

CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE: SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

“Dawson’s vast erudition, his historical intuition, his profound understanding of human nature, and his vision of Western culture as a living and dynamic entity, make him an essential starting point in the study -- and understanding of -- the spiritual tradition at the root of Western culture. Without this, all else that follows in Western history is incomprehensible.” (Araceli Duque)

“The greatest English-speaking Catholic historian of the twentieth century.” (Daniel Callahan, *Harvard Theological Review*)

“One of the foremost prophets of our age. (Herbert Musurillo, S. J.)

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INTRODUCTION

by John J. Mulloy, from *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. iii-xi.

Two hundred years is a relatively brief space in the history of mankind upon the globe. But in that time a greater change has taken place in man's ways of living than in all the preceding centuries of recorded human existence. The inventions introduced by the scientific revolution of the past two centuries have transformed the face of nature and of human society, and in all the five continents people are being moulded by the standardizing influences of a technological civilization. Nor is it likely that the present movement of rapid social change will in any degree abate its speed. It is this fact which imparts a unique character to the social situation of the present moment.

But it has not been simply the scientific revolution which has shattered the patterns men have inherited from the past. Equally distinctive have been the social and political upheavals of the past forty years. The impact of two world wars in one generation of the twentieth century and the development of totalitarian ideologies in Central and Eastern Europe have radically changed the structure of European society and fundamentally altered the balance of power on which European world hegemony rested. No longer is it possible for Western man to view the rest of the world from the eminence of a privileged position of superior power and wealth. Within Europe itself the hurricanes of war and revolution have levelled to the ground many of Europe's most historic institutions; while from without, the rising tide of Oriental nationalism and xenophobia has all but erased the islands of European culture and political power which previously existed in the East.

It is little wonder that such a situation has increasingly turned the attention of the educated layman and even the general public

[vi] to questions concerning man's historical destiny and the meaning of the present moment in world history. If it no longer seems valid to accept the Progress theory of history which assured the man of the nineteenth century of the happy outcome of the changes he saw taking place around him, in what new light shall the man of the twentieth century view the revolutionary developments of the present era?

It is in reply to this question that contemporary philosophers of history have obtained an ever widening audience for their views: whether the idea be that of the inevitable decline of each historic civilization described with such compelling imagery by Oswald Spengler, or the view of Arnold Toynbee that each civilization achieves its individual character by overcoming the obstacles that confront it, or the thesis of F. S. C. Northrop that East and West are by their nature meant to complement each other in the formation of a future world civilization. And these, of course, are but a few of the interpreters of history and culture who have attempted to explain the meaning of the changes taking place in the rapidly expanding universe of modern civilisation.

How does the work of Christopher Dawson fit into this picture? By what particular features may his approach to the interpretation of history be defined? What does he believe to be the elements most important for cultural progress, or does he consider progress on the broad scale to be possible in history? How does his thought compare with that of other "metahistorians" ¹ and philosophers of culture?

It is to provide an adequate answer to these and other questions of a similar nature that the present volume has been assembled. Selected from Mr. Dawson's writings over the last thirty-five years, beginning with his earliest published article in *The Sociological Review* in 1921 ("Sociology and the Theory of Progress") concluding with his critique of Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History* in the April 1955 issue of *International Affairs*, the book aims to present a representative cross section of his thought on world history.

¹ See below, "The Problem of Metahistory," pp. 287-93

[vii] Between these two dates practically the whole of Christopher Dawson's career as a writer lies; during this period, in books and magazine articles, he has formulated a conception of world history that, in scope and in vision, ranks with the work of Spengler, Northrop and Toynbee. However, the significance of his thought as a philosopher of history and culture has been obscured by the fact that the majority of his books have been devoted specifically to two major tasks: (1) tracing the historical development of Western culture, and (2) analyzing the causes of the contemporary world crisis. In several of his earlier works, however, and in many uncollected articles, Mr. Dawson has dealt with other subjects that are of vital interest to students of comparative culture. It is with the purpose of bringing into focus these neglected aspects of Mr. Dawson's thought, and calling them particularly to the attention of anthropologists and sociologists, that the present selection has been made.

First in these fields of Christopher Dawson's thought on comparative culture is what we may call "The Movement of World History," his investigation of the cross-fertilizing contacts between different civilisations and cultures, and the enlargement in the area of cultural communication which these contacts bring about. His first volume, *The Age of the Gods* (1928), subtitled "A Study in the Origins of Culture in Prehistoric Europe and the Ancient East," which narrates the development of civilization down to about 1000 B.C., is the largest work he has devoted to this subject. However, *Progress and Religion*, published in the following year (1929), treats in more condensed form the intermingling of sociological with intellectual factors in the development of civilisation, providing an account from primitive times down to the modern period; and it is in this volume that Mr. Dawson has afforded us the best synthetic view of his conception of world history. *Progress and Religion* has served as a seed bed for several of his later works, for the ideas presented there in spare but impressive outline are in these other volumes elaborated and developed. Possibly the most important of these later books for the present topic is *Enquiries* (1933). In addition to three or four longer papers illustrating the main points in his conception of

[viii] world history, it contains several penetrating studies of social and religious movements.

The second area of Christopher Dawson's thought which the present volume is intended to illustrate may be called "The Dynamics of Culture." Since it is upon his philosophy of culture that Mr. Dawson draws for the principles that govern his approach to history, we shall provide an extended analysis of this philosophy in a later part of the present book. For an understanding of Dawson's view of the dynamics of culture, the three volumes we have mentioned above and also the first series of his Gifford Lectures, *Religion and Culture* (1948), are indispensable. Both the first and third sections of the present selection "The Sociological Foundations of History" and "Urbanism and the Organic Nature of Culture" contain articles of great significance for this topic.

Then, of course, there is the area of Dawson's work concerned with evaluation and criticism of various conceptions of world history. Previously his contributions to this subject have been so scattered through different books and magazines that we believe that a most valuable feature of the present work lies in the fact they are now brought together under one cover. The last two sections of the present volume grouped under the heading "Conceptions of World History" contain all of Dawson's articles in this area, we believe, with the exception of one on Hegel's philosophy of history, which has very recently been published in *Understanding Europe* and thus is readily available to the reader.

A fourth general topic dealt with rather extensively in Christopher Dawson's writings on world history is what is usually termed Comparative Religion. From the viewpoint of Mr. Dawson's approach, however, it might more accurately be called the Meaning of Mankind's Religious Experience. Two volumes are particularly rich with his insights into this problem : *Progress and Religion*, which devotes a third of its pages to this topic, and *Religion and Culture*, where the whole book is devoted in one way or another to its consideration. For our purposes we have chosen a more condensed form of his interpretation of this subject, taken

from a small book published in 1931 under the title *Christianity [ix] and the New Age*. In this essay, which gives special attention to primitive religion and the Oriental world religions, he shows the unity which lies behind man's developing understanding of religious reality and traces the basic needs in human nature which all religions attempt to satisfy. In some ways this essay of Dawson's suggests the goal which Etienne Gilson set himself in the field of philosophy in such a volume as *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* or, even closer to the subject of comparative religion, in *God and Philosophy*.

Organization of the Book

In organizing [*Dynamics of World History*] to present the main ideas of Christopher Dawson's thought in these four areas, we have preferred to bring together articles dealing with the same general subject matter rather than to present the selections in the chronological order of their publication.² The general plan of the book is to illustrate how Christopher Dawson's view of history is built upon his conception of the sociological factors that are the dynamics for historical events and movements. We therefore devote the first section of the book to Dawson's discussion of the nature of sociology and the elements in culture and society which he finds most significant; this is followed by a presentation of certain aspects of world history as influenced by factors of a sociological nature. The third section considers a topic of central importance in Dawson's sociology and one which he believes has had far-reaching influence on the course of history: the nature of urban development, and the need for a highly developed civilization, if it is not to become abstract and formless, to retain its roots in the regional environment from which it has sprung.

These three sections constitute the first major division of this work, called "Toward a Sociology of History." Of the articles it contains, the one entitled "Religion and the Life of Civilization" comes closest to giving us (although in an abbreviated form) Dawson's own conception of world history. It thus may be used

² See ... "Sources," [in *Dynamics of World History*] for the original date and place of publication of each article.

[x] for comparison with those articles in Part II which provide a critique of the views of other contemporary interpreters of world history.

This second major division of the volume -- "Conceptions of World History" -- approaches history from the viewpoint of ideas men have held concerning its significance rather than from the standpoint of actual human societies in contact with their environment. It illustrates the manner in which the history of mankind is affected as much by intellectual forces as by realities of a more material nature. But it also shows that a purely philosophical approach to history is likely to result, as it did in Greece and India, in the denial that history has any ultimate significance and in the acceptance of the principle of recurrence rather than progress as the key to historical events. Only when a conception of history is based upon a regard for sociological facts can it avoid the explaining away of history which is the pitfall of the philosopher.

It was precisely because the Christian view of history was rooted in the social tradition of the Hebrew Law and the Prophets and had developed from the historical experience of a particular people, the Jews, that it was able to break through the closed circle of the ancient world's "recurrence" conception of history. Because its ideas were not mere philosophic abstractions but grounded in social and historical realities, Christianity laid the foundations for a view of history which is both universal and progressive: that is, it embraced the whole of humankind in its vision and it saw history as moving toward an ultimate goal of unique and transcendent significance.

This new attitude toward history introduced by the Judaeo-Christian tradition has become the source of the intense interest in the meaning of history which distinguishes Western culture from the civilizations of the Orient and has resulted in an increasingly rich development in Western philosophies of history from St Augustine down to Karl Marx and Arnold Toynbee. (It will be noted that two of the articles devoted to the Christian in-

terpretation of history in Part II of this volume are at the same [xi] time discussions of the influence of the Christian view of history upon social and historical thought in the West.) As a result of its universal and progressive view of history, and the social activity and historical dynamism which this view has engendered, Western culture has had a more revolutionary impact upon mankind than any other civilization and has gradually brought the other world cultures into a single area of communication with itself.

Thus the link between the two major divisions of [*Dynamics of World History*] is to be found in the emphasis they both place on sociological factors in history, whether those factors are manifested directly in historical developments or are mediated through the support they provide to world-transforming historical ideas. This emphasis on culture and sociological factors does not mean that the intellectual life of man is merely determined by material conditions, as Marx would claim, but it does signify that ideas do not grow and develop as social forces or exercise their full influence unless they are supported by a social tradition and possess some vital communion with the life of the particular society they seek to influence.

Regarded as a whole, there is a progress from sociology to world history in the general plan of the present volume, and a linking up of material factors in cultural development with those of a more intellectual nature.³

JOHN J. MULLOY

³ For the interrelation between sociology and history in Christopher Dawson's thought, see [*Dynamics of World History*], pages 413-68.

1. CIVILIZATION AND MORALS

"Civilization and Morals," published in *The Sociological Review* (Vol. XVII, July 1925); reprinted in Dawson's *Enquiries* (1933) and in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 45-53, from which the following is taken.

IF we make a survey of human history and culture, we see clearly that every society has possessed a moral code, which is often clearly thought out and exactly defined. In practically every society in the past there has been an intimate relation between this moral code and the dominant religion. Often the code of ethics is conceived as the utterance of a divine law-giver, as in Judaism and Islam. In non-theistic religions, it may be viewed as a "discipline of salvation" a harmonizing of human action with the cosmic process as in Taoism (and to some extent Confucianism) or else as the method by which the individual mind is freed from illusion, and led to Reality (Buddhism and Vedantism).

But it may be asked is it not possible to go behind these historic world-religions, and find a simpler, purely social ethic? Certainly primitive morality is entirely customary, but it is also closely bound up with primitive religion or magic (if the two can be distinguished). A moral offence is not so much an offence against a man's fellow tribesmen, as doing something which provokes the mysterious powers that surround man; the primitive "moralist" is the man who understands how to placate these powers and render them friendly. But if there is not much evidence for the existence of a pre-religious morality, there is no doubt about the existence of a post-religious one. In every advanced civilization, as men become critical of the dominant religion, they tend to elaborate systems of philosophy, new interpretations of reality and [46] corresponding codes of ethics. In every case, the metaphysic and the ethic are inseparably connected, and in theory it is the metaphysic which is the foundation of the ethic. In reality, however, it may be questioned whether the reverse is not often the case, whether the ethical attitude is not taken over from the formerly dominant religion, and then justified by a philosophical construction.

Thus I believe Kant's ethic may be explained as a direct survival of the intensive moral culture of Protestantism, and many similar instances could be adduced. But apart from these cases of direct inspiration, it is only to be expected there should be some relation between the dominant religion and the characteristic philosophies in the case of each particular culture.

The situation with regard to ethical codes, in a society in which religion is no longer completely dominant, is somewhat as follows:

A. There is a minority which still adheres completely to the old faith and corresponding ethical system.

B. There is a still smaller minority which adheres consciously to a new rational interpretation of reality, and adopts new ideals of conduct and standards of moral behaviour.

C. The great majority follow a mixed "pragmatic" code of morality made up of (1) the striving for individual wealth and enjoyment, (2) an "actual" social ethic of group-egotism or "tribal" patriotism, (3) certain tabus left over from the old religion-culture. These are usually the great precepts of social morality, e.g., against murder, theft, adultery, &c., but they may be purely ritual restrictions (e.g., the survival of the Scotch Sunday in spite of the disappearance of the religious substructure); (4) to a slight extent a top-dressing of the new moral ideals from B.

This situation is to a great extent characteristic of the modern world, but we must also take account of a great movement, neither a religion nor a philosophy in the ordinary sense of the words, which may be regarded as a kind of reflection of the old religion-culture or else as the first stage of a new one. This is the Democratic or Liberal movement, which grew up in England and France in the eighteenth century, and which found classic expression in the Declaration of Independence, 1776, and the Declaration of the Rights of Men, 1789. It was based on the new naturalist philosophy and theology of the English Deists and the French philosophers, and it owed much to the political and economic teaching of the Physiocrats and Adam Smith, but its great prophet and true founder was Rousseau. This movement continued to grow with the expansion of European civilization in the nineteenth century. It is at present the established religion of the U.S.A. and Latin America, any deviation from it being regarded as heretical, and it is by no means a negligible force in Europe. It is doubtful, however, whether it can be regarded as a new culture-religion, since it seems simply to carry on, in a generalized and

abstract form, the religious and ethical teaching of the previously dominant religion.

Supposing that we have correctly outlined above the general course of the development of moral conceptions, the chief problems to be solved are the following --

- (1) Is the development of moral conceptions progressive, and if so, in what direction does this progress tend?
- (2) What is the cause of the changes in the dominant conception of Reality, on which the change of moral systems seems to depend?
- (3) Is it possible to elaborate a rational system of ethics based on a modern scientific interpretation of Reality?

Now it seems clear that it is impossible to have a purely "practical" morality divorced from an interpretation of Reality. Such a morality would be mere social custom and essentially unprogressive. Progress springs very largely from the attempt to bring actual conditions and social habits into harmony with what are conceived as the laws or conditions of real life. The very conception of morality involves a duality or opposition between what "is" and what "ought to be" Moreover from the very earliest conditions of primitive savagery up to the highest degree of intellectual culture, the ethical standard can be shown to be closely connected with some kind of world-view or conception of reality, whether that is embodied in a mythology, or a philosophy, or is merely vaguely implicit in the customs and beliefs of the society.

[48] Now the great obstacle to the attainment of a purely rational system of ethics is simply our lack of knowledge of Reality. If we can accept some metaphysic of Absolute Being, then we shall quickly possess an absolute morality, as the Platonists did. But if we limit ourselves to positive and scientific knowledge of Reality, it is at once evident that we are limited to a little island of light in the middle of an ocean of darkness. Unfortunately, Herbert Spencer's attitude towards the Unknowable will not help us here, for the *machina mundi* is a dynamic unity, and the part of it that

we know shares in the movement of the unknown whole. Most philosophies and religions have supposed that there is some kind of meaning or reason in the world process; though there are thinkers like Lucretius (and perhaps Bertrand Russell) who deny this, and yet try to fashion a kind of "island" morality for reasonable humanity shipwrecked amidst the chaos of an irrational universe. Nevertheless the great majority of modern thinkers, and in fact modern men, believe profoundly in the existence of progress, and not merely a progress of succession but a progress of improvement. "Life moves on to ever higher and richer forms. Here is an adequate goal for moral effort! Here is a justification of moral values! Here is the true foundation for a modern system of ethics!"

But from the purely rational point of view what does all this amount to? So far from explaining the problems of human existence, it adds fresh difficulties. There is continual movement from the Known to the Unknown. Something that was not before, has come to be. Granted that the true morality is that which subserves Progress, how can we know what it is that will best serve the Unknown? Could Aurignacian man divine the coming of civilization? Could the men of the Mycenaean age foresee Hellenism? When the people of Israel came raiding into Canaan, could they look forward to the future of Judaism? And yet all these achievements were in some degree implicit in the beginnings of these peoples. They created what they could not understand. If they had limited themselves to the observance of a purely rational social ethic based on the immediate advantage of the community, they might have been more prosperous, but they would not have [49] been culturally creative. They would have had no importance for the future. The highest moral ideal either for a people or for an individual is to be true to its destiny, to sacrifice the bird in the hand for the vision in the bush, to leave the known for the unknown, like Abram going out from Haran and from his own people, obedient to the call of Yahweh, or the Aeneas of Virgil's great religious epic.

This of course seems mere mysticism and the very contradiction of a reasonable ethical system. Nevertheless it seems to be the fact that a new way of life or a new view of Reality is felt in-

tuitively before it is comprehended intellectually, that a philosophy is the last product of a mature culture, the crown of a long process of social development, not its foundation. It is in Religion and Art that we can best see the vital intention of the living culture.

Ananda Coomaraswamy, writing of Indian art, says: -- "The gods are the dreams of the race in whom its intentions are most perfectly fulfilled. From them we come to know its innermost desires and purposes, . . . He is no longer an Indian, whatever his birth, who can stand before the Trimurti at Elephanta, not saying 'but so did I will it -- So shall I will it.'"¹

The modern psychologist of Art will probably object that this view of the meaning of Art is purely subjective and fanciful. A work of Art, he will say, represents simply the solution of a psychic tension, the satisfaction of a rather recondite and complicated impulse, which is of importance only for the psychic life of the individual. From the point of view of the psychologist this is no doubt justified, but then from the same point of view all cultural activities, nay the life process itself, may be explained in terms of psychic tensions and their solution. Yet this is merely an analysis of the psychic mechanism, and it takes little or no account of the underlying physical realities. For instance, when one eats one's dinner, one satisfies an impulse, and solves a psychic tension, viz., the hunger tension, but at the same time one builds up the physical organism, and the results of a persistent neglect to

¹ A. Coomaraswamy, *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, p. 59.

[50] take food cannot be assessed simply in terms of a repression psychosis.

Consequently, in the case of Art, it is not enough to look at the psychic impulse of the individual artist. It is only in times of cultural decadence and social dissolution that Art is a "refuge from reality" for the individual mind. Normally it is an expression of mastery over life. The same purposeful fashioning of plastic material which is the very essence of a culture, expresses itself also in art. The Greek statue must be first conceived, then lived,

then made, and last of all thought. There you have the whole cycle of creative Hellenic culture. First, Religion, then Society, then Art, and finally Philosophy. Not that one of these is cause and the others effects. They are all different aspects or functions of one life.

Now it is obvious that if such a central purpose or life-intention exists in a society, the adherence to it or the defection from it of the individual becomes the central fact in social morality. There remain, of course, a certain number of obvious moral duties without which social life is hardly conceivable and which must be much the same in every age and society. But then these acquire very different meaning according to the ruling principle to which they are related. The offence of murder, for example, cannot have the same meaning in a society such as ancient Assyria, where religion and morality were essentially warlike, as among the Jains to whom taking of life, under any circumstances and in respect to any creature, is the one unpardonable sin. Again to the modern European or American, social justice necessarily involves an increasing measure of equality and fraternity; to the ancient Indian on the other hand, justice involves the strictest preservation of every barrier between classes and occupations -- to him the very type of lawlessness is the man who oversteps the boundaries of his caste. If morality was purely social, and concerned entirely with the relation of the individual to the group in which he lives, this difference of moral standards would no doubt be less though it would not be eliminated. But actually men's view of social reality forms but a part of their conception of cosmic reality and morality involves a constant process of adjustment not only between individual impulse and social reality, but also between the actual life of society and the life of the whole, whether that is conceived cosmically or is limited to humanity. There is a tendency in every organism, whether individual or social, to stop at itself, to turn in on itself, to make itself a goal instead of a bridge. Just as the individual tends to follow his antisocial impulses so the society also tends to assert itself against the larger interests of humanity or the laws of universal life. We see clearly enough that a dominant class is only too apt to make society serve its own ends, instead of subordinating itself to the functional service of society, and the same thing happens with every actual society, in

its relations towards other societies and towards humanity at large.

This is why moral systems in the past have (except in China) so often shown a tendency of hostility to the actual social group, and have established themselves in a super-social sphere. Certainly the great moral reformers have usually found the greatest opposition not in the "immoral" and impulsive individual, but in the regularly constituted organs of social authority and law. And it is one of the greatest difficulties in the democratic system that the force of this actual social authority is so enormously strengthened by its identification with public opinion that the position of the individual whose moral standards and whose grasp of reality are in advance of his society is increasingly hard to maintain: instead of the triangle Government, People, Reformers, we have the sharp dualism Governing people, Reformers.

At first sight there may seem to be a contradiction between the idea of individuals being in advance of the morality of their society and the conception of the existence of a central life-purpose in every civilization. But it must be remembered that there is a great distinction between the age-long racial and spiritual communion which is a civilization and the association for practical ends which is an actual political society. Not for thousands of years perhaps -- not since the earliest kingdoms of Egypt and again excepting China -- have the two coincided. There is always a dualism between the Hellenic state and Hellenism, the Christian state and Christendom, the Moslem state and Islam, the "modern" [52] state and "Modern civilization," and the individual man has a double citizenship and a double allegiance. Certainly every actual society is moulded by the civilization to which it belongs, and to which it always professes a certain loyalty, but the whole emphasis of its activity is on the present, the actual, the practical, and it tends to regard the civilization as something fixed and achieved, as a static background to its own activities. Consequently there are frequent conflicts between the spirit of the culture, and that of the actual society, which become manifest in the opposition to the actual social will of those individuals whose minds are in closer contact with the wider movement of the whole civilization. For a man's social contacts vary with the rich-

ness of his psychic life, and it is only in the mind of the man whom we call a genius that the creative movement in the living culture becomes explicit. The ordinary man is only conscious of the past, he may belong to the cultural present by his acts, by the part that he plays in the social life of his time, but his view of reality, his power of sight is limited to what has been already perceived and formulated by others.

About 2,500 years ago civilization underwent a great revolution owing to a change in men's conceptions of Reality. Throughout the ancient world from the Mediterranean to India and China, men came to realize the existence of a universal cosmic law to which both humanity and the powers of nature are subject. This was the foundation of the great religious civilizations whether theistic or non-theistic, which have controlled the world for some 2,000 years. In some cases, especially in India and China, the old worship of the nature powers was carried over into the new culture, but even there, and still more in Islam and Christendom, there was a neglect of the material side of civilisation due to a concentration on ideal values and absolute existence, which in some cases, especially in Greece and Mesopotamia, led to a decline in material culture.

Since the Renaissance there has been first in the West, and then increasingly throughout the world, a new comprehension of Reality, due to the turning of man's attention once more to the powers and processes of nature and resulting in the elaboration of scientific laws. On this new knowledge, and on the new power of control over nature that it gives, our modern Western Civilization is being built up. Thus it is in a sense a reaction against the second stage described above, and since European and still more Oriental culture has been based traditionally upon that stage, there is at present a conflict and a dualism existing within the culture itself. Moreover, the new third stage of culture while far superior to the second in knowledge and power with regard to particulars, is far less unified and less morally sure of itself. It arose either as an expansion or as a criticism of the second stage, and not as an independent self-sufficient culture. As the recent history of Europe has shown, it may easily end in a suicidal process of exploitation and social self-aggrandizement, or it may

lose itself in the particular. Therefore, the great problem, both moral and intellectual, of the present age lies in securing the fruits of the new knowledge of nature without sacrificing the achievements of the previous stage of culture, in reconciling the sovereignty of universal cosmic law with man's detailed knowledge of himself and the powers and processes of nature.

2. VITALITY OR STANDARDIZATION IN CULTURE

"Vitality or Standardization in Culture"

From Chapter I, Part II of *The Judgment of the Nations* (1942), reprinted in *Dynamics of World History*, pp. 75-79.

IF we accept the principle of social planning from the bottom upwards without regard for spiritual values we are left with a machine-made culture which differs from one country to another only in so far as the process of mechanization is more or less perfected. To most people this is rather an appalling prospect, for the ordinary man does not regard the rationalization of life as the only good. On the contrary, men are often more attracted by the variety of life than by its rationality. Even if it were possible to solve all the material problems of life: poverty, unemployment and war and to construct a uniform scientifically-organized world order, neither the strongest nor the highest elements in human nature would find satisfaction in it.

These views are usually dismissed by the progressive as reactionary. They are in fact the arguments of the conservative, the traditionalist and the romantic. They were first developed by Burke and the romantics against the social rationalism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. But their criticism was based on a real sense of historical realities and they had, above all, a much clearer and deeper sense of the nature of culture than the philosophers whom they criticized.

They saw the immense richness and vitality of European culture in its manifold development in the different nations

through the ages, and, in comparison, the philosophic ideal of a [76] society founded on abstract rational principles seemed lifeless and empty.

And today, even in spite of all the achievements of scientific technique and the increased possibilities of social control, the problem still remains whether it is possible to produce by scientific planning a culture that will be as rich and varied and vital as one that has grown up unconsciously or half-consciously in the course of ages.

Comparing the modern planned society with the unplanned historical societies which it has succeeded we see that it is enormously superior in power and wealth, but it has two great weaknesses: (a) it seems to leave little or no room for personal freedom, and (b) it disregards spiritual values.

We see these twin defects most strongly marked in the totalitarian states, which have been absolutely ruthless in their treatment of personal rights. But wherever modern mechanized mass culture obtains, even in countries of liberal tradition, we find the freedom of the personality threatened by the pressure of economic forces, and the higher cultural values sacrificed to the lower standards of mass civilization. This is not simply a question of class conflict, for it is not only the life of the proletariat that is standardized. On the contrary, the most extreme forms of cultural standardization are to be found in the higher economic levels. The luxury hotel is the same all over the world and represents a thoroughly materialistic type of culture, while the inn which caters to the poorer classes has preserved its cultural individuality and national or local character to an exceptional degree. The older type of culture was characterized by a great inequality in regard to individual freedom. Freedom was a manifold thing. There were all kinds of different freedoms. The noble, the bourgeois and the peasant each had his own freedom and his own constraints. On the whole there was a lot of freedom and no equality, while today there is a lot of equality and hardly any freedom.

Similarly the older type of culture had very little power over

its environment, natural or social But it had very clearly defined spiritual standards and was rich in cultural values. These were [77] of course primarily religious, for religion was the supreme unifying force in the old type of society, but they were also cultural in the narrower sense, so that these societies had a much greater sense of style than our own.

Today we have made incalculable progress in the scientific control of our environment, but at the same time our culture has lost any clearly defined spiritual standards and aims, and our cultural values have become impoverished.

In fact at the present time it looks as though we were beginning to witness a sort of persecution of culture, corresponding to the anti-clerical and anti-religious movement of the last century. Of course the culture that is being attacked is by no means the same thing as the religious or humanist culture of the past. It is a sort of devitalized intellectualism which no longer possesses a social function or a sense of social responsibility.

A culture of this kind is a decadent and dying form of culture, and it is bound to disappear. But that does not mean that society can exist without culture at all. It is all very well saying "To Hell with Culture" but that is just what has happened, and see where it has landed us! During the last thirty years the natural leaders of Western culture have been liquidated pretty thoroughly -- on the battlefield, by firing squads, in concentration camps and in exile. A tough may be better than a highbrow, but a society that is dominated by toughs is not necessarily a tough society: it is more likely to be a disintegrated and disordered one. It is a phenomenon that is common enough in history, a typical phenomenon of periods of transition, and it is often followed by a sharp reaction which prepares the way for a spiritual renaissance.

Sooner or later, there must be a revival of culture and a reorganization of the spiritual life of Western society.

The more successful and complete is the process of economic organization the greater will be the need for a super-economic

objective of social action. If man's increased control over his environment and his greater material resources were simply devoted to the quantitative multiplication of his material needs and [78] satisfactions, civilization would end in a morass of collective self-indulgence. But the more natural and rational solution would be to devote the increased power and wealth and leisure that would emerge in a planned society towards cultural ends or, in other words, to the creation of a "good life" in the Aristotelian sense. For the higher culture is, after all, essentially the fruit of the surplus energy and resources of society. Cathedrals and theatres, universities and palaces -- such things flower naturally from a healthy society as soon as it has acquired a bare margin of freedom and leisure.

It is obvious that the new planned society should be more and not less culturally creative than the societies of the past which accomplished such great things in spite of their poverty and weakness. The reason it has not been so hitherto has been due to our intense and one-sided preoccupation with the economic issue, which led to the starvation of all the non-economic functions and which also created the unemployment problem in the form in which we know it. But a planned culture which is the necessary complement to a planned economy would restore the balance of society, since it would devote no less a degree of organized social effort and thought to the development of the non-economic functions. In this respect it would mark a return to the traditions of the pre-industrial age, which put a much higher social value on the non-economic functions than we have done in the West for the last century and more.

But if we admit the creative powers of reason and the primacy of the spirit, we shall have to leave room in our planned world for the intervention of a power which transcends planning. And the only place for this power in a planned society is at the summit as the source of spiritual energy and the guiding principle of the whole development. For as economic planning is impossible unless a society possesses a certain amount of physical vitality -- a will to live which provides the motive power for work-- so cultural planning requires an analogous principle of spiritual life without which "culture" becomes a pale abstraction.

The only way to desecularize culture is by giving a spiritual [79] aim to the whole system of organization, so that the machine becomes the servant of the spirit and not its enemy or its master. Obviously this is a tremendous task, but it is one that we cannot avoid facing in the near future. And while the present situation in many respects seems more difficult than any in past history, it is at the same time also more unstable, less fixed in custom and less emotionally attached. In fact the mechanization of human life renders it more sensitive to spiritual influence, in some respects, than the old unorganized type of culture: at the present time this response is most evident where the forces in question are most evil, but clearly this cannot be the only possibility, and the great problem that we have to face is how to discover the means that are necessary to open this new world of apparently soulless and soul-destroying mechanism to the spiritual world which stands so near to it.

3. *THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY IN HISTORY*

"The Patriarchal Family in History"
from "Christianity and Sex,"
published in *Enquiries* (1933); reprinted in
Dynamics of World History (1958), pp. 156-166.

The traditional view of the family was founded on a somewhat naive and one-sided conception of history. The knowledge of the past was confined to the history of classical civilization and to that of the Jews, in both of which the patriarchal family reigned supreme. But when the European horizon was widened by the geographical discoveries of modern times, men suddenly realized the existence of societies whose social organization was utterly different to anything that they had imagined. The discovery of totemism and exogamy, of matrilinear institutions, of polyandry, and of customs of organized sexual licence gave rise to a whole host of new theories concerning the origins of marriage and the family. Under the influence of the prevalent evolutionary philosophy, scholars like Lewis Morgan elaborated the theory of the gradual evolution of the family from a condition of primitive sexual promiscuity through various forms of group-marriage and temporary pairing up to the higher forms of patriarchal and monogamous marriage as they exist in developed civilizations. This theory naturally commended itself to socialists. It received the official imprimatur of the leaders of German Socialism in

the later nineteenth century, and has become as much a part of orthodox socialist thought as the Marxian interpretation of history. It was, however, never fully accepted by the scientific world, and is today generally abandoned, although it still finds a few supporters among anthropologists. In England it is still maintained by Mr. E. S. Hartland and by Dr. Briffault, whose vast work *The Mothers* (3 vols., 1927) is entirely devoted to the subject. According to Briffault, primitive society was purely matriarchal in organization, and the primitive family group consisted only of a woman and her offspring. A prolonged sexual association, such as we find in all existing forms of marriage, except in Russia, is neither natural nor primitive, and has no place in matriarchal society. The original social unit was not the family, but the clan which was based on matrilinear kinship and was entirely communistic in its sexual and economic relations. The family, as we understand it, owes nothing to biological or sexual causes, but is an economic institution arising from the development of private property and the consequent domination of women by men. It is "but a euphemism for the individualistic male with his subordinate dependents."

But in spite of its logical coherence, and the undoubted existence of matrilinear institutions in primitive society, this theory has not been borne out by recent investigations. The whole tendency of modern anthropology has been to discredit the old views regarding primitive promiscuity and sexual communism, and to emphasize the importance and universality of marriage. Whether the social organization is matrilinear or patrilinear, whether morality is strict or loose, it is the universal rule of every known society that a woman before she bears a child must be married to an individual male partner. The importance of this rule has been clearly shown by Dr. Malinowski. "The universal postulate of legitimacy," he writes, "has a great sociological significance which is not yet sufficiently acknowledged. It means that in all human societies moral tradition and law decree that the group consisting of a woman and her offspring is not a sociologically complete unit. The ruling of culture runs here again on entirely the same lines as natural endowment; it declares that the human family must consist of the male as well as the female." [1]

It is impossible to go back behind the family and find a state of society in which the sexual relations are in a pre-social stage, for the regulation of sexual relations is an essential pre-requisite of any kind of culture. The family is not a product of culture; it is, as Malinowski shows, "the starting point of all human organization" and "the cradle of nascent culture." Neither the sexual nor the parental instinct is distinctively human. They exist equally among the animals, and they only acquire cultural significance when their purely biological function is transcended by the attainment of a permanent social relation.

Marriage is the social consecration of the biological functions, by which the

instinctive activities of sex and parenthood are socialized and a new synthesis of cultural and natural elements is created in the shape of the family. This synthesis differs from anything that exists in the animal world in that it no longer leaves man free to follow his own sexual instincts; he is forced to conform them to a certain social pattern. The complete freedom from restraint which was formerly supposed to be characteristic of savage life is a romantic myth. In all primitive societies sexual relations are regulated by a complex and meticulous system of restrictions, any breach of which is regarded not merely as an offence against tribal law, but as morally sinful. These rules mostly have their origin in the fear of incest, which is the fundamental crime against the family, since it leads to the disorganization of family sentiment and the destruction of family authority. It is unnecessary to insist upon the importance of the consequences of this fear of incest in both individual and social psychology, since it is the fundamental thesis of Freud and his school. Unfortunately, in his historical treatment of the subject, in *Totem and Tabu*, he inverts the true relation, and derives the sociological structure from a pre-existent psychological complex instead of vice versa. In reality, as Dr. Malinowski has shown, the fundamental repression which lies at the root of social life is not the suppressed memory of an instinctive crime--Freud's prehistoric Oedipus tragedy--but a deliberate constructive repression of anti-social impulses. "The beginning of culture implies the repression of instincts, and all the essentials of the Oedipus complex or any other complex are necessary by-products in the gradual formation of culture." [2]

The institution of the family inevitably creates a vital tension which is creative as well as painful. For human culture is not instinctive. It has to be conquered by a continuous moral effort, which involves the repression of natural instinct and the subordination and sacrifice of the individual impulse to the social purpose. It is the fundamental error of the modern hedonist to believe that man can abandon moral effort and throw off every repression and spiritual discipline and yet preserve all the achievements of culture. It is the lesson of history that the higher the achievement of a culture the greater is the moral effort and the stricter is the social discipline that it demands. The old type of matrilinear society, though it is by no means devoid of moral discipline, involves considerably less repression and is consistent with a much laxer standard of sexual behaviour than is usual in patriarchal societies. But at the same time it is not capable of any high cultural achievement or of adapting itself to changed circumstances. It remains bound to its elaborate and cumbrous mechanism of tribal custom.

The patriarchal family, on the other hand, makes much greater demands on human nature. It requires chastity and self-sacrifice on the part of the wife and obedience and discipline on the part of the children, while even the father himself has to assume a heavy burden of responsibility and submit his personal feelings to the

interests of the family tradition. But for these very reasons the patriarchal family is a much more efficient organ of cultural life. It is no longer limited to its primary sexual and reproductive functions. It becomes the dynamic principle of society and the source of social continuity. Hence, too, it acquires a distinctively religious character, which was absent in matrilinear societies, and which is now expressed in the worship of the family hearth or the sacred fire and the ceremonies of the ancestral cult. The fundamental idea in marriage is no longer the satisfaction of the sexual appetite, but, as Plato says: "the need that every man feels of clinging to the eternal life of nature by leaving behind him children's children who may minister to the gods in his stead." [3]

This religious exaltation of the family profoundly affects men's attitude to marriage and the sexual aspects of life in general. It is not limited, as is often supposed, to the idealization of the possessive male as father and head of the household; it equally transforms the conception of womanhood. It was the patriarchal family which created those spiritual ideals of motherhood and virginity which have had so deep an influence on the moral development of culture. No doubt the deification of womanhood through the worship of the Mother Goddess had its origin in the ancient matrilinear societies. But the primitive Mother Goddess is a barbaric and formidable deity who embodies the ruthless fecundity of nature, and her rites are usually marked by licentiousness and cruelty. It was the patriarchal culture which transformed this sinister goddess into the gracious figures of Demeter and Persephone and Aphrodite, and which created those higher types of divine virginity which we see in Athene, the giver of good counsel, and Artemis, the guardian of youth.

The patriarchal society was in fact the creator of those moral ideas which have entered so deeply into the texture of civilization that they have become a part of our thought. Not only the names of piety and chastity, honour and modesty, but the values for which they stand are derived from this source, so that even where the patriarchal family has passed away we are still dependent on the moral tradition that it created. [4] Consequently, we find that the existing world civilizations from Europe to China are all founded on the tradition of the patriarchal family. It is to this that they owed the social strength which enabled them to prevail over the old cultures of matrilinear type which, alike in Europe and in Western Asia, in China and in India, had preceded the coming of the great classical cultures. Moreover, the stability of the latter has proved to be closely dependent on the preservation of the patriarchal ideal. A civilization like that of China, in which the patriarchal family remained the corner-stone of society and the foundation of religion and ethics, has preserved its cultural traditions for more than 2,000 years without losing its vitality. In the classical cultures of the Mediterranean world, however, this was not the case. Here the patriarchal family failed to adapt itself to the urban conditions of

the Hellenistic civilization, and consequently the whole culture lost its stability. Conditions of life both in the Greek city state and in the Roman Empire favoured the man without a family who could devote his whole energies to the duties and pleasures of public life. Late marriages and small families became the rule, and men satisfied their sexual instincts by homosexuality or by relations with slaves and prostitutes. This aversion to marriage and the deliberate restriction of the family by the practice of infanticide and abortion was undoubtedly the main cause of the decline of ancient Greece, as Polybius pointed out in the second century B.C.[5] And the same factors were equally powerful in the society of the Empire, where the citizen class even in the provinces was extraordinarily sterile and was recruited not by natural increase, but by the constant introduction of alien elements, above all from the servile class. Thus the ancient world lost its roots alike in the family and in the land and became prematurely withered.

The reconstitution of Western civilization was due to the coming of Christianity and the re-establishment of the family on a new basis. Though the Christian ideal of the family owes much to the patriarchal tradition which finds such a complete expression in the Old Testament, it was in several respects a new creation that differed essentially from anything that had previously existed. While the patriarchal family in its original form was an aristocratic institution which was the privilege of a ruling race or a patrician class, the Christian family was common to every class, even to the slaves.[6] Still more important was the fact that the Church insisted for the first time on the mutual and bilateral character of sexual obligations. The husband belonged to the wife as exclusively as the wife to the husband. This rendered marriage a more personal and individual relation than it had been under the patriarchal system. The family was no longer a subsidiary member of a larger unity-the kindred or "gens." It was an autonomous self-contained unit which owed nothing to any power outside itself.

It is precisely this character of exclusiveness and strict mutual obligation which is the chief ground of objection among the modern critics of Christian morality. But whatever may be thought of it, there can be no doubt that the resultant type of monogamous and indissoluble marriage has been the foundation of European society and has conditioned the whole development of our civilization. No doubt it involves a very severe effort of repression and discipline, but its upholders would maintain that it has rendered possible an achievement which could never have been equalled under the laxer conditions of polygamous or main-linear societies. There is no historical justification of Bertrand Russell's belief that the Christian attitude to marriage has had a brutalizing effect on sexual relations and has degraded the position of woman below even the level of ancient civilization: on the contrary, women have always had a wider share in social life and a greater influence on civilization in Europe than was the case either in Hellenic or oriental society. And

this is in part due to those very ideals of asceticism and chastity which Bertrand Russell regards as the source of all our troubles. For in a Catholic civilization the patriarchal ideal is counterbalanced by the ideal of virginity. The family for all its importance does not control the whole existence of its members. The spiritual side of life belongs to a spiritual society in which all authority is reserved to a celibate class. Thus in one of the most important aspects of life the sexual relation is transcended, and husband and wife stand on an equal footing. I believe that this is the chief reason why the feminine element has achieved fuller expression in Catholic culture and why, even at the present day, the feminine revolt against the restrictions of family life is so much less marked in Catholic society than elsewhere.

In Protestant Europe, on the other hand, the Reformation, by abandoning the ideal of virginity and by the destruction of monasticism and of the independent authority of the Church, accentuated the masculine element in the family. The Puritan spirit, nourished on the traditions of the Old Testament, created a new patriarchalism and made the family the religious as well as the social basis of society. Civilization lost its communal and public character and became private and domestic. And yet, by a curious freak of historical development, it was this Puritan and patriarchal society which gave birth to the new economic order which now threatens to destroy the family. Industrialism grew up, not in the continental centres of urban culture, but in the most remote districts of rural England, in the homes of nonconformist weavers and ironworkers. The new industrial society was entirely destitute of the communal spirit and of the civic traditions which had marked the ancient and the mediaeval city. It existed simply for the production of wealth and left every other side of life to private initiative. Although the old rural culture, based on the household as an independent economic unit, was passing away for ever, the strict ethos of the Puritan family continued to rule men's lives.

This explains the anomalies of the Victorian period both in England and America. It was essentially an age of transition. Society had already entered on a phase of intense urban industrialism, while still remaining faithful to the patriarchal ideals of the old Puritan tradition. Both Puritan morality and industrial mass economy were excessive and one-sided developments, and when the two were brought together in one society they inevitably produced an impossible situation.

The problem that faces us today is, therefore, not so much the result of an intellectual revolt against the traditional Christian morality; it is due to the inherent contradictions of an abnormal state of culture. The natural tendency, which is even more clearly visible in America than in England, is for the Puritan tradition to be abandoned and for society to give itself up passively to the machinery of modern cosmopolitan life. But this is no solution. It leads merely to the breaking down of the old structure of society and the loss of the traditional moral standards without

creating anything which can take their place. As in the decline of the ancient world, the family is steadily losing its form and its social significance, and the state absorbs more and more of the life of its members. The home is no longer a centre of social activity; it has become merely a sleeping place for a number of independent wage-earners. The functions which were formerly fulfilled by the head of the family are now being taken over by the state, which educates the children and takes the responsibility for their maintenance and health. Consequently, the father no longer holds a vital position in the family: as Mr. Bertrand Russell says, he is often a comparative stranger to his children, who know him only as "that man who comes for week-ends." Moreover, the reaction against the restrictions of family life which in the ancient world was confined to the males of the citizen class, is today common to every class and to both sexes. To the modern girl marriage and motherhood appear not as the conditions of a wider life, as they did to her grandmother, but as involving the sacrifice of her independence and the abandonment of her career.

The only remaining safeguards of family life in modern urban civilization are its social prestige and the sanctions of moral and religious tradition. Marriage is still the only form of sexual union which is openly tolerated by society, and the ordinary man and woman are usually ready to sacrifice their personal convenience rather than risk social ostracism. But if we accept the principles of the new morality, this last safeguard will be destroyed and the forces of dissolution will be allowed to operate unchecked. It is true that Mr. Russell, at least, is willing to leave us the institution of marriage, on condition that it is strictly demoralized and no longer makes any demands on continence. But it is obvious that these conditions reduce marriage to a very subordinate position. It is no longer the exclusive or even the normal form of sexual relations: it is entirely limited to the rearing of children. For, as Mr. Russell is never tired of pointing out, the use of contraceptives has made sexual intercourse independent of parenthood, and the marriage of the future will be confined to those who seek parenthood for its own sake rather than as the natural fulfilment of sexual love. But under these circumstances who will trouble to marry? Marriage will lose all attractions for the young and the pleasure-loving and the poor and the ambitious. The energy of youth will be devoted to contraceptive love and only when men and women have become prosperous and middle-aged will they think seriously of settling down to rear a strictly limited family.

It is impossible to imagine a system more contrary to the first principles of social well-being. So far from helping modern society to surmount its present difficulties, it only precipitates the crisis. It must lead inevitably to a social decadence far more rapid and more universal than that which brought about the disintegration of ancient civilization. The advocates of birth-control can hardly fail to realize the

consequences of a progressive decline of the population in a society in which it is already almost stationary, but for all that their propaganda is entirely directed towards a further diminution in the birth rate. Many of them, like Dr. Stopes, are no doubt so much concerned with the problem of individual happiness that they do not stop to consider how the race is to be carried on. Others, such as Mr. Russell, are obsessed by the idea that over-population is the main cause of war and that a diminishing birth rate is the best guarantee of international peace. There is, however, nothing in history to justify this belief. The largest and most prolific populations, such as the Chinese and the Hindus, have always been singularly unaggressive. The most warlike peoples are usually those who are relatively backward in culture and few in numbers, like the Huns and the Mongols, or the English in the fifteenth century, the Swedes in the seventeenth century, and the Prussians in the eighteenth century. If, however, questions of population should give rise to war in the future, there can be no doubt that it is nations with wide possessions and a dwindling population who will be most likely to provoke an attack. But it is much more likely that the process will be a peaceful one. The peoples who allow the natural bases of society to be destroyed by the artificial conditions of the new urban civilization will gradually disappear and their place will be taken by those populations which live under simpler conditions and preserve the traditional forms of the family.

1 B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927), p. 213.

2 Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

3 Laws, 773 F.

4 For this reason the Catholic Church has always associated its teaching on marriage with the patriarchal tradition, and even today she still concludes the marriage service with the ancient patriarchal benediction: "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, be with you and may he fulfill his blessing upon you that you may see your children's children even to the third and fourth generation."

5 He writes that in his days the diminution of population in Greece was so great that the towns were becoming deserted and the fields untilld. The reason of this is neither war nor pestilence, but because men "owing to vanity, avarice or cowardice, no longer wish to marry or to bring up children." In Boeotia especially he notes a tendency for men to leave their property to clubs for public benefactions instead of leaving it to their heirs, "so that the Boeotians often have more free dinners than there are days in the month." Polyb., *Books XXXVI*, 17, and *XX*, 6.

6 The same change, however, has taken place in China, where, owing to the influence of Confucianism, the whole population has gradually acquired the family institutions which were originally peculiar to the members of the feudal nobility.

4. STAGES IN MANKIND'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

"Stages in Mankind's Religious Experience," from Chapters II and III of *Christianity and the New Age*, "Humanism and Religious Experience," and "The Claim of Christianity" (1931); reprinted in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 167-188.

EVEN the crudest and most primitive forms of religion possess an element of transcendence without which they would cease to be religion. For since religion is the bond between man and God, between human society and the spiritual world, it always has a twofold aspect. To the outsider, whether he be a traveller or a rational critic, primitive religions seem like a dead weight of social convention and superstition which prevents the society from advancing; to the primitive himself, however, it is the Way of the Gods, the traditional consecrated order which brings human life into communion with the higher powers; and we see from the history of more developed religions that the most simple and elementary religious practices are capable, not merely of becoming charged with religious emotion, but of becoming the vehicle of profound religious ideas, as for example the ritual of sacrifice in ancient India or the ceremonial ordering of the calendar in ancient China.

On the other hand, when we come to the higher religions where there is a conscious effort to assert the absolute transcendence of God and the spiritual order, we still do not find any complete divorce between religion and culture. Even Buddhism, which seems at first sight to turn its back on human life and condemn all the natural values on which human culture is built, [168] nevertheless has as great an influence on culture and impresses its character on the social life of the Tibetans or the Singalese no less than a religion which adopts a frankly positive, or as we say "pagan," attitude towards nature and human life. Religions of this type do, however, bring out more clearly the element of tension and conflict in the relation between religion and culture, which it is easy to ignore in a primitive religion which seems completely fused and identified with the social pattern.

Thus there are two factors to be considered in relation to any

religion. Just as it is possible to conceive of a religion which will satisfy man's religious needs without being applicable to the social situation of modern Europe as, for example, in Buddhism, so we can construct, at least in theory, a religion which would be adapted to the social needs of modern civilization, but which would be incapable of satisfying the purely religious demands of the human spirit. Such a religion was constructed with admirable ingenuity and sociological knowledge by Comte in the nineteenth century, and it proved utterly lacking in religious vitality, and consequently also in human appeal. And a similar experiment which is being carried out with far less knowledge and greater passion by the modern Communists in Russia threatens to be even more sterile and inimical to man's spiritual personality. It is useless to judge a religion from the point of view of the politician or the social reformer. We shall never create a living religion merely as a means to an end, a way out of our practical difficulties. For the religious view of life is the opposite to the utilitarian. It regards the world and human life *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is only by accepting the religious point of view, by regarding religion as an end in itself and not as a means to something else, that we can discuss religious problems profitably. It may be said that this point of view belongs to the past, and that we cannot return to it. But neither can we escape from it. The past is simply the record of the experience of humanity, and if that experience testifies to the existence of a permanent human need, that need must manifest itself in the future no less than in the past.

[169] What, then, is man's essential religious need, judging by the experience of the past? There is an extraordinary degree of unanimity in the response, although, of course, it is not complete. One answer is God, the supernatural, the transcendent; the other answer is deliverance, salvation, eternal life. And both these two elements are represented in some form or other in any given religion. The religion of ancient Israel, for example, may seem to concentrate entirely on the first of these two elements -- the reality of God -- and to have nothing to say about the immortality of the soul and the idea of eternal life. Yet the teachings of the prophets is essentially a doctrine of salvation -- a social and earthly salvation, it is true, but nevertheless a salvation which is essentially re-

ligious and related to the eternal life of God. Again, Buddhism seems to leave no room for God and to put the whole emphasis of its teaching on the second element -- deliverance. Nevertheless, it is based, as much as any religion can be, on the idea of Transcendence. Indeed, it was an exaggerated sense of Transcendence that led to its negative attitude towards the ideas of God and the Soul. "We affirm something of God, in order not to affirm nothing," says the Catholic theologian. The Buddhist went a step further on the *via negativa* and preferred to say nothing.

Now, a concentration on these two specifically religious needs produces an attitude to life totally opposed to the practical utilitarian outlook of the ordinary man. The latter regards the world of man the world of sensible experience and social activity as the one reality, and is sceptical of anything that lies beyond, whether in the region of pure thought or of spiritual experience, not to speak of religious faith. The religious man, on the contrary, turns his scepticism against the world of man. He is conscious of the existence of another and greater world of spiritual reality in which we live and move and have our being, though it is hidden from us by the veil of sensible things. He may even think, like Newman, that the knowledge of the senses has a merely symbolic value; that "the whole series of impressions made on us by the senses may be but a Divine economy suited to our need, and the token of realities distinct from them, and such as might be re-[170] vealed to us, nay, more perfectly, by other senses as different from our existing ones as they are from one another"[1]

The one ultimate reality is the Being of God, and the world of man and nature itself are only real in so far as they have their ground and principle of being in the supreme reality. In the words of a French writer of the seventeenth century: "It is the presence of God that, without cessation, draws the creation from the abyss of its own nothingness above which His omnipotence holds it suspended, lest of its own weight it should fall bade therein; and serves as the mortar and bond of connection which holds it together in order that all that it has of its Creator should not waste and flow away like water that is not kept in its channel."

Thus, although God is not myself, nor a part of my being,

yet the relation of dependence that my life, my powers, and my operations bear to His Presence is more absolute, more essential, and more intimate than any relation I can have to the natural principles without which I could not exist . . . I draw my life from His Living Life . . . ; I am, I understand, I will, I act, I imagine, I smell, I taste, I touch, I see, I walk, and I love in the Infinite Being of God, within the Divine Essence and substance. . . .

God in the heavens is more my heaven than the heavens themselves; in the sun He is more my light than the sun; in the air He is more my air than the air that I breathe sensibly. . . . He works in me all that I am, all that I see, all that I do or can do, as most intimate, most present, and most immanent in me, as the super-essential Author and Principle of my works, without whom we should melt away and disappear from ourselves and from our own activities"[2]

Or again, to quote Cardinal Bona, God is "the Ocean of all essence and existence, the very Being itself which contains all

1 *University Sermons*, p. 350. In this remarkable passage he develops a parallelism between the symbolic character of sensible knowledge and that of mathematical calculi and musical notation.

2 Chardon, *la Croix de Jesus*, pp. 422, 423, in Bremond, *Histoire du sentiment religieux en France*, viii, pp. 21-22.

[171] being. From Him all things depend; they flow out from Him and flow back to Him and are in so far as they participate in His Being."[3]

Thus the whole universe is, as it were, the shadow of God, and has its being in the contemplation or reflection of the Being of God. The spiritual nature reflects the Divine consciously, while the animal nature is a passive and unconscious mirror. Nevertheless, even the life of the animal is a living manifestation of the Divine, and the flight of the hawk or the power of the bull is an

unconscious prayer. Man alone stands between these two kingdoms in the strange twilight world of rational consciousness. He possesses a kind of knowledge which transcends the sensible without reaching the intuition of the Divine.

It is only the mystic who can escape from this twilight world; who, in Sterry's words, can "descry a glorious eternity in a winged moment of Time a bright Infinite in the narrow point of an object, who knows what Spirit means that spire-top whither all things ascend harmoniously, where they meet and sit connected in an unfathomed Depth of Life." But the mystic is not the normal man; he is one who has transcended, at least momentarily, the natural limits of human knowledge. The ordinary man is by his nature immersed in the world of sense, and uses his reason in order to subjugate the material world to his own ends, to satisfy his appetites and to assert his will. He lives on the animal plane with a more than animal consciousness and purpose, and in so far, he is less religious than the animal. The life of pure spirit is religious, and the life of the animal is also religious, since it is wholly united with the life-force that is its highest capacity of being. Only man is capable of separating himself alike from God and from nature, of making himself his last end and living a purely self-regarding and irreligious existence.

And yet the man who deliberately regards self-assertion and sensual enjoyment as his sole ends, and finds complete satisfaction in them the pure materialist is not typical; he is almost as rare as the mystic. The normal man has an obscure sense of the existence of a spiritual reality and a consciousness of the evil and

3 Bona, *Via Compendii ad Deum*.

[172] misery of an existence which is the slave of sensual impulse and self-interest and which must inevitably end in physical suffering and death. But how is he to escape from this wheel to which he is bound by the accumulated weight of his own acts and desires? How is he to bring his life into vital relation with that spiritual reality of which he is but dimly conscious and which transcends all the categories of his thought and the conditions of human experience? This is the fundamental religious problem which has

perplexed and baffled the mind of man from the beginning and is, in a sense, inherent in his nature.

I have intentionally stated the problem in its fullest and most classical form, as it has been formulated by the great minds of our own civilization, since the highest expression of an idea is usually also the most explicit and the most intelligible. But, as the writers whom I have quoted would themselves maintain, there is nothing specifically Christian about it. It is common to Christianity and to Platonism, and to the religious traditions of the ancient East. It is the universal attitude of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, of that nature which the mediaeval mystics term "noble," because it is incapable of resting satisfied with a finite or sensible good. It is "natural religion" not, indeed, after the manner of the religion of naturalism that we have already mentioned, but in the true sense of the word.

It is, of course, obvious that such conceptions of spiritual reality presuppose a high level of intellectual development and that we cannot expect to find them in a pre-philosophic stage of civilization. Nevertheless, however far back we go in history, and however primitive is the type of culture, we do find evidence for the existence of specifically religious needs and ideas of the supernatural which are the primitive prototypes or analogues of the conceptions which we have just described.

Primitive man believes no less firmly than the religious man of the higher civilizations in the existence of a spiritual world upon which the visible world and the life of man are dependent. Indeed, this spiritual world is often more intensely realized and more constantly present to his mind than is the case with civilized man. He has not attained to the conception of an autonomous natural order, and consequently supernatural forces are liable to interpose themselves at every moment of his existence. At first sight the natural and the supernatural, the material and the spiritual, seem inextricably confused. Nevertheless, even in primitive nature-worship, the object of religious emotion and worship is never the natural phenomenon as such, but always the supernatural power which is obscurely felt to be present in and working through the natural object.

The essential difference between the religion of the primitive and that of civilized man is that for the latter the spiritual world has become a cosmos, rendered intelligible by philosophy and ethical by the tradition of the world religions, whereas to the primitive it is a spiritual chaos in which good and evil, high and low, rational and irrational elements are confusedly mingled. Writers on primitive religion have continually gone astray through their attempts to reduce the spiritual world of the primitive to a single principle, to find a single cause from which the whole development may be explained and rendered intelligible. Thus Tylor finds the key in the belief in ghosts, Durkheim in the theory of an impersonal *mana* which is the exteriorization of the collective mind, and Frazer in the technique of magic. But in reality there is no single aspect of primitive religion that can be isolated and regarded as the origin of all the rest. The spiritual world of the primitive is far less unified than that of civilized man. High gods, nature spirits, the ghosts of the dead, malevolent demons, and impersonal supernatural forces and substances may all coexist in it without forming any kind of spiritual system or hierarchy. Every primitive culture will tend to lay the religious emphasis on some particular point. In Central Africa witchcraft and the cult of ghosts may overshadow everything else; among the hunters of North America the emphasis may be laid on the visionary experience of the individual, and the cult of animal guardians; and among the Hamitic peoples the sky-god takes the foremost place. But it is dangerous to conclude that the point on which attention is focussed is the whole field of consciousness. The high gods are often conceived as too far from man to pay much attention to his doings, and it is lesser powers -- the spirits of the field [174] and the forest, or the ghosts of the dead who come into closest relation with human life, and whose malevolence is most to be feared.

Consequently primitive religion is apt to appear wholly utilitarian and concerned with purely material ends. But here also the confusion of primitive thought is apt to mislead us. The ethical aspect of religion is not consciously recognized and cultivated as it is by civilized man, but it is none the less present in an obscure way. Primitive religion is essentially an attempt to bring man's

life into relation with, and under the sanctions of, that other world of mysterious and sacred powers, whose action is always conceived as the ultimate and fundamental law of life. Moreover, the sense of sin and of the need for purification or catharsis is very real to primitive man. No doubt sin appears to him as a kind of physical contagion that seems to us of little moral value. Nevertheless, as we can see from the history of Greek religion, the sense of ritual defilement and that of moral guilt are very closely linked with one another, and the idea of an essential connection between moral and physical evil between sin and death, for example is found in the higher religions no less than among the primitives. *Libera nos a malo* is a universal prayer which answers to one of the oldest needs of human nature.

But the existence of this specifically religious need in primitive man in other words, the naturalness of the religious attitude is widely denied at the present day. It is maintained that primitive man is a materialist and that the attempt to find in primitive religion an obscure sense of the reality of spirit, or, indeed, anything remotely analogous to the religious experience of civilized man, is sheer metaphysical theorizing. This criticism is partly due to a tendency to identify any recognition of the religious element in primitive thought and culture with the particular theories of religious origins which have been put forward by Tyler and Durkheim. In reality, however, the theories of the latter have much more in common with those of the modern writers whom I have mentioned than any of them have with the point of view of writers who recognize the objective and autonomous character of religion. All of them show that anti-metaphysical prejudice which [175] has been so general during the last generation or two, and which rejects on a priori grounds any objective interpretation of religious experience. On the Continent there is already a reaction against the idea of a "science of religion" which, unlike the other sciences, destroys its own object and leaves us with a residuum of facts that belong to a totally different order. In fact, recent German writers such as Otto, Heiler, and Carl Beth tend rather to exaggerate the mystical and intuitive character of religious experience, whether in its primitive or advanced manifestations. But in this country the anti-metaphysical prejudice is still dominant. A theory is not regarded as "scientific" unless it explains religion in

terms of something else as an artificial construction from non-religious elements.

Thus Professor Perry writes: "The idea of deity has grown up with civilization itself, and in its beginnings it was constructed out of the most homely materials." He holds that religion was derived not from primitive speculation or symbolism nor from spiritual experience, but from a practical observation of the phenomena of life. Its origins are to be found in the association of certain substances, such as red earth, shells, crystals, etc., with the ideas of life and fertility and their use as amulets or fetishes in order to prolong life or to increase the sexual powers. From these beginnings religion was developed as a purely empirical system of ensuring material prosperity by the archaic culture in Egypt and was thence gradually diffused throughout the world by Egyptian treasure-seekers and megalith-builders. The leaders of these expeditions became the first gods, while the Egyptian practices of mummification and tomb-building were the source of all those ideas concerning the nature of the soul and the existence of a spiritual world that are found among primitive peoples.

It is needless for us to discuss the archaeological aspects of this pan-Egyptian hypothesis of cultural origins. From our present point of view the main objection to the theory lies in the naive Euhemerism of its attitude to religion. For even if we grant that the whole development of higher civilization has proceeded from a single centre, that is a very different thing from admitting that a fundamental type of human experience could ever find its origin in a process of cultural diffusion. It is not as though Professor Perry maintained that primitive man lived a completely animal existence before the coming of the higher culture. On the contrary, the whole tendency of his thought has been to vindicate the essential *humanity* of the primitive. It is the claim of "the new anthropology" that it rehabilitates human nature itself and "disentangles the original nature of man from the systems, tradition, and machinery of civilization which have modified it." [4] If, then, primitive man is non-religious, the conclusion follows that human nature itself is non-religious, and religion, like war, is an artificial product of later development.

But this conclusion has been reached only by the forced construction that has been arbitrarily put upon the evidence. Because the primitive fetish has no more religious value for us than the mascot that we put on our motor-cars, we assume that it can have meant nothing more to primitive man. This, however, is to fall into the same error for which Mr. Massingham rightly condemns the older anthropology the neglect of the factor of degeneration. Our mascot is a kind of fetish, but it is a degenerate fetish, and it is degenerate precisely because it has lost its religious meaning. The religious man no longer uses mascots, though if he is a Catholic he may use the image of a saint. To the primitive man his fetish is more than the one and less than the other. It has the sanctity of a relic and the irrationality of a mascot. Professor Lowie has described how an Indian offered to show him "the greatest thing in the world"; how he reverently uncovered one cloth wrapper after another; and how at length there lay exposed a simple bunch of feathers a mere nothing to the alien onlooker, but to the owner a badge of his covenant with the supernatural world. "It is easy," he says, "to speak of the veneration extended to such badges . . . as fetishism, but that label with its popular meaning is monstrously inadequate to express the psychology of the situation. For to the Indian the material object is nothing apart from its sacred associations." [5]

4 H. J. Massingham, *The Heritage of Man*, p. 142.

5 R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, p. 19.

[177] So, too, when Mr. Massingham speaks of primitive religion as "a purely supernatural machinery, controlled by man, for insuring the material welfare of the community," he is right in his description of facts, but wrong in his appreciation of values. To us, agriculture is merely a depressed industry which provides the raw material of our dinners, and so we assume that a religion that is largely concerned with agriculture must have been a sordid materialistic business. But this is entirely to misconceive primitive man's attitude to nature. To him, agriculture was not a sordid occupation; it was one of the supreme mysteries of life, and he surrounded it with religious rites because he believed that the fertility of the soil and the mystery of generation could only be ensured through the co-operation of higher powers. Primitive agri-

culture was in fact a kind of liturgy.

For us nature has lost this religious atmosphere because the latter has been transferred elsewhere. Civilization did not create the religious attitude or the essential nature of the religious experience, but it gave them new modes of expression and a new intellectual interpretation. This was the achievement of the great religions or religious philosophies that arose in all the main centres of ancient civilization about the middle of the first millennium B.C.[6] They attained to the two fundamental concepts of metaphysical being and ethical order, which have been the foundation of religious thought and the framework of religious experience ever since. Some of these movements of thought, such as Brahmanism, Taoism, and the Eleatic philosophy, concentrated their attention on the idea of Being, while others, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, and the philosophy of Heraclitus, emphasized the idea of moral order; but all of them agreed in identifying the cosmic principle, the power behind the world, with a spiritual principle, conceived either as the source of being or as the source of ethical order.[7] Primitive man had already found the Transcendent immanent in and working through na-

6 I have discussed this movement at greater length in *Progress and Religion*, ch. vi.

7 This may not appear obvious in the case of Buddhism. It is, however, implicit in the doctrine of Karma as the ground of the world process.

[178] ture as the supernatural. The new religions found it in thought as the supreme Reality and in ethics as the Eternal Law. And consequently, while the former still saw the spiritual world diffused and confused with the world of matter, the latter isolated it and set it over against the world of human experience, as Eternity against Time, as the Absolute against the Contingent, as Reality against Appearance, and as the Spiritual against the Sensible.

This was indeed the discovery of a new world for the religious consciousness. It was thereby liberated from the power of the nature daimons and the dark forces of magic and translated to a higher sphere -- to the Brahma-world -- "where there is not darkness, nor day nor night, nor being nor not-being, but the Eternal

alone, the source of the ancient wisdom" to the Kingdom of Ahura and the Six Immortal Holy Ones, to the world of the Eternal Forms, the true home of the soul. And this involved a corresponding change in the religious attitude. The religious life was no longer bound up with irrational myths and non-moral tabus; it was a process of spiritual discipline directed towards the purification of the mind and the will a conversion of the soul from the life of the senses to spiritual reality. The religious experience of primitive man had become obscured by magic and diabolism, and the visions and trances of the Shaman belong rather to the phenomena of Spiritualism than of mysticism. The new type of religious experience, on the other hand, had reached a higher plane. It consisted in an intuition that was essentially spiritual and found its highest realization in the vision of the mystic.

Thus each of the new religio-philosophic traditions -- Brahmanism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Platonism -- ultimately transcends philosophy and culminates in mysticism. They are not satisfied with the demonstration of the Absolute; they demand the experience of the Absolute also, whether it be the vision of the Essential Good and the Essential Beauty, through which the soul is made deiform, or that intuition of the nothingness and illusion inherent in all contingent being which renders a man *jivana mukti*, "delivered alive." But how is such an experience conceivable? It seems to be a contradiction in terms -- to know the Unknowable, to grasp the Incomprehensible, to receive the Infinite, Certainly [179] it transcends the categories of human thought and the normal conditions of human experience. Yet it has remained for thousands of years as the goal--whether attainable or unattainable -- of the religious life; and no religion which ignores this aspiration can prove permanently satisfying to man's spiritual needs. The whole religious experience of mankind indeed, the very existence of religion itself testifies, not only to a sense of the Transcendent, but to an appetite for the Transcendent that can only be satisfied by immediate contact -- by a vision of the supreme Reality. It is the goal of the intellect as well as of the will, for, as a Belgian philosopher has said, "The human mind is a *faculty in quest of its intuition*, that is to say, of assimilation with Being" and it is "perpetually chased from the movable, manifold and deficient towards the Absolute, the One and the Infinite, that is,

towards *Being pure and simple*."[8]

A religion that remains on the rational level and denies the possibility of any real relation with a higher order of spiritual reality, fails in its most essential function, and ultimately, like Deism, ceases to be a religion at all. It may perhaps be objected that this view involves the identification of religion with mysticism, and that it would place a philosophy of intuition like that of the Vedanta higher than a religion of faith and supernatural revelation, like Christianity. In reality, however, the Christian insistence on the necessity of faith and revelation implies an even higher conception of transcendence than that of the oriental religions. Faith transcends the sphere of rational knowledge even more than metaphysical intuition, and brings the mind into close contact with super-intelligible reality. Yet faith also, at least when it is joined with spiritual intelligence, is itself a kind of obscure intuition -- a foretaste of the unseen[9] -- and it also has its culmination in the mystical experience by which these obscure spiritual realities are realized experimentally and intuitively.

Thus Christianity is in agreement with the great oriental religions and with Platonism in its goal of spiritual intuition, though

8 J. Marechal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, trans. Algar Thorold (Benziger, 1927), pp. 101, 133.

9 Cf. Rousselot, *Les Yeux de la Foi*.

[180] it places the full realization of the goal at a further and higher stage of spiritual development than the rest. For all of them religion is not an affair of the emotions, but of the intelligence. Religious knowledge is the highest kind of knowledge, the end and coronation of the whole process of man's intellectual development.

If we accept the necessity of an absolute and metaphysical foundation for religion and religious experience, we still have to face the other aspect of the problem namely, how this spiritual experience is to be brought into living relation with human life and with the social order. The ecstasy of the solitary mind in the

presence of absolute reality seems to offer no solution to the actual sufferings and perplexities of humanity. And yet the religious mind cannot dissociate itself from this need, for it can never rest with a purely individual and self-regarding ideal of deliverance. The more religious a man is, the more is he sensitive to the common need of humanity. All the founders of the world religions—even those, like Buddha, who were the most uncompromising in their religious absolutism were concerned not merely with their private religious experience, but with the common need of humanity. They aspired to be the saviours and path-finders for mankind, as the Indians termed them who should rescue their people from the darkness and suffering of human life.

Nowhere is this social preoccupation more insistent than in the religious tradition of the West, and it is to be found even in the most abstract and intellectualist type of religious thought. It is to be seen above all in Plato, the perfect example of the pure metaphysician, who, nevertheless, made his metaphysics the basis of a programme of political and social reform. Indeed, according to his own description in the Seventh Epistle it was his political interests and his realization of the injustice and moral confusion of the existing state which were the starting point of his metaphysical quest. But though Plato realized as fully as any purely religious teacher the need for bringing social life into contact with spiritual reality and for relating man's rational activity to the higher intuitive knowledge, he failed to show how this could be accomplished by means of a purely intellectual discipline. He saw [181] that it was necessary on the one hand to drag humanity out of the shadow world of appearances and false moral standards into the pure white light of spiritual reality, and, on the other hand, that the contemplative must be forced to leave his mountain of vision and "to descend again to these prisoners and to partake in their toils and honours." [10] But, as he says, the spiritual man is at a disadvantage in the world of politics and business. The eyes that have looked upon the sun can no longer distinguish the shadows of the cave. The man who cares only for eternal things, who seeks to fly hence and to become assimilated to God by holiness and justice and wisdom, is unable to strive for political power with the mean cunning of the ordinary "man of affairs." [11] In fact nothing could show the impossibility of curing the ills of human-

ity by pure intelligence more completely than Plato's own attempt to reform the state of Sicily by giving a young tyrant lessons in mathematics. The political problems of the Greek world were solved not by the philosopher-king, but by condottieri and Macedonian generals, and the gulf between the spiritual world and human life grew steadily wider until the coming of Christianity.

In the East, however, the religious conception of life was victorious and dominated the whole field of culture. In India, above all, the ideal of spiritual intuition was not confined to a few philosophers and mystics, but became the goal of the whole religious development. It was, as Professor de la Vallee Poussin has said, "the great discovery that has remained for at least twenty-five centuries the capital and most cherished truth of the Indian people." The man who cannot understand this cannot understand the religion of India or the civilization with which it is so intimately connected. It is, however, only too easy for the Western mind to misconceive the whole tendency of Indian thought. It is apt to interpret the teaching of the Upanishads on the lines of Western idealist philosophy, and to see in the Indian doctrine of contemplation a philosophic pantheism that is intellectualist rather than religious. In reality it is in Western mystics such as

10 *Republic*, 519.

11 *Theaetetus*, 176.

[182] Eckart or Angelas Silesius rather than in philosophers such as Hegel or even Spinoza that the true parallel to the thought of the Vedanta is to be found. It leads not to pantheism in our sense of the word, but to an extreme theory of transcendence which may be termed super-theism. Western pantheism is a kind of spiritual democracy in which all things are equally God; but the "non-dualism" of the Vedanta is a spiritual absolutism in which God is the only reality. At first sight there may seem to be little practical difference between the statement that everything that exists is divine and the statement that nothing but the divine exists. But from the religious point of view there is all the difference in the world. For "if this transitory world be the Real," says a mediaeval Vedantist, "then there is no liberation through the Atman, the

holy scriptures are without authority and the Lord speaks untruth. . . . The Lord who knows the reality of things has declared 'I am not contained in these things, nor do beings dwell in Me.'"[12]

God is the one Reality. Apart from Him, nothing exists. In comparison with Him, nothing is real. The universe only exists in so far as it is rooted and grounded in His Being. He is the Self of our selves and the Soul of our souls. So far the Vedanta does not differ essentially from the teaching of Christian theology. The one vital distinction consists in the fact that Indian religion ignores the idea of creation and that in consequence it is faced with the dilemma that either the whole universe is an illusion -- Maya -- a dream that vanishes when the soul awakens to the intuition of spiritual reality, or else that the world is the self-manifestation of the Divine Mind, a conditional embodiment of the absolute Being.

Hence there is no room for a real intervention of the spiritual principle in human life. The Indian ethic is, above all, an ethic of flight -- of deliverance from conditional existence and from the chain of re-birth. Human life is an object of compassion to the wise man, but it is also an object of scorn. "As the hog to the trough, goes the fool to the womb," says the Buddhist verse; and

12 *Vivekachudamani* (attributed to Sankara), trans. C. Johnston, p. 41.

[183] the Hindu attitude, if less harsh, is not essentially different.

Men are held by the manifold snares of the desires in the world of sense, and they fall away without winning to their end like dykes of sand in water. Like sesame-grains for their oil, all things are ground out in the mill-wheel of creation by the oil-grinders, to wit, the taints arising from ignorance that fasten upon them. The husband gathers to himself evil works on account of his wife; but he alone is therefore afflicted with taints, which cling to man alike in the world beyond and in this. All men are attached to children, wives and kin; they sink down in the slimy sea of sorrows, like age-worn forest-elephants.[13]

It is true that orthodox Hinduism inculcates the fulfilment of social duties, and the need for outward activity, but this principle does not lead to the transformation of life by moral action, but simply to the fatalistic acceptance of the established order of things. This is the theme of the greatest work of Indian literature, the Bhagavad-Gita, and it involves a moral attitude diametrically opposed to that of the Western mind. When Arjuna shrinks from the evils of war and declares that he would rather die than shed the blood of his kinsfolk, the god does not commend him. He uses the doctrine of the transcendence and impassibility of true being to justify the ruthlessness of the warrior.

Know that that which pervades this universe is imperishable; there is none can make to perish that changeless being.
... [T]his Body's Tenant for all time may not be wounded, O Thou of Bharata's stock, in the bodies of any beings. Therefore thou dost not well to sorrow for any born beings. Looking likewise in thine own Law, thou shouldst not be dismayed; for to a knight there is no thing more blest than a lawful strife.[14]

The sacred order that is the basis of Indian culture is no true spiritualization of human life; it is merely the natural order seen through a veil of metaphysical idealism. It can incorporate the most barbaric and non-ethical elements equally with the most profound metaphysical truths; since in the presence of the abso-

13 *Mahabharata*, xii, ch. 174, trans. L. D. Barnett.

14 *Bhagavad-Gita*, ii, pp. 17, 30-31, trans. L. D. Barnett.

[184] lute and the unconditioned all distinctions and degrees of value lose their validity.

The experience of India is sufficient to show that it is impossible to construct a dynamic religion on metaphysical principles alone, since pure intuition affords no real basis for social action. On the other hand, if we abandon the metaphysical element and content ourselves with purely ethical and social ideals, we are still further from a solution, since there is no longer any basis for a spiritual order. The unity of the inner world dissolves in subjectiv-

ism and scepticism, and society is threatened with anarchy and dissolution. And since social life is impossible without order, it is necessary to resort to some external principle of compulsion, whether political or economic. In the ancient world this principle was found in the military despotism of the Roman Empire, and in the modern world we have the even more complete and far-reaching organization of the economic machine. Here indeed we have an order, but it is an order that is far more inhuman and indifferent to moral values than the static theocratic order of the Oriental religion-cultures.

But is there no alternative between Occidentalism and Orientalism, between a spiritual order that takes no account of human needs and a material order that has no regard for spiritual values? There still remains the traditional religion of our own civilization: Christianity, a religion that is neither wholly metaphysical nor merely ethical, but one that brings the spiritual world into vital and fruitful communion with the life of man.

In the ancient world its faith in a holy society and in a historical process of redemption distinguished Christianity from all its religious rivals and gave it the militant and unyielding quality that enabled it to triumph in its struggle with secular civilization. But this is not sufficient to explain its religious appeal. In addition to the social and historical side of its teaching, Christianity also brought a new doctrine of God and a new relation of the human soul to Him. Judaism had been the least mystical and the least metaphysical of religions. It revealed God as the Creator, the Law-giver and the Judge, and it was by obedience to His Law and by the ritual observances of sacrifice and ceremonial purity that man [185] entered into relations with Him, But the transformation by Jesus of the national community into a new universal spiritual society brought with it a corresponding change in the doctrine of God. God was no longer the national deity of the Jewish people, localized, so to speak, at Sinai and Jerusalem. He was the Father of the human race, the Universal Ground of existence "in Whom we live and move and are." And when St. Paul appealed to the testimony of the Stoic poet, he recognized that Christianity was prepared to accept the metaphysical inheritance of Hellenic thought as well as the historic revelation of Jewish prophecy.

This is shown still more clearly in St. John's identification of the Logos and the Messiah in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Jesus of Nazareth was not only the Christ, the Son of the Living God; He was also the Divine Intelligence, the Principle of the order and intelligibility of the created world. Thus the opposition between the Greek ideal of spiritual intuition and the Living God of Jewish revelation an opposition that Philo had vainly attempted to surmount by an artificial philosophical synthesis finally disappeared before the new revelation of the Incarnate Word. As St. Augustine has said, the Fourth Gospel is essentially the Gospel of contemplation, for while the first three evangelists are concerned with the external mission of Jesus as Messianic King and Saviour and teach the active virtues of Christian life, St. John is, above all, "the theologian" who declares the mysteries of the Divine Nature and teaches the way of contemplation.[15] Jesus is the bridge between Humanity and Divinity. In Him God is not only manifested to man, but vitally participated. He is the Divine Light, which illuminates men's minds, and the Divine Life, which transforms human nature and makes it the partaker of Its own supernatural activity.

Hence the insistence of the Fourth Gospel on the sacramental element in Christ's teaching,¹⁶ since it is through the sacraments that the Incarnation of the Divine Word is no longer merely a historical fact, but is brought into vital and sensible contact with

¹⁵ *Consensu Evangelistarum* 1, ch. 3-5.

¹⁶ See *John* 3:5; 6:32-58.

[186] the life of the believer. So far from being an alien magical conception superimposed from without upon the religion of the Gospel, it forms the very heart of Christianity, since it is only through the sacramental principle that the Jewish ideal of an external ritual cult becomes transformed into a worship of spiritual communion. The modern idea that sacramentalism is inconsistent with the "spiritual" or mystical element in religion, is as lacking in foundation as the allied belief in an opposition between religion and theology. It is only when we reduce theology to religious rationalism and spiritual religion to a blend of ethics and emotion that

there is no place left for sacramentalism; but under these conditions genuine mysticism and metaphysical truth equally disappear. Each of them forms an essential element in the historical development of Christianity. In the great age of creative theological thought, the development of dogma was organically linked with sacramentalism and mysticism. They were three aspects of a single reality the great mystery of the restoration, illumination and deification of humanity by the Incarnation of the Divine Word. This is clearly recognized by Ritschl and his followers such as Harnack, although they involve mysticism, sacramentalism and scientific theology in a common condemnation.

Nevertheless, their criticism of the development of Greek Christianity is not entirely unjustified, for the historical and social elements, on which Ritschl laid so exclusive an emphasis, form an integral part of the Christian tradition, and apart from them the mystical or metaphysical side of religion becomes sterile or distorted. The tendency of the Byzantine mind to concentrate itself on this aspect of Christianity did actually lead to a decline in moral energy and in the spiritual freedom and initiative of the Church, and Eastern Christianity has tended to become an absolute static religion of the Oriental type.

It is true that this ideal, since it is a purely religious one, has much more in common with Catholic Christianity than have the secularized ideals of modern European culture. Catholicism and Orientalism stand together against the denial of metaphysical reality and of the primacy of the spiritual, which is the fundamental Western error. As Sir Charles Eliot has truly said, "The [187] opposition is not so much between Indian thought and the New Testament. . . . the fundamental contrast is rather between both India and the New Testament, on the one hand, and, on the other, the rooted conviction of European races, however much orthodox Christianity may disguise their expression of it, that this world is all-important. The conviction finds expression not only in the avowed pursuit of pleasure and ambition, but in such sayings as that the best religion is the one that does most good, and in such ideals as self-realization or the full development of one's motive and powers. Though monasteries and monks still exist, the great majority of Europeans instinctively disbelieve in

asceticism, the contemplative life and contempt of the world"[17]

And yet, for all this, there is no getting over the profound differences that separate Christianity from the purely metaphysical and intuitive type of religion.

Against the Oriental religions of pure spirit, which denied the value and even the reality of the material universe, the Church has undeviatingly maintained its faith in a historical revelation that involved the consecration not only of humanity but even of the body itself. This was the great stumbling-block to the Oriental mind, which readily accepted the idea of an Avatar or of the theophany of a divine Aeon, but could not face the consequences of the Catholic doctrine of the Two Natures and the full humanity of the Logos made flesh. This conception of the Incarnation as the bridge between God and Man, the marriage of Heaven and Earth, the channel through which the material world is spiritualized and brought back to unity, distinguishes Christianity from all the other Oriental religions, and involves a completely new attitude to life. Deliverance is to be obtained not by a sheer disregard of physical existence and a concentration of the higher intellect on the contemplation of pure Being, but by a creative activity that affects every part of the composite nature of man. And this activity is embodied in a definite society, which shares in the divine life of the Spirit, while at the same time it belongs to the visible order of social and historical reality.

17 C. Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. I, p. 9.

[188] Thus Catholic Christianity occupies an intermediate position between the two spiritual ideals and the two conceptions of reality which have divided the civilized world and the experience of humanity. To the West its ideals appear mystical and other-worldly, while in comparison with the Oriental religions it stands for historical reality and moral activity. It is a stranger in both camps and its home is everywhere and nowhere, like man himself, whose nature maintains a perilous balance between the worlds of spiritual and sensible reality, to neither of which it altogether belongs. Yet by reason of this ambiguous position the Catholic Church stands as the one mediator between East and West, be-

tween the ideal of spiritual intuition and that of moral and social activity. She alone possesses a tradition that is capable of satisfying the whole of human nature and one that brings the transcendent reality of spiritual Being into relation with human experience and the realities of social life.

5. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HISTORY

"The Christian View of History,"
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reprinted in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 233-50.

THE problem of the relations of Christianity to History has been very much complicated and, I think, obscured by the influence of nineteenth-century philosophy. Almost all the great idealist philosophers of that century, like Fichte and Schelling and Hegel, constructed elaborate philosophies of history which had a very considerable influence on the historians, especially in Germany, and on the theologians also. All these systems were inspired or coloured by Christian ideas and they were consequently eagerly accepted by Christian theologians for apologetic purposes. And thus there arose an alliance between idealist philosophy and German theology which became characteristic of the Liberal Protestant movement and dominated religious thought both on the Continent and in this country during the later nineteenth century.

Today the situation is entirely changed. Both philosophic idealism and liberal Protestantism have been widely discredited and have been replaced by logical positivism and by the dialectic theology of the Barthians. The result is that the idea of a Christian philosophy of history has also suffered from the reaction against philosophic idealism. It is difficult to distinguish the authentic and original element in the Christian view of history from the philosophic accretions and interpretations of the last century and a half, so that you will find modern representatives [234] of orthodox Christianity like Mr. C. S. Lewis questioning the

possibility of a Christian interpretation of history, and declaring that the supposed connection between Christianity and Historicism is largely an illusion.[1]

If we approach the subject from a purely philosophical point of view there is a good deal to justify Mr. Lewis's scepticism. For the classical tradition of Christian philosophy as represented by Thomism has devoted comparatively little attention to the problem of history, while the philosophers who set the highest value on history and insist most strongly on the close relation between Christianity and history, such as Collingwood and Croce and Hegel, are not themselves Christian and may perhaps have tended to interpret Christianity in terms of their own philosophy.

Let us therefore postpone any philosophical discussion and consider the matter on the basis of the original theological data of historic Christianity without any attempt to justify or criticize them on philosophical grounds. There is no great difficulty in doing this, since the classical tradition of Christian philosophy as represented by Thomism has never devoted much attention to the problem of history. Its tradition has been Hellenic and Aristotelian, whereas the Christian interpretation of history is derived from a different source. It is Jewish rather than Greek, and finds its fullest expression in the primary documents of the Christian faith the writings of the Hebrew prophets and in the New Testament itself.

Thus the Christian view of history is not a secondary element derived by philosophical reflection from the study of history. It lies at the very heart of Christianity and forms an integral part of the Christian faith. Hence there is no Christian "philosophy of history" in the strict sense of the word. There is, instead, a Christian history and a Christian theology of history, and it is not too much to say that without them there would be no such thing as Christianity. For Christianity, together with the religion of Israel out of which it was born, is an historical religion in a sense to

1 In his article on "Historicism" in *The Month*, October, 1950.

[235] which none of the other world religions can lay claim--not

even Islam, though this comes nearest to it in this respect.

Hence it is very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to explain the Christian view of history to a non-Christian, since it is necessary to accept the Christian faith in order to understand the Christian view of history, and those who reject the idea of a divine revelation are necessarily obliged to reject the Christian view of history as well. And even those who are prepared to accept in theory the principle of divine revelation -- of the manifestation of a religious truth which surpasses human reason--may still find it hard to face the enormous paradoxes of Christianity.

That God should have chosen an obscure Palestinian tribe -- not a particularly civilized or attractive tribe either -- to be the vehicle of his universal purpose for humanity, is difficult to believe. But that this purpose should have been finally realized in the person of a Galilean peasant executed under Tiberius, and that this event was the turning point in the life of mankind and the key to the meaning of history -- all this is so hard for the human mind to accept that even the Jews themselves were scandalized, while to the Greek philosophers and the secular historians it seemed sheer folly.

Nevertheless, these are the foundations of the Christian view of history, and if we cannot accept them it is useless to elaborate idealistic theories and call them a Christian philosophy of history, as has often been done in the past.

For the Christian view of history is not merely a belief in the direction of history by divine providence, it is a belief in the intervention by God in the life of mankind by direct action at certain definite points in time and place. The doctrine of the Incarnation which is the central doctrine of the Christian faith is also the centre of history, and thus it is natural and appropriate that our traditional Christian history is framed in a chronological system which takes the year of the Incarnation as its point of reference and reckons its annals backwards and forwards from this fixed centre.

No doubt it may be said that the idea of divine incarnation is

not peculiar to Christianity. But if we look at the typical examples [236] of these non-Christian theories of divine incarnation, such as the orthodox Hindu expression of it in the Bhagavad-gita, we shall see that it has no such significance for history as the Christian doctrine possesses. It is not only that the divine figure of Khrishna is mythical and unhistorical, it is that no divine incarnation is regarded as unique but as an example of a recurrent process which repeats itself again and again *ad infinitum* in the eternal recurrence of the cosmic cycle.

It was against such ideas as represented by the Gnostic theosophy that St. Irenaeus asserted the uniqueness of the Christian revelation and the necessary relation between the divine unity and the unity of history -- "that there is one Father the creator of Man and one Son who fulfils the Father's will and one human race in which the mysteries of God are worked out so that the creature conformed and incorporated with his son is brought to perfection."

For the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is not simply a theophany -- a revelation of God to Man; it is a new creation -- the introduction of a new spiritual principle which gradually leavens and transforms human nature into something new. The history of the human race hinges on this unique divine event which gives spiritual unity to the whole historic process. First there is the history of the Old Dispensation which is the story of the providential preparation of mankind for the Incarnation when "the fulness of time," to use St. Paul's expression, had come. Secondly there is the New Dispensation which is the working out of the Incarnation in the life of the Christian Church. And finally there is the realization of the divine purpose in the future: in the final establishment of the Kingdom of God when the harvest of this world is reaped. Thus the Christian conception of history is essentially unitary. It has a beginning, a centre, and an end. This beginning, this centre, and this end transcend history; they are not historical events in the ordinary sense of the word, but acts of divine creation to which the whole process of history is subordinate. For the Christian view of history is a vision of history *sub specie aeternitatis*, an interpretation of time in terms of eternity and of human events in the light of divine reve-

[237] lation. And thus Christian history is inevitably apocalyptic, and the apocalypse is the Christian substitute for the secular philosophies of history.

But this involves a revolutionary reversal and transposition of historical values and judgments. For the real meaning of history is not the apparent meaning that historians have studied and philosophers have attempted to explain. The world-transforming events which changed the whole course of human history have occurred as it were under the surface of history unnoticed by the historians and the philosophers. This is the great paradox of the gospel, as St. Paul asserts with such tremendous force. The great mystery of the divine purpose which has been hidden throughout the ages has now been manifested in the sight of heaven and earth by the apostolic ministry. Yet the world has not been able to accept it, because it has been announced by unknown insignificant men in a form which was unacceptable and incomprehensible to the higher culture of the age, alike Jewish and Hellenistic. The Greeks demand philosophical theories, the Jews demand historical proof. But the answer of Christianity is Christ crucified -- *verbum crucis* -- the story of the Cross: a scandal to the Jews and an absurdity to the Greeks. It is only when this tremendous paradox with its reversal of all hitherto accepted standards of judgment has been accepted that the meaning of human life and human history can be understood. For St. Paul does not of course mean to deny the value of understanding or to affirm that history is without a meaning. What he asserts is the mysterious and transcendent character of the true knowledge "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory which none of the rulers of this world know." [2] And in the same way he fully accepted the Jewish doctrine of a sacred history which would justify the ways of God to man. What he denied was an external justification by the manifest triumph of the Jewish national hope. The ways of God were deeper and more mysterious than that, so that the fulfilment of prophecy towards which the whole history of Israel had tended had been concealed from

2 Col. 2; cf . Eph. 3.

[238] Israel by the scandal of the Cross. Nevertheless the Christian

interpretation of history as we see it in the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers follows the pattern which had already been laid down in the Old Testament and in Jewish tradition.

There is, in the first place, a sacred history in the strict sense, that is to say, the story of God's dealings with his people and the fulfilment of his eternal purpose in and through them. And, in the second place, there is the interpretation of external history in the light of this central purpose. This took the form of a theory of successive world ages and successive world empires, each of which had a part to play in the divine drama. The theory of the world ages, which became incorporated in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition and was ultimately taken over by Christian apocalyptic, was not however Jewish in origin. It was widely diffused throughout the ancient world in Hellenistic times and probably goes back in origin to the tradition of Babylonian cosmology and astral theology. The theory of the world empires, on the other hand, is distinctively biblical in spirit and belongs to the central message of Hebrew prophecy. For the Divine Judgment which it was the mission of the prophets to declare was not confined to the chosen people. The rulers of the Gentiles were also the instruments of divine judgment, even though they did not understand the purposes that they served. Each of the world empires in turn had its divinely appointed task to perform, and when the task was finished their power came to an end and they gave place to their successors.

Thus the meaning of history was not to be found in the history of the world empires themselves. They were not ends but means, and the inner significance of history was to be found in the apparently insignificant development of the people of God. Now this prophetic view of history was taken over by the Christian Church and applied on a wider and universal scale. The divine event which had changed the course of history had also broken down the barrier between Jews and the Gentiles, and the two separated parts of humanity had been made one in Christ, the corner-stone of the new world edifice. The Christian attitude to secular history was indeed the same as that of the prophets; and [239] the Roman Empire was regarded as the successor of the old world empires, like Babylon and Persia. But now it was seen that the

Gentile world as well as the chosen people were being providentially guided towards a common spiritual end. And this end was no longer conceived as the restoration of Israel and the gathering of all the exiles from among the Gentiles. It was the gathering together of all the spiritually living elements throughout mankind into a new spiritual society. The Roman prophet Hennas in the second century describes the process in the vision of the white tower that was being built among the waters, by tens of thousands of men who were bringing stones dragged from the deep sea or collected from the twelve mountains which symbolize the different nations of the world. Some of these stones were rejected and some were chosen to be used for the building. And when he asks "concerning the times and whether the end is yet" he is answered: "Do you not see that the tower is still in process of building? When the building has been finished, the end comes."

This vision shows how Christianity transfers the meaning of history from the outer world of historic events to the inner world of spiritual change, and how the latter was conceived as the dynamic element in history and as a real world-transforming power. But it also shows how the primitive Christian sense of an imminent end led to a foreshortening of the time scale and distracted men's attention from the problem of the future destinies of human civilization. It was not until the time of the conversion of the Empire and the peace of the Church that Christians were able to make a distinction between the end of the age and the end of the world, and to envisage the prospect of a Christian age and civilization which was no millennial kingdom but a field of continual effort and conflict

This view of history found its classical expression in St. Augustine's work on *The City of God* which interprets the course of universal history as an unceasing conflict between two dynamic principles embodied in two societies and social orders the City of Man and the City of God, Babylon and Jerusalem, which run their course side by side, intermingling with one another and [240] sharing the same temporal goods and the same temporal evils, but separated from one another by an infinite spiritual gulf. Thus St. Augustine sees history as the meeting point of time and eternity.

History is a unity because the same divine power which shows itself in the order of nature from the stars down to the feathers of the bird and the leaves of the tree also governs the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires. But this divine order is continually being deflected by the downward gravitation of human nature to its own selfish ends a force which attempts to build its own world in those political structures that are the organized expression of human ambition and lust for power. This does not, however, mean that St. Augustine identifies the state as such with the *civitas terrena* and condemns it as essentially evil. On the contrary, he shows that its true end the maintaining of temporal peace is a good which is in agreement with the higher good of the City of God, so that the state in its true nature is not so much the expression of self-will and the lust for power as a necessary barrier which defends human society from being destroyed by these forces of destruction. It is only when war and not peace is made the end of the state that it becomes identified with the *civitas terrena* in the bad sense of the word. But we see only too well that the predatory state that lives by war and conquest is an historical reality, and St. Augustine's judgment on secular history is a predominantly pessimistic one which sees the kingdoms of this world as founded in injustice and extending themselves by war and oppression. The ideal of temporal peace which is inherent in the idea of the state is never strong enough to overcome the dynamic force of human self-will, and therefore the whole course of history *apart from divine grace* is the record of successive attempts to build towers of Babel which are frustrated by the inherent selfishness and greed of human nature.

The exception, however, is all-important. For the blind forces of instinct and human passion are not the only powers that rule the world. God has not abandoned his creation. He communicates to man, by the grace of Christ and the action of the Spirit, the spiritual power of divine love which alone is capable of transforming human nature. As the natural force of self-love draws [241] down the world to multiplicity and disorder and death, the supernatural power of the love of God draws it back to unity and order and life. And it is here that the true unity and significance of history is to be found. For love, in St. Augustine's theory, is the principle of society, and as the centrifugal and destructive power of

self-love creates the divided society of the *civitas terrena*, so the unitive and creative power of divine love creates the City of God, the society that unites all men of good will in an eternal fellowship which is progressively realized in the course of the ages.

Thus St. Augustine, more perhaps than any other Christian thinker, emphasizes the social character of the Christian doctrine of salvation. For "whence," he writes, "should the City of God originally begin or progressively develop or ultimately attain its end unless the life of the saints were a social one?"[3] But at the same time he makes the individual soul and not the state or the civilization the real centre of the historic process. Wherever the power of divine love moves the human will there the City of God is being built. Even the Church which is the visible sacramental organ of the City of God is not identical with it, since, as he writes, in God's foreknowledge there are many who seem to be outside who are within and many who seem to be within who are outside.[4] So there are those outside the communion of the Church "whom the Father, who sees in secret, crowns in secret." [5] For the two Cities interpenetrate one another in such a way and to such a degree that "the earthly kingdom exacts service from the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of heaven exacts service from the earthly city." [6]

It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of St. Augustine's thought on the development of the Christian view of history and on the whole tradition of Western historiography, which follows quite a different course from that of Eastern and Byzantine historiography. It is true that the modern reader who expects to find

3 *De Civ. Dei*, xix, V.

4 *De Bapt.*, V, 38.

5 *De Vera Religione*, vi, II.

6 *In Psalmos*, li, 4.

[242] in St. Augustine a philosophy of history in the modern sense, and who naturally turns to the historical portions of his great work, especially Books XV to XVIII, is apt to be grievously disappointed, like the late Professor Hearnshaw who wrote that the *De*

Civitate Dei contains neither philosophy nor history but merely theology and fiction. But though St. Augustine was never a Christian historian such as Eusebius, his work had a far more revolutionary effect on Western thought. In the first place, he impressed upon Christian historians his conception of history as a dynamic process in which the divine purpose is realized. Secondly, he made men realize the way in which the individual personality is the source and centre of this dynamic process. And finally, he made the Western Church conscious of its historical mission and its social and political responsibilities so that it became during the following centuries the active principle of Western culture.

The results of St. Augustine's work find full expression three centuries later in the Anglo-Saxon Church. Unlike St. Augustine, St. Bede was a true historian, but his history is built on the foundations that St. Augustine had laid, and thus we get the first history of a Christian people in the full sense of the word a history which is not primarily concerned with the rise and fall of kingdoms though these are not omitted; but with the rise of Christ's kingdom in England, the *gesta Dei per Anglos*. Of course Bede's great work can hardly be regarded as typical of mediaeval historiography. It was an exceptional, almost an unique, achievement. But at any rate his historical approach is typical, and, together with his other chronological works, it provided the pattern which was followed by the later historians of the Christian Middle Ages. It consists in the first place of a world chronicle of the Eusebian type which provided the chronological background on which the historian worked. Secondly there were the histories of particular peoples and Churches of which St. Bede's Ecclesiastical History is the classical example, and which is represented in later times by works like Adam of Bremen's *History of the Church of Hamburg* or Ordericus Vitalises' *Ecclesiastical History*. And thirdly there are the biographies of saints and bishops and abbots, like [243] Bede's life of St. Cuthbert and the lives of the abbots of Wearmouth.

In this way the recording of contemporary events in the typical mediaeval chronicle is linked up on the one hand with the tradition of world history and on the other with the lives of the great men who were the leaders and heroes of Christian society. But

the saint is not merely an historical figure; he has become a citizen of the eternal city, a celestial patron and protector of man's earthly life. So that in the lives of the saints we see history transcending itself and becoming part of the eternal world of faith.

Thus in mediaeval thought, time and eternity are far more closely bound up with one another than they were in classical antiquity or to the modern mind. The world of history was only a fraction of the real world and it was surrounded on every side by the eternal world like an island in the ocean. This mediaeval vision of a hierarchical universe in which the world of man occupies a small but central place finds classical expression in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. For this shows better than any purely historical or theological work how the world of history was conceived as passing into eternity and bearing eternal fruit.

And if on the one hand this seems to reduce the importance of history and of the present life, on the other hand it enhances their value by giving them an eternal significance. In fact there are few great poets who have been more concerned with history and even with politics than Dante was. What is happening in Florence and in Italy is a matter of profound concern, not only to the souls in Purgatory, but even to the damned in Hell and to the saints in Paradise, and the divine pageant in the Earthly Paradise which is the centre of the whole process is an apocalyptic vision of the judgment and the reformation of the Church and the Empire in the fourteenth century.

Dante's great poem seems to sum up the whole achievement of the Catholic Middle Ages and to represent a perfect literary counterpart to the philosophical synthesis of St. Thomas. But if we turn to his prose works the *Convivio* and the *De Monarchia* we see that his views on culture, and consequently on history, differ widely from those of St. Thomas and even more from those [244] of St. Augustine. Here for the first time in Christian thought we find the earthly and temporal city regarded as an autonomous order with its own supreme end, which is not the service of the Church but the realization of all the natural potentialities of human culture. The goal of civilization -- *finis universalis civitatis humani generis* -- can only be reached by a universal society and

this requires the political unification of humanity in a single world state. Now it is clear that Dante's ideal of the universal state is derived from the mediaeval conception of Christendom as a universal society and from the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire as formulated by Ghibelline lawyers and theorists. As Professor Gilson writes, "if the *genus humanum* of Dante is really the first known expression of the modern idea of Humanity, we may say that the conception of Humanity first presented itself to the European consciousness merely as a secularized imitation of the religious notion of a Church." [7]

But Dante's sources were not exclusively Christian. He was influenced most powerfully by the political and ethical ideals of Greek humanism, represented above all by Aristotle's Ethics and no less by the romantic idealization of the classical past and his devotion to ancient Rome. For Dante's view of the Empire is entirely opposed to that of St. Augustine. He regards it not as the work of human pride and ambition but as a holy city specially created and ordained by God as the instrument of his divine purpose for the human race. He even goes so far as to maintain in the *Convivio* that the citizens and statesmen of Rome were themselves holy, since they could not have achieved their purpose without a special infusion of divine grace.

In all this Dante looks forward to the Renaissance rather than back to the Middle Ages. But he carries with him so much of the Christian tradition that even his secularism and his humanism have a distinctively Christian character which make them utterly different from those of classical antiquity. And this may also be said of most of the writers and thinkers of the following century, for, as Karl Burdach has shown with so much learning, the whole

7 E. Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, p. 179,

[245] atmosphere of later mediaeval and early Renaissance culture was infused by a Christian idealism which had its roots in the thirteenth century and especially in the Franciscan movement. Thus the fourteenth century which saw the beginnings of the Italian Renaissance and the development of Western humanism was also the great century of Western mysticism; and this intensifica-

tion of the interior life with its emphasis on spiritual experience was not altogether unrelated to the growing self-consciousness of Western culture which found expression in the humanist movement. Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the humanist culture was not entirely divorced from this mystical tradition; both elements co-exist in the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa, in the culture of the Platonic Academy at Florence and in the art of Botticelli and finally in that of Michelangelo. But in his case we feel that this synthesis was only maintained by an heroic effort, and lesser men were forced to acquiesce in a division of life between two spiritual ideals that became increasingly divergent.

This idealization of classical antiquity which is already present in the thought of Dante developed still further with Petrarch and his contemporaries until it became the characteristic feature of Renaissance culture. It affected every aspect of Western thought, literary, scientific and philosophic. Above all, it changed the Western view of history and inaugurated a new type of historiography. The religious approach to history as the story of God's dealings with mankind and the fulfilment of the divine plan in the life of the Church was abandoned or left to the ecclesiastical historians, and there arose a new secular history modelled on Livy and Tacitus and a new type of historical biography influenced by Plutarch.

Thus the unity of the mediaeval conception of history was lost and in its place there gradually developed a new pattern of history which eventually took the form of a threefold division between the ancient, mediaeval and modern periods, a pattern which in spite of its arbitrary and unscientific character has dominated the teaching of history down to modern times and still affects our attitude to the past.

This new approach to history was one of the main factors in [246] the secularization of European culture, since the idealization of the ancient state and especially of republican Rome influenced men's attitude to the contemporary state. The Italian city state and the kingdoms of the West of Europe were no longer regarded as organic members of the Christian community, but as ends in themselves which acknowledged no higher sanction than the will

to power. During the Middle Ages the state as an autonomous self-sufficient power structure did not exist even its name was unknown. But from the fifteenth century onwards the history of Europe has been increasingly the history of the development of a limited number of sovereign states as independent power centres and of the ceaseless rivalry and conflict between them. The true nature of this development was disguised by the religious prestige which still surrounded the person of the ruler and which was actually increased during the age of the Reformation by the union of the Church with the state and its subordination to the royal supremacy.

Thus there is an inherent contradiction in the social development of modern culture. Inasmuch as the state was the creation and embodiment of the will to power, it was a Leviathan a sub-moral monster which lived by the law of the jungle. But at the same time it was the bearer of the cultural values which had been created by the Christian past, so that to its subjects it still seemed a Christian state and the vice-gerent of God on earth.

And the same contradiction appears in the European view of history. The realists like Machiavelli and Hobbes attempted to interpret history in non-moral terms as a straightforward expression of the will to power which could be studied in a scientific (quasi-biological) spirit. But by so doing they emptied the historical process of the moral values that still retained their subjective validity so that they outraged both the conscience and the conventions of their contemporaries. The idealists, on the other hand, ignored or minimized the sub-moral character of the state and idealized it as the instrument of divine providence or of that impersonal force which was gradually leading mankind onwards towards perfection.

It is easy to see how this belief in progress found acceptance [247] during the period of triumphant national and cultural expansion when Western Europe was acquiring a kind of world hegemony. But it is no less clear that it was not a purely rational construction, but that it was essentially nothing else but a secularized version of the traditional Christian view. It inherited from Christianity its belief in the unity of history and its faith in a spiritual or moral purpose which gives meaning to the whole historical process. At

the same time its transposition of these conceptions to a purely rational and secular theory of culture involved their drastic simplification. To the Christian the meaning of history was a mystery which was only revealed in the light of faith. But the apostles of the religion of progress denied the need for divine revelation and believed that man had only to follow the light of reason to discover the meaning of history in the law of progress which governs the life of civilization. But it was difficult even in the eighteenth century to make this facile optimism square with the facts of history. It was necessary to explain that hitherto the light of reason had been concealed by the dark forces of superstition and ignorance as embodied in organized religion. But in that case the enlightenment was nothing less than a new revelation, and in order that it might triumph it was necessary that the new believers should organize themselves in a new church whether it called itself a school of philosophers or a secret society of illuminati or freemasons or a political party. This was, in fact, what actually happened, and the new rationalist churches have proved no less intolerant and dogmatic than the religious sects of the past. The revelation of Rousseau was followed by a series of successive revelations --idealist, positivist and socialistic, with their prophets and their churches. Of these today only the Marxist revelation survives, thanks mainly to the superior efficiency of its ecclesiastical organization and apostolate. None of these secular religions has been more insistent on its purely scientific and non-religious character than Marxism. Yet none of them owes more to the Messianic elements in the Christian and Jewish historical traditions. Its doctrine is in fact essentially apocalyptic a denunciation of judgment against the existing social order and a message of salvation to the poor and the oppressed who will at last receive their [248] reward after the social revolution in the classless society, which is the Marxist equivalent of the millennial kingdom of righteousness.

No doubt the Communist will regard this as a caricature of the Marxist theory, since the social revolution and the coming of the classless society is the result of an inevitable economic and sociological process and its goal is not a spiritual but a material one. Nevertheless the cruder forms of Jewish and Christian millenarianism were not without a materialistic element since they en-

visaged an earthly kingdom in which the saints would enjoy temporal prosperity, while it is impossible to ignore the existence of a strong apocalyptic and Utopian element in the Communist attitude towards the social revolution and the establishment of a perfect society which will abolish class conflict and social injustice.

There is in fact a dualism between the Marxist myth, which is ethical and apocalyptic, and the Marxist interpretation of history, which is materialist, determinist and ethically relativistic. But it is from the first of these two elements that Communism has derived and still derives its popular appeal and its quasi-religious character which render it such a serious rival to Christianity. Yet it is difficult to reconcile the absolutism of the Marxist myth with the relativism of the Marxist interpretation of history. The Marxist believer stakes everything on the immediate realization of the social revolution and the proximate advent of the classless society. But when these have been realized, the class war which is the dialectical principle of historical change will have been suppressed and history itself comes to an end. In the same way there will no longer be any room for the moral indignation and the revolutionary idealism which have inspired Communism with a kind of religious enthusiasm. Nothing is left but an absolute and abject attitude of social conformism when the revolutionary protest of the minority becomes transformed into the irresistible tyranny of mass opinion which will not tolerate the smallest deviation from ideological orthodoxy. By the dialectic of history the movement of social revolution passes over into its totalitarian opposite, and the law of the negation finds its consummation.

[249] Thus, in comparison with the Christian view of history, the Marxist view is essentially a short-term one, the significance of which is concentrated on the economic changes which are affecting modern Western society. This accounts for its immediate effectiveness in the field of political propaganda, but at the same time it detracts from its value on the philosophical level as a theory of universal history. The Marxist doctrine first appeared about a century ago, and could not have arisen at any earlier time. Its field of prediction is limited to the immediate future, for Marx himself seems to have expected the downfall of capitalism to take

place in his own lifetime, and the leaders of the Russian revolution took a similar view. In any case the fulfilment of the whole Marxist programme is a matter of years, not of centuries, and Marxism seems to throw no light on the historical developments which will follow the establishment of the classless society.

The Christian view, on the other hand, is co-extensive with time. It covers the whole life of humanity on this planet and it ends only with the end of this world and of man's temporal existence. It is essentially a theory of the interpenetration of time and eternity: so that the essential meaning of history is to be found in the growth of the seed of eternity in the womb of time. For man is not merely a creature of the economic process a producer and a consumer. He is an animal that is conscious of his mortality and consequently aware of eternity. In the same way the end of history is not the development of a new form of economic society, but is the creation of a new humanity, or rather a higher humanity, which goes as far beyond man as man himself goes beyond the animals. Now Christians not only believe in the existence of a divine plan in history, they believe in the existence of a human society which is in some measure aware of this plan and capable of co-operating with it. Thousands of years ago the Hebrew prophet warned his people not to learn the ways of the nations who were dismayed at the signs of the times. For the nations were the servants of their own creatures the false gods who were the work of delusion and who must perish in the time of visitation. "But the portion of Jacob is not like these, for he that formed all things has made Israel to be the people of his inheritance" The [250] same thing is true today of the political myths and ideologies which modern man creates in order to explain the signs of the time. These are our modern idols which are no less bloodthirsty than the gods of the heathen and which demand an even greater tribute of human sacrifice. But the Church remains the guardian of the secret of history and the organ of the work of human redemption which goes on ceaselessly through the rise and fall of kingdoms and the revolutions of social systems. It is true that the Church has no immediate solution to offer in competition with those of the secular ideologies. On the other hand, the Christian solution is the only one which gives full weight to the unknown and unpredictable element in history; whereas the secular ideolo-

gies which attempt to eliminate this element, and which almost invariably take an optimistic view of the immediate future are inevitably disconcerted and disillusioned by the emergence of this unknown factor at the point at which they thought that it had been finally banished.

6. HISTORY AND THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

"History and the Christian Revelation,"
adapted from the first half of Chapter V of *Religion and the Modern State* (1935) and combined with portions of Chapter VII from the same volume; reprinted in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 251-261.

THE Christian interpretation of history is inseparable from the Christian faith. It is not a philosophic theory which has been elaborated by the intellectual effort of Christian scholars. It is an integral part of the Christian revelation; indeed that revelation is essentially an historic one, so that the most metaphysical of its dogmas are based upon historic facts and form part of that great dispensation of grace in which the whole temporal process of the life of humanity finds its end and meaning. In this respect Catholicism and Communism agree, in spite of the absolute contradiction that characterizes their several interpretations of history. For Communism is also an historic faith and the materialist interpretation of history is no less fundamental to Communism than is the spiritual interpretation of history to Christianity. The economic doctrines of Marxism are based on history to an almost greater extent than the theological doctrines of Catholicism; and a Socialism which professes Communism and Materialism without the historic doctrine of Marx has no more right to be called Marxism than a religion which accepts the ethical and theological teachings of Christianity while rejecting the historic elements of the faith has the right to the name of Catholicism.

In spite of this parallelism, however, no real comparison is possible between a theory deliberately constructed by an individual thinker as part of his economic system and a doctrine which is

older than history itself and which has developed organically with the greatest religious tradition of the world.

[252] For if we wish to find the roots of the Catholic interpretation of history, we must go back behind the Fathers, behind the New Testament, behind even the Hebrew prophets to the very foundation of the religion of Israel. It has its root in the the solemn *berith* or covenant by which at a particular point in time and space Israel became a *theophoric* nation, the People of Jahweh. To the rationalistic critic this strange ceremony which took place in the Arabian desert some 3,400 years ago cannot seem anything more than a somewhat abnormal instance of the primitive conception of the solidarity between the tribal god and his worshippers. To the Christian, however, it is nothing less than the first act in that marriage of God with humanity which was to be consummated in the Incarnation and to bear fruit in the creation of a new humanity. Even the critics, however, admit the unique character of the relations between Israel and its God. In the case of the other Semitic peoples this relation is a natural one and consists in the kinship of the people with its god. Only in the case of Israel is the relation an adoptive one that had its origin in a particular series of historical events.

And as the covenant of Jahweh had an historic origin, it also found an historic fulfilment. Only in so far as Israel fulfilled its theophoric mission could it enjoy its theophoric privileges. The misfortunes of Israel were the judgments of Jahweh and every historic crisis was a call for Israel to return to the laws of Jahweh and thus to renew the validity of the covenant. And in the writings of the prophets we see how the successive crises of Jewish history were the occasion of fresh revelations of the divine vocation of Israel and of the divine purpose in history. The vision of the prophets was no longer limited to the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel; it extended to the surrounding nations and the world empires that were eating them up. Even the kingdoms that were the enemies of the people of Jahweh were the instruments of Jahweh and had their part to play in working out his purpose. Assyria was the rod of his anger, which would be broken and cast aside when its work was done. And thus the judgment of Jahweh was no longer confined to the offences of Israel, it was a world judgment

against the injustice but above all against the pride of man.

[253]For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty and upon every one that is lifted up and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the great mountains and upon all the high hills, and upon every high tower and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish and upon all that is fair to behold. And the loftiness of man shall be brought down and the haughtiness of man shall be humbled: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.[1]

But through this denunciation of divine wrath, there is an increasing revelation of the hope of Israel. The new Jerusalem will not be a kingdom like the kingdoms of the Gentiles, but an eternal and universal one, founded on a new spiritual covenant. Israel was destined to be a theophoric people in a fuller sense than when it received the law of Jahweh at Sinai. It was to be the vehicle of divine revelation to the world.

This Jewish interpretation of history finds its most systematic expression in the book of Daniel which formed a model for the later apocalyptic literature. It no longer takes the form of isolated prophecies and denunciations of particular judgments, but of a synthetic view of world history as seen in the series of world empires which occupy "the latter times." Each empire has its allotted time and when "the sentence of the watchers" has gone forth its kingdom is numbered and finished. And at the same time the transcendent character of the Messianic hope is brought out more clearly than before. The Kingdom of God does not belong to the series of the world empires, it is something that comes in from outside and replaces them. It is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that crushes the fourfold image of world empire to powder and grows till it fills the whole world. It is the universal kingdom of the Son of Man which will destroy the Kingdoms of the four beasts and will endure for ever.

This is the tradition that was inherited by the Christian Church. Indeed it may be said that it was precisely this prophetic and apocalyptic element in Judaism to which Christianity ap-

pealed. To the modern Protestant the essence of the Gospel is to [254] be found in its moral teaching: its doctrine of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, But to the primitive Christian it was in the literal sense the Good News of the Kingdom. It was the announcement of a cosmic revolution, the beginning of a new world order: the dispensation of the fullness of the times to re-establish all things in Christ.

In order to understand the resultant attitude to history we must study the Apocalypse, which is at once the culmination of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition and the first Christian interpretation of history. It is marked by an historical dualism of the most uncompromising kind, which even accentuates the contrast between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men which we find already in the prophets and in the book of Daniel. The city of God is not built up on earth by the preaching of the Gospel and the labour of the saints: it descends from God out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband. But before it comes the mystery of iniquity must fulfil itself on earth and the harvest of human power and pride must be reaped. This is the significance of the judgment of Babylon, which appears in the Apocalypse not as a conquering military power as in the earlier prophets, but as the embodiment of material civilization and luxury, the great harlot, whose charms bewitch all the nations of the earth; the world market whose trade enriches the merchants and the shipowners. At first sight there may seem little in common between all this lurid apocalyptic imagery and the teaching of the Gospels. Nevertheless the same fundamental conceptions underlie both of them. The dualism of the Kingdom and the World in the Gospels and the Epistles is no less uncompromising than that of the two apocalyptic cities. This is especially so in the case of the fourth Gospel with its insistence on the enmity of the World as the necessary condition for the children of the Kingdom. "I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me." And again -- "The prince of this world cometh and in me he has not anything." [2]

So too the supernatural and catastrophic character of the coming [255] of the Kingdom is insisted on in the Synoptic Gospels no less than in the Apocalypse. There also, in what may be called the apocalypse of Jesus, we find the same prophecies of coming woe

and the same conception of a world crisis which is due to the ripening of the harvest of evil rather than the progress of the forces of good. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate and drank, they married and gave in marriage until the day when Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all." [3]

It does not follow, however, that the faithful are powerless to affect the course of events. It is their resistance that breaks the power of the world. The prayers of the saints and the blood of the martyrs, so to speak, force the hand of God and hasten the coming of the Kingdom. If the unjust judge listens to the importunity of the widow, will not God much more avenge his elect who cry to him night and day?

These are the foundations of the Christian view of history as it has been incorporated in the Catholic tradition. It is true that it seems at first sight a doctrine of the end of history which leaves no room for future development. As Newman writes, history seemed to have changed its direction with the coming of Christ. It no longer runs straight forward, but is, as it were, continually verging on eternity. "The Jews had a grant of this world: they had entered the vineyard in the morning; they had time before them; they might reckon on the future. . . . But it is otherwise with us. Earth and sky are ever failing; Christ is ever coming; Christians are ever lifting up their heads and looking out, and therefore it is the evening." Nevertheless "the evening is long and the day was short." "This last age though ever-failing has lasted longer than the ages before it, and Christians have more time for a greater work than if they had been hired in the morning." [4]

This was the great problem before the ancient church, and on its solution the Catholic interpretation of history depends. The milleniarists solved it in one way by a literalist interpretation of [256] the Apocalyptic traditions, the Gnostics and the Origenists solved it in another way by eliminating history altogether in the interests of metaphysics and substituting theosophy for apocalyptic.

But the Catholic solution which found its classical expression

in St. Augustine retained the Hebrew sense of the significance and uniqueness of history, while rejecting the literalism and materialism of the extreme millennialists and adopting the spiritual interpretation of the Greek theologians. The conflict between the Church and the Roman Empire was not the last act in the world drama; it was but one chapter of a long history in which the opposition and tension between the two social principles represented by the Church and the World would repeat themselves successively in new forms.

History was no longer a mere unintelligible chaos of disconnected events. It had found in the Incarnation a centre which gave it significance and order. Viewed from this centre the history of humanity became an organic unity. Eternity had entered into time and henceforward the singular and the temporal had acquired an eternal significance. The closed circle of time had been broken and a ladder had been let down from heaven to earth by which mankind can escape from the "sorrowful wheel" which had cast its shadow over Greek and Indian thought, and go forward in newness of life to a new world.

Thus the Catholic interpretation of history differs from any other in its combination of universalism with a sense of the uniqueness and irreversibility of the historic process. Its rejection of millennialism frees it from the short views and the narrow fanaticisms of the sectarian tradition, as well as from the provincialism and partiality of the national historian who is a part of the political unit of which he writes. But the Catholic historian is the heir of a universal tradition. As Orosius writes, "Everywhere is my country, everywhere my law and my religion. . . . The breadth of the east, the fullness of the north, the extent of the south and the islands of the west are the wide and secure home of my citizenship, for it is as a Roman and a Christian that I address Christians and Romans."

[257] And on the other hand the Catholic interpretation of history no less avoids the false universalism of the rationalist historians who insist on the fundamental identity of human nature in all circumstances; and who believe, like Hume, that the object of history is "only to discover the constant and universal principles

of human nature by showing men in all variety of circumstances and situations." "The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events always follow from the same causes."[5]

But the Catholic interpretation of history preserves the prophetic and apocalyptic sense of mystery and divine judgment. Behind the rational sequence of political and economic cause and effect, hidden spiritual forces are at work which confer on events a wholly new significance. The real meaning of history is something entirely different from that which the human actors in the historical drama themselves believe or intend. For example, to a contemporary "scientific" historian the rise of the world empires in the Near East from the 8th to the 6th centuries B.C. would have seemed the only historical reality. He could not have even imagined that 2,000 years later all this drama of world history would only be remembered in so far as it affected the spiritual fortunes of one of the smallest and least materially civilized of the subject peoples. And in the same way what contemporary observer could have imagined that the execution of an obscure Jewish religious leader in the first century of the Roman Empire would affect the lives and thoughts of millions who never heard the names of the great statesmen and generals of the age?

It is this mysterious and unpredictable aspect of history which is the great stumbling block to the rationalist. He is always looking for neat systems of laws and causal sequences from which history can be automatically deduced. But history is impatient of all such artificial constructions. It is at once aristocratic and revolutionary. It allows the whole world situation to be suddenly transformed by the action of a single individual like Mohammed or Alexander. No doubt the situation in each case was ripe for change, but it would not have changed in that particular way without the intervention of that particular individual. If Alexander had turned his eyes to the West instead of to Persia, the course of world history would have been altered. There would have been no Roman Empire and consequently either no Europe or else a different Europe and a different modern civilization.

Now the Catholic interpretation, on the other hand, finds no difficulty in accepting the arbitrary and unpredictable character

of historical change, since it sees everywhere the signs of a divine purpose and election. The will of God chooses a barbarous Semitic tribe and makes of it the vehicle of his purposes towards humanity. Nor is the divine choice determined by human merit or by the internal logic of events. "Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias but unto none of them was Elias sent save unto Sarepta of Sidon to a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian." The house of the world seems closed and guarded; its masters have no rivals left to fear. But suddenly the wind of the spirit blows and everything is changed. No age has ever been able to foresee the age to come. The Augustan age could not have foretold the triumph of Christianity, nor the Byzantine age the coming of Islam. Even in our own generation, the best political observer of twenty years ago never guessed the possibility of the destruction of Parliamentarism in Central Europe by the advent of Fascism. But while all this is a scandal and reproach to historical rationalism, it offers no difficulties to the Catholic who lives in the presence of mysteries and who knows that "the way of man is not in himself."

To the ordinary educated man looking out on the world in A.D. 33 the execution of Sejanus must have appeared much more important than the crucifixion of Jesus, and the attempts of the Government to solve the economic crisis by a policy of free credit to producers must have seemed far more promising than the doings of the obscure group of Jewish fanatics in an upper chamber at Jerusalem. Nevertheless there is no doubt today which was the most important and which availed most to alter the lot of humanity. All that Roman world with its power and wealth and culture and corruption sank into blood and ruin -- the [259] flood came and destroyed them all -- but the other world, the world of apostles and martyrs, the inheritance of the poor, survived the downfall of ancient civilization and became the spiritual foundation of a new order.

Christianity literally called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. It did not attempt to reform the world, in the sense of the social idealist. It did not start an agitation for the abolition of slavery, or for peace with Parthia. It did

not support the claims of the Jews to national self-determination, or the Stoic propaganda for an ideal world state. It left Caesar on his throne and Pilate and Gallio on their judgment seats and went its own way to the new world.

The Christian solution was a fundamentally different one from that of social idealism. And this was not simply due to the fact that the world of the first century A.D. was not yet ripe for idealism. On the contrary, it had to meet the rivalry of the social millennialism of the Jews, which was more intense, because it was more genuinely religious than the social millennialism of modern socialism; and on the other hand it had to meet the humanitarian idealism of Hellenism, which was even more rational and even more humane than any form of modern idealism. Christianity refused each of these alternatives, it offered men the answer of the Cross -- to the Jews a scandal and to the Greeks foolishness, just as today it is a scandal to the secular reformer and foolishness to the rational idealist. In the life of Christ the power of the world -- the "torrent of human custom" -- at last met with another power which it could neither overcome nor circumvent, -- the irresistible power met the immovable obstacle, and the result was the tragedy of the Cross, a tragedy which seemed at first sight to manifest the triumph of the forces of evil and the victory of the flesh over the spirit, but which was in reality the turning point in the history of humanity and the starting point of a new order.

Not that this new order was itself the new world to which Christianity had looked. Christendom is not Christianity. It is not the City of God and the Kingdom of Christ. Humanity remains much the same as it has always been. To quote Newman:

[260] The state of great cities now is not so very different from what it was of old; at least not so different as to show that the main work of Christianity has lain with the face of society, or what is called the world. Again the highest class in the community and the lowest are not so different from what they would be respectively without the knowledge of the Gospel as to allow it to be said that Christianity has succeeded with the world as the world in its several ranks and classes.[6]

In reality no age has the right to call itself Christian in an absolute sense: all stand under the same condemnation. The one merit of a relatively Christian age or culture -- and it is no small one -- is that it recognizes its spiritual indigence and stands open to God and the spiritual world; while the age or culture that is thoroughly non-Christian is closed to God and prides itself on its own progress to perfection. No doubt there is a real leaven of spiritual progress at work in mankind and the life of the world to come is already stirring in the womb of the present. But the progress of the new world is an invisible one and its results can only be fully seen at the end of time. Apparent success often means spiritual failure, and the way of failure and suffering is the royal road of Christian progress. Wherever the Church has seemed to dominate the world politically and achieves a victory within the secular sphere, she has had to pay for it in a double measure of temporal and spiritual misfortune. Thus the triumph of the Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire was followed first by the loss of the East to Islam and then by the schism with the West. The mediaeval attempt to create a Christian theocracy was followed by the Reformation and the destruction of the religious unity of Western Europe, while the attempt that was made both by the Puritans and by the monarchies of the Counter-Reformation to dragoon society into orthodoxy and piety was followed by the incredulity and anticlericalism of the eighteenth century and the secularization of European culture.

It is necessary that Christians should remember that it is not the business of the Church to do the same thing as the State to build a Kingdom like the other kingdoms of men, only better; nor [261] to create a reign of earthly peace and justice. The Church exists to be the light of the world, and if it fulfills its function, the world is transformed in spite of all the obstacles that human powers place in the way. A secularist culture can only exist, so to speak, in the dark. It is a prison in which the human spirit confines itself when it is shut out of the wider world of reality. But as soon as the light comes, all the elaborate mechanism that has been constructed for living in the dark becomes useless. The recovery of spiritual vision gives man back his spiritual freedom. And hence the freedom of the Church is in the faith of the Church and the freedom of man is in the knowledge of God.

- 1 Isaiah 2, 12-17.
- 2 John 17, 9; 14, 30.
- 3 Luke 17, 7
- 4 *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, 10.
- 5 *Enquiry*, pp. 84 *et seq.*
- 6 *Parochial Sermons* (1st ed.), iv, pp. 175-176.

7. CHRISTIANITY AND CONTRADICTION IN HISTORY

"Christianity and Contradiction in History,"
a condensed version of Chapter V of *Beyond Politics* (1939),
"Christianity and Politics," reprinted in *Dynamics of World History*
(1958), pp. 262-269.

Is history a reasonable process or is it essentially incalculable and irrational? It seems to me that the Christian is bound to believe that there is a spiritual purpose in history -- that it is subject to the designs of Providence and that somehow or other God's will is done. But that is a very different thing from saying that history is rational in the ordinary sense of the word. There are, as it were, two levels of rationality, and history belongs to neither of them. There is the sphere of completely rationalized human action -- the kind of rationality that we get in a balance sheet or in the plans and specifications of an architect or an engineer. And there is the higher sphere of rationality to which the human mind attains, but which is not created by it -- the high realities of philosophy and abstract truth.

But between these two realms there is a great intermediate region in which we live, the middle earth of life and history; and that world is submitted to forces which are both higher and lower than reason. There are forces of nature in the strict sense and there are higher forces of spiritual good and evil which we cannot measure. Human life is essentially a warfare against unknown powers -- not merely against flesh and blood, which are themselves irrational enough, but against principalities and powers, against "the Cosmocrats of the Dark Aeon," to use St. Paul's strange and

disturbing expression; powers which are more than rational and [263] which make use of lower things, things below reason, in order to conquer and rule the world of man.

Of course if we were pure spirits, the whole process of history and human life might be intelligible and spiritually transparent. We should be like a man in calm weather on a clear tropical lagoon who can look down and see the lower forms of life in their infinite variety and the powers of evil like the sharks that move silently and powerfully through the clear water, and who can also look up and see the ordered march of the stars.

But this is not given to man. The actor in history is like the captain who sees nothing but clouds above and waves below, who is driven by the wind and the current. He must trust in his chart and his compass, and even these cannot deliver him from the blind violence of the elements. If he makes a mistake, or if the chart fails him, he dies in a blind flurry of dark water and with him the crew who have no responsibility except to obey orders and to trust their officers.

It is true that the theologian and the philosopher aspire to the spiritual state but they only attain to it partially and momentarily; for the rest of their lives, outside their science, they belong to the world of other men. But the politician and the man of action are like the sailor, and the State is like the ship which may be wrecked by an error of a single man; and it makes no difference if it is a democracy or a dictatorship, just as it makes no difference whether the ship is sailed by the owner or whether the captain is chosen by the officers and the officers by the crew.

It seems the very nature of history that individuals and apparently fortuitous events have an incalculable effect upon the fortunes of the whole society. As Burke wrote: "It is often impossible to find any proportion between the apparent force of any moral cause or any assigned, and their known operation. We are therefore obliged to deliver up their operation to mere chance, or more piously (perhaps more rationally) to the occasional interposition and the irresistible hand of the Great Disposer. The death of a man at a critical juncture, his disgust, his retreat, his disgrace,

have brought innumerable calamities on a whole nation. A com-[264] mon soldier, a child, a girl at the door of an inn have changed the face of the future and almost of Nature."[1]

This has always been so, but it is seen in the most striking way when it comes to a question of moralizing politics or realizing social ideals in practice. It is here that we see most clearly and tragically the contradiction between human aims and historical results and the way in which fate seems to bring so much that is best in social endeavour to sterility or to disaster. Take two examples from the period of modern history connected with the French Revolution. First frustration of social idealism. The great Revolution a hundred and fifty years ago was a deliberate attempt to moralize political relations and to create a new order based on moral principles which would vindicate the human rights of every individual whatever his economic or social position. Under the guidance of men who believed most wholeheartedly in these ideals, it led nevertheless to as complete a subversion and denial of those rights as it is possible to conceive. It led to the denial of freedom of conscience and freedom of opinion; it led to terrorism and wholesale judicial murder, until every man of principles, whatever his principles were, had been exterminated or outlawed, and society returned with gratitude and relief to the absolute dictatorship of an unscrupulous military despot. For Bonaparte appeared to his contemporaries as an angel of light in comparison with the idealists and social reformers who, instead of creating a Utopia, had made a hell on earth.

In the second place, to take an example from the opposite side, there is the case of the war in La Vendee which brings up both the question of the just war and that of the conscientious objector. The men of La Vendee had every justification for their resistance to the revolutionary government, since it had clearly violated the rights of freedom of opinion and religious liberty that were laid down in the constitution, and since the latter expressly admitted the right of the citizen to resist the government in such cases. The actual occasion of the rising was moreover the question of military service in defence of the revolution against

1 *Letters on the Regicide Peace*, ed. E. J. Payne, p. 6.

[265] which the men of La Vendee had a direct and simple conscientious objection. Hence the war in La Vendee was at once a just war if ever there was one and a case of spontaneous popular resistance to compulsory service in what they considered an unjust war.

Yet what was the result? Instead of sending 12,000 conscripts to the army, of whom a small proportion would have been killed or wounded, the whole population was involved in the most desperate struggle that any people ever experienced: a struggle which is said to have cost nearly a quarter of a million lives, which caused practically every town and village and farm to be destroyed, and which contributed largely, if indirectly, to the horrors of the Reign of Terror in the rest of France. And so their desire to keep out of a war they did not approve of caused another war of a far more atrocious kind, and their determination to vindicate their just rights led to every kind of injustice and cruelty.

These are extreme instances, but all through history we find plentiful evidence of the same non-moral and irrational tendency which causes idealists and humanitarians to despair. And at the present day humanitarianism and moral idealism have become so much a part of our tradition that Christians often unconsciously or even consciously accept the same point of view and are tempted to despair by the failure of Christian ideals to work out in practice.

Actually, however, Christianity has never accepted these postulates, and the Christian ought to be the last person in the world to lose hope in the presence of the failure of the right and the apparent triumph of evil. For all this forms part of the Christian view of life, and the Christian discipline is expressly designed to prepare us to face such a situation.

Christianity, to a far greater degree than any other religion, is a historical religion and it is knit up inseparably with the living process of history. Christianity teaches the existence of a divine progress in history which will be realized through the Church in the Kingdom of God. But at the same time it recognizes the es-

stantial duality of the historical process -- the co-existence of two opposing principles, each of which works and finds concrete social expression in history. Thus we have no right to expect that Christian principles will work in practice in the simple way that a political system may work. The Christian order is a supernatural order. It has its own principles and its own laws which are not those of the visible world and which may often seem to contradict them. Its victories may be found in apparent defeat and its defeats in material success.

We see the whole thing manifested clearly and perfectly once and once only, i.e. in the life of Jesus, which is the pattern of the Christian life and the model of Christian action. The life of Jesus is profoundly historical; it is the culminating point of thousands of years of living historical tradition. It is the fulfilment of a historical purpose, towards which priests and prophets and even politicians had worked, and in which the hope of a nation and a race was embodied. Yet, from the worldly point of view, from the standpoint of a contemporary secular historian, it was not only unimportant, but actually invisible. Here was a Galilean peasant who for thirty years lived a life so obscure as to be unknown even to the disciples who accepted his mission. Then there followed a brief period of public action, which did not lead to any kind of historical achievement but moved swiftly and irresistibly towards its catastrophic end, an end that was foreseen and deliberately accepted.

And out of the heart of this catastrophe there arose something completely new, which even in its success was a deception to the very people and the very race that had staked their hopes on it. For after Pentecost after the outpouring of the Spirit and the birth of the infant Church there was an event as unforeseen and inexplicable as the Incarnation itself, the conversion of a Cilician Jew, who turned away from his traditions and from his own people so that he seemed a traitor to his race and his religion. So that ultimately the fulfilment of the hope of Israel meant the rejection of Israel and the creation of a new community which was eventually to become the State religion of the Roman Empire which had been the enemy of Jew and Christian alike.

If you look on all this without faith, from the rationalist point [267]of view, it becomes no easier to understand. On the contrary it becomes even more inexplicable; *credo quia incredibile*.

Now the life of Christ is the life of the Christian and the life of the Church. It is absurd for a Christian who is a weak human vehicle of this world-changing force to expect a quiet life. A Christian is like a red rag to a bull -- to the force of evil that seeks to be master of the world and which, in a limited sense, but in a very real sense, is, as St. John says, the Lord of this world. And not only the individual but the Church as an historic community follows the same pattern and finds its success and failure not where the politician finds them, but where Christ found them.

The Church lives again the life of Christ. It has its period of obscurity and growth and its period of manifestation, and this is followed by the catastrophe of the Cross and the new birth that springs from failure. And what is most remarkable is that the enemies of the Church -- the movements that rend and crucify her -- are in a sense her own offspring and derive their dynamic force from her. Islam, the Protestant Reformation, the Liberal Revolution, none of them would have existed apart from Christianity -- they are abortive or partial manifestations of the spiritual power which Christianity has brought into history. "I have come to cast fire on the earth and what will I, but that it be kindled."

It is easy to give way to the dominant tendency to surrender to the spirit of the age and the spirit of the world by shutting our eyes to the errors of public opinion and the evils and injustice of popular action; it is the same temptation which in the past made religious men flatter the pride of the great and overlook the injustice of the powerful. But it is also easy, and it is a more insidious temptation, to adopt an attitude of negative hostility to the spirit of the age and to take refuge in a narrow and exclusive fanaticism which is essentially the attitude of the heretic and the sectarian and which does more to discredit Christianity and render it ineffective than even worldliness and time-serving. For the latter are, so to speak, external to the Church's life, whereas the former poisons the sources of its spiritual action and causes

it to appear hateful in the eyes of men of good will.

[268] It is the nature of heresy to sacrifice Catholic truth and Christian unity by concentrating its attention on the immediate solution of some pressing contemporary problem of Christian thought or action. The heretic goes astray by attempting to take a short cut, owing to a natural human impatience at the apparent slowness and difficulty of the way of pure faith.

But the Church also has to take the difficult way of the Cross, to incur the penalties and humiliations of earthly failure without any compensating hope of temporal success. She is not an alternative and a rival to the State, and her teaching does not take the place of political needs and ideologies; yet she cannot disinterest herself in the corporate life of the community and confine her attentions to the individual soul. The Church is no human society, but she is the channel by which divine life flows into human society and her essential task is the sanctification of humanity as a whole in its corporate as well as in its individual activities.

Human society today is in a state of rapid change. The life is going out of the old political and juridical forms and a new community is being created whose appearance marks a new epoch in history. It is not the Church's business to stop this great social change, and she could not if she would, but neither can she abdicate her essential mission, which remains the same in the new circumstances as of old. The new social forms offer new opportunities -- new openings for the action of grace.

We are perhaps too much inclined to look to authority to lay down beforehand a programme of action when the initiative must come in the first place from the spontaneous personal reaction of individuals to the circumstances of the moment. Even in the natural sphere the statesmen and organizers of this world do not know what is going to happen from one day to another. But whereas this obscurity and incalculability is inevitably a source of discouragement to the statesman, whose whole business is to achieve temporal success, it should be of no great importance to the Christian who sees the end of history as dawn and not as

night.

When Our Lord spoke of the future He gave His disciples no [269] optimistic hopes, no visions of social progress; He described all the things that we are afraid of today and more -- wars, persecutions, disasters and the distress of nations. But strange to say He used this forecast of calamity as a motive for hope. "When you see these things," He said, "look up and lift up your heads for your redemption is at hand."

That may seem a strange philosophy of history, but it is the authentic philosophy of Christ, and if the prospect of these things causes us to hang down our heads instead of lifting them up, it shows that there is something wrong with our point of view. I know we are apt to feel this does not apply to us -- that it merely refers to the end of the world. But to the Christian the world is always ending, and every historical crisis is, as it were, a rehearsal for the real thing.

8. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HISTORY

"The Kingdom of God and History,"

from the symposium *The Kingdom of God and History*, edited by H. G. Woods et al.; Vol. 3 of *Official Oxford Conference Books*, published in England by Allen & Unwin (1938) and in the United States by Willette, Clark & Co; reprinted in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 262-286.

THE development of a historical sense -- a distinct consciousness of the essential characteristics of different ages and civilizations -- is a relatively recent achievement; in fact it hardly existed before the nineteenth century. It is above all the product of the Romantic movement which first taught men to respect the diversity of human life, and to regard culture not as an abstract ideal but as the vital product of an organic social tradition. No doubt, as Nietzsche pointed out, the acquisition of this sixth sense is not all pure gain, since it involves the loss of that noble self-sufficiency and maturity in which the great ages of civilization

culminate -- "the moment of smooth sea and halcyon self-sufficiency, the goldenness and coldness which all things show that have perfected themselves." It was rendered possible only by the "democratic mingling of classes and races" which is characteristic of modern European civilization. "Owing to this mingling the past of every form and mode of life and of cultures which were formerly juxtaposed with or superimposed on one another flow forth into us," so that "we have secret access above all to the labyrinth of imperfect civilizations and to every form of semi-barbarity that has at any time existed on earth." [1]

Yet it is impossible to believe that the vast widening of the range and scope of consciousness that the historical sense has brought to the human race is an ignoble thing, as Nietzsche would have us believe. It is as though man had at last climbed [271] from the desert and the forest and the fertile plain onto the bare mountain slopes whence he can look back and see the course of his journey and the whole extent of his kingdom. And to the Christian, at least, this widening vision and these far horizons should bring not doubt and disillusionment, but a firmer faith in the divine power that has guided him and a stronger desire for the divine kingdom which is the journey's end.

It is in fact through Christianity above all that man first acquired that sense of a unity and a purpose in history without which the spectacle of the unending change becomes meaningless and oppressive.

"The rational soul," writes Marcus Aurelius, "traverses the whole universe and the surrounding void, and surveys its form, and it extends itself with the infinity of time and embraces and comprehends the periodical revolutions of all things, and it comprehends that those who come after us will see nothing new, nor have those before us seen anything more, but in a manner he who is forty years old, if he has any understanding at all, has seen by virtue of the uniformity that prevails all things that have been or that will be." [2]

This denial of the significance of history is the rule rather than the exception among philosophers and religious teachers through-

out the ages from India to Greece and from China to Northern Europe. Even Nietzsche, who grew up in the tradition of the modern historical movement and himself possessed so delicate and profound a historical sense, could not escape the terrifying vision of The Return of All Things, even though it seemed to nullify his own evolutionary gospel of the superman. "Behold," he wrote, "this moment. Two roads meet here and none has ever reached their end. . . ." "From this gateway a long eternal road runs back: behind us lies an eternity. Must not all things that can run have run this road? Must not all that can happen have already happened, have already been done and passed through? And if all has already been, what ... of this moment? Must not this gateway also have been before? And are not all [272] things knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all that is to come, and therefore also itself? For all that can run -- even in this long road behind, must run it yet again.

"And this slow spider that crawls in the moonlight and this moonlight itself, and you and I whispering together in the gateway, must we not all have been before?

"And must we not come again and run that other long road before us --that long shadowy road -- must we not return eternally?"[3]

As St. Augustine said,[4] it is only by Christ the Straight Way that we are delivered from the nightmare of these eternal cycles which seem to exercise a strange fascination over the human mind in any age and clime.

Nevertheless, Christianity does not itself create the historical sense. It only supplies the metaphysical and theological setting for history and an attempt to create a theory of history from the data of revealed truth alone will give us not a history but a theodicy like St. Augustine's *City of God* or the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius. The modern historical consciousness is the fruit of Christian tradition and Christian culture but not of these alone. It also owes much to humanism, which taught the European mind to study the achievements of ancient civilization and to value human nature for its own sake. And it was the con-

tact and conflict of these two traditions and ideals -- Christianity and humanism -- classical and mediaeval culture -- that found expression in the Romantic movement in which the modern historical sense first attained full consciousness. For it was only then and thus that the human mind realized that a culture forms an organic unity, with its own social traditions and its own spiritual ideals, and that consequently we cannot understand the past by applying the standards and values of our own age and civilization to it, but only by relating historical facts to the social tradition to which they belong and by using the spiritual beliefs and the moral and intellectual values of that tradition as the key to their interpretation.

[273] Hence the essence of history is not to be found in facts but in traditions. The pure fact is not as such historical. It only becomes historical when it can be brought into relation with a social tradition so that it is seen as part of an organic whole. A visitor from another planet who witnessed the Battle of Hastings would possess far greater knowledge of the facts than any modern historian, yet this knowledge would not be historical for lack of any tradition to which it could be related; whereas the child who says "William the Conqueror 1066" has already made his atom of knowledge an historical fact by relating it to a national tradition and placing it in the time-series of Christian culture.

Wherever a social tradition exists, however small and unimportant may be the society which is its vehicle, the possibility of history exists. It is true that many societies fail to realize this possibility, or realize it only in an unscientific or legendary form, but on the other hand this legendary element is never entirely absent from social tradition, and even the most civilized society has its national legend or myth, of which the scientific historian is often an unconscious apologist. No doubt it is the ideal of the modern historian to transcend the tradition of his own society and to see history as one and universal, but in fact such a universal history does not exist. There is as yet no history of humanity, since humanity is not an organized society with a common tradition or a common social consciousness. All the attempts that have hitherto been made to write a world history have been in fact attempts to interpret one tradition in terms of another,

attempts to extend the intellectual hegemony of a dominant culture by subordinating to it all the events of other cultures that come within the observer's range of vision. The more learned and conscientious a historian is, the more conscious he is of the relativity of his own knowledge, and the more ready he is to treat the culture that he is studying as an end in itself, an autonomous world which follows its own laws and owes no allegiance to the standards and ideals of another civilization. For history deals with civilizations and cultures rather than civilization, with the development of particular societies and not with the progress of humanity.

[274] Consequently if we rely on history alone we can never hope to transcend the sphere of relativity; it is only in religion and metaphysics that we can find truths that claim absolute and eternal validity. But as we have said, non-Christian and pre-Christian philosophy tend to solve the problem of history by a radical denial of its significance.

The world of true Being which is man's spiritual home is the world that knows no change. The world of time and change is the material world from which man must escape if he would be saved. For all the works of men and the rise and fall of kingdoms are but the fruits of ignorance and lust -- *mala vitae cupido* -- and even the masters of the world must recognize in the end the vanity of their labours like the great Shogun Hideyoshi who wrote on his deathbed:

Alas, as the grass I fade
As the dew I vanish
Even Osaka Castle
Is a dream within a dream.

Yet even the religion that denies the significance of history is itself a part of history and it can only survive in so far as it embodies itself in a social tradition and thus "makes history" The spiritual experience from which a religion receives its initial impetus -- like the contemplation of Buddha under the Bo tree or Mohammed's vision in the cavern on Mt. Hira -- may seem as completely divested of historical and social reference as any

human experience can be. Yet as soon as the teacher comes down among men and his followers begin to put his teachings into practice a tradition is formed which comes into contact with other social traditions and embraces them or is absorbed by them, until its very nature seems to be changed by this chemistry of history. Thus we see Buddhism passing from India to Central Asia and China, and from China to Korea and Japan and again to Ceylon and Burma and Siam. We see it taking different forms in different cultures and at the same time changing the cultures themselves, while all the while the religion itself ignores historical [275] change and remains with its gaze averted from life, absorbed in the contemplation of Nirvana.

Now at first sight it may seem that this is true of Christianity; that it also has been absorbed against its will in the stream while its attention has been concentrated on eternal truths and its hopes fixed on eternal life. It is easy to find examples in Christianity of world flight and world denial no less extreme than that of the Indian sannyasi: the fathers of the desert, St. Simeon on his pillar, Thomas Kempis in his cell and the countless pious Christians of every age and country who have regarded this life as an exile in the vale of tears and have oriented their whole existence towards death and immortality. In fact the current criticism of Christianity is based on this conception and the communist sneer about "pie in the sky when you die" is merely a crude and malicious statement of what has always been an essential element of the Christian faith and one which is nowhere more prominent than in the gospel itself.

Nevertheless this is only one side of the Christian view of life, for Christianity has always possessed an organic relation to history which distinguishes it from the great Oriental religions and philosophies. Christianity can never ignore history because the Christian revelation is essentially historical and the truths of faith are inseparably connected with historical events. The Sacred Scriptures of our religion are not made up of expositions of metaphysical doctrines like the Vedanta, they form a sacred history, the record of God's dealings with the human race from the creation of man to the creation of the Church. And the whole of this history finds its centre in the life of an historic personality who

is not merely a moral teacher or even an inspired hierophant of divine truth, but God made man, the Saviour and restorer of the human race, from whom and in whom humanity acquires a new life and a new principle of unity.

Thus the Christian faith leaves no room for the relativism of a merely historical philosophy. For here at one moment of time and space there occurs an event of absolute value and incomparable significance for all times and all peoples. Amid the diversity and discontinuity of human civilizations and traditions there [276] appears One who is one and the same for all men and for all ages: in whom all the races and traditions of man find their common centre.

Yet on the other hand the Incarnation does not involve any denial of the significance of history such as we find in the Gnostic and Manichaeian heresies. It is itself in a sense the fruit of history, since it is the culminating point of one tradition, and the starting point of another. The appeal to tradition is one of the most characteristic features of the gospel. The New Testament opens with "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham," and the first preaching of the apostles starts with an appeal to a tradition that goes back to Ur of the Chaldeans and the earliest origins of the Hebrew people.

Thus, the Christian Church possessed its own history, which was a continuation of the history of the chosen people, and this history had its own autonomous development which was independent of the currents of secular history. We have the age of the apostles and the age of the martyrs and the age of the fathers, each of them built on the same foundations and each contributing its part to the building up of the City of God.

The chief problem, therefore, which we have to study is that of the relations between this sacred tradition and the other countless traditions that make up human history. For Christianity, no less than the other world religions, has entered the stream of historical change and has passed from one race to another, from civilization to barbarism and from barbarism to civilization. Men of different periods with different historical backgrounds and

different national or racial traditions all belong to the all-embracing tradition of the Christian Church. We have Hellenistic Christians and Byzantine Christians, Romans and Syrians, Mediaeval Christians and Renaissance Christians, seventeenth-century Spaniards and nineteenth-century Englishmen. Are these differences of culture and race accidental and ephemeral -- details that have no relevance to the Christian view of life and the Christian interpretation of History? Or are they also of spiritual significance as elements in the divine plan and forms through which the providential purpose of God in history is manifested?

[277] Now from the early Christian point of view, at least, it would seem that the whole significance of history was entirely comprised in that sacred tradition of which we have spoken. The key to history -- the mystery of the ages -- was to be found in the tradition of the chosen people and the sacred community, and outside that tradition among the Gentiles and the kingdoms of men there is a realm of endless strife and confusion, a succession of empires founded by war and violence and ending in blood and ruin. The Kingdom of God is not the work of man and does not emerge by a natural law of progress from the course of human history. It makes a violent intrusion into history and confounds the work of man, like the stone hewn from the mountain without human agency which crushes the image of the four world empires into dust.

One of the most striking features of the Christian tradition is, in fact, its historical dualism: in the Old Testament the opposition between the chosen people and the Gentiles; in the New, the opposition between the church and the world -- in the Augustinian theodicy, the two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon -- the community of charity and the community of self-will. Yet this dualism is never an absolute one. Even the Old Testament, in spite of its insistence on the unique privilege of Israel as the exclusive bearer of the divine promise, also recognizes the hand of God in the history of the Gentiles. Even the powers that seem most hostile to the people of God are the instrument by which God works out his purpose. This is shown most remarkably in the Isaianic prophecy with regard to Cyrus, for here a Gentile ruler is addressed by the messianic title as chosen and

anointed by God to do his will and to deliver his people. No doubt here and elsewhere the divine action in history always has a direct reference to the fortunes of the people of God. But the converse is also true, for God's dealings with his people are of profound significance for the future of the Gentiles. In the end the Holy City will be the resort of all peoples; the Gentiles will bring their riches into it, and from it there will go forth the law of justice and grace to all the nations of the earth.

And in the New Testament there is a still further recognition [278] of a limited but intrinsic value in the social order and social traditions that lie outside the dispensation of grace. Even the pagan state is God's servant in so far as it is the guardian of order and the administrator of justice. And in the higher sphere of grace, the passing of the old racial restrictions and the opening of the Kingdom to all nations involved at least in principle the consecration of every nation and of every social tradition in so far as they were not corrupted by sin. And so we have the reception into the church of Greek philosophy and scholarship, and of Roman law and leadership, until the whole civilized world found itself Christian. The vital thing was not the conversion of the Empire and the union of church and state, but the gradual penetration of culture by the Christian tradition, until that tradition embraced the whole of the life of Western man in all its historic diversity and left no human activity and no social tradition unconsecrated.

With this coming in of the nations and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ among the Gentiles the Christian interpretation of prophecy seemed to have been fulfilled. From the time of St. Augustine Christian millennialism was generally abandoned and the messianic kingdom was identified with the triumph of the church -- "*ecclesia et nunc est regnum Christi regnumque coelorum*." It seemed to the men of that age witnessing the fall of the Empire and the ruin of civilization that nothing remained to be accomplished except the last things. Consequently the Christian interpretation of history became mainly retrospective, and the present and the future of man's attention were concentrated not on history but on the end of history which seemed close at hand.

But with the passing of ages and the birth of new nations and new forms of culture, new problems presented themselves to the Christian conscience. The Augustinian theology with its intense realization of the inherited burden of evil which weighs down the human race and its conception of divine grace as a supernatural power which renews human nature and changes the course of history, continued to inspire the mediaeval outlook, and the mediaeval interpretation of history is still based on the [279] Augustinian conception of the two cities. But whereas St. Augustine presents this opposition primarily as a conflict between the Christian Church and the heathen world, the Middle Ages saw it above all as a struggle between the forces of good and evil within Christian society. The reform of the church, the restoration of moral order, and the establishment of social justice -- these were the vital problems that occupied the mind of mediaeval Christendom from the tenth century onwards; and the whole movement of reform from the time of St. Odo of Cluny to that of St. Bernard and Otto of Freising was consciously based on an interpretation of history which applied the Augustinian concept of the two cities to the contemporary crisis between church and state or rather between the religious and secular forces that were at war within the Christian community. This neo-Augustinian view of history finds its most direct expression in the writings of Odo of Cluny in the tenth century, Bonizo of Sutri in the eleventh and Otto of Freising in the twelfth, but it also inspired some of the ablest partisans of the Empire such as the author of the treatise *De Unitate Ecclesiae conservanda*. For the mediaeval empire and indeed the mediaeval kingship were not regarded by their supporters as secular institutions in our sense of the word. They were the leaders of the Christian people and the defenders of the Christian faith, and it was to them rather than to the papacy and the priesthood that the government of Christendom as an historical "temporal" order had been committed by God. This tradition of Christian imperialism was not destroyed by the victory of the papacy over the Empire. In fact it found its most remarkable expression in the fourteenth century in Dante's theory of the providential mission of the Roman Empire as the society through which the human race would realize its potential unity and attain universal peace, and of the particular vocation of

the messianic prince, the mystical Dux who would be the saviour of Italy and the reformer of the Church. Here for the first time we have a Christian interpretation of history which looks beyond the sacred Judaeo-Christian tradition and admits the independent value and significance of the secular tradition of culture. There are in fact two independent but parallel dispensations -- the [280] dispensation of grace, which is represented by the Church, and the natural dispensation by which humanity attains its rational end by the agency of the Roman people, which was ordained by nature and elected by God for universal empire.

Thus while on the one hand Dante's interpretation of history looks back to the mediaeval tradition of the Holy Roman Empire and the Augustinian ideal of the City of God, on the other hand it looks forward to the humanism of the Renaissance and the modern liberal ideal of universal peace as well as the modern nationalist ideal of the historical mission of a particular people and state. And this idea of a predestined correspondence between the secular tradition of human civilization embodied in the Roman Empire and the religious tradition of supernatural truth embodied in the Catholic Church finds its philosophical basis in the Thomist doctrine of the concordance of nature and grace. If it had been adopted by Thomism as the basis of the interpretation of history, it might well have developed with the growth of historical knowledge into a really catholic philosophy of history in which the different national traditions were shown, on the analogy of that of Rome, as contributing each according to its own mission and its natural aptitudes towards the building up of a Christian civilization. Actually, however, Dante's attachment to the dying cause of Ghibelline imperialism prevented his philosophy from exercising any wide influence on Catholic thought. It remained an impressive but eccentric witness to the universalism of mediaeval thought and the lost spiritual unity of mediaeval culture.

For the close of the Middle Ages was marked by the great religious revolution which destroyed the unity of Western Christendom and divided the peoples of Europe by the strife of sects and the conflict of opposing religious traditions. There was no longer one common Catholic faith and consequently there was

no longer a common sacred tradition or a common interpretation of history. It is true that the Reformers inherited far more from the Middle Ages than they themselves realized, and this was particularly the case with regard to the interpretation of history. Their conception of history, no less than that of the Middle Ages, [281] is based on the Bible and St. Augustine, and the Augustinian scheme of world history, based on the opposition and conflict of the two cities, had as great an influence on Luther and Calvin and the seventeenth-century Puritan divines as it had on the Catholic reformers five centuries earlier.

Nevertheless the Catholic interpretation of history is organically related to the Catholic conception of the nature and office of the church, and in so far as Protestantism formed a new conception of the church, it ultimately involved a new interpretation of history. Thus already, long before the emergence of the new schools of Biblical criticism and ecclesiastical history that have so profoundly affected the modern Protestant attitude to the Catholic tradition, a divergence between the Catholic and Protestant interpretations of history is plainly visible.

At first sight the difference between sixteenth-century Catholicism and Protestantism is the difference between the traditional and the revolutionary conceptions of Christianity and of the church. To the Catholic the church was the Kingdom of God on earth *in via* -- the supernatural society through which and in which alone humanity could realize its true end. It was a visible society with its own law and constitution which possessed divine and indefectible authority. It remained through the ages one and the same, like a city set on a hill, plain for all men to see, handing on from generation to generation the same deposit of faith and the same mandate of authority which it had received from its divine Founder and which it would retain whole and intact until the end of time.

The Reformers, on the other hand, while maintaining a similar conception of the church as the community through which God's purpose towards the human race is realized, refused to identify this divine society with the actual visible hierarchical church, as known to history. Against the Catholic view of the church as the

visible City of God, they set the apocalyptic vision of an apostate church, a harlot drunk with the blood of the saints, sitting on the seven hills and intoxicating the nations with her splendour and her evil enchantments. The true church was not this second Babylon, but the society of the elect, the hidden saints who followed the teaching of the Bible rather than of the hierarchy and who were to be found among the so-called heretics -- Hussites, Wycliffites, Waldensians and the rest, rather than among the servants of the official institutional church.

The result of this revolutionary attitude to the historic church was a revolutionary, catastrophic, apocalyptic and discontinuous view of history. As Calvin writes, the history of the church is a series of resurrections. Again and again the church becomes corrupt, the Word is no longer preached, life seems extinct, until God once more sends forth prophets and teachers to bear witness to the truth and to reveal the evangelical doctrine in its pristine purity. Thus the Reformation may be compared to the Renaissance since it was an attempt to go back behind the Middle Ages, to wipe out a thousand years of historical development and to restore the Christian religion to its primitive "classical" form. Yet on the other hand this return to the past brought the Protestant mind into fresh contact with the Jewish and apocalyptic sources of the Christian view of history, so that the Reformation led to an increased emphasis on the Hebraic prophetic and apocalyptic elements in the Christian tradition as against the Hellenic, patristic and metaphysical elements that were so strongly represented alike in patristic orthodoxy and in mediaeval Catholicism.

Hence we find two tendencies in Protestant thought which find their extreme expression respectively in Socinianism and millennialism. One represents the attempt to strip off all accretions, to separate religion from history and to recover the pure timeless essence of Christianity. The other represents a crude and vehement reassertion of the historical time-element in Christianity and an attempt to strip it of all its non-Jewish, mystical, philosophical and theological elements. The resultant type of religion was marked by some of the worst excesses of fanaticism and irrationality, yet on the other hand it was intensely social in spirit, as we see, for example, in the case of the Anabaptists, and it made

an earnest, if one-sided and over-simplified, effort to provide a Christian interpretation of history.

But though these two tendencies seem hostile to one another, they were not in fact mutually exclusive. For example, John [283] Milton could be at the same time a millennialist and a Socinian, and eighteenth-century Unitarians, such as Priestley, who seem to represent the Socinian type of Protestantism in an almost pure state, acquired from the opposite tradition a kind of secularized millennialism which found expression in the doctrine of progress. The development of this rationalized theology and of this secularized millennialism, whether in its revolutionary-socialistic or revolutionary-liberal forms (but especially the latter), is of central importance for the understanding of modern culture. It was in fact a new reformation, which attempted to rationalize and spiritualize religion in an even more complete and drastic way than the first Reformation had done, but which ended in emptying Christianity of all supernatural elements and interpreting history as the progressive development of an immanent principle.

Thus it is not only the materialistic interpretation of history but the idealistic interpretation as well which is irreconcilable with the traditional Christian view, since it eliminates that sense of divine otherness and transcendence, that sense of divine judgment and divine grace which are the very essence of the Christian attitude to history. This holds true of Protestantism as well as of Catholicism. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the clash is much sharper and more painful in the case of the latter. Partly, no doubt, because the great idealist thinkers, such as Kant, were themselves men of Protestant origin who had preserved a strong Protestant ethos, it has been possible for Protestants to accept the idealist interpretation of history without any serious conflict, and in the same way it was on Protestant rather than on Catholic foundations that the new liberal theology of immanence developed itself.

Catholicism, on the other hand, showed little sympathy to the idealist movement which it tended to regard as an external and non-religious force. Its attitude to history was at once more traditionalist and more realist than that of Protestantism and it did

not readily accept the idea of an inevitable law of progress which was accepted by both liberal and Protestant idealists as the background of their thought and the basic principle of their interpretation of history. Consequently there is a sharp contrast between [284] the Catholic and the liberal-idealist philosophies such as hardly exists in the Protestant world. As Croce brings out so clearly in his *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, it is not a conflict between religion and science or religion and philosophy, but between two rival creeds, based on an irreconcilable opposition of principles and resulting in a completely different view of the world. For, as Croce again points out, the idealist conceptions of monism, immanence and self-determination are the negation of the principles of divine transcendence, divine revelation, and divine authority on which the Catholic view of God and man, of creation and history and the end of history is based.

Hence the opposition between liberalism and Catholicism is not due, as the vulgar simplification would have it, to the "reactionary" tendencies of the latter but to the necessity of safeguarding the absolute Christian values, both in the theological and the historical spheres. For if Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation, and if the Christian interpretation of history depends on the continuation and extension of the Incarnation in the life of the church, Catholicism differs from other forms of Christianity in representing this incarnational principle in a fuller, more concrete, and more organic sense. As the Christian faith in Christ is faith in a real historical person, not an abstract ideal, so the Catholic faith in the church is faith in a real historical society, not an invisible communion of saints or a spiritual union of Christians who are divided into a number of religious groups and sects. And this historic society is not merely the custodian of the sacred Scriptures and a teacher of Christian morality. It is the bearer of a living tradition which unites the present and the past, the living and the dead, in one great spiritual community which transcends all the limited communities of race and nation and state. Hence, it is not enough for the Catholic to believe in the Word as contained in the sacred Scriptures, it is not even enough to accept the historic faith as embodied in the creeds and interpreted by Catholic theology, it is necessary for him to be incorporated as a cell in the living organism of the divine society and to enter into

communion with the historic reality of the sacred tradition. Thus to the student who considers Catholicism as an intellectual system embodied in theological treatises, Catholicism may seem far more legalist and intellectualist than Protestantism, which emphasizes so strongly the personal and moral-emotional sides of religion, but the sociologist who studies it in its historical and social reality will soon understand the incomparable importance for Catholicism of tradition, which makes the individual a member of a historic society and a spiritual civilization and which influences his life and thought consciously and unconsciously in a thousand different ways.

Now the recognition of this tradition as the organ of the Spirit of God in the world and the living witness to the supernatural action of God on humanity is central to the Catholic understanding and interpretation of history. But so tremendous a claim involves a challenge to the whole secular view of history which is tending to become the faith of the modern world. In spite of the differences and contradictions between the progressive idealism of liberalism and the catastrophic materialism of communism all of them agree in their insistence on the immanence and autonomy of human civilization and on the secular community as the ultimate social reality. Alike to the liberal and to the communist the Catholic tradition stands condemned as "reactionary" not merely for the accidental reason that it has been associated with the political and social order of the past, but because it sets the divine values of divine faith and charity and eternal life above the human values -- political liberty, social order, economic prosperity, scientific truth -- and orientates human life and history towards a supernatural and super-historical end. And since the modern society is everywhere tending towards ideological uniformity which will leave no room for the private worlds of the old bourgeois culture, the contradiction between secularism and Catholicism is likely to express itself in open conflict and persecution.

No doubt the prospect of such a conflict is highly distasteful to the modern bourgeois mind, even when it is Christian. The liberal optimism which has been so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon religious thought during the last half century led men to believe that the days of persecution were over and that all men of good

will would agree to set aside their differences of opinion and unite [286] to combat the evils that were universally condemned -- vice and squalor and ignorance. But from the standpoint of the Christian interpretation of history there is no ground for such hopes. Christ came not to bring peace but a sword, and the Kingdom of God comes not by the elimination of conflict but through an increasing opposition and tension between the church and the world. The conflict between the two cities is as old as humanity and must endure to the end of time. And though the church may meet with ages of prosperity, and her enemies may fail and the powers of the world may submit to her sway, these things are no criterion of success. She wins not by majorities but by martyrs and the cross is her victory.

Thus in comparison with the optimism of liberalism the Christian view of life and the Christian interpretation of history is profoundly tragic. The true progress of history is a mystery which is fulfilled in failure and suffering and which will only be revealed at the end of time. The victory that overcomes the world is not success but faith and it is only the eye of faith that understands the true value of history.

Viewing history from this standpoint the Christian will not be confident in success or despondent in failure. "For when you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars be not afraid, for the end is not yet." None knows where Europe is going and there is no law of history by which we can predict the future. Nor is the future in our own hands, for the world is ruled by powers that it does not know, and the men who appear to be the makers of history are in reality its creatures. But the portion of the Church is not like these. She has been the guest and the exile, the mistress and the martyr, of nations and civilizations and has survived them all. And in every age and among every people it is her mission to carry on the work of divine restoration and regeneration, which is the true end of history.

1 F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 224.

2 Marcus Aurelius, xi, 1, trans. G. Long.

3 *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, 30:2, 2.

4 *De Civitate Dei*, XII, 20.

9. ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE CITY OF GOD

"St Augustine and the City of God," from the article "St. Augustine and His Age" in the symposium *A Monument to St Augustine* (1930); reprinted in *Enquiries* (1933), and *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 294-325.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S work of *The City of God* was, like all his books, a *livre de circonstance*, written with a definitely controversial aim in response to a particular need. But during the fourteen years from 412 to 426 -- during which he was engaged upon it, the work developed from a controversial pamphlet into a vast synthesis which embraces the history of the whole human race and its destinies in time and eternity. It is the one great work of Christian antiquity which professedly deals with the relation of the state and of human society in general to Christian principles; and consequently it has had an incalculable influence on the development of European thought. Alike to Orosius and to Charlemagne, to Gregory I and Gregory VII, to St. Thomas and Bossuet, it remained the classical expression of Christian political thought and of the Christian attitude to history. And in modern times it has not lost its importance. It is the only one among the writings of the Fathers which the secular historian never altogether neglects, and throughout the nineteenth century it was generally regarded as justifying the right of St. Augustine to be treated as the founder of the philosophy of history.

Of late years, however, there had been a tendency, especially in Germany, to challenge this claim and to criticize St. Augustine's method as fundamentally anti-historical, since it interprets history according to a rigid theological scheme and regards the whole process of human development as predetermined by timeless and [295] changeless transcendental principles.¹ Certainly *The City of God* is not a philosophical theory of history in the sense of rational induction from historical facts. He does not discover anything from history, but merely sees in history the working out of universal

principles. But we may well question whether Hegel or any of the nineteenth-century philosophers of history did otherwise. They did not derive their theories from history, but read their philosophy into history.

What St. Augustine does give us is a synthesis of universal history in the light of Christian principles. His theory of history is strictly deduced from his theory of human nature, which, in turn, follows necessarily from his theology of creation and grace. It is not a rational theory in so far as it begins and ends in revealed dogma; but it is rational in the strict logic of its procedure and it involves a definitely rational and philosophic theory of the nature of society and law and of the relation of social life to ethics.

Herein consists its originality, since it unites in a coherent system two distinct intellectual traditions which had hitherto proved irreconcilable. The Hellenic world possessed a theory of society and a political philosophy, but it had never arrived at a philosophy of history. The Greek mind tended towards cosmological rather than historical speculation. In the Greek view of things, Time had little significance or value. It was the bare "number of movement," an unintelligible element which intruded itself into reality in consequence of the impermanence and instability of sensible things. Consequently it could possess no ultimate or spiritual meaning. It is intelligible only in so far as it is regular -- that is to say, tending to a recurrent identity. And this element of recurrence is due to the influence of the heavenly bodies, those eternal and divine existences whose movement imparts to this lower world all that it has of order and intelligibility.

Consequently, in so far as human history consists of unique and individual events it is unworthy of science and philosophy. Its value is to be found only in that aspect of it which is independent of time -- in the ideal character of the hero, the ideal wis-

1 E.g. H. Grundmann, *Studien fiber Joachim von Floris* (1927), pp. 74-5; cf. also H. Scholz, *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte* (1911).

[296] dom of the sage, and the ideal order of the good commonwealth.

The only spiritual meaning that history possesses is to be found in the examples that it gives of moral virtue or political wisdom or their opposites. Like Greek art, Greek history created a series of classical types which were transmitted as a permanent possession to later antiquity. Certainly Greece had its philosophical historians, such as Thucydides and, above all, Polybius, but to them also the power which governs history is an external necessity -- Nemesis or Tyche -- which lessens rather than increases the intrinsic importance of human affairs.

The Christian, on the other hand, possessed no philosophy of society or politics, but he had a theory of history. The time element, in his view of the world, was all-important. The idea, so shocking to the Hellenic mind or to that of the modern rationalist, that God intervenes in history and that a small and uncultured Semitic people had been made the vehicle of an absolute divine purpose, was to him the very centre and basis of his faith. Instead of the theogonies and mythologies which were the characteristic forms of expression in Greek and oriental religion, Christianity from the first based its teaching on a *sacred history*.²

Moreover, this history was not merely a record of past events; it was conceived as the revelation of a divine plan which embraced all ages and peoples. As the Hebrew prophets had already taught that the changes of secular history, the rise and fall of kingdoms and nations, were designed to serve God's ultimate purpose in the salvation of Israel and the establishment of His Kingdom, so the New Testament teaches that the whole Jewish dispensation was itself a stage in the divine plan, and that the barrier between Jew and Gentile was now to be removed so that humanity might be united in an organic spiritual unity.⁸ The coming of Christ is the turning-point of history. It marks "the fullness of times,"⁴ the coming of age of humanity and the fulfilment of the

² Cf. for example, the speech of Stephen in Acts 7.

³ Eph. 2.

⁴ St. Paul uses two expressions (Gal. iv, 4 and Eph. i, 10) : [Greek] on the fullness of time in respect to man's age, and [Greek] the completion of the cycle of seasons. Cf. Prat, *Theologie de S. Paul* (second edition), II, 151.

[297] cosmic purpose. Henceforward mankind had entered on a new phase. The old things had passed away and all things were become new.

Consequently the existing order of things had no finality for the Christian. The kingdoms of the world were judged and their ultimate doom was sealed. The building had been condemned and the mine which was to destroy it was laid, though the exact moment of the explosion was uncertain. The Christian had to keep his eyes fixed on the future like a servant who waits for the return of his master. He had to detach himself from the present order and prepare himself for the coming of the Kingdom.

Now from the modern point of view this may seem to destroy the meaning of history no less effectively than the Hellenic view of the insignificance of time. As Newman writes, "When once the Christ had come . . . nothing remained but to gather in His Saints. No higher Priest could come, no truer doctrine. The Light and Life of men had appeared and had suffered and had risen again; and nothing more was left to do. Earth had had its most solemn event, and seen its most august sight; and therefore it was the last time. And hence, though time intervene between Christ's first and second coming, it is not recognized (as I may say) in the Gospel Scheme, but is, as it were, an accident . . . When He says that He will come soon, 'soon' is not a word of time but of natural order. This present state of things, 'the present distress', as St. Paul calls it, is ever close upon the next world and resolves itself into it."⁵

But on the other hand, although the kingdom for which the Christian hoped was a spiritual and eternal one, it was not a kind of abstract Nirvana, it was a real kingdom which was to be the crown and culmination of history and the realization of the destiny of the human race. Indeed, it was often conceived in a temporal and earthly form; for the majority of the early Fathers interpreted the Apocalypse in a literal sense and believed that Christ would reign with His saints on earth for a thousand years

⁵ *Parochial Sermons*, VI, xvii.

[298] before the final judgment. 6 So vivid and intense was this expectation that the new Jerusalem seemed already hovering over the earth in readiness for its descent, and Tertullian records how the soldiers of Severus's army had seen its walls on the horizon, shining in the light of dawn, for forty days, as they marched through Palestine. Such a state of mind might easily lead, as it did in the case of Tertullian, to the visionary fanaticism of Montanism. But even in its excesses it was less dangerous to orthodoxy than the spiritualistic theosophy of the Gnostics, which dissolved the whole historical basis of Christianity, and consequently it was defended by apologists, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, as a bulwark of the concrete reality of the Christian hope.

Moreover, all Christians, whether they were milleniarists or not, believed that they already possessed a pledge and foretaste of the future kingdom in the Church. They were not, like the other religious bodies of the time, a group of individuals united by common beliefs and a common worship, they were a true people. All the wealth of historical associations and social emotion which were contained in the Old Testament had been separated from its national and racial limitations and transferred to the new international spiritual community. Thereby the Church acquired many of the characteristics of a political society; that is to say, Christians possessed a real social tradition of their own and a kind of patriotism which was distinct from that of the secular state in which they lived.

This social dualism is one of the most striking characteristics of early Christianity. Indeed, it is characteristic of Christianity in general; for the idea of the two societies and the twofold citizenship is found nowhere else in the same form. It entered deeply into St. Augustine's thought and supplied the fundamental theme of *The City of God*. In fact, St. Augustine's idea of the two cities is no new discovery but a direct inheritance from tradition. In its early Christian form, however, this dualism was much

6 Tixeront: *Histoire des Dogmes* I, 217 ff. On milleniarism at Rome in the third century cf. d'Ales, *La Theologie de S. Hippolyte*, v.

[299] simpler and more concrete than it afterwards became. The mediaeval problem of the co-existence of the two societies and the two authorities within the unity of the Christian people was yet to arise. Instead there was the abrupt contrast of two opposing orders -- the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world -- the present age and the age to come. The Empire was the society of the past, and the Church was the society of the future, and, though they met and mingled physically, there was no spiritual contact between them. It is true, as we have seen, that the Christian recognized the powers of this world as ordained by God and observed a strict but passive obedience to the Empire. But this loyalty to the state was purely external. It simply meant, as St. Augustine says, that the Church during her commixture with Babylon must recognize the external order of the earthly state which was to the advantage of both -- *utamur et nos sua pace*.⁷

Hence there could be no bond of spiritual fellowship or common citizenship between the members of the two societies. In his relations with the state and secular society the Christian felt himself to be an alien -- *peregrinus*; his true citizenship was in the Kingdom of Heaven. Tertullian writes, "Your citizenship, your magistracies and the very name of your curia is the Church of Christ. . . . We are called away even from dwelling in this Babylon of the Apocalypse, how much more from sharing in its pomps? . . . For you are an alien in this world, and a citizen of the city of Jerusalem that is above."⁸

It is true that Tertullian was a rigorist, but in this respect, at any rate, his attitude does not differ essentially from that of St. Cyprian or of the earlier tradition in general. There was, however, a growing tendency in the third century for Christians to enter into closer relations with the outer world and to assimilate Greek thought and culture. This culminated in Origen's synthesis of Christianity and Hellenism, which had a profound influence, not

⁷ *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, xxvi. "That the peace of God's enemies is useful to the piety of His friends as long as their earthly pilgrimage lasts." Cf. also *ibid.*, xvii.

[300] only on theology, but also on the social and political attitude of Christians. Porphyry remarks that "though Origen was a Christian in his manner of life, he was a Hellene in his religious thought and surreptitiously introduced Greek ideas into alien myths."

This is, of course, the exaggeration of a hostile critic; nevertheless it is impossible to deny that Origen is completely Greek in his attitude to history and cosmology. He broke entirely, not only with the milleniarist tradition, but also with the concrete realism of Christian eschatology, and substituted in its place the cosmological speculations of later Greek philosophy. The Kingdom of God was conceived by him in a metaphysical sense as the realm of spiritual reality -- the supersensuous and intelligible world. The historical facts of Christian revelation consequently tended to lose their unique value and became the symbols of higher immaterial realities -- a kind of Christian *Mythos*. In place of the sacred history of humanity from the Fall to the Redemption we have a vast cosmic drama like that of the Gnostic systems, in which the heavenly spirits fall from their immaterial bliss into the bondage of matter, or into the form of demons. Salvation consists not in the redemption of the body, but in the liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter and its gradual return through the seven planetary heavens to its original home. Consequently there is no longer any real unity in the human race, since it consists of a number of individual spirits which have become men, so to speak, accidentally, in consequence of their own faults in a previous state of existence.

No doubt these ideas are not the centre of Origen's faith. They are counterbalanced by his orthodoxy of intention and his desire to adhere to Catholic tradition. Nevertheless, they inevitably produced a new attitude to the Church and a new view of its relation to humanity. The traditional conception of the Church as an objective society, the new Israel, and the forerunner of the Kingdom of God fell into the background as compared with a more intellectualist view of the Church as the teacher of an esoteric doc-

trine or gnosis which leads the human soul from time to eternity.

[301]Here again Origen is the representative of the Graeco-oriental ideals which found their full expression in the mystery religions. The result of this change of emphasis was to reduce the opposition which had previously existed between the Church and secular society. Unlike the earlier Fathers, Origen was quite prepared to admit the possibility of a general conversion of the Empire, and in his work against Celsus he paints a glowing picture of the advantages that the Empire would enjoy if it was united in one great "City of God" under the Christian faith. But Origen's City of God, unlike Augustine's, has perhaps more affinity with the world state of the Stoics than with the divine Kingdom of Jewish and Christian prophecy. It found its fulfilment in the Christian Empire of Constantine and his successors, as we can see from the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea, the greatest representative of the tradition of Origen in the following age.

Eusebius goes further than any of the other Fathers in his rejection of millennialism and of the old realistic eschatology. For him prophecy finds an adequate fulfilment in the historical circumstances of his own age. The Messianic Kingdom of Isaiah is the Christian Empire, and Constantine himself is the new David, while the new Jerusalem which St. John saw descending from heaven like a bride adorned for her husband means to Eusebius nothing more than the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Constantine's orders.⁹

Such a standpoint leaves no room for the old Christian and Jewish social dualism. The emperor is not only the leader of the Christian people, his monarchy is the earthly counterpart and reflection of the rule of the Divine Word. As the Word reigns in heaven, so Constantine reigns on earth, purging it from idolatry and error and preparing men's minds to receive the truth. The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of God

⁹ Life of Constantine, III, xxxiii. So too he applies the passage in Dan. vii, 17. ("And the saints of the Most High shall receive the Kingdom") to Dalmatius and Hannibalianus, who were made Caesars by Constantine (*Oration on the Tricennalia of Constantine*, iii.).

[302] and of His Christ, and nothing more remains to do this side of eternity.¹⁰

It is not enough to dismiss all this as mere flattery on the part of a courtier prelate. The Eusebian ideal of monarchy has a great philosophical and historical tradition behind it. It goes back, on the one hand, to the Hellenistic theory of kingship, as represented by Dio Chrysostom, and, on the other, to the oriental tradition of sacred monarchy which is as old as civilization itself. It is true that it is not specifically Christian and it is entirely irreconcilable with the strictly religious attitude of men like Athanasius, who were prepared to sacrifice the unity of the Empire to a theological principle. Nevertheless, it was ultimately destined to triumph, at least in the East, for it finds its fulfilment in the Byzantine Church-State indissolubly united under the rule of an Orthodox emperor.

In the West, however, Christian thought followed an entirely different course of development. At the time when Origen was creating a speculative theology and a philosophy of religion, the attention of the Western Church was concentrated on the concrete problems of its corporate life. From an intellectual point of view the controversies on discipline and Church order which occupied the Western mind seem barren and uninteresting in comparison with the great doctrinal issues which were being debated in the East. But historically they are the proof of a strong social tradition and of an autonomous and vigorous corporate life.

Nowhere was this tradition so strong as in Africa; indeed, so far as its literary and intellectual expression is concerned, Africa was actually the creator of the Western tradition. By far the larger part of Latin Christian literature is African in origin, and the rest of the Latin West produced no writers, save Ambrose and Jerome, who are worthy to be compared with the great African doctors. This, no doubt, was largely due to the fact that Africa possessed a more strongly marked national character than any other Western province. The old Libyo-Phoenician population had been submerged by the tide of Roman culture, but it still

10 Eusebius develops the parallel at great length in his *Oration on the Tricennialia of Constantine*, ii-x.

[303] subsisted, and during the later Empire it began to reassert its national individuality in the same way as did the subject nationalities of the Eastern provinces. And, as in Syria and Egypt, this revival of national feeling found an outlet through religious channels. It did not go so far as to create a new vernacular Christian literature, as was the case in Syria, for the old Punic tongue survived mainly among the peasants and the uneducated classes,¹¹ but though it expressed itself in a Latin medium, its content was far more original and characteristic than that of the Syriac or Coptic literatures.

This is already apparent in the work of Tertullian, perhaps the most original genius whom the Church of Africa ever produced. After the smooth commonplaces of Pronto or the florid preciousness of Apuleius the rhetoric of Tertullian is at once exhilarating and terrific.¹² It is as though one were to go out of a literary salon into a thunderstorm. His work is marked by a spirit of fierce and indomitable hostility to the whole tradition of pagan civilization, both social and intellectual. He has no desire to minimize the opposition between the Church and the Empire, for all his hopes are fixed on the passing of the present order and the coming of the Kingdom of the Saints. Similarly he has no sympathy with the conciliatory attitude of the Alexandrian School towards Greek philosophy. "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" he writes. "What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?" . . . "Our instruction comes from the Porch of Solomon who taught that the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart. Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition. We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus. . . ." ¹³

This uncompromising spirit remained characteristic of the African Church, so that Carthage became the antithesis of Alex-

¹¹ Although the emperor Severus, according to his biographer, found it

easier to express himself in Punic than in Latin.

12 It is true that Tertullian's style is no less artificial than that of Apuleius, by whom he was perhaps influenced, but the general effect that it produces is utterly different.

13 *De Praescriptione*, vii (Homes's trans.).

[304] andria in the development of Christian thought. It remained a stronghold of the old realistic eschatology and of millennialist ideas, which were held not only by Tertullian, but by Arnobius and Lactantius and Commodian. The work of the latter, especially, shows how the apocalyptic ideas of the Christians might become charged with a feeling of hostility to the injustice of the social order and to the Roman Empire itself. In his strangely barbaric verses, which, nevertheless, sometimes possess a certain rugged grandeur, Commodian inveighs against the luxury and oppression of the rich and exults over the approaching doom of the heathen world-power,

*"Tollatur imperium, quod fuit inique repletum,
Quod per tributa mala diu macerabat omnes.*

.

*Haec quidem gaudebat, sed tota terra gemebat;
Vix tamen advenit isti retributio digna,
Luget in aeternum quae se jactabat aeterna."*¹⁴

And the same intransigent spirit shows itself in the cult of martyrdom, which attained an extraordinarily high development in Africa, especially among the lower classes. Cultivated pagans saw in the martyrs the rivals and substitutes of the old gods and regarded their cult as typical of the barbarous anti-Roman or anti-Hellenic spirit of the new religion. Maximus, the old pagan scholar of Madaura, protested to St. Augustine that he could not bear to see Romans leaving their ancestral temples to worship at the tombs of low-born criminals with vile Punic names, such as Mygdo and Lucitas and Namphanio "and others in an endless list with names abhorred both by gods and men." And he concludes : "It almost seems to me at this time as if a second battle of Actium had begun in which Egyptian monsters, doomed soon to

14 *Carmen apologeticum*, 889-90 and 921-3. "May the Empire be destroyed which was filled with injustice and which long afflicted the world with heavy taxes. . . . Rome rejoiced while the whole earth groaned. Yet at last due retribution falls upon her. She who boasted herself eternal shall mourn eternally."

[305] perish, dare to raise their weapons against the gods of the Romans."15

In fact the conversion of the Empire had not altered the fierce and uncompromising spirit of African Christianity. On the contrary, the peace of the Church was in Africa merely the occasion of fresh wars. The Donatist movement had its origin, like so many other schisms, in a local dispute on the question of the position of those who had lapsed or compromised their loyalty under the stress of persecution. But the intervention of the Roman state changed what might have been an unimportant local schism into a movement of almost national importance, and roused the native fanaticism of the African spirit. To the Donatists the Catholic Church was "the Church of the traitors"16 which had sold its birthright and leagued itself "with the princes of this world for the slaughter of the saints." They themselves claimed to be the true representatives of the glorious tradition of the old African Church, for they also were persecuted by the world, they also were a martyr Church, the faithful remnant of the saints.

The African Church had been called by Christ to share in His passion, and the persecution of the Donatists was the first act of the final struggle of the forces of evil against the Kingdom of God. "*Sicut enim in Africa factum est,*" writes Tyconius, "*ita fieri oportet in toto mundo, revelari Antichristum sicut et nobis ex parte revelatum est.*" "*Ex Africa manifestabitur omnis ecclesia.*"17

But the Donatist movement was not only a spiritual protest against any compromise with the world; it also roused all the forces of social discontent and national fanaticism. The wild

16 *Traditores* -- primarily those who had delivered (*tradere*) the sacred books to the authorities during the persecution of Diocletian, but the word also has the evil association of our "traitor."

17 From the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Beatus in Monceaux. *Hist. Litt. de l'Afrique Chretienne*, V, p. 288, notes 2 and 3: "For as it has been done in Africa, so it must be done in the whole world and Antichrist must be revealed, as has been revealed to us in part." "Out of Africa all the Church shall be revealed."

[306] peasant bands of the Circumcellions, who roamed the country, with their war-cry of "*Deo laudes*," were primarily religious fanatics who sought an opportunity of martyrdom. But they were also champions of the poor and the oppressed, who forced the landlords to enfranchise their slaves and free their debtors, and who, when they met a rich man driving in his chariot, would make him yield his place to his footman, as a literal fulfillment of the words of the Magnificat, *deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*. In fact, we have in Donatism a typical example of the results of an exclusive insistence on the apocalyptic and anti-secular aspects of Christianity, a tendency which was destined to reappear at a later period in the excesses of the Taborites, the Anabaptists and some of the Puritan sects.

The existence of this movement, so powerful, so self-confident, and so uncompromising, had a profound effect on Augustine's life and thought. The situation of the Church in Africa was essentially different from anything which existed elsewhere. The Catholics were not, as in many of the eastern provinces, the dominant element in society, nor were they, as in other parts of the West, the acknowledged representatives of the new faith against paganism. In numbers they were probably equal to the Donatists, but intellectually they were the weaker party, since with the exception of Optatus of Milevis the whole literary tradition of African Christianity had been in the hands of the Donatists; indeed, from the schism to the time of Optatus, a space of more than fifty years, not a single literary representative of the Catholic cause had appeared.

Hence during the thirty years of his ecclesiastical life St. Augustine had to fight a continuous battle, not only against the

paganism and unbelief of the open enemies of Christianity, but also against the fanaticism and sectarianism of his fellow-Christians. The extinction of the Donatist schism was the work to which before all others his later life was dedicated, and it inevitably affected his views of the nature of the Church and its relation to the secular power. The Catholics had been in alliance with the state since the time of Constantine, and relied upon the help of the secular arm both for their own protection and for

[307] the suppression of the schismatics. Consequently, Augustine could no longer maintain the attitude of hostile independence towards the state which marked the African spirit, and which the Donatists still preserved. Nevertheless, he was himself a true African. Indeed, we may say that he was an African first and a Roman afterwards, since, in spite of his genuine loyalty towards the Empire, he shows none of the specifically Roman patriotism which marks Ambrose or Prudentius. Rome is to him always "the second Babylon,"¹⁸ the supreme example of human pride and ambition, and he seems to take a bitter pleasure in recounting the crimes and misfortunes of her history.¹⁹ On the other hand, he often shows his African patriotism, notably in his reply to the letter of Maximus of Madaura to which I have already referred, where he defends the Punic language from the charge of barbarism.²⁰

It is true that there is nothing provincial about Augustine's mind, for he had assimilated classical culture and especially Greek thought to a greater extent than any other Western Father. But for all that he remained an African, the last and greatest representative of the tradition of Tertullian and Cyprian, and when he took up the task of defending Christianity against the attacks of the pagans, he was carrying on not only their work, but also their spirit and their thought. If we compare *The City of God* with the works of the great Greek apologists, the *Contra Celsum* of Origen, the *Contra Gentes* of Athanasius and the *Praeparatio*

¹⁸ *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, ii, xxii.

¹⁹ E.g. the passage on Rome after Cannae in *De Civitate Dei*, III, xix.

²⁰ "Surely, considering that you are an African and that we are both settled in Africa, you could not have so forgotten yourself when writing to Africans

as to think that Punic names were a fit theme for censure. . . . And if the Punic language is rejected by you, you virtually deny what has been admitted by most learned men, that many things have been wisely preserved from oblivion in books written in the Punic tongue. Nay, you ought even to be ashamed of having been born in the country in which the cradle of this language is still warm." *Ep.* xvii. (trans. J. G. Cunningham). Julian of Eclanum often sneers at St. Augustine as "a Punic Aristotle " and "*philosophaster Paenorum.*"

[308] *Evangelica* of Eusebius, we are at once struck by the contrast of his method. He does not base his treatment of the subject on philosophic and metaphysical arguments, as the Greek Fathers had done, but on the eschatological and social dualism, which, as we have seen, was characteristic of the earliest Christian teaching and to which the African tradition, as a whole, had proved so faithful.

Moreover, the particular form in which Augustine expresses this dualism, and which supplies the central unifying idea of the whole work, was itself derived from an African source, namely from Tyconius, the most original Donatist writer of the fourth century.²¹ Tyconius represents the African tradition in its purest and most uncontaminated form. He owes nothing to classical culture or to philosophic ideas; his inspiration is entirely Biblical and Hebraic. Indeed, his interpretation of the Bible resembles that of the Jewish Midrash far more than the ordinary type of patristic exegesis. It is a proof of the two-sidedness of Augustine's genius that he could appreciate the obscure and tortuous originality of Tyconius as well as the limpid classicism of Cicero. He was deeply influenced by Tyconius, not only in his interpretation of scripture,²² but also in his theology and in his attitude to history; above all, in his central doctrine of the Two Cities. In his commentary on the Apocalypse, Tyconius had written, "Behold two cities, the City of God and the City of the Devil.... Of them, one desires to serve the world, and the other to serve Christ; one seeks to reign in this world, the other to fly from this world. One is afflicted, and the other rejoices; one smites, and the other is smitten; one slays, and the other is slain; the one in order to be the more justified thereby, the other to fill up the measure of its iniquities. And they both strive together, the

21 Strictly speaking, Tyconius was not a Donatist, but an "Afro-Catholic," since he believed not that the Donatists were the only true Church but that they formed part of the Catholic Church, although they were not in communion with it.

22 Cf. especially Augustine's incorporation of the "Rules" of Tyconius in his *De Doctrina Christiana*.

[309] one that it may receive damnation, the other that it may acquire salvation."²³

This idea had entered deeply into Augustine's thought from the first. He was already meditating on it at Tagaste in 390; in 400 he makes use of it in his treatise *On Catechizing the Unlearned*, and finally, in *The City of God*, he makes it the subject of his greatest work. In his mind, however, the idea had acquired a more profound significance than that which Tyconius had given it. To the latter, the Two Cities were apocalyptic symbols derived from the imagery of the Bible and bound up with his realistic eschatological ideas. To Augustine, on the other hand, they had acquired a philosophic meaning and had been related to a rational theory of sociology. He taught that every human society finds its constituent principle in a common will -- a will to life, a will to enjoyment, above all, a will to peace. He defines a people as a "multitude of rational creatures associated in a common agreement as to the things which it loves."²⁴ Hence, in order to see what a people is like we must consider the objects of its love. If the society is associated in a love of that which is good, it will be a good society; if the objects of its love are evil, it will be bad. And thus the moral law of individual and social life are the same, since both to the city and to the individual we can apply the same principle -- *non faciunt bonos vel malos mores nisi boni vel mali amores*.

And thus the sociology of St. Augustine is based on the same psychological principle which pervades his whole thought -- the principle of the all-importance of the will and the sovereignty of love. The power of love has the same importance in the spiritual world as the force of gravity possesses in the physical world.²⁵ As a man's love moves him, so must he go, and so must he be-

come; *pondus meum amor meus, eo feror quocumque feror.*

23 Beatus, *Comm. in Apocalypsin*, ed. Florez, pp. 506-7.

24 *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, xxiv.

25 Following the Aristotelian theory according to which every substance naturally tends to its "proper place", cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, XIII, i, x; *De Civitate Dei*, XI, xxviii.

[310] And though the desires of men appear to be infinite they are in reality reducible to one. All men desire happiness, all seek after peace; and all their lusts and hates and hopes and fears are directed to that final end. The only essential difference consists in the nature of the peace and happiness that are desired, for, by the very fact of his spiritual autonomy, man has the power to choose his own good; either to find his peace in subordinating his will to the divine order, or to refer all things to the satisfaction of his own desires and to make himself the centre of his universe "a darkened image of the divine Omnipotence." It is here and here only that the root of dualism is to be found: in the opposition between the "natural man" who lives for himself and desires only a material felicity and a temporal peace, and the spiritual man who lives for God and seeks a spiritual beatitude and a peace which is eternal. The two tendencies of will produce two kinds of men and two types of society, and so we finally come to the great generalization on which St. Augustine's work is founded. "Two lives built two Cities -- the earthly, which is built up by the love of self to the contempt of God, and the heavenly, which is built up by the love of God to the contempt of self."²⁶

From this generalization springs the whole Augustinian theory of history, since the two cities "have been running their course mingling one with the other through all the changes of times from the beginning of the human race, and shall so move on together until the end of the world, when they are destined to be separated at the last judgement."²⁷

In the latter part of *The City of God* (books xv to xviii) St. Augustine gives a brief synopsis of world history from this point of view. On the one hand he follows the course of the earthly city -- the mystical Babylon through the ages, and finds its com-

pletest manifestation in the two world empires of Assyria and Rome "to which all the other Kingdoms are but appendices." On the other hand, he traces the development of the heavenly City: from its beginnings with the patriarchs, through the history

26 *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, xxviii.

27 *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, XXI, xxxvii; cf. *ibid.*, XIX, xxxi and *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, i, xxviii, XV, i, 11.

[311] of Israel and the holy city of the first Jerusalem down to its final earthly manifestation in the Catholic Church.

The rigid simplification of history which such a sketch demands necessarily emphasizes the uncompromising severity of St. Augustine's thought. At first sight he seems, no less than Tertullian or Commodian, to condemn the state and all secular civilization as founded on human pride and selfishness, and to find the only good society in the Church and the Kingdom of the Saints. And in a sense this conclusion does follow from the Augustinian doctrine of man. The human race has been vitiated at its source. It has become a waste product -- a *massa damnata*. The process of redemption consists in grafting a new humanity on to the old stock, and in building a new world out of the debris of the old. Consequently, in the social life of unregenerate humanity St. Augustine sees a flood of infectious and hereditary evil against which the unassisted power of the individual will struggles in vain. "Woe to thee," he cries, "thou river of human custom! Who shall stop thy course? How long will it be before thou art dried up? How long wilt thou roll the sons of Eve into that great and fearful ocean which even they who have ascended the wood (of the Cross) can scarcely cross?"²⁸

This view of human nature and of the social burden of evil finds still further confirmation in the spectacle of universal history. St. Augustine, no less than St. Cyprian,²⁹ sees the kingdoms of the world founded in injustice and prospering by bloodshed and oppression. He did not share the patriotic optimism of writers like Eusebius and Prudentius, for he realized, more keenly perhaps than any other ancient writer, at what a cost of human

suffering the benefits of the imperial unity had been purchased. "The imperial city," he writes, "endeavours to communicate her language to all the lands she has subdued to procure a fuller society and a greater abundance of interpreters on both sides. It is true, but how many lives has this cost! and suppose that done, the worst is not past, for . . . the wider extension of her empire produced still greater wars. . . . Wherefore he that does

28 *Confessions*, I, xxv.

29 Cf . especially St Cyprian's *Epistle to Donatus*.

[312] but consider with compassion all these extremes of sorrow and bloodshed must needs say that this is a mystery. But he that endures them without a sorrowful emotion or thought thereof, is far more wretched to imagine he has the bliss of a god when he has lost the natural feelings of a man."³⁰

In the same way the vaunted blessings of Roman law are only secured by an infinity of acts of injustice to individuals, by the torture of innocent witnesses and the condemnation of the guiltless. The magistrate would think it wrong not to discharge the duties of his office, "but he never holds it a sin to torture innocent witnesses, and when he has made them their own accusers, to put them to death as guilty."³¹ Consequently the consideration of history leads Augustine to reject the political idealism of the philosophers and to dispute Cicero's thesis that the state rests essentially on justice. If this were the case, he argues, Rome itself would be no state; in fact, since true justice is not to be found in any earthly kingdom, the only true state will be the City of God.³² Accordingly, in order to avoid this extreme conclusion he eliminates all moral elements from his definition of the state, and describes it, in the passage to which I have already referred, as based on a common will, whether the object of that will be good or bad.³³

The drastic realism of this definition has proved shocking to several modern writers on Augustine. Indeed, so distinguished a student of political thought as Dr. A. J. Carlyle is unwilling to admit that St. Augustine really meant what he said,³⁴ and he

cites the famous passage in book iv, chapter 4, "Set justice aside and what are kingdoms but great robberies,"³⁵ to show that the

30 *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, vii (trans. J. Healey).

31 *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, vi.

32 *De Civitate Dei*, II, xxi.

33 Cf. note 24 above.

34 "If he did," he writes, "I cannot but feel that it was a deplorable error for a great Christian teacher." *Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Mediaeval Thinkers*, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, p. 51.

35 *Remota iustitia quid regna nisi magna latrocinia?*

[313] quality of justice is essential to any real state. The actual tendency of the passage, however, appears to be quite the contrary. St. Augustine is arguing that there is no difference between the conqueror and the robber except the scale of their operations, for, he continues, "What is banditry but a little kingdom?" and he approves the reply of the pirate to Alexander the Great, "Because I do it, with a little ship, I am called a robber, and you, because you do it with a great fleet, are called an emperor."

In reality there is nothing inconsistent or morally discreditable about St. Augustine's views. They follow necessarily from his doctrine of original sin; indeed, they are implicit in the whole Christian social tradition and they frequently find expression in later Christian literature. The famous passage in the letter of Pope Gregory VII to Hermann of Metz, which has been regarded by many modern writers as showing his belief in the diabolic origin of the state, is simply an assertion of the same point of view; while Newman, who in this, as in so many other respects, is a faithful follower of the patristic tradition, affirms the same principle in the most uncompromising terms. "Earthly kingdoms," he says, "are founded, not in justice, but in injustice. They are created by the sword, by robbery, cruelty, perjury, craft and fraud. There never was a kingdom, except Christ's, which was not conceived and born, nurtured and educated, in sin. There never was a state, but was committed to acts and maxims which is its crime to maintain and its ruin to abandon. What monarchy is there but began in invasion or usurpation? What revolution has been effected without self-will, violence, or hypocrisy? What

popular government but is blown about by every wind, as if it had no conscience and no responsibilities? What dominion of the few but is selfish and unscrupulous? Where is military strength without the passion for war? Where is trade without the love of filthy lucre, which is the root of all evil?"³⁸

But from this condemnation of the actual reign of injustice in human society it does not follow that either Newman or Augustine intended to suggest that the state belonged to a non-moral

38 From "Sanctity the Token of the Christian Empire" in *Sermons on Subjects of the Day* (1st ed.), p. 273.

[314] sphere and that men in their social relations might follow a different law to that which governed their moral life as individuals. On the contrary, St. Augustine frequently insists that it is Christianity which makes good citizens, and that the one remedy for the ills of society is to be found in the same power which heals the moral weakness of the individual soul. "Here also is security for the welfare and renown of a commonwealth; for no state is perfectly established and preserved otherwise than on the foundations and by the bond of faith and of firm concord, when the highest and truest good, namely God, is loved by all, and men love each other in Him without dissimulation because they love one another for His sake."³⁷

Moreover, though St. Augustine emphasizes so strongly the moral dualism which is inherent in the Christian theory of life, he differs from the earlier representatives of the African school in his intense realization of a universal reasonable order which binds all nature together and which governs alike the stars in their courses and the rise and fall of kingdoms. This belief is one of the fundamental elements in Augustine's thought. It dominated his mind in the first days of his conversion, when he composed the treatise *De Ordine*, and it was preserved unimpaired to the last. It finds typical expression in the following passage in *The City of God*: "The true God from Whom is all being, beauty, form and number, weight and measure; He from Whom all nature, mean and excellent, all seeds of forms, all forms of

seeds, all motions both of forms and seeds, derive and have being; . . . He (I say) having left neither heaven nor earth, nor angel nor man, no, nor the most base and contemptible creature, neither the bird's feather, nor the herb's flower, nor the tree's leaf, without the true harmony of their parts, and peaceful concord of composition; it is in no way credible that He would leave the kingdoms of men and their bondages and freedoms loose and uncomprised in the laws of His eternal providence."³⁸

Here Augustine is nearer to Origen than Tertullian; in act this fundamental concept of the Universal Law -- *lex aeterna* -- is de-

37 *Ep. cxxxvii*, c, 18 (trans. Cunningham); cf. *Ep. cxxxviii*, 15 and 17.

38 *De Civitate Dei*, V, xi (trans. J. Healey).

[315] rived from purely Hellenic sources. It is the characteristically Greek idea of cosmic order which pervades the whole Hellenic tradition from Heraclitus and Pythagoras to the later Stoics and neo-Platonists, and which had reached Augustine by way of Cicero and Plotinus.³⁹ This Hellenic influence is to be seen above all in Augustine's profound sense of the aesthetic beauty of order and in his doctrine that even the evil and suffering of the world find their aesthetic justification in the universal harmony of creation, an idea which had already found classic expression in the great lines of Cleanthes's Hymn to Zeus:

"Thou knowest how to make even that which is uneven and to order what is disordered, and unlovely things are lovely to Thee. For so Thou bringest together all things in one, the good with the bad, that there results from all one reasonable order abiding for ever."

Thus St. Augustine was able to view history from a much wider standpoint than that of Tertullian or the Donatists. He can admit that the Earthly City also has its place in the universal order, and that the social virtues of the worldly, which from a religious point of view are often nothing but "splendid vices," yet possess a real value in their own order, and bear their appropriate fruits in social life. And in the same way he believes that

the disorder and confusion of history are only apparent, and that God orders all events in His Providence in a universal harmony which the created mind cannot grasp.

This philosophic universalism is not confined to Augustine's conception of the order of nature; it also affects his eschatology and his doctrine of the Church. Above all, it determined his treatment of the central theme of his great work *The City of God* and entirely alienated him from the realistic literalism of the old apocalyptic tradition. To Augustine, the City of God is not the concrete millennial kingdom of the older apologists, nor is it the visible hierarchical Church. It is a transcendent and timeless reality, a society of which "the King is Truth, the law is Love

39 Cf. . . A. Schubert, *Augustins Lex Aeterna Lehre nach Inhalt und Quellen* (1924).

[316] and the duration is Eternity."⁴⁰ It is older than the world, since its first and truest citizens are the angels. It is as wide as humanity, since "in all successive ages Christ is the same Son of God, co-eternal with the Father, and the unchangeable Wisdom by Whom every rational soul is made blessed." Consequently, "from the beginning of the human race whosoever believed in Him and in any way knew Him, and lived in a pious and just manner according to His precepts, was undoubtedly saved by Him in whatsoever time and place he may have lived."⁴¹

Thus the City of God is co-extensive with the spiritual creation in so far as it has not been vitiated by sin. It is, in fact, nothing less than the spiritual unity of the whole universe, as planned by the Divine Providence, and the ultimate goal of creation.

These conceptions are quite irreconcilable with the old millenarist belief which was still so strong in the West, and which Augustine himself had formerly accepted. They led him to adopt Tyconius's interpretation of the crucial passage in the Apocalypse, according to which the earthly reign of Christ is nothing else but the life of the Church militant: an explanation which henceforth gained general acceptance in the West. Moreover, he went further than Tyconius himself and the great majority of

earlier writers by abandoning all attempts to give the data of prophecy an exact chronological interpretation with regard to the future, and by discouraging the prevalent assumption of the imminence of the end of the world.⁴²

Thus St. Augustine influenced Christian eschatology in the West no less decisively than Origen had done in the East almost two centuries earlier, and to some extent their influences tended in the same direction. To Augustine, as to Origen, the ideal of the kingdom of God acquired a metaphysical form, and became identified with the ultimate timeless reality of spiritual being. The

40 Ep. cxxxviii, 3, 17.

41 Ep. cii, 2, 11 and 12.

42 Ep. cxcix. In another passage he even goes so far as to entertain the hypothesis of the world being still in existence 500,000 years hence (*De Civitate Dei*, XII, xii); elsewhere, however, he speaks of the world having reached old age (e.g. *Sermo* xxxi. 3; Ep. cxxxvii, 16).

[317] Augustinian City of God bears a certain resemblance to the neo-Platonic concept of the Intelligible World -- *cosmos neutos*: indeed, the Christian Platonists of later times, who were equally devoted to Augustine and Plotinus, deliberately make a conflation of the two ideas. Thus John Norris of Bemerton writes of his "Ideal World": "Thou art that Glorious Jerusalem, whose foundations are upon the Holy Hills, the everlasting Mountains, even the Eternal Essences and Immutable Ideas of Things. . . . Here are *ta onta* -- the Things that are and that truly and chiefly are -- *quas vere summeque sunt*, as St. Austin speaks and that because they necessarily and immutably are, and cannot either not be or be otherwise. Here live, flourish and shine those bright and unperishing Realities whereof the Things of this World are but the Image, the Reflection, the Shadow, the Echo."⁴³

This Platonic idealism did indeed leave a deep imprint on St. Augustine's thought. Nevertheless, he never went so far in this direction as Origen had done, for his Platonism did not destroy his sense of the reality and importance of the historical process. To Origen, on the contrary, the temporal process had no finality. There was an infinite succession of worlds through which the

immortal soul pursued its endless course. Since "the soul is immortal and eternal, it is possible that, in the many and endless periods of duration in the immeasurable and different worlds, it may descend from the highest good to the lowest evil, or be restored from the lowest evil to the highest good."⁴⁴ This is not precisely the classical Hellenic doctrine, since, as I have pointed out elsewhere,⁴⁵ Origen expressly rejects the theory of the Return of All Things as irreconcilable with a belief in free will. It has a much closer resemblance to the Hindu doctrine of samsara the endless chain of existences, which are the fruit of the soul's own acts. But although this theory allows for the freedom of the will, it is destructive of the organic unity of humanity and of the sig-

⁴³ J. Norris, *An Essay Towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World*, I, 430-6 (1701).

⁴⁴ Origen: *De Principiis*, III, i, 21 (trans. I. Crombie).

⁴⁵ *Progress and Religion* (London, 1929), p. 156.

[318] nificance of its social destinies to an even greater extent than the purely Hellenic doctrine. Consequently, St. Augustine rejected it no less firmly than the theory of cyclic recurrence. He admits that the idea of a perpetual return is a natural consequence of the belief in the eternity of the world, but if we once accept the doctrine of Creation, as Origen himself did, there is no further need for the theory of "the circumrotation of souls" or for the belief that nothing new or final can take place in time. Humanity has had an absolute beginning and travels to an absolute goal. There can be no return. That which is begun in time is consummated in eternity.⁴⁶ Hence time is not a perpetually revolving image of eternity; it is an irreversible process moving in a definite direction.

This recognition of the uniqueness and irreversibility of the temporal process -- this "explosion of the perpetual cycles" is one of the most remarkable achievements of St. Augustine's thought. It is true that the change of attitude was implicit in Christianity itself, since the whole Christian revelation rests on temporal events which nevertheless possess an absolute significance and an eternal value. As St. Augustine says, Christ is the

straight way by which the mind escapes from the circular maze of pagan thought.⁴⁷ But although this change had been realized by faith and religious experience, it still awaited philosophic analysis and definition. This it received from St. Augustine, who was not only founder of the Christian philosophy of history, but was actually the first man in the world to discover the meaning of time.

His subtle and profound mind found a peculiar attraction in the contemplation of the mystery of time which is so essentially bound up with the mystery of created being.⁴⁸ He was intensely sensitive to the pathos of mutability -- *omnis quippe iste ordo pulcherrima rerum valde bonarum modis suis peractis transiturus est*;

46 *De Civitate Dei*, XII, xi-xx, XXI, xvii.

47 "Viam rectam sequentes, quae nobis est Cristus, eo duce et salvatore a vano et inepto impiorum circuitu iter fidei mentemque avertamus." *De Civitate Dei*, XII, xx.

48 Cf. *De Civitate Dei*, XII, xv, xi, vi.

[319] *et Marx quippe in eis factum est et vespera*⁴⁹-- but he felt that the very possibility of this act of contemplation showed that the mind in some sense transcended the process which it contemplated. Consequently he could not rest satisfied with the naive objectivism of Greek science which identified time with the movement of the heavenly bodies.⁵⁰ If the movement of bodies is the only measure of time, how can we speak of past and future? A movement which has passed has ceased to exist, and a movement which is to come has not begun to exist. There remains only the present of the passing moment, a moving point in nothingness. Therefore, he concludes, the measure of time is not to be found in things, but in the soul -- time is spiritual extension -- *distentio animae*.

Thus the past is the soul's remembrance, the future is its expectation, and the present is its attention. The future, which does not exist, cannot be long; what we mean by a long future is a long expectation of the future, and a long past means a long memory of the past. "It is, then, in thee, my soul, that I measure time. . . . The impression which things make upon thee as they pass and which remains when they have passed away is what I meas-

ure. I measure this which is present, and not the things which have passed away that it might be. Therefore this is time (*tempora*) or else I must say that I do not measure time at all."⁵¹

Finally, he compares the time-process with the recitation of a poem which a man knows by heart. Before it is begun the recitation exists only in anticipation; when it is finished it is all in the memory; but while it is in progress, it exists, like time, in three dimensions -- "the life of this my action is extended into the memory, on account of what I have said, and into expectation, on account of what I am about to say; yet my attention remains present and it is through this that what was future is transposed and becomes past." And what is true of the poem holds good

49 *Confessions*, XIII, xxxv. "For all this most fair order of things truly good will pass away when its measures are accomplished, and they have their morning and their evening."

50 *Confessions*, XI, xxiii.

51 *Ibid.*, XI, xxvii.

[320] equally of each line and syllable of it, and of the wider action of which it forms part, and also of the life of man which is composed of a series of such actions, and of the whole world of man which is the sum of individual lives.⁵²

Now this new theory of time which St. Augustine originated also renders possible a new conception of history. If man is not the slave and creature of time, but its master and creator, then history also becomes a creative process. It does not repeat itself meaninglessly; it grows into organic unity with the growth of human experience. The past does not die; it becomes incorporated in humanity. And hence progress is possible, since the life of society and of humanity itself possesses continuity and the capacity for spiritual growth no less than the life of the individual.

How far St. Augustine realized all this may indeed be questioned. Many modern writers do, in fact, deny that he conceived of the possibility of progress or that he had any real historical sense. They argue, as I said before, that *The City of God* con-

ceives humanity as divided between two static eternal orders whose eternal lot is predestined from the beginning. But this criticism is, I think, due to a misconception of the Augustinian attitude to history. It is true that Augustine did not consider the problem of secular progress, but then secular history, in Augustine's view, was essentially unprogressive. It was the spectacle of humanity perpetually engaged in chasing its own tail. The true history of the human race is to be found in the process of enlightenment and salvation by which human nature is liberated and restored to spiritual freedom. Nor did Augustine view this process in an abstract and unhistorical way. For he constantly insists on the organic unity of the history of humanity, which passes through a regular succession of ages, like the life of an individual man;⁵³ and he shows how "the epochs of the world are linked together in a wonderful way" by the gradual development of the divine plan.⁵⁴ For God, who is "the unchangeable Governor as He is the unchangeable Creator of mutable things, orders all

⁵² *Confessions*, XI, xxviii.

⁵³ E.g. *De Vera Religione*, XXVII, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ep.* cxxxvii, 15.

[321] events in His providence until the beauty of the completed course of time, of which the component parts are the dispensations adapted to each successive age, shall be finished, like the grand melody of some ineffably wise master of song."⁵⁵

It is true, as we have already seen, that in *The City of God* St. Augustine always emphasizes the eternal and transcendent character of the Heavenly City in contrast to the mutability and evil of earthly life. It is impossible to identify the City of God with the Church as some writers have done, since in the Heavenly City there is no room for evil or imperfection, no admixture of sinners with the saints. But, on the other hand, it is an even more serious error to separate the two concepts completely and to conclude that St. Augustine assigned no absolute and transcendent value to the hierarchical Church. Certainly the Church is not the eternal City of God, but it is its organ and representative in the world. It is the point at which the transcendent spiritual order

inserts itself into the sensible world, the one bridge by which the creature can pass from Time to Eternity. St. Augustine's point of view is, in fact, precisely the same as that which Newman so often expresses, though their terminology is somewhat different. Like Augustine, Newman emphasizes the spiritual and eternal character of the City of God and regards the visible Church as its earthly manifestation. "The unseen world through God's secret power and mercy encroaches upon this; and the Church that is seen is just that portion of it by which it encroaches, it is like the islands in the sea, which are in truth but the tops of the everlasting hills, high and vast and deeply rooted, which a deluge covers."⁵⁶

And neither in the case of St. Augustine nor in that of Newman does this emphasizing of the transcendence and spirituality of the City of God lead to any depreciation of the hierarchical Church. The latter describes the Christian Church as an Imperial power -- "not a mere creed or philosophy but a counter kingdom." "It occupied ground; it claimed to rule over those whom hitherto this world's governments ruled over without rival; and it is only

⁵⁵ *Ep. cxxxviii*, 5 (trans. Cunningham).

⁵⁶ "The Communion of Saints" in *Parochial Sermons* (1st ed.), IV, p. 201.

[322] in proportion as things that are brought into this kingdom and made subservient to it; it is only as kings and princes, nobles and rulers, men of business and men of letters, the craftsman and the trader and the labourer humble themselves to Christ's Church and (in the language of the prophet Isaiah) 'bow down to her with their faces toward the earth and lick up the dust of her feet,' that the world becomes living and spiritual, and a fit object of love and a resting-place for Christians."⁵⁷

The late Dr. Figgis, in his admirable lectures: *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's "City of God"* has referred to this sermon of Newman as showing how far later Western tradition earned "the political way of thinking about the Church, which had been inaugurated by St. Augustine." But here again Newman's teaching really represents, not the views of his own time nor even those of the Middle Ages, but a deliberate revival of the

patristic Augustinian doctrines. We have seen how primitive Christianity, and the early Western tradition in particular, showed an intense social realism in their eschatology and in their conception of the Church and the Kingdom of God. St. Augustine definitely abandoned the millennialist tradition and adopted a thoroughly spiritual eschatology. But he preserved the traditional social realism in his attitude to the Church: indeed, he reinforced it by his identification of the Church with the millennial kingdom of the Apocalypse. *Ecclesia et nunc est regnum Christi regnumque caelorum*.⁵⁸ Consequently it is in the Church that the prophecies of the kingdom find their fulfilment, and even those which seem to refer to the last Judgment may really be applied to "that advent of the Saviour by which He is coming through all the present time in His Church, that is to say in His members, gradually and little by little, for it is all His Body."⁵⁹

"O beata ecclesia," he writes, *"quodam tempore audisti, quodam tempore vidisti. . . . Omnia enim quae modo complentur antea prophetata sunt. Erige oculos ergo, et diffunde per mun-*

⁵⁷ *Sermons on Subjects of the Day* (1st ed.), pp. 257 and 120.

⁵⁸ *De Civitate Dei*, XX, X.

⁵⁹ *De Civitate Dei*, XX, v.

[323] *dum: vide jam hereditatem usque ad terminos orbis terrae. Vide jam impleri quod dictum est: Adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae, omnes gentes servient illi.*"⁶⁰

The grain of mustard-seed has grown until it is greater than all the herbs, and the great ones of this world have taken refuge under its branches. The yoke of Christ is on the neck of kings, and we have seen the head of the greatest empire that the world has known laying aside his crown and kneeling before the tomb of the Fisherman.⁶¹

Hence Augustine bases his claim to make use of the secular power against the Donatists, not on the right of the state to intervene in religious matters, but on the right of the Church to make use of the powers of this world which God has subdued to Christ

according to His prophecy: "All the kings of the earth shall adore Him and all nations shall serve Him" -- "*et ideo hac Ecclesiae potestate utimur, quam ei Dominus et promisit et dedit.*"⁶²

To some -- notably to Reuter and Harnack -- this exaltation of the visible Church has seemed fundamentally inconsistent with the Augustinian doctrine of grace. It is indeed difficult to understand Augustine's theology if we approach it from the standpoint of the principles of the Reformation. But if we ignore modern developments, and study Augustine's doctrine of grace and the Church from a purely Augustinian standpoint, its unity and consistency are manifest.

St. Augustine never separates the moral from the social life. The dynamic force of both the individual and the society is found

60 *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, LXVII, vii. "O blessed Church, once thou hast heard, now thou hast seen. For what the Church has heard in promises, she now sees manifested. For all things that were formerly prophesied, are now fulfilled. Lift up thine eyes and look abroad over the world. Behold now thine inheritance even to the ends of the earth. See now fulfilled what was spoken: 'All the kings of the earth shall worship Him, all nations shall do Him service.' "

61 *Sermo* xlii, 2; Ep, ccxxxii, 3. We may observe that the same facts on which Eusebius rests his glorification of the Emperor are used by Augustine to exalt the Church.

62 Ep. cv, 5, 6; cf. Ep. xxxv, 3. "And, therefore, we are making use of this power which the Lord both promised and gave to the Church."

[324] in the will, and the object of their will determines the moral character of their life. And as the corruption of the will by original sin in Adam becomes a social evil by an hereditary transmission through the flesh which unites fallen humanity in the common slavery of concupiscence, so too the restoration of the will by grace in Christ is a social good which is transmitted sacramentally by the action of the Spirit and unites regenerate humanity in a free spiritual society under the law of charity. The grace of Christ is only found in "the society of Christ." "Whence," says he, "should the City of God originally begin or progressively develop or ultimately attain its end, unless the life of the saints was a social one?"⁶³ Thus the Church is actually the new humanity in

process of formation, and its earthly history is that of the building of the City of God which has its completion in eternity, "*Adhuc aedificatur templum Dei.*"⁶⁴ "*Vos tanquam lapides vivi coaedificamini in templum Dei.*"⁶⁵ Hence, in spite of all the imperfections of the earthly Church, it is nevertheless the most perfect society that this world can know. Indeed, it is the only true society, because it is the only society which has its source in a spiritual will. The kingdoms of the earth seek after the goods of the earth; the Church, and the Church alone, seeks spiritual goods and a peace which is eternal.

Such a doctrine may seem to leave little room for the claims of the state. In fact, it is difficult to deny that the state does occupy a very subordinate position in St. Augustine's view. At its worst it is a hostile power, the incarnation of injustice and self-will. At its best, it is a perfectly legitimate and necessary society, but one which is limited to temporary and partial ends, and it is bound to subordinate itself to the greater and more universal spiritual society in which even its own members find their real citizenship. In fact, the state bears much the same relation to the Church that a Friendly Society or a guild bears to the state: it fulfils a useful function and has a right to the loyalty of its members, but it can never claim to be the equal of the larger society or to act as a substitute for it.

⁶³ *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, v.

⁶⁴ *Sermo* clxiii, 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, clvi, 12, 13.

[325] It is on the ground of these conceptions that St. Augustine has so often been regarded as the originator of the mediaeval theocratic ideal, and even (by Reuter) as "the founder of Roman Catholicism."⁶⁶ And indeed it is to him more than any other individual that we owe the characteristically Western ideal of the Church as a dynamic social power in contrast to the static and metaphysical conceptions which dominated Byzantine Christianity. But it does not necessarily follow that the influence of St. Augustine tended to weaken the moral authority of the state or to deprive ordinary social life of spiritual significance. If we consider the matter, not from the narrow standpoint of the juristic rela-

tions of Church and state, but as St. Augustine himself did, from the point of view of the relative importance of the spiritual and material element in life, we shall see that his doctrine really made for moral freedom and responsibility. Under the Roman Empire, as in the sacred monarchies of the oriental type, the state is exalted as a superhuman power against which the individual personality had no rights and the individual will had no power. In the East, even Christianity proved powerless to change this tradition, and alike in the Byzantine Empire and in Russia the Church consecrated anew the old oriental ideal of an omnipotent sacred state and a passive people. In the West, however, St. Augustine broke decisively with this tradition by depriving the state of its aura of divinity and seeking the principle of social order in the human will. In this way the Augustinian theory, for all its otherworldliness, first made possible the ideal of a social order resting upon the free personality and a common effort towards moral ends. And thus the Western ideals of freedom and progress and social justice owe more than we realize to the profound thought of the great African who was himself indifferent to secular progress and to the transitory fortunes of the earthly state, "for he looked for a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God."

66 Cf. C. H. Turner in the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, I, 173: "St. Augustine's theory of the *Civitas Dei* was, in germ, that of the mediaeval papacy, without the name of Rome."

10. ON SPIRITUAL INTUITION IN CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

"On Spiritual Intuition in Christian Philosophy," from *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (1933), published in *The Dawson Newsletter*, Winter 1994.

The problem of spiritual intuition and its reconciliation with the natural conditions of human knowledge lies at the root of philosophic thought, and all the great metaphysical systems since the time of Plato have attempted to find a definitive

solution. The subject is no less important for the theologian, since it enters so largely into the question of the nature of religious knowledge and the limits of religious experience. The Orthodox Christian is, however, debarred from the two extreme philosophic solutions of pure idealism and radical empiricism, since the one leaves no place for faith and supernatural revelations, and the other cuts off the human mind entirely from all relation to spiritual reality. Yet even so there remains a vast range of possible solutions which have been advocated by Catholic thinkers from the empiricism of the medieval nominalists to the ontologism of Malebranche and Rosmini. Leaving aside the more eccentric and unrepresentative thinkers, we can distinguish two main currents in Catholic philosophy. On the one hand, there is the Platonic tradition that is represented by the Greek Fathers, and, above all, by St. Augustine and his medieval followers such as St. Bonaventure; on the other, the Aristotelian tradition which found classical expression in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. But it is important not to exaggerate the divergences between the two schools. Both of them seek to find a *via media* between the two extreme solutions. St. Bonaventure is not a pure Platonist, nor St. Thomas a pure Aristotelian. The former rejects the doctrine of innate ideas, while the latter finds the source of intelligibility in the divine ideas, and regards the human mind as receiving its light from the divine intelligence.[1] Hence although Thomism insists on the derivation of our ideas from sensible experience, it is far from denying the existence of spiritual intuition.

Human Intelligence Is Intuitive By Nature

On this point I will quote the words of a French Dominican, Pere Joret: "Let us not forget," he writes, "that the human intelligence, also, is intuitive by nature and predisposition. No doubt, as it is united substantially with matter, it cannot thenceforth know except by proceeding from sensible realities and by means of images. But, apart from this, our intelligence is intuitive. Its first act at the dawn of its life, at its awakening, is an intuition, the intuition of being, or, more concretely, of 'a thing which is,' and, at the same time, as though it already unconsciously carried them in itself, there suddenly appear with an ineluctable certainty the first principles" of identity, contradiction, causality, and the like. It is from our intuition of first principles that all our knowledge proceeds. St. Thomas says: "As the enquiry of reason starts from a simple intuition of the intelligence, so also it ends in the certainty of intelligence, when the conclusions that have been discovered are brought back to the principles from which they derive their certitude." Pere Joret insists on the importance of the intuitive faculty as the natural foundation of religious experience. It is not itself mystical, but it is the essential natural preparation and prerequisite for mysticism. The failure to recognise this, which has been so common among theologians during the last two centuries, has, he says,

been deplorable not only in its effects on the study of mysticism, but in its practical consequences for the spiritual life.[2]

It is easy to understand the reasons for this attitude of hesitation and distrust with regard to intuitive knowledge. If the intuition of pure being is interpreted in an excessively realist sense, we are led not merely to ontologism, but to pantheism—to the identification of that being which is common to everything which exists with the Transcendent and Absolute Being which is God. And the danger has led to the opposite error of minimising the reality of the object of our intuition, and reducing it to a mere logical abstraction.

Here again it is necessary to follow the middle way. The being which is the object of our knowledge is neither wholly real nor purely logical and conceptual. The intuition of pure being is a very high and immaterialised form of knowledge, but it is not a direct intuition of spiritual reality. It stands midway between the world of sensible experience and the world of spiritual reality. On the one hand it is the culminating point of our ordinary intellectual activity, and on the other it leads directly to the affirmation of the Absolute and the Transcendent.

Hence it is always possible, as Pere Marechal shows, that the intuition of pure being may become the occasion or starting-point of an intuition of a higher order. But it is difficult to decide, in concrete cases, whether the supreme intuition of the Neoplatonist or the Vedantist philosopher is simply the intuition of pure being interpreted in an ontologist sense, or whether it is a genuine intuition of spiritual reality. There is no *a priori* reason for excluding the latter alternative; indeed, in some cases it seems absolutely necessary to accept it. Nevertheless, this higher intuition is not necessarily always the same. It is possible to distinguish several different types of intuition, or to find several different explanations of it. In the first place there is the possibility of a very high form of metaphysical intuition by which the mind sees clearly the absolute transcendence of spirit in relation to sensible things and the element of nothingness or not-being which is inherent in the world of sensible experience.[3] This form of intuition seems adequate to explain the spiritual experience which is typical of the oriental religions, e.g., the intuition of advaita—non-duality, which is characteristic of the Vedanta. But there are other cases which suggest a higher form of experience, and one which is more strictly comparable to the higher experiences of the Christian mystic. In such cases the obvious explanation is that such experience is mystical in the full sense of the word, since we need not deny the existence of supernatural grace wherever the human mind turns towards God and does what lies in its power—*facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam*.

But while we must admit the essentially supernatural character of all true mystical experience it is still possible that this higher experience may have its psychological roots in a rudimentary natural capacity of the soul for the intuition of God. This is

certainly not the common theological view, but there are, nevertheless, Catholic theologians such as St. Bonaventure and, above all, the great medieval mystics of Germany and the Low Countries, who teach that the human soul possesses by its very nature a real but obscure knowledge of God. St. Bonaventure argues that Aristotle's theory of the sensible origin of all human knowledge only holds good of our knowledge of external reality, not of those realities which are essentially present to the soul itself; consequently, "the soul knows God and itself and the things that are in itself without the help of the exterior senses." [4] *Deus praesentissimus est ipsi animae et eo ipso cognoscibilis.*

The Soul In Immediate Contact With God

The medieval mystics base their whole theory of mysticism on this doctrine of the knowledge of God essentially present in the human soul. Underneath the surface of our ordinary consciousness, the sphere of the discursive reason, there is a deeper psychological level, "the ground of the soul," to which sensible images and the activity of the discursive reason cannot penetrate. This is the domain of the spiritual intuition, "the summit" of the mind and the spiritual will which is naturally directed towards God. Here the soul is in immediate contact with God, who is present to it as its cause and the principle of its activity. It is, in fact, a mirror which has only to be cleansed and turned towards its object to reflect the image of God. In the words of Ruysbroeck: "In the most noble part of the soul, the domain of our spiritual powers, we are constituted in the form of a living and eternal mirror of God; we bear in it the imprint of His eternal image, and no other image can ever enter there." Unceasingly this mirror remains under the eyes of God,

and participates thus with the image that is graven there from God's eternity. It is in this image that God has known us in Himself before we were created, and that He knows us now in time, created as we are for Himself. This image is found essentially and personally in all men; each man possesses it whole and entire, and all men together possess no more of it than does each one. In this way we are all one, intimately united in our eternal image, which is the image of God and the source in us all of our life and of our coming into existence. Our created essence and our life are joined to it immediately as to their eternal cause. Yet our created being does not become God, any more than the image of God becomes a creature. [5]

God As Its Eternal Origin

The soul in its created being incessantly receives the impress of its Eternal Archetype, like a flawless mirror, in which the image remains steadfast and in which the reflection is renewed without interruption by its ever new reception in

new light. This essential union of our spirit with God does not exist in itself, but it dwells in God and it flows forth from God and it depends upon God and it returns to God as to its Eternal Origin. And in this wise, it has never been, nor ever shall be, separated from God; for this union is within us by our naked nature, and, were this nature to be separated from God, it would fall into pure nothingness. And this union is above time and space and is always and incessantly active according to the way of God. But our nature, forasmuch as it is indeed like unto God but in itself is creature, receives the impress of its Eternal Image passively. This is that nobleness which we possess by nature in the essential unity of our spirit, where it is united to God according to nature. This neither makes us holy, nor blessed, for all men, whether good or evil, possess it within themselves; but it is certainly the first cause of all holiness and all blessedness.[6]

According to this view, every man naturally possesses an immediate contact with God in the deepest part of his soul; but he remains, as a rule, without the realisation and the enjoyment of it.

His soul is turned outwards to the things of sense, and his will is directed to temporal goods. It is the work of grace to reconstitute this divine image, to bring a man back to his essential nature, to cleanse the mirror of his soul so that it once more receives the divine light. Nevertheless, even apart from grace, the divine image remains present in the depths of the soul, and whenever the mind withdraws itself from its surface activity and momentarily concentrates itself within itself, it is capable of an obscure consciousness of the presence of God and of its contact with divine reality.

This doctrine is undoubtedly orthodox, and involves neither illuminism nor ontologism, still less pantheism. Nevertheless, it runs counter to the tendency to asceticism which has been so powerful since the Reformation, and it is also difficult to reconcile with the strictly Aristotelian theory of knowledge and of the structure of the human mind as taught by St. Thomas. Recently, however, Pere Picard has made a fresh survey of the problem, and has endeavored to show that St. Thomas himself, in his commentary on the Sentences, admits the existence of this obscure intuition of God, and uses it as a proof of the soul's resemblance to the Trinity which was so often insisted on by St. Augustine.[7] He does not, however, base his view in the argument from authority so much as on general theological considerations, as the hypothesis which is most in harmony with the teaching and experience of Catholic mystics. Certainly, it seems, the existence of an obscure but profound and continuous intuition of God provides a far more satisfactory basis for an explanation of the facts of religious experience, as we see them in history, than a theory which leaves no place for any experience of spiritual reality, except a merely inferential rational knowledge on the one hand and on the other a revelation

which is entirely derived from supernatural faith and has no natural psychological basis.

1. St. Thomas himself insists on the fundamental agreement of the two theories.
2. F. D. Joret, O.P., *La Contemplation Mystique d'apres St. Thomas d'Aquin*. Bruges, 1923, pp. 83-90.
3. M. Maritain admits the possibility of this kind of intuition, but he regards it as an anomalous form of experience which is neither metaphysical nor mystical. Cf. "Experience Mystique et Philosophie," in *Revue de Philosophie*, November, 1926, p. 606.
4. St. Bonaventure, in *II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2.
5. Ruysbroeck, *The Mirror of Eternal Salvation*, chap. VIII.
6. Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, Bk. II, chap. LVII (trans. C.A. Wynschenk Dom).
7. Cf. "La Saisie immediate de Dieu dans les Etats Mystiques." by G. Picard, in *Revue d'Ascetique et de Mystique*, 1923, pp. 37-63 156-181. The subject is also discussed by Pere Hugueny, O.P., in his introduction to the new French translation of Tauler (Vol. I, 73-154). He concludes that Tauler's doctrine is based upon that of Albertus Magnus, and diverges on several points from that of St. Thomas.

11. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"The Catholic Church," taken from chapter 2 of *The Making of Europe* (1932).

The influence of Christianity on the formation of the European unity is a striking example of the way in which the course of historical development is modified and determined by the intervention of new spiritual influences. History is not to be explained as a closed order in which each stage is the inevitable and logical result of that which has gone before. There is in it always a mysterious and inexplicable element, due not only to the influence of chance or the initiative of the individual genius, but also to the creative power of spiritual forces.

Thus in the case of the ancient world we can see that the artificial material civilisation of the Roman Empire stood in need of some religious inspiration of a more profound kind than was contained in the official cults of the city state; and we might have guessed that this spiritual deficiency would lead to an infiltration of oriental religious influences, such as actually occurred during the imperial age. But no one could have foretold the actual appearance of Christianity and the way in which it would transform the life and thought of ancient civilisation.

The religion which was destined to conquer the Roman Empire and to become permanently identified with the life of the West was indeed of purely oriental origin and had no roots in the European past or in the traditions of classical

civilisation. But its orientalism was not that of the cosmopolitan world of religious syncretism in which Greek philosophy mingled with the cults and traditions of the ancient East, but that of a unique and highly individual national tradition which held itself jealously aloof from the religious influences of its oriental environment, no less than from all contact with the dominant Western culture.

The Jews were the one people of the Empire who had remained obstinately faithful to their national traditions in spite of the attractions of the Hellenistic culture, which the other peoples of the Levant accepted even more eagerly than their descendants have received the civilisation of modern Europe. Although Christianity by its very nature broke with the exclusive nationalism of Judaism and assumed a universal mission, it also claimed the succession of Israel and based its appeal not on the common principles of Hellenistic thought, but on the purely Hebraic tradition represented by the Law and the Prophets. The primitive Church regarded itself as the second Israel, the heir of the Kingdom which was promised to the People of God; and consequently it preserved the ideal of spiritual segregation and the spirit of irreconcilable opposition to the Gentile world that had inspired the whole Jewish tradition.

It was this sense of historic continuity and social solidarity which distinguished the Christian Church from the mystery religions and the other oriental cults of the period, and made it from the first the only real rival and alternative to the official religious unity of the Empire. It is true that it did not attempt to combat or to replace the Roman Empire as a political organism. It was a supernatural society, the polity of the world to come, and it recognized the rights and claims of the state in the present order. But, on the other hand, it could not accept the ideals of the Hellenistic culture or co-operate in the social life of the Empire. The idea of citizenship, which was the fundamental idea of the classical culture, was transferred by Christianity to the spiritual order. In the existing social order Christians were *peregrini* - strangers and foreigners - their true citizenship was in the Kingdom of God, and even in the present world their most vital social relationship was found in their membership of the Church, not in that of the city or the Empire.

Thus the Church was, if not a state within the state, at least an ultimate and autonomous society. It had its own organization and hierarchy, its system of government and law, and its rules of membership and initiation. It appealed to all those who failed to find satisfaction in the existing order, the poor and the oppressed, the unprivileged classes, above all those who revolted against the spiritual emptiness and corruption of the dominant material culture, and who felt the need of a new spiritual order and a religious view of life. And so it became the focus of the forces of disaffection and opposition to the dominant culture in a far more fundamental sense than any movement of political or economic discontent. It

was a protest not against material injustice but against the spiritual ideals of the ancient world and its whole social ethos.

This opposition finds an inspired expression in the book of the Apocalypse, which was composed in the province of Asia at a time when the Church was threatened with persecution owing to the public enforcement of the imperial cult of Rome and the Emperor in the time of Domitian. The state priesthood that was organized in the cities of the province is described as the False Prophet that causes men to worship the Beast (the Roman Empire) and its image, and to receive its seal, without which no man might buy or sell. Rome herself, whom Virgil described as "like the Phrygian Mother of the Gods, crowned with towers, rejoicing in her divine offspring," [1] now appears as the Woman sitting upon the Beast, the mother of harlots and abominations, drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And all the heavenly hosts and the souls of the martyrs are shown waiting for the coming of the day of vengeance when the power of the Beast shall be destroyed and Rome shall be cast down for ever, like a mill-stone into the sea.

This is an impressive witness to the gathering forces of spiritual hostility and condemnation that were sapping the moral foundations of the Roman power. The Empire had alienated the strongest and most living forces in the life of the age, and it was this internal contradiction, far more than war or external invasion, that caused the downfall of ancient civilization. Before ever the barbarians had broken into the Empire and before the economic breakdown had taken place, the life had passed out of the city-state and the spirit of classical civilization was dying. The cities were still being built with their temples and statues and theatres as in the Hellenistic age, but it was a sham façade that hid the decay within. The future lay with the infant Church.

Nevertheless, Christianity won the victory only after a long and bitter struggle. The Church grew under the shadow of the executioner's rods and axes, and every Christian lived in peril of physical torture and death. The thought of martyrdom coloured the whole outlook of early Christianity. It was not only a fear, it was also an ideal and a hope. For the martyr was the complete Christian. He was the champion and hero of the new society in its conflict with the old, and even the Christians who had failed in the moment of trial - the *lapsi* - looked on the martyrs as their saviours and protectors. We have only to read the epistles of St. Cyprian or the *Testimonia* which he compiled as a manual for the "milites Christi," or the treatise *de Laude Martyrum* which goes under his name, to realize the passionate exaltation which the ideal of martyrdom produced in the Christian mind. It attains almost lyrical expression in the following passage of St. Cyprian's epistle to Nemesianus, which is deservedly famous: "O feet blessedly bound, which are loosed not by the smith but by the Lord! O feet blessedly bound, which are guided to paradise in the way of salvation! O feet bound for the present time in the world

that they may be always free with the Lord! O feet lingering for a while among the fetters and crossbars but to run quickly to Christ on a glorious road! Let cruelty, envious or malignant, hold you here in its bonds and chains as long as it will, from this earth and from these sufferings you shall speedily come to the Kingdom of Heaven. The body is not cherished in the mines with couch and cushions, but it is cherished with the refreshment and solace of Christ. The frame wearied with labours lies prostrate on the ground, but it is no penalty to lie down with Christ. Your limbs unbathed are foul and disfigured with filth; but within they are spiritually cleansed, though the flesh is defiled. There the bread is scarce, but man liveth not by bread alone but by the Word of God. Shivering, you want clothing; but he who puts on Christ is abundantly clothed and adorned." [2] This is not the pious rhetoric of a fashionable preacher; it is the message of a confessor, who was himself soon to suffer death for the faith, to his fellow bishops and clergy and "the rest of the brethren in the mines, martyrs of God."

In an age when the individual was becoming the passive instrument of an omnipotent and universal state it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of such an ideal, which was the ultimate stronghold of spiritual freedom. More than any other factor it secured the ultimate triumph of the Church, for it rendered plain to all the fact that Christianity was the one remaining power in the world which could not be absorbed in the gigantic mechanism of the new servile state.

And while the Church was involved in this life-and-death struggle with the imperial state and its Hellenistic culture, it also had to carry on a difficult and obscure warfare with the growing forces of oriental religion. Under the veneer of cosmopolitan Hellenistic civilisation, the religious traditions of the ancient East were still alive and were gradually permeating the thought of the age. The mystery religions of Asia Minor spread westwards in the same way as Christianity itself, and the religion of Mithras accompanied the Roman armies to the Danube and the Rhine and the British frontier. The Egyptian worship of Isis and the Syrian cults of Adonis and Atargatis, Hadad of Baalbek, and the Sun-God of Emesa, followed the rising tide of Syrian trade and migration to the West, while in the oriental underworld new religions, like Manichaeism, were coming into existence, and the immemorial traditions of Babylonian astral theology were appearing in new forms. [3]

But the most characteristic product of this movement of oriental syncretism was the Gnostic theosophy, which was an ever-present danger to the Christian Church during the second and third centuries. It was based on the fundamental dualism of spirit and matter and the association of the material world with the evil principle, a dualism which derived more, perhaps, from Greek and Anatolian influences than from Persia, since we find it already fully developed in the Orphic mythology and in the philosophy of Empedocles. But this central idea was enveloped in a dense

growth of magic and theosophical speculation which was undoubtedly derived from Babylonian and oriental sources.

This strange oriental mysticism possessed an extraordinary attraction for the mind of a society which, no less than that of India six centuries before, was inspired with a profound sense of disillusionment and the thirst for deliverance. Consequently, it was not merely an exterior danger to Christianity; it threatened to absorb it altogether, by transforming the historical figure of Jesus into a member of the hierarchy of divine Aeons, and by substituting the ideal of the deliverance of the soul from the contamination of the material world for the Christian ideals of the redemption of the body and the realisation of the Kingdom of God as a social and historical reality. And its influence was felt not only directly in the great Christian-Gnostic systems of Valentinus and Basilides, but also indirectly through a multitude of minor oriental heresies that form an unbroken series from Simon Magus in the apostolic age down to the Paulicians of the Byzantine period. In the second century this movement had grown so strong that it captured three of the most distinguished representatives of oriental Christianity, Marcion in Asia Minor, and Tatian and Bardesanes, who were the founders of the new Aramaic literature, in Syria.

If Christianity had been merely one among the oriental sects and mystery religions of the Roman Empire it must inevitably have been drawn into this oriental syncretism. It survived because it possessed a system of ecclesiastical organization and a principle of social authority that distinguished it from all the other religious bodies of the age. From the first, as we have seen, the Church regarded itself as the New Israel, "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart." [4] This holy society was a theocracy inspired and governed by the Holy Spirit, and its rulers, the apostles, were the representatives not of the community but of the Christ, who had chosen them and transmitted to them His divine authority. This conception of a divine apostolic authority remained as the foundation of ecclesiastical order in the post-apostolic period. The "overseers" and elders, who were the rulers of the local churches, were regarded as the successors of the apostles, and the churches that were of direct apostolic origin enjoyed a peculiar prestige and authority among the rest.

This was the case above all with the Roman Church, for, as Peter had possessed a unique position among the Twelve, so the Roman Church, which traced its origins to St. Peter, possessed an exceptional position among the churches. Even in the first century, almost before the close of the apostolic age, we see an instance of this in the authoritative intervention of Rome in the affairs of the Church of Corinth. The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (c. A.D. 96) gives the clearest possible expression to the ideal of hierarchic order which was the principle of the new society. [5] The author argues that order is the law of the universe. And as it is

the principle of external nature so, too, is it the principle of the Christian society. The faithful must preserve the same discipline and subordination of rank that marked the Roman army. As Christ is from God, so the apostles are from Christ, and the apostles, in turn, "appointed their first converts, testing them by the spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of the future believers. And, knowing there would be strife for the title of bishop, they afterwards added the codicil that if they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministry." Therefore it is essential that the Church of Corinth should put aside strife and envy and submit to the lawfully appointed presbyters, who represent the apostolic principle of divine authority. [6]

The doctrine of St. Clement is characteristically Roman in its insistence on social order and moral discipline, but it has much in common with the teaching of the Pastoral Epistles, and there can be no doubt that it represents the traditional spirit of the primitive Church. It was this spirit that saved Christianity from sinking in the morass of oriental syncretism.

In his polemic against the Gnostics in the following century St. Irenaeus appeals again and again to the social authority of the apostolic tradition against the wild speculations of Eastern theosophy. "The true Gnosis is the teaching of the apostles and the primitive constitution of the Church throughout the world." And with him also it is the Roman Church that is the centre of unity and the guarantee of orthodox belief. [7]

In this way the primitive Church survived both the perils of heresy and schism and the persecution of the imperial power and organised itself as a universal hierarchical society over against the pagan world-state. Thence it was but a step to the conquest of the Empire itself, and to its establishment as the official religion of the reorganised Constantinian state. Whether Constantine himself was moved by considerations of policy in his attitude to Christianity is a debatable question. [8] No doubt he was sincere in the conviction he expresses in his letter to the provincials: that he had been raised up by the Divinity from the far west of Britain to destroy the enemies of Christianity, who would otherwise have ruined the Republic; and this belief may well have been reinforced by a conviction that the order and universality of the Christian Church predestined it to be the spiritual ally and complement of the universal Empire. In any case, this was the light in which the official Christian panegyrist of Constantine, Eusebius of Caesarea, interpreted the course of events. "One God," he writes, "was proclaimed to all mankind; and at the same time one universal power, the Roman Empire, arose and flourished. The enduring and implacable hatred of nation for nation was now removed; and as the knowledge of one God and one way of religion and salvation, even the doctrine of Christ, was made known to all mankind; so at the selfsame period, the entire dominion of the Roman Empire being vested in a single sovereign, profound peace

reigned throughout the world. And thus, by the express appointment of the same God, two roots of blessing, the Roman Empire and the doctrine of Christian piety, sprang up together for the benefit of mankind." [9]

In fact the official recognition of the Church and its association with the Roman state became the determining factor in the development of a new social order. The Church received its liberty and in return it brought to the Empire its resources of spiritual and social vitality. Under the later Empire the Church came more and more to take the place of the old civic organisation as the organ of popular consciousness. It was not itself the cause of the downfall of the city state, which was perishing from its own weakness, but it provided a substitute through which the life of the people could find new modes of expression. The civic institutions which had been the basis of ancient society had become empty forms; in fact, political rights had become transformed into fiscal obligations. The citizenship of the future lay in the membership of the Church. In the Church the ordinary man found material and economic assistance and spiritual liberty. The opportunities for spontaneous social activity and free co-operation which were denied by the bureaucratic despotism of the state continued to exist in the spiritual society of the Church, and consequently the best of the thought and practical ability of the age was devoted to its service.

Thus in every city of the later Empire, side by side with the old citizen body, we find the new people of the Christian Church, the "plebs Christi," and as the former lost its social privileges and its political rights, the latter gradually came to take its place. In the same way the power and prestige of the clergy - the Christian *ordo* - increased as those of the civil *ordo* - the municipal magistracy - declined, until the bishop became the most important figure in the life of the city and the representative of the whole community. The office of the bishop was indeed the vital institution of the new epoch. He wielded almost unlimited power in his diocese, he was surrounded by an aura of supernatural prestige, and yet, at the same time, his was an essentially popular authority, since it sprang from the free choice of the people. Moreover, in addition to his religious authority and his prestige as a representative of the people, he possessed recognized powers of jurisdiction not only over his clergy and the property of the Church, but as a judge and arbitrator in all cases in which his decision was invoked, even though the case had already been brought before a secular court. Consequently, the episcopate was the one power in the later Empire capable of counter-balancing and resisting the all-pervading tyranny of the imperial bureaucracy. Even the most arrogant official feared to touch a bishop, and there are numerous instances of episcopal intervention not only on behalf of the rights of individuals, but also of those of cities and provinces.

So, too, the Church came to the economic help of the people in the growing

material distress and impoverishment of the later Empire. Its vast endowments were at that time literally "the patrimony of the poor," and in great cities like Rome and Alexandria the Church by degrees made itself responsible for the feeding of the poor as well as for the maintenance of hospitals and orphanages.

St. Ambrose declared that it was a shameful thing to have gold vessels on the altar when there were captives to be ransomed, and at a later period when Italy was devastated by famine and barbarian invasion St. Gregory is said to have taken his responsibilities so seriously that when a single poor man was found dead of hunger in Rome, he abstained from saying Mass as though he were guilty of his death.

This social activity explains the popularity of the Church among the masses of the people and the personal influence of the bishops, but it also involved new problems in the relation of the Church to secular society. The Church had become so indispensable to the welfare of society, and so closely united with the existing social order, that there was a danger that it would become an integral part of the imperial state. The germs of this development are already to be seen in Origen's theory of the Church. [10] He draws an elaborate parallel between the Christian society and that of the Empire. He compares the local church to the body of citizens in each city - the *Ecclesia* - and as the latter had its *Boulé* or *Curia* and its magistrates or archons, so, too, the Christian Church has its *ordo* or clergy, and its ruler, the bishop. The whole assembly of churches, "the whole body of the synagogues of the Church," corresponds to the unity of the cities in the Empire. Thus the Church is, as it were, "the cosmos of the cosmos," and he even goes so far as to envisage the conversion of the Empire to Christianity and the unification of the two societies in one universal "city of God."

In the fourth century the ecclesiastical organization had become closely modeled on that of the Empire. Not only did each city have its bishop, the limits of whose see corresponded with those of the city territory, but the civil province was also an ecclesiastical province under a metropolitan who resided in the provincial capital. By the end of the fourth century an effort was even being made to create an ecclesiastical unity or "exarchate" corresponding to the civil diocese or group of provinces that was governed by an imperial vicar.

The logical culmination of this development was to make the capital of the Empire also the center of the Church. The solution indeed might seem to have been already provided by the traditional primacy of the Church of Rome, the imperial city. But in the fourth century Rome no longer occupied the same unique position that it had held in the previous centuries. The center of the Mediterranean world had shifted back once more to the Hellenistic east. Since the reorganization of the Empire by Diocletian, the emperors no longer resided at Rome, and the importance of the old capital rapidly declined, especially after the foundation of the new capital at Constantinople in 330.

These changes also affected the position of the Roman Church. Under the early Empire Rome had been an international city and Greek was the language of the Roman Church. But from the third century A.D., Rome and the Roman Church gradually became Latinised, [11] and East and West tended to drift apart. The ecclesiastical aspect of this centrifugal tendency is already visible in the middle of the third century, in the opposition of the Eastern bishops, under St. Firmilian, to Pope Stephen on the question of the re-baptism of heretics, and the tendency became still more marked in the following century. From the time of Constantine onwards the Eastern churches began to look to Constantinople rather than to Rome for guidance, and it was the imperial court rather than the Apostolic See that was the center of unity. This was already evident in the later years of Constantine himself, and his successor, Constantius II, went so far as to anticipate the Caesaropapism of later Byzantine history and to transform the Church of the Eastern provinces into a State Church closely dependent on the imperial government.

The essential organ of the ecclesiastical policy of Constantine and his successors was the General Council, an institution which was not, like the earlier provincial councils, of purely ecclesiastical origin, but owed its existence to the imperial power. [12] The right of convocation was vested in the emperor, and it was he who decided what was to be discussed and ratified the decisions by his imperial sanction. But, though in the hands of a crowned theologian like Constantius or Justinian, the General Council was an instrument of the imperial control of the Church rather than an organ of ecclesiastical self-government, it was also a representative institution, and the great ecumenical councils were the first representative deliberative assemblies that had ever existed. [13] Moreover, the Eastern churches in the fourth century were far from being the passive servants of an Erastian government. They were full of independent spiritual and intellectual life. If the Western Church takes a second place in the ecclesiastical history of the time, it is largely because the great religious forces of the age had their center in the East.

It was in the East that there arose the monastic movement which created the dominant religious ideals of the new age, and though it spread rapidly from one end of the Empire to the other, it continued to derive its inspiration from the hermits and ascetics of the Egyptian desert.

It was the East also that created the new liturgical poetry and the cycle of the liturgical year which was to become the common possession of the Christian Church. [14]

Above all, it was the East that united the Christian tradition with that of Greek philosophical culture and embodied Christian doctrine in a scientific theological system. The foundations of this development had already been laid in the third

century, above all by Origen and the catechetical school of Alexandria, and the work was carried on in the following century by Eusebius in Palestine, by Athanasius at Alexandria, and finally, by the three great Cappadocian Greeks, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. Thanks to their work the Church was able to formulate a profound and exact intellectual statement of Christian doctrine and to avoid the danger of an unintelligent traditionalism on the one hand, and on the other, that of a superficial rationalisation of Christianity, such as we find in Arianism.

No doubt this process of theological development was accompanied by violent controversies and the intellectualism of Greek theology often degenerated into metaphysical hair-splitting. There is some justification for Duchesne's remark that the Eastern Church would have done well to think less of speculative questions about the Divine Nature and more about the duty of unity; [15] but the development of scientific theology was not the only or even the principal cause of heresy and schism, and without that development the whole intellectual life of Christendom would have been immeasurably poorer.

In order to realise what the West owed to the East, we have only to measure the gap that divides St. Augustine from St. Cyprian. Both of them were Westerners, and Africans, both of them owed much to the older Latin tradition of Tertullian. But, while Cyprian never indulges in philosophical speculations and is not even a theologian in the scientific sense of the word, Augustine yields nothing to the greatest of the Greek Fathers in philosophical profundity. He is, as Harnack puts it, an Origen and an Athanasius in one, and something more as well.

This vast progress is not to be explained as a spontaneous development of Western Christianity, even though we admit the supreme personal genius of Augustine himself. The theological development of the West in the century that followed Tertullian was in fact a retrograde one, and writers such as Arnobius and Commodian possess no theology, but only a millenarist traditionalism. [16]

The change came with the introduction into the West of Greek theological science during the second half of the fourth century. The agents of this transformation were the Latin Fathers, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Rufinus of Aquileia, and the converted rhetorician, Victorinus; while at the same time St. Martin of Tours and Cassian of Marseilles, both of them natives of the Danube provinces, brought to the West the new ideals of oriental asceticism and monasticism. [17]

The Latin Fathers, apart from St. Augustine, were not profound metaphysicians nor even original thinkers. In theological matters they were the pupils of the Greeks, and their literary activity was mainly devoted to making the intellectual riches that had been accumulated by the Christian East available in the Latin world. Yet at the same time they were the heirs of the Western tradition, and they combined with

their newly acquired knowledge the moral strength and the sense of discipline that had always characterised the Latin Church. Their interest in theological problems was always subordinated to their loyalty to tradition and to the cause of Catholic unity. In the Western provinces the Christians were still but a small minority of the population, and consequently the Church was less exposed to internal dissensions and still preserved the spiritual independence that it had possessed in pre-Constantinian times.

This is very evident in the case of the Arian controversy, for Arianism appeared in the West as not so much an internal danger to Christian orthodoxy as an attack from without on the spiritual liberty of the Church. The Western attitude is admirably expressed in the remonstrance which Hosius, the great bishop of Cordova, addressed to the Emperor Constantius II: "I have been a confessor," he wrote, "in the persecution that your grandfather Maximian raised against the Church. If you wish to renew it you will find me ready to suffer all rather than to betray the truth and to shed innocent blood ... Remember that you are a mortal man. Fear the day of judgment ... Do not interfere in ecclesiastical affairs, or dictate anything about them to us, but rather learn from us what you ought to believe concerning them. God has given to you the government of the Empire and to us that of the Church. Whosoever dares to impugn your authority, sets himself against the order of God. Take care lest you likewise render yourself guilty of a great crime by usurping the authority of the Church. We are commanded to give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. It is not lawful for us to arrogate to ourselves the imperial authority. You also have no power in the ministry of holy things." [18]

St. Hilary of Poitiers goes still further and attacks the emperor with all the resources of his classical style. "We are fighting today," he writes, "against a wily persecutor, an insinuating enemy, against Constantius the antichrist, who does not scourge the back, but tickles the belly, who does not condemn to life but enriches to death, who instead of thrusting men into the liberty of prison, honours them in the slavery of the palace . . . who does not cut off the head with the sword, but slays the soul with gold ..." [19]

The language of Lucifer of Cagliari is still more uncompromising, and the very titles of his pamphlets, "On royal apostates," "On not sparing the persons of those who offend against God," or "On the duty of martyrdom," breathe a spirit of hostility and defiance against the secular powers that recalls that of Tertullian.

Thus the Western Church was far from being dependent upon the state; the danger was rather that it might have become permanently alienated from the Empire and from the traditions of ancient civilisation, like the Donatist Church in Africa, or the Church in Egypt after the fifth century.

This danger was averted, on the one hand, by the return of the Western Empire to

orthodoxy under the house of Valentinian, and on the other, by the influence of St. Ambrose and the new development of Christian culture. In St. Ambrose, above all, the Western Church found a leader who could maintain the rights of the Church no less vigorously than St. Hilary, but who was at the same time a loyal friend of the emperors and a devoted servant of the Empire.

Ambrose was indeed a Roman of the Romans, born and trained in the traditions of the imperial civil service, and he brought to the service of the Church the public spirit and the devotion to duty of a Roman magistrate. His devotion to Christianity did nothing to weaken his loyalty to Rome, for he believed that the true faith would be a source of new strength to the Empire and that as the Church triumphed over paganism so the Christian Empire would triumph over the barbarians.

"Go forth," he wrote to Gratian, on the eve of his expedition against the Goths, "go forth under the shield of faith and girt with the sword of the Spirit; go forth to the victory promised of old time and foretold in the oracles of God." . . . "No military eagles, no flight of birds here lead the van of our army, but Thy Name, Lord Jesus, and Thy worship. This is no land of unbelievers, but the land whose custom it is to send forth confessors - Italy; Italy oft times tempted but never drawn away; Italy whom your Majesty has long defended and now again rescued from the barbarian." [20]

Thus Ambrose is the first exponent in the West of the ideal of a Christian state, as was Eusebius of Caesarea in the East. But he differs utterly from Eusebius in his conception of the duties of the Christian prince and the relations between the Church and the state. Eusebius' attitude to Constantine is already that of a Byzantine court bishop, and he surrounds the figure of the emperor with a nimbus of supernatural authority such as had always characterized the theocratic monarchies of the ancient East. But Ambrose belongs to a different tradition. He stands midway between the old classical ideal of civic responsibility and the mediaeval ideal of the supremacy of the spiritual power. He has something of the Roman magistrate and something of the mediaeval pontiff. In his eyes the law of the Church - the *jus sacerdotale* - could only be administered by the magistrates of the Church - the bishops, and even the emperor himself was subject to their authority. "The Emperor," he wrote, "is within the Church, not over it"; and "in matters of faith bishops are wont to be the judges of Christian emperors, not emperors of bishops." [21] And accordingly, while Eusebius addresses Constantine as a sacred being exalted above human judgment, [22] Ambrose did not hesitate to rebuke the great Theodosius and to call him to account for his acts of injustice. "Thou art a man, temptation has come upon thee. Conquer it. For sin is not removed save by tears and repentance." [23]

The authority of St. Ambrose had a far-reaching influence on the ideals of the Western Church, for it helped to strengthen the alliance between the Church and

the Empire, while at the same time it preserved the traditional Western conception of authority in the Church. In the East the Church was continually forced to turn to the Emperor and to the councils which he convoked in order to preserve its unity; in the West the conciliar system never attained such importance, and it was to the Roman See that the Church looked as the center of unity and ecclesiastical order. The attempts to define the jurisdiction of the Papacy by the Council of Sardica in 343, and by the Emperor Gratian in 378, are of minor importance in comparison with the traditional belief in the apostolic prerogative of the Roman See and in the "*Romana fides*" as the norm of Catholic orthodoxy. In the fifth century this development was completed by St. Leo, who united the conviction of St. Ambrose in the providential mission of the Roman Empire with the traditional doctrine of the primacy of the Apostolic See; while, earlier in the same century, St. Augustine had completed the Western theological development and endowed the Church with a system of thought which was to form the intellectual capital of Western Christendom for more than a thousand years.

And thus, when the Western Empire fell before the barbarians, the Church was not involved in its disaster. It was an autonomous order which possessed its own principle of unity and its own organs of social authority. It was able at once to become the heir and representative of the old Roman culture and the teacher and guide of the new barbarian peoples. In the East it was not so. The Byzantine Church became so closely bound up with the Byzantine Empire that it formed a single social organism which could not be divided without being destroyed. Anything that threatened the unity of the Empire also endangered the unity of the Church. And so it was that while the Eastern Empire resisted the attacks of the barbarians, the Eastern Church lost its unity owing to the reaction of the oriental nationalities to the ecclesiastical centralization of the Byzantine state. Among the oriental peoples, nationality took on a purely religious form and the state was ultimately swallowed up by the Church.

But although from the fifth century the two halves of the Empire drifted apart in religion as well as in politics, the division was not complete. The Papacy still preserved a certain primacy in the East, for as Harnack says, "even in the eyes of the Orientals there attached to the Roman Bishop a special something, which was wanting to all the rest, a nimbus which conferred upon him a special authority." [24] And similarly, the Western Church still regarded itself as in a sense the Church of the Empire, and continued to recognise the ecumenical character of the General Councils which were convoked by the Byzantine Emperor.

These conditions characterised the whole period with which we are about to deal. It was not until the eleventh century that the religious bond which united East and West was finally destroyed and Western Christendom emerged as an independent unity, separated alike in culture and religion from the rest of the old Roman world.

Endnotes

1. *Qualis Berecynthia mater Invenitur curru Phrygias turrita per urbes Laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes Omnis caelicolas, omnis supera alta tenentis.* Aeneid, VI, 785.
2. St. Cyprian, Ep. LXXVI, trans. R. E. Wallis.
3. In recent years particular attention has been devoted to the Mandaeans or "Christians of St. John," of Southern Babylonia, the only one of these sects that has survived to modern times. Lidzbarski and Reitzenstein have attempted to prove that this sect was originally connected with the Essenes and with the disciples of John the Baptist, and consequently that the Mandaean writings have an important bearing on the question of Christian origins. S. A. Pallis, however, has shown (in his Mandaean Studies, 1919) that the parallels with Judaism are superficial and of relatively recent origin and that Mandaeanism is essentially a Gnostic sect which subsequently, in Sassanian times, came under the influence of Zoroastrian ideas. He also rejects the earlier theory of Brandt that the fundamental stratum in Mandaean beliefs is based on ancient Babylonian religion.
4. I Peter ii. 9.
5. So clear is this, that Sohm went so far as to regard this epistle as the starting-point of the juridical conception of the Church, which in his view abruptly replaced the earlier "charismatic" view. But, as Harnack points out, the conception of a divine apostolic authority is as old as the Church itself and appears clearly enough in the decree of the Council of Jerusalem. Acts xv, 23-27.
6. I Clement, XX, XXXVII, XL-XLIV, etc.
7. "By its (the Roman Church's) tradition and by its faith announced to men, which has been transmitted to us by the succession of bishops, we confound all those who in any way by caprice or vainglory or by blindness and perversity of will gather where they ought not. For to this Church, on account of its higher origin, it is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful from all sides, should resort, in which the tradition from the Apostles has always been preserved by those that are from all parts" (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, iii). The expression "propter potentiolem principalitatem" which I have translated as "higher origin" is somewhat disputed. It has often been translated as "more powerful headship" or as "pre-eminent authority" (e.g., in the Ante-Nicene Library translation, Vol. I, p. 261). I think there can be little doubt that *principalitas* = *archaiotes* and refers to the origins of the see, as in the passage of Cyprian, Ep. LIX, 13 - "*navigare audent ad Petri cathedram et Ecclesiam principalem unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est*," where "*principalem*" means the original or earliest church. It is the same argument that Optatus and St. Augustine were to use against the Donatists, as in the lines: *Numerate sacerdotes vel ab ipsa Petri sede, et in ordine illo patrum quis cui*

successit videte: ipsa est petra quam non vincunt superbae infernorum portae. Psalmus c. partem Donat. 18.

8. The question has recently been discussed by Mr. Norman Baynes in the Raleigh Lecture for 1929. He maintains that the dominant motive in Constantine's career was his "conviction of a personal mission entrusted to him by the Christian God," that he "definitely identified himself with Christianity, with the Christian Church and the Christian creed"; and that he believed the prosperity of the Empire to be bound up with the unity of the Catholic Church. Thus the Byzantine ideal of a Roman Empire founded on the orthodox faith and united with the orthodox Church has its source in the vision of Constantine. Constantine the Great and the Christian Church by N. H. Baynes; Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XV. (with very full bibliographical notes on the subject).

9. Oration in Praise of Constantine, XVI.

10. *Contra Celsum*, III, 29, 30. Cf. Battifol, *l'Eglise Naissante*, ch. vii.

11. St. Hippolytus is the last Roman Christian to write in Greek. Novatian in the middle of the third century already writes Latin, although Greek probably remained the liturgical language until the following century.

12. Harnack writes: "In all cases it was a political institution, invented by the greatest of politicians, a two-edged sword which protected the endangered unity of the Church at the price of its independence." (*History of Dogma*, Eng. trans., III, 127.)

13. Cf. H. Gelzer, *Die Konzilien als Reichsparlamente in Ausgewählte Kleine Schriften* (1907). He argues that the Councils followed the precedent of the ancient Senate in their arrangement and forms of procedure.

14. Dom Cabrol has shown how the liturgical cycle was evolved from the local ceremonies connected with the Holy places at Jerusalem in the fourth century. The ceremonies of Holy Week at Rome were in origin an imitation of this local cycle, and the group of churches round the Lateran at Rome, St. Maria Maggiore, Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme, St. Anastasia, etc., in which these ceremonies were performed, reproduced the sanctuaries of the holy places at Jerusalem. Cabrol, *Les Origines Liturgiques*, Conf. VIII.

15. *Que l'on eût été bien inspiré, si au lieu de tant philosopher sur la terminologie, d'opposer l'union physique à l'union hypostatique, les deux natures qui n'en font qu'une à l'unique hypostase qui régit les deux natures, on se fût un peu plus préoccupé de choses moins sublimes et bien autrement vitales. On alambiquait l'unité du Christ, un mystère; on sacrifiait l'unité de l'Eglise, un devoir.* Duchesne, *Eglises Séparées*, p. 57.

16. The backwardness and isolation of the West in theological matters is shown by the fact that St. Hilary himself admits that he had never heard of the Nicene faith until the time of his exile in A.D. 356. (*De Synodis*, 91.)

17. We may also note the introduction of liturgical poetry into the West by Hilary and Ambrose.
18. The letter is given in Greek by Athanasius, *History of the Arians*, 44. I follow Tillemont's French version in *Memoires*, Tom. VII, 313.
19. *Contra Constantium imperatorem*, 5.
20. *De Fide*, II, xvi. 136, 142 (trans. H. de Romestin).
21. Ambrose, *Ep.* XXIV, 4, 5.
22. Cf. the whole of his Oration in Praise of Constantine. E.g., he writes, "Let me lay before thee, victorious and mighty Constantine, some of the mysteries of His sacred truth: not as presuming to instruct thee who art thyself taught of God; nor to disclose to thee those secret wonders which He Himself not through the agency or work of man, but through our common Saviour and the frequent light of His Divine presence has long since revealed and unfolded to thy view; but in the hope of leading the unlearned to the light of truth and displaying before those who know them not, the causes and motives of thy pious deeds." Cap. XI.
23. Ambrose, *Ep.* LI, 11.
24. *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), III, 226. He goes on to say, "Yet this nimbus was not sufficiently bright to bestow upon its possessor an unimpeachable authority; it was rather so nebulous that it was possible to disregard it without running counter to the spirit of the universal Church." The Greek ecclesiastical historians, Socrates and Sozomen, both of them laymen and lawyers, are impartial witnesses to the position accorded to the Roman see at Constantinople in the fifth century, as Harnack notes (*ibid.*, note 2). Cf. Batiffol, *Le Siège Apostolique*, 411-416.

12. CHRISTIANITY AS THE SOUL OF THE WEST

"Christianity as the Soul of the West," from *The Modern Dilemma* (1932).

The modern dilemma is essentially a spiritual one, and every one of its main aspects, moral, political and scientific, brings us back to the need of a religious solution. The one remaining problem that we have got to consider is where that religious solution is to be found.

Must we look for some new religion to meet the new circumstances of the changing world, or does the Christian faith still supply the answer that we need?

In the first place, it is obvious that it is no light matter to throw over the Christian

tradition. It means a good deal more to us than we are apt to realise.

As I have pointed out, it is the Christian tradition that is the most fundamental element in Western culture. It lies at the base not only of Western religion, but also of Western morals and Western social idealism. To a far greater extent than science or philosophy, it has determined our attitude to life and the final aims of our civilisation. Yet on the other hand we cannot fail to recognise that it is just this religious element in Western culture that is most challenged at the present day. The majority of men, whatever their political beliefs may be, are prepared to accept science and democracy and humanitarianism as essential elements in modern civilisation, but they are far less disposed to admit the importance of religion in general and of Christianity in particular. They regard Christianity as out of touch with modern life and inconsistent with modern knowledge. Modern life, they say, deals with facts, while Christianity deals with unproved and incomprehensible dogmas. A man can indulge in religious beliefs, so long as he treats them as a private luxury; but they have no bearing on social life, and society can get on very well without them.

Moreover, behind this vague tendency to treat religion as a side issue in modern life, there exists a strong body of opinion that is actively hostile to Christianity and that regards the destruction of positive religion as absolutely necessary to the advance of modern culture. This attitude is most in evidence in Soviet Russia, where, for the first time in the history of the world, we see a great state, or rather a world empire, that officially rejects any species of religion and has adopted a social and educational policy inspired by militant atheism. But this tendency is not confined to Russia or to the followers of communism. Both in Europe and America there is a strong anti-religious movement that includes many of our ablest modern writers and a few men of science. It seeks not only to destroy religion, but also to revolutionise morals and to discredit the ethical ideals which have hitherto inspired Western society.

This, I think, is one of the most significant features of the present situation. Critics of religion in the past have, as a rule, been anxious to dissociate the religious from the moral issue. They were often strict moralists, like the late John Morley, who managed to clothe atheism in the frock coat and top hat of Victorian respectability. But today the solidarity of religion and morals is admitted on both sides. If Europe abandons Christianity, it must also abandon its moral code. And conversely the modern tendency to break away from traditional morality strengthens the intellectual revolt against religious belief.

At first sight it seems as though the forces of change in the modern world were definitely hostile to religion, and that we are rapidly approaching a purely secular state of civilisation. But it is not so easy to get rid of religion as we might imagine. It is easy enough for the individual to adopt a negative attitude of critical

scepticism. But if society as a whole abandons all positive beliefs, it is powerless to resist the disintegrating effects of selfishness and private interest. Every society rests in the last resort on the recognition of common principles and common ideals, and if it makes no moral or spiritual appeal to the loyalty of its members, it must inevitably fall to pieces.

In the past, society found this unifying principle in its religious beliefs; in fact religion was the vital centre of the whole social organism. And if a state did not already possess a common religious basis, it attempted to create one artificially, like the official Caesar-worship that became the state religion of the Roman Empire. And so, today, if the state can no longer appeal to the old moral principles that belong to the Christian tradition, it will be forced to create a new official faith and new moral principles which will be binding on its citizens.

Here again Russia supplies the obvious illustration. The Communist rejection of religion and Christian morality has not led to the abandonment of social control and the unrestricted freedom of opinion in matters of belief. On the contrary, it has involved an intensification of social control over the beliefs and the spiritual life of the individual citizen. In fact, what the Communists have done is not to get rid of religion, but merely to substitute a new and stricter Communist religion for the old official orthodoxy. The Communist Party is a religious sect which exists to spread the true faith. It has its Inquisition for the detection and punishment of heresy. It employs the weapon of excommunication against disloyal or unorthodox members. It possesses in the writings of Marx its infallible scriptures, and it reveres in Lenin, if not a God, at least a saviour and a prophet.

It may be said that this is an abnormal development due to the excesses of the Russian temperament. But it is abnormal only in its exaggerations. The moment that a society claims the complete allegiance of its members, it assumes a quasi-religious authority. For since man is essentially spiritual, any power that claims to control the whole man is forced to transcend relative and particular aims and to enter the sphere of absolute values, which is the realm of religion. On the other hand, if the state consents to the limitation of its aims to the political sphere, it has to admit that its ideal is only a relative one and that it must accept the ultimate supremacy of spiritual ideals which lie outside its province.

This is the solution that Western society has hitherto chosen, but it implies the existence of an independent spiritual power, whether it be a religious faith or a common moral ideal. If these are absent, the state is forced to claim an absolute and almost religious authority, though not necessarily in the same way that the Communist state has done. We can easily conceive a different type of secularism that conforms to the needs of capitalist society: indeed, we are witnessing the emergence of something of the kind in the United States, though it is still somewhat coloured by survivals from the older Protestant tradition.

And so too in Western Europe the tendency seems all towards the development of a purely secular type of culture which subordinates the whole of life to practical and economic ends and leaves no room for any independent spiritual activity. Nevertheless a civilisation that fails to satisfy the needs of man's spiritual nature cannot be permanently successful. It produces a state of spiritual conflict and moral maladjustment which weakens the vitality of the whole social organism. This is why our modern machine-made civilisation, in spite of the material benefits that it has conferred, is marked by a feeling of moral unrest and social discontent which was absent from the old religious cultures, although the lot of the ordinary man in them was infinitely harder from the material point of view.

You can give men food and leisure and amusements and good conditions of work, and still they will remain unsatisfied. You can deny them all these things, and they will not complain so long as they feel that they have something to die for.

Even if we regard man as an animal, we must admit that he is a peculiar sort of animal that will sacrifice his interests to his ideals—an animal that is capable of martyrdom. The statesman sees this when he appeals to the ordinary man to leave his home and his family and to go and die painfully in a ditch for the sake of his country; and the ordinary man does not refuse to go. The Communist recognises this, when he calls on the proletarian to work harder and to eat less for the sake of the Five-Year Plan and the cause of world revolution. But when the soldier comes back from the war, and the Communist has realised his Utopia, they are apt to feel a certain disproportion between their sacrifices and the fruits of their achievements. Now it is the fundamental contradiction of materialism that it exalts the results of human achievement and at the same time denies the reality of the spiritual forces that have made this achievement possible. All the highest achievements of the human spirit, whether in the order of thought or action or moral being, rest on a spiritual absolute and become impossible in a world of purely economic or even purely human values. It is only in the light of religious experience and of absolute spiritual principles that human nature can recognise its own greatness and realise its higher potentialities.

There is a world of eternal spiritual realities in which and for which the world of man exists. That is the primary intuition that lies at the root of all religion, even of the most primitive kind. The other day I came upon a very good illustration of this, rather unexpectedly, in a passage in one of Edgar Wallace's novels in which he is describing a religious discussion between a white officer and a West African medicine-man. The former says "Where in the world are these gods of whom you are always talking?" and the savage answers, "O man, know that the Gods are not in the world; it is the world that is in the Gods."

In our modern civilised world this truth is no longer obvious; it has become dim and obscured. Nevertheless it cannot be disregarded with impunity. The civilisation

that denies God denies its own foundation. For the glory of man is a dim reflection of the glory of God, and when the latter is denied the former fades.

Consequently the loss of the religious sense which is shown by the indifference or the hostility of the modern world to Christianity is one of the most serious weaknesses of our civilisation and involves a real danger to its spiritual vitality and its social stability. Man's spiritual needs are none the less strong for being unrecognised, and if they are denied their satisfaction through religion, they will find their compensation elsewhere, often in destructive and anti-social activities. The man who is a spiritual misfit becomes morally alienated from society, and whether that alienation takes the form of active hostility, as in the anarchist or the criminal, or merely of passive non-co-operation, as in the selfish individualist, it is bound to be a source of danger. The civilisation that finds no place for religion is a maimed culture that has lost its spiritual roots and is condemned to sterility and decadence. There can, I think, be little doubt that the present phase of intense secularisation is a temporary one, and that it will be followed by a far-reaching reaction. I would even go so far as to suggest that the return to religion promises to be one of the dominant characteristics of the coming age. We all know how history follows a course of alternate action and reaction, and how each century and each generation tends to contradict its predecessor. The Victorians reacted against the Georgians, and we in turn have reacted against the Victorians. We reject their standards and their beliefs, just as they rejected the standards and beliefs of their predecessors.

But behind these lesser waves of change there is a deeper movement that marks the succession of the ages. There are times when the whole spirit of civilisation becomes transformed and the stream of history seems to change its course and flow in a new direction. One such movement occurred sixteen hundred years ago, when the ancient world became Christian. Another occurred in the sixteenth century with the coming of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which brought the mediaeval world to an end and inaugurated a new age. And the forces of transformation that are at work in the world today seem to betoken the coming of another such change in the character of civilisation, which is perhaps even more fundamental than that of the sixteenth century.

All the characteristic movements that marked the culture of the last four centuries are passing away and giving place to new tendencies. We see this not only in politics and the material organisation of life, but also in art and literature and science; for example, in the tendency of modern art to abandon the naturalistic principles that governed its development from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century in favour of new canons of style that have more in common with the art of Byzantium and of the ancient East.

We are not, indeed, going back to the Middle Ages, but we are going forward to a

new age which is no less different from the last age than that was from the mediaeval period.

But if this is so, may it not be that religion is one of the outworn modes of thought that are being abandoned and that the new age will be an age of rationalism and secularism and materialism? This is, as we have seen, the current belief, but then the current beliefs are always out of date. It is difficult to realise how much of current thinking belongs to the past, because it is natural for men's minds to be soaked in the mental atmosphere of the last generation, and it needs a considerable effort to see things as they are and not as other people have seen them. The artist and the philosopher and the scientist, each in his own way, sees life direct, but the majority of men see it at second-hand through the accepted ideas of their society and culture. And consequently, the tendencies that we regard as characteristic of the age are often those that are characteristic of the age that is just passing away rather than of that which is beginning.

Thus in fact the tendencies that are hostile to religion and make for secularism and materialism are not new tendencies. They have been at work in Europe for centuries. The whole modern period from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century was a long process of revolt in which the traditional order of life and its religious foundations were being undermined by criticism and doubt. It was an age of spiritual disintegration in which Christendom was divided into a mass of warring sects, and the Churches that resisted this tendency did so only by a rigid discipline which led to religious persecution and the denial of individual freedom. And this again brought religion into conflict with the spirit of the age; for it was an age of individualism, dominated by the Renaissance ideal of liberty of thought, the Reformation ideal of liberty of conscience, the individualist ideal of economic liberty and the romantic ideal of liberty of feeling and conduct. It was an age of secularism in which the state substituted itself for the Church as the ultimate authority in men's lives and the supreme end of social activity. And finally it was an age which witnessed the triumphant development of scientific materialism, based on a mechanistic theory of the world that seemed to leave no room for human freedom or spiritual reality.

Today this process of revolution has worked itself out, so that there is hardly anything left to revolt against. After destroying the old order, we are beginning to turn round and look for some firm foundation on which we can build anew. Already in social life we are witnessing the passing of individualism and the recovery of a sense of community. In economics for example, the nineteenth-century ideal of unrestricted freedom and individual initiative has given place to an intense demand for social organisation and social control.

Looked at from this point of view, socialism and communism are not purely revolutionary and negative movements. They mark the turn of the tide. Karl Marx

was among the first to feel the insufficiency of the liberal revolutionary tradition and the need for a new effort of social construction. And so he built on what seemed to his age to be an ultimate foundation—the bed-rock of scientific materialism. But today we realise that the materialistic theory of the nineteenth century was no more final than the scientific theories that it superseded. Science, which has explained so much, has ended by explaining away matter itself, and has left us with a skeleton universe of mathematical formulae. Consequently the naive materialism that regarded Matter with a capital M as the one reality is no longer acceptable, for we have come to see that the fundamental thing in the world is not Matter but Form. The universe is not just a mass of solid particles of matter governed by blind determinism and chance. It possesses an organic structure, and the further we penetrate into the nature of reality the more important does this principle of form become.

And so we can no longer dismiss mind and spiritual reality as unreal or less real than the material world, for it is just in mind and in the spiritual world that the element of form is most supreme. It is the mind that is the key of the universe, not matter. In the Beginning was the Word, and it is the creative and informing power of the Word that is the foundation of reality.

And if this is true of the world of nature, it is still more true of the world of society and culture. We must abandon the vain attempt to disregard spiritual unity and to look for a basis of social construction in material and external things. The acceptance of spiritual reality must be the basic element in the culture of the future, for it is spirit that is the principle of unity and matter that is the principle of division. And as soon as this truth is admitted, religion will no longer appear as an unessential and extraneous element in culture, but as its most vital element. For religion is the bond that unites man to spiritual reality, and it is only in religion that society can find the principle of spiritual union of which it stands in need. No secular ideal of social progress or economic efficiency can take the place of this. It is only the ideal of a spiritual order which transcends the relative value of the economic and political world that is capable of overcoming the forces of disintegration and destruction that exist in modern civilisation. The faith of the future cannot be economic or scientific or even moral; it must be religious.

This is just where the new artificial manmade religions, like Positivism, fail. They lack the one thing that is necessary, namely, religious faith. It is a complete mistake to think that we can bring religion up-to-date by making it conform to our wishes and to the dominant prejudices of the moment. If we feel that modern society is out of touch with science, we do not call on the scientists to change their views and to give us something more popular. We realise that we have got to give more thought and more work to science. In the same way the great cause of the decline of religion is that we have lost touch with it, either by abandoning religion altogether,

or by contenting ourselves with a nominal outward profession that does not affect our daily life and our real interests. And the only way to bring religion into touch with the modern world is to give it the first place in our own thought and in our own lives. If we wish to be scientific, we must submit to the authority of science and sacrifice our easy acceptance of things as they seem to the severe discipline of scientific method. And in the same way, if we wish to be religious we must submit to religious authority and accept the principles of the spiritual order. In the material world, man must conform himself to realities, otherwise he will perish. And the same is true in the spiritual world. God comes first, not man. He is more real than the whole external universe. Man passes away, empires and civilisations rise and fall, the stars grow old; God remains.

This is the fundamental truth which runs through the whole of the Bible. There is, of course, a great deal more than this in Christianity. In fact, it is a truth that Christianity shares with practically all the religions of the world. Nevertheless it is just this truth that the modern world, like the ancient world before it, finds most difficult to accept. You even find people who reject it and still wish to call themselves Christians. They water down religion to a series of moral platitudes and then dignify this mixture of vague religiosity and well-meaning moral optimism with the respectable name of Christianity.

A Concrete reality

In reality Christianity is not merely a moral ideal or set of ideas. It is a concrete reality. It is the spiritual order incarnated in a historical person and in a historical society. The spiritual order is just as real as the material order. The reason we do not see it is because we do not look at it. Our interests and our thoughts are elsewhere. A few exceptional men, mystics or philosophers, may find it possible to live habitually on a spiritual plane, but for the ordinary man it is a difficult atmosphere to breathe in. But it is the function of Christianity to bring the spiritual order into contact and relation with the world of man. It is, as it were, a bridge between the two worlds; it brings religion down into human life and it opens the door of the spiritual world to man. Its ideal is not a static and unchanging order like that of the other world religions. It is a spiritual society or organism that has incorporated itself with humanity and that takes into itself as it proceeds all that is vital and permanent in human life and civilisation. It aims at nothing less than the spiritual integration of humanity, its deliverance from the tyranny of material force and the dominion of selfish aims, and its reconstitution in spiritual unity.

And thus there are two principles in Christianity which though they sometimes appear contradictory are equally essential as the two poles of the spiritual order. There is the principle of transcendence, represented by the apocalyptic, ascetic, world-denying element in religion, and there is the principle of catholicity, which

finds expression in the historic, social, world-embracing activity of the Church. A one-sided emphasis on the former of these leads to sectarianism, as we see in the history of the early Christian sects that refused all compromise with secular civilisation and stood aside in an attitude of negative and sterile isolation. But the Catholic Church rejected this solution as a betrayal of its universal mission.

It converted the ancient world; it became the Church of the Empire; and it took up into itself the traditional heritage of culture that the Puritanism of the sectaries despised. In this way the Church overcame the conflict between religion and secular culture that had weakened the forces of Roman society, and laid the foundations of a new civilisation. For more than a thousand years society found its centre of unity and its principle of order in Christianity. But the mediaeval synthesis, both in its Byzantine and mediaeval form, while it gave a more complete expression to the social function of Christianity than any other age has done, ran the risk of compromising the other Christian principle of transcendence by the immersion of the spiritual in the temporal order—the identification of the Church and the World. The history of mediaeval Christendom shows a continuous series of efforts on the part of orthodox reformers and Catharist and "spiritual" heretics against the secularisation and worldliness of the Church. And, as the wealth and intellectual culture of Western Europe increased, the tension grew more acute.

It was the coming of the Renaissance and the whole-hearted acceptance by the Papacy of the new humanist culture that stretched the mediaeval synthesis to breaking-point and produced a new outburst of reforming sectarianism. It is true that Catholicism met the challenge of the Reformation by its own movement of spiritual reform. But it failed to recover the lost unity of Christendom and was forced to lose touch with the dominant movements in secular culture. Thus Christianity withdrew more and more into the sphere of the individual religious life and the world went its own way. European civilisation was rationalised and secularised until it ceased even nominally to be Christian. Nevertheless it continued to subsist unconsciously on the accumulated capital of its Christian past, from which it drew the moral and social idealism that inspired the humanitarian and liberal and democratic movements of the last two centuries. Today this spiritual capital is exhausted, and civilisation is faced with the choice between a return to the spiritual traditions of Christianity or the renunciation of them in favour of complete social materialism.

But if Christianity is to regain its influence, it must recover its unity and its social activity. The religious individualism of the last age, with its self-centred absorption in the question of personal salvation and private religious emotion, will not help us. The Christianity of the future must be a social Christianity that is embodied in a real society, not an imaginary or invisible one. And this society must not be merely a part of the existing social and political order, like the established churches of the

past; it must be an independent and universal society, not a national or local one. The only society that fulfills these conditions is the Catholic Church, the most ancient yet, at the same time, the most adaptable of all existing institutions. It is true that Catholicism has suffered grievously from the sectarian division and strife of the last four hundred years, but it has succeeded in surmounting the long drawn-out crisis that followed the dissolution of the mediaeval synthesis, and it stands out today as the one remaining centre of unity and spiritual order in Europe. If Christianity is necessary to Europe, the Catholic Church is no less necessary to Christianity, for without it the latter would become no more than a mass of divergent opinions dissolving under the pressure of rationalist criticism and secularist culture. It was by virtue of the Catholic ideal of spiritual unity that the social unity of European culture emerged from the welter of barbarism, and the modern world stands no less in need of such an ideal if it is to realise in the future the wider unity of a world civilisation.

But though Christianity is necessary to civilisation, we must not forget the profound difference that there is between them. It is the great paradox of Christianity, as Newman so often insisted, that though Christianity is a principle of life to civilisation even in secular matters, it is continually at issue with the world and always seems on the verge of being destroyed by it. Thus the Church is necessary to Europe, and yet any acceptance of the Church because it is necessary to society is destructive of its real essence. Nothing could be more fatal to the spirit of Christianity than a return to Christianity for political reasons.

But, on the other hand, any attempt to create a purely political or social religion is equally destined to fail. Nothing is more remarkable than the collapse of all the efforts to create an artificial religion to meet "the needs of the age." Deism, Saint-Simonianism, Positivism and the rest have all ended in failure. It is only a religion that transcends political and economic categories and is indifferent to material results that has the power of satisfying the need of the world. As Newman wrote eighty years ago :

"The Catholic Church has accompanied human society through one revolution of its great year; and it is now beginning a second. She has passed through the full cycle of changes in order to show that she is independent of them all. She has had trial of East and West, of monarchy and democracy, of peace and war, of times of darkness and times of philosophy, of old countries and young."

And today she still stands as she did under the Roman Empire, as the representative in a changing world of an unchanging spiritual order. That is why I believe the Church that made Europe may yet save Europe, and that, in the great words of the Easter liturgy:

"the whole world may experience and see what was fallen raised up, what had grown old made new, and all things returning to unity through Him from whom

they took their beginning."

13. CATHOLICISM AND THE BOURGEOIS MIND

"Catholicism and the Bourgeois Mind"

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The question of the bourgeois involves a real issue which Christians cannot afford to shirk. For it is difficult to deny that there is a fundamental disharmony between bourgeois and Christian civilization and between the mind of the bourgeois and the mind of Christ.

But first let us admit that it is no use hunting for the bourgeois. For we are all more or less bourgeois and our civilization is bourgeois from top to bottom. Hence there can be no question of treating the bourgeois in the orthodox communist fashion as a gang of antisocial reptiles who can be exterminated summarily by the revolutionary proletariat; for in order to "liquidate" the bourgeoisie modern society would have to "liquidate" itself.

This is where Marx went wrong. His theory of increasing misery led him to suppose that the line of class division would become sharper and more strongly defined, until the rising tide of popular misery broke the dykes and swept away the closed world of privileged bourgeois society. Instead of this we have seen the bourgeois culture, the bourgeois mind, even the bourgeois standards of life advancing and expanding until they became diffused throughout the whole social organism and dominated the whole spirit of modern civilization.

And so in order to understand the essential character of the bourgeois, it is necessary to disregard for the moment this universalized bourgeois culture which is part of the very air we breathe and turn back to the time when the bourgeois was still a distinct social type which could be isolated from the other elements in society and studied as an independent phenomenon.

Now the bourgeois was in origin the member of a small and highly specialized class which had grown up within the wall of the mediaeval city commune. Far from being the average European man, he was an exceptional type standing somewhat outside the regular hierarchy of the medieval state, which was primarily an agrarian society consisting of the nobility, the clergy, and the peasantry. His very existence was guaranteed by a charter of privileges which constituted the city-commune as a *regime d'exception*. Thus there was a sharp division of material interests and social culture between the bourgeois and the countryman, a division which was deepened in Eastern Europe, including Eastern Germany, by the fact that the towns were often islands of German speech and civilization amidst a population that was predominantly Slav. And so while the peasant laboured and the noble fought, the bourgeois was free to lead his own life, to mind his own business and to grow rich within the narrow limits of the mediaeval urban economy.

All this seems infinitely remote from the modern world. But we must remember that it was not so remote from the society to which the founders of modern socialism — Lassalle and Marx and Engels — belonged. The German bourgeoisie had only just emerged from a regime of corporate rights and privileges which bound the bourgeois to his corporation, the craftsman to his guild, the

peasant to his land, and the Jew to his ghetto. The generation before that of Marx had seen this structure collapse like a house of cards, so that the world was suddenly thrown open to any man who possessed money and enterprise — that is to say to every good bourgeois.

Thus the process which had taken centuries to develop in Western Europe was completed in Central and Eastern Europe within a single lifetime. Whereas in England and the United States, the bourgeois spirit had already become a fluid element that interpenetrated the whole social organism; in Germany, or Austria, or Russia, it was still a new factor in social life and so it was easy for Marx to separate it from the rest of society and regard it as the distinctive mark of a definite limited class.

And this explains why class hatred comes more easily to the Eastern than to the Western European. Croce has an amusing story of how an Italian delegate to a German socialist congress was obliged to apologize for the lack of class hatred in the Italian socialist movement. "We do not hate," he admitted, "but we are quite willing to." And in English socialism even the will to hatred has been lacking in spite of the fact that the proletariat in England suffered far more than the proletariat in Germany from the coming of industrialism. For the leaders of English socialism have been idealists, whether bourgeois idealists like Robert Owen and William Morris or Christian socialists like Keir Hardie and George Lansbury.

But while we may well congratulate ourselves that English social life has not been poisoned by class hatred and class war, it does not follow that the complete penetration of English culture by bourgeois standards and ideals is a good or admirable thing. It is even possible that the victory of the bourgeois has meant the destruction of elements that are not merely valuable but essential to English life, since the English tradition is something much wider and deeper than the machine-made urban and suburban culture by which it has been temporarily submerged.

Actually we have only to open our eyes to see that this criticism is justified. The devastated areas of industrial England and the cancerous growth of the suburbs are not merely offensive to the aesthetic sense, they are symptoms of social disease and spiritual failure. The victory of bourgeois civilization has made England rich and powerful, but at the same time it has destroyed almost everything that made life worth living. It has undermined the natural foundations of our national life, so that the whole social structure is in danger of ruin.

Looked at from this point of view the distinctive feature of the bourgeois culture is its *urbanism*. It involves the divorce of man from nature and from the life of the earth. It turns the peasant into a minder of machines and the yeoman into a shopkeeper, until ultimately rural life becomes impossible and the very face of nature is changed by the destruction of the countryside and the pollution of the earth and the air and the waters.

This is characteristic of modern bourgeois civilization in general, but nowhere is it more striking than in England. And since English culture has been historically a peculiarly rural one, the victory of bourgeois civilization involves a more serious breach with the national tradition and a more vital revolution in ways of life and thought than in any other country of Western Europe.

But if the bourgeois is the enemy of the peasant, he is no less the enemy of the artist and the craftsman. As Sombart has shown in his elaborate study of the historic evolution of the bourgeois type, the craftsman like the artist has an organic relation to the object of his work. "They see in

their work a part of themselves and identify themselves with it so that they would be happy if they could never be separated from it." For in the precapitalist order "the production of goods is the act of living men who, so to speak, incarnate themselves in their works: and so it follows the same laws that rule their physical life, in the same way as the growth of a tree or the act of reproduction of an animal, obeys in its direction and measure and end the internal necessities of the living organism." [1] The attitude of the bourgeois on the other hand is that of the merchant whose relation to his merchandise is external and impersonal. He sees in them only objects of exchange, the value of which is to be measured exclusively in terms of money. It makes no difference whether he is dealing in works of art or cheap ready-made suits: all that matters is the volume of the transactions and the amount of profit to be derived from them. In other words, his attitude is not qualitative, but quantitative.

It is easy enough to see why this should be. For the bourgeois was originally the middleman who stood between the producer and the consumer, as merchant or salesman or broker or banker. And thus there is not merely an analogy, but an organic connection between the role of the bourgeois in society and the economic function of money. One is the middleman and the other is the medium of exchange. The bourgeois lives for money, not merely as the peasant or the soldier or even the artist often does, but in a deeper sense, since money is to him what arms are to the soldier and land is to the peasant, the tools of his trade and the medium through which he expresses himself, so that he often takes an almost disinterested pleasure in his wealth because of the virtuosity he has displayed in his financial operations. In short the bourgeois is essentially a *moneymaker*, at once its servant and its master, and the development of his social ascendancy shows the degree to which civilization, and human life are dominated by the money power.

This is why St. Thomas and his masters, both Greeks and Christians, look with so little favour on the bourgeois. For they regarded money simply as an instrument, and therefore held that the man who lives for money perverts the true order of life.

"Business," says St. Thomas, "considered in itself, has a certain baseness (*turpitude*) inasmuch as it does not of itself involve any honorable or necessary end."

We find this criticism repeated at the time of the Renaissance by humanists like Erasmus: indeed, it is the basis of that aristocratic prejudice against the bourgeois which has never entirely disappeared and which reappears in all sorts of forms from sheer idealism to pure snobbery in the most unlikely times and places.

Thus the classical Marxian opposition of bourgeois and proletarian is but one of a whole series of oppositions and class conflicts which the rise of the bourgeoisie has aroused. There is the aristocratic opposition of which I have just spoken. There is the opposition of the artist which did so much to bring the name of the "bourgeois" into disrepute in the nineteenth century. There is the opposition to the bourgeois in so far as he is the representation and incarnation of the money power — an opposition which has found a new expression in the Social Credit movement. And finally there is the opposition between bourgeois and peasant, which is more fundamental and deep-rooted than any of them.

But while all these oppositions are real and each implies a genuine criticism of bourgeois culture, none of them is absolute or exhaustive. There is a more essential opposition still, which has been pointed out by Sombart and which goes beyond economics and sociology to the bedrock of

human nature. According to Sombart, the bourgeois type corresponds to certain definite psychological predispositions. In other words there is such a thing as a *bourgeois soul* and it is in this rather than in economic circumstance that the whole development of the bourgeois culture finds its ultimate root. In the same way the opposite pole to the bourgeois is not to be found in a particular economic function of interest, as for instance the proletarian or the peasant, but rather in the antibourgeois temperament, the type of character which naturally prefers to spend rather than to accumulate, to give rather than to gain. These two types correspond to Bergson's classification of the "open" and "closed" temperaments and they represent the opposite poles of human character and human experience. They are in eternal opposition to one another and the whole character of a period or a civilization depends on which of the two predominates.

Thus we are led back from the external and material class conflict of the Marxians to a conception not far removed from that of St. Augustine, "Two loves built two cities"; the essential question is not the question of economics, but the question of love. "Looking at the matter closely," writes Sombart, "we get the impression that the opposition between these two fundamental types rests in the final analysis on an opposition of erotic life, for it is clear that this dominates the whole of human conduct as a superior and invisible power. The bourgeois and the erotic temperaments constitute, so to speak, the two opposite poles of the world." Sombart's use of the word "erotic" is of course wider than the current English term. Unsatisfactory as the word "erotic" is, it is the best we have, for "charitable" is even more miserably inadequate. Our bourgeois culture has reduced the heavenly flame of St. Paul's inspired speech to a dim bulb that is hardly strong enough to light a mother's meeting. But Sombart expressly distinguishes it from sensuality, which may be found in either of the two types of temperament. Indeed, the erotic type par excellence in Sombart's view is the religious mystic, the "man of desire," like St. Augustine or St. Francis.

Seen from this point of view, it is obvious that the Christian ethos is essentially antibourgeois, since it is an ethos of love. This is particularly obvious in the case of St. Francis and the mediaeval mystics, who appropriated to their use the phraseology of mediaeval erotic poetry and used the antibourgeois concepts of the chivalrous class-consciousness, such as "*adel*," "*noble*," and "*gentile*," in order to define the spiritual character of the true mystic.

But it is no less clear in the case of the Gospel itself. The spirit of the Gospel is eminently that of the "open" type which gives, asking nothing in return, and spends itself for others. It is essentially hostile to the spirit of calculation, the spirit of worldly prudence and above all to the spirit of religious self-seeking and self-satisfaction. For what is the Pharisee but a spiritual bourgeois, a typically "closed" nature, a man who applies the principle of calculation and gain not to economics but to religion itself, a hoarder of merits, who reckons his accounts with heaven as though God was his banker? It is against this "closed," self-sufficient moralist ethic that the fiercest denunciations of the Gospels are directed. Even the sinner who possesses a seed of generosity, a faculty of self-surrender, and an openness of spirit is nearer to the kingdom of heaven than the "righteous" Pharisee; for the soul that is closed to love is closed to grace.

In the same way the ethos of the Gospels is sharply opposed to the economic view of life and the economic virtues. It teaches men to live from day to day without taking thought for their material needs. "For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses." It even condemns the prudent forethought of the rich man who plans for the future: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast

provided?"

Thus so long as the Christian ideal was supreme, it was difficult for the bourgeois spirit to assert itself. It is true, as Sombart insists, that the bourgeois class and the bourgeois view of life had already made its appearance in mediaeval Europe, but powerful as they were, especially in the Italian cities, they always remained limited to a part of life and failed to dominate the whole society or inspire civilization with their spirit. It was not until the Reformation had destroyed the control of the Church over social life in Northern Europe that we find a genuine bourgeois culture emerging. And whatever we may think of Max Weber's thesis regarding the influence of the Reformation on the origins of capitalism, we cannot deny the fact that the bourgeois culture actually developed on Protestant soil, and especially in a Calvinist environment, while the Catholic environment seemed decidedly unfavourable to its evolution.

It is indeed impossible to find a more complete example in history of the opposition of Sombart's two types than in the contrast of the culture of the Counter Reformation lands with that of seventeenth-century Holland and eighteenth-century England and Scotland and North America. The Baroque culture of Spain and Italy and Austria is the complete social embodiment of Sombart's "erotic" type. It is not that it was a society of nobles and peasants and monks and clerics which centred in palaces and monasteries (or even palace-monasteries like the Escorial), and left a comparatively small place to the bourgeois and the merchant. It is not merely that it was an *uneconomic* culture which spent its capital lavishly, recklessly and splendidly whether to the glory of God or for the adornment of human life. It was rather that the whole spirit of the culture was passionate and ecstatic, and finds its supreme expressions in the art of music and in religious mysticism. We have only to compare Bernini with the brothers Adam or St. Teresa with Hannah More to feel the difference in the spirit and rhythm of the two cultures. The bourgeois culture has the mechanical rhythm of a clock, the Baroque the musical rhythm of a fugue or a sonata.

The ideal of the bourgeois culture is to maintain a respectable average standard. Its maxims are: "Honesty is the best policy," "Do as you would be done by," "The greatest happiness of the greatest number." But the baroque spirit lives in and for the triumphant moment of creative ecstasy. It will have all or nothing. Its maxims are: "All for love and the world well lost," "Nada, nada, nada, " "What dost thou seek for, O my soul? All is thine, all is for thee, do not take less, nor rest with the crumbs that fall from the table of thy Father. Go forth, and exult in thy glory, hide thyself in it and rejoice, and thou shalt obtain all the desires of thy heart. "

The conflict between these two ideals of life and forms of culture runs through the whole history of Europe from the Reformation to the Revolution and finds its political counterpart in the struggle between Spain and the Protestant Powers. It is hardly too much to say that if Philip II had been victorious over the Dutch and the English and the Huguenots, modern bourgeois civilization would never have developed and capitalism in so far as it existed would have acquired an entirely different complexion. The same spirit would have ruled at Amsterdam as at Antwerp, at Berlin as at Munich, in North America as in South, and thus the moment when Alexander Farnese turned back a dying man from his march on Paris may be regarded as one of the greatest turning points in world history. Even so it is quite conceivable that Europe might have fallen apart into two closed worlds, as alien and opposed to one another as Christendom and Islam, had it not been that neither culture was strong enough to assimilate France. For a time during the first half of the seventeenth century, the Counter Reformation and its culture carried

everything before them, but the bourgeois spirit in France was already too strong to be eliminated and it allied itself with the monarchy and the Gallican church against ultramontane Catholicism and Baroque culture.

Although the classicist and Gallican culture of the age of Louis XIV was far from being genuinely bourgeois, it contained a considerable bourgeois element and owed a great deal to men of bourgeois class and bourgeois spirit, such as Boileau, Nicole and even perhaps Bossuet himself. The resultant change in the spirit of French religion and culture is to be seen in that "retreat of the mystics" of which Bremond speaks, and in the victory of a rather hard and brilliant Nationalism which prepared the way for the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Thus French eighteenth-century culture became an open door through which the bourgeois spirit penetrated the closed world of Baroque Catholicism, first as a leaven of criticism and new ideas, and finally as a destructive flood of revolutionary change which destroyed the moral and social foundations of the Baroque culture. The uneconomic character of that culture left it powerless to withstand the highly organized financial power of the new commercialist bourgeois society. It went in the same way that the Hellenistic world succumbed to the superior organization of Roman imperialism. Nevertheless it did not succumb without a struggle, for wherever the common people possessed the power of organization and the means of defence, and wherever the religious tradition of the Counter Reformation had struck deep roots in the soil, they fought with desperate resolution and heroism in defense of the old Catholic order,[2] as in La Vendee in 1793, in Tirol in 1809, and in the Basque provinces till late in the nineteenth century.

With the passing of the Baroque culture a vital element went out of Western civilization. Where its traditions survived into the nineteenth century, as in Austria and Spain and parts of Italy and South Germany, one still feels that life has a richer savour and a more vital rhythm than in the lands where the bourgeois spirit is triumphant. Unfortunately the breach with the past seems too great for Europe to recover this lost tradition even when the bourgeois civilization is decadent and exhausted. Men look for an alternative not to the humane culture of the immediate Catholic past but to the inhuman mass civilization of Russia or the barbaric traditions of German paganism, while in our own country we are abandoning the competitive selfishness of the older capitalism only to adopt a bourgeois version of socialism which is inspired by a humanitarian policy of social reform, derived from the liberal-democratic tradition. It aims not at the proletarian revolutionary ideal of the communists, but rather at the diffusion of bourgeois standards of life and culture among the whole population — the universalizing of the bourgeois *rentier* type.

Whatever may be the future of these movements there can be little doubt that they mark an important change in the history of the bourgeois civilization and that the age of the free and triumphant progress of Western capitalism is ended. Capitalism may well survive, but it will be a controlled and socialized capitalism which aims rather at maintaining the general standard of life than at the reckless multiplication of wealth by individuals. Yet the mere slowing down of the tempo of economic life, the transformation of capitalism from a dynamic to a static form will not in itself change the spirit of our civilization. Even if it involves the passing of the bourgeois type in its classical nineteenth-century form, it may only substitute a post-bourgeois type which is no less dominated by economic motives, though it is more mechanized and less dominated by the competitive spirit. It may not be, as so many Continental critics of English society suggest, the bourgeois capitalist order in a senile and decadent form. As we have already pointed out, the

character of a culture is determined not so much by its form of economic organization as by the spirit which dominates it. Socialization and the demand for a common standard of economic welfare, however justified it may be, do not involve a vital change in the spirit of a culture. Even a proletarian culture of the communist type, in spite of its avowed hatred of the bourgeois and all his works, is post-bourgeois rather than antibourgeois. Its spiritual element is a negative one, the spirit of revolution, and when the work of destruction is accomplished, it will inevitably tend to fall back into the traditions of the bourgeois culture, as appears to be happening in Russia at present. Thus, while Western communism is still highly idealistic and represents a spiritual protest against the bourgeois spirit and a reaction against the victorious industrial capitalism of the immediate past, Russian communism is actually doing for Russia what the Industrial Revolution did for Western Europe, and is attempting to transform a peasant people into a modern urban industrial society.

No economic change will suffice to change the spirit of a culture. So long as the proletarian is governed by purely economic motives, he remains a bourgeois at heart. It is only in religion that we shall find a spiritual force that can accomplish a spiritual revolution. The true opposite to the bourgeois is not to be found in the communist, but in the religious man — the man of desire. The bourgeois must be replaced not so much by another class as by another type of humanity. It is true that the passing of the bourgeois does involve the coming of the worker, and there can be no question of a return to the old regime of privileged castes. Where Marx was wrong was not in his dialectic of social change, but in the narrow materialism of his interpretation which ruled out the religious factor.

The fact is that Marx was himself a disgruntled bourgeois, and his doctrine of historic materialism is a hangover from a debauch of bourgeois economics and bourgeois philosophy. He was no great lover, no "man of desire," but a man of narrow, jealous, unforgiving temperament, who hated and calumniated his own friends and allies. And consequently he sought the motive power for the transformation of society not in love but in hatred and failed to recognize that the social order cannot be renewed save by a new principle of spiritual order. In this respect Marxian socialism is infinitely inferior to the old Utopian socialism, for St. Simon and his followers with all their extravagances had at least grasped this essential truth. They failed not because they were too religious but because they were not religious enough and mistook the shadows of idealism for the realities of genuine religion. Yet we must admit that the Church of their day with its reactionary Gallicanism and its official alliance with the secular power gave them some excuse for their end.

Today Christians are faced with a no less heavy responsibility. There is always a temptation for religion to ally itself with the existing order, and if we today ally ourselves with the bourgeois because the enemies of the bourgeois are often also the enemies of the Church, we shall be repeating the mistake that the Gallican prelates made in the time of Louis XVIII. The Christian Church is the organ of the spirit, the predestined channel through which the salvific energy of divine love flows out and transforms humanity. But it depends on the Christians of a particular generation, both individually and corporately, whether this source of spiritual energy is brought into contact with the life of humanity and the needs of contemporary society. We can hoard our treasure, we can bury our talent in the ground like the man in the parable who thought that his master was an austere man and who feared to take risks. Or, on the other hand, we can choose the difficult and hazardous way of creative spiritual activity, which is the way of the saints. If the

age of the martyrs has not yet come, the age of a limited, self-protective, bourgeois religion is over. For the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.

1 Sombart, *Le Bourgeois* (French trans.), pp. 25-27.

2 These popular risings may be compared with the peasant risings against the Reformation in sixteenth-century England. In each case it was the common people and not the privileged classes who were the mainstay of the resistance.

14. THE PAPACY AND THE MODERN WORLD

"The Papacy and the Modern World," the final chapter of *Christianity in East and West*, published in 1959.

The Popes of the twentieth century have been called to rule the Church in an age of revolutionary change when one catastrophe has followed upon another, when the old landmarks have been submerged by the flood of change and the old rules of tradition and precedent no longer avail. During these pontificates the world has changed and the conditions of the Christian apostolate have been changed with it. A new world has come into existence, though it often seems not a world but a formless chaos, and the Church has had to find a new language in which to speak the creative word to the new nations that are being born or renewed.

In the last years of the reign of Pius IX, Rome was perhaps more isolated from the civilization of the modern world than at any previous period. The great achievements of the pontificate of Pius IX had seemed to be annulled by the political defeat of the Papacy and the destruction of the temporal power. Pius IX had become the prisoner of the Vatican and his last years were darkened by the growing alienation of the Catholic world from the Holy See. It was the age of the *Kulturkampf*, the denunciation of the Austrian Concordat and the growth of militant anticlericalism in France and Italy and Latin America. In Italy, Catholics could no longer take part in public life, while elsewhere they had become identified with lost causes like Carlism in Spain and royalism in France: in the eyes of a hostile world the Papacy seemed to stand alone, undefended and without allies, against the triumphant forces of modern secular civilization.

Nevertheless there were some who read the lesson of history in a very different sense. Cardinal Manning, who had been one of the foremost defenders of the

temporal power in the years before 1870, was also one of the first to foresee the true nature of the change that was taking place. During his visits to Rome in these years he expressed again and again his sense that a turning point in the history of the Church had been reached, that the old world of the courts and dynasties was dead and that a new world of the peoples was coming into existence — a new Christendom which was no longer confined to Europe but was expanding across the oceans and the continents to embrace the whole habitable world.

In 1878 this new world was indeed only visible to the eye of the prophet. The world was dominated by a small group of European states and statesmen and the expansion of Western civilization represented the triumph of material power and the exploitation of a subject world by Western capitalism.

It was however in this age that Leo XIII laid the foundations of a new papal apostolate and began the great work of Christian reconstruction which has now reached its fulfillment in the work of the Papacy in the 20th century.

In the past, encyclicals and other papal utterances had possessed a somewhat limited appeal. They were read by bishops and theologians, but they did not reach the common man, nor did they deal with the problems which immediately affected the lives of the masses. But from the time of Leo XIII onwards, papal utterances have acquired a new character. Peter has spoken directly to the whole body of the faithful on the great issues which concern humanity: on modern civilization and the dangers that threaten it, on the state and its functions, on liberty and citizenship, on capitalism and socialism, on the condition of the workers and on the family as the basis of human society.

But the new apostolate to the nations which was begun by Leo XIII assumed a new character during the period after World War I. In the beginning, Leo XIII was speaking to a world that was intoxicated by material power and prosperity and there were few to listen to the prophetic voice which warned Europe of the dangers that threatened society and of the abyss of destruction towards which modern society was tending. But after 1914 the whole aspect of history changed. The old securities disappeared and the dangers which Leo XIII had foreseen suddenly became monstrous realities with which European statesmen were forced to grapple and which affected the life and death of millions of common men. The catastrophe brought the Papacy and the modern world together in a new way. Not that the conflict between Christian principles and secular civilization was in any way lessened; on the contrary the revolutionary consequences of the first World War, above all in Russia, revealed more clearly than ever how deep this conflict was: but at least men could no longer feel, as they had done in the 19th century, that the

Church had become detached from the contemporary world and that the teachings of the Papacy were no longer relevant to the needs of modern man. For now it became evident that the cause of the Church was the cause of humanity.

For more than a hundred years Western man has set his faith in a religion of material progress and scientific enlightenment which would free mankind from the miseries and ignorance of past ages and create an earthly paradise of freedom and prosperity. Now this dream has suddenly disappeared, and its failure was not due to any lack of power, since it occurred at a moment when Science had given Western man new powers which far surpassed his highest expectations. It was a moral and spiritual failure due to a flaw in his own nature — a curse of Babel which divided man from man and nation from nation so that they no longer understood one another's speech but were driven to destroy one another by an instinct that was far stronger than the rational idealism in which they had put their faith. This is the curse of nationalism which, beginning in the romantic cult of the element of diversity in European culture, has spread like an epidemic from one end of the world to the other, leaving no room for an international order and no common ground on which to build a world civilization.

In this confusion of tongues, the Papacy stands as the one supranational power which can speak to the nations the words of peace and reconciliation. At first sight, the Church has little reason to look with hope on this new situation. She has lost not only her old allies, the Catholic monarchies which disappeared after the first World War, but also the Christian states of Eastern Europe like Poland and Hungary which have disappeared behind the iron curtain of a totalitarian and anti-Christian imperialism. She has seen the field of her missionary activity increasingly restricted by the revolt of Asia and Africa against the West, and while Christianity has suffered from its traditional association with European culture, that culture itself has continued to become increasingly secularized and more alienated from the Christian Faith.

But these losses have been in some degree compensated by the new opportunities that have been opened to the Christian apostolate. The breakdown of the traditional association between the Church and the Catholic States with their concordats and entrenched privileges and prerogatives, has set the Papacy free to undertake its universal mission to humanity at large. The new pattern of international organization and world order has far more in common with the Catholic ideal of natural law and universal order than the old state system which rested so largely on *raison d'etat* and the claims of historical precedent.

No doubt the new internationalism is secular in spirit and derives from liberal

rather than Christian tradition; no doubt its action is still hampered and restricted by power politics and the power of the veto. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the central principles on which the Popes had based their social teaching — the unity of the family of nations and the sovereignty of the reign of law and of the principles of international justice — have now been accepted and given judicial expression by the ruling powers of the modern world. At the same time the establishment of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the numerous subsidiary institutions for cultural and economic purposes, has created a new world forum and a new area of common activity which is at once wider and more free than the old diplomatic channels of international action.

The principles formulated by papal teaching apply not only to the relation between society and the individual, but also to the relation of societies to one another. In principle, according to the creative divine purpose for humanity, all the different societies and states and peoples form a universal community with a common purpose and common duties. Thus, there is no room for state sovereignty in the absolute sense, for every state is the member of a wider society and is morally bound to cooperate with its fellows for the common good and to submit to the common law of international justice — to the law of nature and of nations.

This international society was not created by the Treaty of Versailles or the Atlantic Charter. It has always existed and looks to nature and the Creator of nature as its foundation.

But there is an immense gulf between this divinely instituted and immutable order and the historical realities of international politics, in which states and nations have devoured one another, like the fishes in the sea. Throughout history, war and violence have been so common that they seem the normal condition of the human race and there have been times like the early middle ages when this state of perpetual war was not confined to states and empires but was diffused throughout society, so that every city and family was in arms against its neighbor. Under these conditions the reign of law was confined to islands of order that had been created and defended by the sword. For the sword is the traditional symbol of sovereignty and it was only under its shadow that human justice was administered.

At the same time even in the darkest ages mankind retained a consciousness of the divine origins of justice and of the duty of the bearer of the sword to use his power in the service of God. And as the Church extended her influence over the barbarian kingdoms of Europe, there grew up a Christian Society of Nations which recognized, at least in principle, that they were bound by a common law of justice, so that the evil realities of war and despotism were no longer the only reality, but

were regarded as the social expression of the moral disorder in which human nature has been involved from the beginning.

In the modern world both these two opposing tendencies are still represented, though today they have assumed new forms. On the one hand, as Pius XII pointed out in his first encyclical — *Summi Pontificatus* — the secularization of modern civilization has brought darkness on the earth and has set up in a new form the old blood stained idols which Christianity had cast out. The totalitarian state involves not only the denial of personal liberty and the freedom of conscience, it is also irreconcilable with international peace and order, since it puts itself outside the family of nations and denies the existence of any higher law than the law of revolutionary violence. And the same errors are found in the exaggerated forms of nationalism, which substitute nationality for humanity as the ultimate source of social values, and exalt the way of life of a particular people above the universal moral law.

But this is only one side of the picture, for the same age which has seen the secularization of Western culture and the rise of the totalitarian state, has also witnessed the development of a world-wide movement making for international order and cooperation. The influence of this movement is not confined to the two great official experiments in world government — the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization. It also manifests itself at many different levels in international movements for humanitarian, economic, scientific, and cultural ends; and though these are now being brought into relation with the United Nations Organization, many of them are independent in origin and date back to the last century.

All this is a new phenomenon. It may have been inspired to some extent by the example and influence of Christianity, but it is not the conscious product of Christian principles, like the common institutions of medieval Christendom.

Nevertheless it is an unfortunate fact that internationalism, like the humanitarianism with which it is so closely allied, is a relatively superficial movement, which represents the aspirations of the idealist or the moralist; whereas totalitarianism and ultra-nationalism are inspired by the deeper irrational forces in human nature which manifest themselves in war and revolution.

Thus the soul of modern civilization is divided between the sublimated abstractions of humanity and international unity and scientific enlightenment which are apparent to reason, and the repressed forces of revolution and violence which move the passions and the will to power. And Humanity will perish in the conflict unless some higher spiritual power intervenes.

As the Church in the Dark Ages provided the spiritual motive power which transformed the warring chaos of the barbarian world into the European commonwealth of nations, so today the Church remains the only power which is capable of overcoming the spiritual disorder of the modern world and making the Society of Nations a living organic reality.

No doubt this international mission will be regarded by secular opinion as remote from the political realities of the modern world. If the Catholic Church can no longer maintain its old unquestioned authority in Christian Europe, if Christendom no longer exists as a social reality, how can we expect to see the extension of her influence over the nations that have never known her, or have been divided from her by centuries of conscious opposition? In the past moreover, the Church was able to extend her influence into the non-Christian world through the alliance and protection of the colonial and imperial powers: as we see in the case of the Spanish empire in America, the Portuguese patriarchate in Asia, and the Austrian empire and the Polish kingdom in Eastern Europe. But today these powers no longer exist and the very memory of their achievements is an embarrassment when the old cultures of Asia and the new nationalism of Africa are in revolt against the West and the traditions of European colonization.

Yet in spite of all these difficulties there has been no weakening in the Church's insistence on the universality of her mission. On the contrary she has redoubled her missionary activities during the present century, and the decline of power and influence of Western Christendom has brought out more clearly than ever her international or rather supranational character as the one universal society in which the spiritual unity of the human race is realized.

For secular internationalism, in spite of the hope of peace that it offers, is at once a lower and more abstract thing than the universal spiritual society whose feet are firmly planted in history and whose Head is divine: a Society which possesses no less objective reality and juridical form than a State, while at the same time its action extends to the very depths of the individual human soul.

In his Christmas allocution to the College of Cardinals in 1945, Pius XII spoke as follows: "The Catholic Church, of which Rome is the centre, is supranational by its very nature . . . The Church is a mother — *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* — a true mother, mother of all nations and all peoples, no less than of all men individually. And precisely because she is a mother, she does not and cannot belong exclusively to this or that people, nor even more to some than others, but equally to all."

And the Holy Father then went on to describe how the growing individualism and totalitarianism of the modern state has made it more vital than ever to assert this

supranational character which is no longer centered in Europe and the old society of Western Christendom, but which has extended its sphere of action to include the other continents.

And he concludes: "Is there not revealed in this progressive enrichment of the supernatural and even the natural life of mankind the true significance of the Church's supranational character? She is not — because of this supranational character — placed aloft, as though suspended in an inaccessible and intangible isolation above the nations. [But] just as Christ was in the midst of men, so too His Church in which He continues to live, is placed in the midst of the peoples, as Christ assumed a real human nature, so too the Church takes to herself the fullness of all that is genuinely human, wherever and however she finds it, and transforms it into a source of supernatural energy.

"Thus ever more fully is verified in the Church of today that phenomenon which St. Augustine praised in his *City of God*: 'The Church recruits her citizens from all nations and in every language assembles her community of pilgrims upon earth. She is not anxious about diversities in customs, laws and institutions, she does not exclude or destroy any of them but rather preserves and observes them. Even the differences in different nations, so long as they do not impede the worship of the one supreme God, she directs to the one common end of peace upon earth.'"

This universal mission to the nations is something quite different from the relation of Church to State which has been the main centre of attention in the past and which has given rise to so much discussion and controversy.

The State is the juridical organization of social and military power; while the nation represents the natural organic community of speech and culture into which a man is born and from which he receives the indelible imprint of a particular social tradition. The number of states is limited and their importance is determined by official status and protocol.

But the nations and peoples of the earth are countless and their only title to recognition is the mere fact of their existence. They may be the creators of world empires or lost tribes that have been thrust aside out of the stream of history. But whatever they are, strong or weak, civilized or barbarian, they all alike possess their place in the Church's universal mission. Each has its own language and its own way of life and the Church calls on them all to hear the words of life in their own tongue and to use their way of life as a way to the service of God.

This Christian internationalism with its ideal of spiritual unity in national diversity stands in contrast and opposition to the totalitarian pattern of world order which

threatens the existence not only of Christianity but of humanity itself. But this danger is not entirely due to the aggressive action of those ideological dictatorships like Communism which aim deliberately at world conquest. They have their ultimate source in certain tendencies in modern culture which are world-wide and which are growing stronger in proportion as the world is drawn together by economic and political forces.

The new powers created by modern science have made the technological organization of life more complicated and more all-embracing, while on the other hand the development of democracy has made publicity and the formation and influence of mass opinion the dominant forces in social life.

These forces are not in themselves evil, so long as they are subordinated to rational and moral ends, but as soon as they get out of control or are exploited recklessly in the interests of power by parties or groups, they become engines of social destruction. Any society that submits to their unrestricted action becomes a huge machine which crushes human nature under its pressure and uses the disintegration of the mind and will of the individual human person as a source of inhuman energy.

This process of degeneration and destruction affects the life of nations as well as individuals, since, as Pius XII has observed, the totalitarian order destroys that continuity in time which has hitherto been regarded as an essential condition of life in society, so that man is cut off from his social past and left isolated to face the enormous pressure of contemporary materialism.

Now it is the consciousness of continuity in time, of the living past and the social inheritance, that makes a nation and a social culture. If the nations are deprived of this, they are no more than masses — human herds separated from one another by the barriers of language, and submitted blindly to the absolute control of forces which possess unlimited technological power and resources, but which are themselves blind, because they lack spiritual knowledge and direction.

In this dark world, divided against itself, cursed by the confusion of tongues and frustrated by the lack of common purpose, the Papacy speaks to the nations as the representative of the only power that can "lead man back from the shadows into the light. The Church alone can make him conscious of the past, master of the present, and secure for the future. Like the mother of a family, she daily gathers around her all her sons scattered over the world and brings them into the unity of her vital Divine Principle." (Pius XII, Allocution of February 20, 1946)

This profound doctrine of the supranational mission of the Church as the center of

spiritual unity in a divided humanity has been developed and actualized by the Popes of the twentieth century throughout the course of their apostolic ministry. In countless utterances and public audiences they have applied these principles to the special needs and circumstances of the different peoples. Never perhaps in the history of the Church have the peoples come to Rome in such numbers and from so many different regions, and in addition a still wider audience has been reached by radio and television and all the resources of modern publicity.

We seem to see the beginnings of a new Pentecostal dispensation by which again "all men hear in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."

The pontificates of the twentieth century have occurred in a catastrophic period, full of wars and the rumors of wars and the distress of nations, but they have also seen the dawn of a new hope for humanity.

They foreshadow the birth of a new Christendom — a Society which is not confined as in the past to a single group of nations and a single civilization but which is common to every people and language and unites all the members of the human family in the divine community of the Mystical Body of Christ.

15. THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN

"The Nature and Destiny of Man," from *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (1933), published in *The Dawson Newsletter*, Spring 1994.

In her doctrine of man the Catholic Church has always held the middle path between two opposing theories, that which makes man an animal and that which holds him to be a spirit. Catholicism has always insisted that man's nature is twofold. He is neither flesh nor spirit, but a compound of both. It is his function to be a bridge between two worlds, the world of sense and the world of spirit, each real, each good, but each essentially different. His nature is open on either side to impressions and is capable of a twofold activity, and his whole destiny depends of the proper co-ordination of the two elements in his nature: and not his destiny alone; for since he is a bridge, the lower world is in some sense dependent on him for its spiritualization and its integration in the universal order.

In the early ages of the Church the main opposition to this view of man's nature came from those who, like the Gnostics and Manicheans, held man's nature to be purely spiritual and his connection with the body to be in itself an evil and the

source of all evil.

This view, as held by the Catharists and Albigensians, was also the dominant heresy of the Middle Ages, and even today it has its adherents among Christian Scientists and Theosophists.

During the last four hundred years, however, Spiritualism has been a steadily declining force, and the materialistic view of man has become the great rival of Catholicism. It is true that during the last generation a strong wave of Spiritualism passed once more over Western civilization, and showed itself both in literature and art, in philosophy and religion, not to speak of such lower manifestations as magic and table turning. Nevertheless, this movement did not rest on any clear view of the relations between spirit and matter. It was in the main a reaction of sentiment against the dogmatic scientific rationalism of the nineteenth century. In literature it is represented by the mystical materialism of Maeterlinck, as well as by the orthodox traditional Catholicism of Claudel and the vague symbolism of W. B. Yeats. It is neither a philosophy nor a religion, it is rather agnosticism becoming mystical and acquiring once more a hunger for the infinite...

It may be that this movement is a temporary phenomenon, without any deep roots in the mind of the age, and without importance for the future; but it is also possible that it marks the beginning of a religious age and the permanent weakening of the rationalist and materialist tradition which has increasingly dominated Western civilization ever since the fifteenth century.

The change that came over Europe at that period was too complex to be ascribed to any one cause. It was the breaking up of the social and religious unity of the Middle Ages. In every direction men were conscious of new power and new knowledge, and they used their new opportunities to the full in a spirit of ruthless self-assertion which took no heed for the rights of others and had no respect for authority and tradition. In this sudden and violent expansion, the genius of that age foresaw and traced out all the essential achievements of the modern as against the medieval world. Indeed, the mind of some of the great artists and humanists, above all of Leonardo da Vinci, is more modern than that of the philosophers of the eighteenth-century enlightenment, or those of the pioneers of nineteenth-century industry and science.

It is easy to understand that such an age should evolve a new view of human nature. The men of the Renaissance had turned their eyes away from the world of the spirit to the world of colour and form, of flesh and blood; they set their hopes not on the unearthly perfection of the Christian saint, but on the glory of man—man set free to live his own life and to realize the perfection of power and

beauty and knowledge that was his right. They returned to the old Ionian conception of nature, "Physis," a single material order, which, whether it be rational or irrational, includes in itself all that is. "Nothing is more Divine or more human than anything else, but all things are alike and all Divine."

It is true that few thinkers were sufficiently consistent or sufficiently bold to expound this idea explicitly, like Giordano Bruno. Nevertheless, it is implicit in the life and work of many of the men of the Renaissance. Rabelais, for example, may have been sincere in his professions of belief in God, but the true tendency of his ideas is shown when he substitutes for the spirit and the flesh, for supernatural grace and corrupt nature, the opposition of "Physis" and "Antiphysis": the joyous "Physis" of the humanist and poet, of the peasant and the soldier, of all that is real and carnal and unashamed of itself, and the hateful dark "Antiphysis" of the schoolmen and the monks, hostile to life and destructive of joy.

But it was only in the exceptional minds of an exceptional age—men like Bruno and Rabelais—that the new ideas attained to clear expression; the ordinary man, even if he lived like a humanist, still half belonged in thought and feeling to the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Christian Renaissance of the sixteenth century largely undid the work of the Pagan Renaissance, so that by the beginning of the seventeenth century the tide seemed indeed to have turned.

Nevertheless, the rationalist and humanist traditions were carried on, whether by unsystematic skeptics like Montaigne or dogmatic atheists like Vanini, until in the course of the eighteenth century they came at last into their kingdom. From that time the negative work of destructive criticism and the positive construction of a rationalist and natural synthesis have been carried on vigorously, especially in the more favourable environment produced by the political and industrial revolutions, and the passing away of the *ancien régime*.

Darwin's Influence

The naturalist conception of man has above all been influenced by the Darwinian doctrine of the Origin of Species, and by the evolutionary theories to which this gave rise. The doctrine of a continuous development through the whole of animate nature, and the gradual evolution of the human species under the influence of natural selection, seemed to show that no principle external to the material world need be invoked to account for man: he was of a piece with the rest of nature. Further, the theory of evolution was linked with the earlier liberal theories of political and social advance to form the modern doctrine of unlimited and inevitable material progress, a doctrine fundamentally unscientific and based on an irrational optimism, but which has nevertheless become a part of the mental

furniture of the ordinary modern man. As yet, however, the naturalist movement has not received its definitive philosophy. There has been no lack of ambitious attempts to elaborate naturalistic syntheses, but none has been final. Neither Condorcet nor Holbach nor Bentham nor Comte nor Spencer nor Haeckel can be said to be the philosopher of the movement. Nevertheless, in their doctrine of man there is a large element common to all these philosophers. Whether they be Deists, Materialists, or Agnostics, they generally agree that man is a part of the material world; that in the knowledge, the control, and the enjoyment of this world he finds his true end, and that no spiritual principle can intervene in this closed order governed by uniform physical laws. Taking it as a whole, however, modern naturalism is due not so much to any philosophic theory, as to the material triumphs of modern civilization and man's conquest of nature. The realm of mystery before which man feels himself humble and weak has withdrawn its frontiers. Man can know his world without falling back on revelation; he can live his life without feeling his utter dependence on supernatural powers. He is no longer the servant of unknown forces, but a master in his own house, and he intends to make the most of his new-found powers.

The resultant attitude to life is well shown in the following extract from Professor Bateson's Presidential Address to the British Association in August, 1914. "Man is just beginning to know himself for what he is—a rather long-lived animal with great powers of enjoyment if he does not deliberately forego them. Hitherto superstition and mythical ideas of sin have predominantly controlled these powers. Mysticism will not die out: for these strange fancies knowledge is no cure: but their forms may change, and mysticism, as a force for the suppression of joy, is happily losing its hold on the modern world. As in the decay of earlier religious, Ushabti dolls were substituted for human victims, so telepathy, necromancy, and other harmless toys take the place of eschatology and the inculcation of a ferocious moral code. Among the civilized races of Europe, we are witnessing an emancipation from traditional control in thought, in art, and in conduct, which is likely to have prolonged and wonderful influences. Returning to freer, or if you will, simpler conceptions of life and death, the coming generations are determined to get more out of this world than their forefathers did."

This view of life is clearly rather practical than philosophical. It is only possible to one who looks at the surface of life; if we look at man from within, its simplicity is easily seen to be delusive.

If man limits himself to a satisfied animal existence, and asks from life only what such an existence can give, the higher values of life at once disappear. It is from that very element of the eternal and the unlimited, which the materialist seeks to

deny, that the true progress of the human race has sprung. Throughout his history, man has been led, not as Buckle taught, by the rational pursuit of practical and material ends, but by belief in a transcendent reality, and in the truth of moral and spiritual values. This is to a great extent true even of the values of that civilization which the disciple of naturalism accepts as his end. Even Professor Bateson himself demands of his ideal eugenist community that it shall not eliminate the Shakespeares and the Beethovens. Yet what value remains in Shakespeare's work if the doubt of Hamlet is a simple physical neurasthenia, and the despair of Lear but the reaction of a wounded animal to hostile circumstances?

Man's true excellence consists not in following the law of animal nature, but in his resistance to it, and in his recognition of another law. The law of the animal world is the law of instinctive desire and brute force; there is no room in it for freedom or right or moral good. In man alone a new principle comes into play; for he recognizes that beyond the natural good of pleasure and self-fulfillment, there is a higher good which is independent of himself, a good that is unlimited, ideal, spiritual. It is true that man does not necessarily follow this good; it is easy enough for him to disregard it and to lapse into animalism, but even as he does so, he has the sense of choice, of responsibility, of something he has gained, or lost.

16. THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE

"The Study of Christian Culture," first published in "*Thought*," Winter 1960, pp. 485-493

One of the chief causes of the weakness of religion in the modern world has been the general neglect of religious studies in higher education. In the past in Europe, and to some extent in America also, "religious education" meant teaching a child his catechism, and in Protestant countries teaching him to read the Bible and perhaps teaching him to read the New Testament in Greek. But anything more than that was regarded as only necessary for the clergy. Consequently the division between lay and clerical studies was a very sharp one, especially in Catholic countries, where the candidates for the priesthood underwent a specialized training from a very early age in *les petits seminaires*. And it was this state of things which was largely responsible for the anticlericalism of lay opinion in Catholic Europe during the nineteenth century.

But in this country there has been a different tradition, and Catholic colleges and universities have devoted considerable effort and thought to religious teaching and to the integration of Catholic theology and philosophy in the college curriculum.

Yet even here the results have been disappointing--for this education has not produced many outstanding Catholic religious thinkers or philosophers. Consequently we are today in the midst of an active process of self-criticism in educational matters, especially with regard to higher education.

The same process is also going on in non-Catholic education. Indeed, many of the problems are common to both systems and are the result of the immense expansion of the educational system and the democratic attempt to give every young man and woman a college education and to provide an almost unlimited choice of specialisms and vocational courses. Higher education has tended to become an anarchy of competing specialisms and no longer possesses any principle of unity.

In this situation, which affects Catholic as well as non-Catholic colleges, we have been led to ask whether there is not room for the study of Christian culture and whether such a study might not provide a bond of integration which would unite the higher and more abstract principles of theology and philosophy with the specialized courses which prepare the student for his future profession or vocation. But this suggestion has encountered considerable opposition from two sides. To the reformer or "the liberal," it seems too reactionary--too bound up with dogmatic Catholic presuppositions--while to the conservative it seems to be a revolutionary threat to the classical studies which have been the basis of the Liberal Arts curriculum in the university.

Now it is certainly true that the study of Christian culture does involve a break with that exclusive concentration on the Greek and Latin classics which dominated Western education in the past. For centuries higher education has been so identified with the study of one particular historic culture--that of ancient Greece and Rome--that there was no room for anything else. Even the study of our own particular national culture, including both history and literature, did not obtain full recognition until the nineteenth century, while the concept of Christian culture as an object of study has never been recognized at all.

The great obstacle to this study has not been religious or secularist prejudices but strictly cultural. It had its origins in the idealization of classical antiquity by the humanist scholars and artists who rediscovered the Hellenistic concept of *Paideia* and in the corresponding depreciation of the education of the medieval schools. And it followed from this view that the period that intervened between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance offered the historian, as Voltaire says, "the barren prospect of a thousand years of stupidity and barbarism." They were "middle ages" in the original sense of the word--that is, a kind of cultural vacuum between two ages of cultural achievement which, to continue the same quotation, "vindicate the

greatness of the human spirit."

This view, which necessarily ignores the achievements and even the existence of Christian culture, was passed on almost unchanged from the Renaissance to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and from the latter to the modern secularist ideologies. And though today every instructed person recognizes that it is based on a completely erroneous view of history and very largely on sheer ignorance of history, it still continues to exert an immense influence, both consciously and unconsciously, on modern education and on our attitude to the past.

It is therefore necessary for educators to make a positive effort to exorcise the ghost of this ancient error and to give the study of Christian culture the place that it deserves in modern education. We cannot leave this to the medievalists alone, for they are to some extent themselves tied to the same error by the limitations of their specialism. For Christian culture is not the same as medieval culture. It existed before the Middle Ages began and it continued to exist after they had ended. The term "the middle ages" is itself derived from the false view of history of which I have been speaking--the view that there was a kind of cultural vacuum of a thousand years or more between two isolated peaks of creative achievement. And no less misleading is the opposite view of the Catholic romantics who identified Christian and medieval culture and concentrated their attention on a single century, usually the thirteenth, and a single part of Christendom, usually France or Germany, as the perfect example of Christian civilization.

But Christian culture is far more than this. It has been one of the four great world cultures on which the civilization of the modern world has been built. And in particular it is the historic basis of our own civilization, since it was through this Christian culture that the peoples and nations of the West were brought together and acquired a common consciousness and a sense of cultural and spiritual unity. Hence it is clear that without some understanding of this great cultural tradition which molded the life and thought of our ancestors for ten to fifteen centuries, we cannot understand our past and we shall become progressively alienated from our own spiritual inheritance, as in fact so much of our population is today. By the study of Christian culture we become conscious of our spiritual roots and integrated into the continuing life of the historic community of culture.

One of the weaknesses of our education in the past has been due to our ignoring this historical dimension of Christian culture. Thus while the student may receive a thorough grounding in the principles of Thomist theology and ethics, there is a danger that this knowledge will remain in the sphere of theory and of textbooks, unless he is able to make some study of how these doctrines and these ethical

values have in fact affected or failed to affect the way of life of Christian men and societies.

Of course the study of Christian culture presupposes that such influences have in fact existed throughout the course of history, a supposition which I have always believed to be generally accepted. But in fact I have found to my great surprise that it is just on this ground that Catholic educationalists have based their opposition to the idea of Christian culture and to the possibility of its study.

These objections have been very vigorously expressed by Professor J. G. Lawler of St. Xavier College, Chicago, in his recently published book. *The Catholic Dimension in Higher Education*,[1] and since he represents in many ways the views of the *avant garde* of American Catholic educationalists, I think it is necessary to make some reply to his criticisms.

Now Professor Lawler questions the use of the expression "Christian Culture," on account of the disassociation or fissure which has existed between Christian teaching and the practice of Christians, for he believes that we should not apply "the attribute *Christian* to any human undertaking not directly sanctioned by revealed truth or religious authority." [2] Professor Lawler justifies this drastic rejection of the possibility of any Christian culture by appealing to Newman's denial of the possibility of a Christian literature in his *Discourse on the Duties of the Church towards Knowledge*. Here Newman himself is stating an extreme position but Professor Lawler is not content with this. He rewrites the whole passage, substituting the word "culture" for "literature" so as to make Newman responsible for his repudiation of Christian culture. This is hardly fair to the memory of a great Catholic who devoted his life, as he himself said, to resisting the religious Liberalism which denied the bond between religion and society and was destroying all over Europe the Christian character of "that goodly framework of society which is the creation of Christianity."

But the fact is that Professor Lawler is quite unaware of Christian culture as a living historical reality. He conceives it as an intellectual ideal--the idea of a perfect Christian society--and since such a society has never existed, he is indignant with anyone who professes to find such an ideal in the bloody and barbarous past.

For my part, I have always attempted to make it perfectly clear in my writings that I use the word "culture," not as an intellectual ideal, but in the sense in which it is defined and used by the social sciences and especially by anthropology--that is to say, a culture is essentially a social process which may be studied historically or sociologically. It is the *way of life* of a society or a group of societies--not merely

their economics and their technology, but even more a moral order, for what holds a society together are the common values, the common standards and the common laws which make them in some sense a spiritual community.

A Christian culture is this, but more than this. It is a Christian way of life--a spiritual order by which the Christian faith and Christian morality leaven human society. With Christianity a new dynamic principle enters the life of humanity and reorganizes it round a new spiritual center and toward a new supernatural end. This principle is social as well as individual. It is embodied in the life of an organized community--the Catholic Church--and it extends its influence to every aspect of human life and every form of social activity. The elements of human society--family, economic association, city and state--remain the same, but in proportion as they come under the influence of the higher spiritual order, they are directed to new ends.

Thus the contribution of Christianity to culture is not merely the addition of a religious element; it is a process of re-creation which transforms the whole character of the social organism. It breaks down the closed self-centered world of secularist culture and gives human society a new spiritual purpose which transcends the conflicting interests of individual and class and race. Thus it provides the psychological motive for the creation of a genuinely universal culture from which no class or race is excluded.

If this is so, it may be asked. How does the study of Christian culture differ from the life of the Church? Clearly the two studies are intimately related, and it may even be said that they deal with the same subject from different points of view. But while the theologian studies it from above in the light of revelation--*ex parte Dei*--the student of Christian culture studies it from below in the light of history--*ex parte hominis*. The theologian studies the whole economy of redemption and shows how human nature is restored and transfigured by the action of divine grace through the Church and the Sacraments. The student of Christian culture studies this leavening process on the human plane. He is concerned not so much with the inner nature of the Christian way of life as with its external expression: not that the two can be completely separated, any more than we can separate the performance of the liturgy from the spirit of prayer or from the sacrament. But the student of Christian culture is primarily concerned with the human material which is subjected to the leavening process.

This material already possesses cultural form, so that the student of Christian culture is also obliged to study the pre-Christian or non-Christian cultures with which it is intermingled. Thus he has three different levels or fields of study: (1)

the Christian way of life, which is the field of study he shares with the theologian; (2) the preexisting or co-existing forms of human culture, which is the field he shares with the anthropologist and the historian; and (3) the interaction of the two which produces the concrete historical reality of Christendom or Christian culture, which is his own specific field of study.

Christendom, the historical reality of Christian culture as a world movement, was created by the conversion of Hellenistic Roman culture to Christianity and its diffusion to the peoples of the West. Thus, it was a kind of "super-culture" which absorbed and overlaid a large number of cultures of various degrees of importance. In order to understand it, we must first study the Jewish-Christian tradition which is the specific study of theologians, but which must here be seen historically and dynamically as the development of the spiritual tradition of the Old and New Testaments, which contains the sacred history of the People of God--the old and the new Israel.

The study of the first community, through the Old Testament and the history of Judaism, is of great value in that it provides a classical example of a pure religious culture in which all the aspects of culture --sociological, political, legal, moral, ritual, and theological--are united in one all-embracing sacred order. It is of course easy to find other examples of this unification of standards in primitive cultures, but they are remote from our own historical experience, whereas in the case of the religion of Israel, it is directly related through the biblical tradition of our own Christian culture, which is the object of our study.

This kind of historical relativism or "relatedness" is very valuable as against the metaphysical relativism which denies all transcendent values to theology and philosophy. Unfortunately, neither the theologians nor the sociologists seem to recognize this vital distinction. Thus there is a great danger in the United States that while secular education is being pushed toward an extreme metaphysical relativism by sociology and psychology, Catholic education is being pushed in the opposite direction toward a metaphysical absolutism so that you will get two mutually exclusive and incomprehensible universes of discourse.

What is so dangerous about this particular kind of metaphysical education is that it leaves so little room for criticism. The student is bound to take Thomism largely on faith since there is no competition of rival schools, as in the medieval university, and so one is in danger of having a solid monolithic structure of infallible knowledge which includes philosophy as well as theology and treats the two as coequal, so that Catholic education becomes identified with an authoritarian ideology, like Marxism. Thus the distinction between theology and ideology

becomes blurred. It may not be so in practice, but it may become a real danger unless students have a deep grounding in culture, either literary or historical.

Now as anthropology and literature are the studies which offer a means of understanding on the secular side, the study of Christian culture could perform a similar function for Catholics, if only we had the teachers to develop it. Therefore the first priority must be to find a number of individuals who are interested in culture studies, and to enlist their support for the development of the study of Christian culture.

Since theology and philosophy are considered the basic principles of unity for Catholic higher education in America, the kind of Christian culture study here proposed may meet with opposition from theologians and philosophers as well as from specialists and utilitarians. I certainly do not wish to reduce the role of theology in education. One must remember, however, that systematic theology has hitherto been, in Europe, exclusively a clerical subject--a specialized discipline for priests, and that the layman received his theology at second hand from the priest in the church, not from the university. My idea has been that a theological element can be introduced on this level through the study of Christian culture and of the theological and spiritual literature of the age which is being dealt with.

At the same time the theology or religious instruction course, which forms part of the Catholic college curriculum in America, would be strengthened and enriched by the study of positive theology, which is an essential part of the Christian culture program. The systematic study of Christian doctrine only stands to gain by the insight imparted by a study of the historical development of Christian culture. Of course no one would suggest that you can teach an undergraduate religious doctrine without any positive theology. He must at least know something about the Bible, the liturgy, the creeds, and the church councils, and the great figures such as Athanasius and Augustine and Thomas. But the study of Christian culture would extend this element very considerably and would also give the student some notion of other possibilities and movements of which the ordinary student learns nothing at present. This is surely pure gain for the religious educator. It would enable him to assume a certain level of positive knowledge in his students and it would give him more time to devote to systematic theology and to apologetics. The latter especially will gain enormously by the higher standard of historical knowledge which the student of Christian culture will possess.

Thus Christian culture study is additional to and not in substitution for the professional and systematic study of theology. After all, this has been the Catholic educational tradition hitherto. Theology was the crown of the system, not the

foundation, and the liberal arts had an independent origin, being in fact taken over bodily from the old classical education.

It must be clear from what I have already said that there can be no question of confining the study of Christian culture to a single period, for it extends over the whole course of Christian history--and even behind it, to its historic and providential preparation in the Old Testament.

The culture of the later Middle Ages was only one of the five or six successive ages of Christian culture, each of which had its own mission and vocation and deserves to be studied for its own sake as I have explained at greater length in my essay on "The Six Ages of the Church."^[3] Of course it is not possible, or hardly possible, for the student to study all of these. He can choose whichever of them is best adapted to his own needs and interests. But each of them provides an equally good field for study--not because they are equal from the point of view of material and intellectual culture--but because in each we see how Christianity has extended into vital relations with some particular social world and has changed it by creating a new pattern of Christian life according to the conditions of this particular age and society. Each has its own record of achievement and failure and each has played its part in the world mission of the Church, the progressive transformation of humanity by the new principle of divine life which was brought into the world by the Incarnation and which will continue its work through the whole course of human history until the end of time.

1 The Newman Press, 1959.

2 *Op. cit.*, pp. 211, 215.

3 In *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture* (Harper & Bros., 1960), pp. 47-59.

17. CULTURAL POLARITY AND RELIGIOUS SCHISM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF SCHISM

"Cultural Polarity and Religious Schism," from Chapter IV, Part II of *The Judgment of the Nations* (1942); reprinted in *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 80-89.

It may be said that the collaboration of Christians on the basis of fundamental principles is impossible, because it ignores the real nature of our disagreement. Granted that Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox, Lutherans and Free Churchmen all believe in the Church of the Living God as the pillar and ground of the truth, the fact remains that it is not the same Church in an objective, institutional sense that is the object of this faith. We see this most clearly in the case of Catholics and Orthodox. Here are two perfectly concrete and definite, organized spiritual societies which agree to a remarkable extent in their conception of their nature and office, but which are mutually exclusive, so that it would seem that the more profound is their belief in "the Church," the more complete is their separation from one another. In the case of the Protestant denominations and especially the Free Churches, the situation is of course far less clearly defined, owing to the complete disappearance of structural and intellectual unity. Nevertheless it is conceivable that reaction against the fissiparous tendency of Protestantism, of which reaction the Ecumenical Movement is the most striking example, might result in the creation of a reunited Protestant Christendom, which would stand over against the Catholic Church, in the same way that Eastern Orthodoxy has done in the past.

[81] Thus we are brought up once more against the fundamental problem of Christian disunity which is the problem of schism. In practice this problem is so closely associated with that of heresy, i.e. difference of religious belief, that they are apt to be confused with one another. But it is nevertheless important to distinguish them carefully, and to consider the nature of schism in itself, for I believe that it is in the question of schism rather than that of heresy that the key to the problem of the disunity of Christendom is to be found. For heresy as a rule is not the cause of schism but an excuse for it, or rather a rationalization of it. Behind every heresy lies some kind of social conflict, and it is only by the resolution of this conflict that unity can be restored.

In order to illustrate what I mean I would take as an example the schism between the Byzantine and the Armenian churches, for that controversy is sufficiently remote for us to treat it in a completely impartial spirit. Here the theological issues at stake

were the Monophysite heresy and the decrees of the council of Chalcedon; matters of the highest importance which involved the most profound and subtle problems of theological science. Yet even from the beginning it is obvious that the passions which filled the streets of Alexandria with tumult and bloodshed and set bishops fighting like wild animals were not inspired by a pure desire for theological truth or even by purely religious motives of any kind. It was a spirit of faction which used theological slogans, but which drew its real force from the same kind of motive which causes political strife or even war and revolution.

And when we leave the primary conflict at Alexandria and Ephesus and come to its secondary results in Armenia or Abyssinia, it is obvious that the theological element has become practically negligible, and the real conflict is one of national feeling. Take as an example the rubric, which used to appear in the Greek liturgy for the week before Septuagesima Sunday and which I quoted in *The Making of Europe*: "On this day the thrice cursed Armenians begin their blasphemous fast which they call artziburion, but we eat cheese and eggs in order to refute their heresy." Here, it seems to me, we can see in an almost pure state the spirit which causes religious dissension. To put it crudely, [82] it means that the Greeks thought the Armenians beastly people, who were sure to be wrong whatever they did. And where such a spirit reigns, what could be hoped for from theological discussions? The same spirit which made the eating of cheese a confutation of Armenian depravity would never have any difficulty in finding some theological expression, and if it had not been the doctrine of the Incarnation, then something else would have served just as well.

Now it is easy for us to condemn the Greeks and the Armenians, because we belong to a different world, and if we fast at all, we find it difficult to understand how people can attach such enormous importance to the questions of exactly when and how the fast is made. But can we be sure that the same spirit is not just as strong today, though it takes quite different forms? I remember, years ago, reading a story of an eminent Nonconformist divine whose name I have forgotten, which struck me as an example of this. He had been on a visit to Assisi and was immensely im-

pressed with the story of Saint Francis and the mediaeval art in which it is expressed. But one evening, as he was visiting the lower church, he happened to come across a friar and a group of peasant women making the Stations of the Cross and singing one of those mournful traditional chants which are so different from our English hymn tunes, and strike one as half Oriental. And suddenly he experienced a violent revulsion of feeling and said to himself: "This religion is not my religion and this God is not the God that I worship."

This seems to me a perfect instance of what I have in mind because the intellectual or theological motive is entirely absent. It is not as though he jibbed at Mariolatry or the pomp of a High Mass. He was revolted by the very thing in Italy for which Evangelical Nonconformity has stood in England, a spontaneous manifestation of popular Christocentric devotion. And what upset him was not any divergence of theological views but merely the alien setting and the different cultural tradition which separate the world of the Italian peasant from that of the well-to-do, middle-class Englishman.

There is no need to labour the point. It was realized only too [83] forcibly by the writers and thinkers of the Enlightenment from Bayle to Gibbon and Thomas Paine, and it was largely responsible for the reaction against orthodoxy in the eighteenth century. But, unfortunately, its use as a weapon against revealed religion has tended to blind orthodox apologetics to its real significance. History has shown that no true solution is to be found in the direction which the eighteenth-century Enlightenment took, i.e., by constructing a purely rational philosophy of religion based on the abstract generalities that are common to all forms of religion. For deism is nothing but the ghost of religion which haunts the grave of dead faith and lost hope. Any real religion must recognize, on the one hand, the objective character of religious truth -- and hence the necessity of a theology -- and on the other, the need for religion to embody itself in concrete forms appropriate to the national character and the cultural tradition of the people. It is right that Italian peasants and the English shopkeepers should express their feelings in different forms; what is wrong is that they should worship different gods or should

regard each other as separated from the mind of Christ and the body of the Church because they speak a different language and respond to different emotional stimuli. In other words: difference of rite ought not to involve differences of faith.

Now it is hardly necessary to point out the bearing that this has on the problem of the reunion of Catholic and Protestant Europe. To the average Protestant, Catholicism is not the religion of Saint Thomas and Saint Francis de Sales and Bossuet; it is the religion of Wops and Dagoes who worship the images of the Madonna and do whatever their priests tell them. And the same is true of the average Catholic, *mutatis mutandis*.

Underlying the theological issues that divide Catholicism and Protestantism there is the great cultural schism between Northern and Southern Europe which would still have existed if Christianity never had existed, but which, when it exists, inevitably translates itself into religious terms.

Yet this division is a natural one which cannot be condemned as necessarily evil since it is part of the historical process. If it had been possible to keep life to a dead level of uniformity, in [84] which Englishmen and Spaniards, Frenchmen and Germans, were all alike, conditions might be more favourable to religious unity, but European civilization would have been immensely poorer and less vital, and its religious life would probably have been impoverished and devitalized as well. It is the besetting sin of the idealist to sacrifice reality to his ideals; to reject life because it fails to come up to his ideal; and this vice is just as prevalent among religious idealists as secular ones. If we condemn the principle of diversity or polarity in history, and demand an abstract uniform civilization which will obviate the risk of wars and religious schisms, we are offending against life in the same way as though we condemned the difference of the sexes, as many heretics actually have done, because it leads to immorality. And this is not a bad parallel, because the polarity or duality of culture of which I have spoken is but an example of the universal rhythm of life which finds its most striking expression in the division of the sexes. Of course I do not mean to say that the duality of culture is an absolute, fixed, unalterable law; it is rather a tend-

ency which acts differently in different societies and in different stages of the development of a single society. But this is a tendency which is always present and which seems to become more clearly defined when social life and culture is most vital and creative, as, for example, at the time of the Renaissance.

Any vital point in the life of society may become the centre of such a polarization, and where a culture has an exceptionally rigid organization, as in the Byzantine empire, the principle of duality may find expression in an apparently arbitrary division, like those of the Circus factions --the Blues and the Greens -- which played so important a part in the social life of Constantinople. As a rule however, race and religion are the vital points around which the opposing forces in society coalesce. Thus we see how the Ionian and Dorian strains form the two opposite poles of Greek civilization and finally become defined in the conflict between Athens and Sparta which tore Greece asunder in the fifth century B.C.

Sometimes the two types of motive coalesce and reinforce one another, as in Ireland, where the cause of religion and race became identified, so that the opposition between Celt and Anglo-Saxon finds religious expression in the opposition of Catholic and Protestant. We find a similar state of things in Poland, where it was twofold, and showed itself in the conflict of Catholic Pole and Orthodox Russian in the East, while in the South, where the conflict was a purely national one between Catholic Pole and Catholic Austrian, feeling was less intense and the cultural opposition less strongly marked. On the other hand in Bohemia at an earlier period, where the opposition of Czech and German also manifested itself in a religious form, Slav nationalism took an heretical form and the German ascendancy was identified with the cause of the Church.

But, in addition to these cases, where the principle of social polarity is exemplified in its crudest form, we have a more subtle kind of socio-religious polarity which develops inside the unified national society and within the boundaries of a common religious tradition. A most striking example of this is to be found in England, where the tension of opposing social forces found expres-

sion in the religious opposition between the Established and the Nonconformist Churches. At first sight it may seem as though the diversity and disunity of Nonconformity are inconsistent with what I have said about religious schism as an expression of duality of culture and the tendency of social forces to converge round two opposite poles. But if we leave aside the theological aspect of Nonconformity and concentrate our attention on its social character, we shall see that the opposition of Church and Chapel, of conformity and dissent has an importance in the life of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English village or small town which far outweighs the differences between the various Nonconformist sects. And to some extent at least this religious opposition forms a spiritual background or foundation for the political division between the great English parties, so that in many parts of England it was taken for granted that a Nonconformist would be a good Liberal and a Churchman would be a good Conservative. It is true that this does not hold good of the early period of Methodism, but Methodism arose at a time when the Whigs represented the established social order, [86] and it owes its importance to the fact that it made its chief appeal to the disenfranchised classes to whom the political parties of the day made no direct appeal.

But, whatever view we may take of the causes of any particular schism and the social significance of particular religious movements, there can, I think, be no question but that in the history of Christendom from the Patristic period down to modern times, heresy and schism have derived their main impulse from sociological causes, so that a statesman who found a way to satisfy the national aspirations of the Czechs in the fifteenth century, or those of the Egyptians in the fifth, would have done more to reduce the centrifugal force of the Hussite or the Monophysite movements than a theologian who made the most brilliant and convincing defense of Communion in One Kind or of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. Whereas it is very doubtful if the converse is true, for even if the Egyptians had accepted the doctrine of Chalcedon, they would have found some other ground of division so long as the sociological motive for division remained unaltered.

What bearing has all this on the problem of Reunion as it exists today? It would be a profound mistake to conclude that because religious disunion in the past has been based on social and political causes, we must accept it in a spirit of fatalism, as an evil which cannot be remedied except by political or economic means. The cause of Christian unity can best be served neither by religious controversy nor by political action, but by the theological virtues: faith, hope and charity. And these virtues must be applied both in the intellectual and religious spheres. It is, above all, necessary to free the religious issue of all the extraneous motives that take their rise in unconscious social conflicts, for if we can do this we shall deprive the spirit of schism of its dynamic force. If we can understand the reason of our instinctive antipathy to other religious bodies, we shall find that the purely religious and theological obstacles to reunion became less formidable and more easy to remove. But so long as the unconscious element of social conflict remains unresolved, religion is at the mercy of the blind forces of hatred and suspicion which may [87] assume really pathological forms. If it seems that this is an exaggeration, you have only to look back at our own past and consider the history of the Gordon Riots or the Popish Plot.

Hence the first and greatest step toward religious unity is an internal and spiritual one: the purging of the mind from the lower motives which may contaminate our faith. For in the vast majority of cases the sin of schism does not arise from a conscious intention to separate oneself from the true Church, but from allowing the mind to become so occupied and clouded by instinctive enmities or oppositions that we can no longer see spiritual issues clearly, and our religious attitude becomes determined by forces that are not religious at all.

It is easy enough to see, in the fifteenth century, for example, how vested interests and material motives caused the leaders both of Church and State to oppose necessary reforms, but it is no less evident that the passion of revolt that drove a great religious leader like Martin Luther into schism and heresy was not purely religious in origin, but was the outcome of a spiritual conflict in which religious motives were hopelessly confused, so that if Luther had not been such a "psychic" person, to use the

word in Saint Paul's sense as well as the modern one, he would have been able to judge the deep things of God as a spiritual man: he would still have been a reformer without becoming an heresiarch.

When we turn to the English Reformation, the influence of the non-religious factors in the schism is so obvious that there is no need to insist on it. It was to a great extent a movement of the State against the Church, and the driving force behind it was the awakening of national consciousness and the self-assertion of national culture. Hence the religious issue became so identified with the national cause that Catholicism became the representative of all the forces that were hostile to nationality, and every Catholic was regarded as a bad Englishman and a disloyal subject. To the average Englishman the typical Catholic was not Thomas More but Guy Fawkes, and the celebration of the Gunpowder Treason became a kind of primitive ritual expression of the popular detestation of the hereditary enemy of the tribe.

This identification of religion and nationality endured for more than two hundred years, and even today it remains as a subconscious prejudice at the back of men's minds. But it has inevitably tended to diminish with the growth of modern secular civilization. There is no longer any need for nationalism or class feeling or economic motives to disguise themselves in the dress of religion, for they have become the conscious and dominant forces in social life. The ideologies which today form the opposite poles of social tension are not religious, but political, national and economic ones, which have cut across and largely obliterated the older socio-religious divisions which separated Catholic and Protestant Europe.

Here it seems to me that the present age is more favourable to the cause of unity than any time since the Middle Ages, For, if Christianity becomes a minority religion, if it is threatened by hostility and persecution, then the common cause of Christianity becomes a reality and not merely a phrase, and there is a centre round which the scattered forces of Christendom can rally and reorganize. We must remember that behind the natural

process of social conflict and tension which runs through history there is a deeper law of spiritual duality and polarization which is expressed in the teaching of the Gospel on the opposition of the World and the Kingdom of God and in Saint Augustine's doctrine of the two cities Babylon and Jerusalem whose conflict runs through all history and gives it its ultimate significance.

Thus when Christians allow the conflicts and divisions of the natural man to transgress their bounds and permeate the religious sphere, the cause of God becomes obscured by doubts and divisions, and schism and heresies arise. But when the Church is faithful to its mission, it becomes the visible embodiment of this positive divine principle standing over against the eternal negative of evil.

I believe that the age of schism is passing and that the time has come when the divine principle of the Church's life will assert its attractive power, drawing all the living elements of [89]Christian life and thought into organic unity. For since Christ Is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is the life of the Church, wherever there is faith in Christ and the Spirit of Christ there is the spirit of unity and the means of reunion. Therefore it is not necessary to talk much about the ways and means, for the ways of the Spirit are essentially mysterious and transcend human understanding. It may even be that the very strength of the forces that are gathering against the Church and against religion will make for unity by forcing Christians together, as it were, in spite of themselves; or it may be that the Church will react positively to the situation by a fresh outpouring of the apostolic spirit, as Blessed Grignon de Montfort prophesied two centuries ago.

18. CONTINUITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN CHRISTOPHER DAWSON'S THOUGHT

A Note by John J. Mulloy

from *Dynamics of World History* (1958), pp. 413-468

IN considering the development of Christopher Dawson's thought over the span of thirty-five years which this volume encompasses, one is impressed by the remarkable continuity in fundamental conceptions with which he has approached the study of culture and world history.

A significant example of this continuity is afforded by his conception of the nature of a civilization, as this is applied in criticism of Spengler in 1922 and of Toynbee in 1955. In both writers Dawson finds an oversimplification of the concept and a failure to appreciate the contributions which a civilization receives from the peoples of lower culture who are its neighbors or who may have been incorporated by it.

First in 1922, speaking of the difficulties in which Spengler's theory of history results:

"There is little room in Herr Spengler's scheme for cultural interaction and admixture, still less for the cooperation of several peoples in one civilization. . . .

". . . All this results from Herr Speaker's oversimplification, which only allows him to take account of a single people in dealing with a particular civilization. In reality it is impossible to simplify to this degree any civilization except the most primitive ones. So long as a people exists it possesses a cultural tradition, and however depressed and passive this may seem in relation to the creative culture of the dominant people in a world civilization, it is nevertheless capable of far-reaching influences and reactions."¹

Thirty-three years later it is the same idea of the complexity of elements in a civilization which forms the basis for Dawson's criticism of Dr. Toynbee's view of history. And because of this complexity, the philosophers of history require the help of sociology and anthropology if they are to reach valid conclusions as to the nature and the historical development of the higher cultures.

The fact is that a civilization of any but the most simple and archaic kind is a far more complex phenomenon than the philosophers of history have realized. No doubt it is always based on a particular original process of cultural creativity which is the work of a particular people. But at the same time it always tends to become a super-culture -- an extended area of social communication which dominates and absorbs other less advanced or less powerful cultures and unites them in an "oecumene," an international and intercultural society; and it is this extension of the area of communication that is the essential characteristic of civilization as distinguished from lower forms of culture.

The higher civilizations usually represent a fusion of at least two independent traditions of culture, and while one of these is dominant and possibly more advanced, it is not enough to dismiss the sub-culture as an internal proletariat, as Dr. Toynbee does, since the word "proletariat" denotes a class within a society and not a culture or sub-culture within a civilization. Hence I do not believe it is possible to study the high civilizations satisfactorily until we have succeeded in analyzing their different cultural components. In other words, the essential basis of the study of history must be, not just a comparative study of the higher civilizations, but a study of their constituent cultures, and here we must follow, not the grand synoptic method of the philosophers of history, but the more laborious and meticulous scientific technique of the social anthropologists.²

While this continuity in Dawson's thought is most striking, as the above quotations indicate, there has at the same time taken

¹ See above, "Oswald Spengler and the Life of Civilizations," pp. 381, 382-83.

² See above, "Arnold Toynbee and the Study of History," pp. 402-3.

[415] place a process of development by which his earlier views have been deepened and broadened so as to give greater attention to matters previously passed over without much comment. The classification of cultures and the position of language within cul-

ture are two problems to which Mr. Dawson has recently given considerable study (we discuss his present view of language in a later part of this essay); but possibly the most impressive instance of development in Dawson's sociology is found in his attitude toward the importance of the intellectual element in a superculture or civilization.

In the criticism of Toynbee's views which we have just quoted, it will be observed that Dawson sees the extension of the area of communication as the essential feature by which a civilization is distinguished from lower forms of culture. Now normally it is by the geographic expansion of a civilization's military power or political control that such extension in the area of communication takes place. How then shall we evaluate the fact of geographic expansion as a sign that a civilization is losing its cultural quality and degenerating into mere cosmopolitanism, or as an indication that it has been able to communicate its basic values and outlook on life to other peoples?

There is undoubtedly something to be said for both of these interpretations of the geographic expansion of a culture, and no doubt the particular explanation found valid will differ with the circumstances of each case. (We should note, however, that in Dr. Toynbee's view, "The history of almost every civilization furnishes examples of geographical expansion coinciding with deterioration in quality." And again, "More often geographical expansion is a concomitant of real decline and coincides with a 'time of troubles' or a universal state -- both of them stages of decline and disintegration." ³ And the reason for this is that geographic expansion is closely connected with militarism, which Toynbee sees as "the commonest cause of the breakdowns of civilizations."⁴

³ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Somervell abridgement, Oxford, 1946), pp.191, 190.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[416] But what is significant in relation to the changes in Dawson's thought on this question is the fact that in his earlier essays in

the 1920(5), he tended to regard the geographic expansion of a culture as achieved mostly or primarily at the expense of cultural quality, while in his recent writings on culture in the 1950's he is inclined to emphasize the achievement by which a civilization has opened up new areas of communication and made its own values part of the cultural outlook of other peoples.

Thus, in the fifth essay in the present volume (first published in 1924), he refers to the Hellenistic superculture and its geographic expansion into Asia as "a mechanical and external creation, compared with the vital and internal impulse that created the Greek City-State." He sees it as combining superficial and abstract progress with a vital decline in the quality of the culture being imparted, so that "the vivid and highly differentiated life of the regional city-state" faded away "into a formless, cosmopolitan society, with no roots in the past and no contact with a particular region, a society which was common to the great cities everywhere from Mesopotamia to the Bay of Naples." 5

In his observations of the last few years, while not rejecting his analysis of the causes of the decline of the Greek city-states, Mr. Dawson takes a somewhat different view of the character of Hellenistic civilization. Precisely because it was capable of being taught to other peoples not of Greek origin, the Hellenistic superculture possessed an inner life of its own which allowed it to transcend the particular fate of decline or breakdown which might come upon the regional city-states where Hellenism had its origin. As he remarks on this point in a letter to the present writer (written January 18, 1955):

"With regard to the superculture and the organic culture, I have changed my views to some extent of late years and would qualify considerably what I wrote on the Hellenistic culture in *Progress and Religion* [parts of this fifth essay we have quoted from were later incorporated into this work]. It is quite true, as I say in *Progress and Religion*, that the Hellenic culture declined

5 Cf. above, pp. 58, 60.

[417] through the withering away of its organic substratum in the regional cultures. (The case of Hellenism is unique, because it is the only culture I know of in which the regional unit, the polis, also became the organ of the higher culture.)

"On the other hand, I entirely disagree with Toynbee about geographical expansion coinciding normally with cultural decline. The normal process is quite the opposite, e.g. the great age of medieval culture was also the age of the territorial expansion of the Franco-Norman culture, the great age of Spanish culture was the age of Spanish territorial expansion and the latter ceased before the former by a generation or two.

"So too with Western European culture generally, the age of expansion was the age of cultural achievement. So again with Islam."

Speaking of the question of whether supercultures are subject to growth and decay he seemed to imply that the Hellenistic superculture was, in his original criticism of it in the 1920's Mr. Dawson defines his position as follows:

"I would say that Athens experienced a breakdown then [i.e. the fourth century B.C.], but by no means Hellenism itself. But on the whole I do not believe that civilizations have life-cycles. Peoples have, and if a culture is bound up with a people, then it also must. But in so far as a civilization becomes a superculture and is transmitted to an indefinite number of peoples, its development may transcend this cycle."

And again, in the same letter as the above passage (January 1, 1955):

"A superculture which is a world civilization, like Hellenism, Christendom and Islam, is potentially universal and eternal. It ends only when it is destroyed by atom bombs or when it is absorbed by another world civilization greater than itself."

At a further point in this letter of January 1, 1955 he specifically dissociates his views on the organic and intellectual elements in a

civilization from the position on this matter held by Spengler:

"I think Spengler quite realized the existence of these universal cultures which are civilizations, but he disliked them. He thought

[418] that when a culture is taught it becomes dead, whereas I should say that when a culture can be transmitted by teaching, it attains a higher level of existence."

It should be noted that Spengler's use of the term civilization differs from that of Dawson, since Spengler applies it to the last phase of a culture, which he identifies as a period of petrification and death, when the creative impulse of the people that has created the original culture has played itself out; while Dawson thinks of a civilization as transcending the limitations of the regional culture in which it had its origin and uniting many peoples in a new supercultural unity. For Dawson, this last phase of a culture, which Spengler holds in such low esteem, is a time of the greatest seminal importance for the future; for it is precisely then that a culture acquires "new contacts and opportunities for expression," and during this "decisive period of intercourse and fusion" sets an indelible character upon the daughter-cultures that are being formed within it.⁶

Finally, we should observe that Dawson's present view on the intellectual element in a civilization involves a high regard for education in intercultural contacts, since it is by the process of teaching its fundamental values to other peoples that a civilization achieves a relative universality, that is, transcends the boundaries of its region of origin.

Since the publication in 1948 of his last volume specifically devoted to analysis of culture (the first series of Gifford Lectures, *Religion and Culture*), Mr. Dawson's thought has been exploring new trails along a number of lines, including the problem of proper classification of cultures: how one is to distinguish, for example, subcultures from regional cultures, and these again from national cultures and civilizations. In his correspondence with the present writer, which may eventually be published, these and other matters have been given critical examination, and the re-

ult has been an extension in the area of Dawson's sociological

6 See above, p. 386. For a more detailed statement of these differences, see the entire essay on "Oswald Spengler and the Life of Civilizations," pp 374-89.

[419] thought and a more precise statement of the principles it involves.

Sociology and History

As we have noted above, Dawson's interest in the wider perspectives of world history is balanced by a regard for the smaller and more local factors which enter into movements of historical change the structure of the primary social unit, the relation of the regional group to its environment, the effect of the region upon a people's view of life, and the constituent contributions of several different regional peoples to the wider cultural unities called civilizations. His ultimate goal may be to show the relationship of these broader cultural unities to one another in the movement of world history but he believes this relationship cannot be understood without an examination of these facts which are usually considered the province of sociology and anthropology disciplines where social change is studied on a more limited level than that of the cultural historian.

His concern for the first of these factors the primary social unit is evidenced in certain themes which run as a connecting thread throughout most of his works of historical analysis. One of these is the influence exercised upon culture by peasant and by tribal societies, both in themselves and in their interaction with the higher culture of the city. For example, in Dawson's view the Archaic civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia result from and are conditioned by the ethos of the peasant society, which underlay their greatest achievements. 7 Nor can the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome be understood, he maintains, without seeing them as the union of the older city civilization of the East with the tribal structure of the barbarian war bands which invaded the Mediterranean area toward the end of the second millennium B.C. 8 And, as a final example, medieval cul-

ture is seen as the offspring of the union of the classical culture

7 See Chapters V, VI, and VII in *The Age of the Gods*.

8 See above, "The Origins of Classical Civilization," pp. 148-55.

[420] of the Mediterranean cities with the tribal cultures of Northern Europe, brought about through the agency of the Church.

Mr. Dawson's continuing interest in the primary social unit and its influence upon cultural development is shown in a recent letter where he comments upon the studies of the peasant village in different parts of the world now being made by contributors to *The American Anthropologist*:

"These studies strengthen my conviction on the importance of the village as the primary unit of culture and they also show how the higher cultures rest on different types of village society, though it is not dear whether the difference between the higher cultures can be explained by the difference between the primary units or whether the opposite is the case,

"These studies also appear to show certain general differences between the European or Northwest European village and those of Asia and Africa. In the latter the village seems to form part of a wider kinship group, that is to say, that there is a strong tribal element still surviving in Asiatic and African societies which has disappeared in Europe, save in a few exceptional regions. I wonder whether this disappearance of the wider kinship group in Europe is due to exceptional development of the monogamous family as the foundation of society." (Letter of September 7, 1955).

The importance of physical environment in influencing the culture and social development of a people is another key principle which Dawson as a cultural historian holds in common with the anthropologists. One instance of his recognition of the influence of the region is found in his ascribing the diversity of the European cultural development to the nature of the European continent and its particular geographic construction innumerable valleys and peninsulas shut off from one another by moun-

tains but open to intercourse by sea. As a result, "The sea ways have been the high road of European civilization, for they alone have rendered possible the combination of regional independence with the stimulus of commercial intercourse and mutual influ-

9 See *The Making of Europe*, especially Chapters V and XI; also Chapter IV for Dawson's analysis of tribal society and culture.

ence to which Europe owes the richness and variety of its cultural life."10

On the other hand, when a people loses contact with the region it is occupying, this has usually seemed to Dawson a portent of cultural decline. For the particularism of a local society is at the same time a means of nourishing the culture by a contact with the realities of nature. One example of a society's loss of regional roots and their replacement by cosmopolitanism is provided by the decline of the Greek city-states on the mainland of Greece in the fourth and third centuries B.C.; and another by the fate of Moslem Spain in the tenth and eleventh centuries of the Christian era. Of the latter development Dawson observes (and his analysis recalls his description of the decline of the Greek city-states which we discussed earlier in this Note):

"Unfortunately Moslem Spain, in spite of its high civilization was based on insecure social foundations, and the very age which produced so brilliant a flowering of intellectual culture was also the age of its political decline and fall The Moslem State in Spain no less than in Egypt and Mesopotamia was an artificial creation which had no organic relation to the life of the people and rested its power on mercenary troops and on the class of slaves and freedmen from which most of its servants and officials were drawn. . . .

"This premature blighting of the brilliant civilisation of Moslem Spain is typical of the fate of this (Islamic) Mediterranean world as a whole. Everywhere we find the same wealth of material and intellectual culture and the same lack of social vitality or free political activity."11

The effects of occupation and geographic environment upon the world view or religious outlook of the less advanced peoples have often been recognised by anthropologists; and one of the chief tasks Dawson undertook in *The Age of the Gods* was to show how the difference between the way of life of the peasant

10 *The Age of the Gods*, p. 170.

11 *Medieval Essays*, pp. 127, 130. For comparison with this passage, see above, "Progress and Decay In Ancient and Modern Civilization," Dawson's analysis of the decline of Greece, pp. 59 ff.

[422] and that of the pastoral nomad had corresponding effects upon their approach to the supernatural. However, in Dawson's view not even the world religions have wholly transcended the limits of the geographic region where they had their origin, and certain psychological orientations which they assume have to be related to the experience of the regional people among whom the religion had its beginnings.

Thus, speaking of the desert as one of the forces which influenced the development of Semitic religion in the direction of Prophecy more than of Priesthood (we may assume the primary reference here is to Islam and perhaps to Judaism), he points out:

"In contrast to the Greeks and to the peoples who created the archaic culture, the Semitic peoples in historic times were not deeply concerned with the problem of the order of nature. They saw the world in a more primitive fashion as a battlefield of contending forces of superhuman powers which had to be placated and obeyed rather than controlled and understood. The Semitic background was not the world of the Mediterranean where the gods are the friends of man and crown his labour with the vine and the olive, but the world of the desert in which man exists only on sufferance and is always at the mercy of alien powers. In such a world there is little room for rational calculation, and life is ruled by fate and chance and personal luck and prowess. And the wise man does not trust too much to his own prowess but looks for help to supernatural guidance and warnings, to divination and to an implicit obedience to an incomprehensible divine will."¹²

However, despite the geographic influences which may be involved in its origin, every world religion possesses a vision which is potentially universal. Thus, although Islam originated in the world of the desert and carries with it attitudes and ideas engendered by such an environment, its appeal is not restricted simply to desert-dwelling peoples.

"... in the case of Islam, we see a new attitude to life, which first arose in the arid plateau of Arabia, transforming the lives and

12 *Religion and Culture*, p. 73. For a reference to the influence of geography on the formation of Indian religion, see above, pp. 62-3.

[423] social organization of the Slavonic mountaineers of Bosnia, the Malay pirate of the East Indies, the highly civilized city dwellers of Persia and Northern India, and the barbarous Negro tribes of Africa."13

As Dawson remarks elsewhere on the spread of Islam to regions so different from its original environment, "For a vision to be so universal in its effects, there must also be something universal in its causes, and we cannot suppose it to be a merely fortuitous product of local circumstances."14

The last of these factors of a sociological nature which Dawson finds so important in the dynamics of culture is the contribution which regional peoples make to the cultural unity which is a civilization. Dawson's own work has been greatly enriched by his awareness of the complexity of cultural elements which go to make up a civilization,15 and, as we have noted above, it is one of his chief criticisms of Spengler and Toynbee that they fail to do justice to this complexity and tend to neglect the cultural traditions of the primitive and barbarian societies which have so greatly affected the formation and character of the higher cultures. In his assertion of a fundamental continuity between civilizations and more primitive societies, Dawson finds himself in basic disagreement with the philosophers of history, whose gaze is fixed too intently upon civilizations as such to allow them

to perceive the true character of the unit they are studying. In reply to Toynbee's attempt to posit a radical difference between civilizations and peoples of lower culture, such as the human societies of prehistoric times or those of the non-civilized world today, Dawson observes:

"All these belong to the same world of history as the higher civilizations. They possess language and culture and religion and art. And they differ from one another as much or more than they differ from the civilizations. There is no excuse for lumping them

13 *Progress and Religion* (1st ed., London, 1929), p. 76.

14 See above, "Sociology and the Theory of Progress," p. 43.

15 See *The Making of Europe* and *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, especially Chapters 7, 9 and 13 in the former, and 5 and 6 in the latter.

[424] all together at the bottom of the scale and grouping the civilizations all together at the top.¹⁶

In this contrast between the conceptions of culture held by Dawson and Toynbee, it is significant that A. L. Kroeber, the dean of American anthropologists, tends rather to favor the view held by Dawson, that there is a basic similarity in character between the civilizations and the more primitive societies. In a communication to *The American Anthropologist* some years ago, Dr. Kroeber defined his position in the following terms:

"Nor do I accede to the view of Spengler, Toynbee and others that civilizations (or "culture") and history begin only at a certain level. It is historic records that begin at a certain level. Also, readiness of sophisticated and lettered people to consciously admit explicit cultural values usually begins only at a certain level not too remote from that of their own culture. And it is certainly simpler for them not to be bothered about the so varied primitives who yet look so much alike. Nevertheless, values exist in lowly cultures, definite styles occur in them, and patterns are there; and except as a matter now and then of pragmatic convenience, no anthropologist or certainly very few of them will admit the validity of splitting the continuum of human culture

into two strata of which one totally or essentially lacks certain qualities that characterize the other."¹⁷

Although Dawson's own attention has been focused mainly on the higher civilizations and upon the cultural influence of the world religions, he believes that often it is only by studying the lower cultures that the sources and achievements of the advanced cultures can be understood and evaluated. In a letter of comment upon what is needed before an adequate schema of the various epochs of world history can be written, he particularly emphasized the importance of the cultures of barbarian peoples.

". . . We need much further study of the great historical cultures and especially of the relation between these cultures and

16 See above, "Arnold Toynbee and the Study of History," p. 401.

17 Communication by A. L. Kroeber in *The American Anthropologist*, V. 53, No. 2, April-June 1951, pp. 279-83.

[425] the smaller regional units which the anthropologists are studying. There is also a great need for more study of the intermediate units the more advanced barbarian cultures, for example, the cultures of the Yoruba and Bini in West Africa (as these existed within living memory), which are too barbarous for the historians and too civilized for the anthropologists. I think that it is only by the study of these cultures that we can understand the intermediate cultures of antiquity the Hittites, the Kassites, the Assyrians, even the Persians.

"The kind of thing we need is a complete survey of a single area, as for example West Africa, which would show the general pattern of primitive and intermediate cultures in contact with and under pressure from the world cultures of Islam and Western Europe." (Letter of December 28, 1951.)

Thus for the proper development of a world history of culture the historian needs the work of the sociologist and the anthropologist as well as his own investigations. If this is the case, by what principle may each expect to mark out his respective role

and function in the common task?

In the article "Sociology as a Science," included in this volume, Dawson points out that sociology and history are complementary parts of the single science of social life, that it is the task of sociology to provide "a general systematic analysis of the social process" while history aims to give "a genetic description of the same process in detail." Sociology deals with the structure of society, history with its evolution. On this distinction in function he bases an analogy to biological science; sociology is related to history "as general biology ... to the study of organic evolution."

To illustrate how sociology and history might co-operate in the study of a specific society, so as to delineate more clearly its social structure and culture, Dawson takes as his model an historical community the city-state of ancient Greece.

"Thus a sociological study of Greek culture would concern itself primarily with the organic structure of Greek society with the city-state and its organization, the Greek family and its economic foundation, the functional differentiation of Greek society, [426] the place of slavery in the social order, and so forth; but all these elements must be studied genetically and in relation to the general development of Greek culture on the basis of the material provided by the historian; while the latter, on his side, requires the help of the social analysis of the sociologist in order to interpret the facts that he discovers and to relate them to the organic whole of Greek culture, which is the final object of his study."18

However, it is the anthropologists rather than the sociologists who have accomplished most in the direction of community studies. For sociology in the past has been so much concerned either with the attempted remedy of immediate social problems or with the development of mechanistic theories to explain the working of the laws of society that it had but little time left for study of the community as such. As a result, it has been the anthropologists who have undertaken the pioneer and eminently successful analyses of modern social communities like Yankee City and Southern Town.19

A basic question raised by Dawson's sociological approach to history is the corresponding one of how much part historical evidence should be allowed to play in the validation of sociological principles. Until recently, the general practice in American society has been to concentrate upon particular contemporary problems as representing the only kind of evidence which is truly empirical; it seems likely that this attitude is itself a sort of provincialism and unduly restricts the area for testing of sociological concepts. It is significant, we believe, that Max Weber in Germany in the early part of the present century found that his sociological studies achieved a clearer focus when he concentrated his attention on a particular historical problem; and as a result of this study, he enlarged his field of investigation to include the historical development of several different societies as they re-

18 See above, "Sociology as a Science," pp. 20-21.

19 Cf. W. L. Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (Yale University Press, 1941); *The Status System of a Modern Community* (1942); J. Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Harper & Brothers, 1949).

[427] lated to this question.²⁰ More recently, Robert Redfield's turning to history to clarify the meaning of the folk society and to allow greater scope for its application, affords another convincing testimony of the need for historical perspective in developing sociological conceptions.²¹

Moreover, for the formulation of the principles of social interaction, sociology has come to rely in increasing measure upon the evidence contributed by the anthropologists' study of primitive societies. The value of historical evidence to sociology is of a similar kind to that provided by anthropology. The isolation of basic factors in a social problem which we find in anthropological field work is offered also by historical analyses of past epochs. The combination of sympathy with detachment which the anthropologist should bring to his study is likewise a prerequisite for sound historical investigation. Both the cultural historian and the anthropologist can help the sociologist to overcome what is possibly his major difficulty: that the very wealth of the material available blurs the outlines of the problem he wishes to study.

Through the models of social and cultural situations which they provide, anthropology and history can give to sociology a clearer vision and a more precise understanding of its own subject-matter and methods of procedure.

In this connection, it is not without significance that E. E. Evans-Pritchard, former president of the Royal Anthropological Institute and one of Great Britain's leading social anthropologists, has recognized the kinship of his own discipline to history and its need to make greater use of methods of an historical nature. In his presidential address at Oxford in 1950 Dr. Evans-Pritchard made the following observations:

20 See Weber's three volumes of *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religions-sociologie*, parts of which have been translated into English, including the well-known *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. For a brief view of Weber's thought on this subject, see Parts III and IV of *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated by H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York, 1946).

21 R. Redfield, *The Primitive World and its Transformations* (Cornell University Press, 1953).

[428] "The value of each discipline to the other will, I believe, be recognized when anthropologists begin to devote themselves more to historical scholarship and show how knowledge of anthropology often illuminates historical problems.

"The thesis I have put before you, that social anthropology is a kind of historiography, and therefore ultimately of philosophy or art, implies that it studies societies as moral systems and not as natural systems, that it is interested in design rather than in process, and that it therefore seeks patterns and not scientific laws, and interprets rather than explains. . . .

"I expect that in the future there will be a turning toward humanistic disciplines, especially towards history, and particularly towards social history or the history of institutions, of cultures and of ideas. ... I believe that during this second half of the century . . . it [i.e. social anthropology] will take as its province the cultures and societies, past as well as present, of the non-

European peoples of the world."²²

The Nature of Culture

From these preliminary observations, we may now pass to a more detailed consideration of Dawson's conception of culture. He has described a culture as "a common way of life a particular adjustment of man to his natural surroundings and his economic needs." Observing that both the biological and intellectual elements co-operate in the formation of a culture, he points out that there are both similarities and a basic difference between this process and the development of the way of life of an animal species.

It is true that three of the main influences which form and modify human culture are the same as in the case of the formation of an animal species. They are (1) race, i.e. the genetic factor; (2) environment, i.e. the geographical factor; (3) function or occupation, i.e. the economic factor. But in addition to these there is a fourth element thought or the psychological factor which

²² "Social Anthropology: Past and Present," the Marett Lecture, delivered in Exeter College Hall, Oxford, on June 3, 1950, printed in *Man*, 1950, No. 198.

[429] is peculiar to the human species and the existence of which frees man from the blind dependence on material environment which characterizes the lower forms of life.²³

In his most recent definition of culture, Dawson finds that it is language which most prominently manifests the specific form of the intellectual element in culture. In a yet unpublished essay written in 1954, he remarks: "The linguistic factor is in a sense the most important of all, since language provides the psychological medium in which all the others operate and through which they attain consciousness and continuity." And in another part of the same essay,

"Thus the language community is the most fundamental of all

human groups and language is the most fundamental element in culture. As the use of language distinguishes man from the other animals, so it is the formation and use of a particular language which distinguishes one culture from another."

It is to be noted that this increased emphasis on the importance of language is closely related to Mr. Dawson's deeper appreciation of the intellectual elements in a suprculture of which we have spoken above, by means of which a civilization is able to achieve a larger area of communication with societies with which it comes into contact. For even in the most primitive cultures, language opens up "wider possibilities of communication and understanding and social co-operation" which are the primitive analogue to the achievement of the higher civilization in extending its area of influence to embrace many different peoples.

The first three factors identified in Dawson's definition of culture are the same as Le Play's folk, place and work and correspond to the biological equivalents of organism, function and environment. Through this correspondence there exists the means to relate the social to the biological sciences; for the work of the historian and the sociologist requires an intimate understanding of those things which man has in common with other forms of animal life. Because of the importance of these elements

23 See above, "The Sources of Culture Change," p. 5.

[430] in conditioning human life and culture, Dawson maintains that the approach of the natural sciences has a primary place when the sociologist is studying the relation of the human social group to its natural environment and its economic activities. He observes, "In a thousand ways human life is conditioned and determined by material factors, and there is a legitimate materialism which consists in the definition and analysis of these relations."²⁴

However, a social science interested only in these factors and neglecting the specifically human element of thought or psychology would oversimplify the cultural picture and expose itself to the error of determinism. Indeed, despite their recognition

of the autonomous character of the religious element in social life, this was an error to which Le Play and his school inclined, for with their emphasis on folk, work and place, they "tended to overestimate the importance of the economic and geographical factors and to neglect the contribution of history." This resulted from the fact that Le Play did not conceive religion (and, we may add, the intellectual factor in general) as a dynamic element within culture, but rather thought of it "as an invariable which governs social life from outside without entering into it."²⁵

Where Dawson goes beyond Le Play and makes his specific contribution to cultural theory is in his conception of culture as an organic unity of spiritual and biological elements, in which the intellectual factor is not something existing apart from a people's organized way of life, but is indissolubly united with it. In fact, for Dawson the intellectual element is "the soul and formative principle of a culture" and is "consubstantial with its material substratum" ²⁶ Its position in culture may best be understood by seeing it as part of a psycho-physical unity comparable to man himself. Developing this analogy he asserts:

"In reality a culture is neither a purely physical process nor an ideal construction. It is a living whole from its roots in the soil and in the simple instinctive life of the shepherd, the fisherman,

²⁴ See above, "Sociology as a Science" pp. 21-22.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁶ *Progress and Religion* (1st ed.), p. 76.

431]and husbandman, up to its flowering in the highest achievements of the artist and the philosopher; just as the individual combines in the substantial unity of his personality the animal life of nutrition and reproduction with the higher activities of reason and intellect."²⁷

This conception enables Dawson to consider every human culture from two different viewpoints: as a manifestation of the life of the spirit, though never, be it noted, as simply an "ideal construction"; and as the response of biological life to the con-

ditions of the environment. The more primitive a culture, the more "earthbound and socially conditioned" will its religion appear to be (for it is through religion and its conceptions that the intellectual factor pre-eminently expresses itself in primitive life); but even under these conditions, where the material factors seem completely to dominate a people's way of life, there is always a certain margin of freedom by which new conceptions of reality may introduce a factor for change.²⁸

In his earliest published essay (1921) which we present in this volume, it appears that Dawson's conception of culture is the result of a synthesis of the sociological views of Comte with those of Le Play. Dawson is indebted to Le Play for putting his sociology into touch with the concrete bases of human life, through the latter's classic study of the family in relation to its natural environment. On the other hand, while criticizing Comte for embarking upon "grandiose schemes for the reconstitution of society" and for creating a theory of society which "was at the same time ... a system of moral philosophy and a non-theological substitute for religion" Dawson is impressed with Comte's recognition that the "study of social institutions must go hand in hand with the study of the intellectual and spiritual forces which give unity to the particular age and society in question," And despite his distrust of Comte's philosophy of history and the manner in which it became a substitute for sociology, he praises Comte for stressing "the formation and growth of a living community" in

²⁷ *Progress and Religion*, p. 45.

²⁸ See *Religion and Culture*, pp. 52-54.

[432] the historical development of mankind, "which embraces every aspect of human life and thought, and in which every age has a living and internal connection with the past and the future." And thus he finds himself in full agreement with Comte's view that "the causes of progress must be sought ... in man's psychical development rather than in the play of external circumstances."²⁹

However, it would be misleading to assume that Dawson's conception of sociology is simply the result of a personal attempt

to synthesize the thought of Comte with that of Le Play. While both of these thinkers exercised considerable influence upon his views of society, it was not so much directly as through the mediation of Victor Branford and Patrick Geddes, who founded The Sociological Review for the purpose of making Le Play's ideas better known in England and established the Le Play House in London for the same purpose. Moreover, Geddes and Branford had already provided their own synthesis of Comte with Le Play, although they dealt with the matter in a somewhat different fashion from Dawson. It was through their influence, as well as others in The Sociological Review group like Lewis Mumford (a disciple of Geddes and Branford), that the influence of Le Play's ideas impressed itself on Dawson.

Nor was Comte the chief source upon which Dawson drew in developing his ideas about a civilization as essentially a spiritual community; it was rather the earlier work of the St. Simonians which was the original influence directing his thought along these lines. Mr. Dawson has remarked in a letter to the present writer on the respective parts played by Geddes and Branford, Comte and the St. Simonians in the formation of his sociological thought:

"One must remember that the Geddes-Branford sociology was purely French by origin and with rather an anti-German bias. It represents a synthesis of Comte-Leplay-Bergson, with a strong inclination to biological terms and explanations. (Geddes was a biologist and a close friend of Sir Arthur Thomson.)

"I diverged from them, first by my sympathy with the German

29 See above, "Sociology and the Theory of Progress" pp. 38-39.

[433] tradition, for example, Herder instead of Montesquieu, and in more recent times Troeltsch and Weber. Secondly, by going back from Comte to the St. Simonians and Catholic social thinkers from whom Comte himself had taken so much. In the case of the St. Simonians, I have always regarded Hazard's *Doctrines de St. Simon* (1824) as the real starting point of modern sociology (and

I believed it owed more to Bazard than to St. Simon).

"On the other hand, I agreed entirely with Geddes in the value he attached to Aristotle, and he owed this not to Comte but to his own biological studies. My own interest in Aristotle goes back to my Oxford days when I studied the Politics with Ernest Barker. Also in those early days I was influenced by Fustel de Coulanges, and his study of the city prepared me for Geddes' view of the city as the centre of sociological study.

"Thus my study of sociology was conditioned by my earlier humanist studies, and the Geddes-Branford school had reached the same point from the opposite direction; that is, from biological and geographical science to a humanist sociology." (Letter of July 4, 1954.)

It is important to emphasize that, although many have considered Comte the founder of modern sociology, Dawson believes that the real founders were those earlier social thinkers upon whom Comte drew but whom he did not credit for their contributions to his thought.

What is particularly significant in this early essay of Dawson's which we were discussing above is that he is as firmly convinced as Comte was of the movement of progress in human history, but he sees it achieved in more complex fashion, because of the ambivalent relationship between material and spiritual elements in culture. To avoid the errors of Comte's idealism, Dawson would direct the attention of students of society to the study of supercultures and civilizations, which are the actual historical embodiment of the movement of human progress. By studying these unities in the spirit and with the methods of Le Play, it should be possible to secure a more accurate knowledge of the manner in which biological and social elements combine in the formation of a civilization, and thus provide a more intelligent [434] direction of those forces which at present operate for the creation of a world-wide society.

Thus the investigation of the character of civilizations and the study of the laws by which they flourish and decline, which has

been the work of Spengler, Toynbee, Danilevsky, and many others, including Dawson himself, is a legitimate task for the cultural historian; but it must be pursued with an awareness of the local societies which interact with each other and with the wider cultural unity; for it is these that contribute the vital energies by which alone the life of a civilization can develop and expand.

It is a realization of this fact which lies behind Dawson's emphasis upon the vital contact a culture must maintain with its region. Despite his concern with the intellectual elements in culture, he is profoundly aware of the material foundations in which these elements have their roots. Indeed, notwithstanding his trenchant criticism of Spengler's fundamental thesis that culture is biologically determined, Dawson has considerable sympathy with Spenglerian insights into the influence of biology and geographic environment upon the course of history. This attitude is especially evident in his description of the process of cultural degeneration which results from an unwholesome urbanization.

"First comes the concentration of culture in the city, with a great resultant heightening of cultural activity. But this is followed by the lowering of the level of culture in the country and the widening of the gulf between townsman and peasant. In some cases, as in ancient Greece, this amounts to a gradual but thorough rebarbarization of the country, in others as in Russia since Peter the Great, and in the Hellenistic East since Alexander the peasants still cling to the traditions of a native culture, while the towns adopt a ready-made urban civilization from abroad. In the last stage the cities lose all economic and vital contact with the region in which they are placed. They have become parasitic; less dependent on nature and more dependent on the maintenance of an artificial political and economic system. . . .

"No civilization, however advanced, can afford to neglect these ultimate foundations in the life of nature and the natural region on which its social welfare depends, for even the highest achievements of science and art and economic organization are powerless to avert decay, if the vital functions of the social organism become impaired."30

In his exposition of this process at work in the decline of Greek culture, Dawson implies the need for a local differentiation of culture in particular regional forms if social health is to be maintained. Otherwise the purely intellectual element, losing its roots in the life of a particular people, exposes society to the dangers of a sterile cosmopolitanism. Rather than regarding national and regional particularities as simply an obstacle to be overcome in the development of civilization, Dawson looks upon them as a necessary counterbalance and complement to the values sought after in an ecumenical organization of culture. Consequently he does not consider the particular and the universal elements in culture as barren negations of each other, but rather as fruitful opposites, the tension between which is necessary for attaining a high level of cultural creativeness.

And while recognizing that national and regional cultures are the product of the influence of material factors like race and geography upon human achievement, he would maintain that such factors are capable of being moulded into high cultural forms by man's creative spirit. Nor would he regard the gradual abolition of cultural particularism as a desirable objective to be sought after: in a striking passage in *The Judgment of the Nations*, he contrasts the "immense richness and vitality of European culture in its manifold development in the different nations through the ages" with the eighteenth-century "philosophic ideal of a society founded on abstract rational principles [that] seemed lifeless and empty."³¹ For Dawson, the insights of Edmund Burke and the German Romantics concerning the organic nature of any living culture are factors of primary importance in any proposed world order.

Nevertheless he would certainly agree indeed it is one of the chief bases of his criticism of the modern European development

³⁰ *Progress and Religion*, pp. 67, 69.

³¹ See above, "Vitality or Standardization in Culture," pp. 75-76.

[436] that national particularism always presents the danger that it will exaggerate its own importance and ignore the broader cul-

tural unity of which it is merely a part. By so doing it destroys the wider vision of reality which is the natural complement to regional values, and which must form the necessary framework for any people's development of a high civilization.

It is because of his consciousness of the organic element in culture that Dawson is opposed to the abstract intellectualism of Hegel's conception of history. To the Hegelians "two successive cultures are not independent organisms, they are merely the embodiment of a pair of complementary propositions in the process of Neo-Hegelian dialectic" Hence, for the Hegelians, the fall of Greek culture does not require any historical explanation, it was a natural result of the passing of the Hellenic idea, and called forth by its own inner logic the Magian idea which succeeded it.³²

Dawson's objection to Hegel and his disciples is that, by an opposite road, they reach substantially the same goal as Spengler: that is, they eliminate any contribution which science and the individual human mind may make to an understanding of history. For Spengler, this results from a denial of man's ability to transcend the biological factors by which his thinking is necessarily determined; for Hegel, it flows from the refusal to admit the influence of non-intellectual factors on the movement of history. For if the development of history is simply the working out of the Idea, those fields which deal with the particular and the contingent have nothing to contribute to its understanding. Thus the significance of the unique event for man's historical development, and the conditioning of that development by material factors are equally ignored by the Hegelian conception of history, which sees the end already predetermined by its beginnings.

As against such a view of history determined in its movement by an inevitable necessity, Dawson cites a few of the numerous instances of historical accidents which emphasize the intrusion of brutal reality into the historical process and its upsetting effect upon the neat categories of a purely logical explanation of history.

³² See above, "Oswald Spengler and the Life of Civilization," p. 387.

[437] "It is even possible for one culture to kill another, as we see in the case of the destruction of the Peruvian civilization by the Spaniards, and in the countless instances in which primitive cultures have withered away in contact with modern European civilization. Nor is it only the lower cultures that are destroyed in this way. There are also instances of highly developed urban civilizations falling victim to barbarian invaders, as when the flourishing culture of the Danube provinces was wiped out in the fifth century A.D., or when the cities of Eastern Iran were destroyed by the Mongols."³³

Dawson's final remarks on this point show his conception of the duality of the cultural process as reflected in the movement of world history. The intellectual elements in a culture like religion and science "do not die with the culture of which they formed part. They are handed on from people to people, and assist as a creative force in the formation of new cultural organisms" ³⁴ But in order to do this, they must take form in the individual cultures of particular peoples; they must descend into the world of matter and time and suffer the hazards and misadventures to which human societies are subjected. While not restricted to the culture or society where they had their origin, their development and spread is contingent upon their being accepted by other societies and made a part of a new cultural growth. Where they fail to achieve this embodiment, ideas no longer have historical reality. Thus the movement of "intellectual and religious synthesis's which constitutes the progress of humanity is not something detached from the accidents of history, but something which depends upon historical events for whatever realization it is to achieve. Only by recognizing both the spiritual element in culture and the material factors by which its development is conditioned is it possible to comprehend

". . . that real element of integration and progress, which causes different civilizations to be, not closed worlds without meaning for one another, but progressive stages in the life of humanity."³⁵

³³ See above, "Oswald Spengler and the Life of Civilizations," p, 388.

³⁴ *Loc.cit.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

[438] If such are the historical orientations of Christopher Dawson thought, a closer examination of its sociological foundations is essential. History, according to Dawson, is necessarily secondary in the study of culture, since it can explain only the changes in culture that occur after its original formation. The basic character of a culture is determined by the life of a human group in its primary relation to its environment and functions, and it is essentially these which the anthropologist and the sociologist must investigate.³⁶

Following Le Play, Dawson finds the link between the genetic and the geographic factors in culture in the so-called primary nature occupations, which are the response of a people to the opportunities presented by the region they inhabit. These occupations are six in number and form the foundation for all material culture. Le Play identifies the types formed by these occupations as: (1) the hunters and food gatherers; (2) the pastoral peoples; (3) the fishermen of the sea coasts; (4) the agriculturalists; (5) the foresters; and (6) the miners. These occupations are primary in so far as they require some sort of direct contact with nature to bring forth their product.³⁷

Moreover, in these primary occupations agriculture holds a unique position, for it requires a much closer relation to the special features of a particular region than do the other primary forms of exploiting nature and her resources. A hunting culture, as Dawson observes, may be uniform throughout half a continent, "while a sedentary agricultural one will develop new regional types according to every variation of climate and vegetation."³⁸ A farming people thus marries a particular region in order to make it bear more abundant fruit; this involves the disadvantage of restriction to a specific area but the advantage of a much fuller development of its resources.

Citing specific examples of human cultures which have grown out of a particular environment and are based upon products of

³⁶ See above, "Sociology as a Science," p. 22.

37 *Progress and Religion*, p. 54.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[439] that region "the wine and olive of the Mediterranean, the rice and mulberry of China, the coco-nut and taro of the Pacific Islands, the maize and tobacco of Central America" Dawson points out the tremendous influence which the material foundation exerts upon the character of a culture.

"This intimate communion of human culture with the soil in which it is rooted shows itself in every aspect of material civilization in food and clothing, in weapons and tools, in dwellings and settlements, in roads and methods of communication. In every direction, the natural character of the region determines the modes in which a culture will express itself, and these in turn react upon the character of the culture itself."³⁹

Yet the development of a culture is not simply passive response to an environment, but is an act of creative co-operation with its potentialities. Here also the metaphor of marriage is an appropriate one, for it is by some degree of union with and mastery over its environment that every society, even the most primitive one, achieves its organized way of life. Moreover, when pursued for a long enough period of time, the primary nature occupation by which a people asserts its mastery affects not only the environment but the physical character of the group itself. There is thus an intimate interaction between the racial and geographic factors in culture, which not only brings forth social and economic organization but transforms the two parents in the process.

"If this communion endures without change for a sufficiently long period, it will produce not merely a new way of life, but a new type of man a race as well as a culture. Thus in the eastern hemisphere each climatic zone possesses its specific racial type, the Negroids of the tropical forest, the Mediterranean race in the ivarm temperate zone, the Nordic race in the cooler latitudes, and ihe Lapps of the Arctic regions.

"And each of these races formerly possessed, broadly speaking,

ts own cultural type, so that we may speak interchangeably of Negroid race and Negroid culture, Nordic race and Nordic culture, Arctic race and Arctic culture.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[440] "Such a condition is, of course, only possible where conditions of segregation have endured unchanged for vast ages."40

Elsewhere Dawson speaks of the tendency of a culture to stabilize itself and persist substantially unchanged for centuries, once it has achieved some sort of equilibrium with its environment. He compares this with the process by which particular biological species arise in response to the conditions of a particular environment, even though in the formation of a culture the human element exercises a power of active choice which is not present in the formation of a species.⁴¹

This conception of the persistence of a culture's pattern under conditions of marked isolation seems to connect Dawson with the diffusionist schools in anthropology, both English and German. Although aware of and apparently concurring in the criticisms made of these schools by other anthropologists, Dawson ascribes to Graebner and Schmidt, the founders of the German *Kulturkreislehre*, the inauguration of a new approach to cultural study: the conception of a culture-complex as an interrelated group of social phenomena which has exercised great influence on leading American anthropologists: Kroeber, Lowie and Goldenweiser, and Wissler were specifically mentioned at the time Dawson made this point back in 1929 (in *Progress and Religion*). He also quotes approvingly as a basis for his own viewpoint the remark of W. H. R. Rivers, possibly the greatest member of the English diffusionist school, that "The evidence from Melanesia suggests that an isolated people does not change or advance, but that the introduction of new ideas, new instruments and new techniques leads to a definite process of evolution, the products of which may differ greatly from either the indigenous or the immigrant constituents, the result of the interaction thus resembling a chemical compound rather than a physical mixture."⁴²

40 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

41 See above, "The Sources of Culture Change." pp. 5, 6.

42 *Psychology and Politics*, p. 118, quoted in *Progress and Religion*, pp. 59-60. For the reference to the influence of Graebner and Schmidt on American anthropology, see p. 52.

[441] What seems interesting here is the fact that the diffusionist historical schools were originally formed in protest against the domination of anthropology by methods of natural science. Yet in his idea of the stability of primitive culture, Dawson seems to consider one basic cause for it to lie in the fact that in conditions of isolation the material factors in culture are the governing influences and hence the life of the social group bears a marked similarity to the life of the biological species which has attained adjustment to its environment. As Dawson expresses this point elsewhere, "Here sociology approaches the standpoint of the natural sciences and comes closer to the biologist than to the historian."⁴³

Also significant of the weight which Dawson accords to material factors in culture is the view, which we have cited above, that racial characteristics themselves are the product of a social group's interaction with its geographic environment.

"... In these cases [of primitive isolation] . . . culture becomes inseparable from race.

"But this does not mean, as the racialists believe, that culture is the result of predetermined racial inheritance. On the contrary, it would be more true to say that race is the product of culture, and that the differentiation of racial types represents the culmination of an age-long process of cultural segregation and specialization at a very primitive level. . . . "⁴⁴

But not only in the case of the primitive "race-forming pre-cultures" is this factor operative, but even in such recent instances as the immigration of European peoples to new lands. As an example of this on a limited scale, Dawson cites the physical and

psychological transformation which a century of living in a new environment has brought about in the original English and Irish immigrants to Australia.⁴⁵

43 See above, "Sociology as a Science," p. 22

44 *Religion and Culture*, pp 47-48

45 *Ibid.*, p. 48. This observation agrees with that made by Boas and others on the changes in physical type which distinguish the offspring of immigrants to America from their foreign-born parents.

[442] However, in the final analysis it is the intellectual element in social life which is predominant and which gives a culture its specific form. To this element Dawson assigns quite an inclusive content since he classes under it such aspects of culture as religion, art, philosophy, science and language. (We have noted earlier Dawson's recent emphasis on the importance of language in the study of culture.) Essentially the intellectual element consists in a common set of values which serve to unify the various activities of the group. Such values find expression pre-eminently, Dawson believes, in a society's religious beliefs, since it is here that they acquire a sacredness which enables them to resist the disintegrating forces at work within a society.⁴⁶

The maintenance of a society involves both a community of belief certain agreed upon values, whether explicit or implicit- and a continuous and conscious social discipline. To secure these objectives, there must be some factor in culture which can command the allegiance of the society's members against the temptations of an anti-social individualism. In primitive society, and even in most higher civilizations, this factor is found in the existence of transcendent powers who are believed to control the life of nature and of man. Dawson observes that to the vast majority of peoples throughout history, "For a community to conduct its affairs without reference to these powers, seems as irrational as for a community to cultivate the earth without paying any attention to the courses of the seasons."⁴⁷

It is precisely here, in the conscious discipline exerted by religious beliefs over its members, that the adaptation of a social group to its environment differs from that of an animal species.

However much a human group may seem to approach the biological level in conforming to the character of its environment, this conformity is only achieved by an act of choice: the deliberate adherence of the group to the common set of values which en-

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50. For a similar view of the social function of religion, see *African Political Systems*, ed. by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (London, 1940).

47 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[442] ables it to organize its activities. Thus, even at its lowest level culture implies the existence of the distinctively human elements which makes use of the environment for the attainment of particular social ends.

We have mentioned above that, in Dawson's view, there are several different areas which make up the intellectual element in culture. In one of the articles included in the present volume he suggests the relationship which these various provinces in intellectual culture bear to one another, as also their organic interrelation in the unity of the culture and the sequence of their respective appearance. In this passage one notes particularly the emphasis given to the intuitive aspects of intellectual culture.

"... it seems to be the fact that a new way of life or a new view of Reality is felt intuitively before it is comprehended intellectually, that a philosophy is the last product of a mature culture, the crown of a long process of social development, not its foundation. It is in Religion and Art that we can best see the vital intention of the living culture. . . .

"[For] the same purposeful fashioning of plastic material which is the very essence of a culture, expresses itself also in art. The Greek statue must be first conceived, then lived, then made, and last of all thought. There you have the whole cycle of creative Hellenic culture. First, Religion, then Society, then Art, and finally Philosophy."8

This analogy between social effort and the artist forming his

material so as to embody within it his artistic vision is a favorite one with Dawson to express the dynamic and creative aspects of culture. He uses it most incisively in the following passage, in which he shows the creativeness involved in the adaptation which a culture makes to its environment.

"We do not regard the dependence of an artist on his material as a sign of weakness and lack of skill. On the contrary, the greater the artist, the more fully does he enter into his material, and the more completely does his work conform itself to the qualities of the medium in which it is embodied. In the same way the con-

48 See above, "Civilization and Morals," pp. 49-50

[444] formity of a culture to its natural environment is no sign of barbarism. The more a culture advances, the more fully does it express itself in and through its material conditions, and the more intimate is the co-operation between man and nature."⁴⁹

Nor is this comparison between art and culture merely an accidental one, for Dawson believes there is a fundamental affinity between them. Art indeed is a flowering of culture and represents a society's fundamental aspirations in their most concentrated expression. It is thus a key to the inner character of a culture. Far more than statistical facts, art enables the student of culture to penetrate to the peculiar spirit of the society he is studying, to perceive its specific form and appreciate its particular outlook upon life.

"To understand the art of a society is to understand the vital activity of that society in its most intimate and creative moments. . . . Hence an appreciation of art is of the first importance to the historian and the sociologist, and it is only by viewing social life itself as an artistic activity that we can understand its full meaning.

"No amount of detailed and accurate external knowledge will compensate for the lack of that immediate vision which springs from the comprehension of a social tradition as a living unity."⁵⁰

A. L. Kroeber has pointed out that it requires something of the faculties of the artist to seize upon the specific character of a culture.⁵¹ For this reason, he asserts, some of the best delineations of culture patterns have come from non-anthropologists who have had the intuition needed to grasp the underlying spirit of the culture they were describing. It will be recalled that Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* contains very perceptive descriptions of the particular character of several of the civilizations he compares with one another in his view of world history, although he makes this character so all-pervasive that no aspect of the culture can escape its influence. In the light of his intuitive

⁴⁹ *Progress and Religion*, p. 57.

⁵⁰ See above, "Art and Society" pp. 69, 68.

⁵¹ *Anthropology* (Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1948), p. 317.

[445] perception of cultural patterns, it is significant that Spengler was neither a professional historian nor an anthropologist; but he was an individual of extremely wide cultural background.

Kroeber, in his volume on *Configurations of Culture Growth*, specifically commends Spengler for his ability to grasp the peculiar character of various civilizations and considers this one of Spengler's outstanding contributions to cultural study. And Ruth Benedict, in her delineation of the contrasting attitudes toward life she finds in certain primitive cultures, made use of particular Spenglerian themes as a conceptual basis for her work.⁵² It is possibly as a result of this fact (as well as of her own humanistic studies) that she makes a strong plea for more students trained in the humanities to enter the field of anthropology. Only in this way, she believes, can anthropology make full use of the cultural materials with which it deals.⁵³

So far as history is concerned, it is Dawson's belief that a training in the humanities and an appreciation of aesthetic values have formed the basis for much of the most important historical writing of the last two centuries. In fact, the very attitudes which determined the writing of history in a particular way and, at

different periods, gave it new motivations and new goals, have been derived from an aesthetic approach to history. In a letter of March 6, 1954 to the present writer, Mr. Dawson suggests his views on this matter:

". . . the whole principle of liberal education is aesthetic, and up to the present, history itself has depended on a pre-existing aesthetic attitude.

"Thus eighteenth-century historiography is based on the aesthetic and criticism of French classical culture, nineteenth-century historiography got its new impetus (as in Ranke) from the Romantic aesthetic, and in my own experience and that of other historians I have known, one starts with an aesthetic intuitive vision of a culture in its literary and artistic products and then proceeds to study and criticize and compare and analyze."

52 See *Patterns of Culture* (Mentor, 1948), pp. 48-51.

53 See her article "Anthropology and the Humanities," in *The American Anthropologist*, V. 50, October 1948, p. 589.

[446] But the study of culture is not merely the contemplation of a static object; it is rather like tracing the development of an organic process and essentially implies movement in time. Just as the modern sciences are increasingly concerned with aspects of development in their subject matter and have become profoundly historical in spirit, surveying "the whole world of nature as it lives and moves"⁵⁴ so history's interest in the organic cultural evolution of society leads it in the direction of science and scientific methods. Empirical methods are as necessary as intuitive vision for the study of a society and its culture and history; they are needed to investigate, to compare, and to test one's conclusions; their use, however, is not primary, but secondary; they are not so much creative as critical; they may serve to modify or to reject one's original view, but of themselves they will not establish a new theory. It is the idea or conception which forms the basis for empirical work; and this is not arrived at by means of accumulation of facts, but rather by a certain intuitive faculty which is

as necessary to significant scientific thinking as it is to aesthetic creation. Certain remarks of Dawson in an article replying to an academic historian who criticized broader interpretations in history make this point clear.

"The academic historian is perfectly right in insisting on the importance of the techniques of historical criticism and research. But the mastery of these techniques will not produce great history, any more than a mastery of metrical technique will produce great poetry. For this something more is necessary intuitive understanding, creative imagination, and finally a universal vision transcending the relative limitations of the particular field of historical study. The experience of the great historians such as Tocqueville and Ranke leads me to believe that a universal meta-historical vision of this kind, partaking more of the nature of religious contemplation than of scientific generalization, lies very close to the sources of their creative power."⁵⁵

Related to his conception of social life as an artistic activity, a creative interaction between a human society and its environ-

⁵⁴ See above, "Sociology as a Science," p. 191.

⁵⁵ See above, "The Problem of Metahistory," p. 393.

[447] ment, is one of Dawson's most significant insights about culture. This is the principle that all cultural creativeness depends upon a certain polarity or diversity between the component elements in a culture, and that the greater the creativeness of a culture or a period, the more likely is this tension between opposite poles to be manifested.

This creative tension is not without its dangers, however, since an increase in its intensity may lead to a society's being torn asunder. This is what Dawson believes to have happened at the time of the Reformation between the opposite cultural poles of Northern and Southern Europe, and at an earlier period in Greece, when the Peloponnesian War marked the split between the Ionian and Dorian strains in Greek civilization, as represented respectively by Athens and Sparta.⁵⁶

The Dynamics of Culture Change

Based upon his conception of the organic nature of culture, Dawson identifies five main types of culture change: (1) that of a people developing its way of life in its original environment without the intrusion of human factors from outside; (2) the case of a people coming into a new geographical environment and readapting its culture in consequence; (3) the mixture of two different peoples, each with its own way of life and social organization, usually as a result of conquest but occasionally as a result of peaceful contact (this, which Dawson considers the most typical of all kinds of culture change, also involves a change of the second type for at least one of the peoples); (4) the adoption by a people of some element of material culture from elsewhere; and (5) the modification of a people's way of life owing to the adoption of new knowledge or beliefs, or to some change in its conception of reality.⁵⁷

The principle of dynamic tension underlies most of these five causes of change in a people's culture. The two most important causes the third and fifth which Dawson cites are those in

⁵⁶ See above, "Cultural Polarity and Religious Schism," pp. 83-84.

⁵⁷ See above, "The Sources of Culture Change," pp. 7-9.

[448] which the creative tension is at its greatest degree of intensity. One of these is the cultural situation presented by two different peoples who are gradually interfused with each other over a long period of time, as a result of an original act of conquest or migration. Such a cause is to be found at work in the genesis both of Greek culture and of Western civilization, in each of which, as mentioned above, the tension became too great for the culture to sustain without internecine conflict and division.

The other cause of greatest importance for cultural change is that which occurs when a people secures new knowledge or adopts a new view of reality. It is this type which Dawson believes to exercise the greatest and most lasting influence of all. He finds

the paramount example of such change in the coming of a new religion which, even though it has roots in a people's past experience, transforms their way of life and turns their social development into new and unexpected channels.

Not only is the change wrought by a new view of reality most sweeping, but to the degree that the spiritual tradition which it establishes is a powerful one, it will mould the outlook of peoples living in that cultural area for many centuries to come. Thus the view of reality which acts as a ferment of change in its beginnings, operates to maintain the stability of a culture or civilization once it has become accepted.

The ultimate barriers between peoples are not those of race or language or region, but those differences of spiritual outlook and tradition which are seen in the contrast of Hellene and Barbarian, Jew and Gentile, Moslem and Hindu, Christian and Pagan, In all such cases there is a different conception of reality, different moral and aesthetic standards, in a word, a different inner world.⁵⁸

There is one exception which Dawson finds to this general law that the persistence of a world religion in a particular area leads

⁵⁸ *Progress and Religion*, p. 76. It should be noted that while Dawson considers language "the most fundamental element in culture," so that the "use of a particular language distinguishes one culture from another" (see above, p. 429), the civilizations and the world religions are supercultures, embracing many different regional cultures and linguistic groups within their area of communication.

[449] to conservatism and cultural stability. That is in the effect of Christianity on Western civilization. Although Christianity created the unity that is Europe, it has not been content merely to stabilize and conserve that unity. Instead it has been a continuing influence for change throughout each of the different periods in Western cultural history. Not only has it inspired the religious development of the West and served as a means for the transmission of the Western cultural heritage to peoples of the most diverse social backgrounds, but it has also had a powerful though indirect influence on the successive movements of reform and

revolution by which Western society has been distinguished from the other world cultures.

"In fact, no civilization, not even that of ancient Greece, has ever undergone such a continuous and profound process of change as Western Europe has done during the last nine hundred years. It is impossible to explain this fact in purely economic terms by a materialistic interpretation of history. The principle of change has been a spiritual one and the progress of Western civilization is intimately related to the dynamic ethos of Christianity, which has gradually made Western man conscious of his moral responsibility and his duty to change the world."⁵⁹

In considering the five basic types of cultural change which Dawson enumerates, we find that the conception of cultural stability underlies each and defines it by contrast. It is only when a tension is set up between the otherwise stable culture and new influences from outside that major change may be expected to occur. Moreover, precisely because change is something out of the ordinary and interferes with the previous mode of a culture's functioning, there is a limit to the amount of change of which a society is capable without breakdown. This limitation is a result of the organic nature of culture, which implies that culture is not simply an intellectual development or the result of a movement of ideas, but has its roots firmly planted in the soil of its geographic environment.

When change within a culture is too abrupt or when the

⁵⁹ *The Judgment of the Nations*, p. 23.

[450] environment or conflict with other social groups demands too great a degree of adjustment to new conditions, the effort required of a society may be beyond the optimum of which it is capable and the culture will go under rather than maintain itself. Abruptness of change developed from within the culture itself is only likely to occur in the case of high civilizations, since these already contain such a complexity of elements that the interaction of the latter with one another may set off rapid change; but abrupt

change in less advanced cultures is almost always a result of the intrusion of some external force impinging upon the adaptation they have achieved; the most common of such external forces are extensive changes in the regional environment or the impact of other societies.

"Life necessarily implies change, but this does not mean that change always implies life. There is always a limit to the amount of change of which an organism is capable, and this is no less true of the social than of the physical organism, A species may adapt itself to a slight change in climate and may flourish the more for it, but if the change is very great a whole series of species may become extinct and new ones may take their place. And, as a rule, the more specialized and elaborate is the type the more easily does it succumb to change, while the more plastic and adaptable forms of life survive. . . .

"In the same way human cultures or forms of social life develop and enrich themselves by cultural change, but if the change is too great or too sudden or the culture too stereotyped and fixed, change brings death instead of progress.

"It is not a question of racial deterioration but one of social failure. The Red Indians were probably as fit and fine a type of man as has ever existed, but their culture could not compete with the more highly organized form of civilization of the European colonists. And so they vanished with the buffalo and the open prairie before the plough and the rifle and the railway."⁶⁰

In this passage, written by Dawson in 1931, there seems to be an anticipation of Toynbee's concept of environmental challenges which are too severe for a society to meet successfully. However,

⁶⁰ *The Modern Dilemma*, pp. 35-36,

[451] where Toynbee thinks of the over-severe challenge as inhibiting the progress of a less advanced society toward civilization, or as a cause of breakdown once the level of civilization has been achieved, Dawson considers that the destruction of the culture

itself is involved. This is related to a basic difference in viewpoint between Dawson and Toynbee on the nature of culture: Dawson holding that all culture, including the level of the primitive, is only achieved by an effort of social discipline and mastery of the environment, Toynbee tending to think of civilization alone as requiring that expenditure of social energy which he designates a response.

For Toynbee, therefore, there is a sharp distinction between the dynamic equilibrium which characterizes a civilization, in which the dialectic of challenge and response is continually in operation to push the society forward toward new goals, and the state of primitive society, in which the cake of custom is unbroken and fixation on cultural routine results from mere inertia. In Toynbee's view there is apparently no period in which an advanced society like a civilization has met its challenges successfully and has achieved harmony among its constituent elements and with its environment; if a civilization is not moving forward, in Toynbee's view, it is either in a state of breakdown or cultural stagnation, in the latter instance resembling, on a higher level, the immobility of primitive culture.⁶¹

Thus, whereas for Toynbee primitive societies as we know them at present are essentially static, and this is what distinguishes them from civilizations (or at least civilizations in the process of growth), for Dawson both primitive and advanced cultures can only be maintained by dynamic effort: when this fails, the culture itself goes out of existence. Toynbee will admit the previous dynamism of primitive societies in having reached the particular level of culture they now enjoy; but he fails to see that even keeping a culture going is not possible without social co-operation and hard work.

⁶¹ See *A Study of History* (Somervell abridgment), sections on the genesis and growth of civilizations, but especially pp. 48-51 and 209-216.

[452] Dawson observes in this connection:

"To the outside observer the most striking feature of primitive

culture is its extreme conservatism. Society follows the same path of custom and convention with the irrational persistence of animal life.

"But in reality all living culture is intensely dynamic. It is dominated by the necessity of maintaining the common life, and it is possible to ward off the forces of evil and death and gain life and good fortune only by a continuous effort of individual and social discipline."⁶²

In addition to the organic basis for limited change which we have discussed above, there is also the psychological basis, the fact that an individual and a society both require a feeling of security, of connection with social roots in the past, if change is not to be merely destructive. (It is interesting to speculate to what extent this psychological need, with the limits it imposes upon the amount of change which an individual or a society is capable of absorbing, is a result of man's physical nature and the biological foundations of human culture.)⁶³

Dawson recognizes this psychic aspect which conditions acceptance of social change when he speaks of the need for a new invention, whether social or material in nature to be related to the vital spirit of the culture if it is to be a cause of progress rather than decline.⁶⁴ Somehow or other the new invention must be incorporated into the fabric of the existing culture and made consonant with the society's needs and previous experience. This happened, as Dawson notes, with the introduction of the horse to the culture of the Plains Indians; but much more often is it likely that the new element cannot be incorporated successfully without such radical social change taking place as to destroy the basis for the culture's continued existence. As an example of this outcome,

⁶² *Religion and Culture*, p. 56.

⁶³ *Progress and Religion*, pp. 211-213, discusses this matter in relation to the effects upon social vitality of urban-industrial life.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

[453] "Today the Esquimaux are learning a new manner of life, they are becoming civilized, but at the same time and for the same

reason they are a dying race."⁶⁵

If a culture proves strong enough, it will eventually throw off, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, changes that have been introduced into it from outside and for which there is no sufficient basis in its own past experience. If the change comes attended by a superior technology, it will usually destroy the culture it has conquered. The most common instances of this are the reactions of primitive peoples to contact with modern Western civilization, but it is not only more primitive societies that are endangered by rapid social change brought on by agencies external to their society.

"The most civilized people of antiquity, the Greeks, failed, not because their civilization became unprogressive, but because it was too complex and refined. Their standards of life, their ideals of civic and individual liberty and enjoyment, were too high to stand the strain of political competition, and they went down before ruder and harder peoples like the Macedonians and the Romans, who asked less of life and got more."⁶⁶

Although the Greeks lost their political independence, the forms of their culture were retained and transmitted by their conquerors to new peoples, even though on a lower level of cultural quality. For Western civilization, ruled by the same desire for a high standard of living both economically and politically which was the downfall of the Greeks, the prospects for a continuance of the traditional forms of their culture should conquest occur are considerably less hopeful. For the new barbarians possess no sympathy for the way of life of the peoples of the West and are bent upon destroying not only Western social structure and political institutions, but the traditional system of values as well.

Nor is this external danger the only one which a highly de-

⁶⁵ See above, "The Sources of Culture Change," p. 7.

⁶⁶ *The Modern Dilemma*, p. 37.

[454] veloped culture like the modern West faces. The changes introduced into its way of life over the past century by the scientific revolution raise the question whether it is possible for the cultural tradition of the West to assimilate these changes, or whether they are so great that a new type of technological civilization must succeed to the humanist and religious forms of the past. While recognizing the latter possibility, Dawson believes that the coming of such a civilization would be self-destructive, for it could not long maintain itself against man's deeper spiritual needs. In a letter to the present writer Mr. Dawson remarks:

"I think an entirely technological culture would be an entirely barbarous culture. No one believes that civilization can carry on without some element of higher spiritual culture. . . .

"The coming of age of technology only makes the need for Christian culture (or some alternative religious or humanist culture) more imperative. Even if, *per impossibile*, all the spiritual traditions of culture could be temporarily suppressed, it could only lead to a nihilist revolution which would destroy the technological order itself, as I have pointed out many times in my writings, Orwell's *1984* is a good picture of a pure technological order and the only fault I find with it is that he seems to believe it is a possibility. (Letter of January 29, 1955.)

In connection with the destruction of cultural values and traditions brought about in a society by tremendous social changes, whether as a result of foreign impact or of internal causes, Dawson finds himself in some measure of agreement with Kroeber's observations on the death of a culture.

"What seems to be actually involved in such cases [Kroeber writes] is the dissolution of a particular assemblage of cultural content, configured in a more or less unique set of patterns belonging to a nation or a group of nations. Such particular assemblages and constellations do unquestionably "die out"; that is, they dissolve away, disappear, and are replaced by new ones. . . .

"The corresponding societies, the culture-carrying groups, have a way of going on; much of the cultural content continues to

exist and function somewhere, and may amplify; it is the particular set of patterned interweavings of content characterizing a civilization that breaks down."⁶⁷

Thus the people themselves that possessed the culture continue their existence, but under different cultural patterns, and no longer taking so active a part, it may be, in the new patterns, especially if these have been brought in from outside. And in some cases, if Spengler is correct, there occurs a marked deterioration in the quality of the culture, sometimes descending to the level of what Spengler terms "fellahin peoples."

Dawson believes, however, that Kroeber is possibly too optimistic concerning the fate of the culture-carrying group and that he does not distinguish sufficiently between the mass of the people who accept a culture and the ruling group who have been responsible for introducing and preserving it. In a note on Kroeber's passage on the death of a culture he remarks:

"Actually I think Kroeber overstates the case for survival I believe in many cases the change is accompanied by the physical destruction of the minority that is the bearer of the cultural tradition. This seems to have happened in the destruction of the French Creole element in Haiti, and the destruction or disappearance of the Latin-speaking ruling element in Roman Britain and Germany in the fifth century A.D.

"The mass deportations that accompanied and followed the first and second world wars opened our eyes to this factor in culture change: for example, the destruction of the Greek population in Anatolia after the first world war, and (I believe) the destruction of the Tartars of the Crimea after the second."

If this observation is correct, it would appear to lend some support to Spengler's view about the lower quality of the culture of "fellahin peoples" after the passing of a high civilization.

However, the apparent destruction of a culture does not always mean the permanent loss of its cultural influence. Indeed, the most challenging problem arising from contacts between cultures

is how the traditions of a conquered or subordinate people reassert themselves centuries after the original encounter with their

67 A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, pp. 382-84.

[456] conqueror has taken place. The most common example of this reassertion of the culture tradition of a subordinate people has occurred in the conquest of a peasant society by a nomad warrior aristocracy; and most of the classic civilizations in which the world religions appeared were creations of this type. In these cases the conquest was the starting point of a process of fusion and growth by which the two peoples and their cultural traditions were gradually united to produce a new cultural entity. As one example of this process, Dawson suggests that, if his hypothesis on the origins of Indian culture is correct, "We should interpret the rise of the classical Indian systems of thought and social organization as due to the reassertion of the submerged archaic Indian culture against the warrior culture of the Aryan invaders."⁶⁸

Dawson believes that such an organic fusion of different cultural growths, where it occurs, is distinguished by three identifiable stages. First, there is the period of fertilization and growth, second, the period of progress or flowering of the hybrid creation, and finally there is the period of maturity, in which the new cultural entity is stabilized in patterns which endure as long as that culture lasts.⁶⁹

There is nothing absolute or determined about these stages: first, because they do not occur in all encounters of different cultural traditions, even where conquest has brought two societies into close intimacy with each other; and secondly, because there is no means of predicting with assurance how much or what elements each people taking part in the process will contribute to the final product which is the stabilized form of the new culture.

Although this pattern of three stages is most readily identifiable in the mixing of two different peoples to form a regional culture, it is possible that it may also underlie the development of civiliza-

tions or supercultures. Here, however, the complexity of the cultural pattern and the number of peoples being brought into fertilizing contact with one another make it most difficult

68 *Religion and Culture*, p. 199.

69 *Progress and Religion*, p. 62; cf. also *Enquiries*, pp. 67-68, 71-73.

[457] entangle the threads and identify clearly the course of its development.⁷⁰

View of World History

Although Dawson has explicitly disclaimed the possibility of writing at present a history truly world-wide in scope, so as to do proper justice to each cultural tradition,⁷¹ there is implicit throughout his work a conception of the development of world history which we believe should be presented here, as a conclusion to the present essay.

Dawson's view of the movement of world history turns upon the major changes which have taken place in man's view of reality as these have found expression in the life of particular societies and cultures.

According to Dawson, there are four great world ages in the development of mankind, each distinguished by a different conception of the universe. The first stage is that of primitive culture; the second is characterized by the rise of the archaic civilizations in Egypt and Mesopotamia and Asia Minor; the third is marked by the rise and spread of the world religions; and the fourth stage is that which has been inaugurated by the scientific developments arising in Western civilization. This fourth stage, in Dawson's view, is closely related to the Christian conception of man and the universe.

The difference between the first and second ages in world history is the difference between the unreflective vision of reality held by primitive food-gatherers and hunters and the ordered

70 In the article in *Enquiries* which we have cited immediately above, Dawson seems to apply these three stages to supercultures like Christendom, Islam, China, etc., and not simply to regional cultures. His latest views on this subject, however, are expressed in his letter of January 1, 1955 to the present writer, from which we have already quoted: "But on the whole I do not believe that civilizations have life-cycles. Peoples have, and if a culture is bound up with a people, then it also must. But in so far as a civilization becomes a superculture and is transmitted to an indefinite number of peoples, its development may transcend this cycle."

71 See above, "Europe in Eclipse," pp. 405 ff.

[458] understanding of natural laws which formed the foundation of the archaic culture. Of this conception of man's co-operation with nature's laws, from which flowed the discovery of the higher agriculture, the working of metals and the invention of writing and the calendar, Dawson observes:

"It governed the progress of civilization for thousands of years and only passed away with the coming of the new vision of Reality which began to transform the ancient world in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. -- the age of the Hebrew Prophets and the Greek Philosophers, of Buddha and Confucius, an age which marks the dawn of a new world."⁷²

What causes led to the change in the view of reality which marked the transition between the second and third great ages of world history? One reason lay in the limitations of the archaic civilization itself. In its co-operation with the processes of nature it had realized an enormous material progress "relatively the greatest perhaps the world has ever seen" says Dawson. However, "Each culture was bound up with an absolutely fixed form from which it could not be separated. When once it had realized its potentialities, it became stationary and unprogressive."⁷³ This resulted in so complete an identification of religion with the social order that both religion and culture were stifled, the former losing its spiritual character and the latter so restricted by the bonds of religious tradition "that the social organism became as rigid and lifeless as a mummy."⁷⁴ It was against this idolatry of the archaic religion cultures and the denial of the transcendent

character of spiritual reality that the great world religions rose in revolt.

However, in their desire to emphasize the independence of the spirit from the material order, the world religions often erred in the opposite direction by teachings that were equally injurious to religion as a social force. Through their condemnation of matter

⁷² See above, "The Sources of Culture Change," pp. 10-11

⁷³ *Progress and Religion*, pp. 117-18

⁷⁴ *Religion and Culture*, p. 206.

[459] and the body as evil, their flight from nature and the world of sense, their denial of the reality of the world and the value of the social order, the new world religions tended to weaken, if not destroy, the bridge which the archaic civilization had built between religion and culture. In fact, it was largely through the continued survival of the traditions of the archaic nature religions that the material civilization of the Orient was preserved. As Dawson remarks upon the effects of the new world religions on material progress:

"The great achievements of the new culture lie in the domain of literature and art. But, from the material point of view, there is expansion rather than progress. The new culture simply gave a new form and a new spirit to the materials that it had received from the archaic civilization. In all essentials Babylonia, in the time of Hammurabi, and even earlier, had reached a pitch of material civilization which has never since been surpassed in Asia. After the artistic flowering of the early Middle Ages the great religion-cultures became stationary and even decadent."⁷⁵

The changes that created the fourth great age in world history had their origins in Western Europe and cannot be understood without a study of the new Christian culture that had arisen in that area. In contrast to the cleavage between religion and culture which occurred to a greater or less degree in the Oriental religions, Christianity, through its doctrine of the Incarnation, was better able to reconcile the conflicting demands of the spiritual and

material orders. The spiritual world could maintain its transcendent character and at the same time interpenetrate the world of man with its dynamic force. Dawson notes the effects of this upon the social and cultural development of Western civilization.

"Its religious ideal has not been the worship of timeless and changeless perfection, but a spirit that strives to incorporate itself in humanity and to change the world. In the West the spiritual power has not been immobilized in a sacred social order like the Confucian State in China or the Indian caste system. It has acquired social freedom and autonomy, and consequently its

75 See above, "Religion and the Life of Civilization," p. 112.

[460] activity has not been limited to the religious sphere but has had far-reaching effects on every aspect of social and intellectual life."⁷⁶

Dawson recognizes that the goal of reconciliation between the power of the spirit and the resisting institutions of the temporal order has never been adequately realized in any epoch in Western history. Nevertheless it has been the driving force behind the unique achievements of Western culture and has made that culture a power for change in the rest of the world as well as among its own peoples.

In one of his more recent essays Dawson suggests a psychological basis for the social and material changes which Western civilization has inaugurated and ultimately spread to other parts of the world. It was through the influence of the Christian ethos upon the psyche of the individual person that there developed the new attitude toward life which became the source for the new culture and the tremendous social transformation that it wrought.

"Even today very little thought is given to the profound revolution in the psychological basis of culture by which the new society of Western Christendom came into existence. Stated in terms of Freudian psychology, what occurred was the translation of religion from the sphere of the Id to that of the Super-Ego.

"With the reception of Christianity, the old gods and their rites were rejected as manifestations of the power of evil. Religion was no longer an instinctive homage to the dark underworld of the Id. It became a conscious and continual effort to conform human behavior to the requirements of an objective moral law and an act of faith in a new life and in sublimated patterns of spiritual perfection."⁷⁷

But since all civilizations are essentially distinguished from barbarism by the greater prominence given to the Super-Ego and by the rational control of instinctive impulses through an ordered understanding of their significance, in what way does Christianity

⁷⁶ "Christianity and the New Age," in *Essays in Order*, by Maritain, Wust and Dawson (New York, 1931), pp. 228-29.

⁷⁷ *Understanding Europe*, pp. 14-15.

[461] differ from the religions that form the basis of the other world cultures? Is not its psychological basis identical with theirs in asserting the superior claims of the Super-Ego against the Id? No, Dawson would reply, one may distinguish definite differences in the relationship established between these two forces in the moral universes of the different world religions. For example,

"In some cases, as in Hinduism, the sharp breach with the forces of the Id which was characteristic of the conversion of the West has never taken place, and life is not conceived as a process of moral effort and discipline but as an expression of cosmic libido, as in the Dance of Siva.

"On the other hand, in Buddhism we see a very highly developed Super-Ego. But here the Super-Ego is allied with the death-impulse so that the moralization of life is at the same time a regressive process that culminates in Nirvana."⁷⁸

While Western culture has witnessed religious movements that show a similar tendency, as in Manicheanism and Albigensianism, these were but eccentric developments and not typical of the

central Western religious tradition. The effect of this tradition has been to produce a different kind of personality from those which are representative of the other world cultures.

"But the characteristic feature of Western civilization has always been a spirit of moral activism by which the individual Super-Ego has become a dynamic social force. In other words, the Christian tradition has made the conscience of the individual person an independent power which tends to weaken the omnipotence of social custom and to open the social process to new individual initiatives."⁷⁹

But although this social dynamism was implicit in Christianity from the beginning and provided the impetus for the conversion of the ancient world and the transmission of Christian culture to new peoples through the dark ages of barbarian and Islamic invasion, it was not until the thirteenth century that its significance was fully understood. In the spirituality of St. Francis, in which

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

[462] the spirit of Christian humanism received its most profound expression, in the philosophic synthesis of St. Thomas, who reconciled reason with faith and laid the foundations for a scientific approach to reality, and in the vision of Roger Bacon, who saw in scientific invention a creative social force of incalculable power, the new conception of reality finally reached maturity.⁸⁰

From this point of view the importance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is due to their first embodiment of Christian culture in new dynamic social forms. For the first Christian culture that of the Byzantine-patristic age was the outcome of the application of Christian ideas to an already mature and static culture. And it was for this reason that the social dynamism of Christianity could find no adequate expression in the society and culture of the Byzantine Empire.

The subsequent development of Western culture from the

Renaissance onwards is the result of the growth of this new dynamic Western Christian society and culture. For with the Renaissance there began that movement of vast expansion of Western civilization, not only geographically but also in the fields of science and technology, which has been the outstanding feature of the last four centuries of world history. By this movement the fourth world age reaches out to its material realization. The uniqueness of this epoch created by Western man is directly related to the missionary goals implanted in the soul of the West by more than a thousand years of Christian teaching; the new culture introduced by the Renaissance had its roots especially in the socio-religious ideals of the medieval period. Western humanism and Western science, as well as Western exploration and colonization, were not the quick-ripening fruits of a hothouse growth; they were, rather, the fruits of a millennium of cultivation, "the results of centuries which had ploughed the virgin soil of the West and scattered the new seed broadcast over the face of the earth."⁸¹

⁸⁰ See *Progress and Religion*, pp. 170-76; also *Medieval Essays*, pp. 109-11 and 142-51.

⁸¹ *The Judgment of the Nations*, p. 24.

[463] Despite the interpretation which sees the Renaissance as primarily a revolt against the Christian past (a view now largely abandoned by scholars,⁸² but still a strong influence on the thought of many non-historians), Dawson points out that the whole era of culture inaugurated by the Renaissance and continuing through the nineteenth century would be impossible to understand if one were to sever it from its Christian origins,

"The great men of the Renaissance were spiritual men even when they were most deeply immersed in the temporal order. It was from the accumulated resources of their Christian past that they acquired the energy to conquer the material world and to create the new spiritual culture.

"Now what I said here [in this passage written eighteen years ago] about the origins of the Humanist culture seems to me to be

equally true of the age of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century, when Western culture conquered and transformed the world. . . .

"The activity of the Western mind, which manifested itself alike in scientific and technical invention as well as in geographical discovery, was not the natural inheritance of a particular biological type; it was the result of a long process of education which gradually changed the orientation of human thought and enlarged the possibilities of social action."⁸²

Thus in Dawson's view the Western cultural development lies at the center of world history, and it has been the dynamic influence of Europe and her offspring in the New World which has made possible the present opportunity for a world society. Where many contemporary philosophers of history either despair of the West or so berate it for its sins and shortcomings as to set it below the Orient in an order of moral or spiritual values (consider Mitter's *Uses of the Past* or Toynbee's *The World and the West* for representative examples of this trend), Dawson main-

⁸² See Wallace Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Cambridge, 1948).

⁸³ *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, pp. 9-10.

[464] tains that, despite its secularism and self-seeking, Western culture is distinguished by a moral energy and spiritual dynamism which it has inherited from its Christian past, and that it is this energy which has caused the spread of Western institutions to the rest of the globe and has made the other cultures part of one world of cultural communication. Thus it is through an understanding of Europe that we can comprehend the forces that are shaping the destinies of the modern world, for even those movements that are in revolt against the West owe their origins to Western inspiration and would not have developed in the way they did without European influence. Dawson has remarked on this fact in an article written some years ago:

"The movement of Oriental revolt against the European he-

gemony is itself largely of Western inspiration. Its ideology is purely European and owes nothing to the cultural traditions of the peoples whom it is seeking to free. Even in the literary sphere the leaders of Oriental thought, as conceived in Europe, are themselves men of Western culture and education. The central fact of the whole situation of East-West relations is not the relatively weak and superficial cult of Oriental ideas in the West, but the incomparably more powerful and far-reaching movement of Occidental ideas in the East where the traditional cultures have been shaken to their foundations."⁸⁴

However, the influence of the West upon the East has not been merely a subversive one. It has been through the efforts of European archaeologists and linguists that the civilizations of the Orient have come to recognize the greatness of their own history and culture and have been afforded a clearer perception of their own specific character. As Dawson assesses the results of this work of European scholarship in the last essay of the present volume:

"Not only did it immeasurably widen the frontiers of Western civilization and lay the foundations of a new understanding be-

⁸⁴ "The Revolt of the East and the Catholic Tradition" in *The Dublin Review*, V. 183, July 1928, pp. 1-14.

[465] tween East and West, it also gave the non-European peoples a new understanding of their own past. Without it, the East would be unconscious of the greatness of its own heritage, and the memory of the earliest Asiatic civilizations would still be buried in the dust.

"This is an enduring inheritance for the whole world, East and West, which will outlast political ideologies and economic empires."⁸⁵

Nevertheless, one cannot ignore or minimize the extent to which Western secular culture threatens the traditional cultures of the East. Despite the optimistic views concerning their

future advanced by such writers as Muller and Northrop, and the belief of some that the Oriental religions are better suited for survival than Christianity in the intermingling of cultures and religions which the present epoch is witnessing, there are signs that the Oriental religion-cultures have entered upon a stage of decline and retreat before secularized civilization from which they can recover only with difficulty.

As a result, the Oriental religions today are in danger of being overwhelmed by secular movements which have originated in Western culture. The reason for this weakness of the Oriental religions lies in their loss of an organic contact with the lives of the people. As Dawson observes in a recent article, commenting upon the spread of Communism in Asia, "If Communism is viewed in this light [i.e., as a religion], why should it prove so attractive to Asians who are already well provided with real theological religions? The answer, I think, is that the great Oriental religions are no longer culturally active and that they have become divorced from social life and from contemporary culture."⁸⁶

The precarious nature of their situation is intimated by Dawson in the following passage depicting the significance of the present world crisis:

⁸⁵ See above, "Europe in Eclipse" pp. 411-13.

⁸⁶ "Civilization in Crisis," *The Catholic World*, January 1956.

[466] "As Hellenism gradually expanded during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, until it embraced the whole of the ancient world, so too Western culture has expanded during the last five hundred years to embrace the whole of the modern world. And as the unity of the ancient world was finally broken in two by the rise of Islam, so the modern world is being broken in two by the rise of Communism.

"Consequently I think that the great Oriental world religions today occupy a similar position to that of the religions of the ancient East Egypt, Babylonia and Asia Minor in the Roman

World. If so, the most serious rivals to Christianity at the present day are not the old religions of the East, but the new political substitute-religions, like Communism, Nationalism and so forth. One cannot escape the urgency of this question, on which the whole future of the world depends."⁸⁷

It is from the viewpoint of world history, comparing the present situation of the Oriental religions with the revolutionary developments which attended the rise of Islam in the seventh century A.D., that Dawson foresees such acute danger for the traditional religious cultures of the East, and not for them alone, but for Christianity as well.

One difference, however, that may suggest a more hopeful outcome on this occasion is the fact that Islam derived its dynamic drive from a fervently held religious belief, with sanctions in a supernatural order of reality, while Communism, for all its quasi-religious motivation, is essentially earthbound and can appeal to nothing higher than man's hope for a materialistic Utopia. Thus the power of the Oriental religions to resist the onrush of secular ideologies will be proportionate to their ability to maintain their religious character and at the same time re-establish contact with the daily lives of the people; whether this is possible, in the light of the "detachment" which Oriental religion has prominently displayed in the past, only the future can tell.

For Dawson the significance of the present moment in world

⁸⁷ Letter of March 5, 1953 to the present writer, reprinted in *Four Quarters* (La Salle College quarterly, June 1954).

[467] history lies in the fact that Western civilization, both by its technical inventions and its ideological impact, has been able to break down the barriers which previously isolated the closed cultures of the great world religions from one another and has united them in a new and wider intercultural society. But in this process of development and expansion, Western civilization has increasingly lost contact with the spiritual sources of its creative power. As a result, the moment of its greatest material triumph

is also the time of its greatest spiritual crisis.

"The events of the last few years portend either the end of human history or a turning point in it. They have warned us in letters of fire that our civilization has been tried in the balance and found wanting that there is an absolute limit to the progress that can be achieved by the perfectionment of scientific techniques detached from spiritual aims and moral values."⁸⁸

And yet this crisis of culture is a time in which Europe can fulfill the opportunity that has been granted her, in which she can give form and direction to the new world society now in the process of being born. The science and technology of which Western civilization is the creator need not become the instruments for the destruction of humanity, but can be employed to subserve the higher purpose of uniting mankind in a supranational spiritual community.

The great Revolution of the eighteenth century which ushered in the modern era and overthrew the political and social structure Europe had possessed for more than a thousand years was in many ways similar to the contemporary period. The armies of the French Revolution and later those of Napoleon undermined or overthrew the monarchies of the ancien regime, abolished serfdom, and stirred nationalism in the hearts of almost all the peoples of Europe. In our own day the impact of European nationalism and Western ideologies and the spread of the European revolutionary tradition has had similar effects in Asia and Africa to that which the French Revolution had on Europe and the Amer-

⁸⁸ *Religion and Culture*, p. 215.

[468] icas in the past century and a half. The ideals of political liberty national self-determination and social equality have spread to the most remote peoples of the world, until now they have become practically universal in their acceptance.

It is not inappropriate, therefore, that Christopher Dawson should look back to the age of the French Revolution to per-

ceive the momentous nature of the contemporary period and its meaning for world history. The reaction of one of the most profound of the Conservative thinkers of that age to the revolutions that had broken into his way of life suggests the attitude which Dawson would commend to the peoples of the West at the present day.

More than a century ago Joseph de Maistre, the last representative of the old pre-nationalist Europe, an exile in the city of Peter the Great and Lenin, discerned with almost prophetic insight the meaning of the revolutions that had destroyed his own happiness and broken down the traditional order of European life which he valued so highly. France and England, he writes, in spite of their mutual hostility, have been led to co-operate in the same work. While the French Revolution sowed the seeds of French culture throughout Europe, England has carried European culture into Asia and has caused the works of Newton to be read in the language of Mahomet. The whole of the East is yielding to the ascendancy of Europe, and events have given England 15,000 leagues of common frontiers with China and Thibet. "Man in his ignorance often deceives himself as to end and means, as to forces and resistance, as to instruments and obstacles. Sometimes he tries to cut down an oak with a pocket knife and sometimes he throws a bomb to break a reed. But Providence never wavers and it is not in vain that it shakes the world. Everything proclaims that we are moving towards a great unity which, to use a religious expression, we must hail from afar. We have been grievously and justly broken, but if such eyes as mine are worthy to foresee the divine purpose, we have been broken only to be made one."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ *The Modern Dilemma*, pp. 33-34.

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