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VOICES OF *Liberalism:1*

*First of an annual series
of forceful and distinguished
contributions in the field of
religious liberalism.*

1947

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PREFATORY NOTE

I ASKED for the privilege of writing this note because I succumbed to the temptation to attach my name to those of a group of men who have done competent work here, and because, also, I wanted to explain why we are publishing this sampling of the thought of our liberal ministers.

I believe in religious liberalism and want it spread abroad, and one of my deepest regrets is that we have published so little of our thinking. The views expressed here are of concern to the people of the world. We should at least feel the obligation of making those views available to them. I hope especially that this publishing effort will be a modest encouragement to all ministers of liberal religion to seek channels for expressing their views other than the sole one of their own pulpits. I hope this can be an annual publication, and that we shall find the quality of material to justify other publications like it.

Any reader will be struck with one fact after going through these essays; but in case he is not, I want to state it. The variety of thought within these pages is extraordinary when one senses also the unity of thought built up by a reverberation from each essay to the next and on throughout the book. The unity is expressed too simply in such words as freedom, truth, democracy and brotherhood, for these words are given deep and careful meaning. But the testimony of this collection is that liberal religion can provide a unity for the world's life without regimentation and by stimulating rather than depressing variety. The secret of the religion that can unite the world is contained in these pages, I sincerely believe.

THADDEUS B. CLARK, *Chairman*
Editorial Committee

St. Louis
January, 1947

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THE ROOTS OF LIBERALISM

1

The Roots OF LIBERALISM

Out of prehistoric savagery, on the basis of his own experience, man arose to visions of character. . . . What we of this generation need more than anything else. . . is confidence in man. I believe that the story of his rise is an incomparable basis for full confidence. Among all the conquests which made that rise possible, the supreme achievement is the discovery of character.

—JAMES HENRY BREASTED, *The Dawn of Conscience*

LIBERALISM is a characteristic of American religion, and in a certain sense of all religion. It is not confined to any sect, although certain sects are regarded as liberal while certain others are not. It is present to some degree in all sects. Some sects are very liberal. some are very illiberal. Some are divided against themselves on the question of liberalism.

Liberalism first became a distinctive characteristic of American religion in the Congregational churches of New England, centering in and around Boston, and in

Philadelphia, through Joseph Priestley who brought his liberalism with him from Europe. It is but little more than a hundred and fifty years old. It was not crystallized into a separate organization until the year 1825, when the American Unitarian Association was founded, and even then, religious liberalism was not established as a church but merely as a tract society. Thus as an organized movement, religious liberalism is one of the newest and latest of the sects of Protestant Christianity.

In the early days, the liberal movement and the Unitarian Church were for the most part one and the same. In a volume on American liberalism to which many eminent scholars contributed, A. C. McGiffert, Jr., identifies the two. He writes, "Unitarianism in its formative classical period represents the crystallization into denominational form of a controlling interest and major tenet of Protestant liberalism, namely, faith in the worth and dignity of man."¹ He also writes, "The Unitarians . . . were the first to feel the influence of Romanticism and bore the brunt of the initial struggle for emancipation from orthodoxy's doctrine of revelation as they had previously broken with its doctrine of man."²

The immediate roots of American religious liberalism are to be found in sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, just as the roots of American political philosophy are to be found in the political thought of Europe in the same period. There the liberal philosophy was first worked out, given full expression and set before the minds of thinking men. It was in the Europe of these centuries that men were imprisoned, dispossessed and martyred for asserting the same things which New England churchmen calmly and quietly proclaimed from their pulpits later on. Europe in the Reformation and

¹ "Protestant Liberalism," *Liberal Theology*, editors Roberts & Van Dusen, p. 108

² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

post-Reformation periods clearly exhibits the rootage of liberal religious thought in America.

But rootage is a difficult thing to fix with any degree of finality or certainty. What were the roots of that European thought which eventuated in New England Unitarianism? What gave these earlier Europeans the faith in man which they proclaimed, and for which they were willing to suffer? What gave them the courage to abandon the doctrine of revelation and to put religion upon a natural rather than a supernatural basis? Whence came the radical views in regard to all things religious which these doughty men set forth and were willing to stand by? What are the roots of Reformation and post-Reformation religious thought?

Such questions launch us upon an infinite regression stretching all the way back to man's beginnings. Any idea has its earlier antecedents, and there can be no final answer to the question whence came a certain idea, until we have found our way back to the time when ideas were being born, if indeed, there ever was such a time. Ordinarily, it would be fruitless to follow the infinite regress which is the history of an idea, but it happens that to do so with the one or two basic liberal ideas leads to some very fruitful results.

What are the one or two basic ideas of liberalism? Without raising the difficult question of definitions, suppose we take McGiffert's statement just quoted. He says liberalism revolted from orthodoxy because liberalism refused to accept orthodoxy's doctrine of revelation. This rebellion was based upon a positive faith—faith in the worth and dignity and ability of man to make his own way with God's help. In the same volume, William Ernest Hocking writes, "Liberalism at its roots has been an assertion of invisible futurity embedded in the human present."¹ The idea we are to trace, then, back as far as

¹ Ibid., p. 56.

we can trace it, is this: man may trust himself—his reason, his conscience, his instincts for goodness, his powers of observation and his insight. This is the liberal faith. It is the roots of this fundamental point of view which we are seeking. Whence came man's self-confidence?

There is evidence to show that this frame of mind emerged by the Nile two thousand years before the time of Christ. The authority for this extraordinary assertion is James Henry Breasted, eminent Egyptologist and no Unitarian. He writes: "The rise of man to social idealism took place long before the traditional theologians' 'age of revelation' began. . . . The moral ideas of early men were the product of their own social experience. . . . No conception of a spotlight of Divine Providence shining exclusively on Palestine shall despoil man of this crowning glory of his life on earth, the discovery of character. It is the greatest discovery in the whole sweep of the evolutionary process as far as it is known to us."¹

Thus Breasted summarizes the conclusions of a lifetime devoted to the study of Egyptology. He assures us that man discovered moral law exactly as he discovered physical law. "The emergence of conscience as a social force is . . . as truly a datable event as the gradual introduction of metal,"² he says. Man's conceptions of right and wrong were not handed down to him from the skies, but they emerged in his consciousness as a result of his social experience. He discovered them as Newton discovered the laws of motion and as Columbus discovered America. Man did not fashion moral law arbitrarily. He discovered moral law in his attempt to build a society of men living together at peace. The mere fact that man could make such a discovery, Breasted believes, should give man confidence in his own power.

¹ Breasted, J. H., *The Dawn of Conscience*, pp. xv, xvi.

² *Ibid.*, p. 398.

Without trying to weigh the technicalities of scholarship by which Breasted arrives at his conclusions, we can summarize his views as follows. In the Fourth Millennium B. C., i. e. about 3500 B. C., men living in the Nile Valley were organized into a great society. In this earliest society of which we know, the conception of approval and disapproval of conduct appeared. The conception was primitive, to be sure. Abstract notions like "good" and "evil" had not yet made their appearance. These early men got at the distinction between good and evil concretely, by speaking of "him who is hated" and "him who is loved." It is easy to see how the distinction between those who are loved and those who are hated was transformed from a distinction in fact to a distinction in judgment. The desirability of being loved rather than hated easily became a judgment against the hated and a judgment for the loved, and hence a judgment against the acts that made these men loved and hated respectively.

The loved man is called the "bearer of peace," and the hated man is called "the bearer of crime." Again the distinction is concrete, but it involved an abstract moral judgment, a judgment not yet made explicit, but implicit in the factual distinction these early people observed—the distinction between acts for which people were loved and acts for which they were hated. Of course "love" and "hate" are abstract terms in a sense also. Concretely they mean approval and disapproval: they mean acts which others find pleasurable as they find the taste of honey pleasurable, and acts they find unpleasant as the taste of gall is unpleasant. The distinction is as simple and concrete as that. The "bearer of peace" brings pleasure and happiness to those about him: the "bearer of crime" brings violence and misery to those about him.

Let us not think these distinctions had any cosmic significance for these early men. They had no relation to

reward and punishment after death but were purely earthly and purely social. What is important about them is that here in ancient Egypt we see something new making its way into the world, something which had never been there before, a value judgment on conduct. It was the beginning of ethics and morals.

What was the basis of this judgment? By what implicit standard, felt but unspoken, did these Nile-dwellers recognize certain conduct as lovable and other conduct as hateful? As Breasted observes, these judgments reveal the presence of an integrated and functioning society within which a degree of stability had been attained. The peaceable who were loved conformed to the requirements which made this society possible; the violent refused to conform, disrupted the society and consequently were hated. Thus we see that the thing really most desirable to these early men was society itself—i. e., the living of men together. Thus the earliest men to form a society and live together as a unit approved that conduct which made society possible and condemned conduct which disrupted that society.

Now let us be clear about one point. We are talking about something far transcending the early laws of tribal justice. At the tribal level of his development, man is still concerned with nothing more than convenience. The tribe or clan must act as a unit as a matter of self-preservation. Self-preservation demands the annihilation of any member of the tribe who is not willing to play his part, but who instead seeks his own advantage. It is a far cry from the mechanics of tribal hunting and warfare to ethical and moral judgment on conduct which is what we are concerned with here.

What lifted man's mind from the practical concerns of tribal cohesion in which there was nothing we can call moral — only grim necessity enforced by the chief and public opinion? Breasted thinks the idea arose in the

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family. A man's right to the designation "He who is loved" was first based upon his behavior toward the members of his immediate family. This is shown by the testimonials of character which the Egyptian nobility caused to be engraved on their tombs. There, over and over, the Egyptian rulers cite the high esteem in which the immediate members of their families held them. By the time of the age of the pyramids, these standards of family virtue had spread to the neighborhood and the community and had come to be considered as worthy in the sight of the gods.

It was in this age also that another great new idea emerged in the minds of the ancient Egyptians—namely, the notion that life after death is somehow dependent upon the kind of life lived upon earth. The idea of the soul continuing on after the death of the body is a very common and a very primitive idea. The distinctive element in the thought of the Egyptians was that the Great God himself had established the norms of good conduct by which they were trying to live, and that a judgment after death would follow in accordance with the extent to which they had lived up to these norms of conduct.

As Breasted sums it up. "The recognition of a judgment and the requirements of moral worthiness in the hereafter was a still more momentous step in the same direction. It marked a transition from reliance on agencies external to the personality of the dead, to dependence on inner values. For the first time immortality dawned upon the mind of man as a thing achieved in a man's own soul. It was the beginning of a shift of emphasis from objective advantages to subjective qualities. It was thus also one of the important steps in the long process which we have been watching—the process by which the individual personality begins to emerge as contrasted with the mass of society. The vision of the possibilities of individual character had dawned upon

the minds of these men of the early world; their own moral ideals were passing into the character of their greatest god, his dominion had been recognized as a great moral order benevolently administered on earth by the sovereign for the good of the Egyptian nation, and with this supreme achievement the development of the thousand years which began with the Second Union reached its close not long after 2500 B. C."¹

Was the early Egyptian conscious of all these things? Did he think of himself as discovering a moral order in a seemingly material world? Did he adopt this point of view and reject the doctrine of revelation? Did he think of himself as an entity of dignity and worth rather than as depraved and fallen? Certainly not, for the possibility of such alternatives had not yet crossed his mind. He had not yet heard of depravity; revelation had not yet been conceived of, as we use the word.

Early man found within himself the ability to learn to understand and explain what he found about him. There was no mystery to the process, no questioning of it; he simply did it, just as a growing child does. By the same token he found within himself the ability to distinguish between conduct he desired in others and conduct which was undesirable. He began to discover a discernible order among the principles by which the preferable conduct was designated. This pleased and delighted him, and he made it part of his expanding world. But again, he did not question these principles; he did not seek to fixate them. Instead he reveled in his discovery of them and sought for more.

Here in ancient Egypt, back at the dawn of history, we find man doing the things the modern religious liberal believes he ought to do. Unfettered by preconceptions inherited from the past, his mind is at work upon the data presented to him by the world in which he is

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

living. In the simple process of living in a community as a man rather than as a beast, man comes to glimpse a moral structure lying beneath the rules of convenience he has long since developed. He begins to see a universal context into which to place his personal reactions of loving and hating which somehow justify them and give them stature.

The success of the Egyptians in the simple doing of these things, which they did with utter lack of self-consciousness, gave them confidence in themselves which again was lacking in self-consciousness. In simple childish confidence, not knowing anything else, they developed the attitude toward themselves and their universe which is fundamental in liberal thinking today: viz., confidence in man, in his ability to understand and control himself and his world, a view undergirt by an abiding trust in the existence of an order and regularity and significance in all things which gives the process meaning and makes living worth while.

Later man lost confidence in himself, as Breasted shows, which, if one wished to trace the rootage of orthodoxy to its limits, might be regarded as the beginning of orthodoxy and the reliance upon the institutions of the present and the forms of the past. But this is beyond the scope of the present chapter. Our purpose here is twofold: first, to point out that man's trust in his faculties is as old as man himself, and has arisen because man has accomplished so much through the full and free use of these faculties. This point ought by now to be clear.

The second point is this: the liberal's view, man's confidence in man, is backed by weighty historical evidence. Breasted writes, "I believe that the story of [man's] rise is an incomparable basis for full confidence [in man]".¹ He boldly declares that the theologians are

¹ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

wrong in their doctrine of revelation. He thinks this doctrine "despoils man of his crowning achievement—the discovery of character". His evidence is important for liberalism because it provides factual support for the conviction which liberals have always held—that religion and morality are not handed down to man from the skies, but that by slow and often irregular stages, man climbs up out of the murk of ignorance and superstition to the clearer light of understanding; that while this material universe conceived and bore him a materialist, that same universe also had within it something we designate as spirit, of which man once knew nothing, and which existed in him only as a potentiality, as the huge and brilliant oriental poppy exists in the tiny seed from which it grows, but which can be seen slowly unfolding as man goes on.

The significance of this point of view becomes clear when it is contrasted with the traditional Christian point of view, which holds that values are known to man because God has revealed them, in part through the Old Testament prophets, and in a final culminating revelation through Jesus Christ. Breasted holds that many of the values Christianity has always believed were "revealed" were in fact inherited from a civilization much older than the Jewish nation, a civilization which had lived and passed into decadence two thousand years before the Hebrew prophets spoke.

This assertion does not take anything from the importance or courage of the prophets whose thought was novel to their time, for when they spoke the world had already forgotten most of the great moral and religious teachings of the early Egyptians. It required great courage for the Hebrew prophets to speak as they did, and because they dared to speak, because the people heard and understood and taught what they heard to their children, this rich moral heritage was reintroduced into a world

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which otherwise might have taken many centuries more to reach again the level attained by the Egyptians so long before. Our debt to the Hebrew prophets is incalculable, and nothing said here must minimize it. This earlier history is stressed by way of substantiating the liberal position in regard to revelation. It is intended to show that what has so often been regarded as revelation was, instead, discovery arising from social experience. In the eyes of liberals, the prophets of Israel do not lose, but rather gain in stature when they are regarded as the rediscoverers of moral law, instead of as the vehicles of divine revelation.

The liberal position in regard to Jesus is the same. His revelation or discovery or setting forth of moral law and religious insight was supreme. There has been nothing to equal his consummate penetration either before or since. He is the culmination of the ancient world and the foundation of the modern world. But liberals do not hold with traditional Christianity that God has not spoken since Jesus' time. They do not think that all moral and religious truth dates back two thousand years. They believe the wise and good continue to discover moral and religious truth, or that God continues to reveal it to such men as are competent to receive it. "Revelation is not sealed, answering now to our endeavor," they have sung, "truth and right are still revealed." Unwilling to be bound by any claim of a single, final and complete revelation, liberals have insisted that God continues to speak to man, and that he speaks as clearly now as ever he has spoken if man will but listen to him.

You will notice the words "discovery" and "revelation" have been used interchangeably in the last few paragraphs. Liberals are accustomed so to use them, for to liberals they mean the same thing. Discovery is the word science uses to describe the finding out of a new thing.

Revelation is the word the theologians have used to describe the same process, but only in special instances, as for example, in the case of Moses on Mt. Sinai.

In both discovery and revelation, man learns something he did not know before. In the case of revelation, God shows it to him; that is to say, revelation occurs when God unveils to man something which had previously been veiled or hidden. Discovery occurs when man finds out for himself something which he did not previously know, as when Columbus discovered America.

In both cases something is unveiled or uncovered which previously was hidden. In the one case God is supposed to have taken the initiative and brought something into man's range of vision which previously was not there. In the other case man is supposed to have taken the initiative and found out for himself something he previously did not know.

Whether God takes the initiative or man takes the initiative is at best an abstruse question of epistemology. Most of us believe that *both* God and man act in this process. The really important question for human life and human institutions is whether revelation is already total, complete and final, or whether it is ongoing and continuous, yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. The liberal position is the latter.

If, then, the scholarship of so eminent an Egyptologist as James Henry Breasted is accurate, and if we have understood him aright, the roots of liberalism may actually be traced to the dawn of civilization, and consequently we are justified in saying this viewpoint belongs to the very nature of man. Of course the same may be said of the orthodox point of view which arose almost as early, and this is the most important point of all. Man is a creature who alternately trusts and mistrusts himself. The liberal view is the bold, courageous, self-confident view of man unafraid to throw off his past, and

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strike out into the unknown regions of the future. Orthodoxy is essentially the conservative, careful view which would preserve all that is great and noble in the past, safe and secure in its established techniques and achievements and loth to accept too much novelty lest it be found disruptive of old and cherished things.

Backed by so ancient an ancestry, and coming of such distinguished lineage, the liberal is not troubled by those who would dismiss the movement as a passing phase of American religion peculiar to the nineteenth century. He knows the firm ground upon which he stands. He knows that man's confidence in himself has been shaken to its foundations by the storms and travail of the twentieth century. He is not quite as confident of man as he used to be, and properly so, for he had begun to forget man's tendency to evil while watching his aspirations toward the good.

All these things he knows, but it does not worry the liberal, it steadies him and gives him perspective. It makes him less sure that man will inevitably progress, and more determined to help him to do so. Meanwhile he recalls how far and against what odds man already has come. As he gazes on the vast panorama stretching back to the time when man knew nothing of himself, and sees what he has been able to do, for all his shortcomings, the liberal's mind and heart fill with hope, and his soul is filled with determination to go on.

Such convictions point man's face to the skies; they lift his spirit out of despair and redouble his efforts to make the moral law a working reality. The religious liberal, looking at man's future and back to the remote reaches of the past, prepares to fall in step with his ancestors, and continue the upward climb by which man has risen from the age of tooth and claw, on to the age when conscience shall be the law of all men, and tooth and claw shall at last have been laid to rest.

LIBERALISM IN CHURCH AND STATE

2

LIBERALISM IN
Church and State

IN spite of the fact that two world wars have been fought, and won, ostensibly for the sake of liberty as against the power of tyranny and the philosophy of Fascism and authoritarianism, and in spite of the fact that the democracies have regarded victory as so precious they were willing to pay for it any price that might be demanded, liberalism has been and is under attack from within its own strongholds today. It is an anachronism that in America, which was conceived in liberty, and which has had more than one new birth of freedom, and which has helped deliver mankind from Kaiser Wilhelm, from Adolf Hitler and from the divine emperor Hirohito—it is an anachronism that in America there should be such grave doubts with regard to the merits of what is called the way of freedom, even the American way. It is because of reaction on the one hand and misunderstanding on the other; though it is also because of the heterogeneity and the spiritual deterioration or immaturity of the American people.

It is said in this sophisticated and disillusioned twentieth century that the nineteenth century was one of foolish and unfounded optimism, and that the liberalism

of one hundred years ago has been discredited. It is hard, though, for the historian to discount altogether the faith and the achievement of those liberals in Massachusetts, for example, who were represented in the Flowering of New England and were responsible for the Golden Age in Boston, and who constitute nearly a half of all the members of the National Hall of Fame, or to overlook the good works in the fields of education and philanthropy and social reform that seemed to be the natural product of their religion. Their optimism was not foolish on the basis of the evidence, or judged pragmatically, but only in the dim light of modern cynicism. They had a conviction of the dignity, the duty and the destiny of man; on that conviction as on a strong rock was built an age of progress—that is to say, an age of moral and cultural progress, as well as of scientific and physical expansion. They had known tyranny under George III, and they witnessed the terribleness of man's lust for power as Napoleon, the conscienceless little atom, exploded all over Europe. Still they had a religious faith that was positive and filled with hope, and *that* religious faith was the inspiration *behind*, and the purpose *within*, their own unprecedented growth as a free country.

A revival of religion, a re-emphasis of spiritual values in the hearts and minds of men, is all that can save men in this hour from a sense of the futility of life, or from self-aggrandizement, self-pity and self-destruction. Individuals without some kind of religion are without direction and without strength, while they that wait upon the Lord renew their strength, and rise up with wings as eagles. Nations and civilizations need religion, too, to give them direction and strength, and to lift them up. What Wesley and Whitman and Tolstoy were, or would have been without the consciousness of the presence of God in their lives, England and the United States and Russia are or would be also without religion; what those

men *were* with the consciousness of the presence of God, their respective nations with the same consciousness must be likewise. Without vision the people perish. The need of America, and the need of the world today, is vision. Materialism is a totally inadequate philosophy of life, and is in fact as annihilative as militarism, for like militarism it has respect for neither God nor man. Even science and education are unequal to man's present task, for never before has the human race been so advanced in science and education as now, and yet never before, it seems, has it been so close to the brink of disaster. In any case science has nothing to do with values; it has to do with the knowledge and the skills of man and his mastery over nature; it serves evil and good purposes alike. Even education, as lately understood, has little relation to the motives and moral characters of men, or to any conviction pertaining to the nature and goals of life. Religion is the force that affects men most deeply, that shapes their ideals and determines their conduct. Religion alone can redeem them in this post-war era and in the days and years that lie ahead. They need nothing as they need religion, and all else without religion will be in vain.

Having said this, we must add very quickly that the kind of religion men possess, or that possesses them, also makes all the difference in the world. The kind of religion that made America what it has been, it must be repeated, and the kind of religion that will safeguard it as America in the future, that will create a world of nations on the pattern of these United States, and that will insure universal freedom and brotherhood, is liberal religion. Liberalism as a religious faith and liberalism as a social philosophy ultimately and inevitably go hand in hand. Freedom in the Church is both the fountain-head and guarantee of freedom in the State. There is ample evidence throughout history that the tyrannical

church and the tyrannical state aid and abet each other, and that conservatism or totalitarianism in the one encourages the same in the other. There is ample evidence, also, that freedom in one breeds and fosters freedom in the other. Puritanism is sometimes harshly judged, but no one can deny that much of the freedom and greatness of America was inherent or incipient in the colonies of New England and in the Pilgrim or Separatist spirit. Those who covenanted with each other under God for their mutual help and advancement were the progenitors of our Free Church and our Free State, whether through the media of Congregationalism and Massachusetts or Baptism and Rhode Island. The same Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence wrote, and persistently advanced until it was adopted, the provision in the Virginia Bill of Rights for freedom of religion, the first such provision in the Revolutionary era, pre-dating, of course, the Federal Bill of Rights. Jefferson was a liberal in politics, and undoubtedly influenced our form and philosophy of government more than any other man. He was also, and fundamentally, a liberal in religion. He called himself a Unitarian, and believed so firmly in the views of Unitarianism, and in its rational approach to religion, that he stated he expected every thoughtful young man then living would die a Unitarian. He has been rightly regarded as a preacher of an American religion, and of certain ideas that were designed to destroy not only feudalism and monarchism but also the orthodox and oligarchic power of creedalism and the clergy, which he thought was inimical to pure Christianity and the ethics of Jesus. The next great friend of freedom in the political life of the nation, the next great democrat and defender of the rights of man, Lincoln, was also a liberal in religion. His enemies called him a radical, and a heretic. Not familiar in his part of the country with the

existence of the church of which he dreamed, he said, "When any Church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership acceptance of the two great commandments, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself, that Church will I join with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my mind."

Channing preached liberalism, and what may be called the American religion. Horace Bushnell preached it, and Phillips Brooks preached it; Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Dr. John Haynes Holmes and the Rt. Rev. G. Bromley Oxnam, representative of three different denominational backgrounds, are preaching it today. Horace Mann espoused it and practiced it, and so did Peter Cooper and Samuel Gridley Howe. Mr. John D. Rockefeller, as a layman, enunciated it clearly a year ago in a published address before the New York Council of Churches. Liberalism in Church and State is the American way of life. Liberalism alone is suitable to meet the needs of tomorrow's world.

What are, then, some of the characteristics or emphases of this liberalism, applicable in both the religious and political realms?

First is the so-called doctrine of man and the emphasis upon the individual, upon his rights and duties. Liberalism regards man not as condemned, but as having an infinite capacity for goodness. He is the child of God, created in God's image; although he has to struggle against his passions and his earthly heritage, and to struggle constantly—a struggle that is the means and basis of his growth—nevertheless he wants to *be* good and to *do* good, and there is an unquenchable spark of deity in him, which is the essence of his immortal soul. Therefore liberalism trusts man instead of distrusting him. It makes the individual the center of its interest,

and creates the Church and the State to serve him. They are for his use, not he for their use. His conscience is the highest voice of authority that can speak to him. His personality is sacred and his liberties inalienable and inviolable. The less he depends upon outward authority, and the more he supplants that outward authority with inner authority and control and affirmation, the more mature a man he is, says liberalism. Self-reliance and independent thought and judgment, in contrast to dependence or serfdom and regimentation, are precepts of liberalism, which, rather than have men conform outwardly, insists they be true to their own selves.

In harmony with the emphasis upon the individual, and with the trust that is placed in him, is the emphasis liberalism constantly puts upon the importance and power of reason. Jefferson's texts, for much of his religious and political thinking, came from the mind and pen of Locke, who personified and epitomized the Age of Reason. Reason is regarded by liberalism as a God-given faculty, no less God-given than revelation. Men are encouraged to use their reason in every walk of life in the search after truth and the right, and in the testing of the validity of these things. The liberal asserts nothing can be true or right that is unreasonable, either in theology, in science or sociology, and that the chances of anything's being true or right are in proportion to its reasonableness. Often it has seemed as if the liberal relied too exclusively upon reason, as if his faith were too much a rational faith rather than an adventurous faith, and as if his politics were speculative rather than practical; but his virtue has been in the use and trusting of reason as far as reason would go. Ideally he is quite ready to be supra-reasonable, but he is always on his guard against being unreasonable. The liberal exalts reason in Church and State.

In the third place, liberalism stands for the progres-

sive discovery and revelation of truth. From the days of John Robinson, at Leyden, Holland, to the present days of the Hon. Harlan F. Stone and of the mystic, Professor Rufus M. Jones, liberals have expectantly looked for more truth ever to dawn before the mind of man. They have opposed the theory that revelation is sealed, and the idea that it can be limited either in time or place to one book, one person or one ecclesiastical body. They have had no sympathy for the thought that man's utmost knowledge comes out of the past, but they have believed that wisdom, which is precious above rubies, is a growing thing, and belongs more to the day that is to come than to the day that is gone. Similarly they have insisted that no man and no institution can have a monopoly on truth, or claim justifiably to be its sole guardian or its single vehicle or manifestation. The liberal is confident that the man who tries to suppress heresy is an enemy of truth, and that truth flourishes nowhere as much as in the open forum. Truth cannot be thwarted, it is enlarged and enriched by the enlargement and the enrichment of man's experience.

Finally, liberalism is characterized by, and emphasizes, tolerance. That is to say that the liberal is truly charitable toward his brethren who have views that are different from his own, and that he consistently grants to others the freedom that he desires for himself. The test of a man's or a party's or a church's liberalism is not the degree of tolerance it manifests, or the persistency with which it fights for freedom when persecuted, or when in the position of a minority party or a minority church: the test is the extent of its charity, and the way in which it champions the cause of freedom when enjoying popularity, or when in the position of a majority party or church. The liberal acknowledges the equal rights of all men, and all parties, and all churches, as long as they refrain from infringing on the rights of each other,

and on his rights. It is not, as the Fascist or the bigot sometimes suggests, that the liberal has no care and no concern for other men and the truth, but it is that he has great respect for other men, and a bigger belief in the truth than the bigot has. Men view the truth from different angles, nor does any man with his little mind encompass it all. A man can be a vigorous missionary, and at the same time be broad-minded and tolerant. He can have the spirit of evangelism and the spirit of charity. The liberal has both of these, as Channing had both, and as Brooks had both.

Liberalism, then, emphasizes the innate possibilities of man and the importance of the individual, the use of reason, the progressiveness of truth, and the necessity for tolerance and brotherly love toward one's fellow men.

Democracy, which is the social and political form of liberalism, will not be safe in the future, in America or throughout the world, without a dominant liberalism in religion. Nor will liberalism in religion be safe without democracy's flourishing within and among the nations. Liberalism in the Church and liberalism in the State depend upon each other. The hope of universal democracy rests upon the hope of a universal, liberal, religious faith.

Why hasn't this liberalism advanced more rapidly? Because it is the way of life for mature and strong men, both in the Church and in the State, and many people are not ready for it; mankind is still in its infancy; liberalism, as a working procedure of life, demands far more of a man than do orthodoxy and authoritarianism—but liberalism is the way of the future, as men are maturing and growing stronger all the time. Liberal religion and democracy will not only flourish with, but they will greatly hasten, that maturation and growing process. All who pursue faithfully the way of the free spirit are the servants of God to this end.

THE RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION
FOR THE NEW WORLD ORDER

3.

THE RELIGIOUS
FOUNDATION FOR THE
New World Order

The thing a man does practically believe . . . concerning his vital relations to this mysterious universe . . . is in all cases the primary thing for him and creatively determines all the rest. If you tell me what this is, you tell me to a very great extent what the man is, what the kind of things he will do is. Of a man or of a nation we inquire, therefore, first of all — what religion they had.

—THOMAS CARLYLL, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*

Now that the most devastating war in human history is behind us, we must make secure the foundation of the new world order that is to be.

The foundation of any world order, whether old or new, is man's attitude towards the universe in which he lives and moves and has his being. Tell me what it is that the majority of men really believe about the nature of the universe, and I will tell you what kind of social order they are likely to set up. When the ancients asked what it was that upheld the world, they were told that the world rested on the shoulders of a giant named Atlas. When they further inquired what it was that Atlas stood upon, they were informed that the

giant's feet were planted on the back of a huge turtle. My contention is that theology, or man's belief about the nature of the universe, is the turtle of Atlas—the real foundation upon which man's world eventually rests.

Every person has a theology, whether he knows it or not, whether he can describe it or not, and this is the most important thing about him. It is his dominating philosophy of life which constantly guides and controls his daily conduct. It is the motivating center of all his acting and thinking. It usually functions on a subconscious plane, but it is sometimes possible for an individual to phrase it in clear and unmistakable language. A man, or the social order he builds, can be no better than his theology, although both can fall short of its full implication. The reality behind the universe is probably the same—yesterday, today and forever—but man's basic conception of what this reality is has undergone several revolutionary changes which have been reflected in corresponding changes in the social order. Thus theology and the political institutions of mankind have pretty much walked together throughout the ages—not arm in arm, to be sure, for the political institutions have generally lagged behind theology and have had a tendency to keep it from making greater progress. The two, however, are vitally related, very much as cause and effect, though partly as effect and cause.

There was a time, for instance, when man's basic attitude towards the universe was one of fear and apprehension. The reality behind our life was thought to be a devil who must be avoided or placated. The unseen world was peopled with a host of arbitrary spirits, mostly evil and predatory. Hobgoblins, fiends and demons blocked the path of man whichever way he turned. They were always ready to spoil his plans, defeat his efforts, blast his hopes or take his life.

Religious Foundation for the New World Order

Man's dominating motive at that time was to escape the wrath of a malicious, supernatural order, to hide from it in sackcloth and ashes, if necessary, to buy it off with bribes and sacrifices, to deceive it with trickery and falsehood. Naturally there was little place in primitive man's religion for love and happy adoration. The universe was deemed hostile and man its convenient and legitimate prey. What wonder, then, that the social ethics of that time was brutal and cruel and revengeful. What wonder that every man's hand was against his neighbor, for every man had to look out for himself while the devil took the hindmost. What wonder that organized religion gave its allegiance to witch doctors and exorcists. What wonder that the prevailing system of economics was more or less cannibalistic in character. One had to eat one's fellow man before one's fellow man did the eating. A fearful theology gave rise to a social order that was literally shot through with fear and insecurity.

Gradually man's attitude towards the universe changed. The reality behind it came to be regarded as potentially benevolent, but still more or less arbitrary and therefore still to be feared and, in addition, to be obeyed as subjects fear and obey a king. This reality bore various names, such as Yahweh, Jupiter, Vishnu and Horus.

Man's chief motive in life now becomes the praise and obedience of a supersovereign in the skies. Man has rights and privileges, but they are all handed down from above. When Yahweh tells Abraham to pull up stakes and journey into a far country, there is no choice for him but to go. When he suggests to Elijah that the prophets of Baal should be slain, his wish is law. The reality behind the universe is powerful and partial. He picks out certain people for special favors, and it is the part of wisdom to keep in his good graces, for these

special favors may be withdrawn at any moment. Therefore the people must be careful at all times to preserve a respectful attitude towards the source of their blessings. God is an absolute monarch; men and women are his subjects. There is no call here for love, no place for self-respect. Man must bow mighty low or he will suffer direful consequences.

Is it any wonder that with this kind of theology ruthless rulers should rise to power, or that feudalism should become the dominant economic system, or that absolutism should prevail among the priesthood, or that servility should characterize the masses of the people? The idea of an absolute monarch at the head of the universe begets a cringing attitude towards life. It is bound sooner or later to produce obedient but unthinking underlings. The foundation of the medieval Moham-medan empire was a god of arbitrary power.

Such a god was the foundation of Japan's recent extensive domain. This was why the average Japanese was ready to die for his emperor. His emperor was looked upon as the Son of Heaven and could therefore do no wrong. Whatever rights the Japanese people enjoyed, they had from the emperor's hand. Their one supreme duty was to obey orders. Subservience to his will characterized all the institutions of Japan from the custom of *hara-kiri* practiced by the higher castes to the regular visitation of Shinto shrines on the part of the common people.

Until there has been a forthright repudiation of emperor worship, Japan is not likely to be fully trusted to keep the peace however emphatic her professions of peace. The ceremonial visit the emperor made to General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo was a step in the right direction.

Let me now mention another drastic change that has taken place in man's basic theology and show how it

has been reflected in the social order. I refer to the concept that God is a Heavenly Father and that the people of this earth are his children. The universe becomes more benevolent and less arbitrary. God is still to be obeyed, but in addition he is to be loved. He knows what is best for us. He has numbered all the hairs of our heads. He watches the sparrow's fall. He provides for all our wants—food, drink, raiment. The Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things, even before we ask. He punishes us for our wrongdoing only as an earthly parent reproves his child, namely, to do us good, and he forgives us when we repent. It is not his will that any of his little ones should perish. Like a shepherd, he maketh us to lie down in green pastures and leadeth us beside the still waters. God as father or shepherd—this has been the fundamental faith of millions in the past. It is still the fundamental faith of millions today.

What wonder that there has been a steady mollification of the institutions of mankind, especially in Western civilization where this kind of theology has been more widespread than elsewhere. What wonder that governments have become paternalistic, yielding much of their former absolutism, while the stronger nations have assumed mandates and protectorates over weaker peoples. What wonder that papacy and episcopacy should develop as the prevailing ecclesiastical order. What wonder that philanthropy should grow apace and the colored races become the white man's burden. Let paternalism be thought to preside at the center of the universe, and paternalism will permeate the institutions of mankind.

Industry in America and Great Britain has been increasingly surrendering the arbitrary power it once exercised. It is rapidly becoming more benevolent towards those committed to its care. Employees are being given

bonuses and clinical service. Employers have been taking a real interest in their departments of social welfare. The idea of trusteeship is capturing the holders of great wealth.

How long has the concept of a benevolent Heavenly Father been in existence? At least three thousand years and probably a good deal longer, but it is only in the last few decades that the economic order has begun to react to the clear implications of the concept. As the seasons lag behind the ascending or receding sun, the social institutions of mankind lag behind theology. A new, commanding idea rises on the horizon of human thought before the old has finished its work.

Another significant change in man's basic attitude towards the universe is now about to take place. Indeed, it is already taking place, and sooner or later it is bound to bring about revolutionary changes in the social order. The reality that men have agreed to call by the general name of God is no longer regarded as an enemy to be feared and placated (except in certain backward areas of the earth), nor is it looked upon as an absolute monarch whose arbitrary wish is law (except among the Japanese, whatever die-hard Nazis may be left and certain Mohammedan and Hindu sects), nor is the dependent relation of children to a benevolent father an adequate description of the newly developing attitude in the world today. Men and women in many countries are coming more and more to look upon the universe as a friendly partner. Man needs God, to be sure, but God also needs man. God and man are of the same essence. They are co-creators in a cosmic task, co-partners in a universal enterprise, co-sharers in a common destiny. The old attitude of fright is going; the old servile attitude is going; even the filial attitude is on its way out. Fear, subserviency and even dependency are giving way to the spirit of self-respecting co-operation. God

does not ask man to work for him or under him, but *with* him. Man does not expect God to work for him either, or over him, but *with* him. Dictatorship at the heart of the universe, whether infernal, imperial or paternal, is gradually being rejected, thanks in large part to the revelations of modern science, thanks also to the democratic implications of Hebrew prophecy. Man is standing up today and looking at the universe more and more without either prostrate deference or reckless defiance. The universe is something that calls for co-operation. God, the life behind it, is a great companion who must be understood and assisted, whose habits of working must be learned in order that man may understand how to work best with him.

Let demonism, absolutism and paternalism depart from the center of man's universe of thought, and demonism, absolutism and paternalism will eventually depart from all his social institutions.

There is, without doubt, a new and revolutionary theology coming into being throughout the world today. It is being given conscious expression by churchmen, scientists and sociologists alike. Postulate partnership at the heart of the universe and the spirit of partnership is bound to permeate the whole of life.

The idea of a co-operative, democratic God is the only foundation for any new world order that is to meet the growing needs of mankind. Already, as a result of today's changing theology, I foresee certain inevitable transformations in the society of tomorrow.

For one thing, I foresee more, not less, democracy in government. Kings and dictators are doomed. Men and women are going to insist more and more upon the duty as well as the right of governing themselves: They are going to reach the conclusion that no one is good and wise enough to do it for them. They are going to insist upon the privilege of making their own political

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mistakes and will not permit this privilege to be monopolized by a few.

I also foresee more and more democracy in the world of industry and commerce. Men and women are going to insist upon a greater degree of control over their own economic destiny. Slavery will have to go. Exploitation will have to go. Even trusteeship will have to go. Partnership in the management as well as in the emoluments of industry and commerce is coming sooner or later.

I also foresee more democracy in our family life. The benevolent patriarch who once dominated the domestic scene has already lost his position of authority. All parental dictatorship will go out of fashion. Motherhood will become voluntary. Children will be accorded not only more rights but also more responsibilities. Family life will become more and more a co-operative enterprise of equal personalities.

I also foresee more and more democracy in education. The acquisition of knowledge will become a joint undertaking of pupil and teacher. "Wisdom," as Professor Harry A. Overstreet prophesies, "will not be ladled out like soup that has already been prepared by master cooks. Everyone will be encouraged to taste the broth and add his own seasoning, before it is swallowed." The method of forum discussion will supplant the platform lectures. Teachers will appeal to the authority of experimentation and listen to the wisdom of children, as well as impart their own.

There is likewise going to be more and more democracy even among the churches of mankind. The magic medicine man and the witch doctor have all but disappeared. The infallible priest who holds the keys of heaven and hell is still with us, but his days are definitely numbered. The paternal pastor who watches over his people as a shepherd over his flock is also in for a

loss of prestige. The religious leader of the new tomorrow will be compelled to be more democratic in his manner and habits. He will not presume to preach a sermon on some controversial subject without giving those who disagree with his conclusions a fair chance to do so. He will be obliged to regard the proclamation of religious truth as a joint endeavor, a mutual undertaking and a common responsibility of layman and minister. The voice of the layman will be heard more frequently in the pulpit, and the unchallenged sermon will give way to the religious round-table conference and the open forum.

Finally, I foresee more and more democracy in the race relations of mankind. The assumption of ethnic superiority is bound sooner or later to be liquidated in favor of mutual respect and cultural co-operation. There will be no chosen people, no white man's burden, no subject races and no second-class citizenship. All peoples are going to be compelled to recognize their interdependence and to acknowledge the special contribution of each of the welfare of the rest.

All these things I foresee as the logical result of a new attitude towards the universe which is gradually taking possession of the minds and imaginations of men today, in America and Great Britain, in China and Russia—yes, even in Germany and Japan. Man's attitude towards the universe has vitally molded the social order in the past. His new attitude, in my judgment, will eventually create a new earth. It may take many more years than any of us wishes were necessary, but the basic idea is already here and at work. It will expand and grow and move mountains. "There is nothing more powerful under heaven than an idea whose hour has arrived."

Here, in the concept of a co-operating, democratic Deity, is the religious foundation of the New World

Order that is to be—an order we both pray and assume will include some working federation of all countries (towards which the United Nations may well lead us), one that is *sufficiently strong* to insure the practical outlawry of war, the effective social control of atomic power for constructive ends and, above all, the lifting of the terrible burden of armament and anxiety that has weighed so heavily upon the life of our times. Sooner or later, a co-operative world is bound to come. It is the only intelligent answer to the growing needs and expanding vision of mankind.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT GOD AND THE ATOMS

4

HOW TO THINK ABOUT
GOD AND *the Atoms*

It is reported that when the crew of the *Enola Gay* saw the vast explosion caused by the first atomic bomb and the gigantic pillar of cloud and flame that rose above Hiroshima they exclaimed, "My God!"

Did you ever try to write out, in words that satisfy you emotionally and rationally, your description of God? Probably you have not, but there are libraries of books written on this theme. I have never found one that satisfies me completely.

That is not surprising. When men first designed automobiles and railroad cars they made them look like carriages. Just as we have grown from stagecoach to strato-liner, so we should change our concepts of God to conform with our increasing knowledge. Man's scientific knowledge has advanced, requiring new thought patterns for the realm of values beyond material relationships, but man's concept of God continues to hold to the old and the familiar, no matter how inadequate for living in the world of tomorrow.

My God is my ideal — always beyond my grasp. I cannot comprehend a condition of life in which I reach my ideal, because if I should, then it would no longer be my

ideal. It would be reality, and my vision, my imagination, my hopes and aspirations would have no horizon.

A letter from a friend in the Navy prods my thinking about God and atoms.

Saturday we listened to the formal surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay and to the President's address. I cannot ascribe our military victory to God and His divine aid. It seems to me that if there were such a one He would not have let us get in such an unholy mess to begin with. Rather, I regard the war and all wars as the inability of man to get along with himself. This is a rather superficial view, I'll admit, but I can't see war, no matter who wins, as an affair due to other than man's own incompetence and bungling. It is rather high time, I think, to stop praying and get down to the business of learning to be a good neighbor and how we can teach others to be good neighbors. The spark, life, inspiration and intellect, that is in man seems sufficient of divinity to me; we ought to work on it a little.

Here is one man at least who is trying to think honestly and clearly. He sees the simple implications of much of the pious but confusing talk from men who ought to know better.

As a matter of fact, as we enter upon the new age of atomic power and men stand face to face with God, they are scared to death! We are, as Mr. H. G. Wells has said, "discovering a frightful queerness has come into life," a "certain wonder, a shrinking and fugitive sense that something is happening so that life will never be quite the same again."

We have long believed that "survival of the fittest" meant survival of the strongest, the most able to fight. Fossils of the giant reptiles in the rocks of prehistoric time should have taught us better. The teachings of our religion should have taught us better — but man has not yet learned the lessons of history.

Now we must recognize and obey the law of survival or sink into the mud of war and perish as did the great beasts who peopled our earth before us.

We have misunderstood the law. The fittest are not the "fightingest" — nor even those who are best prepared to fight. The fittest in this new age are those who co-operate most thoroughly. The basic law to which we must adapt our lives is simply the Golden Rule. The fittest are those who obey that law.

It will be hard to convince military men, statesmen, politicians, men of industry and even some churchmen of that law, but *it is* the law, the central, all-important law of religion and survival, and it is man's law. Whether it was revealed by God or discovered by man is a good question for theologians, but not immediately pertinent. It is high time, as my sailor friend says, "to get down to the business of learning how to be a good neighbor . . . we ought to work on it a little."

There are many people who are troubled today in their thinking about God by the absolute ideological conflicts of war and its aftermath.

Now, *it has been argued that many of the word pictures used to describe God are merely artistic, poetic pictures — they are intended to warm men's emotions, not to feed their reason — but, as a matter of fact, the words we use do affect the ways we think.*

When I was in college, I occasionally went to the service of the little church that was conveniently located right across the street from my fraternity house. It was not only convenience that prompted my attendance. I liked the minister. I used to go off into the woods with him, and I always found more real religion in him and his conversation than in the ritual of his church. There was one phrase he used very frequently that I shall always remember. It's a familiar phrase in Christian ritual: "Inasmuch as without Thee, we are not able to please Thee."

That phrase came to have real meaning for me, not only emotionally, but intellectually and rationally. It

means, for me: "Inasmuch as without a constant consciousness of my ideal, I am not able to live according to, or in a way consistent with, my ideal."

Now there is a big difference between that and the words of another familiar collect from the prayer book:

Almighty God . . . who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same with Thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but all our doings, being ordered by Thy governance, may be righteous in Thy sight.

I shall grant that even those words can and do come to have rational as well as emotional meaning for many people, but go one step farther to the prayer language of many — in fact the majority — of churches and it would appear that men believe God *can*, and will if He wants to, or at least if He is properly petitioned, save men from all kinds of plague, pestilence and poverty. The language of men's religious services presupposes God can stop war, and in His time and wisdom will. God can end poverty and social strife, but is not yet ready. Men thank God for the end of the war, as if God had something to do with it. Men pray to God to be saved from death on a raft or starvation in prison, as if the God in whom they believed were a kind of being who could reach down and lift them up out of their suffering onto the fleecy clouds of eternal bliss, into ease and luxury in His heavenly home.

One of the great weaknesses of our democracy is rooted in that very kind of thinking. We have too long thought of God as the giver of grace, the avenger of wrong, the arbiter of justice, the source of love and truth and the controller of our destiny. Long centuries ago in the feudal Middle Ages we became accustomed to think of God in those terms. We thought of God as a projection beyond the highest authority we knew, the lord of the manor, or the king or the emperor. The ecclesiastical hierarchy of organized Christianity has not helped us

change our spiritual thought patterns as we have grown in the understanding of, and ability to control, the material forces of our world.

In a recent magazine-article comment on the atomic bomb, the statement is made that "the greatest obsolescence of all in the atomic age (into which we have entered) is national sovereignty." There is much truth in that, but it is equally true that an anthropomorphic conception of God, a God who can and will stop wars, create peace, save or destroy life, punish or reward or control our use of atomic energy, is equally obsolete.

The first lesson of the atomic bomb, the ABC of the Atomic Age, is man's responsibility for himself and his world.

As we enter this new age we take with us a great body of understanding of human values — of human righteousness, of human justice. We know what is fair and honest, what is good and what is evil, what is kind and friendly and what is not. Our experience for fifty thousand years has taught us these rules of conduct. They have been coded into law — the bibles of all religions. To be sure, we have often believed that many of the rules were revealed by God as ultimate truth, but that has merely been our teachers', our prophets', way of giving authority to these rules. Unfortunately, too many of us have thought of them as God's law, the king's law, and with that thought has naturally followed the concept of man's dependence upon the will of God, the king, of man's inability to act for himself without the undergirding arms of God, the Grace of God.

Now, however, we have come to the end of the ages where man's failures to build for himself his "kingdom of God," his commonwealth, have merely cost him a little less than he could afford. From here on his failure will mean ultimate destruction, extinction, or turning back to his caveman existence of forty thousand years ago.

The time is now for a belief in God — a belief not in terms of what God can do for man, but in terms of what man can do for God, for the enrichment of his ideals.

We need a belief, not in a God of power and wrath, of justice and love, upon whose will and generosity we depend and without whose help we are helpless, but a belief in a God who is the dream of our perfection, who is the goal of our desires, embodiment of our ideals, whose dwelling places are our homes, whose kingdom is our world, where the longing for man's freedoms is respected by men, where the blessings of friendliness, gentleness and beauty of character are appreciated and won by men, and where work for families, homes and the community of all men is made possible by men.

Man bursts the chains that his own hands have made, hurls down
the blind fierce gods that in blind years he fashioned.

No more is God a stranger; he comes as common man, at home
with cart and crooked yoke,

Know man and you will know the deep of God.¹

This is not a discussion of atomic energy. That is the scientist's job and many, in recent months, have been trying very hard to explain — even for children — what happens when energy explodes from its form, matter, into its form, heat. For the purposes of our thinking, what happened to two Japanese cities and their thousands upon thousands of people and what happened to the sands of our New Mexico desert are enough. We know this much about atomic energy.

We know we can either blow everything alive off the face of the earth and leave it for a few million years for some other form of life to evolve — or we can bend our energies and our ideals to a common purpose and create the community of our dreams.

There are those who still say war is natural to man.

¹Edwin Markham, "The Hour of Man."

Hear Mr. Julian Huxley: "Human nature contains no specific war instinct. There is in man's make-up a general aggressive tendency, but this, like all other human urges, is not a specific and unvarying instinct; it can be molded into the most varied forms."

It is hopeless to expect the man who relies on God to set aright his world, a man whose religion tells him his own nature makes him incapable of saving himself — it is hopeless to expect such a man to do much for himself.

If, on the other hand, all men will begin with the premise of a free religious outlook and know that the responsibility lies with themselves, that there is nothing in their nature that makes the task impossible — then and only then can we expect men to harness the frightening, terrible power of atomic energy and make it work for man's welfare, not his annihilation.

It is just at this point that the old religious concepts of many men have been man's greatest obstacle. In war he has been willing to mobilize all his scientific and intellectual energies for purposes of death. In this last war, at least, man has not called on God to help him in its fighting. We have not been praying or relying on God to help us explode the uranium atom. For that, man took the responsibility alone. He shattered the atom and harnessed its fabulous energy, but he balks — or allows himself to be balked — when it comes to harnessing that same power for human progress. He still relies on God to make "His kingdom come on earth," to rectify his mistakes and set his world aright.

In the last century we have spent only a few million dollars on research for human progress on the social health level, but in the past five years we spent two billion dollars on creating the atomic bomb. What might happen if we put as much energy into the study of man as into the study of matter?

Already our inexperience in doing for ourselves in the

fields of sociology, politics, economics, health and welfare is having its effect.

There are those who fear that the development of atomic energy will mean a complete revamping of the economic structure with the probability that the production of atomic energy would have to be a public service, a government utility. Atomic energy may make obsolete other forms of operational power.

This is merely another way of suggesting that when we think about atoms — as when we think about God — we can't avoid responsibility.

Man's control of atomic energy has already made obsolete any kind of thinking that allows a dependence upon some higher authority than man's democratic will for the determination of his destiny.

The measure of the opportunity before us is exceeded only by the measure of the promise. If man, in terms of the words in the letter from my sailor friend, will "get down to the business of learning how to be a good neighbor," work on it with the same degree of independent, self-reliant responsibility he has shown in the last four years, if man will spend the time and energy and wealth on peace that he has on war, he will need

. . . no other stones to build the stairs on to the Unfulfilled, . . .
No other cedar for the beam and dome of man's immortal dream.

Here on the common human way is all the stuff to build a heaven.

Ours the stuff to build eternity in time.¹

¹Edwin Markham, "The Hour of Man."

BATTLEFIELDS OF OUR AGE

5

Battlefields
OF OUR AGE

THE present resurgence of religious liberalism springs directly from the conviction that religion as a way of life is the supreme need of souls and of society. It matters not whether souls are troubled or complacent. The need is there. It matters not whether nations are conquered or victorious, whether classes languish in want or decay in prosperity. Religion is still the supreme need in varying degree and kind of application.

Unitarian Advance recognizes that the Christian Church—meaning organized Christian religion as a whole—extending over twenty centuries and comprehending manifold divisions—is the most significant social unit in human history. Ideally, it is conceived of by many as being a divine institution. Actually, it is seen by all to be made up of human beings, good, bad and indifferent. Its ideal is the ministry of religion, awakening the native religious instinct of men, nourishing the religious nature by providing opportunity for the worship of God, and directing men's wills to religious action in ethical conduct and human service.

Since the cause of the Church is the cause of religion and since the Church is, in fact, made up of all sorts

and conditions of fallible human beings, it follows that its supreme need is also the very thing for which it exists, as truly as liberty is the need of a liberty-loving people. Long ago the dictum was framed. "*Extra ecclesiam salus nulla.*" Originally this dictum expressed the idea of a monopolist kingdom that was definitely of this world—not the universalism inherent in that other kingdom which Jesus said was *not* of this world. However, the framer spoke more truly than he knew. His words were prophetic. If by "the Church" one may understand the whole body of those who stand in the Christian tradition and all other worshipers of God, of whatever ethical and spiritual faith, one might well expect to find all that is meant by "salvation" flowing through some one or other of the channels of grace of organized religion. The cynics and enemies of all religions have long enough been allowed to sneer that "the Church" almost always means "my Church" or "our Church" and that conceit, self-assurance and vanity are the most eminent "Christian virtues." The conviction has been growing that "outside of the Church there is no salvation"—for the Church itself. Whether what you mean by "the Church" is organized religion in the world, taken as a whole, or a particular body of believers, its salvation must come from within. It is, to be sure, a pleasant delusion, quite fit for those who love to live in a fool's paradise, to trust supinely that "the Holy Spirit will never let his Church go astray." The derisive laugh of the historian may well suggest that, after all, the Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons and, particularly, not of false and forsworn Christians. God will always offer to mankind the divine idea of a Church of his true children, but the human membership, fallible and sometimes traitorous, may in God's wisdom and justice be ousted as squatters, like the legendary Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The great question of the ages is where God, whose life in man and human society *is religion*, is to be found. How did He manifest himself in times gone by and how does He manifest himself in these days?

In times gone by, the revelation of God had to wait on the slowly dawning intellectual and moral consciousness of man. Man had eyes to see but only slowly did he come to understand what he saw. Having created his god in his own image, man was slow to sense a goodness in God above and beyond his own level of morals.

Holy places and holy persons—Greek poets, Hebrew prophets, Jesus of Nazareth and some of his followers—by utterance and writings, preserved in the canons of later times, afforded glimpses of God to eyes becoming ever better able to convey intimations to better-understanding hearts. Institutions, rites and ceremonies, kindred and diverse, helped to make more real and permanent these intimations of the Divine.

The revelation of God was conditioned, in past centuries, even more by man's slowly dawning moral sense than by his slowly dawning understanding. Ideals have been locked in bitter conflict with perverse tendencies in human nature, notably the vices of intellectualism and secularity.

The secret of the vitality of the Christian Church through the centuries, in the face of enemies without and greater enemies within, is that generations of Christians have clung to the belief that it is a divine idea seeking to come to realization as a common fellowship of the faithful. The key to understanding the failures, evils and all the other circumstances of its checkered career is to be found in the fact of the extreme difficulty of any divine idea's becoming realized by fallible human beings, especially by fallible human beings under the delusion of infallibility. God has made men creatures of free will, not automata. So men in pride and vanity

through the centuries have continued to thwart the Holy Spirit, defeat the realization of an idea of God and bring Christianity, and, indeed, religion in general, into disrepute.

Since human nature had taken over, it is plain why discord, division, strife, intolerance, greed, secularity and even crime have marked with filth and blood the pages of Christian history.

To pattern the growing Christian Church after secular institutions of the day was to set at naught and defy Jesus' doctrine that his kingdom was not of this world, if one understands that "Kingdom of God" and "Church" are by orthodox traditional Christians considered to mean the same thing. By degrees, officials with rank and title appeared and proceeded to perform the acts and exercise the powers, for good or ill, of secular officials. Their very titles were secular, and the results of their official conduct were sometimes "human" in the worst sense.

When the Roman Empire waned and then ceased to be, the impulse to ape a kingdom of this world reached its widest limits. Bishops became generals of armies, rulers of subject peoples, gamblers for international power after the manner and style of the lesser Roman emperors. The years of greatest temporal power were the years of greatest spiritual darkness and moral turpitude. The trend to secularity was on. Human depravity broke out in pomp, vanity, oppression, vice, perversion, bloodshed and crimes of every description against persons and property, even against sacred places and consecrated things, and against rivals in the Church's hierarchy itself. At last the Church outdid every other kingdom of this world and, as a penalty for defiance of its hero and founder, was broken and divided East from West and North from South.

In the last five centuries the artificial cleavages inci-

dent to warfare within the Church have ceased to have any but an historical interest. The historian tells us that what has happened in Church history was logically bound to happen, considering the human stuff out of which the early Church was built and the fact that human nature is in part what it has been through the centuries. To be sure, we are aware that human nature has not changed very much. We are aware that there still remain the same forces at work and that the harvest of tares still remains the great problem for the Christian Church.

Slowly but surely within Christendom and within the other great world religions the real cleavage is appearing. The division runs *through* all Christian bodies and world religions, not *between* them. The totalitarians in every church and in every religion raise their hands in Fascist salute to the idea of a religion of the few, by the few and for the few. The modernists of every name and church and religion stand and challenge to a real battle those who like to think that man was made for the Church and not the Church for God's own. The modernists have a bitter score to settle with those of this day who have played into the hands of the enemies of all religions. These enemies are fond of citing the totalitarian Christians as examples of their contention that religion is a racket and that the professional religionist, whether cleric or layman, is a modern Pharisee and an all-time pious gangster. The conviction is firm that the totalitarians who have thus brought the Christian religion and all other religions into disrepute have committed the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit of which the New Testament speaks and rate at least an earthly penance of utmost severity as false and forsworn Christians.

To our confusion we live in a world of isms—Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, capitalism, socialism,

communism, totalitarianism and liberalism or modernism, to mention a few of those most in the minds of men. Most of these isms are fairly cohesive units, although there are several kinds of Catholics (Greek, Roman, Russian, Anglican and others), many varieties of Protestants, and men of all shades of opinion in the other units. Indeed, the totalitarian goats are to be found in all churches and religions and so are the sheep, whom you may call liberals, modernists or champions of democracy. That is the real division among men. There is the real cleavage. There is the battlefield. The issue is squarely between those whose ideology is that governments, churches, religions and all other institutions are *of the few, by the few and for the few*, and the modernists whose battle cry is "of the people, by the people, for the people."

Unitarian Advance is modernism in religion. Its liberalism leaves you free to be theist or humanist. You may think of God as the Infinite Life, immanent and transcendent in the universe, or as "a growing God," or as an adolescent God, or otherwise. Men always have done so and always will. Unitarian Advance, however, has to do with religion, a way of life. Spinning a web of philosophy it leaves to the philosophers. Dilettante interests it leaves to the dilettantes.

In every age a religion has had the call to show men how God is manifest. It has been called upon to "prove" the reality of God's existence and to show how God is involved in the lives of men and of society.

How is God manifest in these days and where is the "proof" of His being? The answer is simple, stated in one word, but comprehending all experience: revelation! Revelation doesn't mean the secrets vouchsafed to a medicine man, or to a seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, or the text of an "inspired book," produced by some kind of automatic writing, or the mere say-so

of an institution or ecclesiastic claiming special privileges from the Holy Spirit.

Unitarian Advance points the seeker after revelation to the two ultimate sources of revelation: the order of Nature and the lives of human beings. If he objects that he cannot see God entire, he must be advised that the part cannot expect to contemplate the whole. Then he may consider that even the eye cannot see the face of which it is a part. The seeker must be content at best with glimpses of God. Uncounted numbers of worshippers have asked for no more and have testified that it was enough.

Everything beautiful, majestic and sublime in Nature is a veil through which the reality and presence of God are revealed. Any moment of any day in any place on earth a tiny flower, a majestic tree, a flight of birds, a waterfall, a sunrise, a sunset, a sea horizon, a mountain or a starlit sky may speak of God's real presence to any man who has eyes to see and a heart to understand.

To the humble religious man, who inevitably has something of the mystic in him, God speaks of Himself in the inner sanctuary of the heart. He who speaks we sometimes call the Holy Spirit. His voice we call the "still small voice." Man seeking for the real presence of God or revelation is rewarded in immediate experience, in itself proof sufficient.

The saints, the seers, the great heroes, the saviors, known from history or in the present life, and the uncounted number of saintly and heroic souls among the living or the dead, great in the sight of God but obscure in the estimate of men, are each and all veils of revelation of the Infinite Life of the God who made them. Having seen them—a Jesus of Nazareth, a Buddha, a Francis of Assisi, or any of the unnumbered heroes who have testified to that greater love by laying down their

lives for a holy cause or a fellow man—we have had a glimpse of the Heavenly Father.

So the seeking after a knowledge of God and the proof of His being is the business of a lifetime. Such knowledge and proof are the distilled essence of the experience of mankind. It is not the quick and easy attainment claimed to result from mere belonging to a church and going through the prescribed motions, saying some prescribed words and forgetting the weightier matter of prescribed conduct. The knowledge of God and the proof of His being are in the cumulative experience of man and of society. The way is difficult but the reward is sure.

Unitarian Advance commends all the facilities and occasions of religion and worship. The altar, symbol of God's real presence, is what the writer in the Rig-Veda calls it: "earth's extremest limit." God's house is literally the meetinghouse, where kindred spirits meet together and together meet the Father. Prayer is the ladder that reaches from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven. The Book of Holy Scriptures of whatever faith is the continuing echo of God's voice, speaking by his holy prophets to mankind of every age. The cherubim have the legs of animals, the bodies of men and the wings of angels and ever teach us whence we all came, what we now are and what we may yet be. They look into each other's faces and teach us where we ought ever to look. The image or the icon of the saint may be there to recall one beloved in the remembrance of the Church who in his lifetime did justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with his God. Even the candle, a thing of wax and wick, its substance being ever drawn up into the wick and converted into light, may be there to challenge us so to spend our lives as to bring some measure of light into the dark places of the earth.

Lastly there is the inborn impulse to set apart our

best treasure for a supreme end. The same writer in the Rig-Veda says, "This sacrifice of ours is the center of the world." It is the supreme Action. We bring our first fruits, sometimes under the symbols of bread and wine. It is the universal Offertory. A servant of us, God's servants, may dedicate our gifts to God. It's still *our* Consecration. Then this servant may give back to us our gifts, the same and yet not the same, because we by his hand have set them apart for God's use and purposes. In this universal Communion, more ancient than any Christian rite, the mystic of whatever faith may partake of the Bread of Heaven and the Chalice of Salvation. He may carry away the benefit of knowing and feeling that the cycle of worship is the cycle of giving and receiving and that, when he brings a gift and consecrates it to God, his gift comes back to him again enriched with God's blessing. This, more than anything else in life, he feels, will "preserve his body and soul unto life everlasting."

So, at all times and in all places, in various occasions and by various ways, God makes his presence manifest in these days. All that man needs to do is to acquaint himself at first hand with Deity.

In these days, then, as in days gone by, the revelation of God is conditioned by man's efforts and ability to see and understand and by the quality of his moral nature. The omnipotence of God does not mean that He can reveal himself to blind sight, dull minds and dead hearts. The perverse ways of man can frustrate revelation.

There is no royal road to the enjoyment of revelation. There are typical ways by which all men may acquaint themselves at first hand with Deity. In practice there are as many occasions as there are persons, times and places.

If you would that God might reveal Himself to you and thereby prove to you by immediate evidence that He is, seek out any of the places at home or abroad where

universal testimony says either that Nature there borders on the sublime or that there is there present something mysterious that reaches in and touches with a divine caress the mystic's heart within you. It might be the Great Stone Face in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Grand Canyon, the sequoias in California, the "merging mystery" of sky and sea along any of our coasts, the ineffable beauty of the green grass of Ireland, it might be Lake Lucerne, the Acropolis in Athens, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Taj Mahal, Napoleon's Tomb, or a countless number of places abroad or at home; it may be miniature beauties at our own doors. Then you will understand the ancient dictum of the old Egyptian priests that God is a circle whose center is everywhere, whose circumference, nowhere.

If you would that God might reveal Himself to you even more abundantly, draw near and stand before the immortals of history, the truly great, the heroes of every land and time who have given their service and their lives for mankind. It is rarely given to men to know many of the great in their own time. Indeed, heroes are often not even recognized as such until long after they have crossed the Great Divide. When at last they have entered upon the life of the world to come and live on earth no longer in the flesh but in the story of their heroic lives, in their words preserved in writings, and in the grateful and loving memory of men, then you may draw near to them, sit at their feet and know them intimately. Included among them are the glorious company of all God's apostles, the goodly fellowship of all God's prophets and the noble army of all the heroes who have received the golden crown of martyrdom.

Greater in number than all the immortals of history, all the great and all the heroes, is the number, beyond all estimate, of those unknown and humble souls whose noble living revealed in their heroic service and sacri-

fice the same infinite love of God. They revealed God. Those near and dear to them loved them because it is man's instinctive impulse to love God and the one who reveals God in the same act of adoration.

If you would that God might reveal Himself to you in fullest measure, behold and hold in due reverence and affection those near and dear to you. Watch for the glimpses of the Divine afforded in services and sacrifices of these persons who live in your heart. Great is your reward when there dawns upon your heart the ineffable and sublime mystery of the Incarnation, that God eternally takes upon himself human flesh and dwells among us, not only in the great immortals of history but also in the noble and humble souls whom we love. Having seen them, we have seen the Father.

PRIORITIES OF SPIRITUAL CONVERSION

6

Priorities OF
SPIRITUAL CONVERSION

I WANT to speak in behalf of the priority of spiritual conversion as our greatest need in these unprecedented times. In a sense, of course, all times are unprecedented but this period has broken patterns of action, smashed customary modes of thought and made "reconversion" impossible. True, people still undergo the major processes of birth and life and death, but these processes are given a setting in a new world that is as yet little understood. I am not thinking primarily of the conquest of atomic energy, although this has meanings that both frighten and inspire. I am thinking of a wide world that has been compressed into a community, of strange peoples that have become neighbors, of terrifying dreams that have become realities, and of visionary hopes that have become immediate possibilities. There has never before been a period of time in which man could so certainly and quickly annihilate himself or so surely and speedily realize his highest hopes.

What we do with this situation will depend upon how intelligently and earnestly we convert our thinking and our feelings, our thoughts and our emotions, our basic

drives and our far-reaching goals to fit the needs of the new world into which we now so haltingly enter.

I am not unmindful of the physical problem America now faces. The problems are such that a wiser generation than ours might well be baffled. Industry geared to war must be geared to peace. Wartime conditions of management and labor must be altered to fit peacetime situations, and such changes will carry in their wake some uncertain solutions and many direful consequences. No sober-minded person can look into the immediate future in America without a shudder as he thinks of strikes and lockouts, of inflation and unemployment. Still, the solutions of these problems of physical change, great as they are, are not beyond the grasp of management and labor, of government and people. I am thinking of the more difficult problem of spiritual conversion that conditions everything else.

The problems commonly spoken of in the American scene—jobs, security, health and the like—would be relatively easy for an awakened and determined people to solve. The problems of a spiritual nature are more difficult—such as the conflict between our professions and our practices, the frequency with which antidemocratic forces rend the air and blacken the pages of the press, and the tendency of many people to deny the very existence of these problems. It is much easier to indulge in self-delusion than it is to face the fact of conflict that the very victims of narrowness and bigotry are often found in the camp of their natural foes. We need clarity and frankness in facing our social sins, and integrity and vigor in applying remedies.

A. Our Prewar State of Mind

In order to know what conversion we need in our thinking and feeling for the postwar period, we must take a look at our prewar and our wartime states of mind.

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In that now dim and distant prewar period we in America were, for the most part, in a state of ideological and emotional confusion and conflict.

We were theoretically committed to democracy, but we were actually practicing discrimination on a gigantic scale. This was incontrovertibly stated in *An American Dilemma*, in so far as the Negro is concerned. Similar volumes could elaborate and document this same dilemma in relation to other minorities, including Mexicans, Japanese Americans and Jews. In one breath we proclaimed the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights and quoted Jefferson and Lincoln with approval; in the next, spread rumors and insinuating jokes about minorities, advocated segregation and fostered discrimination.

We condemned other nations for their racism and at the same time cultivated the soil of an exclusive nativism that had all the earmarks of the worst in Fascism.

While proclaiming our democracy to the world we allowed the importation of Nazi and Fascist propaganda by the ton.

We had an immature conception of what our own democracy involved, and we were shockingly careless about protecting ourselves from infectious centers abroad.

The result of all this was that we were becoming fertile soil for the growth of Fascism. Well may we quake when we think of what would have happened in America if Hitlerism had triumphed in Europe—as it came very near doing! There were numbers of great and good people who were standing up for a broad and fine democracy and against the forces of intolerance, but anyone who thinks we were not near the abyss of bigotry knows neither the Zenith Cities nor the Main Streets of America.

By a war we did not want we were given another chance to make good our ideals.

B. Our Wartime State of Mind

While it would be easy to overidealize what happened to our minds during the recent state of war, we can safely say that at least on the surface, and to some extent at deeper levels, we experienced new commitments to democratic purposes. We pulled ourselves together and produced the greatest volume of goods in the shortest time ever known to any economy. After some controversy we agreed, at least in the higher circles of government and leadership, that discrimination in employment should be opposed. The Army and the Navy took some modest steps in the direction of fairness and justice towards minority groups. There was some shame over our treatment of Japanese Americans. All in all, there was improvement in our conduct toward minorities, and civil liberties were better respected than many of us had dared hope.

There was a slow but easily discernible growth in our comprehension of the human values that were involved in the world struggle. We were slow and terribly inadequate in taking advantage of wartime conditions for the advancement of democratic education. We never really tackled the task of developing tolerance and freedom in a way commensurate with the opportunity afforded by the war. This is particularly true of our failure to provide our armed forces with adequate information of what the war was all about.

Even so, there was a quickening of conscience in regard to our shortcomings. We were a bit embarrassed over the discrepancy between our standards for other countries and our practices at home.

Perhaps the most noticeable change in our state of mind was the development of a sense of belonging to the world. Our sons and daughters were scattered over the earth; the mails were loaded with communications from and to everywhere; places formerly remote seemed close

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at hand. We began to think that this is one world after all!

C. The Postwar State of Mind

Then came what is perhaps too optimistically called a state of peace, and we passed into the postwar world.

With the coming of peace there was a rather sudden letdown in our feelings about the world in general, as if we had just realized that perhaps we had gone too far away from the home base. There was a weakening of our resolve to build a world of justice as well as of peace. The Fascist-like underground began to operate in the open. Prewar ideology once more reasserted itself.

There was an upsurge of the old intolerance. Young people who had imbibed bigotry and prejudice at the home fireside began revolts in the public schools, and the halls of Congress again resounded with whoops of intolerance. I am not saying that the forces of liberty and justice and tolerance have capitulated; what I am saying is that such forces find themselves again compelled to take their places in the old battle line. I am afraid that most of us were about to forget how deep-rooted in the American scene are anti-Semitism, the sense of white supremacy and hundred-per-centism.

Moreover, the very gains that were made in equality of opportunity during the war have frightened the foes of freedom and caused them to redouble their efforts to restore the old ways. Those who have tasted new freedoms will never be content with less and will press for more. This in turn will cause more antidemocratic reaction; it appears to be difficult to break the vicious circle.

Let there be no mistake, the native bigots are willing if necessary to go down fighting; liberal forces, if they are to triumph, must be equally willing to go up fighting. Indeed, liberal forces should be more zealous than

the forces of intolerance, for we represent genuine democratic purposes, and they represent the really subversive elements in American life.

We can, I think, take some encouragement from the fact that there is a residue of wartime idealism. Good resolutions have some carry-over. New human contacts are not easily forgotten. Factory co-workers and foxhole comrades make a permanent impression on each other, regardless of color or nationality. You cannot fight for the liberty of other lands and wholly disdain liberty at home. You cannot consistently oppose the Hitlers of Europe and favor the Bilbos of America, for they are of the same pattern and are made from the same cloth.

D. A Peacetime Program

1. Perhaps our greatest need is a revival of belief in democracy as a way of living and as a mode of government. For a quarter of a century clever but disillusioned writers have been sniping at democracy and fostering totalitarian ways. Others of that ilk have fostered a sort of social Darwinism and raised doubts about freedom and equality. Democratic freedom makes this possible, and I would not want to restrain such persons, but we need within ourselves enough feeling for democracy, enough realization of its meaning and enough concern for its future to cause us to show up the fallacious nature of the opposition and to stand up for the full implications of democracy in all areas of life.

We need particularly to teach and exemplify democracy in our educational institutions. Educational leaders need to be less timid in building programs definitely designed to foster specific attitudes and qualities of a democratic nature. If we do not teach democracy we need not be surprised if grotesque ideas of social and political life are given harbor in the minds of our youth.

2. We need a broader conception of the meaning

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of democracy. We have too long thought of democracy in terms of process and not enough in terms of the ends to be served. We have harped on majority rule and failed to realize that a fundamentally wrong decision does not become right because a majority happens to favor it. There are presuppositions of democracy that cannot be changed by the ballot box. Among these presuppositions is the right to life, liberty and happiness regardless of race or national origin. This we need to take so seriously that anyone who violates it would be immediately branded as a subversive character.

3. We need a high and personal resolve to live democratically and to see to it that America grows democratically. We have never seriously committed ourselves to democracy. We are hardly aware of our democratic obligations until something happens that affects us or someone who is close to us. Wrongs that are suffered by members of the minority groups move us but little if the victims are a short way off from us.

We elect to office persons whose record is either bad or blank on the issue of race and nationality and trust to the chance effect of votes on their subsequent conduct. We should deliberately seek out persons for public office who are known to be dependable on such crucial issues. Only so can we strengthen democratic trends in *government and build solidly for the future.*

4. I would not want to bring this talk to a close without making it clear that I do not think the minority problems can ever be solved without our solving other problems of a social and economic nature. A cutthroat economy will always foster cutthroat relations between dissimilar groups. When motives of profit are dominant, the minority groups are the first to suffer in a collapse of the economy and the last to benefit in recovery. There is no doubt that the development of economy in which all are equally secure in the flow

Voices of Liberalism: I

of goods needed for a full life would take us a long way towards removing the pressure and hostilities that enter into the make-up of prejudice. With atomic energy now released there is no excuse for failure to build such an economy.

Likewise, I would not want it to appear that I think the American scene can be just and peaceful apart from a world scene in which there is justice between peoples and where an ordered peace prevails.

What I have been trying to emphasize is the priority of spiritual conversion. We in America need a conversion that will go deep into the lives of persons and into the heart of social institutions—a conversion from ego-centric interests to sociocentric purposes, from ethnic faith to human goals, from racial and national outlooks to a conception of a united humanity in a united world.

There is no one whose status is such that his opinions and conduct in regard to these matters are of no account. Every person should take it as his first duty to cleanse himself of prejudice and intolerance and then to join with others in an ever-widening and increasingly effective movement to make real the American dream of liberty and equality for all.

TOMORROW IS HERE

7

Tomorrow IS HERE

A FEW days after the attack on Hiroshima — while the newspapers were still full of burning headlines and breathless stories about the atomic bomb — there appeared near the bottom of one of the inside pages, one morning, the report that in our own Southland a cotton-picking machine had at last been perfected to the point where it could go into mass production. It was reported, also, that this machine, operated by one man, could do the work of *thirty pairs of hands*, and that in eighteen months there would be enough such machines to displace one and one-half million cotton pickers, many of whom would, of course, have to come north in search of new jobs.

Now, the connection between this cotton-picking machine and the atomic bomb is much closer than one would suspect from the difference in news space given them during that first week in August. They both symbolize the new age into which we have entered, and from which we can never return. The Atomic Age, it has been called — and the name may very well become fixed, for it is every whit as appropriate as the Old Stone Age, the

New Stone Age, the Bronze Age, or even the Renaissance, applied to other eras of human history.

Four characteristics of this Atomic age interest me this morning. I want to speak of them briefly, and then I want to draw a conclusion; the conclusion will have something to do with religion. It isn't really new, this Atomic Age; that is to say, it isn't new for our generation. For twenty-five years at least, and in many lands, scientists have been working in laboratories, trying to release and to harness the power of the atom. Our new age of science, of which the atom bomb is the final achievement to date, goes back much farther still.

Four hundred years ago it started, when Copernicus and Galileo began, slowly and uncertainly, in earnest to explore the great world of nature. Their work takes us into the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century science became more sure of itself, and in the nineteenth it produced the industrial era and the many social abuses Dickens exposed in his books. Only recently has it gathered momentum. The American Revolution was fought with an old-fashioned musket, and in the Civil War, eighty years later, a similar weapon was the main reliance in battle.

In producing the instruments of war, science made hardly any progress at all during those eighty years, but eighty years more bring us right into the middle of World War II: 1783 to 1863 — only a slightly improved muzzle-loader; 1863 to 1943, 1944 to 1945 — radar, the superfortress, the robot plane and the atomic bomb! This fact alone is enough to strike terror into human hearts. The human race has at last created its Frankenstein. Though the situation was not quite so terrifying before, it was bad enough. Moreover, now that the post-war era has set in, while other countries try to rise from the ruins of the war, frustrated by cold and hunger and destitution, our nation — outwardly untouched by the

destruction — is baffled by its very wealth. Our machines, our national resources, our man power, all are a source of embarrassment. We are at a loss to know what to do with the great mechanisms of production that science has built up around us.

During the last five years our power to produce the materials of life has increased fifty per cent. The cotton picker is only one of many labor-saving machines that the war years have brought into being. A labor research staff in New York City reports that America could return to its 1940 volume of production with nine million fewer men than were needed then. Moreover, once the cotton picker and other technical improvements swing into action we could release eight million more men. With seventeen million unemployed America could still produce the vast stream of goods of all kinds that poured from her factories just before the war began. To keep those seventeen million usefully on the job our country would have to produce an overwhelming abundance of food, clothing, homes, machines and uncounted thousands of commodities people either need or desire — a greater abundance, that, than men have ever known or dreamed! We must make some kind of choice: either that vast, unheard-of abundance; or a stalemate in production that might be compared with a return to the handicraft age of a hundred years ago.

Such a stalemate, or a return to a century that is past, is really not our choice at all. It would be just as meaningless to say, "Would to God the atomic bomb had never been invented," as it would be to say, "Would to God the Texas cotton picker had never been invented." It is certainly true of all our machine industry — as it is of the atomic bomb — that it has advanced so far ahead of our *social insight* and our *moral achievement* as to constitute a fearful menace to the whole human family.

The Emergence of a New Faith

We have not kept up with our machines, much less mastered them, for they may still master and destroy us. Even so, the machine and—in a larger sense—the whole new era of technology has its compensations, too. These are not only the symbol of evil and destruction; they are a symbol, also, of social advance. A new faith is being born, slowly and painfully, and a new vision. If one looks for it one can see it coming. The people have seen during this war—even the Australian Bushmen and the Chinese coolies and the social outcasts of India and the Negroes of America—that modern technology can produce material goods in enormous quantities. This one fact will haunt them day and night. They will talk about it in their homes and on the street corners and in their fields. In this country it will come home to them more clearly if and when the wheels slow down and men are laid off their work. It will not be as it was in other days when people resigned themselves to hopelessness. A new kind of faith will arise among people—the faith that with their hands and brains and a strong will they and their machines can produce and produce and produce. They know it can be done, for they have just seen it happen, and knowing it they will be less patient with failure. They will urge and demand and clamor. We are blind and deaf and dumb if we cannot see that they will not be resigned and that they will never cease day or night to find a way.

This (and this is the second characteristic of our age) will be a religious faith, or at least the beginning of such a faith, even though many religious leaders will not recognize it as such. They will call it “humanism” and “secularism” and “paganism,” and worse. They do not know that tomorrow has dawned, that all the old patterns and institutions have become obsolete by the things men have discovered about their world and have

done with them. Many people, not on Sunday, but on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday, will grapple with the vital issues of real religion, hardly realizing it, for they have yet to discover that the things most real in daily life are most truly the concerns of religion and that ultimately the language of life and the language of religion are one. The new age will teach us the hard way, if we cannot learn it otherwise, that if in the everyday world—the world of labor and industry and the professions—if there, on weekdays, man's dignity is not preserved, if there his understanding is dulled, his sensitiveness hardened, his aspirations stifled, then there is nothing the church can do to save him anyway.

The old institutions and forms of religion are geared to salvaging souls one by one. The new religion must still inspire individual lives and minister to them, but its real job of salvation is in the creation of a world atmosphere, nothing less, in which human life as a whole can find its meaning and its dignity.

That is humanism; it is also the new religious faith without which we can never be at home in the world. The man of the street, because of the science and the technology around him, has now seen what can be done. To be resigned to poverty and frustration may have been a virtue once; it is no longer a virtue. We must encourage people not to be resigned. It is not too much to say, therefore, that a new faith is being born in man. Day and night the vision of what he can have and become haunts him. He will not even think of it as a vision; he will think of it as a practical, human possibility; and he will know that that possibility rather than the ancient religious vision is the real thing and the clue to his salvation. If the Church does not take its stand there, beside that man, it will forsake him and betray him.

The New Battle Line of Our Age

Here, then, is the new battle line of our age or, per-

haps I should say, one sector of that battle line. There is another and, again, the atomic bomb has helped us understand it more clearly than before. Strangely enough, although the first use of atomic energy was in the service of mass destruction, the bomb is in a sense the symbol of the highest kind of co-operation. Twelve nations, no fewer, contributed to its development. These include Italy, which, unwittingly, sent over one anti-Fascist, Dr. Fermi, and Germany, which contributed two Jewish scientists by driving them out of her borders. In America the Negro press proudly announced that, at one time, of all the scientists working on the bomb, fifteen per cent were Negroes, including a young genius not yet twenty years of age.

This example of co-operation, though unusual, is not without precedent. Scientists must build on each other's labors and—figuratively speaking—stand on each other's shoulders. In this way alone can each new generation advance beyond the farthest reaches of those who experimented before them. Moreover, in the laboratories of the world, scientists labor at common problems, each contributing his findings to the larger stream of human progress. Also, when there is really no deliberate co-operation—when there is rivalry, in fact—the basic fund of knowledge is such that even rivals draw upon it for their common advance.

In Russia and in America, fifty years ago, wireless telegraphy was in process of being developed. If Marconi had not succeeded in Italy other inventors in other lands would have been heard from in a comparatively short time. This is no less true of the motion picture, the automobile and the airplane. Increasingly the problems of science and the discoveries are the common possessions of mankind. It is therefore fantastic to assume that America and Britain will long be able to guard the secrets of the atomic bomb, nor can we assume that our

safety lies in doing so. For the moment it is in our keeping—this awful power of life and death over the other nations of the world. Eventually they will develop the power too, and only if we can discover how it can be used co-operatively—as, co-operatively, it was created—can we hope to escape the destruction that was visited on Hiroshima. Mr. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, writing with what at first seems deliberate exaggeration and, on second thought, a definite possibility in our lifetime—says that, while American diplomats may continue to cherish the Monroe Doctrine or plan an inter-Allied defensive alliance, actually both are anachronisms. Says he:

The military science of World War Two, mass armies, battle fleets, networks of far-flung fortifications—all these have gone to join that of the Babylonians.

Mr. Mowrer moves from that conclusion to the next, namely, that the San Francisco Charter, already obsolete, must now be rewritten to provide for a world government under which national sovereignty must be given up—for “only a super-government can cope with a super-weapon.”

Religious Orthodoxy Is Not Equal to the Task

Well, there is a third characteristic of the Tomorrow that has dawned. The Atomic Age has destroyed forever the basic assumptions upon which orthodox religion—Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Mohammedan, Buddhist and Confucian—is based. In not one of these great ancient faiths can orthodoxy cope with the world concept that science now holds before our eyes. They cannot do it and survive. Their world outlook and their doctrines of salvation are just as obsolete as are the fighting armor and the lance of the medieval knight. The atomic bomb, has, of course, not changed the scientist's own conceptions; it would be more correct to say it has confirmed them. In all the twelve or more countries that

have contributed scientists to this project, there have long been endless experiments in an effort to split the atom. The foundation work looking towards that achievement was no secret; it was open knowledge to scientists everywhere; but the bombing of Hiroshima has dramatized before the world—and all mankind is the audience—the incredible resources of power for our common doom or our salvation. How awesome that this power should be demonstrated, not by the *largest star*, a million times the size of our sun, but by the *smallest components* that constitute the reality of the universe! The very light of the sun was dimmed when these tiny atoms were disturbed. More awesome, even, than that fact is the realization that they were not really exploded, but merely split in two, and that therefore only a fraction of their ultimate power was drawn upon. Moreover, it was uranium alone, of the ninety-two elements thus far discovered, that provided the atom for this achievement. What will future generations do *to* and *with* the atoms of these other ninety-one elements? Simply raising the question suggests the awful wonders of the universe with which mankind has now been called upon to deal.

Strangely and wonderfully are we constituted, and the age in which we are living has brought that realization home with an impact so powerful that even the man of the street has had his imagination stirred by the magnificence of it all.

I have often thrilled to the reading of the ancient prophets. They had insight and imagination which found expression in glorious literature. The wisest and best of them identified God with the *whole* realm of nature—sustaining them and arching over them—and the Psalmist, taking it all in in one mighty mystic experience, exclaimed, "God is a great God!" In some such sense modern man, contemplating the infinitely larger world as he has come to understand it—and infinitely

more mysterious as its living things and its atomic structure have been revealed to him—can match that explanation with Shelley's "the world's great age begins anew."

The age of science has not eliminated the mystery of the world—with every new advance in knowledge the mystery seems deepened. Nor does science destroy the glory and wonder of nature; it enhances these. Modern man, relieved of ancient man's fears and superstitions, can be moved and lifted by a more profound sense of oneness and wonder than ancient man could ever know. This is "naturalism," the other side of the same religious faith that has been called "humanism," to supplement it and round it out.

I come now to the fourth characteristic that marks this new, Atomic Age. It imposes a greater urgency on life, sets a faster pace, a stronger tempo. This may not always be so, but it is so now. Our age makes stern demands on us, and it offers us great rewards and bitter punishments. We may not like it; still, it is so. Every age of transition has been like that, only it is more true of this age than of any that has gone before. It demands *daring, decision, action, dedication*. We must imagine greatly, think decisively, act quickly—or all may be lost. Two years ago books were written to prove that our American Senate would defeat any world plan that might be placed before it. Their record was decidedly against the senators; yet, a little later, with only two dissenting votes, the Senate ratified the United Nations Charter, having already ratified the Bretton Woods agreement. Even the forces of reaction may at times be swept up in that fashion by the relentless forces of history. The world moved, and it literally dragged the American Senate out of its old moorings.

The Greatest of All Great Ages

There have been other great ages of history: the Age of Greece, with the liberation of men's minds, the open attack on hypocrisy and superstition, and the tireless examination of human values; the Age of Rome, when many nations and races, speaking different languages, were combined under a system of rough law and justice and security, unmatched for more than a thousand years to follow; the Age of the Enlightenment, when science made its beginnings and when the people of America and France and Poland made their bid for democracy—great ages, these, which thrilled and inspired peoples across the world.

Our age is built on them, has grown out of them and has inherited the strength and the weakness of them all. It has emerged at last with a vision of what life on earth can become. Of all the great ages of history, therefore, this is the greatest, and it may even exceed our high expectations if only, IF ONLY, we play our part well. Built on the successes and failures of the old world, coming out of them, this age more than any other is beginning to understand that it must not be bound to the old. In the economic realm, in the political realm, in the religious realm—in these, all—we must be liberals, now, and radicals, in the finest human sense.

All the old doctrines and institutions that are not sufficiently flexible and adaptable must be abandoned like the barnacle-laden ships they are. We know that people are moving without realizing they are moving, and swept along by the forces of the times, but we must know, too, that these forces must be given voice, direction, a goal. Moreover, we must be the voice, we must determine the direction, we must set the goal.

The common people, the masses of the people, know vaguely that this is a great new age. It would be more correct to say, perhaps, that they sense it. It is therefore

Tomorrow Is Here

the business of the Church to make their awareness of it explicit so that in the days ahead they will not forget. I always think of this in terms of our Church and its responsibility to this community and to the world. Here we must sing of the new tomorrow; here we must feel its power, thrill to its opportunities; here we must enter upon the great adventure that never ends.

With this faith in this new age it is true, as Hegel once said, that "nothing great is ever done unless it is done passionately."

CAN WE RESPOND PASSIONATELY TO THE DEMANDS OF OUR AGE?

FACING THE SUPREME TEST

8

FACING
the Supreme Test

IT HAS been said that Christianity emerged in history and took its place in the vanguard of civilization because the early Christians out-lived, out-thought and out-died people in the world about them. This is undoubtedly a half-truth, but it is the half that matters supremely, for whatever else led to the emergence, the survival and the spread of Christianity—whatever accident of history, whatever superstition, whatever belief or rite of transient worth, whatever aid of now-vanished earthly power—this is the inner truth we care about: it did produce men and women of such thought, such life, such power in death. This is the living grain within the transient husk, the thing man can never quite forget, to which he ever turns again with hope under the burden and before the perils of life's new necessities.

Unitarianism had its origin in a sincere attempt to recover this inward power of Christian faith manifest in life. It was a child of the Renaissance and the Reformation, perhaps more truly of the Renaissance with all the teeming forces of the new learning it let loose

upon the world. Michael Servetus was moved to his position by his first reading of the New Testament, his discovery of its simplicity and living power in contrast with the complexity, the outward show of form, the corruption, the worldly power, the dogma of priest and church. We are likely to forget that for centuries the Bible did not reach the people. They were given only the sacrament, the outward form, the dogma, the mediation of the priest. It is no wonder that the Reformation was so slow in coming, no wonder the Church, fearful of its power, kept the Bible while it could out of the people's hands. It is hard for us to realize, now that the Bible is so widely circulated, so little understood, that its open pages lay at the root of many a revolution. They moved the soul of Luther to the Reformation, and they moved the German peasant to revolt against his princes in the name of a new-found freedom when Luther lost his nerve. They moved Servetus.

Servetus read more deeply than the leaders of the Reformation, and for his reading Calvin burned him at the stake. What Servetus saw was that in order to understand this newly opened Bible it took all the powers of reason to shake the prejudices acquired through centuries of dogma. There is no substitute for the critical analysis of the living mind.

Dr. Earl Morse Wilbur in the first volume of his history of Unitarianism, which has just been published by the Harvard University Press, says that the movement has been characterized by "its steadfast and increasing devotion to these three leading principles: First, complete mental freedom in religion rather than bondage to creeds or confession; second, the unrestricted use of reason in religion, rather than reliance upon external authority or past tradition; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and usages rather than insistence upon uniformity."

There is no time to trace the long, fascinating and prophetic story of the Socinian and the Unitarian movement following the Reformation in Poland, Transylvania, Holland and Britain under such men as Faustus Socinus, Francis David, John Biddle, Joseph Priestley, James Martineau. Enough to say that it bore with it freedom, reason, tolerance and deep personal devotion as it sought the living power of faith manifest in the Bible.

Its character is amply shown in the rise of Unitarianism on our own American soil. Dean Fenn used to say that there was one passenger on every ship that brought colonists to New England whose name never appeared on the roll of passengers. His name was John Calvin, the same John Calvin who burned Servetus at the stake in Geneva in 1553. We cannot understand the development of Unitarianism in America unless we see it against the background of Calvinism with its doctrine of predestination, the total depravity of man, and the theocratic state.

When we come to the first great document of American Unitarianism, William Ellery Channing's Baltimore Sermon of 1819 on "Unitarian Christianity," we find ourselves on the same ground taken by Servetus nearly three hundred years before: "The Scriptures, when interpreted by reason, teach the doctrines held by Unitarians." There is no biblical evidence that Jesus held the doctrine of the Trinity, that he believed in predestination or the total depravity of man. Channing was not concerned to demolish the sincere religious beliefs of the orthodox. He had been reluctantly drawn into this controversy by their attacks. His one aim was to recover the pure simplicity of living faith as it shone through the pages of Scripture, to set forth once more in all of its clean strength the teaching of the sovereignty of God, the ethical monotheism that is the heart and soul of

Judaism as it is of Christianity, the nerve of civilization and high character. He was in earnest, and the intensity of his desire drove him to cut through all obscuring dogma to the clean center of man's direct relationship to the God of wisdom, justice, love. The Baltimore Sermon created a sensation, marked a turning point in the history of religious thought in the American pulpit, and has never been adequately answered.

Channing brought the full power of reason to bear upon the interpretation of Scripture. He had no doubt but that the content of Scripture was a greater thing than reason. However, reason is reason, and if it has this power to interpret Scripture why should it not turn directly to living experience? This was the voice of the New England Transcendentalists. Emerson's "Divinity School Address" of 1838 disturbed even Channing. It was a bugle call for those who would "acquaint men at first hand with Deity." Three years later, in 1841, Theodore Parker, who had been deeply moved by Emerson's call, preached his sermon on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" which shook the Christian church of New England to its very foundations. It was a full-blasted proclamation of "natural religion" in which he maintained that the basic truths of God, the Soul, the Moral Law "are native to the experience of man, and thus, independent of all supernatural disclosures in creed, or Bible, or Savior, are their own eternal witness."

These three addresses are the basic literature of Unitarianism in America. No literate Unitarian should have failed to read them. Indeed, they are essential to an understanding of the religious history of American culture.

Behind these three addresses there lay nearly two centuries of ferment in the American struggle for freedom, religious and secular, touching every phase of

American life. They were its bursting forth into the articulate thought of religion. Freedom, tolerance, reason, among the Unitarians reason now led the way. They were among the first to accept the higher criticism of the Bible. They had no quarrel with science, but eagerly welcomed each new discovery. The doctrine of evolution, which wrought such havoc among the orthodox and was so bitterly denounced by them, was only grist to the Unitarians' mill, and they fashioned of it one of their chief teachings, the progressiveness of history. Emerson and Parker had prepared the way for breaking down the provincialisms of Christianity and for the comparative study of all great religious faiths. They were ready to accept truth from whatever source it might come.

Meanwhile, Unitarians were pouring their creative energies into almost every channel of human endeavor. education, literature, science, social service, reform, politics, law. Thomas Jefferson laid the foundations for freedom in the structure of our civil state. Joseph Tuckerman, as his best biographer, a Roman Catholic, says of him, laid the foundations for modern social service. Humanitarian movements were founded by Unitarians for the care of the blind, the insane, the aged, the destitute, the infirm. Jefferson and Horace Mann prepared the way for universal education. The movement contributed the late Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the most distinguished judges in the history of our Supreme Court. From Jefferson to its triumphal conclusion, Unitarians were among the first leaders of the antislavery movement. The first peace society in America was started in the study of Channing. The Sanitary Commission, precursor of the Red Cross at the time of our Civil War, was headed by Henry Bellows, a Unitarian minister. Indeed, Unitarianism has come perilously near to the identification of religious faith and public service, of churchmanship and responsible citizenship in the civil

state. This is at once its strength, its virtue and its weakness.

We would not have it relax one iota its stress on public service and responsible citizenship in the civil state. These arise from its essential grasp of the inarticulate faith of freedom in its wholeness, for want of which, as Lord Acton pointed out, Socinus failed, disarming his own theory—for he was “a strict advocate of passive obedience” in the civil state. Lord Acton put this in positive terms:

The idea that religious liberty is the generating principle of civil, and that civil liberty is the necessary condition of religious, was a discovery reserved for the seventeenth century. Many years before the names of Milton and Taylor, of Baxter and Locke were made illustrious by their partial condemnation of intolerance, there were men among the independent congregations who grasped with vigour and sincerity the principle that it is only by abridging the authority of State that the liberty of churches can be assured. That great political idea, sanctifying freedom and consecrating it to God, teaching men to treasure the liberties of others as their own, and to defend them for the love of justice and charity more than as a claim of right, has been the soul of what is great and good in the progress of the last two hundred years.

This inarticulate principle of freedom’s wholeness the American Unitarians grasped. It was behind Jefferson’s Four Freedoms. It was behind the Bill of Rights. It was behind their service of the state, the amazing outflow of their energy in humanitarian action. They saw, or felt, behind freedom something of its wholeness in the structure of Being which they must body forth.

There was a reverse side to this emphasis, though, which they did not clearly see. These Unitarians were children of their age, the Age of Reason with its science in the first flush of new-found power, with its individualism and *laissez faire*, its humanitarianism, its relatively superficial doctrines of human nature, the greatest happiness for the greatest number, inevitable progress. Many of them were so impressed by the vitality of this

age, by the ability of men to unite in public service and programs of practical reform, regardless of their faith, that they neglected, even denied, the validity of those great formative truths and emotions that lay behind all these things, neglected the culture that had kept these formative truths and emotions alive.

In the words of Professor A. N. Whitehead:

For two thousand years philosophy and religion had held up before Western Europe the ideal figure of man, as man, and had claimed for it a supreme worth. Under this urge, Jesuits had gone to Patagonia, John Woolman had denounced slavery, Tom Paine had revolted against social oppression and against the doctrine of original sin. These Jesuits, these Quakers, and these Freethinkers differed among themselves. But they owed their emotions towards men, as men, to the generalizations of feeling produced by the joint influence of philosophy and religion.

The men who took these great generalized emotions for ultimate moral intuitions, with no regard for the great traditions of philosophy and religion that gave them birth, who built their working programs upon them as though they were self-sustaining, built without bottom. The sweeping advance of scientific theory confronted man with questions that intuition, unsupported, could not answer. Against their intuitions other men set other intuitions for which they claimed support of scientific fact—of nature red in tooth and claw and man a child of nature, of the struggle for the survival of the fittest and only the ruthless fit, of blood and soil and master race, of life as battle guided only by the lust for power. As Professor Whitehead says, "Unfortunately . . . the relations of the emotions to the rest of things refused to be ignored."

We know the imperative nature of this issue as we look back into the awful abyss towards which the world was lunging, on whose rim it is still pitched so precariously. Human nature, like nature, abhors a vacuum. When the gods go, the half-gods arise. Where men are

no longer called to be greatly good, it has been said, "there is left to the wild human spirit only the adventure of being enormously bad." Confronted by the barbarism of emerging tribal gods, with the bottomless abyss of conflicting national states whose claims are absolute, with the inertia and passive barbarism in ourselves which all but lost "the last best hope of earth," we are discovering once more the august meaning of one transcendent God, of man's need for one supreme moral sovereignty within the universe, for the clean austerity of that ethical monotheism which is our living heritage from Christian saint, Judaic prophet and Greek philosopher.

There is a second danger before us, deeply related to this. From the beginning we have been a church largely of the middle class and of the privileged. This is in part an accident of history, but it is reflected both in our faith and in our living of it. We are once removed from life's necessities and those who suffer them. Professor Whitehead suggests that when we think of freedom we are likely to confine ourselves to freedom of thought, of the press and of religious opinions. "This," he says, "is a thorough mistake. The massive habits of physical nature, its iron laws, determine the scene for the sufferings of men. Birth and death, heat, cold, hunger, separation, disease, the general impracticability of purpose, all bring their quota to imprison the souls of women and of men. . . . The literary exposition of freedom deals mainly with the frills. The Greek myth was more to the point. Prometheus did not bring mankind freedom of the press. He procured fire, which obediently to human purpose cooks and gives warmth. In fact, freedom of action is a primary need. In modern thought, the expression of this truth has taken the form of 'the economic interpretation of history.' "

Professor William Ernest Hocking makes a revealing

comparison between the liberty of John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx. Marx, he said, "knew well in his own person, as Mill never knew, the hard lot of the unpopular idea; yet he made no plea for costless toleration. He saw struggle as an aspect of life, a necessary aspect. . . . He [felt] the movement of history about him as a great argument in which the thinker fights, suffers, creates." I am no Marxian, but here is a realism, a sense of identity with suffering men as they face the necessities of life, a sense of imperative social change which begets initiative and nerves the will to act, that profoundly moves my heart. If we are to share in the articulation of a faith sufficient to nerve freedom we must attain this sense of identity with the suffering of the people, making their lot our own, we must reckon more profoundly with suffering, with the depth of evil, with necessity, with tragedy, with the fellow feeling that comes to men as they face things together. We must belong to them, as we and they belong to God, and find His ways of healing and release through new creation in all of us.

The Unitarian faith now stands before the throne of a transcendent judgment. It has won the right to apply reason in religion to the full limits of its power. It has access to truth, to vision, to the power of spirit from whatever source they may arise, without barrier, without let, without hindrance. It has a glorious heritage. No other faith is more closely identified with the articulation of freedom. No other faith is so closely woven into those forces that have shaped American democracy now risen to its highest power, "the last best hope of earth," as it confronts an age of global civilization. We are bone of its bone and sinew of its sinew.

Unitarianism now faces its supreme test: its capacity to fuse these forces into one comprehensive faith of depth, integrity and power to nerve freedom in its

wholeness. It can do so only if it dares to reaffirm in terms of growing thought and cleanly searching faith the ethical sovereignty of one transcendent God. It was this faith that brought it into being and bore it to its heights of power. It is this faith that links us deeply with our greatest living heritage from ancient Palestine and Greece. It has nerved civilization through successive generations, and at the very summits of life has nerved men to surpass the limitations of mankind. No lesser faith can nerve freedom in its wholeness, can make men truly brothers, can bind us into the bundle of life with all sorts and conditions of men in ways of mutual fulfillment. No lesser faith can nerve and sustain the structure of a just social order amid the teeming forces of this roaring modern world. No lesser faith can reckon with the dark depths of evil, suffering, necessity and loss, can overcome and heal them with the promise of greater life proceeding, and give positive meaning to world history.

The time has come to choose. Then choose with single-minded clarity and power.

RELIGION DEMANDS FREEDOM

9

RELIGION DEMANDS

Freedom

RECENTLY a representative of our liberal fellowship declared that freedom was not a proper gospel. He spoke in our own building. I declare that freedom is not only the *only* gospel of any serious importance, but the only objective truly worthy of man's religious effort and strength. It is the genius of our fellowship that two voices, neither with less authority than the other, can present views that are thus opposed, and still expect men to find reason and sufficiency in our faith. It is only because we do have freedom that we are able to resolve such inconsistencies among ourselves and among those who are our leaders.

Freedom is my gospel, whatever other ministers may propose. Freedom is not only my gospel, but it is my contention that freedom is the utmost essential to the on-going of man. It is the highest ideal to which we may give our energies and the most worthy achievement to which we can aspire. It is far ahead of any other hope of "salvation" for the very good reason that only freedom will permit every thinking man in every age to contribute to the development of more acceptable ideas of salvation. If we have difficulties in considering the impor-

tance of freedom as an aim for all life, we have only to turn to any of the instances of dictatorship, in whatever form, to find evidence of the immediate disintegration that sets in when a people is limited to the authority of an individual or of a small group of individuals. If one mind is making all the decisions for the church, then the church cannot become more effective or more wise than he who is its final authority. If one mind is leading a government, that government cannot grow beyond the interests or the intelligence of that one person. The church that through the centuries was so successful in retarding most of the nobler efforts of men, scientists and scholars in all categories of thought, was an authoritarian church. The government that was recently the most serious threat to the world—not merely because its armies were powerful and threatened to enslave man physically, but because its idealism was dictatorial and threatened to enslave man's mind—was not a government of freedom, but one of bondage.

Every form of enslavement has been a handicap to progress. Every Napoleon, every czar, every creed offered as a final statement of man's faith and every acceptance of infallibility in every field of thought have been handicaps to man, however much they may have seemed to help in the solution of an immediate problem. A Mussolini made trains run on time by enslaving the people, but he also made the world run a thousand years behind time. Freedom in its best form would, of course, become anarchy or, to use a better term, utopia. The speaker who rejected freedom as a gospel insisted that no effective improvement in the social relationships of men was possible. He was free to say that, but we are free to prove him wrong, and unless we do prove him wrong all our religious and social efforts are vain. If the world cannot be made better, then it must become worse, for history never has permitted a static condition in the

Religion Demands Freedom

affairs of men. If there is one thing certain, it is change. It remains for us to determine whether the change shall be for good or for ill.

It is true that with the development of freedom there will be a decrease in the importance of the church, but the church's noblest task is to eliminate the reason for its existence. When we educate society to the point where it has no further need for our teachings, then we shall have done our job. Our job is unfinished until that time comes. Already we find a vast difference between the concept of the church among intelligent people and the notion of its importance among the less well informed. Many cults and many more important religious efforts insist that the minister speaks with authority and that the people are bound to obey his utterances. In this church I deny any intention of speaking for you at any time. I speak only *to* you. If I speak for you there is no further need for your mental processes, and that is the worst tragedy that can befall man or any part of man.

People who read history, and especially the history of religion, know full well that religion was born because something was needed to free man from the enslavement of ideas about the futility of life and the overwhelming power of hostile forces. Man was enslaved to ideas of his own helplessness. Ecclesiasticism has too often exploited this tragic condition, whereas religion in its truest form has always sought to alleviate it. Man has also been enslaved by his environment, but today the evidence is strikingly clear that he is making definite progress towards freeing himself from environmental servitude. He has already removed the third factor of his enslavement, which is enslavement to other individuals.

It was Jesus who said "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We have not always been aware of the mighty importance of this statement; its

honest appraisal reveals the highest attainable end and the noblest usable means for man's effort. Freedom is the end, and truth is the means; this puts freedom on a higher plane than truth in the mind of Jesus. Of course the two are inseparable—truth and freedom—for one leads to the other and the other is impossible without the one, and since the combination is the greatest hope of man it would seem well for man to make it his gospel and to work toward it with the zeal of a convert and the courage of a martyr.

This concept of freedom is bound up in a statement of an earlier religious thinker who said, "Love God and live as you please." For him God was surely not less than truth. He simply meant that if one was aware of the best life could afford, aware of all the virtues man has associated with the idea of God, one might have perfect freedom, for while loving this symbol of all virtue one would not be tempted to do things contrary to good. Loving God would make a man free to engage in every constructive purpose, free to co-operate in every worthwhile enterprise, free to live as unselfishly as his knowledge of God allowed, free to understand the powerful implications of life not for himself only, but for everyone. Is any argument needed to persuade you that laws were made for slaves and not for free people? The police in our community do not restrain the free, they restrain those enslaved to passions, those bound by ignorance of the right, those whose selfishness controls them and whose prejudices determine their actions and their thoughts. As policemen restrain the enslaved in any given community, so the United Nations Organization is intended to restrain those countries bound to selfish national pride, or lust for selfish power, or helpless ignorance of the possible security that is in store for all people when fears and pride and lusts are removed from international dealings. The United Nations Organiza-

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tion is a restraint today not to defeated enemies, but to the uncertainty of powerful friends whose enslavement to national traditions is clearly apparent everywhere. Who can argue that force encourages freedom? We know, if we know nothing else, that compulsion in any form is the antithesis of freedom and a constant deterrent to its realization.

If the peoples of the world should at once begin to make an investment in enlightenment, in an honest search for the truth as it relates to every human experience, in the same way they invested resources and brain power in the accumulation and perfection of arms, the world would be on its way to freedom. Freedom comes with truth, and truth comes with a search. Can you imagine our nation starting a bond drive for education? Can you picture the day when we shall all set aside from our living such a portion for education as we have been using for war? The fact that we do not do this is not sufficient argument that we cannot do it, or that the idealism is too high, or that we will not do it; it is only an argument that we have not yet done it. When we do begin to make the investment, we must also improve the education, for it must be an education for truth, not for national glory or militaristic apology or religious indoctrination. This is a very important reason why religion must demand freedom, for as long as its demands are shaped by its own selfish institutional continuance it cannot demand education for truth or even successfully advocate "bonds for education."

In all this we must remember that religion's demand for freedom is not, essentially, a demand for mere physical freedom of mobility. Men have been in prison who were at the same time much freer than many outside, freer even than their very jailers. The classic example is Jesus himself. Who will say that he was free to do what he pleased, or to go where he pleased, or to speak

as he pleased? But after he had been mobbed by his contemporaries and hanged to a cross he was still free enough to say to his God: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Few men in all history have enjoyed such freedom as that. Jesus was not a mental captive; he was not bound to prejudices or to hatreds or to a selfish concern for his own doctrine. He was no slave to the desire for revenge, no slave to fear or to pride or to any of the cruel ties that keep the most of mankind in slavery. The church that grew in his wake was never as free as he. The burning of Servetus is our own best known example of the enslavement of the church to its own selfish ends, but there are so many others we dare not try to enumerate them. Thus for the church I covet freedom from these base desires more than I covet any other success. Religion demands this freedom.

Religion demands freedom for itself as much as for man, for if it is enslaved to doctrines or to rites and rituals and traditions it has no hope of encouraging the freedom of man. If the church is jealous of its doctrine, of its power, its wealth or its position, then it has defeated already the purpose for which it exists. Jealousy is the sum total of misunderstanding and selfishness; it is born of fear and falsehood. When we demand freedom, we must include the freedom of anyone to reject even freedom itself if he choose, for our own faith in truth must be strong enough to provide an unqualified assurance that, though the doctrine be denied today, it will find its way into the hearts and minds of honest and thoughtful people tomorrow. Our faith must convince us that with the increase of understanding there will come an acceptance of truth without compulsion, except the compelling force of reason. No faith grounded in fear is free, and no faith that is less than free is constructive. Man was born in fear and confusion but,

as fear has gradually been overcome and as confusion has gradually cleared, the very nature of God has changed to conform to the new discoveries of truth and freedom, and the hope of man, the salvation for which he longs, is as changed as his conception of God.

Salvation cannot be other than the lifting of a people from an inferior life to a superior one. I do not mean that part of humanity shall be superior to another part, but that all of humanity shall be superior to anything presently known or presently enjoyed. For this reason I reject utterly any salvation that is out of this world. Let men speak of "getting right with God"; I have no more idea of what they mean than they do. Getting right with an otherworldly spirit is a mystery that some may consider a legitimate achievement, but it is hardly an effective instrument in the human struggle today, and for the very good reason that it is wholly unrelated to that struggle. We must realize that man is important; God has been important through the ages only as he has been in some way helpful to man. If the help he provided in an earlier day was only the hope of an escape, it was still help that justified his existence for many people. No man has long worshiped any form of deity that was not helpful, and the forms of deity have changed as often as more effective forms could be imagined. It is the mind of man that has kept him in the upward way and moved the whole life process towards what we call civilization. If you doubt this, by all means consider the forms of life not controlled by man's mind. Consider vegetation: Only the part that man controls is profitable for any effective use; uncontrolled, it grows wild and becomes a handicap to all our hopes. Consider animals: Those that have been domesticated are fit for many uses; those left untouched by the human mind are wild and dangerous and destructive. Consider man himself in his thoughtlessness, his ignorance and his confusion;

let his passion overcome his mind and we have wars, and if war has ever demonstrated the best that is in man then we are of all creatures most miserable.

The chief function of mind is to discover truth, and the function of truth is to free mankind. Thus religion demands freedom for individuals in order that they may continue without interruption the search for knowledge and the desperate effort to improve their ways. Religion demands freedom for itself that it may encourage man's individual freedom—but remember that it comes to an end with the establishment of a dogma, no matter what the nature of the dogma or how well it may fit an immediate need. In science, in industry, in social relationships, in religious thought, freedom ends with any effective claim of finality. Freedom is a gospel, the most powerful of all gospels and the most necessary.

Let him who would save himself embrace a gospel of personal salvation and establish a relationship with a personal God. Let him who would be less than free bind himself to a dictator, in his religion or in his secular life, morally, mentally, physically. But let him whose concerns are as wide as humanity and whose hopes are for all men everywhere in the world dedicate himself to truth and to freedom for all. In freedom for all there is salvation for all, in all the ages, in all places, in all circumstances. I cannot be sure that this dedication to truth is a better hope than some other; I can only be sure that it is the gamble I will make with my own life. If I cannot insist that you do as I do, I can insist that there is reason for believing that until one knows the truth one cannot be free. You cannot know the truth until you find it, and you cannot find it but by searching. Until it is found man will be cumbered about with enslavements of the mind and the body and all the attendant miseries of groping in darkness. With its discovery will come freedom.

ON HOW TO CONDUCT OUR LIVES

10

ON HOW TO CONDUCT
Our Lives

IT HAS been said by somebody somewhere that nine-tenths of religion is good conduct. Emerson wrote a whole book on what he called "the conduct of life," and religion runs all through that book like water in a stream. So I am talking along religious lines when I speak on how to conduct our lives—on behaving ourselves, on doing good and not evil, on living with self-respect and dignity and courage—but I am not going to confine myself to religion, for I believe that there are many factors in the problem of right living. Religion suffuses the whole, but the whole has aspects that call for separate consideration.

The first rule of good conduct, it seems to me, is to be a good citizen—by which I mean, in this case, to obey the laws of city, state and nation. Laws and morals are not necessarily identical, as Plato pointed out many centuries ago. Thus things that are illegal are not invariably immoral. I encountered an interesting illustration of this fact at my summer home this past season. A year ago, on our beach, everybody suddenly began to gather sea moss. A market for this product had been created by the war, and it was possible to sell it, in bushel bas-

kets, at a profitable figure. So summer visitors, along with the "natives," began to pick! It soon became apparent that some of these natives, our neighbors who live there all the year round, did not like this competition. They saw no reason why the summer residents should amuse themselves by gathering up the sea moss for money, which they presumed the "city people" did not need. Last winter they went to the legislature and had a law passed which provided that moss pickers on the shore must have a license and that a license could be granted only to regular residents of the state. So what was legal last year was illegal this year! The change, of course, involved no moral question of any kind; gathering sea moss on the shore remained as innocent an activity as ever.

In the same way it is evident that things that are immoral are not always declared to be illegal. I would cite gambling as an illustration. Here is an immoral practice, calculated to break down the moral fiber of the best of us, that is not only not illegal, but under certain prescribed conditions is actually protected and cultivated by the law. Go to a race track in this state, and you will find a system, carefully established, under which you can bet on the horses, and the state incidentally make a profit on the stakes you lay down. "Pari-mutuel betting" it is called. Every protection of the law is placed about this type of gambling, but it remains as immoral as gambling has always been. So I say that what is immoral is not necessarily illegal, as what is illegal is not necessarily immoral. The two do not inevitably go together.

What we have in the law, as we call it, is a set of rules and regulations by which we agree, for purposes of mutual convenience and safety, to live together. Most of these rules and regulations cover matters that are flatly immoral, such as the statutes against theft, forgery, libel and murder in its various degrees, but in enacting these

statutes we consider not so much the moral as the practical aspects of the problem. Experience has taught us that we simply can't live together except on a basis of agreement that certain things shall and shall not be done. Society would not stand up for a single hour unless it was clearly understood that there were rules of social conduct that must be obeyed. These rules run all the way from driving on the right side of the road to not bearing false witness against one's neighbor, from not spitting on the sidewalk to not taking a human life. Some are trivial, many are commonplace, a few are momentous, but all are central to the pleasure, convenience and security of our day-by-day existence. This life of ours would not be worth the living if we did not all of us covenant together to recognize these rules which we proceed to build into the august body of the law. To obey the law, therefore, becomes the first element of good conduct. This is the first road we must follow in the pursuit of the good life. The good man is the good citizen. He plays the game with his fellow citizens and therewith establishes his virtue.

Good conduct, however, does not always mean obedience to law. There is a discrepancy between the legal and the moral, the illegal and the immoral, as I have already pointed out. Thanks to this discrepancy there come occasions when to obey the statute law with absolute fidelity leads straight to violation of the moral law, for more than once society has been curiously persuaded to legalize a course of conduct so outrageous that the good man must rebel against it, must simply refuse to go along! There is a higher law, in other words, than statute law, and that is the law of right; a higher court than the court of the state, and that is the court of conscience. When the two conflict, it is the lower and not the higher that must yield.

The most famous illustration of which I can think is

the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. This law was passed under the whiplash of the slave oligarchy of the South, to legalize the capture and return into bondage of slaves who had escaped. It organized the whole power of the nation to hunt and seize these unfortunate fugitives and made it a crime for any man to interfere. What were the abolitionists of the North to do in the face of a law like that? What was any man to do who believed in freedom and that America was rightly the land of freedom? It was impossible to conform to such a law which outraged every sense of decency, every principle of honor, and every ideal for which this nation had ever lived. On the Sunday following the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law, the great Theodore Parker stood up in his pulpit in the city of Boston and read the law, and then said solemnly in the ears of all the people that he would not obey it. Nay, he went further and declared that he would deliberately seek to make occasion to disobey it and challenged the officers of government to take due notice of his intention. To those brave words unnumbered thousands of hearts in the northern states responded with a loud amen.

We have a similar instance in war, in which certain persons will no more participate today than they would participate yesterday in slavery—the Friends, for example. The Friends insist that war is wrong, a violation of God's law for humankind. They declare on the one hand that it is forbidden to kill our fellow men and on the other hand that it is commanded to love and serve them, even our enemies among them. From this point of view, there is absolute contradiction between the military law of the state and the spiritual law of the soul. Such contradiction can be resolved only by obedience to the law of the soul. This is so clear, to any people who believe in freedom, that in our day we have written it into law that conscientious objectors to war,

as we have learned to call them, Friends and non-Friends alike, shall be specifically exempted, without prejudice or punishment, from bearing and using arms. Whether we like it or not, we have come to see that there is a sacred principle involved here. The New Testament puts it in eight words: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

So there is nothing absolute in this matter of obeying the laws of the state. There come occasions when these laws must yield to the higher conscience of mankind, until they are revised in accordance with that conscience. The supreme example is that of a tyrannical state, where a country is occupied by alien rulers, the people repressed and exploited by conquerors and all freedom is thus denied. In such a case it becomes a primary duty to disobey the law and defy the government—as Mahatma Gandhi has again and again proved in India. But in a free state, where the people are ruled by officers of their own choosing and law represents the sanction of the public will, it is the duty of a good man, to the very extremity of conscience, to be a law-abiding citizen. This is playing the game, as I have said. It is each man contributing his part to sustain the whole. Exceptions to this rule are few and involve only the highest ideals of the spirit. They give no justification for evading the income tax, defying the liquor laws or patronizing the black market. In the ordinary business of the day and in our regular relations with our fellows, it remains a first principle of conduct to obey the law.

We turn, now, to a second principle of good conduct. This is the principle of good manners, which Emerson calls "the happy way of doing things."

It is perhaps not strange that we find it difficult to appreciate in this country the value and importance of good manners, for we have always been short of this commodity. Professor Walter B. Pitkin, in his recent

autobiography, declares that Americans "have no manners and want none." Dickens found this to be true a century ago when he sacrificed his great popularity in America to an attempt to reform our manners. Since his day we have undoubtedly made some improvements. Thus, Dickens recounts, in his *American Notes*, that in the pews of our churches he read placards asking the worshipers not to expectorate upon the floor. Today we have to place such signs only in subways and other public conveyances. This is progress! We are still, on the whole, though, a careless and vulgar people, not because we are corrupt, but only because we are ignorant of the place good manners hold in the moral economy of society.

Manners, according to Emerson again, are "minor morals." This may be so! There have been good men, I have no doubt, who have got along without them. But, minor or not, they are a part of morals and therefore not to be regarded lightly or unadvisedly, for however superficial, at least in appearance, they touch in essence the whole integrity of a man's life. Good manners are a matter of good taste. By this I mean that there are certain things a good man will not do. He will not eat with his knife or sit in his shirt sleeves. He will not come to the table unwashed, or wear clothing, however simple, that is unclean. He will not chew gum in public, or dress conspicuously, or talk noisily. He will not push his way through a crowd or steal a place in a waiting line. He will not be rough to children or discourteous to servants. He will not be proud, self-seeking or self-assertive. On the contrary, he will be invariably kind, patient, considerate, compassionate, humble, especially in his relations with the weak and helpless. He will follow the Golden Rule, and thus emulate the Nazarene who has been described as "the first true gentleman."

It is amazing, when you come to think of it, how far

this standard of good taste, or good manners, ranges through the area of human conduct. It begins with matters of merely trivial significance, but before it gets through has reached to the profoundest problems of experience. Let me show you what I mean

One of the idiosyncrasies of my life is an antipathy to the use of first names, or nicknames, in ordinary human intercourse. This is a part, I suppose, of my New England upbringing. In my family, for example, nicknames were never used. I had the same name as my grandfather, and it would have been natural to call me "Johnny," to avoid confusion, but as a matter of fact the usage was invariably "Big John" and "Little John." In my school life, from grammar school clear through college, the boys called one another by their last names and not their first; it was Holmes and Harris and Smith, not Jack or Harry or George. I have come to feel there is more than training involved in this practice. Behind the training, deep-bedded in the New England conscience, is a recognition of the dignity of personality—that no person is to be treated lightly, lest he be regarded lightly, but always seriously and with reverence. It is from this point of view that I was never able to reconcile myself to the late President's habit of calling everybody by his first name or by some casual nickname. It made no difference whether a person was as old as the Hon. George W. Norris or as young as Mr. Thomas Corcoran, whether he was an intimate friend or a chance acquaintance, whether he was a colleague in the government or a political hanger-on, Mr. Roosevelt still called him Ben, or Bill, or Tom. After all those years it still gave me a shock to see a letter from the President addressed to some senator or justice of the Supreme Court or distinguished citizen, with the first name as the method of approach. I have no right to criticize Mr. Roosevelt, for he had as much right to his way of doing things as

I have to mine, but I must confess, none the less, that such practice seems at least undignified in the presidential office and, at the worst, reflects a certain familiar and even patronizing habit of mind that has grave dangers.

I am reminded, of course, of the practice of the Friends in using the first name, along with "thee" and "thou," in their address to one another. But this has a place in the Friends' ritual, if I may so express it, which has a very special spiritual significance of its own. Much more forcibly am I reminded of the practice of the Southern whites in insisting upon addressing all Negroes by their first names, and thus refusing them the dignity of their family names as prefixed by the titles of "Mr." and "Mrs." I think of the cry of the Negro physician to his white friend in Miss Lillian Smith's great novel, *Strange Fruit*: "It would be such a little thing to call us mister. It wouldn't take a penny to do that. It oughtn't to shame you much, to do that. . . . It's things like that that drive us crazy . . . the little things that work through the skin . . . to the heart." It's this that makes me insist that this free and easy use of first names is bad manners. It's a vulgarism that cheapens personality and thus, in the very name of democracy, denies democracy. Good taste demands dignity, and dignity is founded upon mutual self-respect. Keep to the last names—unless there is some very personal and intimate reason for the first!

All this, you will agree, is a rather trivial illustration of good manners, but there are enormously important illustrations as well. I remember, for example, in that remarkable autobiography, *The Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, by Mr. Albert J. Nock, a discussion of a certain case of adultery, in which a famous man was charged with the betrayal of the wife of one of his closest friends. Mr. Nock narrates how the case was brought into court and under moral and religious discussion, and protests

against this. "The courts of law, religion and morals," he writes, "were not courts of competent jurisdiction. Their sanctions were of debatable validity in the premises. The court of undebatably competent jurisdiction would be the court of taste and manners. Whatever law, religion and morals may or may not say, the best reason and spirit of man resents adultery as execrably bad taste, and from this decision there is no appeal. Moreover," he continues, "the three incompetent courts could not take proper cognizance of the fact that [the two men in question] were intimate friends. The court of taste and manners could and would; and a properly enlightened social resentment would be accordingly enhanced, for all but the very lowest of bad manners exempts the wives of one's friends. . . . What is due to common propriety and decency"—that is the question!

One may or may not agree that adultery is not a moral question. I think that it is—the seventh commandment is in precisely the right place—but we must all agree, with Mr. Nock, that the standard of good taste is here involved. This is a perfect illustration of how far and deep this standard may go, affecting the whole range of our personal life. It all comes down to the equivalent, at least, of a moral law: that there are certain ugly, vulgar, shameless things that a good man will not do. Good manners, says Emerson are "victories of character," and therewith a part of all good conduct.

We have identified, now, two aspects of good conduct, namely, obedience to civic law and conformity to standards of good taste. This brings us to a third rule, which has been indicated by the whole trend of our discussion. I refer to the rule of morals as laid down in the principle of duty.

The origins of the moral law are in dispute, whether they be human or divine. I am not going to discuss this question! Suffice it to say that from the beginning of

time, all over the world, man has been working at the problem of how to live—how to live safely, happily, prosperously. By the familiar process of trial and error, he has discovered that certain kinds of conduct are wise and certain other kinds unwise. There are some modes of action, in other words, that seem right in the sense that they bring about satisfactory results, and other modes of action that seem wrong in the sense that they throw everything into confusion and disaster. So important has seemed this distinction between what is wise and unwise in human conduct, what is right and wrong, that men have formulated commandments, or codes of law, covering the things that shall and shall not be done. These commandments or codes of moral law have seemed so august that man has persuaded himself they were divine in character and given by the hand of God, as the two Tables of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The remarkable thing is that, in all parts of the world, even in the early days when there was no intercommunication of ideas, men agreed as to what these commandments ought to be. Experience taught just about the same things to men in the arctics and the tropics—that it was good to tell the truth, to be honest, to keep a contract, to fulfil a promise, to respect property and personality, to be generous and kind and loving. "This do," said Jesus, "and thou shalt live!" Experience also taught that it was fatal in the long run, alike to the individual and the tribe, to lie, to steal, to rape, to kill, to covet. "The wages of sin," said Paul, "are death." This was a guide to conduct that came to be known as the moral law—the eternal "yea, yea" and "nay, nay," as Carlyle expresses it—and all the judgment of men and the power of society have been put behind the vindication of this law.

Now, it does not make very much difference, it seems to me, whether the origin of this law is natural or super-

natural, in revelation or in experience. The important thing is that there is a *law*—a law that marks the absolute distinction between right and wrong. This law, whether human or divine, is inwrought in the very fiber of the universe. It is as much a part of reality as the physical laws that have been made so familiar in our time by science. We understand today, beyond all possibility of contradiction, that we ignore or defy, i.e., disobey, these physical laws at our peril. No one questions the authority of the law of gravitation. In the same way, we must understand that there are moral laws—precepts of human conduct—that we similarly disobey at our peril. No one may safely question the authority of the law of love. What this law may mean in any particular circumstance may be hard to determine; what to do in this or that combination of events is frequently a riddle that seems impossible to solve; but the law of love still stands, and to find the meaning of that law, and to do it with all our mind and heart and soul and strength—this is the essence of good conduct.

All this would seem to be elementary, yet there are those in our time, and they seem to be a majority, especially in the younger generation, who scoff at this idea of duty and declare that there is no such thing as the moral law. It is their contention that there are no longer any absolutes. Everything in this world is relative: a course of conduct that is good today may be bad tomorrow, or right in this place and wrong in that. When you ask "Relative to what?" you are answered, "Relative to yourself, to the personal and particular interests of each separate individual. We must follow our impulses, gratify our instincts, obey our intuitions." Thus has a whole generation abandoned the moral law and given itself over to the pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction. I frequently sit on Mr. A. L. Alexander's Mediation Board and listen to the complaints of people who are

in all sorts of difficulties. As they file before me, it seems as though they were always saying one of three things in justification of their conduct: "I can take care of myself"; or "I want to live my own life"; or "I don't see why I shouldn't have a good time."

It would be easy to point out the fallacies of this point of view, but what can I say that will match the testimony of a world that is now so tragically engaged in passing judgment upon its own sins? Here is a society that has tried consistently and persistently to live without any objective standards of morality, as other societies, in other ages, have tried, consistently and persistently, to do the same thing. The result is once again disaster, in this case the greatest disaster man has ever known. When all other causes of the collapse of our world have been assessed—causes economic, political, social—there remains the one unescapable and insuperable fact that we have undertaken to live in defiance of the moral law, and it can't be done! Here is an industrial system that has deliberately acted upon the principle—if we can call it a principle—of getting while the getting is good, only to pass from one depression into another deeper and darker depression and to end at last in the catastrophe of a great war. Here is a social system, based upon the idea of competition, struggle and vicious rivalry, that is perishing in a welter of prejudice, hatred, race discrimination, class consciousness and oppressed and exploited minorities. Here are nations, proud and powerful and independent, who never tell the truth, never keep a promise, never live up to the terms of a treaty, repudiate their debts, betray their alliances, seek their own advantage, serve their own interests, rely always on force and violence and fear, and who now have ended it all in one vast orgy of slaughter and destruction. Here is a civilization that has organized itself in terms of capitalism, imperialism and militarism

and is now writhing in the throes of its own death agony. Here are men and women, more particularly young men and women, passing before the Mediation Board, who have never recognized a moral obligation in their lives and are amazed that they are tumbling into disaster and disgrace.

What else can they expect? Why should they think any other fate can overtake them? "Things are what they are," said Bishop Butler, "and the consequences will be what they will be." It's the working of the moral law. This law is inexorable. It accepts no excuses, pardons no errors, forgives no sins. There is no good conduct but moral conduct. The law of Arthur's court, in the ancient time, was the one true law: "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King!"

This brings us to our final consideration of good conduct, which is none other than religion.

Don't be afraid that, at this late hour, I shall enter upon any lengthy disquisition upon the meaning of religion—more particularly its differentiation from morality. There is a distinction here that is fundamental, one admirably suggested by Matthew Arnold's great statement that "religion is morality touched by emotion." I would go farther, and I think deeper, and emphasize the universal aspects of religion in that widening of our lives beyond the confines of the individual to the whole great body of humanity. Religion begins when we are primarily concerned not with ourselves but with others, and it does not end until it encompasses the whole great family of humanity in relation to the vast reality of God and his Kingdom.

My concern here is not with theory but with practice. I am talking about good conduct and what religion contributes to that end. Instead of discussing any doctrines of religion, which would take us far afield, I propose at this point simply to commend to you the great

teachers and exemplars of the religious life, ask you to note how they lived and suggest that you try, so far as in you lies, to go and do likewise.

Among all the classic exponents of religion, I regard Jesus as supreme. He is also to us the most familiar. So let me bid you turn to the record of his life and study the pattern of his days. Do not bother with the things that have unfortunately attracted the most attention and are, as a matter of fact, of the least consequence—the wonder stories, the miracles, the sensational and largely mythological events, which lift Jesus out of the world of everyday life and make of him some god or demigod. Turn, rather, to the commonplaces of the narrative. Take Jesus as a man among men, a simple artisan of Galilee who “went about doing good.” Follow him as he goes from place to place in the company of great numbers of human beings as simple and natural as himself. Then watch how he trusts and loves these common folk, how he pities and tries to save them, how he seeks out the sick and the imprisoned and the poor, how he aligns himself with the exploited and the downtrodden, how he forgives sins and tries always to heal and make whole again, how he refuses to hate even his enemies or use violence against them, how he fights injustice, denounces oppression, opens his arms to all men as his brothers and seeks ever to make them one in God who is their Father. Then listen as he tells the story of the Good Samaritan, the tale of the Prodigal Son, the parable of the Last Judgment. Behold him on the day of his trial, when he is scourged, spat upon and abused, and in those hours on the cross when he agonized and died. Here is an epic of the spirit—an epic so grand and wonderful that it is not surprising that men in all ages have cried out with the centurion at the foot of the cross, “Verily, this man was the son of God”—but in essence this is only the acme of good conduct. It is living as we

ought to live, life driven to the peak by the sheer power of the spirit!

Jesus still seems sometimes to be remote and therefore unreal. Let us take an exemplar of the religious life who is alive today—Dr. Albert Schweitzer, for example, who ranks, I believe, with Gandhi of India and Kagawa of Japan as one of the three spiritual geniuses of our time. Dr. Schweitzer, as you know, is a German, who gained eminence in his young manhood as a scholar and a musician. He is today one of our leading theologians and the world's greatest authority on the work of Bach. There came a time when he fell under conviction of religion and resolved to give his life to the black peoples of Africa in atonement for the sins of the white man against the Negro. So he prepared himself to be a medical missionary and for years now has carried on his ministry of healing among the aboriginal tribesmen of the African continent. Here amid incredible heat, dreadful insects and loathsome diseases he conducts his work as a physician and surgeon, pitying the lowly for their need and loving them for their good will. Here is a picture of him at work, as presented in a recent letter home.

The operation is finished, and in the dimly lighted room I wait for the patient's awakening. Presently he stirs, and then I hear him murmur, "No more pain! No more pain!" Then his hand reaches out for mine, finds it, and will not let go. By and by he begins to ask me questions. Why did I come to Africa to help sick Negroes? Who provides the money for hospital needs? Then I tell him it was the Lord Jesus who sent me to Africa and that some of Jesus's followers in Europe and America—all of them white people—give the money for the hospital. The sun streams down through the coffee bushes into the dark shed, and there we sit hand in hand—white doctor, black patient. And out of our own hard experience comes an understanding of the old words, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren!"

This is what religion does for a man. It makes good conduct easy, beautiful and triumphant.

This is the end of our journey. We started with the

simple principle of obeying the statute law of state and nation and thus making good citizenship an element of good conduct. There are times when we cannot conscientiously obey the law, but mostly we can and should. Then we went on to the matter of good manners and declared that good conduct was determined largely by good taste—that we should do only those things that are decent and in order. This led us naturally to the question of morals. Here we made plain, or tried to make plain, the absolute reality of a moral law, which must be obeyed if there is to be any goodness, or even safety, in our lives at all. Lastly we came to religion, which lifts life to the high plane of the ideal and makes good conduct the work of the spirit. These are the steps upon our road—the road well called, in the Old Testament, the highway of our God.

Do you remember the saying of the prophet, as he faced the tumult and terror of his day, a match for the tumult and terror of our own?

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain;

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the voice of the Lord hath spoken it.

YOUR RELIGION MUST HAVE BALANCE

11

YOUR RELIGION MUST
HAVE *Balance*

SAMUEL COLERIDGE, famous English poet and philosopher and perhaps best known as the author of *The Ancient Mariner*, once attempted to define Unitarianism. At one time close to Unitarianism himself, he wrote in 1832: "Unitarianism is, in effect, the worst of one kind of atheism joined to the worst of one kind of Calvinism, like two asses tied tail to tail." This definition of Unitarianism is, of course, more clever than true, but what would a true definition of Unitarianism be? Is it principally the belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man? A Catholic bishop in Chicago recently stated that all religion is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Or is Unitarianism merely that religion in which its members agree to disagree? All living and all religion entails some degree of compromise, some agreement to differ. Or, finally, is Unitarianism—as one wit said—merely the mattress for ex-Christians to fall upon?

If somehow someone could get contemporary Unitarians together and distill out their common beliefs, these three would be uppermost: First, Unitarianism today is a belief in revelation from all man's senses in all times

and a consequent disbelief in the unique revelation from the Bible. There is continuity in revelation—from the Bible, yes, but from other sources also, right up to the cyclotron. Second, Unitarianism today is a belief in the divinity of all men and a consequent disbelief in the unique divinity of Jesus. Again, there is a continuity of the divine spark—in Jesus, yes, and in other great souls right up to Dr. Albert Einstein. Third, I believe contemporary Unitarianism is a belief in the potentialities of man and a consequent disbelief in the omnipotence of God apart from man. Again, there is a continuity of power in the universe—in the atom, yes, but in man, too, right up to the atomic scientists. As one Unitarian has said: "The godlike process is one which is great enough to include the full genius of man; the mind of Plato, the creative spirit of Beethoven, the master hand of Leonardo da Vinci, the poetic genius of Shakespeare, the soul of Lincoln."

It can easily be seen from this description that Unitarianism is principally theological liberalism. For Unitarianism to be effective—and indeed unique—it must be a balanced liberalism. Only a combination of theological and social liberalism will produce a balanced, a religious liberalism. Religion is a total approach to life, not only theological, not only social, but at least both theological and social. If our Unitarianism is to be total liberalism, true religious liberalism, we must work hard to secure a social liberalism within our hearts and in our very churches that will match and balance the theological liberalism that is now so very much in our hearts and in our churches.

This plea for balance in our religion is nothing new. Dr. John Haynes Holmes, one of the leading liberal ministers, said at a Unitarian meeting in Boston: "For a hundred years the Unitarian Church has led Christianity in America upon the side of theology, and I for

one am dreaming of the day when the Unitarian Church of America shall lead the churches of this country upon the side of social reform." Dr. Holmes wasn't dreaming this in Boston in 1946, but in 1908—thirty-eight years ago!—and he is still dreaming of this goal.

If we can agree, tentatively, that we do need a balanced liberalism, that our liberalism is woefully inadequate on the social side, we must work out a method of attaining a more balanced liberalism. The significant questions before us are these. How can we acquire this all-essential liberalism? and, once we get this social liberalism, what will it mean?

Social liberalism cannot be inherited and it cannot easily be acquired. There is, however, one source of social liberalism which is close at hand, and that is from our theological liberalism. Roughly, one could say that theology deals with man's relationship to God and sociology deals with man's relationship to man, that theology deals with our relationship to the universe and sociology deals with the organization of our universe, of society. Traditionally and almost unconsciously, we religious liberals have used certain liberal principles in dealing with theological problems. Let us discover what some of these principles are and then apply them directly to social problems. Let us take the principles we have used in dealing with God and use them in dealing with man.

What, then, are some of these working principles of our theological liberalism, the presuppositions of liberalism? What is the liberal approach to any problem? It seems to me that the liberal approach is at least twofold. It is first of all a scientific attitude in finding solutions to problems; secondly, it is a refusal to absolutize any particular solution.

Science is one of the "good words" in contemporary society—even though science has given us the atomic

bomb and will, perhaps, eventually give us an atomic bomb detector—but the scientific method is something else: it is a thorough search for truth, a realistic admittance of evidence, a frank appraisal of assumptions, of presuppositions. Originally applied to physical phenomena, it was applied by our heretical progenitors of the last century to so-called religious phenomena—to theories of God and salvation and sin, to man's general relation to the universe. Many assumed truths were thrown overboard in the process and a few theories were more nearly substantiated, but not before the cry went up: "Science and theology are not compatible!" The very core of Unitarianism affirms that science and theology are compatible, science merely being an approach to the subject matter traditionally assigned to theology, and the scientific method continues to be one of the most important of the liberal's tools.

A second portion of the liberal's approach is the refusal to absolutize any solution, whether arrived at by the scientific method or not. This is not to be confused with the tentativeness among some liberals which produces nothing but a paralyzing neutrality towards controversial matters, a complete neutrality for want of all the evidence (which, incidentally, is an impossible goal!). The refusal to absolutize is often called the principle of constant criticism, for in essence it is a belief that nothing can be above criticism, that nothing can be final, absolute. Our liberal religious forebears also used this principle with similarly explosive results in the field of theology, and many of the absolutes of orthodoxy were rejected, especially the infallibility of the Bible, the omnipotence of God, the deity of Jesus. The cry went up again: "You can't do that; some things are above criticism." The liberal went right on criticizing, though, refusing to raise Channing or Parker or even the American Unitarian Association to that position above and

beyond criticism. This, then, is the second tool of the liberal: an affirmation that every individual and every institution has its limitations.

Now that we have isolated two principles used by liberals for a century in the field of theology, let us see what it means to apply these tools, these principles, to the field of sociology.

The scientific approach to the problems of society will throw an embarrassing light on some of our most treasured institutions: the profit system, cartels, property, free enterprise, race and class superiority, nationalism, armaments, philanthropy. Have free enterprise and the profit system ever been analyzed by theological liberals as they have analyzed the virgin birth or the ascension? Have racial restrictive covenants and other devices for segregation ever been analyzed by theological liberals as they have analyzed the use of the Apostles' Creed? Has the institution of war in our society ever been analyzed by theological liberals as they have analyzed the institution of prayer?

Under analysis some of these social institutions might remain, some might go, but all of these social dogmas must be as thoroughly, as dispassionately, investigated for social efficiency and social truth as were the theological dogmas of a century ago. The results might be the sharing, by liberals, of opinions and activity on social issues that are unpopular, annoying, heretical and subversive in the light of our present social orthodoxy. Not enough Unitarians have been put in jail or ridden out of town—an acid test of liberalism even today!

Likewise, the refusal to absolutize will make this process of obtaining a balanced liberalism easier. Social panaceas will less easily fill the vacuum left by discarded social dogmas. The magic cures of Henry George, Karl Marx or Clarence Streit; the pat platforms of the New Deal, the Socialists or the Communists; the pet theories

of the pacifists, the youth hostellers or the labor movement—none of these can be regarded as final, as absolute, as *the* answer. Some parts of these programs might remain, temporarily, some might go, but all of these new social absolutes must be as thoroughly, as fearlessly, criticized for social efficiency and social truth as were the theological absolutes of a century ago—or of today. The results might be the sharing, by religious liberals, of opinions and activity on social issues that don't fall into the usual social constellations and for that reason are annoying to secular beliefs (or progressives or radicals). Not enough Unitarians have ripped off the various "leftist" labels—an acid test for independence beyond the ballot box.

The result of the application of these liberal tools to social problems will be a series of social beliefs commonly held by liberals, specific beliefs commonly held, but not a rigid social creed any more than a rigid theological one. If theological liberals attempt this, they will be well on the way towards becoming social liberals. It will not be easy for theological liberals to become social liberals, to transcend their relatively secure position in society, but this is the only route I know towards a more balanced liberalism.

Until Unitarians do become social liberals and thus attain a balanced liberalism, they are no more religious in the full sense of the term than members of half a dozen other religious and secular organizations in our society. This statement, I know, demands proof: that Unitarianism today is no more liberal socially than many other religious or so-called secular organizations. Let's limit the proof to the areas of race relations and economics.

Take the terrible tensions towards racial and religious minorities developing both in the North and South of our country. Are Unitarians united today to fight the

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social and economic segregation of the Negro as Unitarians were united yesterday to fight the theological segregation of certain classes of men? It must be said that there are a few Unitarian ministers—and laymen—who take brotherhood seriously, whatever the consequences, but Unitarianism certainly doesn't stand out as the denomination practicing brotherhood. Interracial churches are growing up all over the country—Congregational, Presbyterian, Lutheran. Interracial youth groups are beginning to take militant action to erase the color line—Methodist, Catholic, Congregational. Interracial groups are meeting for week-end conferences and retreats in the South—Friends, Bahai, Y.W.C.A.

Let us consider the area of economic relations. Are Unitarians united today to fight a return to the unethical elements of capitalism in this postwar period as they were united yesterday to fight a return to the popery of Rome? Again it must be said that there are a few ministers—and laymen—who are socialists, whatever the consequences, but Unitarianism certainly doesn't stand out as the denomination fighting capitalism, or even helping those movements modifying capitalism. Certain denominations are working today very closely with liberal elements of the labor movement—especially the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, the Catholics. Certain church groups are promoting the development of the co-operative movement—especially the Friends and the Catholics again. For a cogent, religious critique of capitalism, one goes not to Unitarian literature but to the statement of the great Malvern Conference of the Church of England. The wealthy, liturgical, Anglican church has denounced the profit system in no ambiguous terms. Perhaps there is some truth after all in the saying that there is nothing more dangerous than an Anglican just off his knees!

Having said all this, one must still affirm the hope that

within Unitarianism there lies a greater potentiality to become truly a liberal social force, as well as a liberal theological force, than probably in any other existing institution. This brings to mind a statement about the gap between what the Christian Church is and what the Christian Church might become, made by the Rev. F. A. Cockin, for some years Canon (now Honorary Canon) of St. Paul's, London: "I believe the Christian Church to be the one hope of salvation of the individual and of the community; and I regard it at the moment as itself one of the greatest obstacles to the achievement of its own true aim." How much more true this is of the liberal church!

The potentiality of Unitarianism is that it has the power within it for social liberalism. Theological liberalism is a start towards a more complete and balanced liberalism, but somewhere along the way in the history of Unitarianism something happened. Unitarians became content with their theological liberalism. As Professor H. Richard Niebuhr and others have pointed out, Unitarians—being of the upper middle class—could afford to be theological and theoretical liberals. The price was, however, too high for Unitarians to risk their social position and identify themselves, other than in a philanthropic way, with liberal social movements. The potential social liberalism of Unitarianism has, with few exceptions, remained undeveloped, certainly no more developed than the social liberalism of several other denominations. So before Unitarians judge the theological conservatism of other denominations, let them put their own liberal house in order. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Before concluding this plea for a social liberalism to equal our theological liberalism, I must add another element to make present-day Unitarianism truly a balanced liberalism: our liberalism must become active, not passive—practical, not theoretical. Liberalism, especially

the nineteenth-century theological variety, has been justly criticized for maintaining what the sociologists call an attitude of distance. The liberals, social as well as theological, played around and toyed with liberal concepts, but they never got out of the idea stage. The world for them was a chessboard that could be viewed with detachment and unconcern—and, for the most part, the nineteenth-century liberal didn't have to be concerned, for he could easily maintain his status and did not have to face in practice the logical consequences of his liberal ideas.

This liberalism with its attitude of distance is the liberalism that is dead. The liberalism that is needed is one with an attitude of decision, an attitude that says, "It does make a difference." It is a liberalism in which the individual cries out, "I care!" If we can realize that our individual and collective response to personal and social questions does make a difference, that we are too often confronted by a personal and social crisis, perhaps we of the liberal church can more often break through our inertia to active commitment, to decision, to action.

If Unitarianism, then, could be characterized today in the same figure that Coleridge used more than a century ago, one might still say that it represents two donkeys. One stands for a liberal theology and the other stands for a conservative sociology. The two donkeys are truly tied tail to tail—completely immobilized by this inconsistency and by this attitude of distance. Let us change this picture of Unitarianism. Let the first donkey representing liberal theology remain, but substitute a second donkey that stands for the best kind of liberal sociology. With this consistent, balanced liberalism, the donkeys will act as a team and can be hitched to all mankind, and with a dynamic furnished by an attitude of decision perhaps we can coax the beasts to move—in fits and starts in the beginning, and with a few good Unitarians (so-

called) dropping out at every milestone, but soon with a steady energy furnished by a more balanced liberalism.

TOTALITARIAN CHRISTIANITY

12

Totalitarian
CHRISTIANITY

THERE are two main opposing views of the Bible. On the one hand are those persons who maintain the traditional doctrine that the Bible, the literal "Word of God" to man, is to be accepted with unquestioning faith as infallible in all its statements. On the other hand is the great body of biblical scholars, who view the book as the greatest and most significant collection of literature that has come down to us from the ancient world, the source of all our information about that search for God which flowered in Judaism and gave rise to Christianity, but a literature of human origin to be studied by the same methods as any other great national literature. I propose to discuss two contrasting views of Christianity based upon and closely associated with these divergent views of the Bible.

Many years ago a soundly orthodox theologian to whom had been assigned the task of writing an article for an encyclopedia, began it by saying, "There are two true religions: Judaism and Christianity—all other religions are false," and he went on to describe Judaism and Christianity, completely ignoring the fact that Judaism is the faith of only a minute fraction of the hu-

man race and that Christianity, while a great religion in point of the numbers who—at least nominally—accept it, is still the faith of a minority of the world's population. He left wholly out of account the religions of great numbers of men who are Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists, not to mention the followers of many other lesser creeds.

The writer of that article unhesitatingly accepted the doctrine that the Bible was the verbally inspired "Word of God" and that therefore only that religion could be true which was based upon the revelation of God's will to be discovered within its covers. It followed, of course, that only those could be saved from eternal damnation who accepted the traditional dogmas of the Christian faith and adhered to the Church; that it was therefore the duty of the Church to extend its sway over the whole earth, so that as many of the heathen as possible might be saved from perishing in their ignorance and sin.

That conception of Christianity has, of course, a very long tradition behind it and is still widely held, at least in theory, although it has become wholly incompatible with modern thought. It goes back to the fourth century. As early as the year 380 A.D. the Emperor Theodosius undertook by imperial decree to suppress heresy within the empire. "We will," ran his decree, "that all our subjects . . . believe the one divinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of majesty coequal, in the holy Trinity. We will that those that embrace this creed be called Catholic Christians. We brand all the senseless followers of other religions by the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles to assume the name of churches." That is what I call totalitarian Christianity because it rests upon the same conception of absolute authority that, in the political field, we see in the totalitarian state. It claims for the Church as a

supernaturally founded and divinely inspired society complete and unquestioned control in the field of religion. The Church is held to be the depository of the complete and final truth about God's purposes and will for men. To question that truth is dangerous, and the Church is only doing its duty when it suppresses heresies which imperil the souls of men, just as the totalitarian state seeks to suppress what it calls "dangerous thoughts"—any ideas that threaten the stability of the social order as prescribed by those who control the government. The totalitarian church, therefore, requires that men should accept its teachings without question like obedient children. When they adopt its creeds, observe its ritual and pay due respect to the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, they are accounted good Christians, often with small regard to their conduct towards their fellow men in other respects.

It is no wonder that a totalitarian church should find itself most at home in a totalitarian state. That has been true right down the centuries, from the time of the Emperor Theodosius to the present hour. The political course of the Vatican of recent years is only the most recent conspicuous illustration of that fact. The Vatican, you may recall, made a *concordat* (that is, a deal) with Mussolini and, for a recompense, gave its blessing to the whole Fascist program in Italy. It made another deal with Hitler, in a somewhat less successful effort to secure the rights of the Church in Germany. It blessed the invasion of Spain by Italian and German troops co-operating with Franco to overthrow the Spanish Republic, and it has ever since backed Franco's iniquitous regime there. It has been hand in glove with the Fascist reactionaries in the Argentine. The totalitarian church and the totalitarian state share the same philosophy of authority, of disbelief in freedom and democracy.

We can see the same phenomenon in Protestantism,

Freedom for the human mind involves differences of opinion, of course. As a matter of fact, probably no two men ever think exactly alike, for the same words suggest somewhat differing shades of meaning to them. Even a totalitarian church or state can force only a delusive uniformity and repress the outward utterance of differences. Differences of opinion are not to be regretted, rather, they are to be welcomed, for, as Milton said, "Difference of opinion between honest men is but wisdom in the making." Look at the conference which was held in San Francisco. One aim animated the delegates there—to effect a world organization capable of maintaining peace and freedom among all men—but the delegates brought to the conference a great variety not only of opinions but of profound convictions as to how that world organization should be framed. It was through the exchange of views, a give and take that at last fused the differences into a more complete understanding, that the conference worked out a solution of its problems likely to be far better and more adequate than any single mind or single nation could have possibly achieved. Similarly, religious truth is found in far larger measure where men of many diverse views tolerate differences of opinion while working together for the welfare of mankind than when a single interpretation of religion is clamped down upon their minds and all divergent beliefs are secluded in a ghetto, or brought to the thumb-screw and the stake, or less openly attacked by economic and social pressures.

To the freedom of the mind and its inevitable corollary, the toleration of differing opinion, we bring a third consideration—confidence in human reason. A great many persons deny the use of reason when it comes to religion. Religion, they say, is far more a matter of emotion than of reason, and they are quite right, so far as a great part of what popularly passes for re-

ligion is concerned. A lot of people crave a religion that makes them "feel good," that releases them of any sense of guilt for their sins, that relieves them of the heavy task of thinking for themselves. Totalitarian Christianity offers to do those things for its unquestioning followers. The question remains whether what it offers is true or not; whether the exhilarating or soothing emotion it arouses has good or bad effects, or any effect at all; whether it is possible for us to be so absolved from wrongdoing that we can escape the consequences of the moral law that as we have sown so also we shall reap.

It is a curious phenomenon that the totalitarian religion that now denies the right of reason to question the ancient dogmas of the Church is itself the product of some of the most acute and subtle reasoning in the history of human thought. The great system of theology built up over a period of a thousand years between the fourth and the fourteenth centuries is the most impressive monument of the human reason between the days of Greek philosophy and the rise of modern science. It has collapsed for the modern man because all its premises have been washed out from under it by modern science, but it stood irrefutable as long as those premises were accepted.

When, therefore, we apply reason to religion we are only doing in our own day what a great succession of Christian theologians have done in theirs. Most of them, indeed, accepted the dogmas of the Church as valid and then rationalized their belief. As Anselm put it, *Credo ut intelligam*—I believe so that I may understand. Abelard's skeptical mind reversed that saying, and he struck the keynote for modern thought when he took, in effect, the opposing point of view: *Intelligo ut credam*—I understand so that I may believe. There is a fundamental difference between accepting beliefs on authority and then finding adequate reasons for doing so, and the use of

reason to lay a firm foundation for the beliefs to which it leads.

It is the latter path that leads to a religion of deeds rather than of creeds, of enlightened intelligence rather than of unrestrained emotionalism; of the good will that draws men together rather than of the intolerance that deeply divides them.

These, then, are the marks of the religion that stands at the opposite pole from totalitarian Christianity: first, the principle of the free mind, free to inquire and to express itself without fear or misgiving, save for its awareness that its findings are not final or absolute; second, the toleration of diversity, which is but an aspect of the principle of human fellowship, a recognition of the equal rights of kindred minds; third, the adequacy of reason as the divinely given instrument of the human mind for the discovery of new truths. New truth is always awaiting discovery. It is always latent in the universe, and the more we learn of it the more wonderful and mysterious the universe becomes. When people of old talked of God's "revelations" to men—to men of exceptional genius—they were speaking of something that was but the reverse side of what we call human discoveries. of what men find when they set their minds to work about their relations with their fellow men or about the world of nature in which they are placed. The things to be revealed are there all the time, but they are not revealed until men look for them. "Search, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," said Jesus is one of his most profound moments of insight.

The day of totalitarian Christianity is done, and a new age awaits mankind. Let us shut the door of the past behind us and go forward with courage, faith and hope—for God hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his word.

ON BELIEVING IN GOD

13

On Believing
IN GOD

At a conference of college students I attended, two remarks were made that remain in my memory as being surprising and interesting. We had some twelve hours in which to discuss an agenda that included the whole universe under such headings as theology, social problems, personal problems, vocations, the war and practical religion. As the moderator, I raised the question at the start of the conference as to which of these subjects seemed most important and deserved the most attention. A young man, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, immediately spoke up and said: "Obviously theology is the most important, and I am in favor of giving plenty of time to it in our discussions." In this judgment the whole group concurred.

This was a considerable surprise to me. I had always assumed that of all subjects theology was by far the dearest and dullest so far as most people were concerned, yet here was a representative group of highly intelligent young people declaring that "dull theology" was the subject in which they were most interested.

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The discussion on theology began with another penetrating remark, this time from a law student "I think," he said, "that there ought to be a system of strict rationing of the use of the word God. So much of the time you preachers use the word when your hearers do not know what you mean by it and when, to be honest, they wonder if you yourselves know what you mean."

Being a preacher myself, I know what he meant by this remark. It is a great temptation, and one often yielded to, to talk yourself into a thorny problem and then extricate yourself by saying that the answer is "faith in God" or that "God's wisdom is not to be questioned." This student simply wants the people who talk about God to define their terms so that those who hear will know what they mean when they use the word. He is not the first to perceive the clergy's weakness for solving all problems in theological terms they leave undefined. He is raising a question no self-respecting minister or laymen can afford to leave unanswered.

What do we mean by God, then? At the very outset it must be admitted that it is hard for most of us to know God "other than by hearsay." Some of us know a lot about what other people have said and written *about* God. Few of us know much *of* God, through firsthand experience. Ours is a secondhand acquaintance. Consequently, our use of the term is seldom as honest and convincing as it ought to be.

The idea of God in human experience has two marked characteristics. First, it is perhaps the most persistent idea in all human history. All the way from primitive man, raising his arms in clumsy adoration to the sun or the moon, to the refinements and subtleties of Christian theology and liturgy, the idea of God has exerted a constant fascination on the human mind. Second, in spite of this constant fascination, this interest amounting almost to a hunger, the idea of God stubbornly refuses to

lend itself to precise definition. For many of us, the least satisfactory ideas of God come from those who are surest that they know exactly what God is and what he is not.

Listen, for example, to the words of one of the greatest minds of the Christian Church, Augustine of Hippo. This man's systematic theology is harsh, rigid and precise. He propounds what is to many of us a perfectly atrocious doctrine of the absolute depravity of man and of the completely illusory nature of free will and free choice in human experience—but his direct experience of God, expressed in his wonderfully penetrating *Confessions*, is human, warm and very much alive.

But what do I love when I love my God? Not the grace of bodies; nor the fair harmony of time; nor the brightness of the light so gladsome to our eyes; nor sweet melodies of varied songs, nor the fragrant smell of flowers, of ointments and spices, not manna and honey. None of these I love when I love my God, and yet I love a kind of light, melody, fragrance, a food when I love my God, the light, melody, fragrance, food of my inner man: where there shineth unto my soul what space cannot contain, and there soundeth what time beareth not away. This is what I love when I love my God.

This, you will agree, is real, yet not precise, not systematic. All attempts to express this accurately, to confine it within a definition, fall short, by far, of the reality as it is felt, yet probably no idea had as real and visible an effect on the life of this man as the idea of God.

By and large, nothing is more dull and unconvincing to the ordinary mortal than philosophical proofs of the existence of God and theological descriptions of his power and love. Nothing, on the other hand, is more powerful than the sense of the reality of God as it takes hold of a man from within. In the language of a man's own experience, his feelings, sacrifices, loyalties and loves, the reality of God is made plain.

What do we mean by God? The best I can do is tell you what I mean and, in so doing, make at least a pro-

visional answer to the very proper condemnation implied in this student's searching statement. The point at which the idea of God takes on reality for me is suggested in Paul's great chapter on love, in his first epistle to the Corinthians. It is in these words: "For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." The phrase, "even as I am known," is for me a kind of key to the idea of God. God is the one who knows. This is something I myself have felt. Whatever we may be outwardly, whatever front we may put up, whatever opinion our friends have of us, inwardly, in some real sense, we are known and can know ourselves for exactly what we are. Just as a husband or wife or friend may know us so well that we do not have to tell that person what we are thinking and feeling, so there is another Knowing One who understands us even better than our closest human companions do. Before this Knowing One we are exactly what we are, with all false fronts beaten down, with all disguises stripped away, with all possibility of pretense and deception removed. All the good in us is known. All the cheapness, selfishness and malice in us is known too. Whatever we may be to all other people, we are what we are to God, just that, honestly that and nothing more or less. This is, at one and the same time, a terrible and a beautiful experience. It is terrible because before this experience our human pretenses and evasions seem shoddy and cheap. It is beautiful because in this experience we feel that our true account is honestly and lovingly added up. The final worth and meaning of a human life is not judged by how it compares with other human lives but by how it measures up to the perfect righteousness and love of this Knowing One.

This awareness of being known leaves me with a choice. Either this Knowing One is playing a game

with human lives in which he regards, with amused and philosophic calm, our struggles to refuse the evil and choose the good, to control and direct our lives in the paths of righteousness and love, or he cares how the struggle comes out. It really matters to him that we shall be braver, cleaner, more loving people. I am free to choose between these two possibilities, neither of which can be proved by any airtight rational and scientific method known to man. Either this Knowing One cares or he does not care.

In the first case, if the Knowing One does not care, then this life we are living is a gigantic joke. Our struggles for better relationships, for peace and justice in society, are merely play-acting on a world stage. We put on a show because that is the thing to do, but the curtain comes down quickly and we are gone. There is no significance in our striving. In the second case, if it matters to the Knowing One what we are and how we play our tiny parts, then while we are still tiny and our time is still very short the play is not a farce, but a grand and meaningful tragedy in which we are expected to do the best we can.

It would be more comfortable if we did not have to make this choice, if we could postpone it indefinitely or dodge it in some ingenious way. Many of us try to do this and succeed for a time. We have even come to the place where it is considered smart and sophisticated to evade this choice: to be what the late Thomas Wolfe called "the apes of fashion, the eternal triflers," to get the most out of every situation and change the color and meaning of life with each passing phase of human affairs. Still, I have a feeling that soon or late a clear-cut choice is demanded of us all. Are we going to live in this world as if what we are, what our beliefs are, what our lives are aimed at matters eternally? At long last we have to say either "yes" or "no" to that question.

Since that is the case, I prefer to live, even with the lack of conclusive evidence on either side, as if what a person is matters. William Lawrence Sullivan put the choice rather neatly in this epigram "Religion may ask a hard thing: faith in the dark; but irreligion asks an impossible thing. faith in darkness."

This choice being made, it occurs to me that the sense of meaning, which I cannot escape in my own life, comes not from me but from something considerably more important than my own personal whims and preferences. History—man's struggles to widen his horizons, increase his knowledge, uplift and dignify his common life; his apparently insatiable lust for a better world in spite of countless frustrations and failures—history means something. Through it there seems to run an enormous energy and an enormous purpose. It is a pilgrimage through the centuries in which a man can have a part. I am amused when I reflect on Mr. G. B. Shaw's witty remark to the effect that the only thing we learn from history is that man never learns from history, but when I reflect that men, in spite of their evil and their failures, have never given up the quest for the good life, have always been made uncomfortable by it and have again and again poured out their energy for the realization of a far-off dream, I am inclined to think Paul is closer to the truth when he says, thinking of the hope and purpose that came into the world with Jesus: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." God, to me, means purpose—the strong, patient purpose for good that inhabits the universe and molds the history of men and nations. It is a purpose not always clear, never easy, often stern and exacting beyond our powers, but I cannot get away from the feeling that it is there and that a man can know enough of it to be either for it or against it.

So the ideas that point to God, for me, are these. First, I am known, honestly and completely, by someone or something in this universe. Second, it matters how my life is lived, matters to the Knowing One. Third, history is not a blind pattern of events. It is going somewhere, there is purpose for good or against it. Of course, behind all this, we still have the fundamental doubt; "How can you be sure? What if you are wrong?" The questions remind me of a statement made by one of the speakers at a recent conference on peace plans. "The problem is," he said, "that nobody believes what governments say any more. If they want to convince anybody about their intentions for peace and justice, they will have to do something concrete." We might transpose this statement into the present discussion, thus: "The problem is that nobody believes what the churches say any more. If the people in the churches want to convince anybody of the reality of God, they will have to do something concrete."

A Christian has been defined as "one who makes it easier to believe in God." I like that definition. It rings true. When I read the New Testament and ponder the life of Jesus, I do not find it hard to believe in God. I do not find it hard to believe in God when I read the life of Paul or of St. Francis of Assisi. I do not find it hard to believe in God when I hear the reports about Martin Niemöller or when I read of the eleven hundred Norwegian clergymen who, almost to a man, resigned their pulpits and therewith their material security rather than permit themselves to be used by the Nazi Quisling regime. These people make it easier for me to believe in God. I do not find myself troubled by the thought that it may be they are living and suffering and dying for nothing, as deluded puppets in what is actually a tragic farce. I think all these people lived and died for something real and true. I am deeply moved by the

way in which their lives thunder across time and space, leap over the barriers of race and creed and nationality and beat at the doors of my own complacency and comfort. Perhaps the only answer to these questions—"How can you be sure? What if you are wrong?"—is that we learn by doing, that our theology has to be set forth not in books and manifestoes but in what we ourselves are and how we stand up to life.

Once this becomes clear, the intellectual barriers to faith in God are not so formidable. The more a man does for God, the more he feels himself answerable to a holiness and a love that underlie his life, the more that same holiness and love hold him up and lead him on. It is rather like learning to swim. First you must cease to fear you will sink. Then you must learn the movements that enable you to make progress. At last, there comes a day when you do not have to think of all these things specifically. You do them more or less spontaneously. That is the day when you can say, "I know how to swim."

So our entrance into the understanding of God involves our overcoming the fear that we may be mistaken; our willingness to entrust ourselves to the buoyancy of the love and truth at the heart of things; and finally our mastery of the movements and disciplines that enable us to use that buoyancy and to be used by it, to work with it and to bring our little purposes in line with its great ongoing purposes.

There really seems to be in the experience of many men and women an answering power in the universe. So long as you do your part it holds you up like the buoyant water. You can depend on it. It does not fail. Here is the curious thing: When we cannot swim we do not pretend that the water isn't there; we know it is there and that it is buoyant, though deep and dangerous; we know the trouble is with us, that we have not

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yet learned to live and move in this medium. But when we cannot understand God, when we cannot explain him in a series of concise and apt definitions, it seldom occurs to us that the trouble is with ourselves; instead, we say God is not there.

Perhaps, though, every quest that is to culminate in a real discovery must begin with the courage to entrust yourself to something, to depend on it and to learn slowly how to work with it. Perhaps this is true whether the case is that of a child learning to swim or that of a mature adult seeking God. Maybe you have to begin and see what comes next, and go on and on until at last the day comes when you feel as much at home in all the world in the companionship of God as you used to feel only in your own home, with your dearest friends, in the familiar, well-loved customs and duties. When that day comes, you don't need theology. Argument and controversy cease to bother you. You know that the quest has been worth-while, that it has led to something real. The days of secondhand acquaintance are over.

UNITARIAN BELIEFS

14

UNITARIAN *Beliefs*

"WHAT is your propaganda?" an Italian barber once asked me, upon learning that I was a minister. In coming to this country he had left behind not only patriotic but also family and religious associations. As a genuine seeker for better ways of life he had listened attentively to many kinds of propaganda. His question startled me once again into the realization that any religious attitude must prove its worth amid all the philosophies and religions clamoring for the attention and loyalty of men. There came to my mind also the classic exhortation in I Peter 3:15: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." It is my purpose in this sermon to outline the beliefs of Unitarians.

Students of religion have long sought for a common denominator of religions. It is to be found, it seems to me, in the origins of religion in human nature. Religion in all times and places has arisen out of three human attitudes: first, an inclination to take life seriously, a feeling that it is worth trying to find out what life is about; second, an endeavor to understand and to relate one's life to metaphysical realities, that is, realities that

lie deeper than the obviously physical (Is there a power that created and sustains all things? If so, what is its nature? What is the fundamental nature of man, and of all life?); third, a desire to discover the best ethical principles, the best way to live with other men. These are the things that religions have always had in common: a serious concern about life; an attempt to relate life to realities beyond the physical; and an attempt to determine the best ethical conduct.

In the course of history people in different times and places have given varying expressions to the three basic concerns of religion; so we have Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and many others. Within each of these religions smaller groups, known as sects, have grown up. We might consider the primary foundations of religion as being the trunk of a tree, the larger religions as being the branches and the sects as being the twigs. Unitarianism is one of the twigs, a twig that more than the others, we believe, has in it the free flow of basic strength. Still further it might be said that there are a number of Unitarian twigs, since within a number of the great religions there are movements akin to what we know as Unitarianism. Being in the Christian tradition we are principally concerned with the Unitarian twig that has sprung from the Christian branch of religion.

Christians differ from other religionists in that they make Jesus of Nazareth the central figure of religion. They say that in him was found the truest and best expression of the three primal attitudes of religion: He took life with such utter seriousness that he went to the cross; he believed in God as a loving father, such as is described in the story of the Prodigal Son; and in his attitude towards his fellow men he exemplified love as the great rule of conduct.

Within the new and exciting religion that grew up in response to the life of Jesus there were from the beginning differing interpretations of his nature. These interpretations may be searched out in the books of the New Testament, in literature contemporary with the New Testament and in the subsequent history of the Church. Minor differences were finally overshadowed by the gathering force of two major interpretations. The most active and able leaders of the opposing interpretations were Arius and Athanasius. Arius held that Jesus was in his essential being different from God. Athanasius taught that Jesus was of the same essential being with God. To state it in another way, the Athanasians maintained that Jesus was "of one substance" with God, while the most the Arians would concede was that Jesus was "of like substance" with God.

Tertullian, a Christian leader at the beginning of the third century A. D., said that in his day "the common people think of Christ as a man." Arius while teaching that Jesus was less than God taught also that he was something more than man. Still, because of his effective opposition to those who insisted that Jesus was "very God of very God," all who were inclined to emphasize the humanity of Jesus came to be commonly known as Arians.

The controversy between opposing groups became so widespread and so passionate that it was an annoyance to the Emperor Constantine. He therefore called a council at Nicaea in 325 to decide upon what should be accepted as the true Christian belief. Constantine's interest in the council was wholly political. He wanted unity in the empire and had no special interest in either side of the discussion. He finally concluded that the adoption of the Athanasian view by the council offered the greater hope of unity and so he threw his weight on that side. His decision was influenced by the utterly unyielding

attitude of the Athanasians, although they were a minority. In this way the deity of Jesus became accepted as the orthodox doctrine of the Church never to be revoked by a Church council.

However, a movement as strong as Arianism could not be readily stamped out, and upon the accession of sympathetic emperors it became for a time the officially supported religion of the Empire. But the second general council of the Church, called by the Emperor Theodosius to meet at Constantinople in 381, finally and definitely outlawed Arianism. In the face of considerable opposition, this council added an article about the Holy Spirit to those accepted at Nicaea and established the doctrine of the Trinity as the central doctrine of orthodox Christian belief.

There were now in the Church two concepts that had no part in the life of the first churches: the concept of orthodoxy and the concept of authority. The first churches were simple groups of people organized solely on the basis of the variety of gifts among them. When the office of bishop was first evolved, bishops were not diocesan but congregational; that is, each church, however small, had its own bishop. As we have seen, there was among the early Christians a wide variety of thought upon the basic problems of their new religion. Now there was to be only one way of thinking, determined by church councils and enforced by the combined authority of Church and State. Later the power of determining and enforcing orthodox belief was still more centralized in the papacy.

This condition continued until the time of the Protestant Reformation. Then a breaking away from these concepts began. Martin Luther broke away to some extent. John Calvin broke away to some extent. Ulrich Zwingli broke away. The Anabaptists broke farther away. Others broke away.

The greatest break with the principle of authority was made by those who returned to the original Christian congregational order. All self-governing churches are congregational churches, no matter what doctrinal positions they may hold or what sectarian names they may carry. Such churches have appeared in various religious traditions, notably in the Anabaptist movement, but Congregationalism first flourished on a large scale in New England.

New England Congregationalism had its origin in the Separatist movement in England. Some of the Separatists, whom we know as the Pilgrims, migrated to Holland and later to Plymouth. Their differences with the Church of England were not doctrinal. Like that church they were Calvinist in theology. It was because they departed completely from the principle of ecclesiastical authority to the principle of independent congregationalism that they were forced to seek a new land in which to practice their religion. It was because they believed that the English Church had not gone far enough in Protestantism that they withdrew and were thus known as Separatists.

The Puritans who later settled in Salem and Boston were more moderate than the Separatists, hoping to reform the English Church from within. However, their contacts with the Pilgrims in the new land led them to adopt Congregationalism and it has been truly said that they "outseparated the Separatists." The Pilgrims and the Puritans thus gave to America its heritage of Congregationalism.

The theory of Congregationalism was, and is, that wherever people wish to create and maintain a church they are free to do so without interference from or guidance by a higher church authority. It is the theory of the priesthood of all believers, which holds that the minister is not inherently nearer God than the members

of the congregation and that among men there are no distinctions except those of special training or ability. In early Congregationalism there was so much agitation over the right of congregations to ordain ministers independently that Paul Dudley, Chief Justice of Massachusetts from 1745 to 1751, established an annual lectureship at Harvard College, which continues to this day, on "The Validity of Nonepiscopal Ordination."

Congregational churches are democratic churches. Their democratic practices are undergirded by democratic theories. They have had a large part in shaping the democratic way of life in America. It may be said that their existence is essential to the maintenance of democratic political life. The foundations of democracy that they lay do not arise out of expediency but out of their conception of the fundamental nature of man and his relation to God and society.

Unitarian churches are congregational and share with all congregationalists the democratic principle of organization and authority.

The greatest break with the principle that there is only one right way of thinking, the principle of orthodoxy, was made by those who came to be known as Unitarians. (The specific origin of the name is not certainly known. It implies a primary faith in the unity of men and of God.) Soon after the Protestant Reformation Unitarian groups were found in Poland and Hungary. Much later, Unitarianism began to spread in England. None of these foreign movements had any considerable influence upon the rise of Unitarianism in America.

American Unitarianism almost wholly represents the natural flowering of a strain of liberalism that was in Puritanism from the beginning. Several churches that are now Unitarian use with complete propriety the covenants formulated by the founders of those churches in the very first years of the New England settlements.

A most interesting statement not infrequently found in the early covenants was substantially as follows: "We covenant to walk together in the ways of God, known or to be made known." There is much in the literature of Puritanism to show that while the dominant tone was orthodox there was in it a generic strength seeking the ways of God that were not yet known. It had not been customary throughout history for the orthodox position to recognize the possibility of new knowledge, but here in the wilderness the Puritans expressed their faith that what may still be discovered is important as well as what is already known.

Education was nourished at Harvard College (founded only six years after the first Puritan settlements) and in secondary schools. By the middle of the eighteenth century Massachusetts Congregationalism began to drift away from orthodoxy. There grew up within it a liberal wing that ignored, rather than denied, the more offensive doctrines of its particular brand of orthodoxy, namely Calvinism. The conservatives noting the trend denounced the liberals, calling them Unitarians.

The controversy that ensued was between those who believed in the worth of new vision and new knowledge and those who held to the old. Factionalism in the churches became bitter. In some instances those who said the old ways of thinking must not be changed were a minority, and so they withdrew to establish their own churches; in other cases those who held to the new ways were a minority, and they withdrew. In this way Unitarianism became established as that branch of Congregationalism which believed in the continuing possibility and worth of new knowledge.

One of the major issues in the controversy had been the nature of Jesus. The views held by Unitarians were largely in accord with the Arian views of early Christian times. They placed their emphasis upon the positive

elements of religious experience and Christian character, and so it may be said that they declared the potential divinity of all men rather than that they denied the divinity of Jesus. Whatever specific beliefs were held, they have been modified and extended by the most distinctive characteristic of Unitarians which was, and has remained, their faith in the continuing possibility and worth of new knowledge.

There are a number of corollaries among Unitarians to the attitude towards new knowledge. Among these the most important are, freedom of individual belief, the belief that nothing is exempt from investigation and leadership in educational and philanthropic activities. Others may be prodded by new knowledge, but Unitarians deliberately promote investigation, being consciously willing to change old beliefs and attitudes when new knowledge requires it. Recognizing the fallibility of all human endeavor they see that there must be no imposition of beliefs and that society must create the institutions that will place in the hands of individuals the basic knowledge and skills necessary to the fullest development of their own possibilities.

We may now summarize the beliefs of Unitarians as follows:

- A. In common with religious people of all times and places Unitarians believe—
 - 1. in taking life seriously;
 - 2. in seeking to understand and properly relate their lives to metaphysical realities;
 - 3. in seeking the best ethical conduct.
- B. In common with some religious people Unitarians believe that the congregational order in the church is the most consistent with the dignity of man and that it is the foundation for political democracy.

C. Unitarians are distinctive—

1. within the Christian tradition, for holding to various modifications and extensions of the Arian view of Jesus;
2. among all religious people, for their faith in the continuing possibility and worth of new knowledge.

Here, I would say to the Italian barber, is our propaganda! Here is the reason of the hope that is in us.

RELIGION IS MORE THAN CHRISTIANITY

15

RELIGION IS *More*
THAN CHRISTIANITY

THE late Edwin Markham, one of America's great poets, once put into four lines a beautiful thought that has probably been voiced in every Christian pulpit:

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle that took him in.

The Old Testament prophet, Micah, fed up with literal adherence to the demands of ritualistic law which required burnt offerings and sacrifices, spoke out to men of his day this thought, which, also, has been quoted from every Christian pulpit:

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . He hath shewed thee, *O man*, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

He who is proclaimed as the founder of Christianity according to Scripture once said:

If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there

rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Wednesday, November 29, 1944, marks a day of a certain kind of significance in the history of organized Protestant Christianity in America. On that day, the Federal Council of the Church of Christ in America, meeting in official session in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, refused membership in its organization to the Universalist Church of America. This rejection (by a vote of twelve denominations to six) of the church of Clara Barton, founder of the America Red Cross, proclaimed publicly where organized Protestant Christianity in America stands today.

I have no hesitancy in saying that the Federal Council was well within its legal right to refuse membership to this religious body. 'As a fellowship it has the right to exclude or include as broadly or as narrowly as it may choose, but by this vote it at once gave life to the question: "As a group of churches, does it represent the Spirit of Christianity in a world where love and religion are so sorely needed—in a world where divisive influences ought to be superseded by unifying influences? or as a group is it a form of entrenched Protestant ecclesiasticism which has room only for its kind of doctrinal theology?"

Be it said to the credit of the six denominations—the Congregational-Christian Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Friends, the Seven-Day Baptists, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America and the African Methodist Episcopal Church—that they voted to welcome the Universalists. Be it said, also, that there are untold numbers of individuals in many denominations who would have been happy to cast their votes of admission if the opportunity had been offered them.

Organized Christianity is today entrenched behind

a fortress of financial investments, boards of powerful directors and conservatism. There are men who as individuals are nothing less than wonderful; they do their best to be spiritual leaders. In spite of attempted leadership, as an organized institution Christianity is not a spiritual force dynamically lighting the way with idealism. Christianity is not a daring, challenging, adventurous spiritual movement or combination of movements living in vibrant co-operation. I make this criticism with not an ounce of venom in my tone. I make it, rather, with a distressing sadness in my heart.

Potentially, Christianity ought to be a religious force with the power to unite men of all classes, races and colors dynamically into a bond of fellowship—all harnessed towards a goal not less than Humanity—but by processes over the past nineteen hundred years, with multitudinous changes, with leadership that has inherited age-old prejudices, the human element has permitted the Ideal within Christianity to deteriorate into a bedlam of chaotic units. Each unit is in co-operation, theoretically, in competition, actually.

Whatever else the word evolution may mean, we may all agree that it means, "What is today is the result of what was yesterday." Christianity is today the evolutionary result of what it was yesterday. Each age of man, as generations have come and gone, has added here, modified there, suggested this, changed that. Christianity nineteen hundred years in the future will not be Christianity as it is today, any more than what it is today is what it was nineteen hundred years ago.

When the disciple, Peter, and James, Jesus' brother, first began their labors to perpetuate the community of followers that had gathered around the man of Galilee, they wanted the movement, which later was to be given the stigma "Christian," to be a fellowship for Jews only; but when Paul, who never had known or seen

Jesus, changed from being a persecutor of Christians to being the chief organizing power within the movement, he persuaded Peter and James that the fellowship should be not only for Jews but for Gentiles—non-Jews—also. Had Peter and James not been persuaded, the Brotherhood would undoubtedly have remained a sect within Judaism. However, when Paul succeeded in winning them to his point of view, the first step was taken towards Christianity's being a fellowship for all men. Among scholars, it is generally accepted as a fact—though a fact with an “if”—that had it not been for the dynamic, extroverted personality of Paul, Christianity would never have been what it is; that it might well have died as a rather unimportant movement in that little portion of earth at the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

Events were such that church after church was established. Preachers went about organizing. Personalities of the preachers loomed above the message preached. What happened made Paul write, for example, to the church at Corinth: “Now I beseech you, brethren, that ye be perfected together in one mind, having the same spirit. For it hath been signified unto me that there are divisions among you. This I mean, that each of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” In those early years, in spite of Paul's efforts, many divisions arose, each believing its message the true one, each believing its belief about Jesus the only valid belief.

Time passed. The period known as the Middle Ages, which often is called the Age of Faith, arrived. Because of the strength of organized Christianity, there was only one major Christian Church. That strength was possible because unbelievers, heretics, any who differed in belief were liable to punishment by torture and painful death.

Religion is More Than Christianity

Indeed, Christianity was a power. The one Church held the keys to every door of life men may have wanted to enter. Religion was man's entire life. Everyone went to church. Everyone performed the rituals demanded. Crosses, crucifixes—symbols of religion—were in homes and at crossroads. Every celebration, whether of sorrow or joy, was under the auspices of the Church. Charity, too, was in the Church's hands. Life was not one thing and religion another; they were inseparable.

Then came the Reformation with the brave and daring Martin Luther and his colleagues. From his day, in the early years of the sixteenth century, evolutionary process working within the Church changed Christianity to something far different. With the invention of printing, ordinary men received copies of the Bible to be read in their homes—a radical departure from earlier times when men were not permitted to read it. Step by step (too many to portray in a brief survey) one change followed another until religion, once a man's entire life, became a Sunday affair. Sabbath church attendance was compulsory in the sense that public opinion compelled it. The man who refused to attend was forced to endure life among neighbors who soon made their opinions of him known.

There came the day of Charles Darwin with his famous book *The Origin of Species*. Science, with all its implications, reached into men's minds. One investigated fact after another became known as men delved into the life that surrounded them. Absolute "conclusions" that could not be disputed were disputed. The great institution of the Church which had done its best to stem the tide by burning at the stake men whose opinions differed, by suppressing and burning books that differed, could not halt what was to be. Religion, which once had been the maximum in men's lives, among vast

numbers who could not and would not be stifled and trampled, soon became a minimum in men's lives.

We come to our own day. Prescribed ritualism, just as it has existed for millions of faithful for centuries, still is practiced. Denominations, each with its own purposes, beliefs and methods, are still given occasional or frequent attention by other millions. This is good. For other millions, though, "religion" as it is generally interpreted has become, if not totally valueless, at least almost totally ineffective. Now and then campaigns are sponsored with such slogans as "Back to the Bible" or "Back to Christ." These have an appeal for and give spiritual warmth to countless numbers, but there still remain uncounted millions who, unstirred, are left spiritually cold. They simply do not find in churches of their acquaintance either intellectual or emotional satisfaction.

"Religion is more than Christianity!" What is your reaction to that statement? One person who heard that statement from my lips responded very interestingly. Having heard the statement, with a tone of surprise she replied, "Why, what do you mean by that?" I answered, "Are not the words self-evident in meaning? Are there not other religions besides Christianity?" She responded, "Why, yes, of course—but, after all, *they* are not to be compared. Christianity is the only religion worthy of becoming a world religion."

I would not quarrel with anyone holding her belief. I think she is wrong; she thinks I am wrong. We simply lack a basic common ground. My judgment may be in error, but I see in the view she represents an unintended exclusiveness that contains within it a feeling of superiority, and I see the expression of that superiority as one of the major reasons for the ineffectiveness of Christianity today.

Such an attitude reminds one of a meeting attended

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by Emerson in his day. An overzealous minister quoted certain passages from the Gospels and added that their equal was not to be found in the sacred books of any other religion. Mr. Emerson arose, so the story tells us, and said: "The gentleman's remarks only prove how narrowly he has read."

The attitude of superiority reminds one, also, of the overzealous minister who extolled the Lord's Prayer as the "perfect prayer given by Jesus which cannot be improved upon." Were such a minister to look into his Bible, he would find two so-called Lord's Prayers: one in Matthew 6:9-13; the other in Luke 11:2-4. Comparing them, he would find they are not identical; he would find, also, that neither is as Christianity has taught it to her children. Somewhere along the line some church authority must have felt that Jesus' prayer as recorded in the Bible was inferior, so took upon himself (or themselves) the duty of improving it. If one were to be literal, without irreverence one could raise the question whether the prayer as Christianity has taught it has a right to be called the *Lord's Prayer*.

Religion is more than Christianity! One needs only to know the meaning of the words religion and Christianity—one needs only to overcome prejudices and feelings of superiority—to recognize that not as a statement of opinion but as a fact. When one regards Christianity as "Religion" (meaning "The Religion"), when one allows that conviction and feeling to express itself, one all too frequently shares in the grievous error of forcing Christianity to be an influence that divides men instead of uniting them.

There is evolution in Christianity. Christianity cannot remain statically where it is today any more than it could remain where it was yesterday. A new world is in the making. If that world is to be a dream transformed into actuality, if it is to be "One World," then we

must all do our part in seeking out every prejudice and superiority that divides instead of unites.

Christian leaders proclaim the need of surgical operations instead of palliatives, pink pills and diluted blood in affairs economic, social and political. They are right. Christian leaders, however, ought to begin with Christianity! Exclusiveness which sets up superiorities ought to be superseded by inclusive, truly Christian deeds.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Imagine three men in a foxhole, soldiers fighting the cause of the United Nations. One is an Arab, a Mohammedan reared amidst his culture. One is a Chinese Confucianist. A third is an American Christian reared in a traditional church. Conversation in the foxhole turns to the question: "What are we as soldiers of the United Nations fighting for?" Laying aside what may or may not be the true answer, in our illustration the American speaks, saying: "The war is being fought for Christian principles." He means no harm, but at once the Arab's cultural and religious background of Mohammedanism stirs resentment in the breast. *Is he, a Mohammedan, fighting for Christian principles? Is the Chinese Confucianist? Hardly.*

If perchance that American had been of a liberal persuasion within Christianity, he would not have said what he did. Rather, he would have said, "The war is being fought for humanitarian principles." That is what the Christian meant, but he didn't say it. The liberal, by using the overarching word "humanitarian," expresses the spirit of inclusiveness. His spirit holds the United Nations soldiers united. The word Christian, being an exclusive term, though not meant to be, gives rise to dividing instead of uniting.

Granted, this illustration is imaginative, but the truth is that it represents a fact in life, not a theory. Our One World is not going to be a theory. Every word that

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divides men in this new One World must be replaced by a word that unites. prejudices, superiorities—no matter how reverently held—will need surgical operations. Christian leaders have a decision to make. Will Christianity with its present vocabulary lend itself to the Spirit of One World?

As we look back at the panorama of religious history, as we ponder the relation of today to tomorrow, every church must ask itself what part it wishes to play in tomorrow's evolution. Churches cannot remain statically where they are today even if they wish to. They must go backward or forward, there is no alternative. "Back to the Bible" and "Back to Christ" have an appeal to millions, but for vast numbers that appeal falls coldly upon minds and hearts.

Our task is not to tell others what they should do. Ours is our own. Religion is not a dead subject of yesterday. It is very much alive, especially as men and women dare to challenge the past in terms of the future. As for myself, I covet the kind of church that, recognizing Christianity for every bit of greatness it is, nevertheless sees religion as *more* than Christianity. I want the word "Unitarian" to mean the finest in the Christian tradition, but, wanting that, I want to exclude nothing that is finest in each of all the other great religions in this world.

Just as literature knows no barriers; just as art knows no barriers, just as science looks upon research and investigation accepting everything of value that is given without regard to nationality, race or color, so I want my church to accept from the world of humanity all that is of value without regard to sectarian religious labels. I want to use the word "Christian" when "Christian" is meant. But I wish that all men might use the word humanitarian when they mean humanitarian, for in

using that word the Spirit of ~~One World~~ will be less divided and more united.

I should like to see the chancel of my church contain the Christian Bible, of course; I should like it to contain the bibles of all the world's great religions. To have the sacred Scriptures of all religions in our chancel would represent, symbolically, our inheritance of the wisdom of the ages, be it Mohammedan, Buddhist, Confucianist, Hindu or whatever. I want my church to open its doors, my people to open their minds, that there may be no prejudices to keep us from attaining the fullest stature of spiritual growth.

It is my conviction that there is in this world a reservoir of power that is being dissipated into sectarian channels of competition. That power ought to be and can be harnessed in co-operation. Overarching all men is the common denominator—Man! When we unite as men, as members of the one great fellowship that excludes none and includes all—HUMANITY—when we give to *that* word the reverence and sacredness it alone can command from us all, we shall have a true spiritual basis for One World.

“Religion is more than Christianity!”

TWO STREAMS IN RELIGION

16

Two Streams
IN RELIGION

HAVE you ever found yourself discussing religion with someone of quite different views from your own—and apparently getting nowhere? Probably this is one of the most common experiences: two minds tackling a question that involves religion and failing to find any common ground, each failing, even, to understand what the other is driving at. We have all had the feeling, after a long argument that generated more heat than light, that it's not much use arguing about religion. Many people whose views are fixed and unalterable, realizing that others have quite different ideas that are also fixed, have long since decided never to argue about or even to discuss religion, for the effort is fruitless. Some of my Catholic and Christian Scientist friends are among those who take this view. Others, with no religious convictions at all, seek to avoid such encounters, for they have come to feel there is something about religion itself that defeats intelligent discussion. It is an unwritten law of our polite society that religion is a subject to be avoided; it is in bad taste and he who brings it up is looked on as a bit of a boor or, at least, a bore.

There are still others, though, to whom religion is a

matter of fundamental importance in human life, a subject we cannot afford to avoid. Many of our vital problems, at first sight not religious at all, lead straight to a religious issue when followed through. It may be that this is what General MacArthur had in mind when he made his remarkable statement at Tokyo Bay that the problem of the world's future peace is basically theological. Some of us see that religion, despite its follies, is still central to the good life, and that avoiding it because of the disagreements it causes doesn't help to bring clarity to a confused business. Some of us believe that religion is so vital in human affairs it is worth the effort of bringing to it our intelligence, our reason and our patience.

Now, if there is something about religion itself that somehow turns discussions into arguments, if religion is the kind of thing that two people can discuss for hours without leaving their respective mental cubbyholes and standing on the same ground or even looking into the other fellow's corner, then there must be some good reason for this and it is worth inquiring what it is. We are not ready to admit there is any field of human concern that is impervious to a reasonable approach, any field where men are not freed by a new grasp on truth.

It was a shock to many to read what a leading American minister in a great denomination recently said about Christianity, after America had loosed the atomic bomb on two crowded Japanese cities and Christian leaders hastened to justify the act in terms of expediency and at the same time predict doom for the human race because, they claim, it has not the moral intelligence to handle such vast power. This minister had the courage to say that it was clear to him, and always had been clear to him, that Christianity had little or nothing to do with the religion of Jesus. His remark suggests some interesting lines of thought; one of them with which we are con-

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cerned is that religion to different people can mean utterly and totally different things, having nothing in common with each other except the name. It is possible to discuss it and argue about it, to get excited and even angry about it, and all the time to have in mind something completely different from what the other fellow means. Yes, you will say, there are certainly many different religions in the world and people can argue from now till Michaelmas, without end or good result, but my meaning is deeper than that. I am suggesting that in religion itself, in every particular religion, there are two streams of meaning, two streams of thought and outlook, two attitudes that cut across the usual lines that divide us, effectively opening a chasm between men. *This chasm is hard to breach and especially so when we are not aware it is there.* Two streams in religion! Here is a possible ray of light upon the endless and futile dogmatic squabbles that have turned so many away from religion in sheer boredom. Here is light, furthermore, upon those vastly more important human realities: religious persecution, dogmatism and resistance to human progress in science and society. Here, possibly, is light upon the nature of religion itself and the workings of the human mind.

What are these two streams in religion? Let me illustrate them in action before I try to say what they are. In Mr. Lewis Mumford's great work, *The Condition of Man*, there is a penetrating observation, and quite a simple one, about Roman Catholicism. "By the twelfth century the Catholic Church had been transformed from a body of believers, as it was in the Apostolic age, to a machine for manufacturing salvation, salvation was protected by exclusive monopoly patents: the Christian dogmas." From a fellowship of believers to a machine for salvation! Here in a nutshell is the revolution which has not been limited to the Catholic Church but has

occurred in one way or another in every religion the world has known. How shall we describe it? Shall we call it a change from the religion of the spirit of the letter, from the religion of actual experience to a second-hand religion of authority and tradition? the difference between religion that is creative and religion that is only received and passively accepted? Yes, all of this and more is true. Something happens in every religion at some time that makes observant people aware there are two streams in all religious experience, forever flowing side by side, forever struggling with each other for dominance over the human heart.

How shall we know them when we see them? At a distance they are not hard to tell apart; it is easy to trace their course in history. The difficulty comes when we try to tell them apart in our own minds and hearts and in the live religious issues of our own time in which our own emotions are tied up. One of the perennial streams in religion flows down the ages — the stream of custom and conformity. So powerful is it that none is free of its undertow. It gathers its strength from the sheer weight of centuries of tradition; it carries along vast numbers of people by its very momentum; the hunger of the human heart for certainty adds to its strength. This is the stream of dogmas, creeds and theological systems, backed by divine authority and by their own majestic claims. This is the stream of rituals and ceremonies, of sacraments and mythologies, running deeply in men's hearts in grooves made smooth by immemorial custom handed down from generation to generation and loved because familiar. On the breast of this stream are found the millions to whom religion is simply "revealed religion," to whom religion is nothing else. These are seldom moved to inquire very deeply into the foundations of the religion they profess to follow; it is enough that their priests and ministers are

learned in these matters. The believers are happy to follow the guidance of these "experts" in religion, a sphere apart from and above the rest of human experience. The authority of the experts is accepted without question.

Very different is the second stream. Its sources are as far back in human experience, its flow is as steady, though usually not as powerful, as those of the first stream. This second stream is a good deal harder to capture and describe in words, for it is very elusive. It has been called "the religion of the spirit" by men conscious of its grandeur and depth, but "religion of the spirit" doesn't say definitely enough what this great stream in religion is and does and has meant to mankind. Better had we say "creative religion," "free religion," "the religion of the heart and mind," "the living essence of religion," "religious experience as an immediate reality," "the religion of the eternal quest," continually breaking the fetters of tradition and seeking new paths of expression. Still we have not captured in words the fullness and richness of it.

Perhaps the best way to understand this second stream is to see it in action, as it has flowed its invigorating way through the affairs of men. How has it been expressed? First of all, the quest for new truth and a better understanding of life and its problems has always been found in the main current of this stream of religion. Wherever men have sought to guide their religion with reason, to arm it with a love of truth, whatever the cost in emotional comfort, there has flowed the stream of essential religion. In this stream have been the heretics of all times, heretics such as Jesus and Socrates and all the great company of men who have disbelieved in order to believe more honestly and deeply. Here is the host of martyrs with such loyalty to the light that was in them that for them even death was preferable to the

empty conformity that lay always open for them. These men and women poured the red blood of courage into this stream of real religion. Here, also, are the dissenters of later ages, when men were no longer executed for their beliefs, who accepted poverty and ostracism that religion might become freer, more joyous and more creative of the good life on the good earth, for their children if not for themselves. The quest for new and broader truth has marked the stream of essential religion.

Then the thirst for perfection, for ethical and moral betterment, has sent into this stream an ever-fresh flow of life. The famous and the nameless men and women of character, who lived their religion of integrity, compassion and appreciation and are quietly living it around and among us, the voices of the prophets calling men to new and brotherly ways of dealing with each other, to a new vision of their responsibilities for their less fortunate brother humans; the company of reformers who see and work for human institutions that shall keep up with human advances in knowledge and social sensitivity—all these express the thirst for ethical and social improvement that is so strong a current in the stream of genuine religion and without which there is no religion worthy of a man's time and thought.

What of the perennial urge to fellowship among men, always breaking ancient bonds and transcending old taboos that human beings might enjoy an ever broader, warmer and more inclusive friendship? Is this a part of creative religion, too? Here is the tie that binds the comradely spirits of all ages in one line of descent, a line that has meant an ever new and more generous outlook for religion. The urge to fellowship above traditional barriers has always been a challenge to that other stream in religion which seeks to constrain and narrow the association of men to include only the believers in this or that little creed, forgetting the great common ground of

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life on which we all stand, ignoring the common humanity of which we are all a part.

These, then, are the two continuing streams in all religion—the stream of custom and tradition, and the stream of new, creative, spiritual life. They flow side by side in every age and they can be found in every church and sect and even in the human heart. Though they are always present together there has never been a time when they did not conflict, and out of this conflict between custom and criticism there have been born the great forward movements in man's religious thinking.

It is of the utmost importance to the religion of the future for us not only to recognize these two streams, which have always gone into the making of religion, but also to realize how closely related they are to each other. It would be delightfully simple if religious progressives could seize upon the creative stream of criticism and seek to follow it and it alone. After all, this is the stream with the forward direction, and do we not owe to it all that is open, broad and free in the religious life of the race? Many have sincerely believed they could declare war upon the stream of custom and tradition, upholding the superior values of the second stream, but the attempt to separate the two streams in religion has never quite come off; there is usually something artificial and forced about the result. Even liberalism has a tradition! It would seem that man cannot live by dissent alone, that all human life—religion, too—needs some stabilities. We human beings are by nature yea-sayers as well as nay-sayers. What I am saying is that religion is never all settled and orthodox, nor is it ever completely creative and prophetic. These two streams seem to accompany each other in a kind of partnership; the partnership has its conflicts, and magnificent ones, which it must have if thought is to remain alive, but the partnership continues throughout the conflict.

How shall we understand this strange thing about religion, this facing in two directions at once, forever the backward and the forward look and seldom either one alone? The paradox does not end there. It is strange enough that these two perennial streams forever flow side by side and are found together in every human crisis great and small, but it is still more strange that one stream seems to flow continually into the other: the creative and the critical always tend in the course of time to become rigid and settled dogma; the free and open fellowship turns, with time, into the rigid organization with its entrance fee, its blackball and its orthodoxy. The process has been well expressed in this way: "When an idea becomes established in thought, it almost invariably runs through a well defined cycle. As an experience it takes shape in an idea, as an idea it expands into a principle, as a principle it hardens into a dogma, as a dogma it takes refuge in an institution that has a vested interest. Finally it may issue in symbol and become merely an object of superstition and adoration. Thus what began as an idea that aroused men to action becomes at the last an anesthetic that lulls men to sleep" So it has gone in religion: the cross on which the martyrs died becomes the crucifix before which the superstitious kneel and await a magical salvation.

How shall we understand this? Isn't it a monstrous thing that everything fresh and free and creative seems inevitably to settle down and become rigid; that the courageous heresy of one day becomes the respectable orthodoxy of the next; that the stream of life seems endlessly to lose itself in the all-engulfing stream of the living death that is conformity? It may seem so at first sight, but the thought loses its sting when we notice that the movement is not all in a downward and backward direction. There is also a reaction the other way! One of the genuine miracles of human life, at which

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we should never cease to marvel, is the miracle that brings a new turn, a creative spark, a convulsion of new life out of even the most settled and solid orthodoxy! It happened in the old Hebrew religion, when the great prophets of Israel rose from the ranks of the people who were oppressed by a religion of idolatry and superstition and called in magnificent anger for a new ethical religion of justice and mercy in tones that still inspire us today. It happened in ancient Greece when out of the priestly religion of the mysteries and the cults there sounded the rational voice of Plato and the high ethical teachings of Aristotle. It happened again in the Middle Ages when John Huss, Wyclif, Servetus and Luther excoriated the Roman Church for its corruption and ceremonialism and preached a new faith in the inward spirit as the foundation stone of religion. The modern age has seen its Galileo, its Bruno, its Voltaire, its Tom Paine, its Channing, John Dewey and Darrow, each in his own way holding out against the deadly pull of the stream of custom and tradition, each giving his own impetus to the creative stream of critical intelligence and ethical vision. Continually the new rises from the old and refuses to let it be! Forever, the creative genius of the human spirit challenges itself and sets itself new goals.

The whole story of religion has been largely an endless struggle between the theological and priestly stream and the ethical, prophetic stream—the settled and the unsettled, the certainties and the doubts—and is this not the essence of life itself? Are we ever free anywhere, do we ever want to be free, of that tension, that struggle between the two realities of our experience, the two strands in human experience that give life both its steadiness and its zest, its adventure and its rest? We could not be free of it if we would, for such is the nature of the life we live, such is the tension and conflict at the

heart of religion, if it is alive and responsive to human needs. The free man, the free spirit, is he who accepts the two streams in his life and keeps the tension between them alive. Here our responsibility becomes plain. The vital power of the stream of tradition and custom can simply be taken for granted. It is always there and needs no added power from the efforts of the living, but the tension that is the secret of life, the tension that spells the difference between static and dynamic religion, that tension is always in jeopardy. It can be maintained only by the grace of the living—by the play of their imagination, the sting of their doubting, the thrust of their independent thought, the courage of their vision.

UNITARIANISM: A MODERN ADVENTURE

ANGUS CAMERON

17

UNITARIANISM:

A

Modern Adventure

INTRODUCTION

A RELIGION for modern man must incorporate a faith broad enough to include all the creative currents of our time and deep enough to support the highest hopes and aspirations of contemporary men. This kind of faith is not merely a private need or a denominational need. It is a universal need. The old certainties have faded, the familiar landmarks have disappeared. Man is drifting. The cautious ones advise retreat to the calm of an anchorage in well-charted waters, but "new occasions teach new duties." We must set forth on the troubled waters of modern life in the confident faith that new realms remain to be conquered for the human spirit. The watchword must be "advance." The tortured peoples of the world are ready for a positive, forward-looking faith.

The incentive to deal with this subject comes primarily from the ferment known as "Unitarian Advance" which is now working within the Unitarian denomina-

tion. The Unitarian tradition is one that in the past has encouraged pioneer efforts in religion. It is one that has always recognized that a free man's faith is a growing faith. Unitarians have never been bound by a fixed creed. They have always accepted the principle of the free mind. Their leaders have believed that "the inquiring mind of man is the acme of creation." The present crucial period of history is a challenge to relive this heritage of faith and to make it a compelling power in the service of human freedom and welfare.

Beyond Protestantism

The leaders of the Reformation several centuries ago rejected the Roman Catholic Church as the supreme authority, but they substituted the Bible as final authority and infallible guide. God's revelation was given in His Word. This new center of revelation became as external and legalistic as that of the Church. Theoretically, each man had the right of private judgment in interpreting the Scriptures. Actually, he had to come away from his examination of the Scriptures with the interpretation of Luther or Calvin. The spirit of intolerance was still as strong as ever.

The Reformation did challenge the absolute authority of Rome. It emphasized private judgment and opened the way to more radical developments. For these reasons, it was on the side of progress, at that time, but the reformers retained the main structure of Christian theology based firmly on revelation. They merely substituted the Bible for the Church. The right of private judgment was very limited. Individual judgment was still chained to revelation.

An example of intolerance equal to that of the Inquisition was the treatment of Michael Servetus. This man turned his reason towards the Scriptures and came to the conclusion that they contained no warrant for

the doctrine of the Trinity. He wrote a book that developed this thesis. John Calvin ordered this pioneer Unitarian arrested in Geneva, and Servetus was burned in that city in 1553.

Both Luther and Calvin distrusted, nay, despised, the free exercise of reason. From Luther's point of view, salvation came through the individual's faith in God's revelation. Men had enough freedom to be saved. It was individual salvation in a supernatural world. Luther had little interest in this world. He said that temporal affairs should not concern men; they must be urgent about their souls' salvation. Their rulers were given them by God, and should be accepted as God's agents on earth. This emphasis in Lutheranism on individual salvation, coupled with the unquestioning acceptance of earthly rulers, has led Dean Inge to remark recently that Luther was responsible for Hitler, and there is a large grain of truth in that statement.

John Calvin had a somewhat different emphasis. Speaking broadly, Luther emphasized salvation by faith; Calvin, salvation by works. He laid stress on the civil calling, industry and thrift. In the theocracy Calvin established in Geneva, every minute of life was subjected to earnest scrutiny. All work was done for God, and must always be under the supervision of religion. Thus, as it has been pointed out, a religious motive was given to the forces of competition and production in the emerging capitalism. Originally under the closest supervision of, and linked with, religious discipline, these economic forces soon threw off the restraint of religion and became ends in themselves.

Let us attempt to sort out some of the strands in contemporary Protestantism. We can distinguish two general trends. First, there is fundamentalism. This position is based on "the faith once and for all delivered. . . ." There is one final revelation in God's Word. In this

general stream we find various sects, all accepting God's Word as final revelation, and accepting also, of course, the traditional theology.

Second, there is the general movement known as modernism, where the keynotes are compromise and adjustment. Here we find Protestantism attempting to meet the challenge of scientific knowledge, biblical criticism, the theory of evolution, the science of comparative religions. Modernists, in varying degree, attempt to come to terms with this new knowledge. They try to preserve the traditional point of view through reinterpretation. They would pour the new wine into the old containers. They are reluctant to accept wholeheartedly the new knowledge and the new point of view as the basis for a new religious venture. Their yearning for the old authorities betrays itself from time to time. After being driven from one position to another, they usually make their final stand on the historical figure of Jesus.

However, it should be said that men holding this mediating point of view have exerted a humane influence on the old theology. In less urgent times, their work might have been sufficient, but it is doubtful if their compromises, however well-meant, can suffice to salvage religion for our time.

Challenges have arisen from two different quarters: first, from a rejuvenated fundamentalism; and second, from the secular authoritarian faiths of communism and fascism. Compromise has proved a rather futile policy for dealing with authoritarian political regimes. There is little reason to believe that it will be less futile in dealing with the authoritarians in religion.

It must be admitted that, at the present time, the authoritarian spirit is in control of organized Protestantism. This is true of its most representative body, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. In late 1944, the Universalists applied for membership

in this federation of Protestant churches. Their application was turned down. It must be remembered that the Universalists, like the Unitarians, do not accept Jesus as God. So it would appear that orthodox belief about the nature of Jesus is still the basis for membership in a "Christian" organization. We readily admit that churches have the right to combine on their own terms and to exclude others that do not meet their doctrinal requirements, but this emphasis on "sound doctrine" betrays a little bit of the spirit that burned Servetus. I think it may be well to note in passing that the United Church of Canada, which is often referred to as the most liberal religious group in Canada, voted unconditionally against accepting the Universalists as members of the Federal Council.

Fundamentalism is now in control of Protestantism. This is especially true since the upsurge of neo-supernaturalism or neo-Calvinism. In this movement, the changes are rung on the pessimistic creed of John Calvin. From this point of view, human reason is despised. Man is seen as a weak and sinful creature, who can do nothing to save himself or his world. He must wait on God, who, if He sees fit, will bring salvation. This loss of faith in man and in the competence of reason betrays a failure of nerve in the face of what are admittedly troublous times for the human venture.

I have little hope that the future will be any less troublous if we surrender our freedom and reason to those who reject every progressive idea since Erasmus.

Confronted by this resurgence of obscurantism and authoritarianism, the compromising spirit of modernism is of little help. Here are the real alternatives in religion: we retreat to the citadel of absolute authority, surrendering our faith in reason and freedom as we enter therein (the path followed by many fair-weather liberals); or we launch boldly forth on a great new reli-

gious venture, with a full-blooded belief in human freedom and reason, cherishing a still unconquerable, if somewhat chastened, faith in man.

To sum up this hasty review of current religious trends:

There is no hope in Roman Catholicism. It is out of sympathy with science, freedom and democracy.

There is no hope in Protestant fundamentalism. It elevates ignorance to a virtue. In a sophisticated form, it is held by people who should know better.

There is little hope in modernism. It is the spirit of compromise, and we are in a situation where very little good will be gained by compromise, nor will "looking the other way" prevent the forces of reaction from marching triumphantly to power. Dr. Roger Babson's ideal church can no longer have any appeal for intelligent men of good will. His idea of a church has been paraphrased as "One which lures tired moderns once a week to a service exhibiting the twin virtues of brevity and absence of theological and socially radical preaching." That description fits many of the so-called "liberal" churches of our time and reminds us of the clubs that discourage members from discussing politics or religion—the two subjects now requiring the best in human thought and effort.

We must remember that the spokesmen for reaction in politics and religion are many, and powerful, and vocal. Unless they are combated vigorously, they may win the day and lead us quickly back along a road pioneered out of the wilderness by many brave spirits who thought highly of man and his possibilities, and who believed he should be free. Those who are in the tradition of a free religion can do no less than battle on the basic is-

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sues of human freedom and the competence of human reason. They must be ready to fight whenever and wherever these values are threatened.

The Reformation was a protest against the absolute authority of an institution. It did help to free the human spirit from the bonds of arbitrary authority, but its vital impulse has been lost, and its spiritual descendants today, holding to an outworn past, are weak and divided. To the great majority, the dogmas of Protestantism no longer have compelling power, nor do its forms have the breadth and freedom to convey the new wine of our time.

That is why we must go beyond Protestantism and seek a rebirth of real freedom. That way lies man's best hope for a faith that will lead not to frustration but to fulfillment.

The Invitation to Freedom

Science gradually threw off the shackles of religious authority; the spirit of inquiry made headway against the power of organized bigotry. This process led into the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period, a large measure of freedom was won. To name only a few of the stalwart battlers for this cause, we mention Erasmus, Milton, Locke, Voltaire and Paine. In this struggle for freedom, the Unitarian movement played an important role. It consistently stood for freedom of conscience and reason. We do well to honor the memory of those of our own household of faith who fought the good fight of free men—such men as Servetus, Socinus, Priestley, Channing, Emerson and Parker.

Just before World War I, the struggle for human freedom seemed to be won in large areas of the Western world. Let's recall the situation: The Roman Catholic Church was making its usual claim of being the one true

Church and the ultimate source of authority, but in most countries in the West its effective power had waned. Orthodox Protestantism still held the citadel of authority and thundered against modernism and science.

Large sections of Protestantism, however, were coming to terms with the new knowledge. Some were moving rapidly, others slowly and unwillingly, but the whole structure of medieval theology and spiritual absolutism appeared to be doomed.

We scarcely need to be reminded that, in two short decades after that war, the principles that gave rise to the intellectual revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the political revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had been challenged by authoritarian regimes, both of the Left and Right.

There have been many individuals in Europe who were old-fashioned enough to reject the "new freedom" of the authoritarian states. Most of these believers in human liberty found their ultimate freedom in concentration camps, and in death.

Furthermore, we must record that in the Western democracies, in the period between wars, the values of intellectual liberty and of a free society have been questioned and ridiculed. Writers have used reason to prove that reason cannot be trusted. There has been a "revolt against reason." The Calvinist doctrine of the depravity of man has been revived. Men are told that intelligence is unimportant, that reason is useless and that they must fall back on revelation. Some of our best minds have been infected and have produced a literature of pessimism and defeatism. On a lower level, various sects are reaping a harvest of bewildered individuals who seem willing to believe in anything—except the light of reason. The conviction that man cannot use his intelligence to any avail is one of the most disturbing features of our time.

The supernaturalists say: Be still, and wait upon Divine Revelation. The Roman Catholics say: Return to Rome. The modernists, still yearning for certainty, are being pushed from one position to another and some of them are retreating to the strongholds of authority.

The spiritual climate poses a great problem for human freedom, because, when reason is rejected, outside authority is substituted. The Nazis had their Führer; the Communists, the party line. The Roman Catholic Church has its Pope and the hierarchy. The neo-supernaturalists and fundamentalists have the Revealed Word. In all this, we see authority replacing freedom, and men's minds being led back to the obscurantism of the Dark Ages.

Outside science, men do not want facts. They live by opinion, and there is a general servility to the opinions of masters and the general public. Men dislike having their cherished opinions brought under rational survey. It is easier to accept the "going" opinion or prejudice and then defend it passionately.

Still, men need the discipline of facts. They need the discipline of free discussion. Therefore, intellectual freedom is not a luxury. It is a social necessity. J. S. Mill recognized that the real question was where to place the limit between individual independence and social control. This was the principal question of human affairs. He laid down the general rule that "social control must come where the exercise of freedom injures another." Beyond that, there should be the widest possible freedom of thought and action. This freedom was not to be considered so much a natural right as a necessary discipline and the indispensable basis for human advance.

At the present time, Mill's argument should appeal to us with renewed force. We need the discipline of facts in a world where newspapers, churches, schools

and political parties (with some honorable exceptions in each category) are guilty of substituting opinion and prejudice for fact. We need the discipline of free discussion and the exercise of human reason, when the alternative is authority, external and absolute. It may be the authority of a divine revelation of Church or Scripture, or the one-man rule of a dictator. Whichever it is, it means that human fallibility is being raised to an absolute power and put beyond the reach of reasoned examination and critical appraisal.

Today, an invitation to freedom is a call to battle. It calls us to battle against obscurantism and arbitrary authority, wherever it seeks to express itself—in religion, politics or education. More than that, it calls us to struggle against tendencies in ourselves that refuse the responsibilities of freedom and the discipline of reason.

We must struggle against the forces, resurgent in our time, that would quench human freedom. More than that, we must use our freedom, while there is yet time, to build a world in which economic and social organization will serve the ends of individual freedom and welfare.

The traditional goals of those who fought for liberty are still valid. Intellectual freedom, tolerance of heresies, civil and religious liberty, freedom of scientific inquiry, faith in reason—these are still beacon lights for the human spirit. These goals must be kept before us today and fitted into the framework of our modern world. This is a battle that should enlist all men of good will.

Before we can assure the next generation, in the words of J. B. Bury, that "freedom of thought is an axiom of human progress," we must win again the right to tell them this. We must have a new birth of freedom.

If we fail here, we shall have betrayed the cause for which the noblest men and women in all ages have

risked "life, fortune and sacred honor." We shall have been traitors to the cause of a truly liberated humanity. Such treason is another name for irreligion.

The Scientific Method

The scientific method is not generally taught in our schools. It has not yet permeated men's minds. Science is still relegated to the menial role of dealing with material things. It is valued primarily for its practical results. Men have not yet absorbed the fact that here is free human intelligence at work, nor have they understood the way by which it arrives at its reliable conclusions.

Science starts from particular facts given by sense experience. From a number of such facts a general rule is arrived at that includes those facts. That rule is a working hypothesis. If new facts are discovered that do not fit the hypothesis, a *new* hypothesis is formulated wide enough to take in the new facts. The scientific method, then, may be summed up briefly in three steps: observation, hypothesis and verification. By verification we mean testing the hypothesis by reference to experience.

This method gives us our clearest example of human intelligence at work. By this procedure we have secured the most accurate information available about the world in which we live, and we must remember that the most important part of the scientific method is its constant reference back to experience. "To look, and then, to look again" might be considered the motto of science.

An interesting and amusing example of the "orthodox" appeal to authority rather than to observation was the long controversy referred to by Professor J. B. Pratt as to whether the rooster came from long eggs or round eggs. Aristotle had said that "long and pointed eggs are female; those that are round or more rounded at the narrow end are male." Writers on natural history lined

up on either side, and verbal battles were fought over this problem. Apparently no one ever thought of hatching out a long egg and a round egg to see what would happen!

The Roman Catholic Church had accepted the science of Aristotle and backed his system with the full weight of its authority. Science consisted chiefly of deductions made from Aristotle's premises. Then a shift in emphasis came with Galileo. Aristotle had said that the velocity of a falling body was proportionate to its mass. Galileo, by dropping different weights, discovered that Aristotle was completely wrong. His test of an hypothesis was to see what happened. Later, Galileo became convinced that the earth was not the fixed center of the universe around which the sun revolved. Rather, the earth revolved around the sun. For this heretical view he was haled before the Inquisition, made to recant and condemned to repeat the seven Penitential Psalms at regular intervals for seven years.

However, the way had been opened for science as we now know it. From this time on, reliable knowledge was to be tested by reference to experience, by observing what happened. It is this method that has provided us with a reliable way to gain knowledge about the world in which we live.

Perhaps someone says: "That's all very well, but man does not live by bread alone, and although science has given us power and control it has not given us peace for our hearts." Obviously not. Furthermore, we have seen that the increased power may be used for evil ends—and, in the realm of ends, we come to that aspect of human experience we call religion. Does science have to do merely with the means of life, and religion with the ends? Is there a conflict between science and religion? If not, what is the relationship?

First of all, it would seem that religion must come to

terms with science's reliable knowledge and realize that no scripture can disprove it. In other words, religion must accept the knowledge of the natural world that has been revealed by science. This knowledge presents a completely different picture of the universe, and of man's place in it, from that of the prescientific age. We see a vast universe in which space and time are curiously interrelated. We have a universe that operates uniformly and regularly on the basis of dependable laws. It is a universe that is understood almost as an organism, with levels of development. It is a universe of creativity, a world of lifeless matter and living things, composed of one "world stuff," and the processes of evolution are always at work. There is a capacity for progressive development. Instead of the static, finished universe of the old theologians, we have a dynamic, living universe.

This is a tremendous conception. Modern religion accepts this view of the universe. It could not hope even to interest modern man if it remained tied to the old viewpoint. Nearly a hundred years ago, Emerson said. "The religion that fears science insults God and commits suicide." Some people may think there is much lost in the new point of view. I think there is much gained. Man can know and feel that he is a part of a living universe. There are tremendous possibilities in this conception for the modern religious outlook. A religion for modern man, then, must accept the reliable knowledge of science to form its picture of the world in which we live.

Again, religion could learn much from the spirit and the method of science. Science deserts absolute certainty as a guide. Religion has usually sought absolutes. For example, the hypothesis of Einstein supersedes the theory of Newton. It does not cancel it; it simply adds to it. This process is considered a victory for science. If a religious belief, however, is undermined by advancing

knowledge and a new hypothesis seems necessary, this is considered a defeat for religion. Here is an indication of the difference between science and religion, and in this sense—the willingness to accept new knowledge—science must be considered more religious than much that is called religion.

Any pretense to finality or absolute authority is spiritual arrogance whether the claim is advanced by church, priest or ecclesiastical council. Edwin Arlington Robinson once wrote: "The world is a kind of spiritual kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell 'God' with the wrong blocks." Men cannot be blamed for trying, but the trouble arises when they think they have a combination of blocks eternally true and forever fixed.

Religion would do well to adopt the spirit and humility of science. In experimental science, men work from experience. They observe what is and then establish a hypothesis. When that method was applied to the natural world, the wisdom of the ages was shown to be not such great wisdom.

If this be true in regard to the natural world, the motion of stars and the lives of plants and animals, why should it not be true in the realm of human nature and social organization? Our ideas in these realms are accepted most uncritically and rarely exposed to rational examination. I am suggesting that the scientific method or the way of intelligence should so permeate our attitude toward life that we should develop a critical attitude towards all vital human interests. That is lacking today. Scientists try to understand what is happening and then formulate a philosophy. In most areas today we are given our philosophy and then try to torture the facts to fit it. I think we must absorb and incorporate, as part of our whole way of looking at the world, the general approach of the scientist—the way of critical in-

telligence. We must have the same reverence for truth, the same respect for what is, and we must accept the discipline of facts. Above all, we must be willing to forego the search for absolute certainty.

Of course, this puts a tremendous responsibility on man, and I am not certain man either likes it or will accept it. I do think, though, that the truly religious man of the future will accept this responsibility to use his intelligence and reason and will demand the freedom to do so. He will have a sense of the ongoing process of which he is a part, a deep conviction of its creative nature and a desire to be in harmony with it. His religion will tell him he can never serve the high ends of life by denying his intelligence or essential freedom.

When that religious revolution takes place we shall have a union of knowledge and piety, if you like, a "union of science and sanctity." We shall have a new harmony of age-old interests and quests of the human race, joined with a new conception of the world and man's place in it. I am convinced that man will also gain a new and vital sense of what other generations meant by "loving and serving God."

The Great Devotion

At this point I shall repeat that the stimulus to prepare this statement came from a movement within the Unitarian denomination known as Unitarian Advance. As the basis for advance an attempt has been made to set down, for our time, the "uniting elements of Unitarian belief."

I have no desire to emphasize the denominational label. I am concerned only with the Unitarian movement, as such, in so far as it maintains its traditional role of expressing a vital, living and growing religion. I believe the denomination will wax or wane as it either

meets or avoids the issues of a religious faith for modern man.

This statement then, is intended to fill out, to some extent, the framework of *A Provisional Statement of Uniting Elements of Unitarian Belief*. These uniting elements are stated as follows:

"Individual freedom of belief." This presupposes intellectual freedom.

"Discipleship to advancing truth"; later in the statement we read that Unitarians "accept the discipline and evidence of science and are willing to share its methods and humility." This is an acceptance of the scientific method and spirit.

"The democratic process in human relations."

"Universal brotherhood, undivided by nation, race or creed."

"Allegiance to the cause of a united world community." This, of course, is the inevitable outcome of all that has gone before. The conviction that mankind is one leads to the attempt to build a community of mankind.

To be effective, these elements of belief must grip us and call forth our commitment and devotion—but, you ask, commitment and devotion to what?

Intellectual freedom is not an end in itself. The scientific method is not an end in itself. The democratic process is not an end in itself, nor are universal brotherhood and a world community ends in themselves. These are all means to the fullest development of the human potential of each individual and also the means to secure the fullest contribution of each individual. Is the fullest development of each individual, then, an end in itself? I think we should recognize that, for many modern men, it is.

We should also grant that, in so believing, these men

are truly religious. It must be said that no man who does not have this attitude towards man and his quest for fulfillment in this world can be called religious in our sense of the word. To men who have this reverence for human personality and a desire to seek a world in which there will be a greater fulfillment of the human potential in all men, we should extend the hand of religious fellowship. For them, religion is "the shared quest for the good life," now, on this planet.

However, there are other men who, going all the way with the group mentioned above, yet seek for the objective of their highest devotion something beyond any known system of values, something beyond any known form of social organization. While reverencing personality, they reserve their last devotion for something beyond personality. It is at this point that we arrive at the growing edge of religious thinking. We cannot expect to achieve finality but, once again, we may outline a point of view. Here, of course, it would be customary to introduce God as the object of the great devotion of those who seek something beyond man or anything man can now visualize.

We must be careful, though. The word "God" is a much misused term, a greatly debased symbol. It is used in many religious circles in a sense that is definitely harmful to the religious quest as we see it. For example, "God" is cheapened by association with various limited and parochial ideas and ideals. Thus we have the identification of God with the aims and purposes of a nation or group. This is simply a reversion to a primitive religious response. A tribal God is just another idol. Many men have reacted against naïve and primitive conceptions of God and object to the use of the word at all. This protest is a rebellion against unhealthy ideas of God which are still part of much thinking in religion.

Certainly I think a modern man when he tries to find

the "God of his fathers" is on a hopeless quest. More than that, he is shutting himself off from a true sense of God in our time. It is my feeling that we have not yet won the right to use the word "God" in any real sense. I think that time may come, and I shall try to indicate the complete change in point of view that must come first.

I have pointed out that Protestantism retained, practically unchanged, the framework and ideas of traditional Christian theology. These ideas still permeate men's minds. They are still part of the intellectual and emotional atmosphere of the Western world. Few escape their influence. We are steeped in them in our youth, and they leave their mark on us, despite the fact that they may be overlaid by education, reading and experience.

It seems to me that the traditional Christian theology presents a view of the world and of man that confuses men on the vital issues of our day and tends to hide from them the God in their midst. Let me outline very briefly the framework of orthodox Christian theology:

God put man and woman, who were sinless beings, on the earth in a perfect setting.

They sinned through eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

Their sin was inherited by all succeeding generations. Hence we have the concept of the innate sinfulness of man.

God sent His Son to earth, a man-god, without sin, who died upon the Cross, taking upon himself the sins of all mankind.

This provided a way of salvation for all men. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." This meant salvation for the soul in some afterlife. This is

the great dramatic myth that has been the background of the religious life of the Western world. It still provides the framework of most thinking about religion. It presupposes a two-story universe, with the earth at its center. God is in control and is thought of as an absolute monarch or a heavenly father.

Our Unitarian conception of the world and man's place in it is diametrically in opposition to this traditional view at every point. First, our knowledge of history and our glimpses of prehistory indicate that man's beginnings were lowly. He bore the marks of the brute as he began a long, slow, tortuous ascent. Then creatures such as we emerged, at first crude natives of the forest. Man's powers grew and he passed through the hunting stage to the development of agriculture. Then, through invention and new material resources, came a more complex form of life. Interwoven with this evolution were the growth of mind, the struggle for freedom and the dawn of conscience. Finally, we see man extending his efforts to creative art and the realm of conscious reflection.

This is not a story of continuous progress. There have been ups and downs in history, and there is very little evidence of the sure piloting of any deity. It seems to have been an uncharted course, rough and hazardous, with impending peril never far from man's consciousness—but there *has* been growth.

Again, the scientists who are investigating the nature of the world in which man lives see a universe that operates regularly and uniformly according to dependable laws. They see order in the universe. They think of the universe almost as an organism in which creativity plays the chief role. Here we sense a process of building something new on lower forms. Man is a child of this process and in him has evolved a world of conscious, aspiring beings. In man, the capacity for progressive development

has reached a conscious level. Man becomes a directing agent in the creative process.

This conception turns the traditional theology upside down. The Golden Age is not in the past; man's great future is being created now. We know something of where man has been; now he must assume responsibility for where he is going. His so-called "sin" of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge is his greatest virtue—the way to the fullest realization of all his potentialities as a human being. We see man as terminal growth of a living universe. In him the cosmos has come to consciousness and has evolved mind and spirit.

Looking back over history, the most awe-inspiring fact, greater than all the struggles of man with nature or with men, is the sense of something unconquerable in the human spirit. Man has driven forward, questing, seeking, sometimes bloody and beaten, sometimes losing the thread of things entirely—but always obeying a deep urge to carry on. By so doing, he has fulfilled the laws of his own being and of the universe of which he is a part.

This new conception of man in a living universe has scarcely dawned upon us. We have only recently become conscious of it. It carries within itself the seeds of a completely new outlook; I think it is very doubtful if the old symbols, with the old meanings, can express it adequately, but it is here that we have the growing edge of a new faith and a new sense of God.

We must reject, in the interests of truth and integrity, the idea of God as a force to be placated or as an arbitrary ruler who interferes with the orderly sequence of events, to answer our individual or national petitions. In short, the religious man must reject every idea of God that does less than justice to this conception of a creative universe in which man plays a responsible role. Certainly, he must reject every idea that takes the responsibility off man and cuts at the very root of his courage

and his faith. I think a new conception of God will arise. It may seem at first so technical and so theoretical that people will smile at it as they think of the old God, so personal and comfortable and helpful, but the new conception will come—and with power.

As Professor Henry Nelson Wieman has said: "Anyone who is able to discern how new and unexplored is the human way of living can scarcely think that we have yet reached the highest possibilities of value the human way may afford. . . . The great discoveries, the great achievements, the great values, and the great dangers are ahead. . . . Religion of the sort we wish to advocate is dedicating life in supreme devotion to that order of existence and possibility which provides the highest values which ever can be actualized. This order, with its highest possibilities of value, is largely unexplored and unknown."

Because these possibilities are "largely unexplored and unknown," we strive to secure freedom for human intelligence as the means of keeping the way of advance open. As a religious duty, we welcome new knowledge. It is our religious task to maintain the democratic process. We do these things because we wish to know more about the intricate interrelations of man and his universe. We wish to realize the human potential of life on this planet to the very highest.

In all this, we are being true to the underlying process that, out of the old, continually brings forth the new. It is the life that encompasses the growing trees, the distant stars and the mind of man. Devotion to this process evokes a response nothing can daunt. No frustration, failure or disaster can quench it. It is devotion to the realm of possibilities, inherent in the life process and as yet only slightly realized. It is, if you will, devotion to God, for we reserve that name for this creative Life Process.

Voices of Liberalism: 1

A religion that has this approach must be frankly experimental and daring. It will be a thrilling adventure of the spirit, sustained by a great devotion—the same devotion that made the men who possessed it in the gone ages unconquerable—and if religion is an adventure, committing us to this vast realm of possibilities unexplored and largely unknown, then the church will be committed to a venture. It will not be a museum of fossilized beliefs. It will be daring, creative, experimental, welcoming all those who share this spirit. It will commit itself to the unknown, but will refuse to take refuge in the unknowable.

We do not prophesy what forms religion or the church may take in the future, but I think we may agree with a prophetic comment made by Ralph Waldo Emerson

There will be a new church, founded on moral science, at cold and naked, a babe in a manger again. The church of the future to come, without shawms or psaltery or sackbut, but it will fill heaven and earth for its beams, science for symbol and illustration. It will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry.

All the best and noblest in our human heritage as we have it now, it seems to me, to a greater and nobler faith, to a vision of the infinite possibilities of man's life on this planet. The opportunity is now. The way of advance is open. Are we ready and willing to commit ourselves to the great adventure? May our faith and devotion be sufficient for the task.

