no cognizance of his fellows in his activity. There could be art with one person in the world but there could be no real religion under such circumstances.

What are the similarities between art and religion? There are many. No doubt the multiplicity of similarities accounts for the close association between art and religion as actually worked out in man's associated life. First, both activities work in the realm of ideas that in their nature must find consummation in action. Ideas expressed in philosophy and history need not of necessity work out into practice. But by definition religious ideas must work out into the realm of associated life. Ideas of tone, of color, of line, must work out into music, into painting, into building.

Moreover, both activities arise from tensions. Religion arises out of the tensions occurring in life; art arises out of the tensions involved in observations of the world. Out of these tensions, in so far as religion is concerned, attitudes, adages, philosophies, rituals, ceremonials, theologies, churches and organizations arise. Out of the restlessness and sensi-

tivity of the artist, paintings, music, churches and museums have arisen. Again the advances in both art and religion are the result of tensions which arise in individuals who have been touched by the already produced expressions of art and religion. Both activities depend on techniques and the perfection of these techniques. This is generally understood among artists; it is not so well understood among religionists. The long and arduous training of the artist is proof of the value which the artist places upon technique. There is no freedom of artistic expression until the artist perfects his technique. He is unable to take vigorously his responsibility for bringing loveliness into the world in his fullest efficiency until color and sound can be used with abandon. As religionists we can learn from the artist in this respect. To be sure, the field of religion is more complex but the method is the same.

Art and religion are alike in that they hold a place for both action and contemplative appreciation. The religionist turning the other cheek, loving his enemies, building for a better society, also prays, attends ceremonials, reads the Scriptures and appreciates the religious nobility in the life of leaders and of common men. And it is an observable fact that those who excel in action have the greatest capacity for appreciation. Jesus could best appreciate Gandhi; and similarly St. Francis, Schweitzer.

Both religion and art are spiritual and both deal with something that involves a total and consummatory experience. A person using the ideas of religion continuously, logically and habitually, develops a religious quality or spirit. He will have a quality that adds up to more than the sum of all the individual techniques. So with the artist. After

long practice with color, with value, with composition, the painter will throw on the canvas all these elements in such expressive design that the observer can catch a feeling and quality that is more than the sum of the individual elements of the picture. This will be high art, and will stand as a purveyor of loveliness to a waiting world.

In their ultimate characteristics both religion and art work in the realm of the imagination. Here man lifts himself by the creative powers that are within him, in the area of religion by projecting the great ideals for the individual and for society, in art by the better rearranging of sense impressions. No one can be either religious or artistic without cultivating the imagination and allowing for the releases and inspirations that ensue.

Finally, there are the uses religion makes of art. It has been noted that of the two activities religion is much more inclusive and stands for a much wider range of ideas and practices. In fact, from the functional point of view religion is a quality that should illuminate all of life. Art is the organization of sense impressions. Art is not essential to religion and religion is not essential to art. When religion feels the need of a more vivid stirring of the imagination, where plastic symbols are needed, art is used.

Religious systems have varied greatly in the uses of art, just as they have varied in the uses of science and organizational processes. Historically early Semitic religions used little art; early Egyptian used much. The Greeks did not discriminate between what was religion and what was art. The early Christian church was torn by the iconoclastic controversy. Most modern ethical religions are quite barren of artistic expression. When the Gothic cathedrals were

built, the Roman Catholic Church used artistic devices to enliven every sense — glowing colored glass for the eyes, sculpture for the sense of touch, music for the ears, incense for the sense of smell, aspiring heights for the sense of equilibrium, vast space for the sense of distance.

Some devotees of art object to art's being thus used. The art-for-art's-sake cult insists that art is prostituted if used for any other purpose than for itself, that art is an end in itself. It has also been said that religion enslaves art, and Byzantine iconography is cited as an illustration of this. Such an example, however, is as much a commentary on religion as on art. It may be pointed out that great revolutions have occurred in art as a result of the interest of the artist in depicting religious subjects. The wall of the Arena Chapel in Padua by Giotto gave intimation of the coming Renaissance. Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence brought to light new methods of handling perspective. Michelangelo created a new world of form in the Sistine Chapel. Certainly our Western music was born and nourished within the walls of the sanctuary and flowered there. And now even Picasso with his Guernica murals brings a real religious note to modern art.

Art is indeed a handmaid of religion, symbolizing, ritualizing and objectifying the intellectual phase as the need for such symbols arises, warming, enriching and dramatizing the emotional phase of religion.

## XII

# THE ARCHITECTURE OF A FREE CHURCH

HENRY K. HOLSMAN

HOW HARDLY can an observer record the influence on architecture of forty years of the life of a great and benevolent philosopher and teacher, lived in such a sensitive and impressionably youthful community as that to be found in and around a great university, even though the observer and reporter be a student and practitioner of architecture.

Architecture is the complicated and subtle art of designing buildings to be created, used and enjoyed by men. A building is not a manifestation of nature except that the mind of man, its creator, is itself a manifestation of nature — human nature. The product of architecture is compounded of selected material and imposed spiritual forces, composed of the stamina of "sticks and stones" and their form and color in light and shade, and the mental and emotional forces of human nature.

In details, architecture is not unlike a language, a system of symbols derived from the static and active phenomena of nature. The virtues of life and death, truth and beauty, courage and strength, rhythm and repose, may be easily expressed by architectural units; and just as unit word symbols may be composed into related phrases to express more ade-

quately the whole meaning, so architectural units may be composed into related rhythmical spaces to express more completely the design and to fulfill its whole function.

Good design consists of just enough material of just the right form and color, no more and no less, to fulfill all its functions easily, gracefully; that is, to produce pleasing emotions in the user or beholder. Architecture is the invention not of a man, but of a race of men, and whether it be good is not the judgment of any critic, however learned, but the opinion, the active response, of the people who use it or behold it.

Perhaps we can best understand the inner meaning or the underlying essence of architecture by examining the fundamentals of the design of a common house. In domestic architecture the home is a sort of chambered nautilus of light and air, where the human family organism, sheltered from adverse elements, is born and reared, works and plays in fulfillment of its function in the universe of life. Spaces must be provided for sociability and privacy and repose, for preparing and consuming food, for cleansing, and for receiving things and discharging refuse — all family functions encumbered with all the manifold manifestations of the opposing yet cooperating spirit of growth and decay, life and death. If the arrangement of these forms and spaces is such that pleasing emotions are produced or heightened and irritations are avoided or suppressed, within and without the family life, the form fulfills its function and the architecture is good.

Since "all things human change," except perhaps human nature itself, domestic architecture need not follow old traditions in form so long as it provides for the prevailing family functions; in fact it must follow in tune with modern changes

in community life and customs, in transportation, communication, schools, libraries, theaters, parks, hospitals, churches and other extensions of the home, all of which serve to simplify, modernize and intensify the individual family institution and its house.

The exterior aspects of the details of form and color in which the house is clothed seem to be determined somewhat by tradition, but mostly by transitory fashion. It is interesting to note that in countries and communities where, by long established fashion, people's hats are high-pitched with broad, upturned rims, as in China, the prevailing roofs take on the same form. Where the head is turbaned, as in India, the important buildings are finished with domes, and where hats are brimless and flat on top, house roofs are flat and without projection over the walls. If this be a truly psychological effect on architectural style, it is probable that as long as men prefer protecting brims on their hats they will require projecting roofs and eaves to cover their houses. In America, however, effective tradition in houses is short-lived. They require only the comfortable baronial doorway or the useless early colonial window blinds to produce the feeling of satisfactory regard for recent ancestral notions.

Church architecture, on the other hand, must house a religious institution whose functions, ceremonial forms and rituals are rooted in the remote past. So long as religious usage clings to these traditions, the housing of the institution must, in some measure, cling to the corresponding, concomitant architectural forms, modified perhaps as much as the particular traditional religious service has been modified to suit modern community life.

Since the main church room is to accommodate an audi-

ence rather than a mass of people, the traditional nave becomes enclosed, separated side aisles disappear and an auditorium is produced whose material, form and proportion may augment and clarify the spoken word, retain the necessary resonance for musical sound, and yet impress the mind with traditional religious feeling without violating modern conceptions of beauty and integrity.

So the design of a church by and for Dr. Ames and his congregation partakes of English Gothic, with moldings, niches, symbolic carvings and paintings, softened by the dictates of modern taste, the most modern symbol being that invented by Dr. Ames himself and carved over the entrance to his robing room.

Further persistence of tradition, or blending of the past with the present, is seen in the baptismal pool placed out of sight — out of mind, too — under the stage platform of the Sunday school assembly room, and the traditional altar in the chancel, replaced by a table spread with the ceremonial elements of the last supper of the disciples of Christ, the symbolic base of this denomination.

The integrity and sincerity of the inspirer of this building, Dr. Ames, is reflected by the thick masonry walls of actual stone inside and outside, and his courageous spirit of exuberant youth is expressed by the high solid stone columns and soaring arches separating his social side aisle from the auditorium.

But in all spatial architecture " the plan is the thing," fundamental. Therefore the best evaluation of Dr. Ames's influence on architecture, the subject of this essay, can be reached by a study of the plan of the church building he and his associates produced in the middle period of his forty

years of thinking and teaching in this community. The building is his creation. His mental and emotional forces assembled the means and materials and selected the craftsmen and experts to interpret his thoughts and translate them into a fulfillment of the functions of a religious house as he conceived them.

Why, for example, is the narthex to the auditorium for formal religious services merged into the same space as the vestibule to the less formal "church house" for the social form of religious service, or why was the east aisle enlarged and equipped with a fireplace to invite the lingering audience, friends and disciples, to discuss the intimate affairs of life with, as they have just been interpreted by, the preacher? Why were the attractive dining room and adequate kitchen placed in such juxtaposition to the lounge and narthex that the congregation is naturally invited to pass from the symbolic last supper of Christ to the real breaking of bread with the disciples and their children at noonday dinners or midweek suppers? The answer is clear in Dr. Ames's character and in his teachings of the meaning of modern religion to the multitudes of disciples who have been attracted and held under the spell of the voices of this arrangement of "sticks and stones," an arrangement that gently persuaded them, young and old, to linger all day and well into the evening within these walls whose suggestive sights and sounds they learned to love and respect.

The building is not a perfect or complete expression of the leader's thoughts and feelings to every beholder, any more than the millions of words and phrases he sent forth from its chancel are a complete expression to all those who heard, but what they heard here supplemented by what they saw here,

what they felt in the presence of these "sticks and stones" and what the relative spaces, architectural phrases, impressed on them within these walls, became in some measure a part of their being and went with them radiantly everywhere to be expressed by them to their associates and their children's children to the ends of the earth. That is, in some measure, the architectural influence of Dr. Edward Scribner Ames.

XIII

# RELIGION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

STERLING W. BROWN

BOTH RELIGION and higher education in colonial America were importations from Europe where the college had developed as an offspring of the church. Despite the fact that the seed of the colonial churches was sown by religious radicals, some of them virtual exiles from their homelands, the resulting harvest of institutions proved to be made up of reproductions of European prototypes. It was not until after the Revolution and the attainment of national independence that the roots of the American denominations were severed from their European soil. This was true in spite of the fact that the American people at the time of the Revolution possessed a larger degree of religious freedom than was to be found in any other country.[1]

The European lineage of higher education in colonial America was even more direct than that of religion. The first institution of higher learning (Harvard, 1636) was a miniature model of Emanuel College in the English university, Cambridge, and was located in Newtowne, renamed " Cambridge " after the place in England where many Harvard patrons had received their education. William and Mary (1693) and Yale (1701) were typically English in their ideals and pattern. The other colonial colleges, Columbia (Kings), Brown, Rutgers, Pennsylvania University,

Dartmouth and Princeton were not essentially different. Through this heritage the early American college was a descendant of the medieval universities which were creations of the church.

The religious purpose was dominant in the founding of each of the colonial colleges and, with the exception of Pennsylvania University, each institution was sponsored by a religious denomination. Not only were these early institutions of higher education religious in motivation and sponsorship, but their curriculums were blends of the liberal arts and the theological studies of their European prototypes. Their primary function was the "propagation of the faith" — to educate ministers and "to teach and engage the children to know God in Jesus Christ." It may be said that the three R's of the colonial institutions of higher learning were "readin' and 'ritin' and religion." This conception of the colleges and universities as institutions for the preservation and propagation of religious faith was rooted in Old World tradition and practice where universities and colleges were functional operations of religion.

American higher education and religion did not long remain static. Both colleges and churches soon developed distinctive characteristics. The American arts college, as it developed against the background of frontier culture, has no exact counterpart in the educational systems of other countries. The larger religious denominations, in the face of economic, social and political influences, developed adaptations and distinctive trends which were peculiarly American. One of these peculiarities was the relationship which they sustained to higher education.

In the minds of the founding fathers of American democ-

racy, education belonged primarily under the control of religion. Neither education nor religion was provided for in the Constitution. This did not indicate a lack of interest in religion. Since there were too many churches to select any one of them as an established religion, and since schools were traditionally connected with churches, the practical solution was to leave both religion and education to the states. As a consequence there was embedded in the Constitution the principle that Congress should make no law "respecting an establishment of religion."

Very early in the national period there came a new motivation for general education. If government was to be a function of the people they must be provided with education enough to assure intelligent citizenship. So the responsibility for general education began to shift from the church to the state. The result was a system of general education directed and supported by the individual states. Higher education remained almost completely in the hands of the church until the rise of the state universities and colleges in the second half of the nineteenth century. Even then the churches remained in control of their own institutions of higher learning and established others, but there was a gradual shading off of denominational control and in some instances the development of great urban institutions supported by philanthropy.

After the Revolutionary War the American churches followed the westward moving population across the Alleghenies to the Mississippi valley and across the plains and Rockies to the Pacific. This shifting frontier culture demanded that education be brought to the students; it was too far to send them back east. Thus higher education served

for the spread of general culture and the propagation of the Christian faith. The total number of these colleges became surprisingly large during the first half of the nineteenth century, nearly every state containing at least one for each large denomination. The general culture of the period was poured in denominational molds under "Christian influences." It remained for the period following the Civil War to bring forth the rapid spread of state universities, colleges and normal schools with tax support. There were, to be sure, several state universities before 1870, but they were small and had little prestige. Even in these tax-supported institutions it was difficult to maintain a proper balance in the employment of faculties in order to keep a non-denominational character and free the curriculum of "the incubus of Baptist Latin, Congregational Greek, Methodist philosophy and Presbyterian astronomy." So it may be said that higher education in America before 1870 was provided very largely by the schools of the different religious denominations rather than by the state. Of the 246 colleges established by the end of the year 1860, but 17 were state institutions. These facts indicate the reciprocal relationship which religion and higher education sustained up to the last quarter of the century, when the rise of tax-supported institutions drove a wedge into this relationship and temporarily erected a barrier between the higher learning and the higher living.

Higher education began to be thought of as an obligation of the government very early in our national history. President Washington cherished the idea of establishing a national university in the city of Washington, even leaving in his will a substantial sum of money to start the endowment. (Nothing is known today as to what became of the money.) Presi-

dents Adams, Madison, Monroe and the second Adams also favored the idea, but nothing ever came of it. The idea that the several states should provide and support institutions of higher education had more success. After the coming of nationality there arose a feeling that the existing church colleges represented the interests of particular groups and not the interests of the state itself. The rise of the new democratic spirit after 1820 intensified this view. It was argued that colleges were institutions to mold the society of the future, and that this was an affair of the state. Hence a desire arose to crown the school system with great universities supported and controlled by the states. The extreme view held that all higher education should be under the control of the state, but the Dartmouth College decision blocked development in this direction. The result was twofold: increased private and denominational efforts on the one hand and the establishment of state institutions on the other. Prior to this decision several states had already made beginnings. The Georgia legislature, in 1784, set aside forty thousand acres of land to endow a "seminary of learning" — the embryonic form of Georgia University. The University of North Carolina was chartered in 1789. South Carolina organized a university in 1801. The University of Tennessee was projected in 1794; Virginia, Indiana, Alabama, Ohio, Vermont, Michigan, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri and Florida followed.

The spread of the tax-supported institutions was given tremendous impetus with the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, by which the federal government gave aid to the states in the form of land grants for the establishment of agricultural and mechanical colleges. Although the financial returns from

land grants were not as high as was expected, the educational returns were astounding. New and vigorous colleges were created; small state universities awakened into new life; agriculture and engineering developed as professions; individual states have since contributed ever increasing appropriations for their institutions, until today they overshadow all but the larger denominational or endowed universities.[2]

This shift of higher education from the church to the state brought about a strained relationship between religious forces and the tax-supported institutions. State universities, fearing the charge of sectarianism, tended to ignore religion as a vital interest of life and a part of the cultural heritage. They did not dare offer religious instruction at public expense. With few exceptions the professors and administrators were sympathetic toward religion. Few state universities have ever deserved the charge of being "godless." It was unfortunately a fact that in the mind of the time religion did not rise above or exist independent of sectarianism. Many of the privately endowed institutions retained, by virtue of their original religious purposes, religious instruction as a part of their curriculums, but it sometimes suffered through neglect.

The problem of religion in the denominational colleges took a different turn. These included (or required) religious instruction as a part of the curriculum and professed in public utterances of their presidents and professors that they were Christian. But their institutional practices and the reactionary attitude of students against required courses in religion and compulsory chapel attendance weakened these claims. From a functional point of view the orthodox denominational colleges merely maintained and promoted their own religious faiths.

While the state universities originally gave little, if any, place to religious instruction, sympathetic support was given to religion as an extra-curricular activity. This interest has been expressed by student religious organizations such as the Christian associations. It is important to note, however, that the function of these organizations has not been strictly educational. They have been more concerned with the practice of religion and have not approached it from the point of view of the scholar who would develop his subject as a field of study to be treated objectively.

A new move to take religious instruction into tax-supported institutions began a few years before the opening of the twentieth century. This new movement took the form of Bible chairs, schools of religion or foundations placed beside the campuses of state schools. Their functions usually included religious instruction, religious guidance and promotion of religious activities. This technique has had a phenomenal growth since the opening of the present century. Tax-supported institutions cooperated by giving credit for the instruction and encouragement for the practical activities. At the present time almost every state university in the United States offers accredited courses in religion which are for the most part supported voluntarily by individuals and religious organizations. At least a half-dozen state institutions now include religious instruction as a part of their regular curricular offerings, financed by state support. Among others are the universities of Michigan, Virginia, Oregon and South Carolina, and Iowa State College.

These facts indicate that there has come about a new rapprochement between religion and higher education. This has been possible because of a correction of the ideals of re-

ligion on one side and reconsideration of the fundamental nature of education on the other. The result is that religion and higher education have moved toward a recognition of a common goal. This unity promises to become even more complete under the force of the present criticism of the tendency in American higher education toward vocationalism.

The current tendency of these two significant human interests to move toward a closer unity is a natural consequence of their objectives, which have emerged out of the historic and functional relationship between American churches and colleges. Institutionally religion and education may be separated from each other, but functionally no such division is possible except by focusing attention on the opposite extremes of the two functional areas. Church and state cannot draw a clear line of demarcation between their areas of service. Man is not a being with distinct temporal and eternal interests. Therefore there is no validity in the antithesis which sets religious interests over against secular interests. There are no compartments of the personality divided off from others which are non-religious. There is one personality requiring for its highest development the training of all its powers. When the ideals and objectives of progressive higher education are compared to those of progressive religion, there is between them no such gap as has been commonly supposed. Religion and higher education do not enter divergent paths, but tend toward a higher unity in their objectives. If love is the supreme law of religion it is none the less valid for education. Both the church and the state have a tremendous stake in higher education. In the present chaotic condition of American culture every resource of both church and state is needed to the end that the higher learn-

ing may eventuate in the higher living. The church emphasizes the problem of being; the state is more concerned with doing. Religion deals with the ends of life; the university is more concerned with the means of life. Both higher education and religion work for a closer connection between the actual and the ideal.

The shift of American higher education from the humanistic to the technical has not been altogether favorable for its unity with religion, for there has resulted no well rounded training of the modern man. Even he cannot live by bread alone, nor by the sciences, though both are essential for the attainment of the good life. They are the means of life but not the end, as they have tended to become.[3] There has been too much effort put into training to make a living rather than teaching how to live the best possible life. This neglect of the higher values of human life is the outstanding weakness of higher education as sponsored in tax-supported institutions. For value is a term indicating those goods which make life meaningful, "those things for which we act, the termini of all our striving."[4] Spiritual or religious values are the interests which lift us out of our everyday world and present to us the possibilities of higher living — the possibility of being heroic, sacrificing and loving in our attitude toward the world of human need. These values emerge out of the experiences of the race and are relative. Religious values are higher values that arise as a phase of a culture. Their most distinctive characteristic is their "cosmic" nature, values that somehow inhere in the reality of the world so that they have a peculiar validity and an enduring nature. The three great themes of higher education are truth, adjustment and value. Our institutions of higher learning have

in the past concentrated upon truth. In recent decades there has been a new emphasis upon adjustment. But of the three, value is of the greatest importance.

It is on this theme of value that religion and higher education meet. It is at this point also that American higher education has been woefully weak. The truth-adjustment type of training has not produced a citizenry ready to assume that democratic function which is a necessary part of our national ideal. The right use of knowledge is quite as important as the possession of it. And there must be a place at which the higher values are the subject of investigation and instruction on the basis of existing data. If the university is to teach how to live as regards maintenance, effectiveness and enjoyment, it is important that values be included as a curricular subject. It is important because during the last fifty years a change has been coming over Western culture — a decadence due to the lack of any central and unifying principle. Dogmas, creeds and traditions have crumbled. What is important is, of course, that the spirit which vitalized and developed these dogmas, creeds and traditions has also been lost. The old order has collapsed and we have not yet developed a higher order to take its place. No thoughtful observer looking over Europe today can fail to realize that we are separated from complete chaos only by a natural barrier that grows more narrow each day.

There are some indications that a recovery of unity in the two fields of religion and higher education is on the way. The taproot of that recovery draws its life from the growing recognition by higher education of the vital connection between truth and value. Therefore it would be particularly appropriate for every institution of higher learning to present

to its students as historic facts the great value schemes which we call religious. For the university should be concerned with the giving of a sympathetic interpretation of the human situation as it really is. In addition to the analysis and classification of these realities by the scientific method, the university must present the world of values and ideals, comprising the noblest attainments of human faculties. Among other subjects within this category will be art and its companion aesthetics, philosophy with its statement of what seems reasonable, and religion expressing the fundamental convictions of the human race.

Curricular offerings in these subjects are the scaffolding upon which the student may stand as he builds his temple of faith. These subjects are non-sectarian and they bear the same relation to religious faith that studies in fine arts have to an appreciation of the beautiful. There is no legitimate reason why religious instruction should not be offered in all institutions of higher learning. To omit it is not only to commit a cultural blunder but to remove from the heart of education any adequate consideration of value. Every student is entitled to a consideration of the spiritual heritage of the race, for religion has a place along with morality, art and science as an aspect of the cultural environment of mankind. If religion as a vital phase of our American culture is cut off from the main arteries of civilization, the institutions of higher education, it cannot function as a unifying force in the life of the nation. Religion must be either an inherent and permanent agent of civilization in its wholeness, or it is an artificial element cut off from the sources of its energy. And the present situation calls for a religion reconciled with and springing from the intellectual achievements of modern

life. Today there is a new framework for human values. The twentieth century individual is committed to what the physical, biological and social sciences teach him about the world he lives in. This means that there is an ethical and religious revolution of major scope and power under way among us.

The inherent difficulties that arise with the inclusion of religious instruction in the curriculum of a university are the same as those existing in the teaching of art. Values tend to be caught rather than taught. But a consideration of the nature and function of religion is a necessary basis for the development of a vital religious faith in the same way in which a study of the basic nature of form is necessary for an understanding and appreciation of art. Therefore there should be in all institutions of higher learning a spirit that will open the way for the student to develop a religious outlook upon life. This spirit will enhance an attitude of mind which is reverent toward the greatness and mystery of the universe, an awareness of man's dependence upon it. Reverence is not religion but it is the favorable soil out of which a religious faith grows. And in the light of modern knowledge the wonder and beauty of the natural world are not less. The inclusion of basic studies in the field of values in the curriculums of institutions of higher education would help to span the gap between these two great functional areas of human endeavor. Not to do so hastens the degeneration of higher education into fact-gathering and logical exercise and relegates religion into the limbo of superstition and ancient pietisms.

## NOTES

[1] William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America* (Harper & Bros., 1930), p. 4.

[2] Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919; revised ed., 1934), p. 211.

[3] Robert Ulich, *Fundamentals of Democratic Education* (American Book Co., 1940), pp. 163–64.

[4] William E. Hocking, "Can Values be Taught?" in *The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order,* a volume issued by the Conference of Universities on the Obligation of Universities to the Social Order (New York University Press, 1932), p. 332.

XIV

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ROY G. ROSS

THE DEVELOPMENT of the religious education movement in America during the past quarter-century constitutes a superb demonstration of the possibilities of a functional approach to religion. The modern religious education movement began with the turn of the twentieth century. It rose out of a growing consciousness that a more effective type of Christian education was essential to the preservation of religion as an integral part of our culture. The impulse was stimulated by the increasing emphasis on education and the rapid advances of our public school system and by the new tendency to apply scientific method to the processes of personality development.

This religious education movement has been nurtured by a new series of national and state organizations, both denominational and interdenominational in scope, which came into being largely as expressions of an expanding fellowship having the children and youth of America as its focus of interest. This basis of organization was strongly in contrast with agencies of a preceding generation which were designed to perpetuate particular bodies of dogma and to add members to the respective branches of the church. The heritage of faith which was used in either case was the same. The out-

come was different because of the difference in the beginning point.

### ORGANIZATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In 1903, the Religious Education Association was formed under the leadership of the foremost educators of the nation, with President William Rainey Harper as its chief officer. This association, which was a fellowship of individuals outside the ecclesiastical machinery of the church, announced its purpose to be "to inspire the educational forces of our country with the religious ideal; to inspire the religious forces of our country with the educational ideal." It attempted to carry on a critical analysis of all aspects of existing and proposed programs for religious training. In its field it made a significant contribution. Through the years, it has revealed both the strengths and the weaknesses of an agency which attempted to operate within the range of interests common to persons of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths.

In the years immediately following the formation of this association, the impact of the same educational approach began to find expression in the organized life of the church itself. During the early years of the twentieth century, a series of denominational boards had come into being, dedicated to the task of improving the quality of work done by their respective local churches. Boards already existing were stirred by a new interest in providing a trained leadership and in building programs on scientific principles.

As the staffs of these boards centered their attention upon improved services to children and youth, they soon became aware of the vast range of interests which were common

to the several denominations. The natural result was the organization of the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations. Through this council, denominational leaders with their respective deep-rooted convictions joined forces in many activities intended to improve the teaching work of their churches. They set themselves to evaluating prevailing procedures in the light of a growing body of educational theory, and to testing such theory in demonstration projects. They took account of scientific studies regarding the nature of the pupil and the laws of learning and character development. Through the council a new type of leadership training was developed along lines which were adopted by many denominations. Common standards were devised for measuring the progress of local Sunday schools and classes.

During the next decade, these same professional leaders found that they had a common bond with laymen who were also attempting to serve childhood and youth. Thus there came another merger.

### THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The organization of the International Council of Religious Education in 1922, as a merger of the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations and the International Sunday School Association, was both a triumph of united Protestantism and a tribute to the validity of a functional approach to religion. The history of the council's activities during the past two decades moreover has substantiated the conviction of those who had faith in this approach. Through the years the council has centered its attention upon persons — children, youth and adults. It has not attempted to resolve differences of conviction by devising a common theological

formulation. It has conceded the right of individuals and denominations to these differences but centered its attention upon tasks to be done. It has not set out to effect Christian union, but it has developed an amazing unity of mind and spirit as a by-product of functional cooperation.

The council has included in its membership individuals and denominations of many shades of conviction as respects theology, sociology and church polity. It has welcomed the contributions of all in the task of discovering how to assist children to develop and deepen the religious values in their lives. Its committees for various functions have consisted of such leaders as chose voluntarily to participate in their work. No participant has been expected to use the product of the joint effort in which he participated except as he found it to be of practical value in serving his constituency. Staffs of constituent denominations have been left free to use any or all of the council's products according to their choosing. When they preferred, they have adapted materials and utilized them under their own imprimaturs.

It might seem that such a procedure would result in chaos. Instead it has eventuated in a constantly growing fellowship of leaders with an ever widening scope of common interests and a growing body of common convictions.

Today the International Council has forty-two denominations and thirty state councils in its membership. The staffs of the educational boards of these denominations still reserve the right to differ. However, it would be difficult, except for difference of labels, to differentiate between the educational programs of many of the participating boards. Out of the fellowship of the council and the process of cooperative study of the needs of persons, there has unconsciously come a sur-

prising degree of unanimity regarding both method and program.

### ACHIEVEMENTS IN COOPERATION

The first major cooperative achievement under the newly formed International Council was the formulation of common objectives for educational work. The statement of objectives which was adopted in the year 1930 has stood until the present year without revision. These objectives have been the theme for numerous books, articles in periodicals and addresses. They have guided the efforts of editors, administrators and teachers in many denominations. They have bound together a large fellowship of persons who, while differing greatly as to theological belief and even as to procedures, have nevertheless recalled their common bond as to ultimate purpose.

Following closely after the formulation of a common statement of objectives there came a great body of resource data, the result of a far-reaching research program. Representatives of many Protestant denominations, through age-level and functional committees of the council, instituted studies of the life situations, problems and relationships of persons of every age, and of the types of curriculum material which might be used in helping these persons in such situations and relationships to achieve the kind of lives individually and socially indicated by their avowed objectives. These and other like representatives also worked at the task of devising an effective curriculum and strategy for use in the training of leaders.

These processes resulted in a rich body of material issued for Protestant church leaders in the form of a " Curriculum

Guide" of several volumes. Later these materials were supplemented by a series of resource materials for youth leaders under the caption, "Christian Youth Building a New World," and a like grouping for adults known as "Learning for Life." The most recent development is a proposed series of lesson committee outlines through which the members hope to join hands in the cooperative outlining of three new types of lesson topics and materials which, it is hoped, will meet the needs for all age groups of all faiths in varied types of geographical and social settings. These types will be utilized by denominational editors according to the interests or educational and cultural levels of their constituencies.

### COORDINATION OF FIELD FORCES

Following a series of achievements in functional cooperation on the side of curriculum construction, Protestant church leaders have now undertaken to extend the principle of cooperation to their field operations. Here they have planned simultaneous promotion of emphases for consideration by local churches and communities. They have joined forces in making a concerted contribution to local communities through leadership education conferences. Where forces for such concerted action were inadequate, they have accepted territorial allocations of responsibilities for the leaders of several denominational boards on behalf of their respective educational boards. For example, a national youth leader of the Presbyterian Board in 1940 might agree to serve the local church and community youth leaders of five states in the middle west on behalf of several denominational boards.

In many cases these joint field activities have been administered under the local aegis of state and city councils of

religious education. These agencies originated as expressions of lay cooperation. Through the years, changes took place within their structures comparable to those on the national level. Gradually they have adopted an administrative philosophy which makes their activities the program of the denominations in cooperation. As these changes have come, these councils have found themselves a part of the modern fellowship and have been approved as avenues of interdenominational activity.

Thus the influence of the functional approach of religion to the experience of growing persons has gradually drawn together the leaders of many denominations which were historically widely separated by differences of theology and church polity.

But the influence of such an education procedure has also gone much farther. It has resulted in the unification of the program of the local church into a comprehensive unit of religious life. It has brought integration of the programs of various city, state and national interdenominational agencies. It has stimulated the development of a great corps of voluntary field workers, who have prepared themselves for specialized service, and who serve large areas which are untouched by the two thousand or more paid field representatives of denominational and interdenominational boards. It has resulted in a new approach to social reconstruction.

### INTEGRATION OF RELIGION IN CHARACTER EDUCATION

It was inevitable that when religious education became person-centered, it should no longer be confined to any one phase of experience or any one institutional mold. Religious education, therefore, became concerned not only with cur-

riculum and classroom procedure; it became interested in every aspect of the life of the child, the experience of his home, his school, his community and his social groups. It was concerned with his economic status, his leisure activities, and every factor which would have a part in determining his health of body, mind and spirit. It was only as these environing factors were known that activities or materials for Christian education could be selected intelligently.

But these same factors were also the interests of progressive public school leaders, social workers, playground directors, librarians and leaders of many activities. The child therefore has served as a center of interest around which there has come a gradual integration of the interests of the church school with those of all institutions for character education in the community.

It is encouraging to note the practical results of such an integration of interests. The effect upon public school leaders is reflected in various pronouncements of the National Education Association. In the foreword of the Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of this association the following statement appears:

> The attitude of reverence toward a Supreme Being grows naturally in the real study of science, literature, music, art, and the general sweep of human affairs, as revealed most pointedly in the social studies. Only when teaching is based upon insight from which this attitude grows is it real teaching.

Again under a discussion of " Agencies of Character Education " this yearbook declares:

> Our society today awaits a new integration of knowledge, aspiration, and human purpose which will take into account the findings of science, the theory of evolution, the advance of technology, the fact of ma-

terial abundance, and the growing power of the laboring classes, as well as the influence of great spiritual leaders. Until such an integration is forthcoming, the present condition of moral chaos is likely to continue and the more fundamental problems of character education will defy solution. Whether this is the task of the church or some other agency we cannot say today; but it would seem to be a task that is essentially religious in nature.

Comparable recognition of the essential place of religion in any adequate program for character development is found in the pronouncements of like agencies for other phases of character development. The whole movement for community coordination of character building agencies, taking the form of local community councils and the National Conference on Community Coordination, is but the formal expression of the same integration of interests.

The most recent expression of this child-centered integration of interests is found in the development of the White House Conferences on Child Welfare. The first of these conferences, which was called by Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, was devoted quite largely to a consideration of the physical well-being of America's children. During a period of thirty years, a growing recognition of the interplay of social forces on the life of the individual has led to a broadening of the character of the meetings, leading finally to recognition of the indispensable place of religion in the lives of children in our democracy, as a means of establishing and maintaining values in all aspects of child development. The mandate to this conference declared among other things:

> We are concerned about the children who are outside the reach of religious influences and are denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God.

The report of the 1940 conference affirmed that personal and social integrity is even more vital to democracy than physical fitness, technical efficiency and mental development. It stated:

> The child needs to have a conviction of his own intrinsic worth as a person and a conviction that he has a significant and sure place in a rational and moral universe. Whatever else we may help the child to achieve in the fulfillment of his needs, we have not met his greatest need until we have helped him to build a practical philosophy of life. . . . Historically man has achieved this end chiefly through art, philosophy, and religion.

It should be observed that a functional approach to the needs of the child led such a group, including many of America's foremost minds, to reaffirm the integral place of religion in any adequate program of child development. On the basis of such an approach, persons of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths found it possible to formulate a statement of common conviction.

At the same time there has come a new unity in the processes of many local churches. The same children, youth and adults have been the focus of attention for the pulpit, the Sunday school, the missionary society and the youth agencies. When programs were organization-centered, their leaders could go their separate ways, indifferent to overlapping of functions and equally indifferent to its effect upon the individual. As their leaders have become person-centered, and as they have taken as their common objective the development of Christian personalities, they could no longer ignore their relationships each to the other or the disintegrating effect of divergent impacts upon the persons they were attempting to serve.

### THE TREND TOWARD UNIFICATION

A concomitant development may be noted in the general life of both the denominational and the interdenominational agencies of Protestantism. For years separate agencies were maintained within each denomination for administration of varied types of organized activity — home missions, foreign missions, ministerial relief, church maintenance, religious education, higher education, social welfare. To the same extent, these divisions have characterized the interdenominational agencies, which quite logically grew up out of the interfaith interest of these denominational boards.

Once again through the influence, indeed the quite unrecognized influence, of the functional approach to the need of persons, and the attempt to relate all religion to life, there has come another merging of interests. Denominational boards have combined in a variety of new patterns. One denomination has combined all its missionary activities under one agency. Numerous denominations have effected a unity of their varied educational agencies. A few have merged all the activities in the homeland in a new type of home missions agency. In most cases agencies for social education and action have been incorporated in either educational or missionary boards.

The last twenty years have also witnessed a large number of interdenominational mergers. Federations of churches and councils of religious education in most cities of the nation have combined to form councils of churches, which administer a vast array of interdenominational services. Within the last decade there have been like developments in a majority of those states which have agencies for interdenominational activity.

It might be noted, however, that in organizing for Christian activity many factors must be taken into account. In theory, all the activities affecting the person should be administered unitedly in order to guarantee integration, sequence and balance. Practically, such activities may best be administered through a series of agencies so as to avoid the danger of cumbersomeness, limited lay participation or a dulled edge of popular presentation. It remains yet to be determined whether extreme centralization will enhance or react disadvantageously upon a life-centered approach to religion.

Whatever the limitations of functional cooperation, there are now some dramatic manifestations of this development in the national interdenominational scene. Through the united Christian youth movement, forty-two denominations and thirteen interfaith or non-denominational agencies have joined their forces to make a united impact on the problems with which Christian youth are concerned. For four years the same denominations and other non-denominational agencies have coordinated their contributions to adult life through the united Christian adult movement. Comparable developments have taken place or have been begun in fields of research, radio, and lay development.

Thus the Protestant forces of America are discovering the way to unity by the democratic process. As long as they followed the road of organizing around theological formulations or abstract dogmas, they divided and subdivided again and again over a period of several centuries. As they have learned the way of functional cooperation with their focus of attention on the persons to be served, they have, within a quarter-century, turned the tide of individualism and developed an amazing unity of interest. But the interests of religious education have extended beyond the guidance of

individual reconstruction of life according to Christian patterns to the reconstruction of the social order.

It is inevitable that, when religious education becomes person-centered, it becomes as broad in its interests as the factors which determine the character of the individual. When religious education seeks to change the character of the person, it seeks simultaneously to provide the type of social milieu which produces the desired kind of individual personality. It therefore is concerned both with the attitudes of the individual toward his environing world and with the effect of the environing world upon the individual. Religious leaders have come to believe that, though an individual may be a Christian to a large degree in an unchristian social order, more persons can achieve a higher degree of Christian practice in the right kind of world. They have therefore set themselves to a study of the home, the school, and the other social institutions of the community and their influences upon the developing personality. They have sought to define religious values in terms of their implications for these agencies of character development.

Religious education has also been concerned with the broader aspects and relationships of our current culture. It has studied the relationships of races, of social classes, of nations, with a view to determining the types of relationship which might be called Christian and which will contribute to the growth of Christian persons. Religious education has been primarily concerned with a definition of values, believing that a Christian community can then devise the structures which make such values possible.

Once again it is encouraging to review the progressive insight into social problems which has resulted from such an

approach by religious educators and their colleagues in other aspects of church life. The pronouncements of the religious bodies of America during the past decade testify to the vitality of the Christian religion when related to life. The similarity of the utterances of various denominational bodies indicates the unity of mind which can be achieved by Christian people when they strive to interpret religion in terms of life values to be conserved.

Thus it is that the religious education forces of America, together with other religious leaders, have discovered an exceedingly vital approach to the task of propagating religion. It has unified the educational forces. It has brought an integration of the total operations of the church. It has given religion a proper place at the center of the total task of character development. It has made religion vital to the individual in all his relationships and to the social order through which he functions.

XV

# THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

S. VERNON McCASLAND

OUR POINT of departure is given with the recognition that the ministry which this volume celebrates is an expression of Protestantism. Not that it has been committed to all the theology of this variety of Christianity, but that it belongs to a Protestant denomination and has felt at home with the basic Protestant beliefs in the religious freedom and autonomy of the individual.

The Protestant movement in religion has been parallel to the growth of democracy in government; both have recognized the dignity of man as an individual person and given him his rights. This has meant the rejection of external authority of whatever kind and the substitution for it of the authority of truth which may be individually perceived and acted upon. This is a recognition of the inherent virtue in the development and exercise of man's rational nature. What this means today is apparent from a contrast with the opposing tide of authoritarianism in both politics and religion which has come upon the world. The totalitarian scorn of democracy is matched by the flight from reason which is evident in the return to orthodoxy in religion in its various forms. In many quarters of both Europe and

America the slogan is being heard of a return to the authority of the church, or the creeds, or the Bible, or, especially, the New Testament.

The New Testament has held a position of unique authority in Protestantism from the beginning. It was regarded as the fulfillment of the Old Testament and so was held in higher esteem; and in this position it has undoubtedly exercised a tremendous power in the development of our social institutions, as well as in personal experience. One of the Reformation's most persuasive and influential slogans was that the Bible is the religion of Protestants. This idea was simple; it cut under the sacerdotalism of centuries; and it gave to individual persons a sense of their own dignity. The history of the last four centuries has witnessed the transforming power of this idea in all the nations of the world. This importance of the New Testament in our cultural history, not to mention the rebirth of religious authoritarianism, is the justification for an effort to reappraise this ancient literature in the light of our modern knowledge. We want to know what it was in the use of the New Testament which exercised so much power over the world. Could a similar transformation be brought about today by a return to the New Testament? If so, what conception of the New Testament would bring about this result?

To ask what Protestants meant when they declared that the New Testament was their religion is to raise only the first of three necessary questions. The second is inevitable for us today: Is the New Testament what the Protestant fathers thought it was? The third is the most important of all: What was the new thing in human experience which Protestants discovered with their return to the New Testa-

ment which brought with it such new vigor into the life of man?

### WHAT PROTESTANTS MEANT

While the first question sounds simplest of all, it is in fact the most difficult to answer. There was little unity in early Protestantism, much less than there is today. The meaning of the slogan depended upon the particular sect, not to say the individual, who used it; and it is very doubtful that any great effort was made to arrive at a definitive interpretation of the idea that the New Testament is the religion of Protestants. But it is safe to say that Protestants meant that they were turning away from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church to the authority of the Bible, that is, the New Testament. This is indicated by the often used formulation of their slogan: Where the Bible speaks we speak; and where the Bible is silent we are silent. With this they proposed to outflank all the old theology, sacramentalism and ecclesiasticism and get back on the original Christian ground.

But is a return to the authority of the New Testament to make such a radical break with Catholicism as is sometimes supposed? As a matter of fact it is not. Catholic doctrine itself rests on the authority of the New Testament. Of course, a considerable measure of theological imagination is required to find some of the doctrines in it, but in theory they are all derived from the New Testament. The case is parallel to that of modern Judaism, whose life is regulated by the Talmud, a literature which has been written since the time of Christ, but the Talmud is itself an outgrowth of the written law of Moses; so Judaism today is still based on the law of Moses. The American law is an illustration closer

home. Actually we are ruled by a great mass of laws continually coming from national, state and local legislative bodies. At the same time, we often say that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land; and so it is. But the Constitution finds its application to us through the modern laws which in theory are based on it.

So the Protestant break with Catholicism was not its assertion of the authority of the New Testament; not even of the *sole* authority of the New Testament. Catholics recognize this, too, if we allow them to define what they mean. The point of difference is that the Catholic use of the New Testament is based not on individual interpretation, but on the view of the church, which is made known only by authorized spokesmen through the centuries. The issue between Protestants and Catholics is not the authority of the New Testament, but whether the individual is to be allowed to interpret it for himself. That the issue was the struggle for individual liberty is shown also by the fact that Protestantism, when it finally got what it wanted, did not generally reject all of the distinctively Catholic theology, sacramentalism or ecclesiasticism.

## PERSONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The issue of the Reformation is perfectly clear. While it called for a return to the New Testament, that was not the main point. It was really *a return to the individual person, a rediscovery of personal freedom.* But this is not to answer our first question. It does not tell us what Protestants meant when they called the New Testament their religion. Did they introduce a new doctrine of Scripture which differed from that already held by Catholics? If so, in what respect?

Did they mean that the New Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit so that every word is infallible? That it is inerrant? If so, did they mean the Latin translation, the only one which they had, or the Greek, of which they knew very little, or one of the vernacular translations which soon appeared, such as the German or English? Did they mean that the New Testament is a complete divine revelation, that no other will be given since no other is necessary? Is it a blueprint of the church with instructions for all organizations, worship and theology? Are these instructions so clear that a simple reading of them by individuals will result in the outward unity of faith and organization which was formerly achieved by the church partly through resort to the sword? Or is the word of God not in the specific ideas and organizations which reflect transitory adjustments to the needs of the time, but in the all-pervading sense of early Christians that they had discovered a way to live in fellowship with God? It would be going too far to say that Protestants held any of these ideas to the exclusion of others. There was probably no general clarity among them on the subject, but in one way or another it was believed that the New Testament would set the individual believer on the road to God.

### ORIGIN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The repudiation of the authority of the church was the signal for the beginning of New Testament scholarship. The light which had been mediated by the church now had to come directly from the New Testament, or by means of it. The tremendous drive of this new movement has caused more study to be done on the New Testament than on any other book in the world and it is better known today than any

other work of antiquity. This is an achievement of Protestantism. First of all is the question of the correct original text. There are several thousand complete or fragmentary manuscripts; new ones are still coming to light; they are in many languages, for the original Greek was soon widely translated. Scholars have now undoubtedly obtained a very reliable text, generally speaking, but the fact remains that the most valuable Greek manuscripts are not older than the fourth century, while only a few small fragments date back to the third or possibly the second century. This means that about three centuries elapsed between the autographs and the manuscripts upon which we rely. Scholars have had to reject a good many passages, like the ending of Mark, shown by the textual evidence to be additions. At best the text is only relatively certain. It is not absolute.

The question of authorship has been an interesting problem. In the early church itself there was little concern about who wrote the books, especially the Gospels. They were published anonymously, like all other historical books of the Bible without exception. It remained for later ages to find authors for them when an effort was being made to give them greater authority. We have a pretty good idea who wrote Mark and Luke — from early church tradition, but not from the books themselves. The only books whose authorship is unquestioned by good scholarship are eight of Paul's letters, though possibly ten may be allowed. That leaves four letters attributed to Paul by most of the leaders of the Reformation which are really pseudepigraphs. All the books of the New Testament except these few letters of Paul are either anonymous or pseudonymous. As they appear in the King James Version they are attributed definitely to apostolic

authors, thus making them pseudonymous, but at least the Gospels and Acts were anonymous originally. No concern was felt about apostolic authorship until the church began to make inspired Scripture out of its literature.

The letters of Paul are the oldest books in the New Testament. Paul began to write them about A.D. 50, and the last ones were written not long before A.D. 65. He did not think of himself as writing Scripture which would be incorporated in a Bible, but wrote to churches or friends dealing with emergencies that arose in his absence, fully expecting that the end of the world was at hand. His letters were written hurriedly and freely and so reveal the spontaneous character of his own thought. They were treasured by the churches, but not as Scripture, for some of his letters were not even preserved, which would be unthinkable if they had been looked upon as Scripture.

Mark, which is the oldest of the Gospels, was written about A.D. 70, some thirty years after the death of Jesus. Matthew and Luke were written still later, for they are both based upon Mark as a source. Both have other written sources too, but they are essentially revisions of Mark, and their authors undoubtedly expected that Mark would be discarded. John is a still later and freer revision of the Gospel tradition. We have four versions of the story of Jesus in our Gospels, not to mention many others reflecting still unidentified sources which the Gospel writers clearly used.

But what about those thirty years before the Gospels began to appear? It is obvious that during those years the tradition about Jesus was transmitted mainly in the memories of the disciples. This is the period of oral tradition. The disciples who had been with Jesus in person would tell

what they could remember of him. There were certain definite activities in the church which required interpretation from sayings of Jesus and stories about him. Examples are missionary preaching, teaching new converts, baptism, the Lord's Supper, healing the sick; and others appeared as the organization of the church began to take form. These interests caused the traditions about Jesus to be gathered in blocks related to these topics; and so they came into Mark, the earliest Gospel in a fairly definite form. This means that while Mark edited, he is not to be thought of as creating either the form or the content of his Gospel outright. His book, like the other Gospels, properly remained anonymous, for it was a product of church tradition.

## AUTHORITY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

By showing that Matthew and Luke have used Mark as a source, we demonstrate beyond question that the Gospels were not regarded as inspired Scripture by their authors. The revisers freely correct Mark's Greek style, change his statements of fact, reconstruct his order of events; they do precisely what any critical writer would do with a document which he uses as a source. But this could never have been done if the books themselves had been regarded as authoritative at the time. The last of the Gospels was written close to the end of the first century, so it is evident that whatever authority there was in early Christianity was not lodged in a book of Christian Scripture.

What then was the nature of the early Christian authority? The answer is that it was pneumatic or prophetic. The leaders and many of the laymen of the early church believed that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and were

so accepted by the church generally. This inspiration applied to both men and women. They were people who believed that God spoke to them and through them directly. They felt no need of a Christian Scripture. Why should one who speaks by inspiration need a book to learn what to say? This is true of John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, Peter, Stephen and any other leader of whom we have a record. It was true also of a large number of laymen in Paul's churches.

This new birth of prophecy is the dominant note of early Christianity. It was a decisive factor in the origin of the new religion. Prophecy is no new thing in religion, but in the Judaism of the time it was generally felt in official circles that prophecy had ceased. This resulted in an extreme emphasis on the written Law, and no rabbi of the time dared to express views which were not based on it. Everything went back to the law of Moses, and the priests in the temple and the rabbis in the synagogues had constructed an elaborate sacramentalism and ceremonialism to control the life of the people, which was remarkably parallel to the Catholicism against which the Protestants rebelled. Christianity began in effect as a Jewish Protestantism. It was a rebellion of common men against an elaborate religious machinery which appeared to have lost the heart of religion. It was an attempt to get back to the realities. But most of all it was a rebellion against a top-heavy officialdom and an assertion of the right of the common man to approach God unhindered.

The Jewish officials were furious at Jesus because he did things without authority; and Paul encountered the same disregard for authority even among Jewish Christians. They dared to teach without official sanction and did not hesitate to set aside or reinterpret specific statements of the law of

Moses. But this was exactly the point. They felt authorized to teach by their own immediate access to God. Paul himself however may illustrate the point most clearly for modern readers. What authority did he have to follow his great missionary work? Had he ever known Jesus personally? No. Did he learn about him from earlier disciples? Undoubtedly he learned the story of his death and resurrection from contact with the disciples before his conversion, but there is no evidence of more. Did he have a Gospel in which he could read about Jesus? Certainly not. Then where did he get his message? He quotes no sayings of Jesus. All his own ideas of religion come, as he interprets his mental processes, by inspiration.

### A CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE

But this religious freedom of the individual in the church was not to continue. Inspiration took too many directions. Sects began to arise on every hand. Certain churches located in strategic centers, such as Rome, assumed the right of domination. In places the prophetic spirit began to wane. The first evidence of this was the writing of the Gospels themselves. Churches felt the need of books to go by. Teachers of the second generation did not stand as high as those of the first. Around the turn of the century a collection of Paul's letters appeared. Before long the four Gospels were put together. By the middle of the second century references to them as Scripture begin to appear. The second epistle of Peter, which was written about that time, refers to Paul's letters as Scripture. By the end of the second century most of the New Testament books had been recognized, but the process went on well into the fourth.

The formation of an inspired Christian Scripture was just

one phase of the origin of the Catholic Church; others were the growth of a creed and the development of an ecclesiastical organization with its sacramental system. This structure was mostly complete by A.D. 200. With its overwhelming authority sectarianism was effectively crushed and the freedom of the individual which characterized Christianity at its beginning disappeared.

The only Scripture which the church had during the first century of its life was the Old Testament which it borrowed from Judaism. The first Christians were Jews and they did not think of themselves as a new religion but as a continuation of true Judaism. Thus the Jewish scriptures were brought bodily into the church. With one exception, that of II Peter, wherever Scripture is referred to in the New Testament the Old Testament is meant. It is noteworthy also that the New Testament books, with the single exception of Revelation, do not claim to be inspired Scripture; and Revelation, which claims to be Scripture, was one of the very last to be recognized as such by the church. While the Old Testament was Scripture in the early church, the leaders did not hesitate to set forth their own original interpretations of it and then to supplement it freely with revelations of their own.

Thus it is clear that whatever authority the New Testament had as inspired Scripture for the reformers, or has today, was not claimed by it and did not belong to it in the early church, but was the creation of the later church to crush the sects. As authoritative inspired Scripture, the New Testament is a product of Catholicism created to unify the church.

THEN AND NOW

The real Protestant principle was not a return to the New Testament, but a return to the individual man. It is this rediscovery of the autonomy of persons in religion which has characterized Protestantism. Here Protestantism stood squarely on ground occupied by early Christianity — *the absolute freedom and autonomy of individual Christian faith.* This identity of the Protestant discovery with that of early Christianity has often been overlooked because of differences in vocabulary. They spoke of " inspiration," we call it " reason "; but we are dealing in both cases with the same processes of man's rational nature, much of which is obscure. The only essential difference is that today we have possibilities of experimentation and a great collection of scientific data not available then.

Faith then or now is not blind submission to the authority of any person, book or ecclesiastical body, but a conviction reached on the basis of an intelligent use of all the rational evidence at one's command. For the individual to take any other attitude is to throw away the liberty which has come to him after ages of slavery and to enter again into bondage, to repudiate the achievement of early Christianity and the rediscovery of Protestantism.

The New Testament is not to be regarded as a body of truth to be accepted or rejected regardless of its rational nature. Modern Christians may find much or all of it true, but whatever of truth there is in it is true not because it is in the New Testament, but because it agrees with rational criteria of truth. The ideas of the New Testament, like the universal, interracial, international and spiritual qualities of re-

ligion, will find wide assent; and the literature which gives them expression will remain the great religious classic. But the real value of the New Testament today will be discovered not by men who love domination and servitude, but by those who are in quest of freedom.

XVI

# THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

ORVIS F. JORDAN

THE ORGANIZATION of communities all over America received great impetus from the experiences of the World War. The Red Cross and other war charities, the Liberty Loan campaigns and other drives brought into being community organizations. The conservation of coal forced congregations to worship together and later to consolidate. It was then that the study of community organization became a university discipline and that Lindeman, Steiner and others produced books upon the subject of community organization.

With the end of the World War came a period when many of the war organizations ceased to be, but the village and town that had one experience of doing things together usually did not forget.

What is a community? One dictionary gives the term the meaning of a political unit, such as village, town, city or state. A secondary meaning is a sharing or participation. Sanderson, a rural sociologist, would make it "the smallest geographical unit of organized association of the chief human activities." The ecumenical movement seems to put into the term an application involving world-wide interests.

For the purposes of this paper we shall regard the community as an organized unit of society usually comprising a village, town or city neighborhood. These are communities only when they do things together. When the cooperation is of individual with individual, the unit is only a neighborhood; when the neighborhood develops a sense of unity and the techniques of common employments, then we really have a community.

Not every community is on the road toward a better coordination and efficiency. Many communities are quite evidently undergoing a process of decay. The will toward common enterprise becomes flabby or weak. Divisive forces make factions and cliques. The hatred between these divisions is like a cancer eating at the vitals of the community.

This community disorganization sometimes results from the factionalism of politics. Small political units swing from one side to another of a political dispute. For the sake of this factionalism people become bad neighbors and refuse to work with each other for any good enterprise.

Sometimes it is a denominational church system that does this thing to a community. The spirit that divides two or three Protestant churches from each other in a village is often more bitter than that which separates them from the local Catholic church and undoubtedly more bitter than their feeling toward the unchurched of the community. There is little opportunity for any church to grow except at the expense of another. In many American communities, sectarianism is doing more to disorganize the community than is politics.

It is not always politics or religion that fosters ill feeling. After the war there was for a while a rivalry between the local

Red Cross units and the local charity organization. It was in many places ended by the withdrawal of the Red Cross.

Even though they may not suffer greatly from the disorganizing influences, communities are often of haphazard growth. One interest of community life grows to disproportionate size because of effective leadership while other interests lag or are not cultivated at all. Few communities have been studied by social experts to determine the services that should be performed in the common life and how they may be best performed. Of course there is much laissez faire in small communities. As a defense against making contributions of money and work, people argue that the community does very well without some given activity.

Over against the disorganized community or the partly organized community one may place the community carefully studied and faithfully developed. The study of the community has often been made by local forces. The churches, the clubs and all uplift organizations have joined in a community council. One such local council I knew to do effective work for a number of years. It developed a community chest and asked the city council to end sporadic drives for individual charities. It was brought to an end by a political boss who found it in the way of his ambitions. He sowed the seed of division and thus succeeded in shattering the council.

What are the common interests of a community? One of the earliest to develop is that of education. Many of us have had a grandfather who built upon his land in pioneer days the first log schoolhouse. Long ago America developed the public school and placed much of the administration in the hands of local officials. The results have on the whole been very satisfactory. People sometimes send their children to

parochial schools under the threat of ecclesiastical punishment, but the reputation of the public school for educational efficiency is high as compared with that of most parochial and private schools.

To secure friendly cooperation of the parents most communities now have a parent-teacher association. There is often need of a voice that will loosen the purse strings of the community to secure more adequate equipment. Here a church of community vision has been effective.

The education of the adults of a community is carried on by clubs of various kinds. Women's clubs have a high rating for this task. Luncheon clubs too often do their best work in the post-prandial mood. With all their defects, the churches are without doubt the most effective means of carrying on with adult education. Adult Sunday school classes in these latter days spend more time on live modern questions than on doctrinal discussions. The forum method is common. The church has various other agencies for adult education including many excellent programs for youth. The pulpit of a properly trained minister is also an educational force in the community much appreciated by the people. This trained man often speaks on other platforms than his own on topics of public interest.

Very early in community life the recreational motive secures recognition. One reads of the life of Abraham Lincoln at Salem and finds him a hero in many wrestling bouts. We know now that play is one of the great necessary human interests. The lack of it results in nervous breakdowns and various abnormalities. Some of our ancestors took the view of an exaggerated Puritanism, and regarded play as a waste of time, an evil.

The churches of a generation ago were chiefly negative in their influence on the play life of the community. They had a list of recreations that were of the devil. This was a list inherited from the days of Cromwell. It was adhered to without regard to any empirical study of the effect of various amusements. A church in northwestern Illinois one Sunday morning excommunicated a score of young people who had attended a dance the night before.

One may safely say that the recreation which is planned and directed by the community is more apt to be wholesome than the kind provided by commercial agencies. The latter are actuated by the profit motive, the former by a sense of community good.

It is in play that churches find it easiest to cooperate. I found in an Illinois village some years ago a recreation hall used by both Catholics and Protestants, and managed by them in entire good will.

The relief of those in distress early becomes a community interest. Private almsgiving was long cultivated by the Christian church, and so eminent a Christian as Count Tolstoi went on his daily walk with a pocket full of small coins for beggars. But the empirical mind of this new age follows the panhandler who asks for a cup of coffee down the street to the neighborhood saloon or the local dope dispensary. Almsgiving without investigation is the lazy way. But most of us cannot do the investigating. Scientific relief means a careful study of cases. Sometimes bread and clothing are given and sometimes just good advice.

In many communities the churches tend to complicate the matter of charity with their sporadic raids on the problem of poverty. They duplicate relief for professionals who know

how to make a good appeal. In large cities the more needy neighborhoods are sometimes connected with the privileged communities by a city organization of the denomination. In smaller communities church charity may be just a bungling waste of money that tends to perpetuate mendicancy.

Health has come to be recognized as a community interest, and many larger communities have salaried health officers who fight contagion and otherwise work for the health of the communities. These health officers may go far enough to study the defectives in the school population. In some communities in America a physician is maintained by a co-operative when he would starve to death in private practice. Such a person may get a rather generous subsidy from the township as a health officer.

The lack in most American communities is health education. The death rate of infants and mothers is a standing disgrace in America. The collapse of young business men, now so prevalent, could be curtailed by annual medical examinations. The socialization of medicine has resulted in an ugly quarrel that has brought the American Medical Association before the Supreme Court of the United States. The coercion of physicians with the threat of the law is not the answer to our problem of medicine for the underprivileged.

In the field of public health the churches do nothing or become a negative influence. The faith healing cults, now rather numerous, have chalked up against them the death of many children who died for the lack of medical aid. They may be credited with the cure of some functional disorders. Just emerging on the horizon is the intelligent minister who may help the physician in incipient mental abnormality.

Government is a community interest of great importance.

Once government was chiefly concerned with restraining evildoers. Gradually its service was extended to public education, the building of roads, the organization of fire departments and many other services. Bad government in a democracy is more often found in metropolitan cities than in villages, but it may be found in either place. Education for life in a democracy is not now given adequately anywhere. The public school sometimes has a course in civics. The local church engages in an occasional campaign of reform, all too often motivated by the desire for publicity on the part of some minister-demagogue.

The American doctrine of the separation of church and state is often misunderstood both by politicians and by church leaders. It does involve an entire freedom from control of one by the other, but certainly it does not involve either indifference or hostility. Good community life is not divided into areas hostile to each other. The same man must at various times give friendly interest and cooperation to all the great concerns of the community. Democracy is still on trial in the world and has already been rejected by many. Its final success will depend upon what happens in the local community. In the shaping of its final destiny, the church will have a part either good or evil.

Without doubt there are communities that regard industry as a common problem. The chief industry of Oberammergau is its Passion Play. In many communities the chamber of commerce or the Kiwanis Club gives thought to the inauguration of new forms of industry that would take up the slack of employment. The question is one that can better be solved locally than nationally for it must take account of local assets both of talent and of material resources. Many

communities might wake up to find that the diamond that had been sought out in the wide world was in its own back yard.

Now just what is the function of the church in the community? Many churches have a keen sense of loyalty to an outside social entity called the denomination. A certain denominational official urges the congregation to "take" Middletown. This word "take" is a military word. There is hope of a conquest and of a surrender. This point of view must be abandoned before a church can render the proper service to a community. The challenge is not to "take" Middletown, but to serve it. How we can best serve and best agree is the real quest.

The protest against this denominational viewpoint has resulted in a swing to the opposite pole. Dr. John Haynes Holmes identifies the church and the community. They are one. This view ignores the obvious fact that in the ordinary American community half of the people do not want to be counted in the church. To disregard their will in this matter only confuses us. And more than half of the country's population are no effective part of the church for there are many purely nominal church members in America.

What is the true relation of the church to the community? The church is that part of the community which is prophet-minded. It feels itself burdened with a message and a task. It builds no walls against the rest of the community. On the contrary, it seeks to persuade the unpersuaded to accept a vision and a task. The vision is that of a life lived in the spirit of Jesus and the task is the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

The prophet-minded church will often discern the menace

of evil before the non-religious section of the community perceives it. If it is a truly prophetic church, it will never despair in the presence of evil. It will insist ever that the spirit of the living God leads on to victory for the better life.

With reference to the community, the church has done a most valuable job in pioneering. The hospital for the sick was pioneered by the church in the long ago. Modern charity was born out of church charity. Education was once carried on by the church exclusively. When a life interest becomes more fully developed it often requires a specialization that the church cannot give to it. Those who reproach the church for a lack of social achievement should read the history of social enterprises. Nor has this social pioneering come to an end. A book could easily be filled with an account of the current efforts of churches in the field of social pioneering.

In many smaller communities the church must supply the social engineering for a more mature social movement. The village minister is paid to "preach the gospel," but if he is to utilize to the full his ministry he must become a "social engineer," to use a phrase of Professor Earp's. He may be the only man in the community who has had an education that included sociology. If his counsels are made after adequate study and are illumined by the best of our modern scientific discoveries, he will be in constant demand. Even the anti-church element of a village may come to like him and support him in his efforts. His function is that of community counselor and never that of community boss. He must wait sometimes to see the fruition of his labors, but with patience he may work a mighty revolution in the community life.

The church must also recognize many non-church organizations as friendly allies. There are still some churches that fight lodges as being centers of darkness. Secrecy is supposed to imply guilt. All that the lodge neophyte learns might as well be proclaimed from the housetop. The lodge ritual is a mixture of biblical story, moral principle, social program, relief and just ordinary recreation. The church that drives a lodge into enmity and suspicion is very unwise.

It is true that the leaders of most community organizations are recruited from the church. This should be thought of by the church as a compliment. The church builds human sympathy, trains in the technique of leadership and provides the motivation for much of our community work. Through this leadership the church might " run " the community organizations. It is very unwise to do so, for thus it will arouse jealousies and make the unchurched element of the community unwilling to cooperate. The true attitude of the church toward all other forms of community organization is that of a friendly ally. Such a role the community organizations are sure to appreciate and commend.

As has already been hinted, the church has the unique function of keeping alive the religious spirit out of which all social life must in the end proceed. It is the church that talks of the universal brotherhood of man, of the infinite value of a single human life, of the organization of life into the Kingdom of God. It is the church that can be depended upon most surely to fight racialism, war, class prejudice and civil strife. Inside most American communities are facts that imply division. It is the business of the church with its idealism to furnish the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

As already implied, the undue multiplication of churches

in a community tends to stymie the efforts of religious people in community service. In Ohio the council of churches has declared repeatedly that there should not be in an Ohio village more than one church to a thousand people. Yet one may find hundreds of villages with three or four times that many churches. Such churches starve their ministers in body and soul and disorganize their communities through the bitterness of their competition.

The community church movement of the past two decades has been an effort to correct this situation. A church does not need to cease its traditional denominational cooperation to become a community church. It has only to be a church that makes all Christians in the community at home in its membership and to organize this congregation in behalf of community good. There are many such community churches in America. Some have the substance as well as the name. Others, unfortunately, trade upon the community name to do a piece of proselyting. In every community the people soon know whether a so-called community church is the real thing or not.

In other communities there are federated churches. At Wauconda, Illinois, a Methodist and a Baptist church federated. Methodist and Baptist ministers are employed alternately. The two buildings were moved upon one lot and tied together by a beautiful tower. Denominational leaders favor this type rather than the independent type. In other communities the ground has been entirely cleared of the denominational debris and a new independent church formed. There are hundreds of these throughout America.

For any of these community or federated churches a special training and outlook are required. No piece of machinery

works by itself but only at the bidding of its master. Every machine must be lubricated and serviced. So it is with the church machine that is called the community church. In the hands of an ignorant or intolerant minister its end is futility. In the hands of a man of vision it may render a great service.

Dr. Holt declares that democracy is most workable in small communities. The building of community spirit and community organization in villages and in sections of great cities is a task that will undergird democracy as well as conserve many other human interests. The church may well consider its duty to become a leader in community development. My own conviction is that we will get on much faster in ushering in the Kingdom of God by working in shirt sleeves in the organizations of our villages than by putting on stuffed shirts and voting for high-sounding resolutions in church conventions.

XVII

# "LIVING" CITY CHURCHES

SAMUEL C. KINCHELOE

A FEW YEARS AGO writers in the field of religion were talking of "successful" churches in city and country. Then the term "adapted city church" came along. A recent writer has spoken of the "effective city church." The phrase "effective city church" does not imply great size or increase in size or average size, popularity of minister or services with large attendance, large finances, large staff or beauty of building, but puts the emphasis upon the role of the church and its work in great causes, in building its community and in the orientation and help which it gives to persons. The users of these various phrases were all seeking to describe the same thing, namely, the vital or living church.

In this brief paper the effort is not to give a statistical picture of the average city church but to state what, from the writer's point of view, are the characteristics of one. There are no technical or statistical devices by which one may tell whether or not a church is doing what it should do as a church. They may help, however, by giving indices by which judgments may be formed. The living city church must be thought of in the light of what city churches must do to live and also in the light of the kind of life they maintain while they live. Religious institutions like other institutions may succeed in some phases of their work but not in others.

Basically we must say that the vitality of a church consists in its worth as a social institution. It is not a simple task to measure "the enrichment and fulfillment" of human life which one institution brings. In one sense this entire article is based on the hypothesis that there are unusual opportunities for churches in cities.

An extensive debate could be carried on over the way in which the various factors making for successful city churches should be ranked. As a matter of fact, to think of them in terms of a chronological order or even a logical order quite misleads the student in this field. While the writer chooses an order in which to discuss these various characteristics, their interrelationship must be ever before us.

The first thing necessary to a vital church is that the institution spoken of as a church *be* a church — that is, that it have those purposes and activities of life which relate it to and identify it with the genius and nature of churches. There may be many institutions known as churches which, according to basic criteria, could not be called vital churches because they have only the form, not the spirit, of the type of institution which they are supposed to be.

The primary purposes of a church may be described roughly under three categories: first, to champion great causes, causes which are so great that they are conceived to be related to God himself; second, to build the good local community; and third, to give meaning and purpose to personal living.

The first of these special purposes required of a vital city church is the great cause, which may be local, national or international in scope. While the great cause is related to geography it is not limited to parish boundaries. For the

Christian church the world is its parish where it must maintain those principles which are considered worthy of supreme devotion. The great causes of the church, therefore, become symbolic of the universal interest of the church in mankind, in Christian missions and in world views. There is a practical need for this emphasis upon the great cause in the fact that social conditions such as unemployment, delinquency, race conflict and war are let down like a great fog over communities and the local community in itself is helpless to deal with them. As the preacher in a local church makes pronouncements on great issues, his message takes on national and even world significance, thus making important the local institution. When Protestant churches lose their ideologies and the accompanying causes, they cease to be significant as Protestant churches.

The second of the church's essential purposes is to build the kind of community in which an institution with the ideals of the church can live and in which the members of the church can maintain their loyalty to these principles. The third purpose is to give orientation to the new life coming into the community and into the church. This orientation might be described by the scriptural and theological term, " salvation." From a sociological point of view a person is saved when he conceives that he has a purpose, a goal and a destiny in life. For all those who hold that they are Christians there is the general assumption that their purposes in life are defined by and related to Jesus Christ and the great tradition which has come down from Hebrew religion through him and has been developed through centuries of Christian life and work. These three purposes a church must have if it is to *be* a church.

The second characteristic of the successful city church might be said to be an adequate constituency. If we think of a church of a particular type, such as the early American Protestant group or the group of continental European origin or the Roman Catholic churches or the Jewish synagogues, we know very well that under certain circumstances any particular type will have difficulty if it is located in a constituency which is very largely that of some other type.

It so happens that in many of the larger cities of the north many churches of British-American origin find themselves stranded or located in a population which has not been conditioned to their particular type of religious faith and practice. Some downtown or inner city churches having almost all the characteristics a successful church should have may gradually decline and finally die because they are so far removed from a possible constituency. This is one reason why the various denominations are anxious to have church comity operate among themselves. They are anxious for its protection because they are conscious that they must have a constituency. Wherever comity has failed to work and there is overcompetition on the part of churches, difficulty is found.

The location of a church in the city is crucial. There are, to be sure, significant churches tucked away in obscure corners. Sometimes lots located in the center of a block have been given by real-estate men. The donors may have to answer for this in the day of the judgment of real-estate men, but they should be forgiven since neither they nor the religious leaders who helped to guide them saw the great need for visibility in the crowded urban areas. The publicity value of a good location is great. Since the church is an evangelizing institution and must compete for the time, interest and

attention of people in crowded urban conditions, it is very necessary that a church be properly located with reference to the constituency which it hopes to attract. The writer can mention by name a number of city churches which have had hard going by reason of a poor location.

One of the essentials of a living church is that there shall be added to it those who need salvation. A church may be said to be unfruitful or dying when it ceases to take in new members. The Christian religion, in contrast with certain other religions, has been an evangelizing and missionary religion. Churches have sought to have those who are without the church come to a commitment of their faith in Jesus Christ. Any church which fails to take this position is out of line with historical Christianity and with the genius of those organizations which call themselves Christian churches.

There are three principal ways for the increase of church membership: (1) migration of members of the denomination into the community; (2) increases from births within the group; (3) increases by conversion, either from among non-churched people or by proselytization from other faiths. This third type takes place best when a movement is new and prophetic. The quickest way for a church to grow in urban territory is to get into a favorable population flow; that is, one which has been conditioned in the religious faith and practice of the church which is seeking to grow.

The successful city church is always seeking to do something more than to get members, something more than merely survive. It is always asking itself what kind of members it is producing. There is, however, no alibi for a church whose members are gradually dying off and which wins no new ones in a population where non-members live.

There are churches and communities in which people are so conditioned to their own particular forms of religion that there is a continuity from generation to generation. In large cities, the preservation of the continuity of church fellowships calls for effective leadership. The factors making for the dissolution of any group in the great city are so powerful that unless there is, at the center of the group, a strong, dynamic leader, the church melts away in the tides of urban life. There are ministers of churches in urban territory who, over a long ministry, with the aid of a relatively small number of faithful lay leaders, have built a constituency, developed a tradition and a momentum for life. There are many city churches which have been consigned to mediocrity and defeat because they have had a succession of preachers whose strength of leadership and length of stay were insufficient to pull together a significant group.

The vital city church has an inclusiveness in religious doctrine and practice and also in the social, cultural, educational and economic characteristics of its members. While there is a general segregation in urban territory according to religious background, nevertheless many urban communities have great heterogeneity of religious faith. One may safely say that there is not a city church of the early American Protestant type which does not have within its membership people from many different denominational backgrounds. Inclusiveness is, therefore, a necessity for growth and survival in urban conditions.

It is also a necessity from the Christian and human point of view. One might say that the city church has the attitudes and methods of a community church so far as concerns its willingness to accept into fellowship members of various re-

ligious faiths. Its positive teachings represent an emphasis rather than a creed to which all must subscribe.

In the city the barriers of social, cultural, economic and racial patterns stand always as a challenge to the basic Christian positions such as were accepted in the World Conference on Life and Work in Oxford, 1937. This inclusiveness in Protestant groups means more than a willingness to worship in the same sanctuary, more than a formal extension of hospitality by a church staff and by the ushers of the church. It means a desire to build fellowship across lines which are frequently barriers. City churches accept a precarious practice when they accept the stratification of the larger communities in which they are situated. The vitality of churches which call themselves Christian has a supreme test at this particular point.

Any church, but especially the city church, must be a place where free and creative discussion may take place. Dr. Edward Scribner Ames has referred to his church as one which has worked out the principles, plans and attitudes by which serious discussions on controversial topics can take place without the disruption of intimate personal relationships. This ability to maintain intimate social relationships while discussing great issues is thought by many to be the supreme test of the Christian in times of great stress and strain. These attitudes and plans for discussion of controversial topics are especially crucial in the large city, where the problems of riches and poverty, of capital and labor, of race relations, of family conflict, are acute, and where the problems involved in international issues are sharpened by war abroad.

The living city church celebrates life. Dr. Von Ogden Vogt has defined religion as "the celebration of life." The

church points up the emotional intensities of life and gives value and interpretation to them. The church which has in it the spirit and practice of the celebration of the high points and the achievements in human life, either in the individual or in the group, has a way of commending itself to its people and of establishing itself in the interest and attention of its community. These celebrations may take place under the simplest circumstances. There may be a church dinner at which the oldest member is asked to stand and receive the greetings of his fellows. There are moments for the recognition of its younger members. It may be in the marriage ceremonies. It may be in the Christmas pageants wherein are celebrated the spirit of giving and of making good cheer. It may be in the beautiful music of Eastertime. One could scarcely call a church vital which failed to celebrate life.

In the celebration of life and in all the functions of the church, beauty and art play an important role. Churches are now competing with organizations which expend great sums of money for the beautification of their programs. This often throws into contrast the barren, ill kept church edifice. The small group which makes a spiritual blessing out of poverty and out of the more primitive forms of life may continue as a small group to exert an influence far beyond the proportion of its numerical strength. There is pressure, however, for church groups to maintain themselves in beauty and dignity in the urban environment. This is especially true in those populations which out of an Old World background have been accustomed to elaborate rituals and beautiful church sanctuaries.

The successful city church must have a rich emotional life. If church groups are dealing with the great issues of life, then

we may expect a tone of natural earnestness to appear in sermons and in all other activities. The writer does not know of any city churches which succeed on the basis of a coldly intellectual or impersonal approach. Even the most intellectual sermons may be filled with urgency and a sense of deep concern. It is very well for a church to have many small discussion groups where emphasis is upon the working out of plans. When, however, the main worship service of a church becomes small, there is difficulty in maintaining the kind of emotional tone which draws people to this service. There cannot be warmth and enthusiasm because the group is small and the group remains small because there is no warmth and enthusiasm. The size of the group, the purifying and cleansing effect of great music, the utterance of a great word of interpretation and beautiful architecture assist in developing a moment in which minister and people come to be emotionally unified in a common act of worship. If the rapport thus established is carried over into a warm personal friendliness extended to fellow members and strangers alike, a powerful element in the success of the church is created.

The vital city church must have a special concern for family life. While activities for various age and sex groups are necessary, still there should be occasions when the family as a family meets at the church. Ministers today are giving special concern to counseling in marriage relationships and to counseling young adults. Certain seasonal activities where drama or pageantry is employed may give occasion for the whole family to attend. Some churches find great advantage in having a part of the main worship service devoted especially to the children. Whatever the special content of the

program, it should be a chief concern to have the family united in its religious life. The prevalence of broken and fragmented family life and the extreme diversification of individual interests in the urban community put a premium upon the church which can develop in its program special ways and means of unifying family life.

The topic of vocation comes to us today with new urgency and in a new setting in the urban environment. The very high rate of unemployment and the type of work which many people must do in the mechanized, standardized production of today challenge people in city churches with the need of a new outlook and new programs to deal with this important aspect of life. Yet in modern urban communities very few church members are able as individuals to do anything about the vocational life of their fellows. We are now at a time when many of the things that can be done must be done by legislative bodies. There is a new urgency and demand that local churches link themselves together in efforts to preserve the dignity of labor and to assure for the individual the possibility of bearing his share of the great burdens of our society. A sound economic order would seem to demand this. A thoroughly democratic society would certainly have a concern at this point. A Christian church cannot possibly escape its responsibility here and still maintain that it is vital.

While a great many churches know very well that recreation is not the chief goal of life, still they are realizing that people are bound together by numerous forms of association and that for a church group to be able to have wholesome and creative recreational life together may be a means of strengthening human fellowship. By the creative use of

leisure the personality gets a new sense of its own significance as a person while, at the same time, a fellowship is strengthened. A religious institution has a spirit and an atmosphere which make a particular activity different in its effect upon the person from what it is in a secular setting. These programs and plans for creative leisure need to apply to all ages and to both sexes in a church, through specialized activities and activities which all may share.

The experimental, youthful and even romantic attitude stands the church in the urban community in good stead. This does not mean that the church can afford to be startling at the expense of dignity. Supplementing its major functions there are many special smaller adaptations which relate the life and message of the church to people under very different circumstances. This special adaptation requires an experimental attitude which is both a quality of mind and a genius for seeing new relationships. It may reveal itself in the minister's message to his people, or in the special type of program which is found in the church. The church may maintain many of the regular practices and yet find ways by which the quality and the content of religion have special relationship to the conditions in which men find themselves so that the city man may truly say, "I have found a church that can speak to my condition."

A church can have enthusiasms when it conceives that it has something for which it should live. This romantic impulse is found in youth and also in churches. Scorn is often heaped upon both. The city is the very place where this quality of religion is especially needed just because the defeats of churches seem so numerous. But enthusiasm cannot be maintained, or pessimism avoided, without some ac-

complishment of results. When churches grow thoroughly pessimistic regarding their own future, their fate is sealed.

The vital church needs to have overhead relationships with a larger fellowship both of its own denomination and with those interdenominational organizations that plan and work for common causes and distribute commitments for work in the city. Being related in a common enterprise with other churches gives a sense of mission in the larger world and saves the local church from an ingrowing spirit directly contrary to the genius of Christianity. Organizations within the local church itself, such as the young people's societies, are given a higher sense of importance when affiliated with city-wide, state and national movements.

We have seen how the vital church must live up to the genius of the church as a church, must have a constituency and a desirable location, must actively seek new members, achieve continuity through strong leadership, be inclusive in spirit and practice, emphasize the celebration of life and a balance of intellect and emotion in preaching and church work, give special attention to family life, bring vocation into the sanctuary, be concerned for the creative use of leisure time, adopt an experimental and youthful outlook toward its future and be closely related to a larger Christian enterprise and fellowship. Sometimes a special combination of even a few of the above characteristics will yield a church successful in giving meaning to human lives, in building a better local community, and in providing leadership for causes so great as to demand complete loyalty and a sense that these causes are a concern of God himself.

XVIII

# THE LOCAL CHURCH— AN EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

IRVIN E. LUNGER

Churches are free associations of individuals, endeavoring by every means to cultivate the highest forms of life that experience and imagination may devise. . . . In them persons band themselves together to instruct themselves, their children, and the community, in finding and following the most ideal manner of living.

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES [1]

CHRISTIANITY is essentially a social movement. Its origins were social and its progress through the centuries may be best understood as a social process. The men and women who shared its forward movement made up a continuing and self-renewing fellowship. However, then as now, they were participants at the same time in the variety of institutions and organizations of life which composed their social environment. Being both in and of the human situation, Christianity never ceased being a social process integral to the time and place through which it moved. Its churches stood uniquely within the continuity of its religious tradition and the complex interests and activities of an immediate human milieu.

Local churches are associations "of like-minded persons who are drawn together by common beliefs and attitudes

toward life and by cherished values which they hope to see prevail in the personal and associated life of their fellow men."[2] A church is but one community within a variety of communities although its unitive character makes it unique. It is made distinctive among social institutions by virtue of the quality of fellowship and the nature of the cause which it represents.

Churches emerged, historically, as informal associations of men and women whose lives had been quickened and transformed by the personality and teachings of Jesus. These associations achieved the status of self-conscious and self-determining communities. Persons entered the early Christian communities voluntarily, motivated by a desire for a sustained and sustaining fellowship in an all-important cause — the enrichment and salvation of life. Only as external forces played upon these rather loosely organized religious communities, and as increasing membership and a maturing world view affected their life, did they acquire more formal organization and more regularized procedures. Much the same social process obtained in the organization and growth of local churches in recent times. As a few individuals or families felt the need for a congenial and stimulating religious fellowship, or as such a need was called into conscious being by the vigorous voice of a missionizing preacher, there came into existence small, loosely organized religious associations which through years of social interaction became more formally established as churches.

Although local churches, historically and currently, emerged from the social process, few of them have kept their fellowship open and freely accessible to all who might desire membership in them. Not infrequently a series of specific

requirements for membership, over and beyond the simple desire to participate in a religious organization of life, was introduced. These requirements tended to make membership selective and to transform the open fellowship of the religious community into an exclusive one. Since exclusiveness leads to isolation from the immediate social process, local churches which have sought to make their membership selective, culturally or theologically, sacrificed the " at-homeness " in the human situation so necessary to effective religious living. To avoid the dangers of exclusiveness and to keep alive the vital interaction between the religious community and its social environment, many churches have made a deliberate effort to keep the local church an inclusive association of all who desire to share its life. Such an emphasis protects the church from isolation from that social situation in terms of which its effective life is defined. By remaining a rather loosely organized community among more rigid social institutions, the local church keeps its life moving within the broad stream of its culture and is able to provide a more vigorous and reasonable projection of its purpose through the larger social process. While immersion in the immediate human situation imposes certain limitations upon the religious community, a deliberate effort to provide a religiously motivated and motivating society within the social processes enables it to function in terms of the native idealisms and aspirations of the unfettered human spirit while challenging and purifying them by the long continuity of past religious experience which it represents.

The local church is a distinctive social community not because of its exclusiveness or its traditional theological authorities but because of the unusual fellowship which it

offers to all who wish to "belong" and to share in a movement born of the shared quest for more meaningful and sustaining life. As a continuing and self-renewing community, voluntarily established and perpetuated, the local church may participate effectively in determining the character and future of human experience.

### A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

To describe the local church as a social unity functioning in and through an immediate social situation and in terms of a long tradition would not be to characterize it completely. The religious community is both the effect of the religious experience of past generations and a cause of present and future religious experience. It is a distinct social unity only because it is uniquely a religious community.

The local church is not merely an institution with a religion. Its social emergence and its religious development were not separate phases of its life. It represents a living integration of both social and religious forces. It would be false to posit a secular world over against a religious world because religion is a quality rather than a quantity of life and would be meaningless apart from its social implication. The local church is that community uniquely concerned with sustaining and stimulating religious life through and in all reaches of the social process.

Although it is a vital function of the religious community to conserve and extend the values and attitudes of earlier religious experience, the local church is not bound by ideas or practices inherent in the Christian tradition which have no relevancy to the present and future ranges of human experience. The religious community has an obligation to the past

but it is less binding than its obligation to the present. Its real power and authority arise from its vital relation to the spiritual needs and aspirations of those men and women who either share its life or are influenced by it. Since it is a primary function of the religious community to express and implement "the out-reaching, forward striving of the human spirit toward the freest and highest development," [3] the local church must exercise and defend its freedom to modify and extend its heritage. Edward Scribner Ames suggests:

> Every local congregation has the right and the duty to examine its methods and teachings in the light of man's growing knowledge of himself and his world. It is obliged by the very urgency of the religion that it cultivates to search and experiment for better forms of public services, for more effective methods of training its members, young and old, for more compelling and illuminating symbols in all the arts, and for more appealing and sustaining sources of comfort and courage in the great adventure of reasonable and idealistic living.[4]

Through their associated experience in the local church, men and women should be stimulated to see their desires and aspirations in a universal and ideal reference. In their quest for more satisfying beliefs and practices, they should develop "techniques for mutual self-appraisal, for release from the past and the possibility of making new beginnings, for self-discipline, and for laying hold upon those spiritual resources that reside in and beyond the group." [5] The sustaining and stimulating experience of the church makes increasingly possible the shared achievement of life as it is loved and the clarification and utilization of those means by which life may be deepened and brought closer to its idealized possibility. In that religious community where religion is interpreted as a quality of life generated and nurtured by

the growth of intelligence and love there will be found a fellowship and a cause capable of functioning in and through the social process in such manner as to further the human achievement of more meaningful and satisfying life.

### AN EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

The recognition that the local church is a social community defined by its religious purpose does not carry any guarantee that it will function effectively in the human situation. The effective functioning of a local church is determined by the spirit of its organized life and by the quality of its program. The religious community must be so organized that it can effectively fulfill its high social and religious responsibility. Its program must be defined in such manner as to make available to its members and to the human situation in which it lives significant and transforming resources and powers of religious living.

In its social organization the local church represents a complex of personal relationships and interacting groups. If it is to function as a creative and renewing social force in a particular period in the life of its culture, it must possess an adaptable and flexible inner structure. Otherwise it would rapidly acquire a rather rigid institutionalism which would stunt the religious life of its members and minimize its social influence. Since the actual organization of the local church is but a means to the end of religious living, its techniques and processes need to be living implementations of its primary and motivating purpose. In order to secure and further the experience of life which it symbolizes, the local church needs to be democratic in structure and experimental in attitude. The structure of the church needs at all times

to be subject to the purposes which motivate it and to the life of the social situation in which it has its being.

The program of the effective religious community is determined by the necessity of sustaining and stimulating the religious life of its members and of interpreting and applying religion to those ranges of human experience which lie beyond its immediate influence. In its relation to those who share its associated life, the local church reveals three emphases: an inspirational or motivational emphasis, an educative or instructive emphasis, and a friendly or social emphasis. Its program is designed to provide compelling motivation for courageous and confident living, to instruct in the religious way of life, and to nurture and extend sustaining human fellowship.

Traditionally, the inspirational or motivational function of the religious community was dominant. The local church sought by every means to hold up to men a vision of an ideal way of life — a way which would save them from the lesser ideals and distorted conceptions of value and help them avoid the pitfalls of life into which spiritual blindness and moral weakness might hurl them. The inspirational function of the church was and is its saving function. However, it is not upon miraculous or supernatural intervention that the religious community must rely but upon its own capacity for discovering those qualities of life which possess transforming and quickening power. The local church represents an associated effort to discern the way of life which promises most complete and ideal realization. It becomes a fundamental responsibility of the church to relate the lives of its members and of those capable of being influenced by its program to ranges of experience, known through memory

or imagination, which give to life a deep sense of meaning and purpose and call forth transforming energies dedicated to the achievement of more ideal possibilities of experience.

The educative or instructive function of the local church is primarily that of "providing conditions and resources by which growing persons may achieve a religious quality in every phase of the experience by which they realize themselves."[6] The educative responsibility of the church is less that of transmitting past religious experience (although this has its place), more a furthering of the human adjustment to the natural world and to the social environment through the use of all available resources interpreted and adapted in the spirit and perspectives gained from the long Christian tradition. This phase of the program of the religious community is given its urgency by the necessity of stimulating its members to more intelligent and creative expression of religion in life.

Historically, the educative function of the church was defined largely in terms of the indoctrination of its members in the traditional theological beliefs of Christianity. However, if the educative responsibility of the church is conceived as being that of providing its members with intelligent and spiritual insight into the true values and possibilities resident in the human situation, the religious community must bring the fruits of science and the wisdom of the ages into such relation to their common life as may aid them in achieving a meaningful and expanding religious experience. The local church may not boast of "given" truth as a unique possession of the religious community. The truths which it seeks to instill in the minds of its members are those substantiated by human experience and imagination. They

have the authority of life itself. However, it does render a unique and invaluable service as it seeks to guide, by open discussion and scholarly investigation, a shared quest for truth with a view to relating all its findings to the religious control and extension of the common life.

The third emphasis of the religious community within its own associated life is upon the sustaining and extending of that network of intimate human relationships which are at once the source of its life and the channels of its larger effectiveness. The quality of life sustained by a religious community is not unlike that of a human family. Although there is a biological unity in the family, its real coordination and strength are a result of the common activities and interests which dominate its life. In the religious community a similar mutuality is created and enriched by vital and continuing fellowship in a cause of great felt importance. Although the human associations which made the local church a social reality are more varied than those of the family, yet there is a cohesion revealed through them by virtue of the unifying cause that may be closer than the bonds of the human family. The warm and meaningful friendships which undergird the religious community require continued nurture. Yet by providing opportunities for social expression and by consciously seeking to keep the life of each member an integral part of the community of religious endeavor, the church may succeed in bringing into its common life a feeling of kinship and shared experience which will support and radiate a quality of life nowhere else obtainable in the social process.

To be socially effective, the local church, in addition to its inspirational, educative and friendly function, must define

its program in terms of those wider areas of life which encircle it in the human situation. The religious community must do for individuals and institutions native to its environment much the same thing it seeks to do for men and women who share its own associated life. The local church may function effectively in the communities beyond its immediate organization in two ways, namely, in an institutional manner as a distinct social organization deeply concerned with the quality of the common life about it, and in an individualized manner through the men and women who are members both of the religious community and of the larger complex of social relations at the same time.

The local church may and should bring its influence as a religious community to bear on institutions or processes about it which hinder or block the growth of those religious qualities so essential to human betterment. Being an institution among institutions, a community within communities, it may bring real social pressure to bear on evils which undermine human life and on those forces which threaten the individual and collective realization of more meaningful and satisfying existence. Either singly or in cooperation with other religious or socially reforming organizations, the local church is under a high obligation to be a critic of conditions which militate for evil, challenging every agency whose purpose or activity blocks the forward thrust of the human spirit, and so to sponsor forces making for good that every effort to enrich the common experience of life may be undergirded and extended.

Much of the social obligation of the local church will be discharged, however, if it is effective in producing and sustaining religious men and women. The greatest social force

available to the religious community is resident in those individuals who share its associated life and are committed to its high purposes. To live religiously, they must live as socially conditioned and conditioning beings. Shailer Mathews once observed: "If a person is to be regarded as a socialized individual, the Christian ideal of love will, if once put into operation, produce the sort of individuals who make social institutions better implements for forwarding human welfare." [7]

The religious community will function with maximum effectiveness in the human situation as it encourages each of its members, in his own way and in the terms of his own social relationships, to work creatively for conditions of life which undergird religious experience and further the human quest for a more shared and satisfying life. The real social strength of any Christian bloc, composed of one or more religious communities, rests in the final analysis upon its success in so cultivating and enlarging the religious experience and imagination of its members through its inspirational and educative and social functions that they may become an increasingly effective force for good in the larger social process in and through which its life is lived. Only as the local church understands its unique relation to the rich and creative heritage of Christianity and to the living human situation will it so live as to be the fulfillment of past ages of Christian experience and aspiration and the effective assurance of ever deepening experience and spiritual realization in these present days.

## NOTES

[1] Edward Scribner Ames, *Religion* (Henry Holt & Co., 1929), pp. 282, 276.

[2] William Clayton Bower, in *The Church at Work in the Modern World,* edited by William Clayton Bower (University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 272.

[3] Ames, in Bower, *op. cit.,* p. 81.

[4] Ames, *Religion,* p. 282.

[5] Bower, *op. cit.,* pp. 272–73.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 117.

[7] Shailer Mathews, in Bower, *op. cit.,* p. 208.

XIX

# A PERSPECTIVE OF MISSIONS

GUY W. SARVIS

FORTY YEARS AGO a letter was handed to me, asking for an office secretary to go to the Y.M.C.A. at Calcutta. Would I be interested in going? Yes, if I thought it was my duty, I would go. The following autumn found me in India, getting my first impressions of missionary work. Two things stand out in memory. The first is a new world of ideas. The work was with college students, and the approach was largely philosophical and intellectual — or so it now appears to me. The problem was to make Christianity seem so reasonable that these young men, steeped in the philosophy and practice of Hinduism, might accept it. The second thing I remember is holding meetings, which was our most important activity. I recall especially how we used to go into the public park in the late afternoon, carrying a baby organ, and sing until the crowd gathered, and then several of us would preach. The individuals in the crowd came and went, but always there was a group listening to the missionary.

I was very young and naive myself, and the intellectual broadening which took place in my own life as a result of acting as stenographer for our double first honor Oxford graduate, J. N. Farquahar, when he wrote on Hinduism and Christianity is one of the significant things in my experience.

Another man who influenced me profoundly was W. M. Forrest, who represented the Christian Women's Board of Missions and who was a man of wide scholarship and deep personal religion. Another member of our staff was F. W. Steinthal, a Dane who had gone blind in mission service and to whom I taught typewriting. He, also, was a highly cultured, religious and scholarly individual.

On the other hand, I became vaguely aware of the young men among whom we lived and whom we sought to influence. One, in particular, belonged to a wealthy high-caste family. He became interested in Christianity and involved in intense conflict over the question whether he should become a Christian. He considered himself a Christian in fact, but if he should be baptized, it would necessitate a complete break with his family, a loss of caste and the building of a new world of friends and interests. I remember vaguely that there was also some moral problem.

In an extremely hazy fashion I began to sense the values which were involved — the demand of the missionaries that the social connections of individuals be destroyed and that the institutions in which they lived and which made up the very fabric of their lives be undermined. The new institutions and social status seemed weak and unimpressive. Yet I was conscious of the superb quality of the missionaries who were seeking to change the lives of these young men, and that some of the young men were both winsome and able. I had little inkling of the motivation involved for either missionaries or "missionees," and I have the feeling now that they themselves had no very clear idea of the larger significance of their work. They were intelligent, consecrated, zealous persons devoting their lives to a cause which then

seemed and now seems to me to be among the noblest conceived by man, but which they had not consciously criticized or evaluated.

I returned to America, spent four years in college and three years in graduate school. In college I was an ardent Student Volunteer; and while doing graduate work in the divinity school at the University of Chicago, I became associated with Dr. Ames and the University Church of Disciples. These were years when new ideas and new syntheses threatened to destroy the single-minded ardor which had sent me to India and made me president of the Student Volunteers at Drake University. Perhaps it was persons more than ideas that became determinative in my life. I suppose two men counted most — Edward Scribner Ames and Charles R. Henderson. Ames talked about ideas; he was a philosopher. But I have never thought of him as an exponent of ideas. I remember the fugitive smile and the eyes that were never too serious to be kind and an impression of mastery and buoyancy that dissolved doubt and gave one a sense of sureness in connection with any project or idea he proposed. I suppose that is why we finally went to China as missionaries of this church and why, through the years, we have called him "father." The influence of Dr. Henderson was different. He was the great, cosmic-hearted, clear-headed saint. He made it a rule "to take a walk, to pray, and to read a poem every day." He made religion concrete for me. I remember him today with deep emotion. These two men awoke responses from two sides of my own nature. One was the minister-philosopher and the other was the practical Christian. I went to China as a missionary with these two influences in my own life.

We arrived in China in the midst of the revolution of 1911; we left China in 1926, and most of our possessions were destroyed by the army of Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking in 1927. China was in turmoil. The people refer to four plagues — flood, drought, robbers and soldiers. They often add a fifth — foreign imperialists. To a certain extent these plagues had been present throughout Chinese history; but in this period they were accentuated because the old fabric of Chinese civilization was disintegrating. It was in such a period that our missionary work in China was done. Human needs were urgent; culture was disintegrating; people everywhere were seeking adjustments in a new world.

Our first missionary days were in Shanghai where, with incredibly fantastic and often tragic results, West meets East. Of course we saw much of missions and missionaries. We found that they were "just folks." They represented the churches which sent them. There were not many from churches like the University Church of Disciples — but there are not many such churches! In America each church attracts a somewhat homogeneous membership; but within the missionary body there are the widest extremes. We often found ourselves puzzled and lonely, for even among our own missionaries there were such wide differences in outlook that it was difficult to avoid conflict. Early I became secretary to our mission Advisory Committee, and one of my first memories of the period is the painful process which finally culminated in a request for the resignation of two of our fellow missionaries who were so sure of God's will that they were unable to accept the decisions of the mission.

In due time — a very short time — I assumed my duties as teacher of sociology and economics (and, from time to

time, many other subjects!) in the University of Nanking. The text we used was Ellwood's *Sociology and Modern Social Problems,* a large portion of which was devoted to the problems of the American family, with much stress on divorce! The procedure struck me as fantastic. At the time I knew almost nothing about the family organization in which my students had grown up, but even then I sensed the incongruity between the textbook and their lives. This lack of coincidence between service and need (as I then saw it) was characteristic of almost every phase of the work of the university, as well as of other mission work. There was implicit in it all the same conflict which I had seen in the Indian student who hesitated to be baptized. However, the situation in China was much more fluid. There was much more outreaching for Western culture. One thing puzzled me at the time. Our teaching was in English and included Shakespeare, but we required also the study of the Chinese classics. The classics and the Bible were the most unpopular subjects, while English and sociology were among the most popular. This bothered us, for we did not want to "Westernize" our students, since they were destined to live in China. But their demands did not coincide with our ideas. A Western education, and especially English, meant increased earning power and prestige and even the possibility of going to America and winning a Ph.D. and the status and salary it commanded. We used American textbooks because we had no other — modern textbooks in Chinese did not exist, and we could not have taught from them if we had had them. We introduced American football and American methods of college administration because we were familiar with them; and these were accepted because, for the most

part, the students liked and honored their teachers and because, in general, the West had prestige. I now see that, since our real function was to bridge the gulf between East and West, our procedure was not unintelligent.

One of my earliest experiences was in a country station (now called Hofei) with Dr. Butchart. The Advisory Committee met there. In those days there were no Chinese members, and one source of satisfaction in my own mind is that I was later one of those who helped reorganize mission government so that it included both Chinese and missionaries. The years have seen sweeping changes which have increased the responsibility of Chinese in the church and its related institutions. Dr. Butchart was one of the most resourceful and well informed men I ever met. He was a liberal, and had his difficulties in reconciling himself to working with persons who seemed to him narrow-minded and shortsighted. I remember how impatient he was about the open-membership and immersion controversy. His hospital and house were full of devices to facilitate living in a place which was inaccessible to a department store or a repair man. We talked of many of the issues of life as we trudged out into the country where there was a boy in his teens who had become insane. I was amazed at the procedure of the doctor in treating this patient. The whole trouble was that his intestines had become so impacted with worms that normal functioning of the body was impossible. A simple vermifuge and appropriate mechanical treatment relieved him, and in a few days he was normal again. I mentally multiplied this incident by thousands, and later learned of the countless parasites which infect the Chinese people. Now, as I remember Dr. Butchart and his kind and

the far-reaching work for personal and public health done by missionary and other American agencies, their work seems to me to be of a piece with that of Dr. Henderson who gave his life in service for the laborers of Illinois, and with that of Jesus who "went about doing good."

Famine by flood and famine by drought! We had not been in China very long before we met two Irishmen, Joseph Bailey and Alexander Paul. They were both connected with famine. There was famine in the north when we went to Nanking. Joseph Bailey was rough and crude and impulsive and bighearted. He was a Presbyterian who had theological difficulties. The beggars who had flocked into the city used to collect at the gate, and Bailey would fill his pockets with copper coins and go out and distribute them as long as they lasted. But the crowds got bigger and bigger, and when his coppers were gone, his life was endangered. He pondered on the matter and came to believe that people might be rehabilitated if they were put onto the land. From that idea grew the College of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Nanking, an institution which has done and is doing today in free China monumental service.

Floods had broken the dikes along the Yangtze. Alexander Paul was an evangelistic missionary and had a school in Wuhu. He devoured the baseball news and embarrassed me by talking about Babe Ruth. I never admitted to him that I didn't know who Babe Ruth was! No matter what was wrong in China, some missionary was likely to be involved in trying to set it right. So when it was decided that some kind of WPA was needed instead of cash relief, the committee decided to build dikes. Alex Paul was asked to boss the job. We went to visit him on the houseboat where

he had established himself. He must see that the earth of which the dikes were made was properly tamped and of the right kind, that the headmen did not cheat the laborers and that quarrels were adjusted. He knew that in a tense situation a laugh is always better than an argument. So he kept hundreds of men working harmoniously, built the dikes and fed the people whom the hungry river sought to devour. He did not talk about religion at all, I suppose. But he incarnated a spirit — name it as you will.

Later the time came when drought destroyed the crops of a province in north China. The committee asked for volunteers. I got leave of absence and, with one of our wisest Chinese pastors, went up to help. The country was infested with bandits. There was not enough relief grain to go around. We canvassed the villages (it took five days to drive across my territory) and issued tickets to the most needy. We feared that those who did not receive tickets might mob us, but they only said, "Ai-ah, fate is unkind to us!" Girls were selling at three dollars each. One rarely went outside a village without encountering an unburied corpse. It was during this period that I came into intimate contact with a "fundamentalist" group of missionaries. They were giving all their strength and resources to caring for the needy. At one place I remember two women who were caring for two boys whose feet had been frozen off and who were suffering from gangrene. The task was repulsive in the extreme, and one saw no hope for the boys, even if they should survive. "What's the good?" was my inner question. But I went away ashamed of my own smugness, feeling that somehow here in this isolated station in central China there walked again a spirit which is infinitely precious among human beings who must learn to live together.

I remember a night in the western hills. There were three or four Westerners and Dr. Hu Shih, now Chinese ambassador at Washington. We spent the night at the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha. Dr. Hu had studied at Cornell University, and the story went that he was once "almost persuaded" to be a Christian. When one meets a person like him one begins to wonder about definitions — what is a Christian? He was not a direct "product" of missions at all, yet into his life had been woven the influences of many missionaries and missionary institutions. I said to him that night, "I don't know whether we educational missionaries are planting seeds to grow up or scattering dynamite to blow up." He answered, quite casually, "Perhaps you are doing neither." I wonder whether he would make that remark today. In any event, in the leadership of China in recent years Christian influence has been dominant above any other influence from the West. In the vast and complicated web of life we cannot untangle the threads that make the pattern, but I suppose that my wife and I shall always feel that our really significant years were those that in some fashion went into the renascent Chinese nation.

I have been trying to suggest by the incidents I have related something of the realities which make up what we call "missions." What of the church? What of Chinese saints? What of conversions and religious experiences? I have known some Chinese men and women, humble or exalted, who deserve to be called saints. Not many church members, in China or America, deserve the title, but there are always some — prophets, seers, mystics, ministers! And the church has been to the Christian movement what the miners and farmers and fishers and hunters are to our economic life, the producer of raw materials. Schools, hospitals,

Christian institutions of all kinds have been possible only because the gospel has been preached everywhere and little groups of converts and friends have been formed from which have come the leaders. Less dramatic than other institutions, but fundamental to all, are these groups of Christians. And the gospel has brought unmeasured comfort and courage and peace and hope to thousands.

In these forty years, what has happened to missions? Nothing has happened which makes the basic process which they represent less significant. Missions have always been an aspect or quality of a larger process which sociologists call cultural accommodation. In a static world there are no missions because there is no change. Christian missions have always reflected rather definitely the forms, beliefs and values of the church from which missionaries were sent; and the church has always been a mediator of the values of the culture in which it is found. The modern missionary movement has been contemporaneous with the expansion of Western civilization. Indeed, it has been an unconscious instrument for the spread of that civilization. It is pointless to assess the value of the Westernization of the world; it is evident that there was no alternative.

Seen in long perspective, then, missions represent those aspects of acculturation of the non-Western world by the West which have to do specifically with the transfer of ideal and spiritual values. It was inevitable and desirable that they should also carry with them much of the material culture of the West; and there was no means of avoiding certain disservices in the process of destroying the old and creating the new. But the essential fact is that, as the church in the West has preserved essential old values and contributed to

the creation of new values, missions have served a like purpose — but missionaries have probably been more dynamic and resourceful than the church in the West.

What of the future? We cannot know. The question concerning the future of missions has many elements in common with that concerning the future of the church and of religion and of democracy. It is clear that the age of imperialism (in the sense in which we know it) has come to an end. Western peoples have occupied all the vacant spaces on the earth. So long, however, as great inequalities of culture exist, it is probable that religious missions will continue. The world is at the moment undergoing such violent change that any more precise judgment is hardly possible. But men will always need that outreaching of the privileged to the underprivileged and that insistence on the eternity of values which have been the essence of missions.

XX

# CHRISTIANITY AND THE EASTERN RELIGIONS

CLARENCE W. HAMILTON

CHRISTIANITY, though linked historically with Western culture, had its beginnings in the Orient. The circle of its insights, as is shown in the history of religions, is overlapped by value-discernments of other Oriental faiths. What does this signify? Modern interpreters of Eastern religions sometimes read the fact in favor of indigenous systems that have never been Westernized. Modern Christians note the same fact, but not infrequently have been perplexed to know what to do with it. How ought the Christian way of life to stand related to non-Christian systems which also cherish recognized values of man's higher life? In the past the question has often enough been dismissed as irrelevant because of the assumed superiority of Christianity as the religion of a triumphant civilization. Today it becomes too urgent to neglect when both East and West face degradation of all higher values in disruptions besetting every traditional culture.

We here propose to examine the question in the light of recent treatments. Four notable studies have appeared within the last four years, signs of growing concern in the watchtowers of thought. Written from different points of view,

they are the more enlightening when considered together. *Living Religions and a World Faith,* by William Ernest Hocking,[1] represents the matured reflections of an American religious liberal. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* by the Dutch scholar, Hendrik Kraemer,[2] speaks with the voice of European neo-orthodoxy and was written for discussion at the Madras Missionary Conference in 1938. Outside Protestant circles the position of a Swiss Catholic is stated in Otto Karrer's *Religions of Mankind.*[3] Beyond the domain of Western thinkers the outlook of reinterpreted Hinduism is represented by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought.*[4]

We turn first to the Indian analysis. Professor Radhakrishnan writes primarily as a philosopher, interested to find linkage of spirit between Hindu and Western religious thought. The tragedy of contemporary life, as he sees it, lies in the fact that, while the world becomes increasingly one through external, material communications, it has no corresponding unity of soul. The remedy must be "a changing of men's hearts and minds" so that the body of world community may be animated by a healthy unity of spirit. Such ministration is something that belongs preeminently to the sphere and function of religion.

Shaping the soul of modern man, however, is a task of religion, not in its traditional organized forms, but in its inner truth and essence. In the meeting of Eastern and Western religions, conflict and competition due to divergencies should be retired in order to develop a spirit of comprehension, free from prejudice and misunderstanding, that shall bring regard for one another as varied expressions of a single truth. Hinduism, as Professor Radhakrishnan sees it, has

cherished such a spirit for nearly fifty centuries. From the days when vedic Aryans invaded India, mingling their ideas and rituals with those of aboriginal tribes and Dravidian peoples, leaders of Indian culture have been haunted by the dream of spiritual unity. Buddha and Śankara, no less than Ramakrishna and Gandhi, believed in absolute truth and regarded all particular faiths as apprehending different aspects of that truth. Hence the mosaic of religious aspirations which is Hinduism. Such universal tolerance is ready to welcome truth in Islam and in Christianity, in religions of China and Japan as well as in religions of the West. Outside of India, China also has partaken of the great Eastern tradition of tolerance, as we can see in the intertwining of its Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist attitudes.

So Professor Radhakrishnan believes that the spiritual unity of religions as well as the healing of an outwardly interrelated but inwardly discordant world is to be sought in supreme devotion to absolute truth. In itself this truth reaches far beyond all particular formulations and embodiments. Compared with these latter it remains formless, mysterious, transcendent, something to be more but never completely known. Consequently the claim to finality of any one historical religion contravenes the unity of spirit in which all alike should share. Judaism, Islam and Christianity have made such claims and have accordingly failed to realize the relativity of their dogmas and to achieve the true spirit of toleration which Radhakrishnan exalts. Yet from his point of view Judaism creates no serious problem, for the " chosen people " have had no passion to convert the world; and Islam, though originally militant and inelastic, has in India had its dogmatism softened by contact with Hinduism, while its modern

variant, Bahaism, urges free religious fellowship with those of all faiths. Christianity alone has the greatest problem of adjustment and in meeting with other religions finds itself in inner conflict. This conflict appears, as the Hindu philosopher sees it, in three diverging attitudes — reactionary, conservative and liberal.

Christian reactionism he sees in Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian who holds that divine revelation belongs to Christianity alone. Since Christians have already received the perfect revelation they must abandon all attempts to see values in other religions. Under no circumstances must Christendom "howl with the wolves." [5] Her sole duty is to witness to the Word of God. In this position of splendid religious isolation Barth has the support of one vein of Christian tradition. To the Indian thinker, however, such a contention means that non-Christian religions are regarded as "untouchable." But this is incredible! "We cannot dismiss as negligible," he writes,

> the sense of the majesty of God and consequent reverence in worship which are conspicuous in Islam, the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for a way of escape in Buddhism, the desire for contact with ultimate reality in Hinduism, the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct in Confucius.[6]

Great church fathers like Clement, Origen and Augustine did not deny the working of the Divine Word outside the specifically Christian religion. Hence Barth does not represent the only Christian tradition nor the only possible Christian attitude toward other faiths.

Less intransigent than the reactionary Barthian view is the conservative attitude. It concedes good elements in other

religions but regards these as half-lights, partial insights which are of value as preparations for the perfect revelation in Christianity which is the peak, the crown, the completion of the religion of humanity. The light of Christianity is as the blazing sun, that of other religions as the faint shining of distant stars. Here the strong undertone is not so much intolerance as an assured sense of superiority. Yet it is no less an affirmation of finality that upholds aggressive missionary effort and would win converts to Christianity from other religions even though it appreciates non-Christian religious values in their due subordination. The attitude is beautifully expressed by men like Dr. Macnicol and Dr. Farquhar, both of whom have written valuable books on Indian religions. To the Indian mind, however, it is linked with " proselytism " and infected with an ultimate inflexibility that hinders give-and-take in real religious growth.

Full approval is reserved for the third Christian attitude which is described as left wing liberalism in which the essentially Hindu attitude on religious relations is attained. This repudiates religious imperialism, regards no religion in its present form as final, and would have the great religions, including Christianity, regard themselves as " friendly partners in the supreme task of nourishing the spiritual life of mankind." This attitude Professor Radhakrishnan feels he detects in certain passages of the Jerusalem Conference reports, in affirmations of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry (in *Re-thinking Missions*), and in specific statements of some Christian missionaries who separate evangelism from proselytism, plead for " mutuality in giving and receiving," or even practice non-interference with ancestral faiths.[7] Impressively he interprets its meaning as follows:

> In a restless and disordered world which is unbelieving to an extent which we have all too little realized, where sinister superstitions are setting forth their rival claims to the allegiance of men, we cannot afford to waver in our determination that the whole of humanity shall remain a united people, where Muslim and Christian, Buddhist and Hindu shall stand together bound by common devotion, not to something behind but to something ahead, not to a racial past or a geographical unit, but to a great dream of a world society with a universal religion of which the historical faiths are but branches.[8]

Thus is conceived the search for " the world's unborn soul."

Professor Radhakrishnan's arresting analysis of East-West religious relations from the viewpoint of Neo-Hinduism is balanced by an equally striking analysis from the Catholic point of view by Otto Karrer. Here likewise we find the cry for spiritual unity in a single humanity now tragically sundered by radical cleavages in the profoundest depths of emotional life, with consequences in the outer order patent to all. Such unity, however, Karrer does not believe attainable by the modern Hindu attitude " whose Universal Gospel with undiscriminating acceptance approves every form of belief, even 'atheistic belief,' provided its adherents are sincere."[9] In view of the luxuriant jungle of mythology, speculation, ritual and superstition which is explored and mapped by the history of religions, this attitude implies too conglomerate a synthesis for the guidance of man. It would also place all religions on the same level, something which Christianity has never done. For Christians, the unity of religions is discernible only in the light of a supreme revelation which is the norm of judgment for all the ways of faith. Does this attitude issue in harsh intolerance and exclusion? No, thinks Karrer. By its very nature it compels the recognition that " there is one God who is the Father, Redeemer

and Sanctifier of all men of good will."[10] Men of good will have lived before the time and beyond the bounds of historic Christianity. These God has not left without some witness and awareness of himself. He is that ever present Reality which man discovers, even if with dim apprehension, and which he worships, even if ignorantly.

So the non-Christian religions are to be respected. They are genuine religions and lay hold on God. Karrer masses the evidence. He traces the notion of God as found in ancient and modern faiths of both East and West. He notes weighty ethical insights among Egyptians, Greeks, Indian Buddhists and devout Mohammedans. He finds authentic religious experience in the prayers, the mystical devotions and the sacrifices that have ascended in myriad forms throughout human history. Yet values are not indiscriminately lumped. They are seen to spread in a vast spectrum reaching from the first crude gropings of primitive religious behavior to the loftiest achievements of Christian saints. Catholicity of this character is certainly inclusive and one wonders whether Christian appreciation of non-Christian religious values can possibly go farther.

Challengingly enough, Karrer does go farther. Not only are there values in religions outside Christianity. There are revelation and salvation also outside the Christian church. God's universal revelation to the human race appears in those insights and illuminations that have visited such seers and saints as Plato and Buddha. Unknown in their true nature by their recipients, these visitations are really beams from "the Light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world." Salvation outside the church appears at first an impossible conception. Does not Catholic teaching claim that

the church is the sole ark of salvation? Karrer recognizes a substantial rigorist strain in Catholic tradition on this point. Yet, threading his way carefully through the forest of various Catholic theological positions, he maintains that his view is consistent and possible. "*Anima naturaliter Christiana,*" "The soul is naturally Christian," as Tertullian said, and noble heathen are, in Augustine's phrase, "secret Christians."

Yet the Catholic thinker does not fail to stress that the conscious Christianity of the true church is both unique and supreme among the faiths of man. Unique, because in Christ God's revelation becomes fully explicit and definitive in a particular person. Supreme, because its ultimate meaning is "the fulfillment of all religions." This absolute goal is not to be identified with the historical, empirical church which falls far short of embodying its ideal. Neither individual Christian nor organized church can boast of having grown to the full stature of Christ. In both only humility is befitting. Yet too often the Christian mission has been identified with winning converts to the supposed superiorities of Western civilization instead of to the one worldwide Kingdom of God over mankind, the true *ecclesia sancta catholica* which would fulfill Christ's prayer "that they all may be one."

In the present dark hour of history this contrast between the remote high goal of perfect Christianity and the failure of Christians to accomplish its embodiment in larger measure stirs in Karrer a grave but ultimately undiscouraged reflection:

> It may be that before God's hour strikes, Europe must be shaken to its foundations. It may be that Sigrid Undset's vision must first be fulfilled and Chinese missionaries bring back the Christian faith to a

repaganized Europe. The tragedy of Christendom is great, but Christianity is immortal. "Christ yesterday, today and forever." [11]

It is evident that Otto Karrer represents what Professor Radhakrishnan calls the conservative Christian attitude, but without claiming the superiority for the organized empirical church to which the Indian philosopher objects. Superficially the two men appear poles asunder, rooted in different religions, nationalities and races. Below the surface they are surprisingly alike. They survey the same complex scene of man's religious life. Both are concerned to seek the spiritual unity of mankind in devotion to an ultimate ideal which lies beyond complete embodiment in any particular religious community. For one it is the ultimately true Hinduism. For the other it is the ultimately true Christianity. For both the need for profound sympathy and understanding between faiths on the level of their highest meanings is undeniably basic. Especially so when reverence for the higher values of life is threatened with new and serious eclipse.

When we enter the world of Hendrik Kraemer we find forebodings of tragedy deepened. Protestant Holland had not been invaded at the time his book was written, but from first chapter to epilogue the sense of advancing danger and crisis forms a continuing background. The world is in transition. We live "between the times." "Humanity is beset with great dangers." [12] "Gigantic forces of obstruction and enmity are arising, and make the future uncertain." [13] In our planetary but disunited world, East and West alike share in the catastrophes of our time. The religious life of man is vitally affected. Everywhere religions are scrutinized as to their value for shaping life toward a new future but not toward the old religious goals. Values associated with hoary

traditions face wholesale destruction. The great world religions, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, thus find themselves together in a fellowship of suffering and acid test. How shall their interrelation be conceived?

As against the wide tolerance of Radhakrishnan and the hospitable catholicity of Karrer, Kraemer's answer is given in terms of an intense Christian absolutism. The fiery testings of trampling events force the church back from reliance on all rudiments of secular culture to the inner core and foundation of its being. The unshakable rock is the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. This revelation is not only ultimate; it is exclusive. It is divinely given, not humanly attained. Hence the values in non-Christian faiths, however noble as human achievements, are in a totally different dimension from that which is expressed in the words: " I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." This is no climax and fulfillment of a " general revelation " found in all religions. It is the single divine revelation, qualitatively as well as supremely distinct. Hence the only right relation of Christianity with other religions is the wholly missionary one of bringing the message of this word to those who know it not.

Emphatic absolutism of this sort promises much for missionary zeal but little for simple friendliness and sympathetic understanding between Christian and non-Christian religious persons. Kraemer, however, is too well informed a scholar and too realistic a missionary observer to identify his absolute revelation with the attainments of quite human Christians and church organizations. To present these as norm and goal to prospective Eastern converts is merely to manifest unwarranted pride in the values of so-called Christian

culture at the cost of blindness to other, real values in non-Christian cultures. Genuine Christian love for non-Christian religious persons, on the contrary, must include sensitive understanding for all that is dear and meaningful to them in order to present basic Christian meanings in terms appreciable by them. The Christian message, couched in terms of Western religion, is inevitably foreign and unadapted.

Adaptation of the rich religious and philosophical terminology of Eastern culture, however, is for the purpose of strategy in statement. In the end it means to express the one revelation in Christ as the unique and only way of salvation. For Kraemer, the meeting of religions is not an occasion whereby Eastern faiths find their fulfillment in Christ, as the Catholic Karrer holds. It is the occasion of their judgment. "Christ, as the ultimate standard of reference, is the crisis of all religions, of the non-Christian religions and of empirical Christianity too."[14]

The quality of Kraemer's thought is aroused, dramatic, incisive, full of urgency for Christian decision in the world's present critical hour. As we pass to the thought of William Ernest Hocking we are aware of a great change. Here are serenity, patience, continuity with thinking done before the First World War, and a far perspective that dares still to look beyond the tremendous convulsions of the present. We are reminded that it was but yesterday that the impact of civilization upon civilization began, and that the deepest implication of universally spread commerce and science is to be found not in the tragic passing of regional cultural systems but in an eventual world culture whose fullness is yet to come.

Our problem now appears in a different light. Existing religions first emerged in company with particular regional

cultures. They are particularized versions of what may be called the essence of all religion. But a faith adequate for a world culture must be a world faith. That is, in it the essence of religion must be adapted to the world situation and so be a concrete religion for mankind as a whole. The problem is to know how to grow from our present situation of plural local faiths toward the one ultimate world faith.

Hocking analyzes three possible ways. One is by radical displacement of all other religions by that which is held to be unique and final. Barth and Kraemer represent this way. It is the way of missionary conquest. Pedagogically, however, Hocking finds it unsound. It insulates Asian converts and church communities from their normal cultural heritage. It creates a community which, while claiming universality in its significance, remains actually foreign and Western in its impression on the non-Christian religious environment.

Another way is by synthesis, that is, by mutual teaching and learning between religions so that there is incorporation in one's own religion of elements drawn from other religions. Here the spirit of liberal appreciation is to the fore. Broad inclusion of everything good in every religion — that is the logical aim. In excess, the process too easily issues in a formless conglomerate. Used legitimately, it is the way by which a given religion assimilates from other faiths accretions of ideas and practices consistent with its own truth and individuality. Thus Christianity in its early days absorbed much from the Greco-Roman world without losing its own identity. Why not again in Asia? "I venture to propose," writes Hocking, "that no religion can become a religion for Asia which does not fuse the spiritual genius of Asia with that of Western Christianity."[15] Christianity could far sur-

pass its Western form were it more hospitable to relevant riches in Eastern faiths.

Yet synthesis is not the final way to a world faith. At best it promotes convergence of religions through enrichment of content. Their profound unity of essence, however, is not yet grasped. A higher process is necessary. This process, set forth with characteristic power of philosophical statement, is named by Hocking the way of reconception. By encountering new forms of excellence in other faiths we dive down more deeply into our own, so to speak, and discover there the primal root, unseen before, whence the truths of both our own and other faiths have sprung. Thus each religion grows into the world faith, deepening and reconceiving its own understanding of the essence of all religion until at last the spiritual unity of mankind becomes evident to all, and free.

As a Christian layman, Professor Hocking meditates on the possible role of Christianity in the growth toward world faith. He recognizes that at this stage it is not yet ready to serve as the world faith. In its Western form its bearing on problems of social institutions, of war, property and the family is uncertain. It is not inclusive of some values which Eastern religions definitely have. For example, Islam is impressive in its strong awareness of the majesty and near presence of God. Hinduism is admirable in its knowledge of meditation and serenity of spirit. Buddhism understands how to enjoy the impersonal element of ultimate truth. Confucianism is unsurpassed in the intensity of its humanity. In all these respects Christians may learn to deepen the quality of their own religious grasp, indeed must do so if they are to have the full respect of the East. A Christianity thus deepened and reconceived so as increasingly to include all excellence known and

to be known by man will be a fitting candidate for the world's faith. So would an equally reconceived Buddhism, Confucianism or Islam. By the time of arrival at a genuine world faith, however, the matter of name may be expected to be unimportant. But what of Christ? They are moving words with which Professor Hocking concludes:

> The figure of Christ can never serve the cause of world faith as the perquisite of a favoured group, still less as an escape from induced fears. " Accept this sign or perish " is an attitude which now incites rejection, because the spirit of man has become too much informed by Christianity. As a privilege, the Christ symbol " will draw all men "; as a threat, never. But as the meaning of this symbol becomes purified of partisanship and folly, rejection becomes arbitrary, its temper will pass, and the perfect interpretation of the human heart will assume its due place. When *in hoc signo* ceases to be a battle cry, it will ascend as token of another conquest, the conquest of estrangement among the seekers of God.[16]

On the question of the relation between Christianity and the Eastern faiths we have surveyed four wide-reaching and significant positions. We need not ask which thinker is ultimately right. Their differing convictions will appeal to different followings. What impresses the present writer is the fact that they are not so far apart as their mutual criticisms imply. Radhakrishnan is not so undiscriminating with reference to religious values as Karrer's view of Hinduism would indicate; nor is Karrer's conception of universal Christianity the inflexible religious imperialism which the Indian scholar denounces. Even the flaming, dramatic absolutism of Kraemer is at heart a spiritual, not an intellectual, emphasis, and makes more room for Christian linkage with Eastern religious heritage than is credited to it by Hocking. Finally Hocking, representative of all that free, " unbiblical," relativ-

istic Christian idealism at which Kraemer shudders, shows that his reluctance to make of the name of Christ a crusading slogan springs from a profound reverence for the meaning of Christ in the highest realms of spirit.

The great significance of these four studies in our time lies in their collective emphasis on the importance of the quality of religion by which men in the future will live. For man must live by some kind of faith. Against the black background of war, inhumanity, disregard for individual personality and the elevation of debasing myths, this fact stands out. Peoples must not throw away their own most precious insights nor ignore the truth that is given to others. Wherever man has been enabled to see deeply into the great values of human association and its higher realizations, those worths must never be forgotten but should become the common possession of all. What the faiths cannot do separately and in isolation they may learn to do together and in fruitful interchange. For Christianity in its world environment the opportunity is great and significant. Let the faiths know one another's depths so that men may have all possible light when, beyond the desolations of the cultures they have known, they seek to build anew.

NOTES

[1] William Ernest Hocking, *Living Religions and a World Faith,* The Macmillan Co., 1940.

[2] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* Published for the International Missionary Council by Harper & Bros., 1938.

[3] Otto Karrer, *Religions of Mankind,* Sheed & Ward, 1936.

[4] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought,* Oxford University Press, 1939; 2nd ed., 1940.

[5] This expression of Barth's is quoted in Nicol Macnicol's *Is Christianity Unique?* (Wilde Lecture, Oxford, 1935), pp. 168–69.

[6] Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.,* p. 342.

[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 345–47.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 347.

[9] Karrer, *op. cit.,* p. 3.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 228.

[12] Kraemer, *op. cit.,* p. 1.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 444.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 110.

[15] Hocking, *op. cit.,* p. 185.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 269.

XXI

# THE ECUMENICAL IDEAL

HERBERT L. WILLETT

THERE IS a growing conviction among Christian leaders that the most urgent problem now awaiting solution in the area of church life is that of Christian unity. The evident cause of the confessed and deplored weakness of the religious movement in our time is the crude wastefulness and lack of cooperation which characterize the denominations in their relation to each other and to the common tasks which call for united action. There are numerous stressful situations in our social order and in world relations to which relief can be brought only by the unity of the Christian forces in the United States and western Europe. These harassing perplexities run the gamut all the way from the injustices of the present industrial and economic systems to the stark iniquity and tragedy of war. With such evils no instrumentality is adequate to cope save the unified and aggressive Christian church.

God wills the unity of those who profess the faith of Jesus Christ. It was the burden of the intercessory prayer of the Master. It was the dream of the apostle Paul. The saints in all the ages have grieved over a divided church. Rosmini declared that of the five wounds that marred the body of

Jesus on the cross the most grievous was the great rent in his side which was the symbol of the divisions in the ranks of his friends. It is beyond conception that any sensitive follower of our Lord should regard the present divided condition of the church as desirable or the efforts under way to remedy that condition unnecessary or negligible. No one is happy over the divisions in the ranks of believers, save those who are enemies of the Christian enterprise. "Divide and conquer" is the tactic of every antagonist of the church or of any other holy cause. Milton tells of Satan's divisive counsel for the thwarting of the divine purpose in creation. It was the strategy employed by Saladin in his campaigns against the crusaders. In the World War the western powers were worsted until they learned the necessity of a united force and a central command. The divided church is the Achilles' heel of the Christian adventure.

Appeals for the greater integration of Christian forces come from all parts of the church and all the continents of the world. Christian statesmen as conspicuous and representative as the Archbishop of York, John R. Mott, E. Stanley Jones and Toyohiko Kagawa are voicing a widespread mood of unrest on the part of multitudes in all areas of church life at the divisions that prevail among the members of the Christian society, and earnest pleas for more urgent devotion to the problem of unity and concord. "The world is too strong for a divided church," was the warning word of Archbishop Brent at the Lausanne Conference. "Christians, unite!" is the message of Stanley Jones, the apostle of India. Archbishop Söderblom of Sweden said at the Stockholm meeting, "We must unite or perish." And Bishop Azariah of Dornakal said at the Edinburgh assembly of 1937, speaking for the

missionary cause in the Orient, "To the younger churches the question of Christian unity is a matter of life or death." The disastrous results of economic and other forms of competition among the denominations, the impression of rivalry and inefficiency made upon an observing world by opposing sects, and particularly the critical situation on the mission fields where secularism and arrogant nationalism are displacing heathenism much more rapidly than is Christianity, are causes of grave concern to all who have the Christian movement at heart.

In the essentials of belief and conduct Christians are the most united group in the world. The basic ideals of the Kingdom of God are shared by all communions and all their members. The evangel of Jesus took account of all human values, and wherever such values are recognized they are found to be religious in their nature. The limitations of church efficiency lie largely in the peripheral areas of dogmas, ritual and organization. Where emphasis is laid upon these features there is inevitable neglect of the fundamental interests of religion. And it has been the outstanding weakness of the Christian society through the centuries that it has been betrayed too frequently into devotion to these minor concerns to the neglect of the vital features of belief and behavior that affect all the relationships of human life.

The recognition of this comprehensive nature of religion, as embracing all the essentials of worthful human experience, provides a groundwork for an all-embracing religious fellowship, above the level of parochial and partial interests. And it is this higher horizon of moral and spiritual interests to which sensitive and liberal-minded Christian leaders have directed their attention through the years. At its best the

church has always been concerned to maintain the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Divergence from the normal and accepted principles of the faith has always been deprecated and resisted. The standard of belief and practice cherished by most of the church fathers was enshrined in the familiar motto, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, et quod ab omnibus creditum est.*" And where there were departures from this norm of universal acceptance there was solicitude and some attempt at correction. That these remedial measures frequently took the form of persecution is one of the regrettable features of church history, a feature on which cultural progress has placed its seal of disapproval.

The story of the development of divisions in the church is long and instructive. In contrast with the present fragmentary estate of the Christian society, there lies spread upon the pages of the New Testament the description of a very different and quite simple community of the friends and followers of Jesus. Apparently neither the Master nor his first interpreters had in mind any fixed pattern of procedure in the initiation or ordering of the early Christian groups. It would seem that they assumed the varied forms of the social structure about them, whether Jewish, Greek or Roman. The men whose age and character gave them recognition as spiritual leaders were known variously as elders, presbyters, *episcopoi,* bishops, pastors, shepherds — terms borrowed from either religious or secular callings, and apparently having much the same meaning. Of these leaders there seem to have been several in each congregation, although by the end of the second century one of the number tended to secure recognition as *primus inter pares.*

That there was any formal or official sanction given to

these men beyond that which age and wisdom authenticated is not evident from the apostolic documents. This is the conviction of such experts in Christian history as Lightfoot, Hort, Schaff, Lindsay and Streeter. Jesus tried to make it clear to certain of his disciples who were covetous of place and power that there were no offices to be distributed among them. The impression gained from the study of the first records of the church is that our Lord would have counted matters of organization, office, ritual and procedure as trivial in comparison with the ideals of the Kingdom which he was concerned to announce, and which find their embodiment in the Sermon on the Mount. Likewise the apostle Paul, while he gave many suggestions concerning the activities and behavior of the Christian communities under his care, evidently regarded these matters as of small importance in comparison with his august conception of the growing society of believers, the exemplars of the truths proclaimed by Jesus. To him the supreme interest in life lay in the person and teaching of Christ, the eternal and divine disclosure of the character and purpose of God.

It must be borne in mind that the New Testament does not present all the facts regarding the early churches. There were influences playing upon the new enterprise from every side, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Oriental. When the Christian movement emerged into fuller publicity in the second and third centuries it had taken on forms of organization and procedure derived from the cultures around it, and the connections between the two are not always clear. But the bonds that united the various communities of believers were everywhere recognized. Disciples passed easily from one congregation to another without formality, although a letter of

introduction was appreciated. No barriers were erected within the wide diameters of the Christian society. All believers were equal before God.

Unfortunately this ideal situation did not endure. Differences arose over forms of organization suggested by the Roman imperial system, features of doctrine derived from Greek philosophy, and types of ritual borrowed from Jewish and Oriental sources. The most far-reaching cleavages resulted from political ambitions. The growing importance of the two capitals of the empire, Rome in the West and Constantinople in the East, led unavoidably to rivalry between these two seats of governmental and churchly authority, with the emphasis in the West on legal and administrative matters, and in the East on theological and mystical subjects. Growing irritation led at last to open rupture, and in 1054 A.D. the pope of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople launched excommunications against each other. There were attempts in later years to reunite the severed sections of the church, East and West, notably at the Council of Florence in 1437. But the claim of papal primacy rendered these negotiations futile. Through the centuries the Eastern Orthodox Church has labored under the manifold disadvantages of its oriental location, its autocephalous organization with national divisions and measurably independent administration, its invincible tenacity in holding to its doctrinal definitions, and most of all the shocks it has suffered in the repeated political and military upheavals to which it has been subjected. It is not strange that in recent years it has made numerous although somewhat hesitant gestures of friendliness toward the Western churches, particularly those of the Anglican order.

In the meantime the Roman Catholic Church employed the devices of urgent and often violent persuasion to prevent the defection of any of its adherents and to preserve the measure of unity it had attained. All forms of heresy were treated with rigorous suppression. The enginery of the Inquisition was set up, and the fires of martyrdom were kindled whereever apostasy was suspected. Whole brotherhoods like the Lollards in England and communities like the Waldenses and the Albigenses in Italy and France were harried with the agencies of persecution in the effort to stifle secession. The early leaders of protest, Wyclif, Hus, Jerome of Prague and Savonarola, paid the price of dissent with their lives. But the era of growing enlightenment had dawned. The Renaissance and the Reformation came hand in hand. The Renaissance was the reformation of the European intellect; the Reformation was the renaissance of the European conscience. However, the rise of the denominational system was the heavy price Christianity was compelled to pay for the freedom which the Reformation brought. It need not be urged that these centrifugal movements to which the Reformation spirit of liberty and adventure gave impulse were wrong, save as they were the outcome of geographical separations, racial differences, cultural variations, social diversities and class disputes. Most of them were efforts to rescue and defend some neglected truth which the new-found freedom had released. A number of these Christian communities have added valuable elements to the teachings of the universal church. We are not to blame for the divisions with which the church is afflicted, but we are at fault if we further divide, or fail to promote all practicable plans for the attaining of unity. It is futile to debate the question whether

it would have been wiser to adopt the more cautious and deliberate methods of More and Erasmus rather than the daring and forceful measures of Luther and Calvin. What we are we are, a divided household, and the duty of the hour is to find the earliest and most promising design for uniting the sundered members of the body of Christ.

When once the tragedy of the great separations, east and west, north and south, was realized, earnest efforts were made to repair the damage that had been wrought. The list of those who attempted to mediate between Roman Catholics and reformers, and between different groups of the latter, is long and impressive. Among them were Hugo Grotius, the Dutch publicist, George Calixtus, the German theologian, William Chillingworth and Richard Baxter, English ministers, John Owen, chancellor of Oxford University, John Durie, ardent advocate of unity, and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, who conducted a significant correspondence with the Roman Catholic Bishop Bossuet on the subject of reunion. So far as doctrinal differences were concerned they were of minor importance. The reformers were in most regards loyal to the basic Catholic dogmatic inheritance. Both groups were the intellectual descendants of St. Augustine, although the Protestants laid fresh emphasis upon the teachings of the New Testament, now for the first time widely available in translation, and upon the character of the primitive church.

But apparently the time had not yet arrived when efforts toward reunion could meet with even reasonable success. Years were to elapse before the church came to a realization of the sin and scandal of disunion, and the imperative need of amendment. There was however in all that post-Reforma-

tion period a growing restlessness among Christians and an increasing sentiment favorable to cooperation.

It is significant of the spirit of the times that, coupled with this dissatisfaction with the growing manifestations of separatism in the multiplying denominations, there was seemingly the conviction that such efforts as were made to unite the members of the Christian communities in useful service must find their fields of operation outside the churches. The sect spirit as such brooked no opposition. Illustrations of this fact are numerous and impressive. The Sunday school was projected by Robert Raikes not as a department of church activity but as an effort at social reform in a neglected district of Gloucester. George Williams' ministries among the clerks and apprentices in London had no connection with organized religion and no encouragement from any church in the movement which developed into the Young Men's Christian Association. Similar was the origin of the Bible societies, British and American, the temperance and anti-slavery associations and other religious and reform organizations. So strong was the sectarian spirit that the churches found it impossible to unite for any of these remedial activities.

Meantime the spirit of protest against divisions among Christians took various forms. Sporadic movements came into being for this purpose, such as the so-called O'Kelley Secession in the Methodist denomination, the group led by Abner Jones among the Baptists, the Washington Association led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell, which later grew into the body known as the Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Connection under the leadership of Barton W. Stone, the body now united with the Congregational Church.

The first serious attempt to unite the churches in definite Christian activity issued in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, a body which was organized in Britain in 1846 and in the United States in 1867. This was a purely voluntary body, but it led to the more formal and authoritative Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, organized in 1908.

Since that time the ecumenical movement has made rapid progress in both eastern and western hemispheres. Interdenominational gatherings have been held for missionary, theological and social deliberations, the first of the comprehensive order since the church councils of the early period — Edinburgh, Stockholm, Lausanne, Jerusalem, Oxford and Edinburgh, Madras and Amsterdam. Young people's Christian societies, home and foreign missionary boards, women's missionary councils, associations devoted to religious education, conferences for the promotion and direction of community churches, and many other types of cooperative ministry in the Christian community have taken form in recent years. Perhaps most notable of all as signs of the times have been the denominational unions that have been formed, such as those in the Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran and Methodist households; the unions that have taken place in England and Scotland; the union of the three leading denominations in Canada; of the French Protestant churches; and the union formed among the Christian forces of China, Japan, South India and the Philippine Islands with the title "Church of Christ."

These facts and many others of similar import give illustration to the increasing movement in the churches in all lands toward godly unity and concord, and the growing

numbers of those in the churches who are sensitive regarding the unhappy divisions prevailing in the Christian fellowship and are eager to promote any practicable measures looking to their correction. They give proof that the life-long efforts of men like Thomas Campbell, Samuel Schmucker, Philip Schaff, William Henry Roberts, James H. Garrison, Josiah Strong, Elias B. Sanford, Samuel Dwight Chown, Robert H. Gardiner, Newman Smythe, Charles H. Brent, Nathan Söderblom and Peter Ainslie have not been in vain.

The church which shall realize in some true sense the ideal of Christian unity will not be an overhead and authoritative organization. From that type of uniformity the church was happily delivered by the Protestant Reformation. Its form and structure no one can predict at the moment. It is rather the conviction of those who believe in and pray for Christian unity that the Spirit will form for himself a body suitable to the high interests of the kingdom of heaven. Such a church must be catholic in the true sense. It will no doubt embody in its structure all three types of administration prevalent in the various communions today — presbyterian, episcopal and congregational. All these are found in the New Testament records. It must be hospitable to many varying points of view within the wide areas of Christian thinking. In doctrines, in forms of worship and in the practical activities of its manifold program it must be appreciative of elements which at first may appear incompatible. It must be willing to welcome to its worship and its work members as wide apart in their convictions as fundamentalists and modernists, those who emphasize individual salvation and those who stress the social gospel, people of both scholastic and practical inclination, those of radical as well as those of conservative

temper, those who stress the supernatural and those who find God in the orderly processes of life, those who enjoy a highly liturgical service and those whose tastes are more simple. In fact all these shades of conviction and preference are at home in the same congregations today. The individual churches will organize their forms of worship and their patterns of work in accordance with the prevailing desires of their constituencies. The church united in the spirit and power of the ideals of Jesus, and in the light of the needs of the community, will welcome to its membership people of as widely diverse types as Phillips Brooks, Dwight L. Moody, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, St. Francis, Tauler, Barth, St. Catherine, Walter Rauschenbusch, Albert Schweitzer, John Wesley, Hudson Taylor, John Calvin and William Booth.

It must permit no differences of opinion regarding ordinances, orders or organization to intrude as separating factors in its life and work. It must insist upon an open membership, an open pulpit and an open program, where all worthful experiments are deemed worthy of examination and testing. It must employ all the approaches to Christian unity — prayer, conference, education. It must appreciate the fact that an organization which exhausts its thought and resources in efforts for its own survival can make no worthful contribution to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

XXII

# THE LIBERAL HERITAGE

## WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON

THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS of this book have presented aspects of an interpretation of Christianity which finds sententious expression in words which appear every Sunday on the Calendar of the University Church of Disciples of Christ, Chicago, of which the authors of all these chapters are present or former members:

> This church practices union; has no creed; seeks to make religion as intelligent as science, as appealing as art, as vital as the day's work, as intimate as home, and as inspiring as love.

This may be called a "liberal" view of religion. It is liberal because it provides for an inclusive membership, a free membership and a comprehensive program. It has brought into harmonious fellowship a large company of persons holding widely diverse opinions and has united them in the sense of loyalty to a common cause which is not that of merely carrying on the organization. It asks these people not to conform their opinions and attitudes to a norm set up by authority but to submit them constantly to the test of intelligence and experience in the light of free discussion and cooperative effort. And it seeks to find religious values in the entire range of human interests and to provide a religious motivation for rewarding activities of the most varied kinds. These quali-

ties, taken together, make what may be properly called a liberal religion.

The term "liberalism" has been so variously used and abused that one is sometimes tempted to discard it in the interest of clear thinking. But that impulse should be resisted. It is an indispensable word with a rich content of meaning, and it is no more liable to misunderstanding than any other great word. Capacious words like "God," "religion," "faith," "love" and "freedom" carry wide varieties of meaning. Those who affirm them are often talking about different things, and between those who affirm and those who deny there is almost always a difference in the meaning of what is affirmed or denied. Yet we cannot get on without these words and the ideas for which they stand, though we may reject the ideas for which others make them stand.

It is so with "liberalism," which is a legitimate word for an essential concept, though it is often illegitimately applied to certain ideas or practices which are related to it only incidentally if at all. As used here, it stands for a way of approaching the problems of knowledge and the practical decisions of life, an attitude on the part of individuals toward other individuals and toward society, and a method of carrying on the whole process of creating and conducting the institutions which make up the social order. These institutions may be political, economic, religious or cultural. A government, a system of industrial production and exchange, a church or a school may be either liberal or non-liberal. Which it is will depend upon the principles on which it is organized, the criteria of truth and value which are implicit in its procedure, and the interests it is designed primarily to serve.

It makes an immense practical difference whether an individual or an institution is liberal or non-liberal. Yet the character and opinions of one and the structure and functions of the other are not defined by these terms. Or, to reverse the statement and at the same time to illustrate it, possession of the quality of liberalism is not necessarily indicated in an individual by his not believing in a personal God or in the Mosaic authorship and scientific accuracy of Genesis, or in a church by its having a creed which rejects the concept of original sin and the doctrine of the Incarnation, or in a government by universal suffrage.

Liberalism, then, has to do with methods, values and ends. It is not a body of doctrine, a form of government or a bag of tricks. Its method is that of intelligent investigation, free discussion, experimentation and self-correction in the light of experience. Its values, which also determine its ends, are the things which all men prize in their best moods. Its ultimate value is man himself. All other values get their value by being valuable to man. Especially must all institutions be put to the test of their contribution to the welfare of individual men and show cause why they should be perpetuated. It is true that the individual exists only in society, and it is truer to say that the individual is a product of society and its institutions than that society is a mere aggregate of individuals. But just as the fruit, which is the product of the tree, is the end and justification of the tree from the orchardist's standpoint, so individuals are the end and test of society. The welfare of individuals is the ultimate value which needs no other validation. All organizations and institutions and all their policies and procedures must be validated in terms of the benefits they produce for individuals. This is the basic

faith of liberalism. Jesus spoke as a true liberal when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Caiaphas spoke as a typical anti-liberal when he said, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people," having previously explained that he meant not the people as individuals but "our place and nation."

Liberalism asserts man's right and ability to learn what truth he needs by the free exercise of his intelligence, but it does not assert that all truth can be attained by the scientific method, or that revelation and the supernatural must be repudiated. By the free use of intelligence one may discover the limits of the scientific method as well as many truths that lie within those limits. One may be an intelligent artist as well as an intelligent scientist. There are experiences of beauty and of wonder, as there are experiences of love, to which scientific analysis is irrelevant. The well furnished liberal must be humanist enough to take into account those aspects of experience which cannot be brought within the compass of any known or conceivable formula. Indeed, his estimate of man as the unique value and the measure of all values is rational only if he realizes that man himself is unique among the phenomena of nature. He is compelled to regard him as something other than a physical organism. And if he sees him as "a little lower than God" and "crowned with glory and honor," his liberalism will not be the worse but the better for it.

This liberalism, which exalts the worth of the individual man and asserts his right to think and speak and live freely, has an old and honorable tradition. Yet it is a short tradition when measured against all the centuries of the human adventure. Moreover, the story of liberalism is, for the most

part, the story of the development and expression of the idea by individual thinkers, not of its practice on a large scale or in any thoroughgoing way as the dominant principle in a society. As to the reputed "failure of liberalism" or the "bankruptcy of liberalism," which we frequently hear on the tongues of those who are disheartened about the present state of the world, I call your attention to the fact that liberalism was never tried at all until everything else had failed, and that it has never been tried very hard, and that the period of its partial and timid trial is still much shorter than that of the costly and calamitous failure of its alternatives. To abandon the liberal experiment because of its alleged failure and revert to any form of illiberalism — whether tyranny in the state or authoritarianism in the church — is like giving up the effort to find ways of friendly and peaceable adjustment of national interests and saying, "Why not try war?" If liberalism has failed, Christianity has failed, and on the same terms — by not being courageously practiced. Neither has been tried, on any large scale, except in a weak dilution and in combination with other elements inconsistent with its character.

For a thousand years the accepted concept of a Christian society was that of a "pyramid to God." It was held not only that all power, all rights and all knowledge come from God, but that these come to men through a graduated system of institutional agencies. The feudal system and the ecclesiastical system were the dual aspects of the social structure, but not coordinate. Only the church had direct contact with the divine source of authority and truth. The empire exercised subordinate jurisdiction conditioned upon maintaining acceptable relations with the church. The church might, for

its own convenience, permit secular agents to perform functions which it did not wish to perform directly, as a judge may have a bailiff to keep order in the court or a sheriff to execute his sentences and decisions. Thus the entire feudal system, itself a "pyramid" of graduated dignities and authorities in which control was exercised from the top down and allegiance and service from the bottom up, existed only by grace of the ecclesiastical system which existed by the grace of God.

Similarly the individual man, as a mere human being, had no rights and no means of gaining dependable knowledge of truth. As a free agent, as a thinker and as an end in himself, he did not exist. As a child of God, however, he had rights as against the secular power and reason within the limits of ecclesiastical permission. But as a child of God he was necessarily a child of the church, dependent upon his relation to it for every right he could claim and for whatever liberty he might enjoy for the use of his reason. Since the only proper relation one could sustain to the church was that of submission, it was inconceivable that man should have rights as against the church or apart from it. (That, incidentally, was the reason the Jew had no rights; he was not in the "pyramid." Here anti-Semitism got its perfect rationalization.) It followed, obviously, that truth was considered a treasure to be transmitted by its accredited custodians, not to be discovered in a field free to independent research.

This theory was, of course, never perfectly reduced to practice. What has been stated is a diagrammatic, rather than a realistic, representation of the medieval scene. Ambitious sovereigns and worldly feudal lords did not willingly or completely accept the subordination to the ecclesiastical power

which this system implied, even though they could formulate no competing social philosophy. Rebellious spirits, who thought and acted as free individuals in an age which did not recognize the existence of individual freedom, sounded notes that jarred harshly upon the patterned harmony of that theoretically perfect system of institutional control. The system itself represented the most completely organized antithesis to liberalism that ever existed on a large scale until the rise of the modern totalitarian philosophies of government. The rebels against it were the pioneers of modern liberalism. It is of the nature of such a system to breed revolt. Man, being what he is, a creature with an invincible awareness of his own significance to himself, is not easily persuaded that he is only a fractional item in an institutional entity in which alone value resides. He may accept the doctrine in which that subordination of man to the institution is implicit, but he cannot live by it. Certainly the Middle Ages, with all their ecclesiastical courts, their inquisitions and their utilization of the police power of the state to do the bidding of the church, had no apparatus adequate to the task of suppressing all who exercised, in greater or less degree, the liberties which the accepted philosophy of the time denied. The "age of faith" seethed with incipient revolt against this whole scheme of things.

From the fall of the Roman Empire until the beginning of the modern ferment — say in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries — virtually the whole body of European culture, its scholarship, its philosophy, its literature, its art, had been in clerical hands. By the sixteenth century, this picture was changed. A large body of secular literature had come into existence. Secular philosophers had supplanted the scholas-

tics. Art had escaped from the suzerainty and the almost exclusive patronage of the church by the introduction of new subjects — classical, courtly, civic, common life and portraiture — and by the appearance of new classes of secular customers. The revival of classical learning, the dawn of a new education based upon it and the prevalence of the humanistic spirit broke the hold of the church on the minds of men. The new scientific spirit, with its emphasis upon observation and experiment, implied the repudiation of authority and the affirmation that man — mere man, as man, equipped with eyes and hands and a brain, and regardless of his status as a child of God and an obedient son of the church — could learn the truth about nature. Most of the scientists were laymen. The scientific society organized at Rome in 1601 provided by its constitution that no member of a religious order could be a member.

A new world was being discovered and explored. While Spanish mariners and conquistadors scattered the names of saints over the map of the western hemisphere and quite sincerely sought to Christianize the natives whom they exterminated or enslaved, no one took seriously the pope's attempted allocation of sovereignty over the new lands, and nothing could have been more secular than the motives and methods of their conquest. Meanwhile, European politics and diplomacy had been thoroughly secularized in so much that the treaties which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648 were made in entire disregard of the agelong precedent that all such negotiations should be conducted on consecrated ground and with the sanction of the pope, and the signatories specifically agreed that the pope should have no power to release them from their oaths (as he had always claimed the

right to do) and even the Catholic princes paid not the slightest attention to the bull *Zelo Domus* in which he denounced the treaty and declared it null and void.

Every one of these movements was a rift in the "pyramid." Every one of them meant a field in which men might seek knowledge, or create beauty, or disseminate ideas, or adjust human relations and the conflicting interests of men, by the free exercise of their abilities without leave or license, without let or hindrance, from any central authority presuming to speak with the voice of God. In the development of the scientific and empirical temper and in the wide diffusion of that spirit and attitude among large numbers of people, the method and spirit of liberalism found perhaps fuller and more immediately fruitful expression than in any other field.

The breakdown of the medieval "pyramid" was for the most part a secular movement freeing both governments and individuals from centralized hierarchical control. Its two main aspects were: (1) the rise of nations, challenging both papal and imperial centralization of power; (2) the Renaissance discovery of the individual, challenging authority in the realm of the spirit and issuing in free experimentation, scientific method, and empirical and rationalistic philosophies. The Protestant Reformation at first utilized both. It began, as every revolutionary movement must, by assuming the right of individuals to revolt. Asserting the priesthood of all believers and the possibility of free access to God by every man, it became the religious counterpart of the secular Renaissance which had declared the independence of the individual in matters of culture and knowledge. This was magnificent, but it was not war.

Because the Reformation soon found itself in a state of war

with the ecclesiastical authority from which it had revolted, it organized for defense. In doing so it shifted from its original ground, and that in two respects: *First,* it substituted the authority of an infallible book for the authority of an infallible church. While the individual's right to interpret the book was not denied, this right lost most of its practical value when Luther began to declare that the meaning of the book was so crystal clear (since " the Holy Spirit is the simplest of all writers ") that any other interpretation than his must be obviously wrong. Whoever held a variant opinion was therefore no Christian at all because he was willfully rejecting the plain teaching of the Word of God. *Second,* Protestantism carried over the Catholic idea that religious unity was essential to social stability and that the state should lend its aid in protecting the true church from competing organizations or heretical individuals. Entering into alliances with secular rulers wherever political conditions made it possible, it issued in a number of national established churches — in many of the German states, in Geneva, in the Scandinavian countries, in the Low Countries and in England and Scotland. In these alliances the church generally took a subordinate position (but not where Puritanism prevailed) and confined its attention to doctrine and sacraments and a limited field of private morality. At the same time royal absolutism was developing.

Thus the liberal spirit was driven out of both state and church. What had begun as a war of liberation ended in a new enslavement. Ended? No, it did not end there. It was really just beginning. The liberal spirit still lived, though not in established institutions either political or religious. It lived in the minds and works of independent thinkers. Liberalism had its catacomb period in the seven-

teenth century. In the eighteenth it dared to show its head in the light, though not without risk. In the nineteenth it came increasingly to find expression in " the laws and habits of the state," in religious thought and in the positions and policies of some churches. The story is far too complicated to tell here. It is the story of the development of democracy, of science, of religious liberty, of the whole range of modern culture. Many Christian men have had leading parts in that development, but the churches, officially, have been inhibited by their traditions — the Roman Catholic Church by its essential principle of ecclesiastical totalitarianism, the older Protestant churches by fixation upon the policies they adopted in the years when they were fighting for *Lebensraum*. They are even now only beginning to recover from their retreat into a limited domain of ecclesiastical affairs and to learn that the medieval church was right in being concerned about the whole range of life, wrong only in trying to deal with it by an autocratic and theocratic rather than a democratic process.

The medieval ecclesiastical tyranny of the " pyramid to God " was shattered by the secular forces of Renaissance culture and the rising power of nations. Effective liberalism from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth was secular. In our own time there is rising a no less tyrannical secular concentration of authority — a " pyramid to man." Effective liberalism, by which if ever it must be shattered, will have to be religious in its motivation, in the intensity of its faith in a cause, in the conviction that the freedom of the human spirit is a corollary of the worth and dignity of man.

XXIII

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*Compiled by*

EDWARD A. HENRY

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In cataloguing Dr. Ames's contributions to periodical literature it has seemed best to present them in several groups. In the first are listed articles in professional magazines of philosophy and theology; in the second, articles of a general religious nature in the *Christian Century,* to which he was a frequent contributor for several years; in the third, articles in various periodicals of the Disciples of Christ.

The treatment of this third category is complicated by its inclusion of the organ of the Campbell Institute which Dr. Ames was chiefly instrumental in organizing in 1895 and which has published a journal under his editorship during the greater part of the period since that date. The *Campbell Institute Bulletin* began in October 1903 as a quarterly. In October 1907 this was changed to the *Scroll,* a monthly, which suspended publication in November 1908. In the fall of 1909 the secretary began issuing a *News Letter.* In October 1910 the *Campbell Institute Bulletin* was revived and appeared regularly until 1918 when it was again changed to the *Scroll.* With the November 25, 1926, issue of the *Christian,* of Kansas City, the *Scroll* became a column (or more) in that weekly paper and so continued until December 1933. Since January 1934 the *Scroll* has been published regularly as a monthly. With brief intermissions, Dr. Ames has been the editor

through all these changes. Much of his writing has been editorial, and it is impossible within the necessary limits to record even all of his signed contributions.

Similarly, with reference to material in the *House News* of the Disciples Divinity House, the aggregate is large but the items are small and very numerous. Only a few of the more important could be listed.

The monthly *Messenger,* of Dr. Ames's church, has appeared since October 1905. Almost every issue begins with a letter from Dr. Ames, and for many years he compiled all the news for this paper and frequently published sermons in it. Those listed are his own selection. It should be added that many of Dr. Ames's written words are to be found in the weekly *Calendar* of the church, which has been issued each Sunday since January 5, 1901.

Files of the *Messenger* and of the *Calendar* are in the library of the University Church of Disciples of Christ. Files of the *Scroll,* the *Christian* and the *House News* are in the library of the Disciples Divinity House. The compiler of this bibliography makes grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Claude E. Spencer, librarian of Culver-Stockton College, for generous assistance in the laborious task of checking through many volumes of unindexed periodicals.

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