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THE
PASSING OF THE GODS

The Author is Co-Editor with S. D. Schmalhausen of

SEX IN CIVILIZATION

THE NEW GENERATION

THE PASSING OF THE GODS

BY

V. F. CALVERTON

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TO

CLARENCE DARROW

THE GRAND OLD VETERAN IN THE WAR
AGAINST SUPERSTITION

PREFACE

In few fields has science been able to make so little advance as in the study of religion. Most students of religion have been too concerned with defending it or attacking it to find sufficient time to examine it as a social reality. The overwhelming majority of those who have attempted to attain a reasonable objectivity in their consideration of the theme have studied it as an individual reality instead of as a social force. Their approach has been psychological instead of sociological. They have been more interested in what religion does for the individual than in what it does for society.

What I have tried to do in this book has been to interpret the psychological consequences of religion in terms of the sociological factors which have created them. Religion cannot be considered as a reality in itself, but only in relationship with the culture which lends it life. Religion is not, it is my contention, an individual reality but a social experience. The compulsives of society and not the impulses of the individual give it being. To understand religion, therefore, one must study not only its psychological characteristics but its sociological origins.

The multitude of *free-thinkers* and rationalists who have attacked organized religion in the past, from Voltaire to Thomas Paine, Elihu Palmer, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Robert Ingersoll, J. M. Robertson, Joseph McCabe, and Clarence Darrow, have been concerned mainly with

exposing the contradictions, fallacies, and absurdities of religion in an attempt to release the human mind from its bondage. Valuable as such exposures have been, they have not touched the crux of the problem. It is not the infantile distortions or egregious imbecilities of religion that are difficult to explain or expose.

The miracle is how religion in the face of such contradictions, fallacies, distortions, absurdities, and imbecilities has managed to survive and through the ages retain the support of countless millions. It is that problem, which is the real problem at stake, that this book has tried to solve. To solve it by resort to such explanations as ignorance, stupidity, or the infinite gullibility of the species, is but to dodge the main issues involved. With rare exceptions the best minds as well as the worst for thousands of years thought in terms of the religious mentality and despite its incredible hypotheses and irrational conclusions did not rebel against it. One can agree with Pomponazzi that religion has served as a means of keeping the poor virtuous and servile, or with Marx that it has been "the opium of the people," or with Grimm that "it has taken centuries to subdue the human race to the tyrannical yoke of the priests; it will take centuries and a series of efforts and successes to secure its freedom," and still get no closer to the core of religion itself or understand any better the secret of religion's psychological potency. One can also agree with Morris Cohen that "there is not a revolting feature of human life that has not at one time or another been an intimate part of religion," and still be at a complete loss to understand the persistence of religion as

a world force. In order to understand religion, it is necessary to do more than study it as an isolated institution or force; what is more important is to study the *interests* it has served, the interests which inspired its creation and perpetuated its function.

It is also important to add that my interest in religion is not in those individual outcroppings of spirit which one feels on shipboard facing an endless expanse of sea, or experiences in desert countries gazing at the stars, or which comes over one frequently in the vast silence of remote places—but with organized religion as a social force. Einstein's declaration that "the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe is as good as dead, his eyes are closed. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men," is something that all men can accept. In that sense, every intelligent sensitive human being is religious, but in that sense few religions have been religious. Einstein's feeling of awe before the mystery of life is no more religious than a poet's sense of wonder before the elusive magic of a darkening sky, or an artist's feeling of transport at the sudden sight of color pushing its way into the earth at spring. If what Einstein means by religion is religion, then we can say that, except for an occasional God-intoxicated Spinoza or lonely wild-eyed prophet, religion has seldom existed in the past. Einstein's conception of religious feeling embodies nothing of the power-promising psychology of religion and carries within it

nothing of the omniscience of ecclesiastical prophecy. It is humble before the unknown and the unknowable and humble too before the limitations of the known. It is out of such humility that science and not religion is born.

Organized religion has seldom adopted such humility before the universe. Through the ages every religion has claimed a monopoly on cosmic truth; it has invested itself with power over the living and the dead; it has attempted to dissolve the wonder and mystery of the universe into its little test-tubes of faith. It has been arrogant instead of humble before the mystery of the universe. It has had little fundamental reverence for the unknown. Its search has not been for truth but for power. It has been concerned with whys and wherefores, beginnings and ends, only to the degree that they have justified its claim to power.

Religion, as I have endeavored to prove in this book, derived its power over the human race by virtue of reading the material *interests* of man into the scheme of the universe. It gave man an illusion of power by making him believe that the world was created for his benefit and was working in his favor. Science destroyed that illusion by providing man with the power religion had promised but had never fulfilled. From the knowledge of the universe and the nature of human life that man has acquired from astronomy, geology, anthropology, biology, and psychology, it is no longer possible for the intelligent mind to construe the cosmos as being singularly concerned with the fate of the individual or the race.

While man will continue no doubt to wonder at the mystery of the universe, as Einstein does, it will become

more and more difficult for him to translate that wonder into articulate form. Conscious of his unexalted place in the universal scheme of things, it will become increasingly apparent to him that his age-long quest for meaning and purpose was largely a product of human delusion. He will become cognizant of the fact that whenever we speak of origin, meaning, and purpose, we are speaking perforce in terms of the human mind and not in terms of the universe. He will realize that in all likelihood meaning and purpose, which are human concepts, have no connection whatsoever with the character of the universe itself but only with the nature of his mental processes which tend to make him construe the universe as an extension of himself. Instead of tormenting himself with the insoluble problems of whether the universe has plan or purpose or is good or evil, he will tend to adopt the more heroic philosophy of conceiving of the earth as an accidental collision of atoms and of man as one of its fortuitous excrescences battling to make an intolerable existence more tolerable. Instead of pampering himself with the belief that the evolutionary emergence of man and the earth's coming to consciousness through mind proves that there must be purpose in the universal design, he will reject all such assumptions as the futile inventions of anthropomorphic conceit.

Until science provides him with more knowledge of that which is today beyond science, he will realize that it is nobler and truer to doubt than to believe. Rather than exalt himself on the spiritual stilts of wish-fulfillment fantasy, he will prefer to walk or fly with his eyes fixed upon those parts of earth or space that he can master or

control. He will neither deny the mystery of the unknowable nor bend to it. Unable to know whether there is an ultimate unknowable, since the unknowable itself is merely a projection of man's belief that the universe has a knowable quality which the mind can never grasp, he will allow himself to be concerned with the unknowable only to the extent that he can break it down into the knowable. Out of respect for what he is, and not for what he is not, he will become suspicious alike of John's "*Revelation*" of the kingdom of jasper and emerald with its "sea of glass like unto crystal" which awaits him beyond the skies and of the metaphysical ontologies and eschatologies which messianic-minded philosophers have devised to give rational form to the cosmos. He will not cry out as did Job: "when I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness" and then wait for the Lord to bargain with him and give him "twice as much as he had before," for he will know that it is not by imploring God, but only by appealing to man that good can triumph over evil and light over darkness. While in his heart the hope may forever linger that somehow the universe must hold out meaning for the species, he will prefer to deny that hope rather than allow it to lead him again into the valley of delusion. Like Omar Khayyam he will conclude:

"I came like Water, and like Wind I go"

rather than falsely persuade himself that behind the curtain of the cosmos *Something* exists which watches over him by night and by day, leading him like a pillar of fire through the invisible labyrinths of time and space. Awar

that science cannot provide him with an answer to the unanswerable, he will prefer to accept the unanswerable without attempting to answer it rather than fake an answer to it merely to palliate his fear of cosmic inferiority and impotence. Although for many years to come weaker minds, lacerated by fear, may yearn to live in a world of make-believe instead of in the one that is, the strong and the fearless, the yea-sayers, the fuglemen of the race, flourishing aloft the torch bequeathed them by Epicurus and Lucretius, will struggle to wipe out the darkness of superstition and make men into gods instead of gods into men. Rather than perpetuate the deception to which he has so long been heir, that the universe is his ally, man will find a new source of strength and a higher form of courage in viewing it as neither friend nor foe, but simply as an outer force or substance that he can convert into malleable forms which can be hammered and chiselled and cemented and harnessed in ways advantageous to his exploitation. Within such radii the extensions of his control may prove to be almost limitless. He may be able to control the atmosphere, explore the stars, convert inorganic matter into organic life, eliminate disease, increase the life-span, and transform the whole earth into a less insecure and precarious place. Always eager to expand the horizons of his knowledge and power, he nevertheless will become correspondingly ever watchful of not being deceived again by the hypnotic compulsion of his all-too-human wishes. Out of such eagerness and watchfulness, resulting from a clear-visioned, heroic resolve, the human mind at last can come of age.

Freed from the this-worldly illusions and other-world-

ly promises of religion, man will be better able to devote the energies which he expended in slavish adorations of false powers toward the creation of a new social world which will attempt to achieve in fact what his concept of heaven sought to realize in fiction. The struggle for that new social world has already begun. Into the minds and bodies of those men and women who are helping to create that new social world there pulses the emotional intensity and sacrificial passion which once had been canalized into religion. It is the vision of that world, a vibrant, earth-palpitating, dynamo-throbbing world, that has already begun to absorb the vast, incalculable energies that were once wasted upon that unreal world of Christian conception which existed beyond the pale of sun and stars.

Religion is dying today and the gods are passing, as the following pages seek to show, not because the human race has no more need of the function they served, but because it has built up superior substitutes for them.

* * * *

I want to thank Paul Radin for reading the early sections of the book which deal with anthropological data. Those sections have profited greatly by his expert criticism and advice.

This book, as the Introduction describes in greater detail, constitutes the first volume of a two-volume work. The second volume will be devoted to two other cultural compulsives: Property and Nationalism.

V. F. CALVERTON.

May 26, 1934.

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INTRODUCTION

"The brain of man, like the nose of a pig, is a food-getting instrument."—H. G. Wells.

WHAT I propose to do in this study is to trace the development of those cultural forces which have shaped and determined the evolution of the human mind. I do not aim to deal with the internal dynamics of the mind itself, which belongs to another field, but to analyze those cultural materials which have dictated the value-judgments the mind has made.

The prevailing tendency in sociology has been to view the mind as an instrument apart, a sovereign conqueror that cuts through reality to its core in order to discover "the object as it really is." In contradistinction to that tendency, I propose to view the mind as an organ of the body, similar to the eye, the heart, or the liver, differing from other organs only in the nature of its function. Like every other organ it has gone through a process of evolution or adaptation, determined by the exigencies of the environment of which it is a product. Like the eye, for instance, it is subject to certain limitations and deficiencies, which have not only conditioned its approach to the world of phenomena but which also have distorted that world to fit its focus. Just as the eye cannot detect all the colors of the spectrum, so the mind, encumbered by its own handicaps, cannot apprehend reality as a whole. The reality it apprehends is naturally conditioned by its own limi-

tations of sensory contact and cerebral function. It is my contention, however, that it can apprehend more of reality than it has done in the past, if it can once disembarrass itself of the ideological blinders which the class interests of society have foisted upon it.

From primeval times to the present day the mind's apprehension of reality has been determined by its *interests*. Those interests have grown out of the pressures and tensions of the environment. The conflicts which those interests have induced have tended to convert the mind into a defense-mechanism. The mind has steadily had to defend something against something else, one interest against another, with the result that the struggle involved has prevented it from recognizing or comprehending reality as a whole. Its energies have been diverted from the task of clarification into those of conflict. The conflict has sharpened its powers of combat, but at the expense of its powers of clarification. The interests at stake, challenging its support, have made the mind function in uni-lateral instead of bi-lateral or multi-lateral forms. In a word, however consciously or unconsciously, the mind has been developed mainly as an instrument to defend interests rather than as a tool to apprehend, conquer, and control reality. It has been less concerned with getting at "the object as it really is" than at twisting and distorting the object in behalf of the interests it has been conscripted to represent.

In the past the general practice has been to treat the mind from the psychological point of view. What we must do, and what is one of the tasks of this book, is to

learn to treat the mind from the sociological point of view. The mind, when all is said, is a social and not an individual product. Without the social fact, attaining intellectual continuity through tradition, the human mind could never have evolved. To understand the development of the human mind, therefore, we must understand the social forces which created and conditioned it. To view that development from a psychological point of view is to fail entirely to get at grips with the forces which have been at work. The error in the psychological approach is in its individualistic emphasis. The new psychology, for example, is more interested in analyzing mental reactions in terms of our present individualistic complexes, which are a clear-cut product of our type of civilization, than it is in trying to understand the social situation which has caused those complexes, and without which those complexes would not exist. In short its approach is too bound up with the individualistic cast of the mind today to see that what it posits as normal is but an artificial point of reference, possessing no pertinence whatsoever to normality as an absolute. Psychology tries to deal with the individual today as if he were an isolated object unconditioned by all the social habits and customs of his age. Therein lies its fundamental error. To study habits of mind without analyzing the society that produces them is but to defeat the necessary objective of psychological science. There can be no sound psychological science that is not fundamentally sociological. Psychology begins with sociology, because, as we stated before, the mind, which is the primary concern of psychology, is a

social product. Any attempt to divorce the two sciences, which has been the prevailing practice during the last few generations, must perforce distort each of them in both approach and application.

When modern psychology makes judgments or conclusions it makes them from the point of view of the individual and not of society. It envisages the world through the eyes of the individual instead of the community, and yet it is only through the community that the individual has intellectual consciousness. Remove the community and the individual would be helpless. He would be without language, culture, tradition. The individual, consequently, is not a product of himself but of the language, culture, and tradition of his age. He is not a separate entity but part of a collective whole. Since that collective whole changes with the constant alterations that take place in civilization, the individual can be studied only in terms of the whole of which he is a part and in terms of the changes which that whole experiences. The concept of the individual mind changes with every change in civilization. The way the mind works, of course, does not change, but the content with which it works changes, and it is that content which gives it its cast and set-up, its coordinates and conclusions, its character and personality. The fallacy in formal logic, for example, is not in its propositions but in their impossible application to social life. To analyze the individual mind, therefore, without first considering the culture of the community and the structure of society, which have made it function as it does, is to render such analysis fruitless from the start.

The tendency of psychoanalysis to deal with the ego as if it were a constant through the ages, asserting that ego-frustration, narcissism, and the Œdipus and Electra fixations are intrinsic parts of the psyche, is a direct illustration of that fallacy. The outlook of psychoanalysis is as much a product of the machine age as the philosophy of Henry Ford or Benito Mussolini. Its emphases are born of the necessities of our era. Modern industrial society created sweeping changes in ways of life and forms of behavior. The vast change from rural to urban life, from individualistic to mass production, occasioned by the Industrial Revolution, with the consequent acceleration of the whole movement of life, via ship, automobile, and airplane, and the expedition of communication by means of the telephone, cable, and radio, have plunged us into a new world of existence. To take that world as a normal world, however, in which the complexes and compulsions produced by it are interpreted as the normal expressions of human behavior, is to lose all sense of historical perspective and all cognizance of the plasticity of the mind in the social process.

When people lived quiet, rural lives, and cities were few and sparsely populated, life adjustments were simple and uncrowded with the agony of frustration. After the machine came, however, and the great migration of people from the country to the city began, the desires of life proceeded to multiply with the intensifying complexity of civilization, changing so sharply and continuously that human capacity for adjustment was startled out of its equilibrium. As a result of that economic revolution, and

the cultural change which followed in its wake, the terrific maladjustments of our age arose. Out of that revolution came new class alignments, new moral standards, new attitudes toward marriage, different outlooks upon sex, and a multiplying mass of situations that demanded adjustment in fashion too rapid for human change. It has been with the results of that wholesale maladjustment that psychoanalysis has been concerned; it has been out of that maladjustment that psychoanalysis has attempted to lay the foundations for what it considers the basic conflicts of the ego. But such an attempt is obviously fallacious. Such conflicts may have, and do have, much pertinence to the ego, as it exists today, in our type of civilization, but they have little pertinence to the ego in other types of civilization. While ego frustration, for example, represents a serious problem in an individualistic society such as ours, it would represent scarcely any problem at all in a collective society where the ego drive would be largely socialized. The Electra complex, to cite another example, may have deep meaning in certain patriarchal societies where the family is a close-knit unit, but it can have no meaning whatsoever in matriarchal societies where the position of the father is without real influence and power.

The same analysis holds true of the Freudian emphasis upon sex. While sex has been one of the most profound forces in human life, it has not determined social change or economic progress. Although its potency may have remained a constant down through the aeons and ages, its influence upon group advance has been secondary rather

than primary, negative rather than positive. Through climatic changes and economic revolutions man has advanced, and his sex life has altered with the variations in existence which have resulted. His sexual customs have oscillated with the movement of external conditions. They have not determined this movement; this movement, on the other hand, has determined them. Sexual ethics, therefore, contrary to the psychoanalytic contention, are more of an effect than a cause in the progress of social relations. They reflect rather than determine the nature of advance.

But psychoanalysis is not the only would-be scientific approach which is committed to that fallacy. Much of contemporary anthropology, in particular that of the American school, falls into the same error. The functionalist hypothesis, for instance, which has been adopted by so many present-day anthropologists in America and England, is guilty of the same limitation of logic. The idea that life should be studied in terms of its existing functions without concern for its past forms, which is the theory of the functionalist, is but another way of succumbing to the individualistic outlook of our age. It is absolutely impossible to interpret existing functions without understanding the nature of their past; where actual knowledge of that past is lacking, as is the case of many primitive peoples, it is necessary, on the basis of extant evidence, to posit a hypothesis which will explain the character of those existing functions in terms of their development in the past. To believe that those existing functions can be interpreted as they are, without analysis

of how they came to be that way, is but to misinterpret the meaning of function itself in the social process. The contention, which many American anthropologists have advanced today, and which is implicit in the functionalist approach, namely, that we should spend all our time at present collecting evidence and eschewing generalization is nothing more than a form of intellectual sabotage adopted in the name of science. It is an unconscious way of justifying the present in terms of the past, because by virtue of its very approach it exalts the status quo and the attitudes of mind produced by the status quo, which in turn determine the nature of the evidence which it collects. In short, anthropology by refusing to approach life, primitive as well as modern, from the sociological point of view has failed to come to grips with the basic problems involved in the science. It has revealed little about the social evolution of the human mind because it has been too much concerned with the collection of cultural evidences that have slight pertinence to the problem of mental progress and too little concerned with the economic factors which actually have conditioned and determined mental advance. By eschewing theory and generalization, it has thwarted its own progress. By so doing, it has only perpetuated the individualistic approach, and prevented us from viewing the primitive mind as a collective phenomenon and its development as a social reality.

It is not by such an approach, I am convinced, that we shall ever be able to understand the consciousness or personality of man. Man is not the product only of the age in which he lives. He carries within him, in his uncon-

scious mind on the one hand and in the shell of his social tradition on the other, a linkage with the past that cannot be broken. To understand man's mind, therefore, to fathom the structure of his consciousness, it is necessary that we make ourselves aware of the dominant social forces which have shaped and formed it. The important thing to keep constantly before us is that we must begin with those forces and not with the mind itself, for it was those forces that made the mind into what it was and is and not vice-versa. The fundamental error in our approach in the past has been due to the fact that in general we have assumed the opposite. In other words, we have begun with the mind and worked outwards, while what we should have done was to have begun with the outer forces and worked inwards.

The basic argument of this book is that the development of the mind has been conditioned ultimately by the economic factor. The social concepts with which the mind has worked and which have constituted the essence of the extant culture have been, in the last analysis, exfoliations of its economic way of life. In a hunting and fishing stage of society, as John Dewey has shrewdly pointed out, the mind develops a "hunting psychology"; its interests revolve about the hunt and the necessities that flow out of that form of life. In a pastoral stage of society the mind develops a different set-up because its interests are different and its needs dissimilar. As society becomes more complex, however, the economic factor resolves itself into various cultural forms which in turn become determinants in the mental process. Certain of those forms, religion for

instance, become so dominant in influence and so complicated in organization that their relationship to the economic structure becomes overshadowed by their seemingly independent existence in themselves. In time, to be sure, as a system of society becomes stabilized, those cultural forms become the psychological manifestations of the economic way of life and often exert on their own part a more decisive influence in shaping consciousness than the more simple and basic economic element. Frequently too, they become retarding forces in the economic process, tending to perpetuate the mental set-up of an economic order which has already outlived its function. Eventually, of course, as the contradictions within the economic order multiply and make it unable to function any longer, the cultural forms break down along with the system itself. To understand what is occurring within the cultural forms, to interpret the changes which develop within them, it is imperative that we study them in relationship to what is happening to the economic way of life of which they are a product.

Before discussing those cultural forms, however, it is important for us to realize that the evolution of the human mind has been contingent upon the development of language which has been its tool of operation. As Robert Briffault has significantly stressed in his book *Psyche's Lamp*, "language is not, as was at one time supposed, the device invented by a transcendent intellect to achieve self-utterance (but) the source whence that intellect itself has sprung into being." Language has been the sustenance upon which the mind has suckled, expanded, and matured.

Life has been charted out, divided, conjoined, and intersected by means of verbal pin-points of demarcation. But just as language has supplied the means of mental advance, it has also provided, by virtue of weaknesses latent in its structure, the source of intellectual retardation. Words which have made men masters have also mastered them. A short cut to reality, words have also been used as a means of falsifying reality, or worse still of keeping the mind from getting at reality by the camouflage which they have succeeded in throwing about it. A means, therefore, of furthering human progress, words have been used likewise as a tool for holding back human advance. By such use it has been possible to paralyze the possibilities of change in the present by binding it up indisseverably with the past.

But what is it that does this? Language itself? Not at all! It is the uses to which language is put, the interests which it is made to serve, that make it possible for it to be converted into such a distorting mechanism. The emotional overtones and undertones that words carry with them, which make them caress, stir, stab, burst, explode, are the products of those interests raised to a psychological level. Just as gold achieves meaning only from the value which society stamps upon it, words convey emotions only in terms of the *interests* they serve.

What I want to get at in this analysis are the cultural forms which have determined the *interests* of the mind, for it is those *interests* which have made the mind what it has been and is today. The basic cultural forms that I wish to study are those which, in my opinion, have had the

most to do with the development of the social consciousness of the race:

Religion
Property
Nationalism

This book, which constitutes the first volume of this study, is confined entirely to *religion.* The second volume, which will follow this and conclude the study, will be devoted to property and nationalism.

In dealing with those cultural forms I shall endeavor to show in just what ways they have determined the course the mind has taken through various periods of development and trace the interests they have served. The whole history of human thought, it is my contention, can be interpreted in terms of *interests.* "The idea," Marx shrewdly observed in the *Heilige Familie,* "is meaningless insofar as it is separated from *the interest.*" In order to study religion, therefore, *the task that confronts us is not to study religion as religion but to study the interests which it has served, the interests which in fact brought it into being and perpetuated its function.* Once we leave early primitive society where such interests were largely social or collective, we shall find that the main interests at work in the determination of human thought have been class interests. Those class interests, expressing conflicting aspects of the economic way of life, have exploited reality in behalf of their own ends, utilizing in divers periods such cultural forms as religion, property, and nationalism as specific means of defending the respective interests at stake. Those interests then, which at basis re-

flect needs, attain their final solution in the form of theory: religious, philosophic, scientific. It was Marx who first observed that fact. "Theory becomes realized in a people,'" he wrote in *Capital*, "only insofar as it is the realization of its needs."[1]

The way in which those interests determine the nature of social thought should be obvious to every student of society. Social thought can be divided into two categories: technical and popular. In its technical aspects social thought expresses itself through the social sciences: economics, sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, etc.; in its popular form it finds its voice in the churches, the newspapers, the cinema, the radio, books, and lectures. In both categories, the interests which dominate are those of the class in power, for the universities in which the social sciences are developed and taught, and the churches, newspapers, cinema, and radio through which the ideas and ideals of society are communicated, are controlled by the class which finances them. Allied as that class is to a profit-making economy, it inevitably tends to encourage ideas and theories, in the technical as well as the more popular forms of social thought, that justify and exalt its interests. But such control is all the more effective when it is the least obvious. It is only in its subtler forms that it becomes a compulsive. By creating an outlook upon society, a philosophy of the state, it exercises as profound an influence upon the tutored as upon the untutored, and makes professors as well as the unlettered populace over in its own image. In the social sciences it

[1]Karl Marx: *Capital*, vol. I, p. 616.

operates as a clear-cut cultural compulsive. It influences the social scientist in his selection of problems, his choice among the many possible initial hypotheses, the way in which he elaborates his hypotheses, and in addition it tends to determine the standards he establishes for judging the reliability of data. Moreover, it encourages him to disregard facts which run counter to hypotheses which serve class interests, and to over-emphasize facts which confirm such hypotheses. Such compulsive thinking is inevitable in a class-controlled society, because the interests of the classes active in the society are bound to condition, however unconsciously, the outlook of all those living in the society.

It has been the presence and persistence of those interests which have made it impossible for the mind to see "the object as it really is." They have kept the mind from getting closer to reality than it has. Those interests have created what I have called *cultural compulsives*[2] which have made the mind less concerned with understanding reality as it actually is than in distorting it to suit its special purposes. Such compulsives represent the expression of class interests in psychological form. I have called the psychological mechanism at work here a compulsive because the ideas it represents are dependent for their influence upon the strength of the interests they represent, and not upon the abstract accuracy or inaccuracy of their sequence or structure. Its content is more emotive than intellectual. It can be destroyed only by the removal

[2] *Cf.* my introduction to *The Making of Man*, in which the whole theory of cultural compulsives is discussed in considerable detail. Since the appearance of that essay in 1931, I have modified the theory somewhat as the following pages attest.

of the interests which constitute its origin. But since those interests will be with us until we organize a new form of society in which they can no longer function, and since we are all affected by those interests, however objective we may try to be, the task that confronts us is not to deny the presence of such *cultural compulsives,* but to attempt to keep them from blinding us to facts that are of importance to our intellectual heritage.

The *cultural compulsive* has had many antecedents in the field of social theory. . . . The Marxians, by use of their dialectic, have been able to show in just what ways classes have utilized ideas and doctrines for their own protection and perpetuation. In recent years, in addition to the work of the Marxians, a number of liberal sociologists have gone so far as to argue for the presence of class factors in certain ideological mechanisms pertaining to such problems as race, neo-Malthusianism, and eugenics. They have explained such mechanisms as part of a rationalization process. What most contemporary thinkers have not seen and what is most important, I believe, to an understanding of the nature of the social process, is that their own thought is also conditioned by the presence and pressure of *cultural* compulsives, that all social thought is colored by such compulsives, reactionary as well as revolutionary, and that those who think they can escape their influence are merely deceiving themselves by pursuing a path of thought that is socially fallacious. When we realize the class factors involved in the nature of all thought, especially social thought, and the cultural compulsives at work in conditioning its character and conclu-

sions, we come to see the truth of Engels' observation, that "then we no longer demand final solutions and eternal truths; *we become aware of the necessary limitations of all knowledge, of its being conditioned by the circumstances in which it has been acquired.* Nor can we be impressed by the old metaphysical and still current contradictions of true and false, good and evil, identical and different, necessary and accidental. We know that these opposites have only relative validity, that that which is now recognized as true has its hidden false side, and also that that which is now recognized as false has a true side, by virtue of which it was once regarded as true" (italics mine).

In that sense the outlook of the revolutionary Marxist represents a closer approximation to objective truth because it is allied with the progressive forces in society. Nevertheless, the revolutionary cannot escape the horns of the scientific dilemma. While the class-struggle theory upon which he posits his approach is an objective reality, the class interests involved in his struggle for power prevent him from achieving the objectivity of outlook which is the *sine qua non* of science. Marx himself stressed the truth of that observation when he declared that "*political economy can remain a science only so long as the class struggle is latent or manifests itself only in isolated and sporadic phenomena.*"[3] When all is said, however, the significant difference between the outlook of the revolutionary and the reactionary lies in the fact that the revolutionary aims to destroy the class society which exists, and

[3] Marx: *Capital*, Preface Second Edition, p. 17.

in so doing eliminate the compulsive factor from social thought, while the reactionary merely seeks to preserve the class society that prevails, which means perpetuating and even deepening the compulsive element. Marx, for example, frankly admitted his proletarian bias, but it was a realization which he construed as a necessity in our class society. "My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history," Marx wrote, "can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them." "In a class society," Sidney Hook points out, paraphrasing Marx's position, "all so-called social sciences are class sciences."[4] What Marx saw, of course, and what every critical radical mind must see, is that it is only by the destruction of classes that such biases can disappear and class sciences be destroyed. Only in that way can the mind be freed of the necessity of justifying the interests of classes instead of the interests of the race as a whole.

The liberal sociologist has merely been deceived by the myth of neutrality—the belief that he can be above the battle, as it were, aloof from the criss-cross of conflicting interests. The very fact that the liberal sociologist in most instances is connected with a university, and is dependent upon a middle-class environment for his survival, is a sufficient reason why such aloofness in the social sciences must of necessity rest upon a false premise.

[4] Sidney Hook: From Hegel to Marx. *The Modern Quarterly*, vol. VI, No. 1, p. 54.

The existence of cultural compulsives, then, makes objectivity in the social sciences impossible. Indeed, the actual claim to objectivity in the social sciences has been largely a defense-mechanism, an unconscious attempt to cover up the presence of compulsive factors and convictions. No mind today can be objective in its interpretation and evaluation of social phenomena. One can be objective only in the observation of detail or the collection of facts —but one cannot be objective in their interpretation. Interpretation necessitates a mind-set, a purpose, an end. Such *mind-sets*, such purposes, such ends, are controlled by cultural compulsives. It was no less acute a thinker than Emile Myerson who pointed out that "our reason is competent to scrutinize everything except itself." Bearing out in different words the presence of what I have described as cultural compulsives, Myerson goes on to add that:

> Research is always dominated by preconceived ideas—that is by hypotheses . . . we are thus never entirely free from them; if we believe we are, this simply proves that they have remained subconscious. . . . But science of today is not sufficient. As a matter of fact, what we are looking for is less the result than the method, the way by which we came. Now the scientist on this point does not differ from the ordinary man. He does not see himself in the act of reasoning. He therefore does not know directly the way by which he has come to such or such a conclusion; the motives which have influenced him in adopting it may be very different from those which he himself supposes. That is why it is advisable to control his assertions by turning, not to individual thought, but to collective thought, by searching for the genesis, the evolution, of these conceptions in history."[5]

[5] Emile Myerson: *Identity and Reality*, Preface, pp. 6 and 7.

Any man living in a society imbibes from it his very consciousness, his way of thought, his prejudice of vision. The class he belongs to in that society in turn gives direction to his thought and vision. It is only in the physical sciences, where his method is quantitative and not comparative, and where the issues do not strike at the essential structure of social life, that he can escape something of that dilemma.

What we must relearn is that, ultimately speaking, there is no such thing as an individual mind. The development of our individualistic civilization distorted so gravely our sense of social vision and understanding of civilization that in time we came to believe—as our social sciences, in particular economics, stressed—that the individual was the centre of things, that society was nothing more than a collection of individuals, deriving its meaning through the individual minds which constituted it. However unsound and erroneous, a philosophy of that character was bound to be produced by an individualistic civilization such as the western world built up in the last 300 years. It represented an excellent justification of its whole way of life. It was that individualistic outlook which camouflaged so successfully the class character of social thought. It is only in our age when that individualistic society can no longer function, and when individualism as a way of life has lost its meaning and pertinence, that the fallacy which underlies its logic has become apparent on every side. Only by realizing and stressing the significance of the sociological approach, is it possible for us to achieve a more direct view of the class character of

social thought. Today it is possible for us to see that the individual mind as a separate entity is a myth. What we call the individual mind is but a product of the social process. The individual mind as an individual thing could not exist. Isolated, it would be nothing more than an animal mind, possessing little more biological differentiation from the higher apes, say, than the higher apes from the lower. The individual mind is dependent upon society, upon the social consciousness of the group, for its being, its operation, its function. The individual mind is a product of the social structure of the group; its materials, its co-ordinates, its set-up, are determined by that structure. The conflicts between individual minds are basically expressive of divisions within the group, divisions which arise from a multitude of sources occasioned by frictions within the mind of the individual.

But the realization of the dependence of the individual mind upon society for its cultural being does not imply a denial of individual differences, variations, and contradictions. While the individual mind can have no existence outside the group, that is except in a primitive, instinctive sense, it can and does have existence in relation to the group. In this latter relation, however, which is a secondary one, the differences, variations, and contradictions which distinguish individual minds can express themselves only in terms of the group. Thus while individuals differ and individual minds conflict, the things they differ in and conflict with are ultimately conditioned by the character and culture of the group. While differences in cerebral voltage or emotional tempo may make one individual in-

terested in science, another in religion, and another in art, the nature of the science, religion, and art in which they are interested is determined by the cultural status of the society in which they live. Although the individual is not a passive product of group culture, his active influence upon it is conditioned by the possibilities of change which are latent in it. An Einstein can make his revolutionary contributions to modern physics only because the culture of the group has progressed to a point where the mind can think in advanced mathematical and scientific symbols; a Lenin could make his contribution to the science of revolution only because the class struggle in society had produced a theory which he could apply to the historical process. It is the group, thus, or society, which is the centre about which the individual mind gravitates and has its being—and not vice-versa.

The neurotic mind, as Trigant Burrow has wisely noted, and as Ernest Sutherland Bates has even more soundly stressed in his essay "The Abnormality of the Normal," is fundamentally a reflection of maladjustment on the part of the group rather than on the part of the individual; the neurosis has a social basis instead of an individual one, the individual merely being its agent of expression. One can deal with the neurosis in a fundamental fashion, therefore, only by understanding its social origin and not by trying merely to cure its individual manifestations. Such understanding, however, necessitates a recognition of the social evolution of the human mind, and an awareness of its dependence upon the group. That understanding alone would render absurd any attempts to

deal with or cure the individual without stressing the more basic necessity of changing the society of which he is an inevitable product.

In the light of the preceding facts any society in which the individual tends to become isolated from the group, and in which classes exist which tend to aggravate and perpetuate that separation and division, is an abnormal society. Difficult as it is to deal with such a term as normality, it can be said without exaggeration, I believe, that normality for a social animal such as man can be found only in a society in which the individual is in harmony with the group —or rather in which the group is in harmony with itself —in which co-operation instead of competition constitutes the basis of his relationships, and in which the presence of classes is replaced by the solidarity of the social whole. To speak of normality in terms of our society, therefore, is a contradiction. Abnormality, if you will, is our norm.

The compulsive character which human thought has been forced to assume has been due to the presence of that abnormality. In fact, the whole compulsive basis of social thought can be traced to that source. The interests which have determined the direction which the mind has taken in society have created that abnormality by compelling the mind to follow patterns which have prevented it from confronting reality as a social whole. The mind has been trapped by the cultural compulsives which those interests have perpetuated. The social drives involved have forced the mind to defend the interests of conflicting classes instead of the interests of the community as a whole.

If we wish to translate that relationship into the some-

what elusive but widely current psychological nomenclature, with its triadic division of the behavior process into perception, conception, and conation, what we discover is that it is the conative factor which largely determines the conceptual. In other words, our conceptions are nothing more than adaptations to the outside world which in turn converts them into conations. The outside world, upon which the mind must act, conditions the nature of the conceptions that the mind adopts. Contrary to the old notion, the mind does not look out upon the world, which it can come into contact with only through its sense-perceptions, and then, from its Olympian fastness, decide what it shall desire, do, or believe. Instead it is the outside world that conditions its interests, shapes its conceptions, and determines its actions. Its ability to be objective, in reacting to and acting upon that outside world, is contingent upon the nature of the outside world and not upon itself. If the relationship between the individual and the outside world is one of conflict, the conceptions of the individual mind will be conditioned by the interests of the conflict. The same is true of groups or classes in conflict; the minds of those who are members of such groups and classes will adopt conceptions that are the product of the interests of the group or class to which they are allied. It should be obvious, therefore, that it is impossible for the mind to be objective in its conceptions until the conflicting interests in the outside world are harmonized and its conceptions become those shaped by the whole of society. One can be objective today in measuring monkeys' skulls, or observing the summer dance of

the cicada, or examining the contents of a fluid—that is, wherever there are no vital individual or group interests at stake. Wherever the value-factor arises, however, objectivity ceases, because the group and class conflicts involved prevent the mind from attaining any objectivity of conception.

It will be only when the human race in a socialized society has rid itself of those antagonistic and dividing interests that the mind will be able to free itself from the cultural compulsives which have perverted its value-judgments and distorted its social vision. Only then will the mind be able to function freely, untrammelled by the interests which have blurred and narrowed its vision in the past. "An impartial social science is impossible," wrote Lenin, "in a society founded on class struggle," and then added, "to expect impartial science in a wage-slave society is rather stupidly naïve, like expecting owners to be impartial on the question whether to raise the workers' wages at the expense of the profits of capital."

The human mind is the highest organ to be developed in the evolutionary process; like the neck of the giraffe, or the antler of the deer, its object of being is to aid its possessor in its struggle with the environment in which it lives, to make it able to surmount the obstacles that threaten to hamper or destroy its existence. "The brain of man," as H. G. Wells shrewdly put it, "like the nose of a pig, is a food-getting instrument." Just as every organ, even those vestigial ones which are still in the process of dissolution, has come into being only because it has a purpose to serve, so the mind has evolved only because it has a

function to perform. The function which the human mind serves is, by virtue of its sensory antennæ, to develop more and more control of reality in its struggle with the environment. Just as the development of the hand made it possible for man to become a tool-making animal, able thus to control more of reality by means of his physical tools, so the evolution of the mind through the agency of language made it possible for man to become a concept-making animal, capable thus of mastering more of reality by means of his invisible tools. The mind, then, an invisible tool, is able to work best when it deals with reality as a whole; when it is forced by the presence of superimposed interests to distort reality in the form of artificial concepts, advantageous to sections of society but not to society as a whole, its purpose has been perverted out of its normal ordained function.

The human mind is a product of society and not of the individual. It has been developed in the process of evolution to work for men, for mankind, and not for a special group of men, or a separate segment of society. When it is made to work for the latter, it fails to function in its full capacity. The compulsive character of social thought has resulted from that unfortunate development which has prevented the mind from working with reality as it really is. "Logicality inexorably requires that our interests shall *not* be limited," wrote Charles Pierce, the famous American philosopher, in proof of the fact that logic is fundamentally a social and not an individual reality, and added: "They (our interests) must not stop at our own fate but must embrace the whole community.

This community, again, must not be limited, but extend to all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation. He who would not sacrifice his own soul to save the whole world is, as it seems to me, illogical in all his references, collectively. Logic is rooted in the social principle."

The next step in the advancement of the human race will be made when society is so revolutionized that the mind will be emancipated from the conflicting class interests which it now serves, and will be able to work in the interest of the community as a whole. That revolution can be achieved only by the creation of a classless society.

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS FORCE

"Without wealth, no sacrifice; without sacrifice, no god."
—From an ancient Aryan saying.

"The Pekkans are poor and have few herds; therefore they have no occasion for a god to protect them."—Marshall.

Not very long ago a bibliophile estimated that twenty times as many books have been written on religion as on any other topic. Although no count could be very precise, it has been asserted that over a million books dealing exclusively with religion have been published within the last four hundred years. If that count should include reprints of religious classics such as the Bible, the Koran, or the Vedas, the sum would undoubtedly multiply into the tens of millions. To calculate the amount of energy involved in the composition of such books and then in their perusal would be enough to stagger a statistician.

With but few exceptions, there has persisted behind all those books, despite their divergences and differences in point of view, one fundamental conception as to the origin and purpose of religion. The basis of that conception, and that conception unfortunately still obtains today, is that religion grew out of man's desire to explain the universe, to solve the beginning and end of things, the why and wherefore of human destiny. Nothing could be much farther

from the truth than such a conception—or rather misconception—of the origin of religion. The falsity of that conception has kept us from understanding the nature of the religious force. The truth of the matter is the origin of religion had very little if anything to do with such a conception. Religion began in no such way at all. In fact, if by the religious impulse we mean a concern for whys and wherefores and the mystery of the hereafter, then it can be said at once and with assured finality that religion is a late instead of an early development in the history of the human race. The purpose of religion among primitive peoples, as Paul Radin, after an extensive study of the religious ideas and habits of the North American Indians, has pointed out, was not to serve as an other-worldly inspiration but to function "as one of the most important and distinctive means of maintaining life-values . . . and to preserve those values that are accepted by the majority of the group at any given time."[1]

Contrary to the usual contention, primitive man was not a religious creature in the accepted sense of the word. Instead of every primitive tribe possessing a god or gods of its own, revealing thus the innateness of the religious impulse, early primitive man often possessed no gods at all. In Tasmania, for example, no word or concept standing for the idea of god or of the hereafter could be discovered. The man who translated sections of the Book of Genesis into Tasmanian, finding "no word conveying the idea of a presiding power, nor any terms which could be used to

[1] Paul Radin: "Religion of the North American Indians," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. XXVII, no. CVI, pp. 336, 337.

represent the idea of heaven, rendered these ideas," Mr. T. S. Foster tells us, " 'God-na' and 'Heaven-na,' '-na' (being) a Tasmanian suffix denoting the singular number."[2] In the African regions, Cyril Claridge relates that in reply to the query as to why the natives do not pray to God he was informed: "We never pray to God because we do not know Him, but we pray to leaves, fetishes, and to the Dead."[3] In the Zulu country, despite the fact that the Zulus speculated on a generalized cause named Unkulunkulu, the same attitude is manifest. When asked if he knew of any god who controlled the universe, causing the sun to shine and the earth to bear fruit, the Zulu addressed replied: "No, we know of none. We know that we cannot do these things, and suppose that they come of themselves."[4] Among the Australians the same outlook prevails. The natives there, revealing no interest in the relationship of cause and effect,[5] not only possess no concept of a creative deity or deities but are actually known to eschew such a concept.[6]

The concept of a deity as a metaphysical force, explaining the origin and destiny of things, is a late development of the race. Early primitive man was not concerned with such a concept. Contrary to the contentions of most of the nineteenth-century anthropologists, early primitive man was not endowed with a contemplative sense which made him want to explain the why and wherefore of the

[2] T. S. Foster: *From Savagery to Commerce*, p. 61.
[3] G. Cyril Claridge: *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa*, p. 151.
[4] A. F. Gardiner: *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country*, p. 283. Quoted from Robert Briffault: *The Mothers*, vol. II, p. 504.
[5] Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen: *Across Australia*, p. 220.
[6] R. H. Lowie: *Primitive Religion*, p. 139.

world.[7] If a few individuals in the community were imbued with such interests, they had little or no influence upon the rest of the group. What nineteenth-century anthropologists did was to study primitive man as one would a puzzle, shifting facts this way and that, out of all sequence and context, in order to find the solutions they wanted. In other words, they studied primitive man not to find out what he was like, but what they thought he ought to be like. They were determined, however unconsciously, to superimpose their own rationality upon that of the primitive. Today with the new knowledge at our command as to the psychology of primitive man, the fallacy in the old approach, which has been pointed out with such clarity by Paul Radin, Alexander Goldenweiser, and others, has become apparent to almost every student of primitive life.

The outlook of primitive man was utilitarian and not metaphysical. He was concerned with the practical control of nature but not with its origin or purpose. He wished to make nature serve his own ends so as to prevent it from destroying him. The struggle that confronted him was that of self-preservation. How to survive and reproduce in a world imminent with enemies that constantly threatened to devour him was the great problem that faced him. His whole life, his whole way of thought, revolved about that problem. Whatever he did, whatever he devised either in the form of physical objects or mental tools, was derived from that basic struggle.

In short, the key to understanding the life of primitive

[7] Bronislaw Malinowski: "Magic, Science and Religion," essay appearing in Joseph Needham: *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 22.

man is to be found in his struggle to protect himself against the destructive aspects of the environment and reproduce his kind. In a basic sense we can call that struggle economic, since in essence it was a struggle for food and shelter which were the *sine qua non* of survival. The human mind with its devious co-ordinates and concepts evolved in response to that struggle. It was the development of language, however, which made the human mind possible. Language endowed the mind with the ability to develop and extend its response. Just as in the Stone Ages, man devised stone implements to aid him in his physical struggle with the environment, he also contrived mental implements to assist him in those parts of the struggle which resisted physical control. It was power that he needed, power to control the environment and shape it in directions favorable to his survival. The mental implements which he naturally invented were those which promised to provide him with such power. The first form that those implements assumed was protective. Man had to devise a means of protecting himself from the adversities of the environment. In the immature state of his thinking it was almost inevitable that his mind should endow objects of danger with the qualities of evil, thus anthropomorphising them in terms of their particular relevance to his life. Unable to combat that evil by physical means, his mind set about extirpating it by means of its own, means which in its undeveloped state at the time led it to what we have come to describe as the practice of *magic.*

When theologians contend that primitive man is every-

where possessed of a belief in religion, what they really mean is that he is everywhere possessed of a belief in magic. But magic is not religion. Magic, as Frazer has clearly shown, precedes religion in the scale of primitive development. Though such a conclusion may appear to many to be something of an exaggeration, it is clear that religion proper was the possession of too few people for it to be comparable in influence to magic. The fundamental difference between magic and religion is that magic is a form of primitive science while religion is a form of primitive metaphysics. Although the theories underlying the practice of magic are far from scientific, the objective in both cases is the same. They both seek to control external phenomena for the sake of immediate and practical ends. Religion, on the other hand, is more concerned with primary causes and ultimate ends, with whys and wherefores, whences and whithers. Magic had a definite practical service to perform for primitive man. Primitive man was far more eager to control the external environment than he was to explain the *raison d'être* of the world. It was only after he had begun to control certain aspects of the environment, and had been able to organize his life into more stable forms, that religion could fulfill any function for him.

If we turn to the natives of Australia, we shall be able to see that distinction at work. The life of the indigenous tribes there is saturated with magic. This description of them by Spencer and Gillen is typical:

> Almost every action in the life of a Central Australian savage from the day of his birth to the day of his death is associated, in

some way or another, with magic. No sooner is the Arunta child born than a black line is painted over his eyebrow in order to ward off sickness. How or why it should do so does not in the least trouble the parents. They have been told by the old men that it will and that is enough for them. The idea of putting any of their beliefs to the test of experiment never enters their heads. If the young child avoids sickness then, of course, it is a result of the black line—if the desired result does not follow then it means that some other person has worked evil by counter magic, and the savage goes on his way perfectly content with this simple explanation.[8]

Permeated thus, as his life still is, with the spirit of magic, the Australian native has little interest in religion. Indeed, it is a well-established fact that the Australian tribes definitely avoid religion. They will have no priests in their communities. It is the magician who is influential in their life.

Extending from the most primitive form of sorcery and witchcraft to the more advanced developments of totemism, magic plays this same definite, uniform rôle in early primitive life. It is part and parcel of the life-interests of the community as a whole. It is not a palliative for minds tormented by the meaning of the universe, but a practical technique for men to control the world in which they live. The inadequacy and invalidity of the technique does not alter the nature of its direction. The motivation behind it is the same wherever found.

For untold centuries the human race was concerned mainly with the problems of securing food and shelter and expressing its sexual impulse. Whatever man did, whatever he planned, whatever he thought, were dedi-

[8] Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen: *Across Australia*, p. 342.

cated to those ends. From the first stone implements that man invented to the more advanced forms of art he contrived, his chief concern was with the food-getting and then with the sexual factor. The animals, for example, that Aurignacian man painted on the walls and roofs of the caves he inhabited, evidence seems to indicate, served an economic instead of a decorative end.[9] Primitive man painted them there because he believed, as Nikolsky expressed it, that "the similar creates the similar." To depict an animal meant to entice and ensnare him. Primitive art thus was very little more than a form of primitive magic.

Primitive man found it necessary to use every means at his command to tame the environment and make it serve his ends. Wherever the environment became obdurate to physical control and manipulation, new devices of conquest had to be developed and invented to give the power he needed. Magic became a psychological device which primitive man invented to endow him with such power. By affording him a source of control over forces which resisted him, and offering him at the same time a means of predicating the future, magic became a definite form of primitive science. With most primitive peoples, religion, with its promise of immaterial rewards, of hereafters and henceforths, did not develop until the food-getting necessity had become less exigent and social classes had begun to form. In a loose sense, one can say that magic in its origins was largely a social product while religion was to a greater extent a class creation.

[9] W. J. Perry: *The Origin of Magic and Religion*, p. 3.

Magic constituted the best science primitive man could invent. It was concerned with physical phenomena rather than metaphysical, and revolved about their control and predictability. Whatever was metaphysical about its practice, its appeal to the spirits or other mystical forces, was dedicated to a definite material end. To those unacquainted with the workings of the primitive mind, magic comprises nothing more than a series of impossible and indefensible contradictions. It is the mind of modern man, superimposing itself upon that of the primitive, which exaggerates those contradictions. In terms of the primitive intellect magic is as rational and consistent as Euclidean geometry or modern science. Granted its premises, primitive magic was based upon as logic-tight a system of reasoning as is contemporary scientific thought. While the hypotheses which constituted the basis of magical procedure were unquestionably fallacious, as is obvious today, the logic underlying their operation was consistent from beginning to end. The magician who through various incantations endeavored to evoke the response of the spirits was never without a logical explanation in the event that the spirits refused to favor his charms. Good spirits were countered by bad ones, and then there was also the logical leeway provided for the intrusion of unknown forces which were beyond the control of the magician, forces operative within the charm itself or set in motion by a hostile sorcerer.[10] The magician was never at a loss to explain any seeming intractability of phenomena or individuals. When his forecasts were not fulfilled, he

[10] Friess and Schneider: *Religion in Various Cultures*, p. 29.

had only to account for his failure on the basis of antipathetic powers which frustrated his will. The logic of his position, thus, was unassailable. Lacking scientific knowledge of the activity of phenomena, he could only account for form and function in terms of his own scheme of explanation. An interesting illustration of this aspect of primitive logic is to be discovered in the mental behavior of the Dobuans. "In Tewara Island, where the Mission has not been," Doctor Fortune relates in his book, *The Sorcerers of Dobu,* "I asked how it came about that the Mission whites and their introduced Polynesian teachers grew yam gardens without incantations. I was met with a retort that, while it was true the Polynesian teachers did not use Dobuan magic, it was not true that they grew good yam crops."[11]

In a word, what prevented their logic from collapsing was lack of knowledge, or ignorance of the facts involved in the case. Indeed, it was the continued lack of sufficient facts to check up on the propositions connected with magical procedure that made it possible for the logic of the magicians to exercise such an indomitable sway over the primitive intellect for so long a period. Had the Dobuans been in a position to verify the quality of the yams grown by the Tewarans their faith in their own incantations might have been somewhat shaken and in time destroyed. At best, of course, even in the face of such a discovery, their tendency would have been either to deny, however untruthfully, the excellence of the yams or to assert that the

[11] R. F. Fortune: *Sorcerers of Dobu,* p. 106.

Tewarans employed magic in secret. Such a tendency would have represented a direct expression of a cultural compulsive. Only later, with the repeated challenge of contrary testimony denying the logic of their contentions, would they have been forced to admit the fallacy underlying their logic. The absence of such tangible evidence, however, made it easy for them to preserve undefiled their faith in their own incantations. Pragmatists as they were, in their primitive way, they were concerned only with the problem of whether their magic *worked.* If it worked it was good; if it didn't work it was no longer magic.

II

Art was one of the most striking forms in which primitive magic found dynamic embodiment. In origin art and magic were closely allied. The economic struggle for existence among primitive peoples was—and still is—so acute that whatever they do is inevitably associated with the utilitarian. Primitives choose for their art-substance those things that mean most to their life. Their interest in art, as in all magic, is overwhelmingly practical. It was out of many of the primitive art-forms that religious ceremonials later arose. In primitive drama, for instance, mimicry is often startlingly pragmatic. The Plains Indians, as part of their advanced magic, adopted the following stratagem which later became a ceremony. In order to capture a buffalo, one member of the tribe would throw a large robe about himself and imitating a calf begin to

bleat with fear as other Indians disguised in white robes suggestive of the wolf would attack him. This mock-combat was staged to attract the buffalo who would rush to the aid of the calf and when close enough would be captured by the Indians. As Boas shows, in his book, *Primitive Art*, that form of magical drama was practised in many parts of the world. In many Tasmanian dances perfection inheres in accurate imitation of the behavior of animals. Even among the Eskimos the magical procedure of imitating the seal in an endeavor to approach a real seal or to entice a polar bear who feeds upon the seal soon turns into a form of dramatic art. The original use of masks was based upon the magical belief that the resemblance would be pleasing to the animal. Whether in this form or another, the animal, because of its economic importance, always played an important part in all those forms of primitive magic which later led to the creation of primitive art and religion.

Even in religion, which succeeded magic in its hold upon primitive people, many of those forms persisted, and in a disguised, oblique way persist in it even today. The animal element, alluded to in the preceding paragraph, was a dominant force in the determination of primitive behavior. Wherever hunting and fishing were basic in society, with the animal as the main source of food supply, magical rites revolved about animal life and worship. Totemism was unquestionably a direct outgrowth of that tendency. Tribes who lived upon carnivorous animals exalted and apostrophized animals of that character, while peoples who depended upon ruminant animals for their

sustenance idolized and deified animals falling into that category. In various forms of primitive art those diverse types of exaltation found definite and striking expression. The propensity of different savage peoples to adorn themselves with the skin and teeth of wild animals is at once illustrative of that tendency. The Indians of Northwest America considered the claws of the gray bear as extremely beautiful, and ornaments made out of those claws assumed a signal value. To capture the gray bear required great bravery and skill. The Indian who attired himself with the claws of this animal felt himself set apart and elevated by this distinction. He was convinced that the ferocity and courage of the animal were transferred to him when he adorned himself with parts of its flesh.[12] The type of existence led by those Indians emphasized bravery as a cardinal virtue. Physical courage was indispensable for their way of life. With the Batoka people, however, among whom carnivorous animals are taboo, the reverse attitude prevails. Instead of exalting the features and lineaments of carnivorous animals, they worship those of herbivorous heritage. A shepherd tribe, the Batokas have made the ruminant animals into their gods. The cow and bull are sacred among them. Consequently instead of adorning themselves with the physical appendages of the more feral carnivorous animals, they prefer to imitate the features of the herbivorous creatures. In their eyes the presence of the incisor teeth, conspicuous among carnivorous animals, constitutes an element of ugliness. In order to make themselves beautiful, therefore, they re-

[12] Schoolcraft: *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the U. S.*, vol. III, p. 216.

move their incisor teeth so that they will tend to resemble the animals they worship. In a word, their esthetic concepts grew out of their economic life, assuming forms that were dependent upon their way of existence.

The same connection is to be discovered with even more advanced groups. In the sphere of religious evolution the relationship is unmistakably intimate. For the most part, wherever the sun-ritual is found it is obvious that the group has already advanced from a hunting and fishing economics into an agricultural. In short, in primitive agricultural economics the importance of plants is emphasized by the attitude taken toward them. The sun is invoked to insure their growth and plenitude. Among people not so economically advanced no such interest in plants is manifest. Among the Bushmen the vegetative aspects of art are alien if not taboo. Since they live in a more primitive state of society, in which the beast-hunt is the main source of food-supply, their art is imitative of animal life in its more fundamental forms. Plant existence has little meaning for them. Their entire artistic skill lies in their ability to delineate animals and their behavior. The one or two instances in which they attempt to deal with plant-life reveal their lack of experience with such materials. The skill which is present in their depiction of animals and men is absent in their plant-drawings. In other words, people choose for their art substance and their magical rites those things that mean the most to their life.

The animal, nevertheless, continued to play an important rôle in primitive art for many centuries afterward, which simply proves that a tradition lingers very often

long after its cause has disappeared. By the time we reach the ancient world the animal has lost the larger part of its popularity. While Dionysos was featured in early Greek drama and other animals appeared in different rôles, the animal element was no longer dominant. Even in the mythical hierarchy the lowest forms were those bearing animal resemblances—the satyrs, the Sileni, the Titans, and the Antæans. In mediæval drama, the animal was seldom seen. By that time, the culture had completely changed.

In this general attitude toward animals assumed by peoples in different stages of culture we can discern a contrast of striking moment. Early primitive peoples sought—and in many cases still seek—to imitate and emulate the animals. They adorned themselves with their flesh, and aimed to attain their virtues. Their ideas of the beautiful were determined by the nature of the animals that were most important to their type of life. The fact which is most significant, however, is that primitive peoples tried to be like the animals, and in this effort at resemblance attained what in their eyes was an expression of the exquisite. Civilized man, on the other hand, living upon a different plane of existence, in which the animal is no longer the centre of his life,[13] has endeavored to stress his superiority to the lower forms of life by describing his own attributes as *human*, and theirs as bestial. As a result, the word

[13] In the seventeenth century in Holland, where dairy farming was an essential pursuit of the people, we discover an interest in the cow that carried over into the art of the time. Potter became famous for his pastoral paintings, in which the cow was most conspicuous. Potter's cows became renowned wherever art was discussed. In addition, we have such animal painters as Vitto, Pisano, George Moreland, and Rosa Bonheur. Nevertheless, in their work there is not and could not be the religious adoration of the animal that was present in the attitude of the animal painters in prehistoric antiquity.

bestial has acquired only a derogatory connotation. Civilized man emphasizes to a point of exaggeration his *unlikeness* to the animals, just as primitive man emphasized his *likeness*. A bestial countenance which today would be repulsive, in primitive times would have been beautiful. While we endeavor to refine away those elements in us that are reminiscent of our animal heritage, the savage sought to preserve them. The beast had a place of exaltation in the economic structure of primitive society which it has lost in ours.

But the important part which animals played in the development of primitive magic marked only one stage in this aspect of the cultural process. In its early phases primitive magic enveloped all of life. At first it served a purpose which was pre-eminently social. Later on, however, it became a class instrument, a tool of the first social class to emerge in primitive society, namely, the magicians. Thus magic, the step-parent of religion, laid the groundwork for the development of class society.

Although it is very probable that originally, as Robert Briffault pointed out, "magical practices and primitive priestly functions belonged to the exclusive sphere of women,"[14] there can be no doubt about the fact that men eventually usurped those practices and functions, displacing women as the master sorcerers. Men, of course, were able to supplant women thus only in societies where matriarchal power had started to break down and a patrilineal society had begun to form. While magical power was greater than physical power in primitive society, it must

[14] Robert Briffault: *The Mothers*, vol. II, p. 555.

not be forgotten that many of the physical disparities which exist between the sexes today, and which have existed now for many centuries, did not necessarily prevail in primeval days. It is altogether likely that in early primitive society woman was in every sense the physical equal of man, if not his superior. Certainly among large sections of the animal kingdom we find the female stronger than the male, and we do know as an established fact that even among many primitive peoples today the female is the equal of the male in sheer physical strength. Among various tribes of American Indians, for example, the female was even stronger than the male.[15] Early women magicians, therefore, were not dependent entirely upon their mystic powers for strength, since they combined physical prowess with magical technique as a double protection of their position. At the same time, it should be remembered that it was upon mystical powers instead of physical that their authority depended.

The close physical relationship between mother and offspring provided the original form of kinship in primitive life. During that roll of centuries when knowledge of paternity was absent, as continues to be the case even today among such peoples as the Trobriand Islanders,[16] it was inevitable that women should stand out as the superior sex and that they should inspire the respect and worship of the society of the time. Magic in those days inhered as natu-

[15] The superior strength which men developed in more advanced societies was a result of the work he undertook and not of any special biological advantage. "The preponderant strength of men," the Vaertings observed, "was the effect, not the cause, of masculine dominance."—Mathilde and Mathias Vaerting: *The Dominant Sex*, p. 265.

[16] Bronislaw Malinowski: *Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 180–184.

rally in woman's hands as plant life in the soil.[17] Among a number of African tribes even today woman plays the leading rôle as a ruler of magical ceremonies.[18] Among the American Iroquois the whole "cult of spirits of the earth" was controlled by women.[19] In various parts of Indonesia magical practices belong exclusively to women.[20] Women's early relationship to fertility deities, extending from those associated with primeval magic to those connected with ancient and mediæval witches, as found in Mexico as well as in Europe,[21] was but another manifestation of such dominancy. In addition the whole tendency of ancient priests to sacrifice their virility in order to approximate femininity, exemplified so revealingly in their habit of adopting female attire, was but another illustration of the earlier dominancy of the female concept.

However, since our concern in this analysis does not revolve about the problem of the sexual character of the early magicians[22] but about the economic origins of magic

[17] For the benefit of the curious reader, it is only fair to state that the whole matter of whether women preceded men as magicians, which is involved in the question as to whether a matriarchal society antedated the patriarchal, is extremely controversial. The evidence on neither side is conclusive. In view of the extant evidence, however, it seems to me that there are sufficient facts to lend credence to the matriarchal theory. At least there are abundant reasons, in my opinion, why it can be profitably accepted as a tentative hypothesis. When all is said, it explains so many social phenomena that otherwise are inexplicable. The truth or falsity of either theory, however, has nothing fundamental to do with the general argument of this book, which is not so much concerned with the sexual character of the early magicians as with the nature and function of the magic they employed.

[18] Hopkins: *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, p. 214. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[20] W. J. Perry: *The Megolithic Culture of Indonesiã*, p. 161.

[21] Bertram C. A. Windle: *Religions, Past and Present*, p. 126.

[22] Edward Carpenter in *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk*, tried to show that the early shamans were neither male nor female but homosexual deviates. Without doubt, Carpenter, for reasons that were more subjective than objective, overstretched the point, but at the same time it must be admitted that the tendency, as Bogoras has also shown, of intermediate sexual types to assume the rôle of magicians and shamans was a common one in late primitive days, although, in my opinion, not for the reasons that Carpenter adduced. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to

and religion, we can proceed at once to a consideration of the rise of the magicians as the first economic class in society.

The magicians afforded primitive man the best short cut to victory in his struggle against the environment. They promised him a form of power which he otherwise lacked.[23] This power they were willing to bow to not because it was holy or sacred or metaphysical or mysterious but because it was economically useful. By resort to incantations and prophecies, which promised power over adversity, the magicians step by step became the most exalted group in society. As the community became more and more dependent upon the magicians for its way out, the magicians began to think of themselves, cognizant of their growing power, as a class or caste separate from the rest of society. At first as fellow tribesmen, serving the community as intermediaries between the known and the mysterious, they functioned as socially as the warrior or huntsman in behalf of the survival of the community. Later on, however, as the community became more and more dependent upon their powers, they tended to add power to themselves as individuals rather than to the group as a whole.

We must turn to the magicians, therefore, for the first beginnings of individuality as well as the first signs of class in primitive society. The superiority which his posi-

assume that the invasion of the intermediates was but another manifestation of that stage of transition between matriarchal and patriarchal culture when it was necessary for men, in their attempt to assume power, to utilize devices that were feminine as a means of sexual disguise.

23 A. A. Goldenweiser: *Early Civilizations*, p. 218. Goldenweiser, in his characteristically penetrating way, realized just that fact. "Magic," he wrote, "is but a system of power, positive or negative, actual or potential."

tion granted him soon led the magician to take advantage of his privilege and turn it to personal gain. "From the earliest known stages of civilization," Tylor observed, "professional magicians have existed who live by their craft and keep it alive.[24] The mechanism by which the magician increased his power has been well described by Tylor:

> What are passed off as sacred omens are often really the cunning man's shrewd guesses at the past and future. Divination serves to the sorcerer as a mask for real inquest, as when the ordeal gives him invaluable opportunity of examining the guilty, whose trembling hands and equivocating speech betray at once their secret and their utter belief in his power of discerning it. Prophecy tends to fulfill itself, as where the magician, by putting into a victim's mind the belief that fatal arts have been practised against him, can slay him with this idea as with a material weapon. Often priest as well as magician, he has the whole power of religion at his back; often a man in power, always an unscrupulous intriguer, he can work witch-craft and state-craft together, and make his left hand help his right. Often a doctor, he can aid his omens of life or death with remedy or poison, while what we still call "conjurers'" tricks or sleight of hand have done much to keep up his supernatural prestige.

The trickery eventually perfected by primitive magicians has scarcely been surpassed by the multitudinous variety of professional magicians that infest society today. It is interesting, as Tylor elucidated, to note the parallels between magical practices in primitive days and those which are prevalent at the present time:

> The untying trick performed among savages is so similar to that of our mountebanks, that when we find the North American

[24] Edward B. Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, vol. I, London, 1913 edition, p. 133.

Indian jugglers doing both this and the familiar trick of breathing fire, we are at a loss to judge whether they inherited these feats from their savage ancestors, or borrowed them from the white men. The point is not, however, the mere performance of the untying trick, but its being attributed to the help of spiritual beings. This notion is thoroughly at home in savage culture. It comes out well in the Esquimaux' accounts which date from early in the 18th century. Granz thus describes the Greenland angekok setting out on his mystic journey to heaven and hell. When he has drummed awhile and made all sorts of wondrous contortions, he is himself bound with a thong by one of his pupils, his head between his legs, and his hands behind his back. All the lamps in the house are put out, and the windows darkened, for no one must see him hold intercourse with his spirit, no one must move or even scratch his head, that the spirit may not be interfered with—or rather, says the missionary, that no one may catch him at his trickery, for there is no going up to heaven in broad daylight.[25]

As soon as their position in society became stable, the magicians began to demand open recompense for their services. In time, for instance, it became conceded, as a native magician noted, that "shamanistic advice or treatment when given gratuitously amounts to nothing."[26] By the time magic had lost its influence and religion had gained power, the priestly class had become the wealthy class in the community. By that time "not the warrior, not the owner of cattle, enslaved the human herd," as Robert Briffault points out, "but the priest."[27]

It was not long before the priests claimed for themselves all the powers important to economic and social life

[25] Tylor: *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[26] A. A. Goldenweiser: *op. cit.*, p. 218.
[27] Robert Briffault: *Rational Evolution*, p. 38.

and became the first ruling class in the community. By that time they had established control over the fertility of the soil, the future of the herd, and all the pleasures and pains of human destiny. The whole earth for that matter, rendered subject to their rites and incantations, became their immediate possession. It was out of that possession that the payment of rent, as a propitiatory and expiatory rite, first arose, and landed ownership developed.

Among agricultural peoples the earth became looked upon as the gift of God, which belonged to the priests who were the direct emissaries of God on earth. By establishing this relationship the ecclesiastical class was able to justify its exploitation of the rest of the community in behalf of its own purposes. Primitive man, in his agricultural stages, needed a favorable environment to insure his survival. Storms and floods and droughts might wreck completely his possibilities of survival. It was power over these elements, power to protect himself from their ravages that he craved above everything else. Lacking the science necessary to control them he had only the aid of magic and religion to resort to as his best protection. The magicians and later on the priests were the first to profit from this need. In order to appease the spirits or gods who controlled the elements it was necessary that gifts of all kinds and homage of every variety be sacrificed to them. In no other way could the elements be placated—and if the elements were not placated, the economic destiny of the tribe, the priest threatened, would be immediately imperilled.

Out of the sequence of such economic logic, and in terms

of the times its assumptions were very logical indeed, the priesthood was able to acquire its position of power in the community. To the priests for such purposes were paid the first rents on the land, the first fees for economic intercession with the elements in behalf of the community and later in defense of individuals. Eventually this form of economic toll practically gave the ecclesiastical class control of the whole community. In time the fees paid the Sumerian priest for reading burial service over one of his flock: "Seven Urns of wine, four hundred and twenty loaves of bread, one hundred and twenty measures of corn, a garment, a kid, a bed, and a seat"[28] became as nothing when compared with the sacrifices of human life which later priests demanded as part of divine necessity.

It is well for us to bear in mind at this point that the development of power on the part of the magicians and priests was not the result of conscious perfidy on their part but of the conditions of life which made magic and religion necessary for economic survival. What the magicians and priests did was to take advantage of that necessity and exploit it eventually for their own ends. As Frazer has shown, the earliest forms of magic were public instead of private in character and the magicians at that time were servants of the community, subject to its controls, and not a class separated from the rest of society. It was only later, when the rôle it played assumed such importance in primitive life, that conscious deception and trickery developed. For the most part, however, it is doubtful whether the ecclesiastical class as a whole ever

[28] Briffault: *op. cit.*, p. 38.

allowed itself to become conscious of the deceptions it practised. On the contrary, it is far more likely that it believed in its function in very much the same way that its preachers and priests do today; it justified its actions as necessary to its occupation, convinced that they were part of the natural order of things. That this natural order of things redounded to its own personal benefit provided it with only another reason why that order should not be questioned or attacked.

The human mind is too elastic an instrument to admit its own deceptions; what it almost invariably does is to rationalize its actions in accordance with its convictions, building up thereby an inner protective device which saves itself from recognizing its own contradictions. It has been this protective device which has made it possible for the mind to resort to all the multitudinous extremes which have scarred the pages of human history, extending from the individual crime of murder to the social crime of exploitation, without recognizing the criminal deception underlying its actions. Not only is an individual able thus to conceal from his left hand what his right hand has done, but he is able to justify the actions of both on the basis of different ends. For the sake of a god or a spirit, a priest or magician can sanctify the murder of an enemy he wishes to destroy, and yet suffer no qualms of conscience because the destruction was undertaken for a holy purpose. In just the same way, a nation today can justify the wanton sacrifice of its citizens in a war in which it hopes to make vast profits by ridding itself of a dangerous economic rival, and yet never think ill of doing so because

its economic motivation is concealed beneath a national ideal and hallowed by a national objective.

This tendency of the mind to invent devices to obscure the truth of its objectives dates back to primeval times. It originated out of primitive man's simple need to control reality for his own ends. He needed power over his environment. Magic and religion evolved as the means whereby he believed he was able to acquire that power and make the universe bend to his wishes.

It was this simple pristine need which magic and religion served in primitive days that made it possible for them to exercise such a profound influence over the mental development of the race. It was not the technique they employed, as has often been contended, which inspired them with such mysterious power; the technique was derivative and not fundamental. Nor was it the infinite gullibility of the human species, as many have suggested, which encouraged their advance. It was simply the compelling character of the economic need they fulfilled which informed them with such significance, and which endowed them from the very beginning with such power over the minds of men.

Moreover, it can be said at once that it was magic and religion which first gave shape to the human mind, causing it to follow certain patterns and develop certain tendencies which were in keeping with the necessities of the economic situation it confronted. Whatever powers primitive man sought, and which he hoped to attain through the intermediation of magician or priest, were primarily physical and not metaphysical. The concern for meta-

physical power did not evolve until later when the need for physical control either had become less exigent or had been shifted to another plane.

By virtue of the desperate struggle which ever since primitive days he has had to wage against his environment, man developed a power-complex as an intrinsic part of his psychology. It was magic and religion which gave scope to the evolution of that complex, converting it into forms, ranging from sacrificial murder to the "chosen people" concept, which often were as fantastic as they were futile. What has always been described as man's fear of the environment, of the elements, of nature, was nothing more than his fear of not being able to control them. Man has never feared what he could control. It is lack of power that breeds fear in the human brain. Eventually when man no longer needs such power, having acquired it in sufficient degree, which promises to be the case in the collective society of tomorrow, he will not require such devices to falsify his approach to reality.

In the light of all that we have just pointed out, it was natural that magic and religion should provide the first stones upon which the edifice of the human mind was erected. They represented the economic factor elevated to a psychological plane. It was through the lenses of magic and religion that the mind first began to peer out into the universe, reconstructing it in terms of the necessity of its focus. At length, it was only through those lenses that the mind was able to function, and for thousands of years to follow, it was that form of function which determined the entire direction of mental reaction.

Magic and religion peopled the universe with new concepts, new forces. They endowed nature, places, things with new meanings and connotations. They afforded a point of reference, a system of co-ordinates, within which the mind could operate, move, and have its being.

Magic and religion, thus, constituted the first cultural compulsive with which the mind became afflicted. They compelled the mind to think in a certain definite way because the purpose they served necessitated such mental obeisance. They were able to enslave the mind to their own ends because the ends they served were so significant. If society or the individual was to possess power over his environment, it could only be through the agencies of magic and religion. There was no other alternative. The magician and priest not only became the source of power in the community, therefore, but the form of logic they cultivated came to comprise the mental pattern of the race for untold centuries. In time it became impossible for the mind to think in other terms. Even after the immediate need which primitive magic and religion served had passed, the ecclesiastical class, in order to protect itself, perpetuated the outlook which it had originally sponsored. By that time it had acquired a vested interest in the way of life it had created. To sacrifice that interest would have meant giving up its position of economic security and cultural power. Nevertheless, no class, ecclesiastical or otherwise, could have succeeded in perpetuating such a faith unless that faith supplied a deep-felt human need. That need, as was indicated above, was for power, power to control the environment, power to annihilate one's ene-

mies, reproduce the race, extirpate disease, conquer the animals, wring rain from the sky, subdue the soil.

Caught by the need for such power, which primitive magic and religion promised, the mind had no choice but to bend before the demands imposed upon it by that necessity. Hence for thousands of years, the mind functioned merely as an instrument of magic and religion, yielding itself to whatever rite or ritual the latter foisted upon it. Instead of facing reality as it actually was, dealing with it by means of the scientific method of trial and error, it transformed reality into an extension of its magical outlook.

In this way the religious force came to constitute the first cultural compulsive in the evolution of human thought. Distorted through the lens of this cultural compulsive, reality was divorced from its physical roots and buried in the obfuscations and obscurities which resulted. It was only thousands of years later, when, under the pressure of a changed environment, the religious force lost its primeval power, that those obfuscations and obscurities began to disappear and reality was able to emerge from behind them in all its original and natural clarity.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS MENTALITY

In seventh-century Greece the whole scene is disordered. Men stand, as a poet complains, at the cross-roads. Ancient right points one way and newborn necessity another. Some good men are for one road, and some for the other. But the greater part stand puzzled and unhappy, looking in vain for a living guide. The fate of the whole venture is in peril. *Only one thing can save it and bring a happy ending—the intervention of a god.*—Alfred E. Zimmern: *The Greek Commonwealth.*

"Religion and not laws first guaranteed the right of property."
—Fustel de Coulanges.

WHILE it cannot be said that religion grew out of magic, since in many communities magic and religion existed side by side, it is altogether reasonable to assume from the evidence we possess that magic was an earlier development than religion. Regardless of the chronology of their appearance, however, we find religion differentiated from magic in its emphasis upon gods instead of spirits as its main consideration. In many instances its early gods were—and in some places still are—little more than magical spirits elevated into a new hierarchy. The important qualification, however, is that those early gods almost invariably served purposes as practical as the spirits. They provided man with the power which he felt he needed to acquire economic sustenance and to ward off disease.

The ecclesiastical classes, magicians as well as priests,

were able to establish their early hegemony on the basis of that practical power. Among various tribes today, the natives will definitely tell you that their first chiefs were priests.[1] In many primitive groups the chiefs in the community were the former medicine men or shamans. In Samoa the priests were frequently the heads of the villages.[2] Among the Maori the priest and the chief are the same person. A similar situation prevailed among the Tasmanians. Among the Toaripi the sorcerers are looked upon as the chiefs.[3] Among many other peoples the medicine man or magician is the practical ruler of the community. In varying degrees this state of affairs exists among divers tribes in the Malay Peninsula. In the Samang tribe, as Doctor Diamond shows, the chief is almost always a prominent medicine man. Frequently among the Sea Dyaks the medicine man is the ruler of the village in which he lives.[4] The same relationship with slight variations is extant among the Malagasy in Madagascar, among the Masai in Africa, the Ba'yaka of the Congo Free State, the Wagogos of German East Africa, the Nilotic Negroes, the New Calabar tribe, the Tons of British Columbia, the Hudson Bay Eskimos and many other peoples.[5]

It was Frazer, however, who traced in most careful detail the rise of the ecclesiastical class to power in primitive society. As Frazer shows, it is possible to turn to any number of groups and discover incontrovertible proofs of the early dominance of the magicians and priests in the

[1] A. M. Hocart: *Kingship*, p. 120.
[2] Diamond: *Religion and the Commonweal*, p. 190.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 191. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 191. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

primitive community. It is highly probable that it was the differentiation of functions within the ecclesiastical class, accentuated by varying degrees of property acquisition, that determined the early evolution of kings and the development of the concept of the gods.

Among the Australian Bushmen, who are often credited with being the most primitive people still extant, the medicine men constitute the only social class in the community.[6] The headman among the tribes of South Eastern Australia is almost invariably a magician. Among the southern Wiradjuri, the Yerkla mining tribe, and the Yuin tribe, the headman is always a medicine man or magician. In other words, the magicians or medicine men signify the first form of class differentiation in primitive society. They mark the appearance of the first leisure class in the history of the race.[7] In more advanced tribes this process of differentiation assumes more complicated forms, with class power very often shared by civil as well as ecclesiastical groups, the two interlocked, however, in the maintenance of economic and social authority. In the light of the evidence we now have, it is reasonably plausible to assume that non-ecclesiastical power, that is civil power, originally grew out of ecclesiastical. In fact, there is sufficient material available today to suggest if not to prove that the emergence of kings in the primitive world was in all likelihood a development of the medicine man's more advanced struggle for power. As the medicine men began to divide their activities in terms of their respective

[6] James Frazer: *The Magical Origin of Kings*, pp. 150, 151.
[7] Diamond: *op. cit.*, pp. 181, 182.

functions, some as the curers of sickness, others as the makers of rain, and still others as the augurers of the future, the more successful became the more powerful, with the most powerful tending to assume the rôle of chief. The next step was simple. The chief slowly began to turn himself into a sacred king.[8] As king, however, he needed the sanction of religion to insure the respect and worship of the people. The concept of king in itself meant nothing unless it was endowed with magical and religious connotations.

Indeed, as modern research has shown, the concept of kings in all likelihood preceded that of the gods. In the Pyramid texts, as Perry has noted, it is definitely stated that kings were more ancient than gods. Among the Brahmans, the king is considered the creator of the gods. There was a time, the Brahmans believed, when there were no gods. It was necessary, therefore, for the king to create them through ritual which he controlled.[9] In this sense, the king was a super-magician, a master-sorcerer, able to create gods and control the universe. It was through this creative ritual that it became possible for kings to make themselves into gods. The kings made themselves into gods in order to establish and fortify their right to rule. In ancient Greece, for example, it was a common practice to transform a dead man into a "full-fledged god."[10] The same tendency prevailed in Polynesia.[11] Alexander had himself transmogrified into a god throughout most of the expanse of his kingdom. Cæsar had himself declared a god and the son

[8] Frazer: *op. cit.*, pp. 150, 151.
[9] W. J. Perry: *Gods and Men*, p. 34.
[10] H. J. Rose: *Culture in Greece*, p. 95.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

of god in Alexandria, and Anthony a little later on was proclaimed the new Dionysus by his subjects. Octavian became a god also in the East and the author of a new cult.[12] Throughout the Roman Empire, as a matter of fact, it was a common custom to deify heroes, in imitation of the early practice of the Greeks, who turned their heroes into demigods and even provided them at times, as in the case of Lycurgus of Sparta, with sanctuaries at which homage and sacrifices were made.[13]

"It does not need much research to show that the claim to divine descent," Perry observed, "is based on the fact that certain men actually called themselves gods."[14] Of course, it would be absurd to contend that the assumption of divinity by the kings was the result of a special decision or conspiracy on their part. What is far more likely is that it was a result of the gradual evolution of the hierophantic class. As its economic power increased, and individual differentiations developed, it was almost inevitable that splits within its ranks would occur, and that the more powerful would dominate the less fortunate. When one priest became more powerful than the rest, and, as chief of the community found himself in a position in which he could force others to obey him, it was natural that he would look for ways and means whereby his status could be used to set himself off from the rest of the priesthood and the remainder of society. The evolution of the concept of kingship was an altogether logical outgrowth of that tendency. This does not mean, to be

12 Albert Grenier: *The Roman Spirit*, p. 378.
13 Ludwig Friedlander: *Roman Life and Manners*, pp. 115, 116.
14 Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 2, 68.

sure, that everywhere the development was the same, but that the general tendency must have been in that direction, however devious and contradictory its specific manifestations in different communities may have proved.

In almost every primitive group where there is a king, the relationship between the king and priest is a most intimate integral one. In many instances, the king is still the high priest of the community. The king of the Wood of Nemi was more of a priest than a king.[15] The ruler of the Matabeles of South Africa is at the same time both king and high priest in the community. Priestly kings were to be discovered among a multitude of peoples extending down to the times of the Greeks and Romans.

The natural tendency of kings was immediately to stamp themselves as divine because in this way their power was made supreme and their right to rulership established upon a basis which the rest of the community could not alter. The magicians required no such divine dispensation in order to justify their supremacy. Their rulership had derived from their so-called magical control of the environment and necessitated no recourse to divine agencies for proofs of their power. Their intercessions with the elements were practical expedients, devised to aid primitive man in his food-getting struggle with the *milieu*. It was only as one man began to emerge as more powerful than the rest that the necessity for divine assistance became exigent. In primitive days, it must be remembered, physical force was less potent than psychological. Primitive peoples lived by rules and rituals as implacable and

[15] J. G. Frazer: *The Magical Origin of Kings*, pp. 29–30.

involved as Chinese ethics. Primitive warriors were constrained on every side by the regulations of social life. An individual priest could become a king only by virtue of the psychological route. When like Aknaton in later days he attempted to violate the psychological traditions of his community, he almost invariably met with defeat. His power depended upon the sanction which the group traditions afforded him. The transition between ecclesiastical rule and kingly rule, therefore, was a most slow and gradual one.[16] Kingship was possible only when religious ritual made it so, for it was only by turning himself into a god that the king was able to make the rest of the community accept his dominance.

The development of kingship, therefore, had a great deal to do with the advance of religion. Among the Australian aborigines, where there are neither priests nor kings, religion has practically no roots at all. Only magic has meaning there. While religion exists in many communities where there are no kings, wherever kings appear religion acquires added influence and power.

II

Early kings could not rule by physical force alone. Their force lay in their ability to make the rest of the community accept their rulership. Worship was the most

[16] It should be pointed out here that that transition was not a uniform one which occurred in every group. In many primitive communities for instance, there are no kings at all. It is only in groups where kings exist that we have the right to assume the possible existence of such a transition.

obvious means of cultivating the obedience of the populace. It was the cleavage in rulership created by the early kings in their separation from the magicians that accelerated the development of the religious psychology. The magicians had been able to rule by virtue of their ostensible control over the environment. The kings, however, in order to rise above the magicians, had to establish a superior right of rulership. This cleavage, resulting in the separation of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, could only be achieved in primitive society by the king assuming greater power than the magician. In other words, a superior form of magic was needed. By making himself into a god the king was able to create that superior magic which justified his supremacy.[17]

It is not at all paradoxical, therefore, that the first kings who became gods were nothing more than exalted magicians. They were, to use Frazer's apt phrase, "magical man-gods." Their powers revolved about the same sources of control as did those of the magicians. They were primarily sun-gods or rain-gods, gods, that is, who presided over the natural forces of the sky which were necessary for the fertility of the crops.[18] The worship which these early king-gods obtained was based upon a very simple technique. The following description of the situation existing

[17] Frazer gives an abundance of illustrations of kings still extant in various parts of the world who constitute examples of living gods today. The God of Lhasa, the Dalai Lama, was one of the most interesting of those illustrations. In China today there are still 160 such human gods, in Tibet 30, southern Mongolia 57, and northern Mongolia 19. Frazer: *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 143.

[18] Briffault's observation here is particularly pertinent: "The sky is thought of as heaven because it is the source of the water supply." In a number of languages the word for "sky" and "rain" is the same, as is also the word for "god" (*The Mothers*, vol. II, pp. 508).

among the Zimbas of South Africa is typical of the relationship established by the early kings with their people:

(The Zimbas) do not adore idols or recognize any god, but instead they venerate and honor their king, whom they regard as a divinity, and they say that he is greatest and best in the world. And the said king says of himself that he alone is god of the earth, for which reason if it rains when he does not wish it to do so, or is too hot, he shoots arrows at the sky for not obeying him.[19]

Even more illustrative is the description of the relationship between the king and the subjects of the kingdom of Sofala in South East Africa:

When they (the people) suffer necessity or scarcity, they have recourse to the king, firmly believing that he can give them all that they desire or have need of, and can obtain anything from his dead predecessor . . . for this reason they ask the king to give them rain when it is required and other favourable weather for their harvest, and in coming to ask him for any of these things they bring him valuable presents, which the king accepts, bidding them return to their homes, and he will be careful to grant their petitions . . . though they see how often the king does not give them what they ask for, they are not undecided but make still greater offerings, and many days are spent in these comings and goings, until the weather turns to rain, and the Kaffirs are satisfied, believing that the king did not grant their request until he had been well bribed and importuned, as he himself affirms, in order to maintain them in their error.[20]

Centuries afterwards, in the later evolution of ancient kings, the early tradition persisted. The Mikado of Japan was accepted as the embodiment of the sun-goddess, the Emperor of China was worshipped as the Sun of Heaven,

[19] Frazer: *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 135. [20] *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 134.

the kings of Egypt were exalted as descendants of the sun-god Ra.[21]

Sun-gods, however, represented an advanced stage in the history of religion. In most places, it seems, rain-gods preceded sun-gods, for among agricultural peoples dwelling in the warmer zones rainfall was a greater necessity than sunlight.[22] In torrid climates where the sun was superabundant and where the absence of rainfall conduced toward the production of droughts and famines, it was natural that the sun would not be worshipped. Also among pastoral peoples rainfall was obviously more precious than sunshine.[23] That does not mean that among nomadic peoples sun-worship did not develop, for it unquestionably did, but that it tended to follow instead of precede rain-worship as a religious rite. Of course, owing to diffusion, one discovers all kinds of contradictions in the worship of the rain- and sun-gods but the general outline of their origin is sufficiently obvious.

Before the development of agriculture, when men were still hunters, the natural elements were little worshipped. Among hunting peoples, for example, control of the elements was not imperative. It was the animals which had to be controlled. Consequently among such peoples animals were cherished, adored, and apotheosized. In Mex-

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 147–149

[22] Lewis Spence: *Gods of Mexico*, p. 13. E. M. Loeb also points out ("The Religious Organizations of North Central California and Tierra del Fuego" in *American Anthropologist*, 1931, vol. 33, no. 4, p. 543), that among most non-agricultural peoples sun-worship was uncommon. *It was the advance of agriculture which developed man's interest in the sun.* Among the Chinn of northern Peru, for instance, as Loeb shows, moon-worship preceded sun-worship. The tie-up here between the matriarchal fact and moon-worship is too obvious to need comment. Briffault's work (*The Mothers*) on the relationship between female ascendency and lunar worship provides an illuminating commentary on the whole phenomenon.

[23] George Foot Moore: *The Birth and Growth of Religion.*

ico the Great Deer was worshipped because the people depended mainly upon deer for their sustenance.[24] Among fisher-folk it was common to exalt the Great Fish for the same reason. To a considerable extent the whole development of totemism was bound up with that tendency.[25] Among the hunters it was not infrequent to discover worship of weapons employed in the chase. Obsidian in particular, out of which many primitive weapons were made, was exalted not only as a precious stone but also as a magic force. Among the Indians in Mexico, as Spence has shown, the early exaltation of obsidian was finally elevated into an obsidian cult, finding its religious focus in the figure of Tezcatlipoca.[26] The fact that it was by means of obsidian weapons that the deer was killed was sufficient reason in itself for the primitive Indian to respect and reverence obsidian as a sacred substance. Since it represented an important means of procuring food, it was employed in holy sacrifice and religious endeavor. When hunting peoples took to agriculture, they very often did not dispense with their old gods but merely introduced new qualities into them. When the rain and the sun became deified, sacrifices to them were made by means of

[24] Spence: *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 29.

[25] Hutton Webster: *Primitive Secret Societies*, p. 143. Frazer, as Webster also observes and quotes, was convinced that the object of totemism, its social purpose in other words, was "to increase the total food supply." Spencer and Gillen, to be sure, confirm that fact by their own discoveries in Australia. These two quotes from Frazer are very much to the point: "Totemism is of high interest to the economist since it furnishes, perhaps, the oldest example of a systematic division of labor among the members of a community" (*Rep. Aust. Adv. Sci.*, VIII, Melbourne, 1901, p. 313). And again, totemism was "simply an organized and co-operative system of magic devised to secure for the members of the community, on the one hand, a plentiful supply of all the natural commodities of which they stood in need, and, on the other hand, immunity from all the perils and dangers to which man is exposed in his struggle with nature (Frazer in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, XXVIII, 1899, p. 282).

[26] Spence: pp. 28, 29.

the sacred obsidian knife. Even the animal worship which had preceded was carried over into the new cult. The sun, it came to be believed, could be placated only by the blood of beasts.[27] Sacrifices of beasts, therefore, became a general form of practice, a means of securing the aid of the sun in the agricultural process. Among nomadic peoples animal sacrifice was a simple gesture. It was after nomadic peoples became agricultural and adopted a more settled and stabilized form of existence that animal sacrifice became a more difficult practice. It was at that time probably that human sacrifice was introduced into the religious scene. Among the Chichimecs, for instance, the sacrifice of deer, to which they had been habituated in their nomadic days, had to be foregone when they built up an agricultural economy, for in such an economy deer naturally became more scarce and to sacrifice them required too great an expenditure of energy and time to encourage the continuance of the practice. Almost all agricultural peoples who afterwards became nomads must have experienced that same difficulty during the period of transition. As the difficulty increased, human sacrifices became almost inevitable. It was natural in the class society which by that time had developed, that the persons sacrificed would be individuals of inferior rank or occupation. The magicians or priests, it is needless to note, did not sacrifice themselves, but demanded the sacrifice of those who were most powerless to escape their command, namely, captives, slaves, and women. One of the most curious parallels in that connection, revealing the continuity between animal

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

and human sacrifice, was that found among the Chichimecs. When the Chichimecs began to sacrifice women in lieu of deer they had them carried away from the altar of the slain with their wrists and ankles bound together in exactly the same way in which a deer is trussed by a hunter.

There was nothing infra-human, nothing subrational, nothing sadistic in such sacrifices, as has often been contended, nothing at least any more infra-human, any more sub-rational, or any more sadistic than a World War in which over 10,000,000 lives were sacrificed on the altar of nationalistic expansion and class cupidity. As a matter of fact, in strictly ethical terms, primitive religious sacrifices had infinitely more justification than modern civilized ones. Both were derived from the same struggle, the struggle of man for more power over his environment. In primitive times that struggle was a genuine one, one in which the need for food was so exigent that without the seeming aid of the elements groups were constantly in danger of extinction; any means which promised such aid possessed a value for the group which was of a high order; the fact that the means employed were not adapted to gain the ends desired was of less importance than the fact that the people of those days believed they were. Their actions were justified on the basis of that belief and the necessity involved lent justification to their faith. Lacking any other means of control, lacking in fact any other alternative, it was not illogical of them to accept the primeval logic of the priests as their best because only source of power over nature.

Today, on the other hand, that necessity has disappeared and along with it the virtue of that justification. Today, man has solved the problem of attaining sufficient food supply; over the more civilized portions of the earth, man is no longer in any danger of extinction through starvation, except insofar as the economic organization of society creates such unfair distribution that the many are forced to starve in order not to violate the profits of the few. The pre-scientific logic of the priests has been superseded by the scientific logic of the technicians.

The struggle for power over the environment, therefore, is no longer a necessity for group survival; it has become nothing more than a struggle for the expansion of a class which uses the nation as its sacred symbol. Its sacrifice of lives serves no other purpose than the *luxury* of national ambition beneath which is concealed the motivation of class greed; in primitive times the sacrifice of lives subserved the *necessity* of group survival beneath which was often concealed the motivation of ecclesiastical avarice. Although the instigators of sacrifice in both instances were conspirators against the social good, in the latter instance the lack of knowledge obvious at the time and the exigency of the economic struggle made no other alternative possible, whereas today the development of scientific knowledge and the removal of economic fear as to group survival have provided another alternative. Men today do not have to sacrifice lives in order to insure their economic survival. They sacrifice them in warfare today not to insure their economic survival, but to assure their economic expansion.

The whole drive of war, as exploited today, is a carry-over from man's primitive fear of extinction. Ruling groups can get those ruled to fight for them because of the unconscious perpetuation of that psychology. It is, in a way, a kind of social atavism. In modern times nationalism has been the source of the expression. Rulers, whether they be ancient kings or modern capitalists, could never get the masses to sacrifice their lives for them if it were not for the fact that the masses continue to identify themselves with the group, or nation, as a whole. Once a necessity in order to insure survival, that identification persists today only because the predatory warfare waged by those possessing economic power in the respective countries tends to make each nation fear conquest or absorption by another. Because of the presence of that warfare, it is still possible by devious routes to appeal to that self-preservative impulse, intensified through the years, which is ever ready to be kindled into flame in the group. Differences of language, habit, and tradition, plus the economic organization of the modern state, tend to accentuate the development of such a response along nationalistic lines. It will only be when the oppressed classes realize that the struggle for self-preservation is a class struggle and not a national one that it will be possible to create a warless world.

While sacrifice of lives in the past was often a defensive measure, today it is an aggressive measure providing benefits not to the group as a whole but to the wealthy classes who are the only ones to gain from the sacrifice.

In short, brutal, horrible, and barbarous as was the

sacrifice of lives on the religious pyres of primitive and ancient man, it was less brutal, less horrible, and less barbarous than the sacrifice of lives on the battlefields of modern man.

III

But let us turn from the problem of sacrifice to the practice of sun-worship. Wherever the worship of the sun occurred, the origin of it was, as Means described it, "materialistic rather than spiritual";[28] in time that worship developed such a complex and ramified ritual that its origins became obscured. The same was true of rain-worship, which, as we previously noted, preceded sun-worship in most places, and which arose out of the simple necessity for rain to fertilize the earth and fructify the crops. It is clear, therefore, that rain and sun worship did not exist in early primitive times when men were still hunters and fishers. It could only arise when there was a definite human need for it, a profound economic necessity demanding its creation as a way of guaranteeing survival against the attacks of the elements upon which the race with its agricultural economy had become so dependent. It was human need which made the sky so precious to man. It was not the fact that the sky was above them, nor the fact that it housed the mystery of the universe, which made man worship it.

Primitive men did not point their fingers at the stars

[28] Philip Ainsworth Means: *Ancient Civilization of the Andes*, pp. 412, 413.

like Napoleon and perturb themselves with the problem of who created them. Their interest in the sky was an overwhelmingly material one. They worshipped it, endowed its symbols and agents with creative power, because it was able to help or hinder them in their struggle for food. Hunters and fishers, as we have seen, were not so interested in the sky because it exercised such little influence over their food-getting activities. They were interested in the forms of animal life which they killed or caught and preferred to worship them in one way or another. It was only when vegetation assumed importance in the life of man that the sky began to evoke his concern. It was only then that he found that he needed it, needed to be able to command the powers latent in its structure. It was out of that need that the religious concept of heaven arose.[29]

Once the sky became important in the history of the race, man began to people it with as many symbols as he had once done the earth. Its great outposts, the moon and the sun, became more important than the animals he had once worshipped. For a long time, to be precise, he perpetuated various forms of animal worship, and, as in India today, he continued to regard certain animals of economic importance as sacred, even though he no longer depended upon hunting and fishing as his main source of subsistence. For the most part, however, his totemic mythology began to be superseded in importance by a firmamental one. This firmamental mythology, in its imagery

[29] Graebner put it well when he observed that "the idea of heaven everywhere is but a reflection of earthly needs" (Fritz Graebner: *Das Weltbild der Primitiven*, p. 111).

and symbolism, proceeded to personalize and deify rain, sun, moon, stars, thunder, and lightning, just as in earlier days the totemic mythology had personalized and deified the animals. Among many peoples, it is interesting to note, in particular among the Bantus, a person killed by lightning is not mourned because such a gesture would be equivalent to rebelling against the will of the god who had thus sent for him.[30]

The firmamental mythology continued to inspire the mind of man for thousands of years to follow. While it later became translated into more subtle forms in modern religions, its crude primitive aspects lingered in the delusive device of prayer and in the barbaric pageants staged by Russian priests parading in the guise of rain makers for the Tzar. As late as the seventeenth century the Esthonians petitioned the god of thunder in the following words:

> Dear Thunder, we offer to thee an ox that hath two horns and four cloven hoofs, we would pray thee for our plowing and sowing, that our straw be copper-red, our grain be golden yellow. Push elsewhither all the thick black clouds, over great ffans, high forests and wildernesses. But unto us plowers and sowers give a fruitful season and sweet rain. Holy Thunder guard our seedfield that it bear good straw below, good ears above, and good grain within.[31]

Some form of rain ritual became an inalienable part of almost every religion. Whether one turns to the ceremonial practice of the Hopi Indians, who spat at the sky in order to induce rain, or to the native Mexicans who

[30] George McCall Theal: *Yellow and Dark-Skinned People of Africa*, p. 185.
[31] Lewis Dayton Burdick: *Magic and Husbandry*, pp. 92–93.

prayed to the cross as a symbol of rain,[32] or to the mediæval Italians who prostrated themselves before the cross of the crucified Jesus in behalf of the same end, or to the modern Mormons who fasted and lacerated themselves in order that the god of their prophet would save them from the droughts of the Desert, one discovers the same motif at work in the minds of all those concerned. Muinwa, the rain god of the Indians who lived in the cliffs of Arizona, and who was known to fertilize the crops by means of his great brush which he spread across the earth[33] or the deity Amo'tquen, called the "chief" in prayer, to whom rain songs were addressed,[34] were no different in substance from the thunder god to whom the Esthonians made supplication in the seventeenth century or the resurrected Jesus to whom the Russians made obeisance in the nineteenth.

IV

What should be clear from the preceding pages is the simple but significant fact that religion as well as magic grew out of the economic struggle in primeval life. Self-preservation was the great primitive necessity. The kind of food man came to depend upon dictated what he worshipped.

In other words, the mode of production, that is, of food-

[32] It was a characteristic custom among many primitive peoples, especially among the indigenous tribes of Mexico, to build sacred altars above wells and important sources of water supply (*Ibid.*, p. 108).

[33] J. W. Powell: *Sketch of the Mythology of the North American Indian.* First Annual Report of American Ethnology, 1879–1880.

[34] James A. Teit: *The Cœur D'Alene*, edited by Franz Boas. Forty-Fifth Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology 1927–28.

getting, determined in large part the development and origin of his magic and religion.

Faced by a hostile environment which constantly threatened to diminish or destroy his food supply, he needed above all else the means of forcing that environment to favor him in his struggle for survival. Magic and religion became the means by which he believed he was able to acquire that power over the environment. Nothing was too earthy, nothing too spiritual, to be resorted to for this end. Deities were made of the sun and the moon, on the one hand, and of urine and dung on the other,[35] and both for the same reason, namely, because they were pertinent to the fertility of the crops.

The struggle for self-preservation, it should be clear then, determined the nature of practically every primitive activity, extending from the simplest economic endeavor to the most complicated religious ritual. It was only after the race had advanced to a point where its survival was fairly well assured that factors other than the purely self-preservative started to exercise an influence upon human behavior. Of course, the struggle for self-preservation was not exclusively economic in character. There was also the factor of disease which threatened the preservation of the group as well as the individual. Disease required a special magic of its own to circumvent its evil consequences. Nevertheless, disease was a much less menacing evil among most primitive groups than the threat of starvation. Sex too played an important rôle in determin-

[35] Even as late as ancient times the Jews were noted for creating gods of dung; the Romans sprinkled urine over Rhea, the earth goddess; and in India even to this day the ordure of the cow is worshipped.

ing the development of primitive behavior, shifting its emphasis from women to men in accordance with the matrilineal or patrilineal structure of the society.[36] But neither disease nor sex could mean so much to primitive man as food, for without food disease could not be combatted nor sex enjoyed.

Food-getting, then, or the economic factor, represented the driving force in primitive life. The Todas worshipped the cow because they were a pastoral people.[37] Agricultural peoples, on the other hand, tended to apotheosize the bull. The head dairy man among the Todas, as Rivers showed, becomes a sacred being, protected by a holy taboo. Why? Because milk constitutes so important a part of the life of the community. The fact that "the milking and churning operations of the dairy form the basis for the greater part of the religious ritual of the Toda" provides the fundamental clue for understanding the entire life of the people. Religion translates that life into social forms. The Esquimos on the contrary have no use for cows or bulls, and hence leave them out of their religious calendar. Seals and walruses are important to their survival. Consequently, their idea of heaven is a pelagic instead of a firmamental one. The people of Guinea conceive of life after death in terms of a marine abode. When sundry Christian missionaries tried to convert the Esquimos to

[36] Among matriarchal peoples the feminine sex organs are still worshipped. In India, for example, Yoni worship persists because the matriarchal order has not yet broken down. Among patriarchal peoples that emphasis disappears. There the phallus becomes more significant, as do all things masculine. An analysis of the changes effected wherever matriarchal societies have changed into patriarchal falls outside of the radius of this study. Robert Briffault in his monumental study, *The Mothers*, has done more to clear up certain of the confusions pursuant upon that change than any other student of the theme.

[37] Elie Reclus: *Primitive Folk*, p. 217.

a belief in the Christian heaven, the reply which the latter made was classic:

"And the seals? You say nothing about seals. Have you any seals in your heaven?" "Seals? Certainly not. What would seals do up there? But we have angels and archangels, we have cherubim and seraphim, Dominions and Powers, the twelve Apostles, the four-and-twenty elders." "That's all very well, but what animals have you?" "Animals none. Yes, though, we have the Lamb, we have a lion, and eagle, a calf . . . but not your sea calf; we have—" "That's enough; your heaven has no seals, and a heaven without seals cannot suit us!"[38]

Among many fishing communities the fisherman is elevated to a sacred status, like the dairyman among the Todas. Among the Chuckchi of Northeast Asia, it is the reindeer which serves as the centre of their holy calendar.[39] In Polynesia where the construction of boats is a noble occupation, the great god, Tangoloa, is the god of shipbuilding.[40]

Nothing reveals the economic origin of religion better than the prayers offered up by primitive and ancient man in supplication of the higher powers. Extending from the cry of the Bushmen: "Oh Cage, Cage, are we not your children? Don't you see our hunger? Give us to eat,"[41] to that of the Khonds of Orissa, which Tylor quotes: "O Boora Pennu, and O Tari Pennu . . . remember that the increase of our produce is the increase of your worship and that its diminution must be the di-

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 104.
[39] Diamond: *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 59.
[40] Fritz Graebner: *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[41] Charles L. Henning: "On the Origin of Religion," from the *American Anthropologist*, vol. XI, p. 373, Dec., 1898.

minution of your rites" and finally to that of the contemporary as well as ancient Christian: "Give us this day our daily bread," the economic motivation persists without interruption as the dominant element in the ritual of prayer. More than that, from the very dawn of their creation, the gods became economic functionaries, employed by man to govern the environment for his benefit. Osiris taught the Egyptians "the art of making agricultural implements, the plow and the hatchet"; and Isis taught them "how to grind corn between two flat stones for the purpose of making bread."[42]

There seems to be sufficient reason to suspect that after property began to accumulate into individual hands the gods came to play a more immediate and important rôle in primitive life. Before that time, it seems very likely that the simple magic of the spirits was sufficient for the group. While there are too many exceptions to make it an established generalization, there is a strong likelihood that in primeval days the rise of both kings and gods, at least in their more advanced form, was related to the development of the institution of private property. When the traveller, Marshall, asked the Todas why a nearby tribe, the Pekkans, had no god, they replied with characteristic primitive candor: "The Pekkans are poor and have few herds; therefore, they have no occasion for a god to protect them."[43] There can be but little doubt that gods became a necessity for the rich, the sacred means of protecting their property from the ravages of the poor. "Without wealth, no sacrifice; without sacrifice, no god,"

[42] Henning: *op. cit.*, pp. 374, 375. [43] Diamond: *op. cit.*, p. 59.

was more than a saying among the ancient Aryans;[44] it was a profound and challenging truth. In Bengal, they openly spoke of Tshanda Gosain as a god who could be approached only by the wealthy. "Without pork to eat, without arak to drink, how can one pray?"[45] the Chinese asks. "Just as man has trades that put him in different classes," as Graebner stressed, "so the gods have." Among many peoples only the wealthy could participate in religious rites; in such groups the poor were either excluded from the sacred practices or forced to accept menial rôles in their performance.

To show how precisely primitive peoples identified their gods with economic realities, one needs but to turn to a simple illustration, culled from recent experience, which Doctor Diamond cites in his interesting and informing study: *Religion and the Commonweal.* "In West Africa," Doctor Diamond writes, "an entirely new group of deities has within recent years come into existence—deities which are exclusively devoted to European trade. They are supposed to watch over the English trading factories and to guide ships to the ports. . . . In the presence of the new economic opportunities the attractions of which were great, the belief in spirits remained as of old. But, as the natives saw it, since industry of any sort could not safely be carried on without the aid of the spirits, or at least without due regard for their feelings, new spirits were invented to be called upon to aid in their new business."[46]

[44] Reclus: *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[46] Diamond: *op. cit.*, p. 62.

V

It was because religion developed out of this elemental necessity of primitive and ancient life, purporting to subserve the economic interests of the group in its struggle for survival, that for thousands of centuries it was able to shape and determine so completely the character and configurations of the human mind. Its fundamental grip upon human mentality, therefore, was possible only because of the material end it served. It was not fear of the unknown which dictated its origin and evolution but fear of starvation, disease, and death. Not until a better technique developed for controlling the environment did the religious mentality begin to weaken and lose its power over the mind of man.

The conflict between religion and science was more than a struggle between superstition and truth; it was a struggle for power between two techniques which promised to control the environment for the benefit of the race. The failure of religion and the success of science was due to the simple fact that science possessed a better technique for controlling the environment. Throughout the ages religion, carrying on the tradition begun by magic, tried to control the environment by appeal to the gods and finally to the moral spirit of man. There is fundamentally very little difference in psychology and technique between the contemporary preachers, priests, and rabbis who believe they can bring peace to the world by virtue of their verbal admonitions and exhortations and the ancient

shamans and hierophants who believed they could draw rain from the sky by means of their mystic ritual. Dishonesty is not part of the equation. That there were fakirs among the ancient priesthood as well as there are Elmer Gantrys among the contemporary goes without saying; the fakirs, however, are in the overwhelming minority; the majority believe in their technique with an honesty that is as unimpeachable as it is naïve and puerile. The contemporary ecclesiastic on the whole is no more dishonest than are the extant shamans in primitive communities today. What they both lack is a sound technique or control. The ancient priest, to be sure, was open to less reprehension than the modern one because the absence of knowledge in his day lent a certain credence to his technique. The contemporary priest, however, is merely trying to perpetuate a technique which has lost its pertinence because it has been superseded by the scientific. The scientific technique has made this advance only because, by virtue of its accuracy of prediction, it has demonstrated its superiority in the field of control. Today, consequently, the priest has abandoned his rain-making powers but has held fast to the spiritual attributes which went with them. The futility of his future is revealed by the fact that, when all is said, those attributes cannot continue to possess coercive meaning when they are robbed of the source of their power. Among those aware of the full import of science, his influence has already begun to wane and disappear. It is only among the masses,[47] to whom science

[47] This, of course, is no longer true in Soviet Russia, where the power of the ecclesiastic has been shorn of all significance and the masses are daily educated in the "truth of science and the falsehood of religion."

is still little more than a technique for creating motor cars, telephones, and radios, that his influence is still a potent force. But even among them, as will be shown later, it is only a matter of time before his power will be broken by the destruction of those forces in society which today tend to perpetuate his influence.

The human mind, in my opinion, has only a latent affinity for truth. It has, on the other hand, an underlying and almost ineradicable craving for power, a craving derivative from the fierce struggle which man has been forced to wage with his environment for æons of years, and it will ally itself on whichever side the greatest promise of power inheres. This power drive, however, is more cultural than biologic. Once the struggle for power is finally dissolved in a socialized world, in which both private property and class rulership have disappeared, there is no plausible reason, at least no plausible biologic one, why the power fight should continue. Until then, however, the power fight will not only persist but will intensify as the struggle between classes and groups becomes more aggravated by the economic disintegration of capitalist society.

So long as religion promised power to the group and the individual, its influence was indestructible. It is only when it becomes more and more apparent that it can no longer fulfill its promise, or rather that science can fulfill what it cannot, that its influence will disappear.

The origin of the conflict between religion and science dates back to Greek civilization, but it was not until the eighteenth century, with the breakdown of feudalism and

the rise of capitalist society, which encouraged the development of science as an applied technique, that the human mind began a concerted revolt against the religious compulsive which had weighed down upon it like an immovable incubus since the dawn of the race. It was then that reason became exalted as a substitute for superstition, and the concept of "free thought" arose as a substitute for "religious thought," which was categorized as "unfree" because it was bound up with biblical superstition. Rationalism arose thus in the modern world not so much as a thing in itself but as a counteractive to the irrationalism of the Bible. "Free thought" in that day did not develop as a means of emancipating the mind from all its economic, political, and social prejudices, but as a means of releasing it from the bondage of the Bible. The whole development of the concept of reason in the modern world was bound up largely with the revolt against religion. The eighteenth-century rationalists were far less concerned with the elevation of reason as an intellectual technique than they were with employing it as a weapon against religious superstition. They believed that reason was the antonym for religion and "free thought" the antipodes of superstitious faith.

The religious compulsive had enforced upon the human mind a certain construction of the universe which had to be destroyed before further intellectual progress could be achieved. Prior to this revolt of the mind against the religious compulsive, cultural life had revolved almost entirely around the religious institution. Almost all of culture was permeated with religious significance. It was

religion which gave meaning to the mores, sanctified the hunt, endowed the animals with hallowed import, fertilized the crops, lent purpose to the dance, made kings divine, property inviolate, and morals sacred. In a word, it was religion which infused institutions with emotional intimacy and intensity, welded the group into a social unit, and made its individual members, however divided in status, all feel as one.

Cultural change, notwithstanding its economic origins, inevitably expressed itself in religious form, for it was only through religion that it could vocalize itself to the populace. When an old order was supplanted by a new one, the cultural transformation was consummated through religion; when one king usurped the power of another, he sanctified his act by means of religion, using the ecclesiastics as his agents in the process; when one people conquered another the main difficulty was to make those conquered accept the religion of the conquerors; this difficulty was overcome in most instances by an adaptation of the old ritual to the new one, with, as in many cases, the amalgamation of the old gods with the new ones. But this process was not confined only to primitive and ancient times. It persisted through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation, and continued down to the French Revolution which in terms of western civilization can be viewed as the turning point in the history of the religious compulsive. When Robespierre tried to substitute the Goddess of Reason for the Christian God, he tended in one way to perpetuate the same process but in another to destroy it by depriving his goddess of

the material as well as spiritual attributes of her predecessors in religious ancestry. Although he made a concession to the religious mentality by calling her a *goddess*, he undermined that same mentality by failing to endow her with the powers necessary for a goddess to possess in order to evoke the homage of her disciples. A goddess who possesses no powers other than those of the ordinary human, is no goddess at all, no matter what title she may bear.

A corollary of that fact is to be found in the inverse process active in recent generations, by which old gods are rendered ineffectual by the tendency to rob them of their original powers. No better example is to be noted than what has happened within the confines of the Christian mythos. The godlike attributes of Jesus have degenerated in the last century into the ethical attributes of a saintly hero. Jesus has increasingly become less of a god and more of a man. Such a change is unequivocal evidence of religious disintegration. When religion begins to stress its ethical appeal instead of its metaphysical powers, it is obvious that it is in a stage of spiritual decadence. Ethics is not the essence of religion; at best it is one of its more important derivatives. It is an attribute of religion but not its foundation, and when it begins to become its foundation it is clear that religion has entered a retrogressive phase in which its vital powers have already become paralyzed. When gods become guides instead of rulers, it is patent that their status has been degraded and their influence reduced. Along with that deterioration in position and influence of the gods in western civilization

there has developed an even more rapid degradation in the rôle of the ecclesiastic. Whereas among primitive peoples the magician or priest was often the ruler of the community and even in ancient times his position was second only to that of the kings, today he has become an unimportant functionary in the modern state. His position in industrial society has been deflated of all political significance.[48] Except in agrarian communities where something of his old prestige has been preserved, he has become an unimpressive personage, an auxiliary instead of a fundamental force in economic and political life.[49] He is important today only as an advocate of causes other than his own and not as the representative of a cause in himself. He is no longer the leader in the community. With the spread of commerce and the advance of industry the position of the lawyer, the industrialist, the financier, and the engineer has become more respected, more important, and

[48] An interesting illustration of this decrease in influence of the clergy is to be seen in the political history of the United States. In the seventeenth century the theocracy dominated in Massachusetts, and the ecclesiastic played an important part in the political life of the entire Atlantic seaboard. In the eighteenth century, up to the Revolutionary War, he continued to exert a marked influence upon our political life. Among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, for example, were clergymen. With the rise of industry however, and the development of science, ecclesiastical influence in America rapidly diminished. Today, for instance, except in the South and the rural sections of the Midwest, the clergy exercises very little influence over the politics of the community or the nation.

In Chapter VI on "Religion and American Culture," this change in the position and power of the American clergymen will be dealt with in more detail.

[49] Until recently Spain provided a revealing illustration of an agrarian country in which the position of the priest remained paramount. Today, to be sure, with the development of industry in Spain, and with the rise of a bourgeoisie on one side and a proletariat on the other, the hegemony of the ecclesiastics, who even in the days of democracy continued to pray "thy *kingdom* come," has been definitely challenged and partially overthrown. Another illustration of the influence of industry and science upon the fate of the religious mentality is to be seen in the contrast between the power of the ecclesiastics in Czechoslovakia and in Jugoslavia. In the former country, where commerce and industry developed long ago, the power of religion in political and intellectual life is scarcely more than infinitesimal. In the latter, on the other hand, which is still an agrarian country, the culture is largely a priest-ridden affair.

more influential than that of the ecclesiastic. As a result, the better minds which once were attracted to the clergy have been drawn in the last century toward the more important professions, in consequence of which the mental calibre of the ecclesiastic has decreased as rapidly as his social status.

What is clear, then, is that we are living in an age today when the religious mentality has begun to lose its power over the race. Man now looks at the universe through the spectacles of science instead of those of religion. In a sense, science has become his new religion. Nor should one be surprised at that fact, since after all science has succeeded in doing what religion attempted to do for untold centuries, but which it could not do because it lacked the correct principles of control. The scientist has become the new priest of the modern world. The *intelligentsia* venerate Einstein more highly than the Pope. Edison was respected more deeply than Bishop Manning. Marx and Freud have become more important than the religious leaders of our day.

The rise of the scientific mentality, which in the opinion of one scholar signifies nothing more than the triumph of "common sense," was possible only when the hypnotic sway of the religious mentality was broken.

The religious mentality was dependent upon the perpetuation of the metaphysical tradition; the scientific mentality is dependent upon the development of the experimental tradition. Religion is *a priori* in its concepts; science is *a posteriori* in its principles. Religion bases its claim to authority upon innate concepts of the mind;

science founds its claims to truth upon the test of experience. As a result, religion appeals to authority for its proofs, and is, therefore, authoritarian, while science appeals to facts for its evidence and is consequently empirical.

The rise of the scientific mentality in the modern world was not due to its superiority over the religious mentality, but to the fact that the agricultural world which had perpetuated the religious mentality began to give way to an industrial world in which that type of mentality was no longer needed. As the discovery of natural laws prepared the way for the mechanical inventions that made possible the Industrial Revolution, man became less dependent upon the gods and more dependent upon science for the power he needed over his environment. Science became, as it were, the new god. It was not the mere discovery of natural laws that led to the destruction of the religious mentality and the creation of the scientific. After all, the Greeks had been interested in the behavior of natural phenomena; Hippocrates had contended that diseases sprang from natural causes; Theophrastus had devoted a considerable part of his energies to the study of plants, laid the foundation for the science of botany, and made a careful analysis of the nature of the senses;[50] Aristotle had concerned himself with animals instead of angels, examining 540 of them during his life time, and in addition had speculated upon the natural evolution of life and stressed the physical basis of human reaction. Then again in

50 For an illuminating discussion of Theophrastus's work in this field the reader is referred to George Malcolm Stratton: *Theophrastus and the Greek Physiological Psychology Before Aristotle.*

Spain, in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the Arabs had focussed their attention upon natural phenomena, cultivated rational thought and scientific analysis of the physical world, advanced mathematical theory, and helped prepare the way for the full-fledged emergence of the scientific mentality.[51] Later, to be sure, Galileo and Toricelli carried on the scientific examination of natural phenomena to an even more advanced point, and afterwards a score of others in fields as diverse as anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and biology extended the same approach. Nevertheless, these same accretions of scientific knowledge alone would not have been sufficient to destroy the structure of the religious mentality which persisted long after they had been accepted by the various scientific minds of the day. Despite their significance viewed in the light of the present time, science remained in those days an isolated thing, a pursuit of a cult rather than a culture.

One of the best illustrations of that fact is to be found in Russia as late as the nineteenth century—and even down to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. While the rest of Europe was being transformed by the new industrial world which was being created by the practical applications of the scientific mentality, Russia remained comparatively unchanged through it all. Industry made but

[51] *Cf.* C. H. Haskins: *Medieval Science,* and George Sarton: *Introduction to the History of Science,* especially these sections dealing with science during the Middle Ages. It is interesting to note here that all through the medieval period, the only people to keep the scientific outlook alive were the Muslim scientists who stemmed from the Oriental and not the Occidental (Greek) tradition. They delved into hydrostatics, mechanics, and optics and anticipated much of the scientific work which was not to be achieved in most European countries until centuries later. They invented chemistry and trigonometry, devised special apparati for distillation and filtration, measured the size of the earth, and ascertained the relationship of the stars (John William Draper: *The Conflict between Religion and Science,* pp. 111–116).

a slight indentation upon Russian soil and hence science was able to make but little headway with the Russian mind. "Science is a bar of gold made by a charlatan alchemist," declared Tolstoi, expressing not only his own opinion but also that of many of the best Russian minds, extending from Dostoievsky and Bielinski to Solovyof and Merezkovski. The *a posteriori* emphasis of the scientific mentality had little appeal for the nineteenth-century Russian mind which was still dominated by the metaphysical *a priori* emphasis of the religious mentality. So long as Russia remained in a backward agrarian state the scientific mentality developed in Europe was not able, by way of diffusion, to penetrate into Russia and counteract the religious mentality dominant there. The scientific mentality could only triumph over the religious when the whole structure of the culture became changed by the applied technique of science.

The conflict in mentalities, therefore, reflecting as they did a basic conflict in the whole mode of production and in the class structures of the respective societies, was a definite and decisive one. It was no wonder, therefore, that the Russians always spoke of "going into Europe."[52] Europe represented a different world to the Russian mind. It was not the so-called Asiatic fact, as has often been contended, which created that difference, but the mental outlook resulting from the difference in economic and cultural background. The best proof of that fact is to be seen in what has happened to Russia today, since the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. Today the religious,

[52] Masaryk: *Spirit of Russia*, vol. I, p. 2.

metaphysical mind has evaporated. Why? Because Soviet Russia has become an industrialized state, in which industry has been introduced even into agriculture in order to collectivize it. The result has been that the religious mentality has been driven into irrecoverable retreat within the span of little more than a decade.

The religious mentality could dominate only so long as man remained in an agricultural stage of existence wherein the necessities for scientific control were neither exigent nor imperative. The demands made upon life by an agrarian form of production are of such a simple variety that scientific mastery of the environment does not constitute a compelling necessity. Where life, as under an agricultural régime, was sufficiently separate and isolated to make contact with the rest of the world impossible, or at least undesired, the religious mentality flourished as the indispensable intermediary between man and the elements. The priest continued, even in the Middle Ages, to function as rain-maker, striving to intercede with God in the behalf of the community, promising man not only rain but freedom from all the other adversities of the environment. And when such promises could not be fulfilled, the priest held out to him the greatest promise of all, the fulfillment of his desires in another world beyond the grave where the imperfections and impermanencies of this world would have no place. The ecclesiastical class exploited these promises to the utmost, for they constituted the source of its power. The more obdurate the environment was to man's control, the more susceptible his mind was to the influence of the religious compulsive.

In ancient Greece the scientific mentality made more progress than anywhere else because the environmental conditions conduced toward making the gods into guides and intimates instead of rulers,[53] thus depriving religion of a good part of its intellectual power over the mind of the individual. In addition, owing to their comparative isolation from the rest of the world, especially from the dominant religious traditions of Asia and Africa, the Greeks, as James Harvey Robinson expressed it, "had no venerated classics, no holy books, no dead languages to master, (and) no authorities to check their free speculation."[54] The Greeks, therefore, were able to begin their intellectual inquiry with a freshness and an originality impossible for their contemporaries in other nations. But such freshness and originality would have been impossible if it had not been for the fact that the economic environment of Greece favored the creation of a different set of gods from those prevalent elsewhere and encouraged a different attitude toward them. Homer's depiction of the lives of the gods on Olympus had no parallel in any other literature. No other people had ever viewed their gods in such a spirit.

But that did not mean that the religious compulsive had no influence over Greek thought. It most certainly did. A happy combination of economic and telluric factors, however, plus the comparative geographic isolation of the country which acted as a partial protection against possible invasion, freed the Greek mind from many of the en-

[53] Zimmern: *The Greek Commonwealth.*
[54] James Harvey Robinson: *The Mind in the Making,* pp. 99–100.

vironmental fears which beset the Jews, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. It was those factors in the main which provided the Greek mind with a degree of critical latitude which was unknown elsewhere in ancient society.

Nevertheless, it should not be thought that the rôle of the gods was a totally negative one in Greek culture. The Greeks were religious; their gods were worshipped and celebrated by the populace. Phidias was not interested in sculpture as an art in itself but as a vehicle of religion. The same was true of other Greek artists. It was the character of the religion, however, which made the difference. The difference was in the nature of the worship and the celebration, and that difference can be traced to the advantages of telluric and economic forces which made the Greeks less dependent upon their gods for aid than were other peoples upon their deities. Therein lay the secret of the advance which the Greeks made in the development of the scientific mentality. Although the religious compulsive was there to combat, its presence was being constantly counteracted by an environment which made the mind ever less and less subject to its enslaving influence.

At the same time, it should not be imagined, even in view of those differences, that the light way in which the Greeks took their gods indicated disrespect for them on the part of the people. After all, Anaxagoras and Aristotle were banished because of their contempt for the gods, and Socrates was forced to drink the hemlock because of his attempt to teach the young not to believe in the old divinities regnant in his day.[55] Still, it was the

[55] Anaxagoras was attacked merely because he asserted that the sun was not a deity but a stone "about as large as the Peloponnese."

intimate way in which the Greeks viewed their gods that made it possible for scepticism to advance as a philosophy and Xenophanes to make his revolutionary discovery that the gods were nothing more than human creations, anthropomorphic in form as well as conception.

Basic to all this intellectual advance on the part of the Greeks, however, was the development of commerce in the Ægean and the contact with the ideas of other peoples which resulted. The religious mentality thrives best of all in an environment isolated from intimate contact or communication with other nations. Contact tends to create curiosity and doubt. It was not as a result of accident, therefore, that Greek philosophy originated in Miletus which was the centre of Ionian commerce.[56] The frequent migrations of the day, including that inspired by colonial enterprise, prepared the way for the rise of a mentality which was given more to science than religion in the pursuit of its ends. The indentations of the coast, which insured numerous harbors for commerce, and the island-punctuated Ægean which made that commerce profitable, constituted all that was needed to give Greek economic life the variety necessary to save the Greek mind from enslavement to an ancient religious tradition.[57] Commerce bred not only a different attitude of mind but also, as in Ionia, a class of merchant-potentates who comprised a more intelligent public than the agrarian city states had produced in the past.[58] While that class developed all the

[56] W. G. Burgh: *The Legacy of the Ancient World*, p. 97.

[57] Henry Osborn Taylor: *Freedom of the Mind*, pp. 51, 52.

[58] Alfred E. Zimmern in *The Greek Commonwealth* (p. 104) traces in illuminating detail the influence which the economic conflict between "town and country" had upon the Greek mentality at the time.

unfortunate dishonesty and cunning of every bourgeoisie,[59] it turned a more sympathetic eye upon the scientific scepticism developing at that period because it was anxious to break down the restrictions of an agrarian economy which handicapped it, and it was happy to favor the declaration of Pericles that "the great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action." Like all bourgeoisies, it favored freedom of discussion because that freedom provided free play for its own economic advance. The old agrarian traditions fettered it; hence the scepticism which grew up in obvious opposition to the old tradition won its immediate support.

As a result of this conflict in Greek society, created by the spread of commerce and the rise of the commercial bourgeoisie, Greek thought was able to achieve the earliest emancipation of the mind from the dominance of the religious mentality. It must not be forgotten, however, as was stated above, that the scientific, experimental approach to reality made by such early Greek thinkers as Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Anaxagoras was not undertaken in avowed defiance of the gods. As a matter of fact, those thinkers for the main part still believed in the gods.[60] They simply did not allow the gods to interfere with their examination of the material world. The final emancipation from all belief in the gods was not to be achieved until many centuries later, with the rise of industrial civilization and the evolution of a full-fledged scientific mentality.

[59] Maurice Hutton: *The Greek Point of View*, p. 108.
[60] Van Hook: *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 267–268.

Although the Greeks might worship Pan as a god who was a half goat and the author of fertility,[61] they were able at the same time not to allow that worship to paralyze their approach to reality. Besides, the very fact that Greek society was built about the orbit of the small farmer,[62] with its commercial advance an extension of that orbit, insured a larger margin of individual independence than was to be discovered at that time in other countries wherein the rôle of the small farmer was exceedingly inconspicuous. In other countries for the most part, the large land-owner dominated the economic scene. Later on in Greece, it is true, as commerce advanced and cities multiplied in both size and number, the small farmer lost his position of influence. In fact, the whole struggle between the country and the city, terminating in the degradation of the farmer and the loss of his former position in the community,[63] marked an important turning point in Greek history, influencing in a profound and enduring way the whole character of Greek culture.

Although the Greeks did not complete the emancipation of the mind which they began, they created a tradition upon which all future civilizations in the Occident were to depend. Whenever, as with the rise of the middle class at the time of the Renaissance, the struggle against the religious mentality was renewed, it was to the Greek tradition that all progressive minds reverted. The Greeks thus, thousands of years ahead of their time, anticipated the rise of the scientific mentality and the decease of the

[61] H. J. Rose: *Primitive Culture in Greece*, pp. 67, 68.
[62] Henry Osborn Taylor: *Freedom of the Mind*, pp. 54, 55.
[63] Zimmern: *op. cit.*, p. 105.

religious, and by providing a tradition which favored the former more than the latter, they did more than any other people to further the progress of western civilization.

To summarize—the religious mentality, as I have tried to show throughout this analysis, did not evolve from man's inner self; it did not represent man's striving to explain the universe in order to satisfy his metaphysical curiosity or appease his fear of mystery; it arose out of his simple economic need for food and protection from disease and the depredations of the elemental forces. Through the putative power of magician and priest, it provided a means of answering that need and attaining that protection. It was, in short, a power-phenomenon, dependent for its cultural voltage upon the importance of the need it satisfied. Only as civilization progressed, and the economic problem became less and less exigent and the individual ego discovered more and more opportunity to emerge, could the human mind find time to concern itself with the whys and wherefores of the universe in the manner of the intellectual mystic. By the time that stage of advance had been attained, all such contemplation had become inevitably entangled with the religious compulsive. The history of mysticism, therefore, has been inextricably interwoven with the evolution of the religious mentality. In modern times many mystics have begun to diverge from the religious tradition, creating a new form of metaphysics in the process, but in no case have they failed to carry over the religious spirit into their technique.

It was the economic fact, however, which provided religion with its pristine force and power, and by the time

the economic element ceased to be the dominant determinant in the religious process the religious mentality had already been created, and an ecclesiastical class whose main task was to perpetuate that mentality had already arisen. In brief, as a result of the conditions we have described, the first force to give shape to the human mind was the religious compulsive; that compulsive created the religious mentality which in turn determined for countless centuries how the mind thought, what it thought about, and what it was to do with what it thought.

The religious mentality was forced to give way to the scientific only when the need which the religious mentality served could be better fulfilled by science. The two factors which were most instrumental in destroying the religious mentality were extensity of contact and facility for verification. So long as man lived in agrarian communities where contact with the outside world was severely limited, there was scarcely any extreme to which his credulity would not extend. Once contact with the outside world was established, however, and the cultures of other peoples came into touch with his own, his credulity became challenged by the contradictions he faced. At the same time, in consequence of that contact, his facilities for verification increased, and what before he had taken as an apodictic fact he was now able to question if it did not check up with the experience of other peoples. It was the evolution of commerce, thus, which hastened the decay of the religious mentality and the development of the scientific. Nevertheless, commerce in itself was not sufficient to destroy the power of the religious mentality. At best, it

could only temper its influence. While it made it possible for an Aristotle to arise in Greece and a Lucretius in Rome, it did not make it possible for the scientific mentality to displace the religious as the dominant way of thought of the nation. It required the application of science in the form of industrial technique, to drive the gods out of the temples of power.

The temples of power are owned today by those who, in industry and finance, employ the methods of science as their source of control. Religion has become an increasingly weaker and weaker ally in the social process. Even in terms of the individual, the power of religion has withered. It hangs on today like the vestige of an ancient thing. It persists more as a habit than as an inspiration to action. The politician today is more powerful than the priest, the financier more influential than the bishop, the industrialist more important than the prophet.

Notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary, notwithstanding all the statistics of membership that the churches may cite, the fact remains that the religious mentality is in a state of disintegration and decay, with no hope left for its recovery. Its social purpose has been superseded by that of science.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS FUNCTION

"How I wish that there were gods that we might have confidence not only in our arms but in the justice of our cause."—Cassius to Brutus before the battle of Philippi.

WHILE it is true, as was shown in the previous chapter, that religion has receded already in importance in the modern world, and the religious mentality has given way to the scientific, it would be absurd to contend that the habits of mind cultivated by the religious compulsive have disappeared. On the contrary, many of those habits continue to linger and hold back the advance of the scientific mentality. Especially in the social sciences, which should be the most dynamic, are such intellectual hang-overs still conspicuous.

As science advanced, it became increasingly evident that religion was no longer needed to provide power over the physical world. Because of the measurable nature of the physical world, it was possible for the physical sciences to eliminate without difficulty the religious factor from the scientific equation.[1] The social world, however, presented and still presents a different and more complex problem than the physical. In the former world, the variables and incalculables are more numerous, more puzzling, and

[1] The fact that Eddington and Jeans tend to lean in mystical directions in their interpretations of the whence and whither of the cosmos does not alter the more important fact that when they attempt to determine the speed of light or the movement of atoms or the cast of the stars, they do so without the intrusion of their pseudo-religious concepts and conclusions.

more unsolvable. The scientific technique cannot be applied there with the certainty of control which is possible in the world of physical phenomena. Consequently, where means of control are absent, or at least severely limited, it is almost inevitable that aspects of the religious mentality will linger as a substitute for the power needed.

Since the real object of science, in the last analysis, is not merely to explain but to control, those sciences which disregard or deny the necessity of control lack both social meaning and significance. Science is more than the pursuit of truth for the sake of truth, the philosophic tradition to the contrary notwithstanding; truth is not an objective in itself; science is the pursuit of truth in order to effect an end. When the social sciences become, as they are in the main in America today, agencies for the discovery of truths which have no ends in themselves, they are really not sciences at all, for they serve no social purpose and possess no social value. They become no more important than a collection of card-catalogues which have no system of reference, or than an alphabet in which the letters cannot be put together to make words—which, for example, is what sociology amounts to today, as taught and discussed in most American universities and expounded by most sociologists without as well as within the academic field. Such emphasis upon the passive instead of the active side of science grows out of a total misconception of the place and purpose of science in social life.

Sociology, of course, did not begin with that false emphasis. It arose as a science of control, of action, as a means of changing and controlling society, as a branch of

socialism. There was a time even in America, as Harry Elmer Barnes has emphasized with telling force, when sociology and socialism were looked upon as synonymous. The present state of sociology is largely an outgrowth of economic necessity. In order to hold their jobs and continue to function, sociologists in America have been driven to develop their present outlook which outlaws everything dynamic in favor of everything static, and prepares them to study the social structure in all its details without ever learning how to change or control it. All of which means, in a word, that they know everything but understand nothing—for if they understood the social structure they would have to act upon their understanding, which would imply controlling it by means of their science.

If then, in the field of established sociology, there is little left of the religious mentality, it is not because sociology has become scientific but because it has failed to develop into a science at all. It has avoided the very task which science must tackle, namely, to control the destiny of the materials with which it has to work. The moment one turns to those developments of social science wherein the control-factor is present, one discovers remnants of the religious mentality in operation. Nowhere is this more conspicuous than in the development of Marxism, which represents the most advanced and progressive form of social science.

Marxism, as every one knows, is the social philosophy about which the proletarian forces of the world have rallied. As a scientific method Marxism has revolution-

ized social thought. It has provided an interpretation of history which is more valid than any that has preceded. It has torn away the shrubbery of confusion which hid the roots of culture from the eye of man. By revealing the importance of the mode of production in determining the development of the race and shaping the character of civilization with its divers cultural institutions, and by showing in addition the psychological rôle which economic classes play in the whole process, Marxism has contributed to social science a method of analysis that is as sound and significant as Newton's contribution to physical science or Darwin's to biological. In terms of social influence, to be precise, the Marxian contribution is much more fundamental than either the Newtonian or the Darwinian. Moreover, since Marxism aims not only to interpret but also to change society, it is all the more important a contribution to science and to the development of the scientific mentality.

Nevertheless, because of the very fact that the tendency of mind bred by the religious compulsive is not yet dead, and because the *power* man needs in the field of social science is still a matter of acquisition, Marxism, in the hands of many Marxians, has tended to retain certain aspects of the religious mentality in the process of application. Instead of using Marxism as a scientific method such Marxians have employed it as a theological dogma. Marxism has become for them a mystical sesame unlocking all the secrets of the universe, and a magic lens in which all history can be kaleidoscoped to fit a fore-ordained design. Marxism, for such Marxians, is converted into an *a priori*

affair,[2] something independent of experience and removed from the empirical test of reality. Consequently, instead of resorting to reality for their proofs, which is the *a posteriori* method of science, reality for them becomes subordinated to doctrine, and proof becomes a matter of quotation from authority or citation of text. While the conclusions arrived at by that method cannot be called theological, since the materials dealt with fall into a different category, the manner in which they are derived is a distinct carry-over of the religious mentality. The mediævalists cited Aristotle as proof of the fact that there were no spots on the sun instead of looking at the sun themselves and discovering that Aristotle was wrong. Such a procedure we call authoritarian instead of scientific. But Marxians who rely upon quotations from Marx or Engels or Lenin as the source of their proofs instead of upon reality itself are no less authoritarian and no more scientific in their emphasis. It is such Marxians who have hindered rather than advanced the Marxian method. They have prevented it from being scientific by making it authoritarian—and authoritarianism and science, it scarcely need be added, are incompatible opposites.

To prove that such Marxians destroy the scientific validity of the Marxian method, stultifying its purpose and vitiating its value, is a necessary task.[3] Although we live in a world in which science has replaced religion as a means of controlling the physical universe, we do not live in a

[2] *The Communist:* March, 1933, p. 292.

[3] In that connection, Marx's declaration in a letter to Lafarge: "One thing is certain and that is I am not a Marxist" is of more than a little interest. Even Marx had to battle with certain of the Marxists.

world in which science has superseded religion as a means of controlling the social universe. While science has provided the power desired over physical things, it has not yet demonstrated its power over social things. Men still crave power over the social world and in the absence of an objective science which endows them with that power, they have no other recourse but to find a means of securing it. The degree to which that means is contingent upon wish fulfillment instead of realistic fact determines the extent to which it is dependent upon the religious mentality for its inspiration.

The whole history of the human race has been the record of its struggle for power over its environment—power over animals, soil, sky, sex, death. Religion is necessary only so long as man believes it can provide him with that power. Science supplants it precisely at the point where that power can be supplied with greater efficacy by the scientific technique.

Science perpetuates aspects of the religious mentality only insofar as its exponents endow it with a power it does not possess. In that sense those Marxians who stress the inevitability of events, and employ a kind of mechanical sleight-of-hand in order to convert history into a fatalistic formula, carry over into their social science an element of the religious mentality in positive form. But why do they do this? Because that element provides them with the sense of power which the purely scientific aspects of Marxism do not provide. By convincing themselves that history is with them, that no matter what happens the future belongs to them, all of which arises from their making Marx-

ism into an *a priori* instead of an *a posteriori* affair, they are able to achieve the same illusion of power over the environment which the magician and priest succeeded in attaining in earlier days.

The results of that attitude are manifold. In the first place, it renders it possible to carry over the fervid devotional intensity of the religious mentality into the social struggle, endowing its challenge with the transcendent passion and promise of a sacred ideal. From the point of view of driving power, resulting from the release of emotional voltage precipitated thereby, there is a decided gain to be noted. The more important problem to consider, however, is what is lost. If by infusing the individual with sacrificial ardor and the world with mystic significance, the victory of the working class could be assured, no objection could be raised from a revolutionary point of view. The end would justify the means.

The contention of every scientific Marxist is that such an *a priori*, theological approach does not lead to that end. What it does, as the history of the Social Democrats and Communists in Germany demonstrably proved, is to lead the mind to fight facts by means of wish-fulfillment fictions.[4] Instead of keying itself to reality, the mind, fettered by the vestiges of the religious mentality, drugs itself into believing in the illusion of inevitable victory. What follows? Failure to understand or devise adequate means to control reality, which is the object of social sci-

[4] In a letter of the author to Leon Trotsky, printed in the April, 1933, issue of *The Modern Monthly* (vol. VII, no. 3), this point is dealt with in more detail, and in terms of the American-German situation is amply demonstrated by documentary evidence.

ence especially in its revolutionary aspects. In consequence, reality becomes what one wishes instead of what it is. Dangers are underestimated and advantages exaggerated. The strength of the enemy is misjudged because history has already foreordained it to defeat. Quotation from authority and citation of text to prove that a policy is correct become more important than studying the reality itself toward which the policy is directed. As a result, what is gained in emotional intensity from the possession of a closed-in, *a priori*, power-promising philosophy, which makes history its fatalistic extension and adjunct, is lost by the errors and mistakes which flow out of it.

What is needed is a scientific application of Marxism, freed of all trace of fatalistic inevitability, metaphysical teleology, and sterile authoritarianism. In other words, what is desired is the development of a Marxism which is completely emancipated from all remnants of the religious mentality. The costs of cultivating an authoritarian Marxism are obvious. Marxism is a dynamic and not a static method. To perpetuate itself, it must advance and not stand still, grow and not remain fixed and stilted. It must be plastic and not rigid. Lenin stressed the correct approach when he declared:

> In no sense do we regard the Marxist theory as something complete and unassailable; on the contrary we are convinced that the theory is only the cornerstone of that science which Socialists must advance in all directions if they do not wish to fall behind life.

Only the cultivation of such a scientific Marxism, keeping in mind Marx's early words that "history is nothing but

the activity of man in pursuit of his ends," can save Marxism from falling into the hands of the authoritarian Marxians and free it from the handicaps of the religious mentality.

The religious compulsive, it is obvious then, has far from disappeared as a mental force. While it is no longer in the ascendent, it still exercises an influence over the intellectual activities of scientists as well as theologians, and will continue to do so as long as the mind refuses to recognize the nature of the compulsive that dominates it and as long as society perpetuates the need for power from which the force of the compulsive is derived.

It is important at this point to remark that it has been a characteristic tendency of upward-struggling, suppressed groups to cultivate the "history is with us" mentality as a form of defense as well as inspiration. The middle class, for example, utilized it in forthright religious form in its struggle for power. The fact of the matter is, of course, that history is with those who make it. No one was more correct than Lenin when he pointed out that capitalism can patch itself up indefinitely if there is no class-conscious proletariat to destroy it. It is up to the proletariat to make history be with it; otherwise history will be against it. In Germany history was with the Fascists because they made it so. It is the job of the proletariat not to let history turn against it just because it theologically convinces itself that history must be with it.

In the past religion was the necessary means by which all struggles for power were justified. Economic conflicts, political strifes, and moral differences were all ex-

pressed in religious form. It was in religion, as we have shown, that human psychology for hundreds of thousands of years found its focal centre. In religion, the lower middle class forged its most effective weapon. When we remember that the entire culture of the Middle Ages had revolved about a religious orbit; that even kings and princes had often been forced to accept its decisions along with jester and serf; that all of life in those days was permeated with religious significances, from the infinitesimal to the infinite, we can easily understand why economic classes during Renaissance and post-Renaissance days in France, Holland, Germany, and England expressed their revolt in religious instead of political or economic form. Religion was the great mask behind which everything was concealed. It was the only cultural form of expression to which men could resort. If change was in the air only religion could justify it. When feudalism broke down, and with the rise of commerce the town supplanted the manor, the individualistic spirit which emerged ineluctably assumed a religious guise.[5]

All this was so because the religious compulsive had succeeded first in shaping the mind in its own likeness and then in endowing the institutions of life with such character that all conflicts had to manifest themselves in religious contours. Even the civil power, controlled by kings, was dependent upon the gods for defense. Although the king, with his army, was physically strong enough to do what he pleased, he was always afraid in ancient days to venture into any conflict without the sanc-

[5] Oscar Marti: *Economic Causes of the Reformation in England*, p. xxi; also Preserved Smith: *A History of Modern Culture*, p. 9.

tification of the gods. This attitude on his part was inevitable. His mind could function no other way, the whole mental outlook of society, that of the rulers as well as the ruled, having been conditioned thus by the religious compulsive. No matter how strong his armies, he could not feel confident of victory unless he had the support of the gods on his side. Besides, the morale of his soldiers depended to a considerable degree upon their faith in the power of the gods. Just as ancient kings would not venture upon wars of obvious aggression without endowing them with religious import, so modern nations today will not hazard similar wars without hallowing them with nationalist meaning. In our day, with the decline of the gods, *nationalism has become the state religion,* embodying within its patriotic ritual a further extension of the religious mentality.[6] Again, the craving for power, derivative in this case from the struggle for national survival, carries over into its nationalist psychology the same "history is with us" mentality, and the same belief in wish-fulfillment fictions. Hence, the Americans who lost the War of 1812 are taught to believe that their nation has never lost a war at all, while the Portuguese continue to teach their children today that Portugal is a great nation.

II

A product mainly of man's fear of economic insufficiency, religion was bound to cling to the mentality of

[6] In the second volume of this study, the relationship between *nationalism* and the religious mentality will be discussed in considerable detail.

the race so long as the threat of material insecurity lingered. When, with the advance of science and the growth of an industrial civilization, that fear became less, the influence of religion decreased. The masses who gained the least from such material progress continued to be the most religious. Even today, despite the advance of the scientific mentality in various fields, the masses retain a large part of their religious psychology. While it is true that they go to the doctor instead of the priest for their physical therapy, and resort to the technician instead of the magician for their control over materials, they continue to worship the gods in their hearts. But why do they do so? Because of their ignorance, as many contend? Partly, no doubt—but mainly because of their need for power. The nature of their lives, the deprivation and suffering they have to endure, the insecurity and uncertainty of their todays as well as their tomorrows, leave them with a sense of powerlessness before the pressures and tensions of the environment. Despite the production of plenty, only the few are able to share in it. The many remain unprotected. Consequently, like the primitives and ancients of early times, the masses crave a form of power which will provide them with an escape from the threat of those pressures and tensions. Religion, with its this-worldly palliatives and its other-worldly promises, supplies them with the power they seek. By believing in the fictions of religion, they achieve a psychological sense of power which otherwise they would lack and without which they could scarcely live. In that way religion functions as an obvious opiate, tending to construe the world in

terms of what one wishes instead of in terms of what it is.[7]

Even before the advent of the scientific mentality, upper classes, as society advanced and their position became more secure, seldom took religion with the seriousness which characterized the reaction of the masses to it. Their religiosity became more and more nominal instead of imperative. Religion for them was not such an indispensable recourse. Nevertheless, until the development of the scientific mentality they tended with but rare exceptions to accept the gods even though they did not make continuous genuflections to them. The rare exceptions, such as Lucretius, inevitably sprang either from the wealthy classes—who needed the gods only as a means of protecting their property from the depredations of the plebeians—or from those who were in sufficiently close touch with the wealthy classes to benefit, by patronage or remuneration, from the advantages of their way of life. But even such exceptions were but infinitesimal indentations on the intellectual map of the race.

Just as the economics of scarcity created the religious impulse and gave form to the gods, the economics of plenty marked the decline in the intensity of the impulse and clipped the wings of its sacred agents. It was the arrival of the Industrial Age, which marked the triumph of the scientific mentality, that spelled the final defeat of the economics of scarcity and the early rise of the economics of plenty. Before the Industrial Revolution all classes, in varying degrees to be sure, were affected by the eco-

[7] In Soviet Russia religion has been practically done away with because the masses there have no need of it, their life interests being protected by a state which provides them with the power they need.

nomics of scarcity. If there was drouth or famine, the patricians suffered as well as the plebeians—although, of course, in a much less severe way—since the food supply of the whole community came from the same source, which was limited by the environment in question. It was natural for the upper classes to believe in the gods, consequently, so long as the economics of scarcity persisted.

In ancient Egypt, for example, the religious force dominated the entire culture of the people. Every one, from the Pharaoh to the humblest pyramid builder, was subject to the caprices of the Nile. If the waters of the Nile failed to wash the soil and fecundate it with its rich sediment, lean years would follow. It was inevitable that the Egyptian mentality should revolve about the Nilotic force and that the religious compulsive should exercise as much influence over the rulers as the ruled.

The Nile, therefore, source and secret of Egyptian economic life, became worshipped in a myriad different forms. Apostrophes to the Nile god and his many satellites, sub-deities who flourished in such abundance in his waters, can still be discovered on Egyptian papyri, and prayers to them are to be found carved high up on the forehead of various star-reaching cliffs. This prayer to the Nile god is typical of the veneration bestowed upon him:

> Father of all the gods, prince of the waters, who feedeth Egypt, from whose rising comes plenty, and riches, and life to all.[8]

Many of the hymns to the Nile were no less revealing:

> Thou art alone, thou createdst thyself, none knoweth the place

[8] A. Wiedemann: *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 147.

in which thou art. On the day when thou comest forth from thyself, then is every one full of joy. Thou art Lord of many fish and of gifts; thou givest food unto Egypt. . . . Thou art into life, for at thy coming their offerings increase, their altar is filled with plenty, they shout for joy at thine appearing, (for) thou dost provide for us that which is needful that men may live.[9]

As the source of one of the "great national cults," the Nile inspired frequent festivals and elaborate celebrations and had many temples erected in its honor, to all of which the king stood as much in awe as the commoner. The king as well as the masses, saw in Hapi, the god of the river, the source of his own sustenance and security.

Egypt was, indeed, as Herodotus said, "the gift of the river." The mechanical rhythm which characterized the inundations of the Nile year after year, unfailingly, as if set by a clock wound in an ancient past that would never lose a minute or skip a second, timed the very nature of human reaction to a point of unparalleled monotony. The nature of toil was as regular and inevitable as sunfall. What was done was done in harmony with the river. To violate that harmony meant extinction. This lack of variation in the life of Egypt disclosed itself in the structure of Egyptian art. The simple monotony of art design in Egypt, the stilted conventions that circumscribed it, which resulted in a lack of adventurousness of conception that was deserted only rarely, once as an aftermath of the Aknaton revolt, were all derived from the overshadowing and overpowering influence of the river.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 146. This hymn was carved in the rocks of Gebel Silsileh in Upper Egypt at the instigation of Rameses II; later it was duplicated by his son, Meneptah, and later still by Rameses III.

In China, where no Nile existed to impregnate the earth with its effluvial overflow, the worship of the soil assumed a humbler guise. Nature worship in China was —and to an extent still is—less spectacular and less elaborate. Heaven was worshipped because it housed the weather-gods, the rain, the wind, and the thunder, whose beneficent influence was so necessary for the fertilization of the crops.[10] All through the official religion of China the soil and grain are invested with holy meaning. They are second only to "the imperial ancestors in the hierarchy of divine powers"; the emperor sacrifices to them, the provincial governors do also, as do likewise the common people at the village altar. The same type of reverence is also accorded the mountains which are supposed to rule the wind and the rain, curb the floods, and prevent earthquakes. The spirit of the soil is the divinity of riches.[11] Prayers are annually dedicated to T'ai-shan, the Eastern Summit, so that he will placate the winds, inspire showers, and multiply the crops. More than that, all creation, according to certain of the religious myths, springs from the flanks of T'ai-shan and returns thereto after death. Shennung, the Father of Husbandry, the god who originally taught the people how to plough the ground, is also accorded extreme reverence throughout China. But these are only a few of the religious ceremonies associated with agriculture. Interwoven with them all, of course, was the intricate system of ancestor worship which bound the ceremonies and sacrifices together into a social whole. While the present thus was linked to the past, the exaltation of

[10] George Foot Moore: *History of Religion*, p. 6. [11] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the ancestors was no more free of economic necessity than the worship of nature.

China has always represented a unique factor in the development of the religious equation. The official religion perpetuated itself without a priesthood, the civil authorities functioning as ecclesiastics as well as rulers. The state and religion thus were one. The emperor, who was looked upon as the Son of Heaven, superior to the spirits of the sun and moon, represented the religious ruler of the people; other civil functionaries of high rank assisted him in administering the religious rites of the nation. This fusion of civil and ecclesiastical functions inspired no suspicions on the part of the populace who accepted it as naturally as the masses of other lands accepted the hegemony of the priests. What the Chinese masses wanted was what all other masses desired, namely, protection from the hostility of the elements, and aid in the fructification of the crops. It was not the agency which was important but the end. The Chinese masses like all other masses possessed no religious instinct; they manifested no interest in religion as religion but simply in the end that religion served.[12]

It is only on such a basis that the development of religion can be explained. The religious mentality did not spring out of an inner compulsion but from an outer necessity. Contrary to the belief entertained by most people today, primitive and ancient religions were not primarily interested in religion because of its promise of an after

[12] In point of fact, as Doctor Wang has emphasized, the Chinese had no word in their language to stand for religion, and when, with the coming of the missionaries, it became necessary to find a word for it, they had to borrow the word from the Japanese, who in turn had had to invent a word for it in their vocabulary.

life. As a matter of fact, most religions in those times were comparatively little interested in the other-worldly prospect; the other world, as they conceived it, was usually, like the Hebrew Sheol or the Greek Hades, an uninspiring darksome place, fretted with shadows instead of winged with light.[13] Their interest in religion was inspired far more by a desire for power on this earth than for power in an earth beyond the skies, or one, like that of the Romans, submerged beneath seas of soil. It is hardly an accident that the word for god in Russian and in most Slavonic tongues is synonymous with the word for "rich."[14] Nor was it an accident either that almost all the gods from primitive to Christian times were conceived of as "powers"—sources of power. After all, it was power that the people needed and sought and which religion aimed psychologically to provide.

One can turn to any ancient religion and discover additional illustrations corroborating that fact. While the character of divers religions varied in both form and ceremony, their purpose was everywhere the same. The variations in form resulted from the differences in environment, mode of production, and class relations, and the impact of other religions through diffusion; the uniformity in psychological objective resulted from the similarity of the need which every people felt. The economics of scarcity produced different cultures and different religions, but

[13] Even the Roman conception of a future world lacked all trace of beauty and lustre (Albert Grenier: *The Roman Spirit*, pp. 95–96). Virgil's depiction of it was typical of the Roman conception.

[14] Hastings: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. II, p. 6. Among the old Russians, for instance, Volos, who with Perun was worshipped as the ruler of the universe, was known as the "God of Riches"—and also the "cattle god" (Kliuchevskii: *History of Russia*, vol. I, p. 44).

it also produced a common necessity which underlay all these cultures and religions, and endowed them all with a common psychological objective. Thus while the specific "divinity reflects the social structure of the group to which the divinity belongs," as Jane Harrison observes,[15] all divinities reflect the common need which every people has experienced.

No religion has revealed that fact more clearly than Christianity. The early success of the Christian religion can be traced to a definite combination of economic and cultural factors which were conducive to the creation of a state of mind immediately receptive to the rise of such a religion. Christianity arose amid the ruins of an ancient world and became victorious when that world expired. Ancient religions, within and without the Roman empire, sprang up like mushrooms and ofttimes seemed to perish in the night. Christianity alone survived because it supplied, better than any other religion of its time, a need which, in the slums of Rome, in the defeated cities of Greece, and in the agitated cities of Palestine, countless hordes of people were aching to satisfy. All the great religions which in ancient times won the support of the masses, sweeping down upon them like vast tidal waves, breaking through and destroying the dykes of national and racial separation, were at basis social movements which derived their potency from an underlying conflict in the economic structure of society. Their specifically religious aspects were a psychological resolution of that conflict.

Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity were all

[15] Jane E. Harrison: *Themis, A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*, p. ix.

social movements cast into religious form, assuming different characteristics in accordance with the different environments from which they sprang, and developing different emphases in keeping with the specific traditions of which they were a part. They were all victorious within the radius of the particular cultures from which they evolved, because they possessed the means of mass appeal which were necessary for their advance. The conditions of class differentiation in the societies from which they emerged were of such a kind that the masses had come to need a religion of their own.

But why should the masses need a different religion from their rulers? Because the old religions had failed to supply them with the power they needed. Owing to the conditions of distress and deprivation which prevailed everywhere, resulting, as with the rise of Christianity, from a decline in the productive forces and the decay of an entire society, life had become an impossible agony for the vast mass of the downtrodden.[16] Within the radius of the Græco-Roman world and its outlying borders the struggle for existence had become so desperately precarious, so unbearably futile, that it was no longer possible for the masses to believe in the power of gods who provided them with so little.

But even such failure on the part of the gods would not have been enough to provoke the rise of a new religion. Similar failures had occurred before without that result. It was a combination of factors, as we shall see, that was involved.

[16] Karl Kautsky: *Foundations of Christianity*, p. 465. See also V. Simkhovitch: *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, footnote p. 141.

By the middle of the first century B.C., the upper classes in the Græco-Roman world had begun to desert their gods.[17] Life had favored them so abundantly they found little need for the gods. This state of affairs became so serious that statesmen like Cicero openly deplored it and urged the *knows* as well as the *know-nots* to lend their support to the gods lest the state collapse from spiritual bankruptcy. Strabo, Ovid, and even the slave Epictetus, repeated the same refrain. Lucretius, of course, and the Greek Epicurus remained implacably unconvinced; they considered the gods inventions that were as dangerous as they were fantastic. With most of the *knows*, however, as Friedlander shrewdly observed, the atheistic gesture was nothing more than ephemeral and episodic. The moment that calamity threatened, and they sensed a loss of security on their part, they tended to return to religion for succor.[18] Nevertheless, the general decrease in piety on the part of the upper classes[19] unquestionably destroyed a large share of the faith that the populace had once had in the power of the gods.

Certainly the development of Stoicism as a compound of religion and philosophy, a semi-spiritual anodyne for the upper classes, did not retard the destruction of that faith on the part of the masses. Nor did the advance of the doctrines of Plotinus stay that destruction. The Plotinian philosophy, developing as it did in the third century after Christ, definitely helped clear the way for the acceptance of the Christian creed by giving philosophy a

[17] Ludwig Friedlander: *Roman Life and Manners*, p. 85. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[19] M. Rostovzeff: *A History of the Ancient World* (Rome), vol. II, chap. XXIII, p. 334.

mystical turn which even the Roman intellectuals could accept. It was the Plotinians, to be sure, who carried on the last fight against the advancing Christian hosts. Their philosophy was a close approximation in spirit rather than in form to the general outlook of Christianity. By that time, however, the fight was no longer one between opposite and conflicting states of mind but between different manifestations of the same mind. The neo-Pythagoreans like the Plotinians had begun to emphasize the mystical aspects of life, and even to concern themselves with the possibilities of a life beyond the grave, all of which was in direct response to the demands of the day, occasioned by the decay in power of the old gods and the need for the creation of new ones.

The decay of Roman religion, then, and the success of the Christian were due to the conditions of economic and cultural life which, on the one hand, undermined the faith in the old gods, and, on the other, inspired belief in the new. The class relationships which developed in the Græco-Roman world, dependent as it was upon slaves as well as free labor, created this contradiction in the religious life of the time. The wealthy classes, having profited by the advances in agrarian economy and the spread of commerce throughout the far-reaching environs of the empire, no longer had to believe in the gods as an aid to their control over nature. Like Cicero they were anxious for the masses to believe in the gods since such an attitude on the latter's part was conducive to their submission. Their own way of life, however, with its comforts and conveniences, its palatial abodes, its extravagant foods and

attires, its elaborate and costly amusements, freed them from all fear of economic insecurity and deprivation and provided them with the leisure necessary for intellectual contemplation. They had no reason to develop hostility to gods which had served them so well—the case of Lucretius was a rare exception—but they had every reason to become indifferent to their existence and influence.

The persistence of religious tradition, however, for the reasons we have given, is always strong, and it was natural, therefore, that the wealthy classes should continue in considerable part to worship the gods in name if not in reality. After all, it was the easier and simpler gesture. Nevertheless, the fact that the vigor of belief had gone out of them, and had become replaced by an intellectual scepticism during the later days of the empire, robbed the spirit of their religion of all challenge and inspiration. It hung on like the last clinging vestige of a dead, desiccated thing.

Cicero might protest against the change, Cato might inveigh against it, Ovid might deplore it, but such a religion could not continue to claim the allegiance of the masses who had need of a faith which could buoy up their belief in themselves and provide them with the illusion of power they craved. The populace could not be made to worship gods that had been divested of their power. The Romans had supplied them with an abundance, even a superabundance of gods—"in Rome there are more gods than citizens," wrote Fustel de Coulanges[20]—but gods that had been emasculated of vigor. The specific agricultural

[20] Quoted from Albert Grenier: *The Roman Spirit*, p. 84.

gods of the Romans: Pales, Faunus, Lupercus, Ops, Consus, Ceres, and Saturn, were all derived from the "numina" —that is wills, energies, powers.[21] Saturn, in the beginning the god of sowing, was the most ancient of them all. As Grenier points out, the famous Saturnalia, in which slaves, servants, and masters became equals, grew out of the belief in the Golden Age over which Saturn had once reigned, when private property had not existed and equality had prevailed for all. Even Mars, later familiar as the god of war, was originally a god of vegetation.[22] (The fact that his priests, as Grenier shows, bore the title of Arvales is convincing proof of that fact.) Those gods had sufficed in the old days when the people believed in them and the conditions of economic production and social relationship encouraged that belief.

When the Empire fell into a rapid state of deterioration, however, like a colossal dinosaur consumed by a fast-spreading cancer, the populace had to turn to new gods to provide them with the power to save them from destruction. Dating from the second century B.C., when Roman civilization changed from an agricultural to a commercial one, the class divisions in Roman society widened catastrophically, with the result that the gods became increasingly less satisfying to the people.[23] The destruction of Corinth and Carthage in 146 B.C. symbolized the complete triumph of Roman commerce over the ancient world. Four centuries later, as Juvenal pointed out, this process of class division had developed to such a point that the entire test of a man's value or position was determined by

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 89. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[23] William Stearns Davis: *The Influence of Wealth in Imperial Rome*, p. 8.

his wealth. "How many slaves has he?" wrote Juvenal. "How many acres of land does he occupy? How expensive are the dishes on his table? (For) in exact proportion to the money in his chest is the credit given to his oath."

As trade increased and Roman merchants penetrated into the remote environs of Gaul, struck out beyond the vast promontories of Gibraltar, and discovered the far-flung island of Britain, the new contacts brought with them fresh doubts as to the divine origin of their own gods and goddesses. When it became possible for slaves like Trimalchio and Pallas to become men of wealth and power, and gold became the obsession of an empire, the stabilizing influence of the gods was lost in the waste and welter of the process. "How I wish that there were gods," declared Cassius to Brutus before the battle of Philippi, "that we might have confidence not only in our arms but in the justice of our cause." Varro was convinced that the Roman gods would disappear entirely through the neglect of the people. Plutarch arrived at that point of cosmopolitan perspective where he was able to declare that there was no fundamental difference between the various gods of different nations. In essence he was convinced they were all the same, descended from the same substance, common symbols of the same supreme power which rules the universe. But such high-minded, philosophic vision divested reverence of its vigor.

Like many new religions, then, Christianity arose out of the ruins of an old religion. When the old religion could no longer supply the need for power which the pop-

ulace craved, a new religion had to take its place. The old religion, as we have seen, collapsed from the top as well as the bottom, but for different reasons. At the top the collapse occurred because the mounting magnitude of wealth which the upper classes acquired freed them, and all those politicians, artists, and intellectuals who benefited by it, from feeling any dependence upon the gods for power over the environment. In part that loss of faith in the power of the gods was due to the increasing knowledge of the time which grew out of the spreading contacts with new people and strange nations that were brought within the ever-widening embrace of the commercial tentacles of the empire. At the bottom, among the plebeians and commoners, the loss of faith in the power of the gods sprang from an entirely different motivation. It was the suffering engendered among the commoners by the inequitable distribution of wealth, plus the increasing exploitation which became more and more severe as the economic structure of the empire decayed,[24] that undermined their belief in gods that disfavored them so. But the loss of such faith was not a rapid affair. Only when that suffering and exploitation became unendurable, that is when the empire

[24] Vladimir Simkhovitch in his excellent little volume, *Towards the Understanding of Jesus*, has advanced an interesting theory as to the nature of the conditions which caused the Empire to decay. Simkhovitch's theory is that Rome fell because the soil gave out and could no longer support the swelling population that depended upon it. As the soil became increasingly exhausted, more and more land was necessary to feed a family. "An estate which formerly held a whole nation," wrote Seneca, "is now too narrow for a single lord." Simkhovitch quotes other Roman authors to the same effect. "The expropriation of the Roman peasantry, the concentration of ownership of land in the hands of the few, to which the Romans ascribed the ruin of the Empire," Simkhovitch notes, "is a very gradual process and runs parallel with the process of soil exhaustion" (p. 102). Later on, Simkhovitch describes the condition that brought about the development of serfdom. "The free tenant is deserting the fields rapidly. To prevent this he too is being bound to the soil, he becomes a serf" (p. 133).

was no longer able to sustain them, did their faith begin to waver, and even then they would not have deserted the old gods had not a more power-promising set of new ones arisen. The disrepute into which the old gods had fallen in high quarters also undoubtedly influenced, by way of social percolation, the attitude of the lower classes. While the upper classes deserted the old gods out of lack of need for them, the underdogs deserted them because they were unable to fulfill the need which it was imperative for them to serve.

By the time Augustus, whom Livy called the "founder and restorer of all the temples," attempted to change that state of affairs, and elevate the gods to their old position of power, the decay in faith had gone too far to be remedied. The relationship between the gods and men had become too far estranged ever to be repaired. Cato's argument that if man bestowed homage upon the gods, the gods in turn would bless him with all the advantages of life, had lost its persuasion. The rich had no reason to believe that such homage was necessary, and the poor had no cause to believe that it would be of any avail. It was when the poor became enamored of new gods that the battle between the classes became most acute. To suppress the Bacchic cult was one thing, but to destroy the Christian bands was quite another. The early Christian congregation was composed of masses who made of poverty a virtue and of sacrifice an ideal. Attempts at suppression, as Clement of Alexandria declared, only caused the Christian hosts to multiply. Persecution was one of their main sources of inspiration.

While Christianity began as a Jewish product, in the ancient city of Jerusalem, its communistic class appeal soon made it the religion of millions of the oppressed. Its early communistic message, preaching hatred for the rich and love for the poor, with a tangible man-god as its Messiah, assured it of a welcome among all the downtrodden who had lost their faith in the power of the old gods.[25] The class hostility between the rich and the poor had developed in Jerusalem, and for that matter throughout the Roman Empire, long before the appearance of Christianity as a religion.[26] It was Christianity, however, which gave social as well as spiritual impetus to that conflict. The growth of such a communistic sect among the Jews as the Essenes was indicative of the sentiment which that struggle had early developed in the ancient world. The communism that Jesus taught was militant and merciless.[27] There was no place in it for the rich—unless they gave up their riches and became one with the commoners. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God," Jesus asked, "for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." The story of Lazarus, which appears in the Gospel of Luke, reflects

[25] Lecky: *History of European Morals*, vol. I, pp. 163, 164.

[26] Joseph Klausner in his interesting study, *Jesus of Nazareth*, deals in considerable detail with "the disordered condition of life in the country" (Palestine) at the time of the rise of Christianity, relating just how the vicious economic policies of Herod prepared the way for the success of Jesus' doctrines. "Herod brought the people to a state of complete poverty," Klausner observes, "though he had found it, with certain exceptions, in a state of prosperity" (p. 191). Later on Klausner shows how this condition of economic decay destroyed the basis of Jewish life, converting the Jews from an agrarian into a commercial people, and endowing them with a cosmopolitan instead of a national psychology.

[27] I am not concerned here with the problem of whether Jesus ever lived or not. I am only interested in the doctrines that have been ascribed to him by his apostles, and the words which they quote him as having uttered.

the same philosophy. In the Epistle of James, the condemnation of the rich is even more complete. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."[28]

It was such doctrine that won the rapid support of the masses of that day who had lost belief in their old gods and who needed new gods to restore their faith. In its inception this new religion promised power to slaves as well as freemen, to wives and daughters as well as husbands and sons.[29] "The community of Christ," Jerome declared, "is recruited not from the Lyceum and the Academy, but from the lowest rabble."[30] In the first two centuries of the new era, the rich were not attracted by the mysteries of the Christian religion, for, having acquired such abundant power over the environment, they did not even need their own gods for protection. It was only later, when their economic security became less stable and the Empire began to crumble, that the wealthy classes became interested in the gods of the new religion, and individual members from their ranks became converts to its gospel. After the middle of the third century, when life in the Empire had reached a point of critical uncertainty, and the upper classes, in a wild search for new sensation, had begun to

[28] In his *Foundations of Christianity*, Karl Kautsky has provided an abundant number of illustrations selected from the New Testament, which bear out that philosophy.

[29] Despite the appeal of the Christianity to all oppressed groups, the early Christians did not come from the ranks of the downtrodden proletarians and slaves in Rome, but, as Troeltsch and Kautsky have both shown, from the free laborers in the eastern part of the empire.

[30] Friedländer: *op. cit.*, p. 206.

lose the vigor to rule, many men and women of wealth joined the Christian cause. By the end of the third century, Christians were to be found in the high places, in royal circles, among the senators and equestrians, and scattered in many positions of importance throughout the Empire.[31] It was this conversion of people of influence to the Christian cause that ultimately determined the victory of the new religion over the old one, but, at the same time, diluted the religion itself of its original passion and purpose.[32]

The desperate deprivations which drove the masses to embrace the Christian creed did not influence the members of the upper classes who adopted it. Like the middle-class liberal elements who joined the Labor party in England in the twentieth century, the upper-class contingents who made alliance with Christianity in the later days of the Empire were converted more by the possibility of being on the winning side in this world than on the heavenly side in the other. It was this latter group, which expressed itself through the growing structure of the theocracy, that came to qualify and modify the primitive ardors and asceticisms of the early Christian brethren.

Nevertheless, it was the lethal spread of poverty, which had given to early Christianity the spirit of a social crusade, that determined the ethical frame-work about which

[31] M. Beer: *Social Struggles in Middle Ages*, p. 73.

[32] As a matter of fact, it is very possible that even in the first century, the Apostles attempted to suppress the revolutionary spirit of the Christian masses. Certainly the words of Paul lend abundant credence to that argument. "Servants, obey your masters," was Paul's explicit command. And at another time, Paul urged that slave as well as freeman "remain in his calling in which he was called." (John Cecil Cadoux in *The Early Church and the World* deals in great detail with the reactionary philosophy which soon displaced the revolutionary ideology of the early Christians.)

the religion was to be built in the future. Oppressed by an economic environment which made life hopeless of survival, the masses of that time seized upon the other-worldly promise of Christianity as the only way out. This other world, fresh with eternal peace, opened up its gates of light to the outcast and the lowly. The masses came to believe in that world as in a living, passionate thing. This world, with its ephemeral torments and agonies, was but for a moment; that world, with its imperishable joys and ecstasies, was everlasting. For over a century and a half the early Christians were convinced that this world was about to end and that new world was about to dawn. It was out of that conviction that the early Christian mutilations and masochisms grew.[33] Everything for the new world became the Christian cry. Martyrdom became an obsession. The lion's roar could not frighten souls dedicated to the destruction of flesh.

[33] The early Christian attitude toward sex sprang out of that whole philosophy. Sex became a sin. Sex perpetuated this world—and was, therefore, a device of evil. Castration sects grew up. Men made themselves into eunuchs for Christ's sake. Men must consecrate themselves to the hereafter and not to what is. And so the phallus became for Paul a thorn in the flesh, and for Tertullian woman became the "gateway to the devil." Clement of Alexandria declared that "every woman ought to be filled with shame at the thought that she is a woman." Woman became unmitigatedly despised because of her reproductive function and her tendencies to worldly temptation. While Plato had classified women along with "children and servants," it was the early Christians who condemned her to perdition. In their eyes she was the incarnation of evil, because she was "sex." Sex was an intrusion in a world that was about to end. Men must prepare themselves for higher things. And so continence became a virtue, and celibacy was exalted into a way of life. Sex was unclean in its this-worldliness. It lacked the purity of a heavenly vision. It was a joy of the body instead of the soul. The body became an unclean sheath that enclosed an immortal soul. The body was to be despised, the soul cherished. The body died, but the soul lived on forever. Nakedness, because it emphasized the body and magnified its temptations, became sinful, and sexual intercourse, because it fed upon the body for its ecstasy and tended to reproduce its forms, was scorned as a craving born of the evil of the flesh. The saintly would never surrender to it. Even those, as Paul said, who could not constrain themselves, must never come to look upon their act as sweet and sinless. It was through women, and sex, that Adam had fallen.

In later centuries when Christianity became the religion of the ruling classes, it lost this annihilating asceticism, but retained its ethical emphasis. It continued to

The impulse behind the revolt of the early Christians against the things of this world was similar to that which always expresses itself in the struggle of the oppressed to escape their oppression. "The history of primitive Christianity presents remarkable coincidences with the modern workers' movement," wrote Friedrich Engels in an article *On the History of Primitive Christianity*, "(for) like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of the oppressed; it first appeared as a religion of slaves and freedmen, of the poor, the outcasts, of the peoples subjected or dispersed by Rome. Both Christianity and Socialism preach an approaching redemption from servitude and misery; Christianity assigns this redemption to a future life in Heaven after death; Socialism would attain it in this world by a transformation of society. Both are hunted and persecuted, their adherents outlawed, subjected to special legislation, represented, in the one case, as enemies of the human race, in the other, as enemies of the nation, religion, the family, of the social order. And in spite of all persecutions, in some cases even aided to victory by such persecutions, both advance irresistibly. Three centuries after its beginning, Christianity is the recognized state religion of the Roman Empire, and in barely sixty years Socialism had conquered a place that renders its victory absolutely certain." In an Introduction, written before the article cited above, to a new edition of Marx's

look upon sex as an unclean thing and to view morality mainly as a means of combating the erotic impulse. This tendency, to be sure, as we shall see later, altered in keeping with the life of the economic class involved. In the lives of the later aristocracies the influence of Christian morality became almost nugatory. They adopted the doctrine in theory, but denied it in practice. The middle classes throughout Europe, on the other hand, tended to practise it, in modified form, for centuries.

Class Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850, Engels drew the same parallel:

Now almost sixteen hundred years ago, there was at work in the Roman Empire a dangerous revolutionary party. It undermined religion and all the foundations of the State; it denied point-blank that the emperor's will was the highest law; it was without a fatherland, international; it spread out over the entire realm from Gaul to Asia and even beyond the borders of the Empire. It had long worked underground and in secrecy, but had, for some time, felt strong enough to come out openly in the light of the day. This revolutionary party, known under the name of Christians, also had a strong representation in the army, entire legions were composed of Christians. When they were commanded to attend the sacrificial ceremonies of the Pagan established church, there to serve as a guard of honor, the revolutionary soldiers went so far in their insolence as to fasten special symbols—crosses—on their helmets. The customary disciplinary barrack measures of their officers proved fruitless. The emperor, Diocletian, could no longer quietly look on and see how order, obedience and discipline were undermined in his army. He promulgated an anti-Socialist—beg pardon—an anti-Christian law. The meetings of the revolutionaries were prohibited, their meeting places were closed or even demolished. The Christian symbols, crosses, etc., were forbidden as in Saxony they forbid red pocket handkerchiefs. The Christians were declared unfit to hold office in the State, they could not even become corporals. Inasmuch as at that time they did not have judges well drilled as to the "reputation of a person," such as Herr Keller's anti-Socialist law presupposes, the Christians were simply forbidden to seek their rights in a court of law. But this exceptional law, too, remained ineffective. In defiance, the Christians tore it from walls, yea, it is said that at Nicomedia they fired the emperor's palace over his head. Then the latter revenged himself by means of a great persecution of Christians in 303 A.D. This was the last persecution of its kind. It was so ineffective that, seventeen years later, the army was composed largely of Christians, and that the next autocratic ruler of the entire Roman Empire, Constantine,

called "the Great" by the clericals, proclaimed Christianity as the religion of the State.

The fallacy in Engels's analogy is that Christianity did not triumph as a religion of the masses but as the religion of a rising class. When Constantine made Christianity into the "state religion," it had already become the religion of a large section of the ruling class. Once it became the established religion, it immediately began to shed its communistic content. It was that development which created the fundamental contradiction in the evolution of the Christian Church. Beginning as a religion of the lower classes, Christianity later became a religion of the upper classes, thereby stultifying its meaning by trying to reconcile its upper-class practices with its lower-class convictions.

III

In the ancient world, thus, as well as in the primitive, religion continued to be the great cultural compulsive, because it provided the chief source of power for the group as well as the individual.

Its function was to allay man's fear of the destructive forces of the environment by providing him, through its gods and goddesses and its mystic ritual, with the power to combat those forces and bring them within the radius of his control. By aiming to serve that purpose, religion assured man of survival, of strength, and of power. It promised him food, shelter, health, and all the joys of prosperity. In short, by affording him economic as well as

psychologic security, it functioned as a form of Christian Science for the group as well as the individual.

It was because it continued to serve that fundamental purpose that religion remained the most cohesive force in society. To the degree to which various classes needed religion to provide them with either the strength to survive or the power to climb to a higher status in society, they were relatively more or less religious. Upper classes, therefore, tended to be less religious, or at least more lax in their religiosity, because, having achieved sufficient power over the environment, they were less dependent upon the gods for favors. Additional knowledge, which it was possible for them to acquire through the advantages of wealth and leisure, or through their intellectual lackeys who found it possible to cultivate their own minds through the leisure and subsidies provided them by that class, also tended to make them more sceptical of the divinity of the gods of their nation. Lower classes, on the contrary, who lacked such wealth and leisure and sought to attain them, were more religious because they were more dependent upon the gods for the aid necessary to achieve the power over the environment that they lacked. Consequently, in the past, no class has tended to be more religious than one struggling for power, while no class has been inclined to be less religious in the active sense of the word than one already in power.

Religion, thus, through the centuries, has functioned as a psychological mechanism, providing man with the illusion of power which he has needed to give him the strength necessary to combat the adversities in the economic environ-

ment and palliate the dangers of disease and death. It has been a psychological extension of the self-preservative instinct, subtilized and sublimated into dramatic form. The masses have always been religious because they have needed the psychological strength religion supplies in order to compensate for their lack of economic security and social power. Only when, in a collective society, as in Soviet Russia today, they achieve that security and power will religion no longer be a necessity for them.

Then, and then only, will the religious compulsive, which the scientific mentality has already displaced in the government of the physical universe, cease entirely to have any more influence upon the history of the race.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGIOUS COMPULSIVE AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

"The divinity reflects the social structure of the groups to which the divinity belongs."—Jane Harrison.

"The more the increased taxation keeps the people in dejection and want, the more essential it is to give them religious education, for it is in the restlessness due to misfortune that there is most need of stout fetters and daily consolation."—Necker.

WHILE religion grew out of primitive necessity, and became the binding mental chain which linked the group into a single unit, it also served, as society widened and divided into different classes, as a subtle means of protecting the position of those in power. Individual members of ruling classes for many centuries have recognized the importance of that function. Cicero, for example, and many of the Roman politicians, repeatedly warned the Roman ruling class not to desert their gods lest the masses do likewise and the Empire lose its influence and power. "By reverence and religion," Cicero exhorted, "we have subdued all nations and races." Without reverence and religion, he argued, it would be impossible to subdue the enemies within as well as without the State, and the rabble hordes, he predicted with clairvoyant insight, would arise and engulf the Empire. It was the failure of the Roman ruling class to recognize the

wisdom of Cicero's counsel that contributed largely to its downfall. Later ruling classes tended to avoid that error. While their religion was always more lax than that of the commoner, and their devotion was more nominal than real, they invariably continued to give lip service to the gods in which the populace believed. Napoleon's famous remark, that while he didn't believe in religion, he considered religion necessary for the masses, was typical of that trend. Voltaire's insistence upon keeping the peasants on his estate religious, and erecting a church for their worship, so that they would work harder and not tend to revolt, was another expression of that same philosophy. The Duke of Weimar's decree, forbidding his subjects "to reason (meaning to question religion) under pain of correction" (Menzel, vol. 3, p. 20), was but another illustration of the same tendency. Necker's counsel, voiced on the eve of the French Revolution, was equally revealing: "The more the increased taxation keeps the people in dejection and want, *the more essential it is to give them religious education*, for it is in the restlessness due to misfortune that there is most need of stout fetters and daily consolation."

While it would be a mistake to conclude that ruling classes have always been shrewd enough to realize the truth of Marx's observation that "religion is the opium of the people," there can be no doubt that they have used religion as a means of keeping the people in subjection. What we must remember is that religion has not only been the opium of the people, it has been the opium of the entire race. By supplying a need which man craved, in a world which would not obey his will, it created a mentality

that enslaved the universe. Rulers as well as ruled were subject to its domination. While the former, as we have noted, reacted to it differently from the latter, both thought in terms of the same pattern of mind to which it had given birth. Nevertheless, within the framework of that pattern, ruling classes were able to use religion, in the same sense as today they use nationalism, to rally the support of the ruled and to reconcile them to their ignominious lot.

But that does not mean that ancient ruling classes, because they used religion as a class end, did not believe in religion, any more than it means that modern ruling classes, because they use nationalism as a class end, do not believe in nationalism. In other words, what I am trying to combat at this point is what may be called the "conspiracy theory of history," which insists that ruling classes in the past did not believe in religion, but simply used it, as a fisherman does his bait, in order to get the masses to work and fight for them. In keeping with that theory it follows that ruling classes in the past, ecclesiastical as well as civil, recognized religion as a fraud and perpetuated it as a means of enslaving the rest of the population, and that ruling classes in the present recognize nationalism as a fraud but exploit it in order to inspire the masses to fight and die for them in wars waged for plutocratic profit.

But such is not the case. History is not the work of conspirators. If it were, it would be easy to change it, and easier still to make it. While individual men may murder for profit, a class of men find it almost impossible to murder millions for the same end. In order to do so, they

find it necessary to erect a whole superstructure of camouflage to conceal that end from view. But that camouflage is not constructed to deceive the masses only but also themselves. That is why individuals and organizations who try to convince ruling classes that wars always result in greater loss than gain are so ineffectual; ruling classes would not dare admit to themselves that they would undertake a war for personal profit; they would only war, as Japan today, for the national good, or, as Germany two decades ago, to spread a superior *Kultur*, or, as America in 1917, to establish a democratic world.

Both religion and nationalism, thus, have functioned as vast smoke screens behind which the real motives of men have been obscured from sight. Thucydides pointed out that fact thousands of years ago when he declared that all wars spring out of selfish purposes. Until the rise of nationalism in modern times, religion functioned most conspicuously in that respect. Consequently it is mainly in terms of religion that the underlying economic and cultural conflicts of earlier ages can be traced. As the great compulsive, determining the pattern of social thought, religion absorbed within itself all the struggles going on in the fields of economics, politics, literature, painting, and music. It was only with the beginning of the modern age, in fact only with the coming of the eighteenth century, when reason became counterposed against superstition, that religion ceased to play a primary rôle in the cultural process, and the religious compulsive began to lose something of its original omnipotence.

The conflict between the religion of the Romans and

that of the Christians continued in a different guise within the framework of the mediæval state. Soon after the victory of Christianity, which sounded the death-knell for the old Roman gods, the class conflict which had raged between the two religions concentrated itself within the heart of the victorious one. The theocracy with its multiplying bishops constituted a new ruling class which in time demanded as much fealty and sacrifice from its subordinates as the Roman patricians had from their slaves. The ecclesiastical machinery which that theocracy created soon constituted a state in itself. Therein lay the great strength of the Roman Catholic Church which made it possible for it to become such a dominant force in world affairs and to remain even today, despite the devastating effects of the Protestant Reformation and the progress of the scientific mentality, a powerful organization, supporting reactionary doctrine in every field of culture.

Before the victory of the Christians over the Roman state the Roman intellectuals were convinced that the success of Christianity would mark the complete disintegration and degeneration of the human race. Like many intellectuals today who view the possible success of Communism in the same light, Roman thinkers interpreted Christianity only as a revolt of the rabble, destined to unseat intelligence by hysteria and order by anarchy. After Christianity triumphed, however, many of those intellectuals allied themselves with the Christian cause, and added to the upper-class strain in its ranks. Before long the entire government of the Christian Church comprised a dominion of upper-class ecclesiastics whose interests were

in conflict with those of the poorer classes upon whose backs they had been lifted to power.

It was that conflict between the interests of the upper class hierophants, who tended to fatten upon the expanding wealth of the ecclesiastical state, and those of the poverty-stricken hordes who were exploited as so many slaves in support of that state, which determined in considerable part the nature of the economic struggle that developed with increasing intensity within the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, and which upon occasions flamed forth in desperate insurrections and merciless massacres. It was those upper-class hierophants, ranging from the rich priests and bishops to the Pope, who constituted the ruling class of the epoch. They censored everything that conflicted with their class interests. Later on, when the ecclesiastical state was superseded by the civil state, those hierophants, supported by the wealthy class, censored everything that conflicted with the interests of the latter class. In that way, they tended to retard every progressive movement which possessed mass support.

This change in the character of Christianity dated from the passing of the Apostolic era. At first the clergy like the laymen worked at a trade in order to earn their living.[1] Believing, in the first century of the new era, that this world was soon to end, there was no need to exalt religious offices or create an ecclesiastical machinery. It was only after that belief vanished and the continuance of this world was accepted as an apodictic reality, that the clergy

[1] Charles Guignebert: *Christianity Past and Present*, p. 138.

was able to establish itself as a separate class and batten upon the contributions of the faithful. All the Christians, however, did not accept this change without opposition. Many groups like the Ebionites—their name was derived from Ebionem, meaning "the poor"—clung to the Apostolic way of life. The main stream of Christianity, however, shot far to the right and condemned those sects by edict and finally by sword. It was on the basis of its increasing conservatism, which went hand in hand with its accumulating wealth, that the Church, later known as the Roman Catholic Church, developed the only organization of a state which was able to take over the remnants of the Roman Empire when the civil state collapsed. By strengthening the principle of authority, St. Augustine and other Church fathers were able to endow the Roman Church with all the powers and privileges of a state. Gradually but steadily the Church built up an empire of its own, freed of the financial and military obligations of civil authority. As a landed proprietor, it became a tax collector, a state employer, a banker, and the final source of authority in political as well as spiritual matters. By the time the ninth century had arrived, the richer members of the clergy owned from 75,000 to 140,000 acres of land; those less rich from 25,000 to 50,000; and the poorest of the bishops and abbots possessed from 5000 to 7500 acres.[2] In the next three centuries this wealth doubled, tripled, and quadrupled, with the result the Church became a business organization on an international scale with

[2] James Westfall Thompson: *An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages* (*300–1300*), p. 653.

its clerics as individual stockholders and its followers as individual slaves, contributing their weekly tithe to its expanding exchequer.

It was in the eleventh century when the wealth of the Church had reached such a point of accumulation that its landed rights were being parcelled out by aristocratic families which had entered the Church offices and gotten control of Church properties, that the issue of celibacy arose. There was only one way in which this dissemination of Church property through family inheritance could be prevented and that was through the creation of a celibate clergy.[3] Moreover, the exaltation of celibacy into a religious virtue tended to restore to the masses that respect for the priesthood which they had begun to lose as they saw the class divisions between the families of the ecclesiastics and their own widen more and more. The practice of celibacy isolated the clergy as a group apart, spiritually superior to the rest of humanity, and sanctioned thus their material gains as the rightful inheritance of their holy function. At the same time the perpetuation of a celibate priesthood insured a solidification and spread of Church property.

Within the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself class divisions had rapidly developed, separating the bishops and abbots from the priests and monks. The former were descended usually from the aristocracy or in one way or another allied with it; the latter sprang usually from the lower orders of society, even at times from the serfs. The mon-

[3] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 658. Also see S. R. Gardner: *Introduction to English History*, chap. III, sec. 9–10, and Lea: *Sacerdotal Celibacy*, vol. I, 165–166; 267–268. Quoted by Thompson.

asteries became so crowded with poor monks in the eighth and ninth centuries that the Church in order to save "the fields (from becoming) deserted," had to pass a law limiting the number of men who could enter the monkhood.[4] A few of the monasteries, in their own meagre way, attempted to keep alive something of the earlier spirit of Christianity. In the higher ranks of the clergy, on the contrary, notwithstanding the fact that several Popes were of humble origin, aristocratic habits of life, with all their wanton waste and extravagance, prevailed. Such perverse disregard of the restrictions of the religious life ultimately aroused the hostility of the masses. The extremity of such disregard was to be found in the gesture of Archibaud of Sens who reconstructed the interior of the church in order to make it into stables and kennels for his horses and hunting dogs.

By that time the hatred of the rich, which had been an inherent part of the early Christian creed, had disappeared. Lactantius declared that neither wealth nor poverty affected the status of a Christian, "for the ownership of property," he wrote, "contains the material both of vices and virtues, *but communism contains nothing else but license for vices.*" Clemens also asserted that "it is better to be thrifty, and keep sufficient for our own wants and those of our needy neighbors than to cast it all away. What Christ really wants us to do is actually to cast away our selfish passions and to be prepared in case of need to cast away our wealth." Even Gratian, who contended that Communism was the ideal state and that private property

[4] Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 658.

did not belong to the good life, was willing to concede that it did not follow that men of wealth had to give up their riches in order to escape sin.[5] It was in accordance with this same elusive logic, developed as a rationalization for the plutocratic practices of the clergy and of the wealthy laity who lent the priesthood such substantial support, that the Christianity which had once defended the cause of the underdog came to condone the institution of slavery. Clemens had conceded that "inequality is necessary in this world, for there cannot be a king unless he has those over whom he may rule and whom he may command, nor can there be a master unless he has one over whom he may bear sway; and the others similarly." Anselm as late as 1100 defended the theory of hereditary serfdom when he declared: "for if any man and his wife . . . commit in partnership a grievous and inexcusable fault, for which they are justly degraded and reduced to serfdom, who would assert that their children whom they beget after their condemnation should not be subjected to the same servitude?" In time even the ecclesiastics bought and sold slaves and passed a canon law forbidding their emancipation, and it was only long after the eleventh century, when, with the advance of the economic revolution, it was found that free labor was more profitable than slave, that the Church altered its attitude and condemned the institution.[6]

It was this bureaucratic hierarchy, extending from priest to Pope, which functioned as the great religious censor in the western world for over a thousand years. It possessed the economic power of the period and

[5] Max Beer: *Social Struggles in Middle Ages*, p. 50.
[6] Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 679, 680.

exploited it as cannily and as callously as any modern capitalist. More than that, by virtue of the alliance which it consummated between Church and State, converting them almost into one and the same, it exercised undivided control over the ideology of the epoch. Owing to the dominance of the religious compulsive, any revolt against that hierarchy had to assume religious form. While upon numerous occasions the peasants revolted against the oppression of the Church, and even at times murdered the tithe collectors, the bishops and abbots never hesitated to subdue them by force of arms whenever such action was imperative. Indeed, the Church put down with fire and sword every revolt undertaken by the oppressed. For the most part such revolts, inevitably denounced as *heresies* by the Church whenever they took on organized form, represented primitive attempts to revive apostolic Christianity with its communistic credo.

It was the rapid deterioration of the feudal mode of production, marked by the rise of the town as the successor to the manor, that after the tenth century made it increasingly impossible for the Church or the lords and barons to keep the peasants sufficiently fed, clothed, and housed. Already in the towns a middle class, whose interests were in conflict with the economic order of feudalism, was beginning to multiply. That middle class needed freedom of commercial enterprise, which meant freedom from the restrictions of feudal economics. It was individualistic in its outlook and commercial instead of agrarian in its emphasis. As money replaced barter as the new medium of exchange, that middle class gained more and more eco-

nomic power. In a little while the aristocracy came to depend more and more upon that middle class and in the struggle between the Papacy and the civil state, which reached its height in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the former found itself driven to defeat by the combined forces of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie.

In the meanwhile, however, as a result of those struggles and the general breakdown of feudal economy, it was the peasants who chiefly suffered. Long before the middle class was able to make a bid for state power, the peasants revolted and in one insurrection after another threatened to undermine the state power of the Catholic Church. It was those peasant revolts that shook European society from top to bottom, like the continued repercussions of an economic earthquake. There was nothing middle class about their protests. In the main they were plebeian collectivists who resented the exploitation to which they had been subjected by the Church and hated the rich-loving anti-communist spirit which had come to dominate Christianity. The plebeian clergy, who did not make up part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, played an important rôle in the leadership of these revolts.[7]

A good while before those revolts reached a fever point in the Peasant War which broke out in Germany in the sixteenth century, there had been various heresies which the Church had combatted with merciless vigor. Among the most famous of those heresies were the Waldensian and the Albigensian, both of which preached poverty and

[7] Friedrich Engels: *The Peasant War in Germany*, p. 41.

condemned the possession of wealth.[8] The Waldensian heresy originated in 1170 when Peter Waldo, in Kropotkin-like style, gave up all his wealth and became a humble follower of Christ. The Waldensians, who multiplied so rapidly that they became a desperate threat to the power of the Church, opposed an official priesthood and encouraged a communal way of life, but their fate, like that of the Albigensians, who for similar reasons were known as "the good men," was one of continued persecution and torture.[9] "The Waldensians do not engage in trade," declared a thirteenth-century monk in an illuminating commentary on their practices, "so as to avoid telling untruths, swearing oaths and practising deceptions." Another group which was similar to the Albigenses and the Waldenses was the Cathari, who originated in Bulgaria in the eleventh century, or perhaps earlier. The only records we have of their activities are those gathered from the documentary evidences of their enemies. The Cathari condemned private property, advocated communism, and denounced the prevailing system of marriage.[10] "The Cathari say also that the marriage tie is against the laws of nature," declared the theologian Alanus, "which ordain that all things should be common." Even such doctrinal heresies as that of Amaury de Bene, which was derived from the

[8] Unlike the Waldensians and Albigensians, the mendicant orders, the Dominican and the Franciscan, succumbed to the lure of wealth and in time became as corrupt as the Church itself (Charles Beard: *The Reformation in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge*, p. 8, and also William Jones: *History of the Waldenses*).

[9] It is pertinent to note that the Albigensian movement was more influenced by Eastern than Western thought. The Albigenses believed that Christianity should be preached in the vulgar (that is, the people's) tongue and not in Latin which the people could not understand (H. J. Warner: *The Albigensian Heresy*, p. 20).

[10] M. Beer: *Social Struggles in the Middle Ages*, p. 131.

inspiration of Scotus Erigena, or that which sprang from Averroes, were crushed by the quick resort to terror. Amaury's disciples were burned at the stake and his writings, along with those of Aristotle and Erigena, were condemned and destroyed.[11]

In the sixteenth century the insurrections of the peasants, developing into a desperate war, provided the mass unrest that was sufficient to undermine the power of the Papacy and prepare the way for the Reformation. Upon numerous occasions during the Middle Ages the Church as well as the aristocracy had been driven to violence in order to suppress various expressions of recalcitrancy on the part of the peasants. At St. Valvery, for instance, the mob burned down the door of the church and destroyed the images and the altars, in protest against ecclesiastical exploitation. Toward the end of the fifteenth century such protests became part of a tremendous mass movement. The peasant revolt in Holland in 1491, followed by those in upper Suabia and Frisia, broke the ground for the spread of those larger movements, *The Union Shoe,* and the *Poor Konrad* which culminated in the Peasant War.[12] *The Union Shoe,* whose name was derived from the peasant shoe which was used as a revolutionary symbol, survived every form of attack and suppression for over twenty years, and under the leadership of Joss Fritz, who engineered its secret organization and directed the "beggar kings" who promoted its operations, it made a direct threat at state power and was defeated only after years of continuous combat and persecution. The conspiracy which

[11] Guignebert, *op. cit.,* p. 304. [12] Engels, *op. cit.,* p. 78.

passed under the name of *Poor Konrad* was scarcely less menacing to the ruling class. In the peasant revolt which sprang up in Hungary, during the crusade against the Turks, and which was led by Dozsa, all the sadistic ferocity of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie revealed itself in the amputation of noses and ears and the general disembowelling and impaling of thousands of peasants who were captured in battle.

It was out of this widespread mass unrest that the momentum of the Reformation was derived. On the one side the strife between the Civil State and the Papacy raged, and on the other the struggle of the peasants against both clergy and nobility flamed forth, challenging the whole economic system, with its ecclesiastical as well as civil rulers, and threatening to uproot it in order to create a new and more just one. The peasant revolts, like the Peasant War, revolved about the fight of the peasants for a resurrected communistic Christianity. Their economic opposition to the ruling class, aristocratic as well as ecclesiastic, gathered its dynamic, emotional hostility from their hatred for *the debased and distorted form of Christianity which the wealthier classes practised.* It was in the radical leadership of Thomas Munzer that their revolutionary religiosity crystallized into a new creed.

Attracted at first by the anti-Catholic, pseudo-progressive promises of Luther, the peasants soon learned to their devastating dismay where Luther stood on the economic question. Luther represented neither their interests nor those of the middle class in the cities. Once the religious Rubicon had been crossed, and Luther with his Witten-

berg theses became the open enemy of Rome, he decided that it was far better for him to ally himself with the aristocracy than with the peasantry. Living in Germany, where feudalism persisted much longer than in England or France, Luther did not even advance as far as Calvin and develop a Christianity adapted to the needs of the middle class, but clung instead to the aristocratic perversion of the Christian creed which had been perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church. All Luther did was to lend strength to the national cause of the nobles in their struggle against the international control of the Papacy. The equalitarian Christianity of Munzer was totally alien to Luther's outlook—as was attested by Munzer's revolutionary proclamation to the peasants:

Arise! fight the battle of the Lord! On! on! on! Now is the time; the wicked tremble when they hear of you. Be pitiless! Heed not the groans of the impious. Rouse up the towns and villages; above all rouse up the miners of the mountains! On! on! on! while the fire is burning; on while the hot sword is yet reeking with the slaughter! Give the fire no time to go out, the sword no time to cool! Kill all the proud ones. While one of them lives you will not be free from the fear of man. While they reign over you it is no use to talk of God! Amen. . . . Thomas Munzer, servant of God against the wicked.[18]

Luther dispensed a different brand of Christianity to the peasants, as these words of his testify:

Listen, dear Christians, to your Christian right. Thus speaks your supreme Lord Christ, whose name you bear: Ye shall not resist evil, but whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two, and if any would take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, and whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek,

[18] Quotation taken from Frederick Seebohm: *The Era of Protestant Revolution.*

turn to him the other also. Do you hear, You Christian Congregation. . . . If you do not want to bear such a right, then you had better put away the Christian name and boast of another name in accordance with your deeds, or Christ himself will snatch his name away from you, so that it will be too hard for you to bear.

At the same time this advocate of submission on the part of the poor, on June 21, 1525, could observe without a tremor that in "Franconia 11,000 peasants have been slain. . . . In the Duchy of Wurtenberg 6000 have been killed; in different places in Swabia 10,000. It is said that in Alsace the Duke of Lorraine has slain 20,000. Thus everywhere the wretched peasants are cut down."

In reply to Munzer's challenging call to arms, Luther in his pamphlet, *Against the Thieving and Murderous Hordes of Peasants*, penned one of the most sadistic, counter-revolutionary diatribes that has ever been published. His words do not even possess the cunning and sophistry of a Machiavellian:

Stab, hit, kill here whoever can; and though you die in this, happy are you, for a more blessed death you can never find; for you die in obedience to the divine word and command (Romans 13) and in the service you love, to save your neighbor from the bonds of hell and devil. . . . Here let whoever can give blows, strangle, stab—secretly or openly—*and remember that nothing can be more poisonous, harmful, and devilish than a revolutionary;* just as one must kill a mad dog, for if you do not slay him he will slay you and a whole land with you. . . . It does not help the peasants that they claim that in Genesis I & II all things were created free and common and that we have all been equally baptized. For in the new testament Moses counts for nothing, but there stands our Master Christ and casts us with body and possessions under the Kaiser's and worldly law when he says "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

Such was the Christianity Luther preached to the masters.

It was Thomas Munzer who gave revolutionary meaning to the fight against the forces of Luther. The Anabaptists, under the leadership of Munzer, denounced the tactics and theories of Luther and carried on open warfare against the forces of the aristocracy and the Papacy. In the Peasant War, it was Munzer who developed into the great revolutionary leader of the peasants, and who, until the time he was captured, put upon the rack, and finally decapitated, did more than any one else to bind the peasant forces into a united movement. After the beheading of Munzer, who, only twenty-eight at the time, had lived a more vital and vigorous life than the revolutionary Jesus, the war did not cease but the resistance of the peasants declined rapidly, and in a short time was snuffed out by the increasing wind of opposition.

Of course, Munzer was not the only Christian leader who represented the communistic spirit of Christianity in its revolt against the bureaucratic Church and the oppressive aristocracy. In the previous century, the Hussites, derivative from Johann Huss, had developed an element of the same spirit. While Huss, a spiritual descendant of Wycliffe, did not go beyond the latter in his theories of economic reform, many of his followers, after he had been burned at the stake, became converts to the communistic tradition of Christianity, and in the city of Tabor created a new communist centre.[14] Wycliffe, it must be remem-

[14] The Taborites, like the early Christians, condemned as a criminal any one who owned property. There were lefts and rights among them, but they were all in agreement in opposing the institution of private property. Later on a split oc-

bered, in his advocacy of the expropriation of Church territory had not recommended that it be communally distributed. The class conflict at the time was not only between the bureaucratic Church and the impoverished populace, but also between the Church and the feudal landowners and the king. Wycliffe's demands, like those of Luther in a later century, were not designed to aid the populace but the landowners and the king. A large part of the populace which followed him, however, especially the Lollard elements with whose name Wycliffe's work has been so familiarly associated, believed in the abolition of private property and the creation of a society in which all property would be owned in common. John Ball, a more forthright and vigorous leader than Wycliffe, with sympathies which were overwhelmingly plebeian, gave to the early Lollard movement conscious revolutionary drive. A renegade monk, Ball knew how to reach the hearts of the people, and with demagogic skill he exhorted them to throw off the class yoke of the aristocracy, seize the lands, and establish a communist commonwealth. Like Munzer, however, Ball was killed in the revolt he led.

Although all these revolts on the part of the masses proved abortive, they continued in episodic form throughout the sixteenth century, and even after their physical violence subsided their psychological protest persisted, finding dynamic expression in the cultural conflicts of the period. In music the conflict revealed itself in the struggle between the communal practices of the more plebeian sects

curred among the Taborites, their army became less dependable, and in the battle of Czeski Brod they were practically annihilated. (*Cf.* Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 176.)

and the aristocratic practices of the dominant theocracy. Among the former, religion was a mass experience in which music that inspired popular participation was cultivated. Congregational singing prevailed over instrumental music, because it brought the whole congregation into participation with the service. Such singing, carrying over as it often did the intimate rhythms and often stirring words of the folk songs into the reigning ritual, gave the people a dynamic form of communication for their protests as well as their passions. Gregory the Great suppressed the Ambrosian congregational songs and Marcellus ordered Palestrina to eliminate from his Masses all trace of popular song because they were both convinced that this was the best way to quell the unrest of the people which was rising during their respective periods.[15]

When the peasant revolts began to manifest themselves at the end of the Middle Ages, the masses made inroads upon the service again and in the Protestant upheaval introduced a growing number of their folk songs into the ritual. Many of those folk songs, with verbiage revised to fit the religious atmosphere, became established hymn tunes. Such hymns, sung by the whole congregation, afforded the masses a form of communal unity which was later to be drowned out by the introduction of the organ into the ritual. While Luther had declared that "singing is the best exercise there is," he had also asserted with detestable spleen and spiteful mendacity, "I am very glad that God has denied to these obstinate rebels of peasants a gift (singing) so valuable, so full of consolation. They

[15] Rutland Boughton: *Bach, the Master*, pp. 40–42.

do not care for music, and they reject the word of God." What Luther's words really meant, in terms of the class struggle of his day, was that he did not like the type of communal singing which the peasants enjoyed, and that he desired, as his later decision in favor of the preservation of scholastic art in preference to the communal hymnology of the people attested, a ritual that tended, like the Catholic one, to keep the populace in its place, preventing it from sharing in any intimate sense with the arrangement and execution of the service and keeping it at a distance by resort to forms which were too difficult for it to understand.[16]

Luther's strategy culminated in a compromise. He actually selected a number of his hymns from the Gregorian tradition, modifying their tunes in such ways as to render them more palatable to the people. The change in Luther's attitude toward Church forms kept pace with his political position in the economic struggle. Before the Peasant War he swung sufficiently to the left to win the support of the masses in his struggle against the Church; once the nobility came to his defense in his struggle against the Papacy, however, and he no longer needed the masses to provide him with power, he switched immediately and sharply to the right, condemning the very masses who had turned to him originally for leadership. In the earlier period he had expressed sympathy with the more popular

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 42. As Mr. Boughton further shows in his very excellent book, the conflict between the religious desires of the masses and the upper classes continued all through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and even found repercussions in the music of Bach. Bach attempted to use the organ as an instrument for calling forth the response of the populace rather than drowning it out by means of its thunderous overtones and crescendoes (p. 112).

variety of Christianity which the masses demanded; in the later period, he disavowed that sympathy and definitely opposed all attempts on the part of the people to introduce more popular elements into the service. The battle was one between faith and formalism, between the people who wanted to manage the services themselves and the ecclesiastics who claimed that right as their inalienable privilege—and Luther took his stand with the formalists and the ecclesiastics as opposed to the people.

While Luther's revolt against the dominancy of the Pope grew out of the same conditions which prepared the way for the success of the capitalist class, it is a mistake to contend, as many historians have done, that he represented the interests of that class in spiritual form. Although the breakdown of feudalism signified the end of one economic order and the rise of a new one, the shift in state power did not extend from the Papacy, symbolizing the old order, to the middle class, representing the new one, but from the Papacy to the king and the nobility. It was the conflict between the kings and the popes which marked the final decay of the feudal system. It spelled the end of the international state and the beginning of the national one. While the national state could not have arisen if it had not been for the development of local interests by the middle class, it was only in the beginning through the agency of the king and the nobility that national state power could be wrested from the international dominancy of the papacy.

Although the middle class, therefore, was the revolutionary class in an economic sense, it was the aristocracy

which achieved the political revolution that was necessary for the nationalistic economy of the middle class to advance and prosper. The Fuggers might become the bankers of an empire, lend money to kings and princes, subsidize industries and construct fleets, but the power of the state continued to belong to another class. With the replacement of barter by money as a medium of exchange, the princes might go to the bankers for funds but that did not mean that the bankers constituted the ruling class in the community. A long time elapsed before the middle class took over state power to itself, and administered the government in complete harmony with its own demands.

In Luther's hands the religious compulsive was exploited in behalf of the national state. In Calvin's hands, it was employed as a direct defense of middle-class economics.[17] It is important that this distinction be kept in mind, because the general tendency has been to classify both men in the same category. While both were opposed to the international feudal state, administered by the Papacy, and in that sense both hastened its downfall, they were far from agreement with what was to take its place. Luther's economics represented nothing more than an extension of feudalism on a national instead of an international scale.[18] The contribution of Lutheranism to the modern world was political but not economic. What it promoted was the establishment of national states and

[17] Since it does not fall within the nature of this study to take up all the various religious movements of the period, suffice it to say in connection with the movement led by Zwingli, concerning which many readers may feel a curiosity, that it fell between that of Luther and that of Calvin, a sort of confused centrist creation.

[18] Algernon Sidney Crapsey: *Religion and Politics*, p. 219.

national churches with national kings and local ecclesiastics in control instead of popes and cardinals. It sanctioned the "divine right of kings" instead of popes.[19] Luther did not approve of the capitalists of his day and in his tract to the German nobility attacked the merchants and their usurious methods, in particular those of the Fuggers, as a cancer in the community. In accordance with that attitude Luther was in favor of the perpetuation of an agrarian society based upon feudal caste distinction, conservative instead of liberal in its economic philosophy. His opposition to commerce and finance and the principle of interest-taking was as unbending as that of the mediæval Gratian.

The individualistic philosophy which grew out of middle-class economy obtained no place in the Lutheran conception of life. Luther's emphasis upon faith instead of good works did not mean that he advocated the right of the people to reason for themselves and make their own decisions on the basis of their individual conclusions. He was an enemy of intellectual individualism as well as economic individualism. His doctrines were revolutionary only in terms of their implications. While his emphasis upon conscience and the right of the individual to communicate with God in his own heart, without the intercession of church or priest, gave justification to the individualistic philosophy of the middle class, it was not because Luther wished it so.[20]

As in his politics Luther shifted his intellectual position whenever expedient. He believed in the right and freedom of the individual to condemn the doctrines of the

[19] Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 82, 83.
[20] R. H. Tawney: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 90.

Roman Catholic Church but he denounced that right and freedom when they led the individual to dissent from the Lutheran pattern. It was that contradiction which made it possible for him to declare in one place that "it belongs to each and every Christian to know and to judge of doctrine and belongs in such wise that he is *anathema* who shall have diminished this right by a single hair" and in another place to recommend the massacre of the peasants who believed in a communal form of Christianity. He was willing enough to have the individual use his own conscience to condemn the Pope but not to employ his own reason to criticize Lutheran gospel.[21]

The doctrines of Calvin and not those of Luther broke the ground for the growth of middle-class economics and the triumph of bourgeois civilization. Although Calvinism in its origins was far from democratic in outlook and in many ways adhered to the old aristocratic tradition, its interests were immediately identified with those of the middle class and its way of life. Unlike Luther, Calvin did not fulminate against the merchants but instead welcomed them to his fold. Luther's condemnations of interest-taking met with Calvin's disapproval. Calvin justified interest-taking, opposed the feudal restriction of investment, and prepared the way in Geneva for the organization of banks and the development of various industries.[22] Luther's affection for agrarian life had no appeal for Calvin who was an urbanite to the core. What reason is there, asked Calvin, why the income from busi-

[21] Luther's description of reason as "the worst whore the devil has" was typical of his intellectual outlook (Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 156).

[22] Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

ness should not be larger than that from landowning? In contradistinction to his ecclesiastical predecessors Calvin approved of the acquisition of wealth as a sign of virtue. Without himself desiring wealth, Calvin, with his philosophy of predestination, scorned the weak, and extolled the strong. To make profit, in his opinion, was not evil. Since the fate of every man was sealed by God, foreordained since the beginning of the race, those who succeeded were the ones chosen by Him as the most deserving. The poverty-stricken masses, therefore, merited scorn and not pity. They were failures because in God's scheme, they were predestined not to succeed.

Calvin's doctrines, it can be readily seen, mark as great a revolution in the history of the world as those of Jesus. Although it is true, as Hall insists, that the first seeds of capitalist economics were to be found in the Lollard movement, long before the birth of Calvin, it was the seed that Calvin sowed rather than that planted by Wycliffe, the founder of the Lollard movement, that burgeoned forth and influenced the character of European civilization for more than a century. Calvin's doctrine appealed to the upper middle class; Wycliffe's won its adherents from the lower middle class; and since it was the upper middle class rather than the lower middle class that effected the economic revolution, Calvinism was bound to play a more important rôle at the time than Lollardism. Later on, however, when the lower middle class became a more powerful force in society, the Wycliffian antecedents, with their more democratic emphasis, superseded the Calvinistic. Calvinism, thus, at the inception of modern cap-

italism, was a more dominant force than Lollardism, even though it followed it in chronology.

With the advent of Calvinism we cross the threshold of a new world. Augustine's declaration that business was a sin and Tertullian's conclusion that "if covetousness is removed, there is no reason for gain, and if there is no reason for gain, there is no need for trade" were completely reversed in Calvin's ethical scheme. The Christian elected by the Creator as one of those chosen for salvation must endeavor to advance himself in every way in the social world in order to create the kind of universe demanded by God.[23] Such a creed was all that was needed to give *carte blanche* to the individualistic impulse of the age. By feeling assured that in working for himself he was also working for the greater glorification of God, the individual was able to establish a new harmony between his selfish impulses and his religious ideals. Calvin put the individual on his own, as it were, endowing him with the rights and privileges which had been denied him in the past. At last the individual was provided with a God, invented by the theocratic imagination of a reformer, who not only sanctioned his acquisitive appetencies but inspired their expression and advance.

Unconscious of the revolutionary rôle he was playing in the creation of modern capitalist society, at which no doubt if he could see the world today he would stand aghast, Calvin adopted the most advanced stand of his time in terms of the economic power of the community. Long ago the Catholic Church, pinning its faith on the land,

[23] Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 108.

had begun to recede as an economic force in the European world. As the Middle Ages came to a close, the town replaced the manor as the centre of economy, and as the peasants deserted the latter for the former, the Church, failing to find sufficient laborers, became "land poor." It was that change which spelled the economic doom of the Papacy. Unable to meet the competition which had been created by the inception of the commercial revolution in the eleventh and twelth centuries, the Church had been driven to all forms of oppressive manœuvres in order to support itself. The most fatal had been the practice of selling indulgences which had provided Luther with an excellent excuse for beginning his attack upon the Church as a whole. Had the Church learned to adapt itself to the new forms of commercial enterprise, which had become the dominant economic force in society, it would not have had to recede from its position of influence and resort to such nefarious practices, of which selling indulgences was but a single example, which undermined its prestige in the eyes of friend as well as foe. A minority group within the Church was anxious to favor the growing commercial interests, and even form an alliance with them;[24] the majority, however, remained hostile to capitalistic enterprise. It was that hostility that made the Reformation and Protestantism inevitable.

The hostility of the Catholic Church to the new order of society was not grounded upon any fundamental humanitarian principle. The Church had functioned as a

[24] In Lombardy, for example, the Catholics openly practiced usury in advance of the Protestant justification of it, but such was the exception and not the general rule.

banker for Europe; it had exploited the land and the people for its own benefit; it had persecuted heretics for profit; it had bought and sold slaves and refused to free its serfs until the development of free labor had rendered serfdom uneconomical and anachronistic. In short, it was no less mercenary in its attitude toward life than Calvinism with its capitalistic tenets. Why, then, did not the Church adapt itself to the new order of society instead of merely attack it as a source of evil? The answer is to be found in the nature of its traditional organization and in its vested interest in the old order of society. Its traditional principles, which were an outgrowth of the feudal order, had pledged it to oppose usury as an immoral device. It was its failure to get around that principle that spelled its doom, for usury was the *sine-qua-non* of the new economy.

The failure of the Church in this respect illustrates in concrete form the operation of a profound social law, namely, the law of organization. The success and failure of any group, ecclesiastical, civil, or fraternal, is contingent, in the last analysis, upon the effectiveness of its organization to control the materials with which it is concerned. But organizations, like mountains and rivers, are subject to the law of growth and decay, of ascent and descent, in which the plasticity of youth is replaced by the rigidity of age. An effective organization succeeds in the beginning by virtue of its plasticity, its quickness of response to new situations; it fails in the end because of its rigidity which renders it impotent to respond to new stimuli or solve new situations. Like the ancient dinosaurs, it

begins to depend upon its size, its largeness, for its power, and succumbs to entities smaller than itself which are better able to adjust themselves to the changing necessities of the environment. In other words, its very structure which in the beginning was its strength later becomes its weakness. Having created a structure, or organization, that it cannot discard, it can only attempt to adapt that structure to the new exigencies that arise. The larger the organization the more difficult such adaptations become. Just as in the biological world an organism, it may be a pleisosaur or a mastodon, finds its physical structure a handicap in the way of change, so in the human world an organization finds itself impeded by its cultural origins and its pledges to the past.

It was in such a way that the Roman Catholic Church was retarded by its own organizational limitations. Its economic structure was feudal and its psychological organization was dedicated to oppose the capitalistic way of life. It had attacked usury for many years, because usury was of no advantage to its feudal structure; but when the time came when usury was an economic necessity, it was impossible for it to make a swift enough about-face to adjust itself to the new emergency. It was bound by its own organizational structure to assail usury as a principle, and it was only after years of slow cumbersome change that it was able to adapt itself to the new world and accept usury as a fact. In addition, the functionaries of the old organization, the bishops and cardinals, were more interested in holding their positions and maintaining their power (which is the story of every organization) than

they were in adapting their organization to the new needs, which might result in their displacement from the pedestals of privilege.

It was almost inevitable, therefore, that a fresh organization arise which would not have to adapt itself to the new necessity, but at birth would be in immediate harmony with its demands. As is always the case when such a necessity emerges, a number of organizations spring forth to supply the need. Calvinism and not Lutheranism became the new organization of the epoch. The Church quickly recognized Calvinism as its main enemy, for Calvinism had definitely allied itself with the capitalist forces, while Lutheranism, developing in a country which was still dominantly agrarian, had failed to consummate such an alliance. Just as the Mensheviks in the twentieth century were beaten in Russia by the Bolsheviks, because the nature of their organization was dedicated to the outworn theory of middle class democracy when it was a new organization, a proletarian dictatorship, that was needed, so the Roman Catholic organization was defeated in the sixteenth century by its inability to overcome the limitations of its own structure in its struggle to compete with the new forces in the environment. In a word, it could not become middle class rapidly enough to retain the allegiance of the bourgeoisie, who needed a fresh religion that would satisfy its needs.

Dominated by the religious compulsive, the mind continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to fight its economic and political conflicts along the theological front. Under the banner of Calvinism the middle

classes in the Netherlands, England, and France went forth to battle against the Catholic hosts. Yet it was not Calvinism which carried them to victory, for, as Thomas Cuming Hall has conclusively shown, Calvinism receded as capitalism advanced.[25] Like Roman Catholicism, Calvinism embodied within its own *organization* the source of its defeat. While it prepared the way for the acceptance and adoption of capitalistic economics, it clung to a semi-aristocratic psychology, manifest in its whole conception of the *theocracy*, which handicapped it in the democratic world which capitalism created. In America, for instance, the semi-aristocratic character of Calvinism could not withstand the democratizing power of the environment, and had to give way to the Dissenters, whose democratic conventicle philosophy was much better adapted to the growing needs of the country. On the frontier, Calvinism made no inroads at all. The democratic, anti-Calvinist creeds succeeded there. It should be obvious, therefore, that while Calvinism functioned as the great religious ally of capitalism, it was not able to keep pace with the rapidity of the latter's progress.

In the meanwhile the downtrodden peasants and the unfortunate poor in the cities were once more left without a religion which represented their interests. Lutheranism had betrayed them to the prince and Calvinism had surrendered them to the bourgeoisie. Even Dissent, with its lower middle class outlook, proffered them no way out. The communistic drive of the early Christian sects evaporated after the failure of the revolutionary up-

[25] Thomas Cuming Hall: *The Religious Background of American Culture*, p. 211.

risings of the Anabaptists under the leadership of Munzer and the eclipse of the Diggers and Harrison's Fifth Monarchy Men. The new economic world which capitalism brought into being gave a different character to the religious outlook of the proletariat as well as the middle class. The rise of money as a revolutionary power in the world and the exaltation of competition as a new incentive to existence, infected the entire population, the oppressed as well as the oppressors. In the Middle Ages, when wealth consisted mainly of landed property and barter was the prevailing medium of exchange, money possessed little meaning to the feudal owner who derived his wealth from services, and less meaning still to the lower classes who derived their support from their superiors for services rendered.[26] Capitalism with its monetary economy upset that entire relationship and made money into the common necessity of all classes. As the free labor market replaced the old serf system and guild organization, the struggle for existence became a battle for money. The poor as well as the rich became soldiers in that battle which has persisted down to the present day. Consequently, handicapped though they were by insuperable odds, the poorer classes, as the history of their post-Reformation creeds attests, slowly began to shed their old communistic religiosity and adopt a middle class one.

The new religions of the masses, manifesting themselves in various denominations, Dissenters, Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, differed from Calvinism in a very fundamental respect. Calvinism became the religion of

[26] Preserved Smith: *The Age of the Reformation*, p. 548.

the successful upper middle class. Pietism, however, into which category the evangelical creeds belong, became the religion of the lower middle class. On the basis of that class difference the strife between the Protestant creeds can be traced. In England, in the seventeenth century, the conflict between the Puritans and the Dissenters revolved about that difference.[27] The same conflict was carried over to America, where the Dissenting elements finally triumphed over the Puritan.[28] While in other countries sundry aspects of the conflict varied, its essential characteristics were the same.

This change did not occur until the end of the seventeenth century. The early Lollards had retained certain of the communistic characteristics of the primitive and mediæval Christian sects, and as late as the seventeenth century the Diggers, led by Winstanley, clung to a mystical, millennialist communism which terrified the ruling classes of that day. "At this very day," declared Winstanley, "the poor people are forced to work for 4 *d.* and corn is dear. And the tithing-priest stops their mouth and tells them that 'inward satisfaction of mind' was meant by the declaration, 'the poor shall inherit the earth.' I tell you the scripture is to be really and materially fulfilled. . . . You jeer at the name of Leveller. I tell you Jesus Christ is the Head Leveller. . . . The day of Judgment is begun . . . the poor people you oppress shall be the saviors of the land . . . (and) break to pieces the bands of

[27] For further discussion of that difference as reflected in morality and esthetics as well as religion, see the author's *Liberation of American Literature*, chap. II, "The Puritan Myth."

[28] Thomas Cuming Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 141.

property." Many of the Anabaptists of that day were equally revolutionary in their declarations. Harrison's Fifth Monarchy Men were violent in their economic demands. There was even a left-wing element among the seventeenth-century Quakers. The whole period, which was marked by all the pains and penalties that are inevitably associated with the collapse of an old economy and the emergence of a new, was rife with radical protests and proclamations. The Ranters and Seekers as well as the Levellers became hysterically vociferous in their denunciations of the existing order.

But all this economic radicalism died down before the century came to a close and has played no rôle in the history of Christianity since that time. That change resulted from a combination of three factors all of which flowed out of the development of capitalist society. The first of those factors, the creation of a money-seeking psychology, we have already described; the second, the development of economic individualism and the consequent exaggeration of the individual ego, shifted the emphasis of religion from a social to an individualistic plane; the third, the appearance of a radical labor movement, absorbed the larger part of the social energy which in earlier periods had been released through religious channels. Only by appreciating the influence of those factors can the character of modern Christianity and the development of its contradiction, the radical movement, be understood.

The battle for the support of the masses today is between religion and radicalism, between Christianity, which is middle class in its emphasis, and Communism, which is

collectivistic in its stress. This conflict is disclosed most strikingly in the contrast between the Fascist attitude toward religion and the Communist one. Fascism, which is a middle class phenomenon, has allied itself with Christianity in both Italy and Germany; Communism, on the other hand, which is a mass phenomenon, has been an open and constant adversary of Christianity and all organized religion.

CHAPTER V

THE EGO AND THE RELIGIOUS COMPULSIVE

"When we are, death is not; when death is, we are not."
—Epicurus.

In primitive and ancient religions the interest in individual immortality was a comparatively negligible consideration. The other world for the most part was an unattractive, dubious place. The belief in individual immortality on a classless plane, as we shall show in detail in this chapter, is a late development in the religious history of the race.[1] Among the Greeks as well as among the Romans and Jews, the concept of a future life was shrouded in "a twilight of uncertainty."[2] With the inception of Christianity, however, individual immortality became an important religious issue. During the days of apostolic Christianity the saving of one's individual soul assumed a psychological significance of great moment. In later centuries, on the contrary, after the belief in the imminent return of Christ and the advent of the millennium had waned, that individualistic emphasis disappeared. The Church became the collective nucleus in which the individual was absorbed.

The rise of capitalism, on the other hand, gave new meaning to the psychology of the individual. It made him conscious of himself as an individuality in a sense that he had never been before; it inspired him to become acquisitive and competitive in spirit; and it taught him to believe

[1] Theodore W. Darnell: "Is Anything Left of Religion?" *The Forum*, September, 1929.

[2] F. M. Cornford: "Greeks' Views of Immortality." Article included in *Immortality*. Edited by Sir James Marchant.

that his value as a person depended upon what he could tangibly call his own and identify as an extension of his personality. In earlier days, in Grecian times or in the Middle Ages, he thought of himself in connection with something else, as a member of a group, as part of a religious whole. In the modern age, he began to think of himself as a separate entity, an isolated force, an individual ego.

As in economics he found it necessary to struggle against all other individuals, whether as a merchant buying cheap and selling dear, or as a mechanic competing in the labor market, it was inevitable that in psychology he should come to look upon himself as an individual rather than as a member of a group. As this process of individual differentiation advanced, his ego, representative of his new psychology in a sublimated synthesis, became the final test of value, the fountain head of being and purpose. In time everything became secondary to it; nothing else mattered.

It was Protestantism that functioned as the psychological midwife in giving birth to the modern ego. An outgrowth itself of the same forces which ultimately elevated the middle class to power, Protestantism gave religious justification to the individual ego which middle-class economics had released in the economic realm. In that respect all Protestant creeds, extending from the Lutheran to the Methodist, were the same. Whereas in the Catholic code the priest unlocked the mystery of God for the individual, in the Protestant scheme the individual was endowed with the right to unlock the mystery for himself, and face the Creator not through the intercession of

an ecclesiastic but in the naked intimacy of his own soul.

This change in religious reaction constituted as great a revolution in human psychology as the rise of capitalism did in world economics. In freeing the ego from dependence upon institutional authority, it forced it to create within itself an equilibrium which it could no longer find in society. The fight for that equilibrium, necessitated by an ego which had escaped like a released Laocoön from the slipping coils of an old civilization, drove the individual into all forms of strange, wild, and fantastic extremes of reaction. To find within himself a harmony which had previously been provided by the outside world in the form of religious authority was a difficult and desperate task. When the individual mind breaks loose from its social moorings, it is beaten about as easily and as helplessly as a one-manned rowboat in a threshing sea. No better proof of that fact is to be found than in what happened in religion in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. When the mind cannot find a compatible relationship between itself and the outside world, it is ineluctably driven, as the history of psychoses illustrates, to create an inner world of its own. Within that world there is no authority but the ego itself. Justification and approval no longer depend upon the sanction of one's fellow men, but upon the incontrovertible evidence of one's individual conscience. The individual, thus, is converted from a social entity, living an extrovert existence in terms of an exterior world of which he is a part, into an isolated microcosm, living an introvert existence in an interior world of his own creation.

Within this latter world the ego triumphed. Everything was subject to it. It was more important than church, hierophant, or sacred prophecy. Men came to believe in the superiority of inner experience over outer wisdom. It was "the inner light" which man craved as his guide through life. Conversion became a matter of emotional ecstasy rather than intellectual conviction. Men became leaders, reformers, and prophets because of the challenge of an inner vision and not because of the pressure of outer reality. Cobblers became modern Jeremiahs and weavers saw God and followed after Him. Poor men became prophets and stormed the high places with the religious artillery of the spirit. Fox walked barefoot through the "bloody city of Litchfield." Naylor proclaimed himself Christ. Endowed with an individual vision, these men were prepared to defy the rest of the world, organized religion, reason, learning, science. It was "the call" of God that these men heard; or sometimes it was a vision of Him they saw which invaded all their senses, inspiring them to communicate that experience to the rest of mankind.

What obsessed these new prophets and their followers was the morbid desire for everlasting life. It was not concern for the immortality of their kind, their family, their race, such as the primitives and ancients had entertained, but for their individual selves, their individual souls, their individual egos. "Life, eternal life," Bunyan's Christian cried as he flung wife and children aside in his mad race to the celestial city. It was his own salvation which alone concerned him. The fear of death, the extinc-

tion of his ego, had come upon him, and he was afraid. That fear possessed him day and night, now that he had to meet the universe alone, without the supporting hand of priest or tribe or a belief that rescued him and all his kind from the abyss of destruction. Now he had to create within himself, out of the flame of his own emotion, a new way out for his soul. Without finding that way, without convincing himself that that was the true, the only way, he was lost, his ego destroyed, for there was no longer any church which might absolve his sins and give him peace. What the priest and the Church had once done for him he now had to do himself. He had to face death alone, in the isolation of his own heart, with his brain burning to a cinder with fear.

While the individual's physical form and sensory equipment did not change, his consciousness experienced such a revolution in character, that without knowing it he came to look out upon and live within a new world. Life ceased, in his new consciousness, to flow out into the highways and byways of group activity, and began more and more to stop at the frontiers of his own being and personality. Within those frontiers he had to fight a battle with the universe which before had been fought out for him by the group. While physically, as the new economic world increased in its activities, he mingled with his fellow men even more than before, psychologically, he tended to withdraw from their world into the world of his individual self. He used the outside world merely as a means of building upon the pyramid of his inner self. Selfhood instead of manhood became his criterion. To exploit the

world for the aggrandizement of his individual self, at whatever cost to his fellow man, became his economic ideal; to perpetuate that self and to endow it at all hazards with everlasting life became his religious aspiration.

The individual ego, released thus like a panther from its cage, having discovered the thrill of the unbound places, became desperately concerned with the perpetuation of its freedom. The material universe was indifferent to it. Death threatened its extinction. Only a universe created in its own image, with individual immortality assured by the Creator himself, could supply sufficient protection from the dangers of destruction. The creation of that universe and the establishment of that relationship between the individual and his Creator necessitated the introduction of a more mystical element into religion. Although religion in the past had depended upon magic and mystery for its support, it was logical rather than mystical in its appeal. It represented, in its Oriental as well as its Occidental aspects, a form of mythos which involved a series of payments and promises and rewards which were of value to the individual as well as to the group. In its new form, with the individual instead of the Church as its centre, it came to depend upon revelation and clairvoyant emotionality for its motive power. The individual was saved by himself, and himself alone, and not by any outside authority.

Wherever individualistic society advanced, and the ego became conspicuous by its emergence, personal immortality developed into the great necessity, and the mystical ele-

ment in Christianity sprang into the ascendant. As the craving for eternal life became the carking obsession of the individual mind, mysticism was bound to become a predominant force in religious thought. Even the conception of the Creator was influenced by this change. The overawing, invisible dominance of God, the Father, was superseded by the kind, personal rulership of Jesus, the Son.[3] While the early Calvinists were the first of the individualists, they retained enough of a hold upon the old Catholic tradition to escape the mystical extremes of the evangelical creeds that followed. They escaped, at least in their early evolution, the democratic emphasis of the lower middle class groups; they insisted upon an aristocratic outlook upon society and a caste division of peoples; they gave to the individual merchant the right to his way of life, but theologically, in their creed of predestination, they did not give the individual the ego-release which the evangelical religions afforded him. On the other hand, the evangelical religions, which were overwhelmingly democratic in their emphasis, discarded the Calvinist's theory of predestination, threw their entire stress upon the individual, and eschewed all concern for theological differentiations and declarations. In their churches the division between preachers and laymen was practically destroyed. Men could become great preachers without

[3] Since this study is not concerned with that detail, it is not necessary to examine the origin of the Virgin Mary motif which was not introduced into Christianity until well after its establishment as a State religion. Suffice it to say that it was closely connected with the matriarchal emphasis of the Italians and was immediately dispensed with by all the post-Reformation sects which grew up in countries where the patriarchal outlook prevailed.

theological study if they were emotionally inspired. It was the mystical contact between the individual and God that alone counted.

The mystical elements in religion, as in life, grow out of the theory of the third form of knowledge—intuitive, personal knowledge dependent upon individual revelation and not upon the corroborational evidences of sensory and intellectual experience. While individual religious leaders and prophets have always based their claim to authority on mystical inspiration, organized religions, primitive, ancient, and mediæval, have built their appeal upon logic, that is theo-logic. They have relied for their development upon a social mythos, a network of historical evidences, and not upon the unverifiable and precarious testimony of individual emotion. In short, they have distrusted instead of trusted the individual. They have been thus more social than individualistic, more intellectual than emotional in substance.

Mysticism is an individualistic phenomenon; by its very nature it is anti-social. It provides validity for individual but not for social experience, for what the mystic discovers is personal and not impersonal in character.[4] Knowledge in the ordinary sense is derived from sensory and intellectual data; it consists first of the awareness of things and second of the nature of their relations. Knowledge in a mystical sense claims intimacy with a higher form of data, transcending those of purely sensory and intellectual origin. It is knowledge that is not derived from the outer world of fact, of matter and motion, but from the inner

[4] William James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 405.

world of spirit and impulse. It is not inspired by logic but by intuition. It can only be attained by the individual therefore, and cannot be communicated to others, the essence of it being too private and personal, too dependent upon the inner experience of the particular individual. God must come to men in the lonely isolation of their hearts, become part of them so that they can know Him, breathe upon them the sweetness of His presence, assure them of His nearness by the touch of His hand, the sight of His face.

While mysticism had been most conspicuous in Oriental countries, in particular in India, it is illuminating to note that the individual there used, and still uses, mysticism to *lose himself*, whereas the the post-mediæval Christian employed it to *save himself*. The mysticism of the Oriental embodies a yearning to become part of the cosmos, a molecular extension of Karma; the mysticism of the Christian, on the other hand, represents a practical means of saving his own identity. Whereas the mysticism of both is individual in character, in that the experience in each case is subjective instead of objective, the mysticism of the Oriental is universal in its emphasis, a matter of the macrocosm rather than the microcosm, while the mysticism of the Occidental is personal in its stress, with the ego instead of the cosmos as its pivot.

Even in mediæval days Western mysticism was more individualistic than Eastern. The difference can be accounted for easily enough by the contradictory forces at work in the two civilizations. The mysticism of Saint Ignatius, of Saint John of the Cross, and that of Saint Theresa was

of an individualistic variety. It made them more conscious of themselves as individuals. It endowed them with more dynamic personalities. It set them apart, inspired them with more force—which was one of the reasons why many of the Christian mystics were viewed with distrust by the Church. It did not rob them of their ego, their I, as Oriental mysticism does. Their ecstasy had little in common with the Oriental *samadhi* or *dhyama.* The state of *samadhi,* described in the pages of Vivekananda, in which there is no "feeling of egoism . . . no feeling of I, and yet the mind works, desireless, free from restlessness, objectless, bodiless . . . (and we become) identical with the Atman or Universal Soul," was not characteristic of their experience. They never lost consciousness of themselves or of the fact that even in their sublimest moments of union and ecstasy it was they, as individuals, who were uplifted and inspired. There was no disappearance of identity, no vanishing into Nirvana, in Saint Theresa's ecstasy:

> One day, being in orison, it was granted me to perceive in one instant how all things are seen and contained in God. I did not perceive them in their proper form, and nevertheless the view I had of them was of a sovereign clearness and has remained vividly impressed on my soul. It is one of the most signal of all the graces which the Lord has granted me.

More egotistic even than Saint Theresa's ecstasies were those of Saint Gertrude, who saw Jesus kiss her like a lover:

> In this *Sanctus* addressed to my person receive with this kiss all the sanctity of my divinity and of my humanity, and let it be

to thee a sufficient preparation for approaching the communion table.

In mediæval days such ecstasies came only to the holy, the blessed ones, to those who lived within the house of God. Priests and nuns might experience such revelations, although even then they were more often suspected than reverenced for them, but the common people lived in a world in which such communications did not exist. If, as in the case of Joan of Arc, they were unfortunate enough to receive them, they were either burned at the stake or ridiculed as mad people. After the sixteenth century, however, when the seeds of the Reformation began to sprout in various parts of the European world, that line of spiritual demarcation vanished. With the ego of the common man released from the bondage of institutional authority mystical revelation became the familiar experience of the multitude. The vision of George Fox, the cobbler, was one which was shared by myriads of men and women of his day:

I kept much as a stranger, seeking heavenly wisdom and getting knowledge from the Lord; and was brought off from outward things, to rely on the Lord alone. As I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all hopes in them and in all men were gone so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do; then, oh, then I heard a voice which said: "There is one, even Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition." When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition. I had not fellowship with any people, priests, nor professors, nor any sort of separated people.

. . . But when Christ opened to me how he was tempted by the same devil, and had overcome him, and had bruised his head; and that through him and his power, life, grace, and spirit, I should overcome also, I had confidence in him.

Bunyan's revelations were similar:

Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed; I was loosed from my afflictions and irons; my temptations also fled away; so that from that time, those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me; now went I also home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God. . . . Now could I see myself in Heaven and Earth at once; in Heaven by my Christ, by my Head, by my Righteousness and Life, though on Earth by my body or person. Christ was a previous Christ to my soul that night; I could scarce lie in my bed for joy and peace and triumph through Christ.

It was out of such spiritual substance that modern Christianity was born. Its mysticism was the mysticism of the individual soul in hungry search for salvation. Confronted by a world which he had to face alone, with an ego that in finding itself discovered also the terror of death, the individual was forced, in his quest for perpetuity, to create a religion that would destroy that terror. The more individualistic society became, the more the ego needed, in its growing isolation from the group, a means of allaying its fear of extinction.

In earlier societies the fear of death had played a less conspicuous rôle in religious life because the individual ego had been subordinated to the group force. Wherever that is the case, the interest in individual immortality is less acute than the concern for group survival. When the individual feels himself part of the group, and identifies his interests and affections with its direction and destiny,

he does not suffer from that sense of spiritual and economic insecurity which assails him in societies which are predominantly individualistic. The absence of that insecurity makes it possible for him in the main to live an extrovert instead of an introvert existence. The group provides him with a form of strength and endows him with an element of courage that otherwise he would not possess. It supplies him with a source of power, through the agency of its socialized religion, as we have seen, that makes it possible for him to face the hostilities and horrors of the universe with a measurable degree of fortitude. Instead of being willing to forsake everything and every one for the sake of his individual ego, as was Bunyan's *Christian,* he is more willing to sacrifice his ego for the sake of the group. Like the Florentines, who, in their battle with the Pope, as Machiavelli described, held "love of their native city higher than the fear for the salvation of their souls," the individual in earlier societies believed more in the survival of the group than in the preservation of himself.

Modern Christianity, starting with the individual instead of the group, served a function that was more eschatological than ethical. Individual salvation became its primary objective. Middle class in concept and content, it sought to provide the individual mind with a spiritual security that paralleled the material security which his ego strove to attain in the economic world. The more his ego developed into a thing in itself, the more it identified its interests with objects, materials, and possessions that were exclusively its own, the more it became concerned with the preservation of itself as a separate

singular entity. It came to live almost, one might say, within a world of its own even though it built that world upon the lives of others. In that sense, the development of the overwhelming concern for individual immortality resulted from the same causes, as we shall see, that instigated it in late primitive society.

Whereas among early primitive peoples, living within a less individualistic orbit, the interest in personal immortality was practically non-existent, in primitive groups which had developed the institution of private property that interest manifested itself in an eschatological ideology that very often favored the perpetuation of the individuality of the *haves* but not of the *have-nots*. Among the Tongans, the Maoris, and the Samoans, for example, the concept of the other world was one in which the rulers became immortal personalities in the next world, deities that ruled the sky as well as the earth, while the common people perished as so much scum, consumed by the sea, or swallowed up by the wind and the rain.[5]

Among the Leeward Islanders the same outlook prevailed. Only the chiefs and the more privileged members of society were able to enjoy the bliss of *Rohutu noanoa*, which was their heaven, "for only they could afford to pay the heavy charges which the priests exacted for a passport to paradise; common folk seldom or never dreamed of attempting to procure for their relatives admission to the abode of bliss."[6] Among the Marquesans the fate of the soul after death "was determined, not by moral considerations,

[5] J. G. Frazer: *Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, vol. II, pp. 51, 146, 214.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 319.

not by the virtue or vice of the deceased, but by the rank he had occupied in this life; people of quality went to the upper world, and common people to the lower, to Havaiki."[7] The belief in that type of immortality, which was even more conspicuous among the Maoris, tended, as Frazer pointed out, to ascribe "to the chiefs the special protection of the powerful spirits of the dead, (and to) invest the governing class with a degree of authority to which on merely natural or rational grounds they could have laid no claim, (and) to strengthen the respect for the government and to ensure the maintenance of law and order. Moreover, by lending a supernatural sanction to the rights of private property among all classes it further contributed to abolish one of the most fruitful sources of discord and crime in the community."[8] Even among the Egyptians, to skip a span, the same philosophy persisted. The Pharaohs were embalmed and mummified for eternity; the commoners perished, or, as in certain periods in the history of Egyptian religion, they were preserved merely to serve and wait upon the ruling class in its myriad functions.[9]

What Christianity did by its religious ideology was to perpetuate the class divisions upon earth but abolish them

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 363. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[9] The attitude of the Egyptians varied with different dynasties, with the result that during certain dynasties all trace of class differentiation disappeared from their conception of the future life. Sir Flinders Petrie, for instance, contends that the Egyptian conception was predominantly a classless one (Sir Flinders Petrie: "Egyptian Conceptions of Immortality," in volume entitled *Immortality*, edited by Sir James Marchant, p. 17). Other authorities such as Friche, Ballod, Gardner, etc., stress the fact that the Egyptians devoutly believed that a man in the next world continued to live the same life that he had lived upon earth. At one time, as a matter of fact, the servants and slaves were killed at the master's death in order to provide for his existence in the next world. (*Cf.* Helen Gardner, *Art Through the Ages*; Friche, *Sociology of Art*; Ballod, *Essays on the History of Ancient Egypt.*)

in heaven. While this marked a great advance over earlier religions in other-wordly concept, it signified a distinct retrogression in this-worldly outlook. That retrogression resulted from the development on the part of the populace of a psychology of acquiescence instead of resistance.

Evil as that psychology was in its influence in the Middle Ages, it was impossible for a corrupt theocracy, faced by a changing economic world, to coerce completely the minds of the masses. Even the illiterate peasants in time, as we have seen, resented the exactions of an exploiting clergy and combined in revolt against it. It was possible for them in those days not only to believe in the following words of John Ball, the English preacher who taught them that *this* earth belonged to them as well as did the other, but also to rally behind them in violent revolt:

> Things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us earn for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and straw and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour; the rain and the wind in fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state.

More than that, the structure of the Catholic hierarchy, with its obvious economic controls, was something real, something manifestly concrete, that even the unsophis-

ticated plebeian who suffered from it could resent and loathe.[10] The words of the Spaniard who declared:

> I see, that we can scarcely get anything from Christ's ministers but for money; at baptism, money at marriage, for confession, money—no, not extreme unction without money! They will ring no bells without money, no burial in the church without money; so that it seemeth that Paradise is shut up from them that have no money. The rich is buried in the church, the poor in the churchyard. The rich man may marry with his nearest kin, but the poor not so, albeit he be ready to die for love of her. The rich may eat flesh in Lent, but the poor may not, albeit fish perhaps be much dearer. The rich man may readily get large Indulgences, but the poor none, because he wanteth money to pay for them—

represented something that the peasant could understand and feel as personally as the lash of a whip. When conditions became unendurable, ecclesiastical exploitation became something that he could fight, something that he was willing to struggle to destroy.

The Reformation, alas, and the release of the individual which flowed out of it, removed the clarity of that conflict. As the arrival of capitalism spelled the rise of money, and the coming to consciousness of the individual as an entity in himself, Christianity became an individualistic religion and the individual man began to think of his personality as a power in itself, something isolated and distinct which achieved its realization through its immediate and intimate contact with God. It was no longer possible, in this new phase of Christianity, for the individual to hate the ecclesiastic, because the ecclesiastic was one with himself, a simple, humble, God-inflamed mystic who dif-

[10] Thomas M. Lindsay: *A History of the Reformation*, p. 96.

fered from him only in superiority of articulation and eloquence.

This change marked one of the most revolutionary changes in the history of religion and its influence upon man. This new individual, born of the blood stirrings of the Reformation, cut the umbilical cord of the old authoritarianism, and sprang forth as a newly conceived entity, believing in his own right to Godliness, and in his religious leaders as only a minor help toward that great end. He went forth as an individual soldier to battle with the evil hosts of the world in order to attain the priceless victory of eternal life. He was no longer afraid of priest, of bishop, of cardinal, or of pope, but only of himself. Would he be able to find God and follow after him? Could he, like the memoried Galahad of mediæval lore, discover the Grail and across its silver rim taste the blood of the Lord and know that he was redeemed? His fight was no longer against exacting, exploiting clerics, but against the evils and temptations of a world that tried and tormented him and threatened to lead him astray. He was not tormented with fears of the outside world, but with the fear that lived within himself. He must make his harmony with his Creator, in the same groping, upward climbing way that he made his harmony with the outside world, in his struggle for economic survival.

Believing in himself as a spiritual integer, and having no one to fight any longer but himself, his outlook upon the universe became a psychological instead of a sociological one. As he became more interested in himself than in society, his philosophy of life became more subjective than

objective in emphasis. This change in outlook, intensifying with the advance of individualism and the progress of capitalist civilization, prevented the great mass of Christians from recognizing the conflict that was at stake in the new society to which they had given birth. They could not perceive the social forces at work which oppressed and enslaved them. More concerned with saving his own ego, the individual could not ascertain the real direction of his social and economic interests. With no theocracy to blame for his failures, he had only himself to condemn. As an individual he rose or fell.

It was that psychology which forced him to rely upon himself more than upon the group, that made the modern individual less social-minded than the primitive, ancient, or mediæval individual. Those who were unable to attain success defended their poverty because as individuals they knew that personal immortality beyond the skies, where all pain would vanish and all differences disappear, was better than momentary success in this world at the cost of eternal agony in the next. Those who succeeded defended their wealth as proof that God had blessed their works and that eternal life in the next world was guaranteed them for making this world a better place. Thus individual immortality, the pressing cry of the age, was assured for all, and the individual ego of poor man as well as rich man was saved by himself, within the frontiers of his own personality, and not by the intermediation of priest or social authority.

By relegating the solution of the economic conflict to the future world, and by making the individual think of

himself in exclusively individualistic terms, Christianity, in the last two centuries, prevented the development of a revolutionary communal outlook on the part of its more lowly followers. The underdog no longer looked upon himself as an underdog. He considered himself an individual. He believed in the possibility of success in this world, but failing that he knew that ultimate success awaited him in the world beyond the grave. Such doctrine kept the masses in submission, and what protest they evinced took root in the radical labor movement and not within the walls of the churches.

The labor movement, on the other hand, strove for a better world here and not in the remote beyond; it was sociological and not psychological in its emphasis, stressing the group instead of the individual, and proffering not the immortality of the ego but that of humanity as a whole.

The creeds and churches which sprang up to supply the spiritual need of the lower classes were more concerned with protecting the soul of the individual than his skin. The Methodists, for example, with their emphasis upon enthusiasm, and their hysterical yearning for the sight of the heavenly gleam, were more aroused by the fear of individual extinction at the time of death than they were with physical suffering in their daily existence. The same was true of the Baptists and Quakers. Paul's declaration that Jesus had robbed death of its sting bestirred them more than the humanitarian wisdom of the Sermon on the Mount. The fear of sin became their great obsession, because succumbing to sin meant eternal damnation. For a considerable period Methodism evoked the response of the

lower classes who found in its emotional excesses a personal escape from the horrors of everyday life. But like all Christian sects of importance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Methodism adapted itself to the economic as well as spiritual needs of the emerging ego. It not only salved the craving of the individual ego for immortality but it also abetted it in its struggle for economic success. Like the entire Protestant Church at the time, and ever since, it achieved a harmony between the psychological and the economic demands of the ego in an age which challenged its survival on every side.

Lacking the communal zealotry of the Anabaptists, Methodism condoned the acquisition of wealth if the individual who acquired it would give away part of it to charity. "We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is in effect to grow rich," wrote John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, thereby justifying the cause of the middle-class individualist in the economic world. But that same individualist, endowed now with an ego that craved immortality, had to find a way to acquire eternal life. And Wesley provided that way for him also. "What way then can we take, that our money may not sink us into the nethermost hell?" asked Wesley, and answered, "There is one way and there is no other under heaven. If those who gain all they can, and save all they can, will likewise give all they can, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasures they will lay up in heaven." In other words, charity became the way out. Middle class as it was in concept, Methodism was able thus to attract the unsuc-

cessful as well as the successful because of this compromise. In addition, it did more than any other religion, by virtue of its various philanthropies and charities, to conceal from the eyes of the downtrodden the class cleavage which existed in society. In this way it saved the ego of the poor as well as the rich in the next world, and at the same time fostered the success of the ego of the rich man at the expense of the poor man in this world.

Nevertheless, Methodism spread among the masses in England, which accounts in considerable part for the weak, vacillating character of the British Labor Party and the spineless quality of its leadership which has been far more middle class than collectivistic in its ideology. The Primitive Methodists in particular, whose stronghold was, and to a good extent still is, with the miners, have been very instrumental in determining the nature of Labor politics in England. As a matter of fact, so many members of the British Labor party are Methodists, that in the County of Durham the remark is frequently heard that: "You must first be a P. M. (Primitive Methodist), if you wish to be an M. P. (member of Parliament)."[11]

Modern Christianity did not forward the cause of the socialized individual. On the contrary, inspired by the philosophy of the middle class, it promoted the development of the anti-social individual, for by giving full freedom to the ego in the economic world, it encouraged a way of life that made the security and success of the individual more important than that of society. Moreover, its influence was vertical rather than horizontal. The poor man

[11] F. F. Stead: *The Story of Social Christianity*, p. 180.

as well as the rich man became concerned with his ego, with the perpetuation of his individual soul through personal contact with his Creator. Religion thus brought an individualism to the masses that was contradicted in the material world. It endowed the masses with an individualistic psychology that had little basis in economic reality. While this individualistic psychology was of great aid to the middle class in its struggle for position and wealth, it had little meaning for the working class which was not able to succeed in that struggle. Nevertheless, compelled by the conditions of religious change which resulted in the isolation of the individual from outer jurisdictions, the working class adopted that individualism as part of its new heritage. The mediæval masses, depending upon priest, bishop, cardinal, and pope for their spiritual manna, and believing that they could come to God only through the Church and not through themselves, possessed little if any of that individualistic psychology. Salvation for them was derived, as it had been among ancient peoples, from the magic power of the ecclesiastic. The individual was a mere microcosm beside the vast macrocosm of the Church.

In the Middle Ages the spiritual fate of the individual was almost as completely controlled by the Church as in the modern world the economic fate of an employee is determined by his employer. Innocent infants who died before the hand of the Church could touch and baptize them were consigned to Limbo; dying men could only be assured of welcome in the new world if the priest gave them final unction; dead souls struggling in the gnarled gloom of Purgatory could be rescued only by the help

of the ecclesiastic to whom the surviving kin had to make appeal. Everywhere the individual was dependent upon the Church for his spiritual support and survival.

Protestantism made the masses as well as the middle classes individualistic in their psychology by destroying that religious continuity between the ego of the individual man and the social agency of the Church. But that continuity was not the creation of the Roman Catholic Church. It originated in primitive times, and was severed only in periods when, as during the rise of Greek and later of Roman commercial supremacy, the spread of trade brought with it the possibility of individual emergence for those who could share in its increase and influence. Only the development of a trading economy could foster such individual emergence, and cultivate thereby an individualistic philosophy, for it was only in the world of trade that individual cunning and enterprise were more important than social rank or ecclesiastical position.

In the static land economies of the past, the status of the individual was almost as fixed at birth as the position of the pole-star in the northern heavens. Only among the higher ranks of such societies did the individual possess any possibilities of personal assertion and advance. The battle for power was waged entirely within the upper ranks of those societies. Only the intervention of trade as an advanced activity was able to alter and upset the character of their social structure. The trader was not concerned with land; he dealt with a different and more mobile form of wealth. His success did not depend upon the wealth of manors or private armies but upon individ-

ual initiative and enterprise in the buying and selling of goods that were in demand. He acquired his economic power not by means of landed conquest but by personal profit. As trade increased, the traders developed into an economic class, and during the hey-day of Greek civilization became a dominant force in Athenian life. This same class played a scarcely less conspicuous rôle in the rise of Roman civilization a few centuries later. The downfall of Roman civilization, however, eclipsed its career for a considerable period; and it was not until the days of the Crusades and the development of commerce in the Hanseatic sea that it began to rise and acquire power again. From the tenth century on, as feudalism began to break down, the trading class, which eventually became known as the middle class, gradually became the most powerful class in society. It was that class which prepared the way for the religious revolt of Protestantism, and laid the foundations for the creation of the modern world with its individualistic philosophy of life. While in the past the individualistic spirit of that class had influenced the character of civilization, as that class became the ruling class in the modern world, and after the Industrial Revolution the master of the Western world, its individualistic philosophy became the new cornerstone about which the mental pattern of Western civilization was built. In destroying the organic relationship between man and the community that individualistic philosophy created a new individual who in turn gave birth to a new religion, a new politics, a new economics, and a new culture.

It was that individualistic philosophy of the middle

class, which expressed its economic and psychologic independence through Protestantism, that released the ego of the individual, and, by making the individual mind the test of truth, ultimately robbed the religious compulsive of its social force.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND AMERICAN CULTURE

"The growing ascendancy of the English in China and the Asiatic Islands simultaneously with the transfer of California to our people completes the control of the four great coast lines of the Northern Hemisphere, by two great Protestant nations, speaking the same language, and one in all the great features of their character. . . . Herein a great trust is committed to us by Providence, for the benefit of a new empire, about to rise in the Pacific World. God kept that Coast for a people of the Pilgrim blood. . . . The Spaniard came thither a hundred years before our fathers landed at Plymouth; but though he came for treasure, his eyes were holden that he should not find it. But in the fulness of time, when a Protestant people have been brought to this Continent, and are nourished up to strength by the requisite training, God commits to their possession that Western Shore."—*The Home Missionary.*

In America that individualistic philosophy provided the foundation of the whole national culture. Religion in America consequently developed different characteristics from Europe. In Europe Protestantism grew up in revolt against the Catholic tradition, and after centuries of struggle established a new tradition of its own. In the British colonies Protestantism established itself without a struggle. It became the spiritual mother of the new world. Out of it, as from a womb which had given birth to a new-fangled creature, came a religion which used the same words and symbols but developed a different and more primitive quality of soul. It represented a

new state of mind invested in an old form of worship. Year by year, decade by decade, it nurtured a new type of Christian. The psychology it fostered was an individualistic one in the pioneer sense of the word, and the Christian it bred was distinctively and singularly American.

While the religious compulsive exercised as profound an influence upon American thought as upon European, the territorial immensity of the country and the individualistic psychology it cultivated prevented any one religion from gaining a stranglehold on the culture of the nation. In that respect this country represents a unique contradiction. Although it was founded by religionists, of Dissenter and Puritan stock, it soon attracted and bred so many different kinds of religions that no one particular variety was ever able to dominate the others. The democratic nature of American institutions owes more to that fact than most historians have recognized. Had any one religion ever remained dominant in terms of the nation as a whole, the political history of this country would have taken on a very different cast. The proof of that fact can be seen in what happened to New England during the reign of the Puritan theocracy and what has occurred to the South since the victory of the evangelical sects in that region. The factor that prevented the possibility of such dominance was environmental. When Roger Williams discovered himself hemmed in and harassed by the New England theocrats, he was not forced to submit or remain silent but moved on and founded the colony of Rhode Island. Connecticut was established in a similar way by Hooker. Religious intolerance upon a national scale was impossible in a coun-

try in which geography promised an immediate protection for theological sansculotte or spiritual apostate. It was the frontier, moving westward at the rate of 12½ miles a year, which thwarted the development of theological as well as political tyranny in the early life of the American people.

As a result of those factors, religion in America became a thoroughly democratic phenomenon. The environment broke the back of any anti-democratic tendencies which various religious groups brought over from the old world. The pseudo-aristocratic temper of the early Puritans, even though encrusted in the form of a theocracy, could not survive the challenge of the New England frontier. By 1648, when at the Synod of Cambridge Puritanism was outvoted by Dissent,[1] the anti-democratic influence of Puritanism was practically at an end. The Congregationalism which succeeded it in influence was, like all the movements of Dissent, democratic in organization and outlook. The same individualistic, democratic spirit dominated the Methodists and Baptists who eventually proselytized the larger part of the western frontier. Even in the South where a definite attempt had been made to perpetuate the Anglo-Catholic tradition and support the Established Church, the pro-democratic individualistic Dissenter elements triumphed, and, following a lapse of control during the hey-day of the plantation aristocracy, acquired influence again after the Civil War and have maintained it ever since.

Thus we can see that the one binding element, the one

[1] Thomas Cuming Hall: *Religious Background of American Culture*, p. 105.

cultural bond, which through years of hard bitter strife united all North America into one people was the common psychology which underlay its multitudinous religions. It was that psychological factor more than any other which held the American populace together despite geographic divisions and economic conflicts. Dissenters, Baptists, Methodists, Scotch Presbyterians, and even Lutherans might all differ in the matter of dogma or ritual but they were all at one in religious psychology. They all believed in an individualistic democratic concept of religion, and in a corresponding individualistic democratic concept of political and economic life. Descended in the main from lower middle class European types, or from workers with lower middle class aspirations, they discovered a remarkable harmony between their European psychology and the economic possibilities of the American environment. The American environment was ideally constituted to abet the upward struggling, economically climbing psychology of the Europeans who pioneered to this country. Although in considerable part it was religion, or the right to religious freedom, which motivated the immigration of a great number of Europeans to these shores, it is interesting to note that the religions of almost all who came were either of a lower middle class character or, as in the case of the Moravians,[2] of a semi-communal one. The people who emigrated to America in the early days were very seldom rich—rich people naturally tended to stay in the country where they had their riches—and very seldom unam-

[2] Jacob John Sessler: *Communal Pietism Among Early American Moravians*, pp. 72–93.

bitious. Consequently whether the immigrants came from England, Sweden, Holland, or Germany, they all came essentially from the same social strata and were members of Protestant sects which represented in a great many respects religious outlooks which were in accord with their economic way of life.

What these religionists all wanted was a form of self-government which in most cases they had been denied in their homeland; they all had a similar regard for the family which was common to the middle class throughout Europe; they all believed in the same economic virtues; and they all stood at about the same cultural level which was, in keeping with the limitations of their intellectual life in England and on the Continent, very low, indeed. If the Lutherans who came to America, for example, did not possess the same marked antagonism to the theatre and the arts in general which characterized the psychology of the English Dissenters, they certainly did not reveal any particular interest or proficiency in them. On the contrary, in Pennsylvania they tended to accept the Dissenter attitude of the Quakers toward cultural life, for they possessed neither the cultural equipment nor the economic means to do otherwise. The environment, in short, favored such a cultural, or rather a-cultural, outlook. The one exception, that of the early Puritans, was reduced to the same level before very long because of the psychology of the majority of the populace. A number of the Puritans were of upper middle class stock and brought over with them, therefore, a superior grade of cultural heritage, with the result that for a few decades

New England possessed a higher form of culture, albeit an ascetic one, than the rest of the colonies. While traces of that culture undoubtedly remained, its force and influence waned as the Dissenting elements got control of the colony.

The clue, then, to understanding the nature and development of American religion, out of which the rest of our culture was derived, is to be found in its lower middle class foundation. In most European countries, as we have seen, religion had upper-class as well as lower-class roots; in England, to illustrate, the Established Church was the haven for the aristocracy, Puritanism the resort of the upper middle class, and Dissent the refuge of the lower middle class. The nature of the various religious psychologies of these groups was conditioned by the conflicts that existed between them. Although Puritanism was an outgrowth of the same economic class as Dissent, it was much closer to the aristocracy than to the Dissenters in its cultural perspective. Contrary to the common conception which has been derived from the long continued fallacy of confusing the Puritans with the Dissenters,[3] the Puritans did not stand for half the things which have been attributed to them. The Puritans had an affection for art which was not at all common to the Dissenters. The hangings in Cromwell's bedrooms depicting in colorful patterns the story of Vulcan, Mars, and Venus, the garden decorations which he cherished, the statues of Cleopatra, Adonis, and Apollo, which he loved to have about him,[4]

[3] For a more extended discussion of the fallacy see the author's *Liberation of American Literature*, chap. II, "The Puritan Myth," and also Thomas Cuming Hall's *The Religious Background of American Culture*, chaps. 7, 8 and 9.

[4] Joseph Crouch, *Puritanism in Art*, p. 167.

were ample testimony of that affection. In addition, Cromwell was a great lover of music and frequently entertained foreign ambassadors with all the fascinating devices of that art. It was Cromwell also who insisted upon the nation's retaining possession of the cartoons of Raphael and the Triumphs of Cæsar by Montegna, which later Charles II attempted to sell to the king of France.[5] Colonel Hutchinson was interested in both painting and literature as well as in music. In a word, many of the Puritans were more interested in the arts than most of the aristocrats.

It was the Dissenters, on the other hand, who embodied most of the virtues and vices which have been described erroneously as Puritanic. Members of the poorer strata of society, the Dissenters in their various religious sects, Anabaptists, Quakers, Independents, Levellers, Ranters, and Seekers, developed a violent hatred for the practices and privileges of the upper classes. This hatred, born of their fight against the aristocracy which ground them down, was closely allied to the Lollard hostility to the whole Roman Catholic tradition. That hostility dates back to the old antagonism of the English people to Norman domination. The fact that the ruling class in England until the time of Henry VIII supported the Anglo-Catholic state Church, and that even after Henry's semi-Reformation clung to the same tradition however disallied from Rome, provided sufficient reason for the Lollards and the Dissenters, who were their religious descendants, to identify everything aristocratic

[5] John Brown, *The English Puritans*, p. 152.

with the Roman heritage. Consequently everything that savored of the aristocracy, their religion, their interests, their manners, their dress, their practices, they despised and hated. Lacking cultural advantages themselves, it was a simple step for them to condemn the culture of the aristocracy. Whatever the aristocracy encouraged, the theatre, the arts, card-playing, dancing, fine clothes, the Dissenters sought to destroy. Thus their anti-cultural outlook sprang not only from their lack of culture themselves, but also from their antipathy for the aristocracy in whose hands the culture of the nation at the time largely inhered. For the Dissenters the only culture that was necessary was God's Holy word, which was to be found in only one book: The Bible.

It was the Dissenters, then, and not the Puritans who laid the foundations of American culture and determined the tonal quality of American life. It was their type of religiosity, which found such ready root in the American environment, that shaped the early outlook of the nation and has continued ever since to function as a spiritual incubus in hampering and suppressing the creative spirit of the American people in the field of art and letters. Because of the dominant influence of that tradition, the American people have never been able to develop their æsthetic appreciation much above an intellectually backward if not a primitive cultural level. The effects of that psychology are revealed in the very structure and organization of the vast majority of American churches of Protestant derivation. Their architectural design is unimaginative and unoriginal, and their ritual is barren of beauty of

conception or execution. Interested in the inner spirit of man and not in the outer world of form, they have been more concerned with what the individual soul can experience within than with what the senses might feast upon in the environment without. If art is no longer suspect with them, as in the old days, it still represents something in which they are not essentially interested. Like most lower middle class people, they are interested in art only insofar as it serves a practical purpose.

Beneath this entire psychology pulses the individualistic passion of an economically ambitious class. The early Lollards were largely individuals of that type. In the main, they were shopkeepers and tradesmen of divers kinds,[6] who were engaged in activities in which the hope for individual advance was implicit. The first country to rid itself of feudal serfdom, England was also one of the first nations in the modern world to encourage an individualistic spirit in economic affairs. The growth of town and city life created a class of shopkeepers and tradesmen whose economic interests were to get ahead, to accumulate property, and increase profits. Those who were most successful in those pursuits, the Hampdens, Pyms, Hutchinsons, and Cromwells, soon constituted the upper crust of that class, which, as its wealth mounted, developed an interest in life and culture that was different from, and in advance of, that of its less successful brethren. However hostile the lower crust of the middle class often became to the upper, it always stood at one with it in its individualistic psychology. As a matter of fact, in that re-

[6] Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 45.

spect it was more uncompromisingly individualistic than the latter, as was proved in religion by the contrast between the democratic conventicle type of worship which it encouraged and the semi-aristocratic type which the Calvinistic Puritans adopted. While in England, the Puritan tradition prevailed, although only after compromise with that of Dissent, in America, as we have seen, the reverse was the case. This signified the beginning in America of a different and in many ways a new culture. Individualism and democracy thus became cardinal tenets of American religion, which in turn meant of American life, since in those days all culture flowed out of the religious source.

II

The frontier was the main factor that conditioned the development of American religion. From the days of the early settlement of the country to the close of the nineteenth century, the frontier continued to exercise a dominant influence over American social life. The very fact that there were so many frontiers, one succeeding another as the pioneers advanced farther and farther westward, only assured the perpetuation of its psychological influence. The frontier gave the individualistic democratic philosophy of the Dissenters a vast stage upon which it could play the major part. Whereas in Europe that individualistic philosophy was confined mainly to the middle class, in America, where the opportunities of the frontier promised every individual the prospect of advance, it became the possession of the entire populace. In

brief, by making every one in America individualistic it made the entire country adopt the psychology of the middle class.

It was in the form of religion that that psychology first revealed itself on American soil. The religious sects who populated the frontier regions were almost exclusively members of the various Dissenting denominations, particularly Baptists and Methodists. They were evangelical in type, and democratic in ecclesiastical conviction. Hating the theocratic dictatorship of the Massachusetts Colony, the Baptists had made Rhode Island, which Roger Williams had founded in the name of religious liberty, their first centre of occupation. But the Baptists had achieved only limited gains in America prior to the middle of the eighteenth century. Although it was the coming of the Great Revival, centred at first around the figure of Jonathan Edwards, which afforded the Baptist movement its first driving impetus, it was the frontier which gave it its great momentum.[7] The Methodists, who like the Episcopalians were almost wiped out in the East in consequence of their reactionary support of England during the Revolutionary War, also found the frontier the most fertile territory in which to spread their doctrines. In fact, it was only such doctrines as the evangelical religions espoused that could make any headway on the frontier.

What was there about the doctrines that those religions espoused which made them win such sweeping support in the West? In the first place, they were doctrines that in the East had represented the extremity of lower middle class

[7] William Warren Sweet: *Religion on the American Frontier* (The Baptists), New York, 1931, p. 18.

independency of outlook, doctrines which appealed to the poorer elements in the population far more than to the wealthier.[8] The theocracy had stressed class divisions in church as well as in society; places in church had been determined by economic station; and authority had rested in the hands of the ecclesiastics and not in the hands of the individual members of the congregation. In other words, it was dictatorship and not democracy which prevailed. With the Baptists and Methodists, the situation was reversed. Appealing to the poorer classes, these evangelical religions were overwhelmingly democratic in their emphasis. They threw their entire stress upon the individual and the right of the individual to salvation. They were not interested in theological differentiations and declarations. It was the inner reaction of the individual that counted, the inner vision of the soul which could perceive God and be saved. Redemption and salvation with these evangelical groups was far more of an emotional than an intellectual experience. There was nothing predestinate about their creeds, nothing Calvinistic; salvation was a matter of individual volition, attainable by all. The only test was individual faith, a faith which the individual could establish with his Maker without the intercession of an established clergy. It was emotional conviction and not theological purity in which they were interested. In their churches, therefore, the division between preacher and laymen was practically destroyed.[9] The qualities

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[9] "Although I universally heard religion spoken of with 'respect' . . . yet they think much less of the necessity of a minister than the people of the North" (Timothy Flint: *Recollections of the Last Ten Years in the Valley of the Mississippi*, p. 76).

necessary to make a preacher revolved less about theological training than about religious emotion and insight. Men could become great preachers without theological study if they were religiously inspired. It was this belief that made it possible for lay preachers to become so instrumental in the spread of these doctrines—and for laymen to feel an intimacy, an intense, emotional intimacy, with their religions which had been impossible in the more theological creeds.

Now, it was just these individualistic, democratic, emotional aspects of the Baptists' and Methodists' creeds which made them capture the imagination of the frontiersmen.[10] To be sure, a considerable part of the frontier was settled by men and women who before they deserted the East were members of one or the other of those congregations, but the vast majority who joined them were converts made in the new territories. Those religions fulfilled a definite need in the virgin environment. They defended the cause of the frontiersman in politics,[11] lent validity to his economic form of existence and provided an outlet for his emotional life which otherwise, in surroundings as barren as those of the frontier, would have been pent-up and suppressed.

Indeed, the revivalistic type of Christianity created by the frontier,[12] running riot in every form of emotional

[10] Even the Presbyterians, whose credal origins were very different from those of the Baptists and Methodists, were forced to adopt the same attitudes and practices in the Western regions.

[11] William Warren Sweet: *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 16.

[12] "Protestant sects," stated Rusk, summarizing the whole tendency, "succeeded in the pioneer West in inverse ratio to their intellectual attainments and in direct ratio to their emotional appeal." (R. L. Rusk: *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, p. 18).

extreme and finding its anachronistic repercussions even today in the antics of the Holy Rollers, and the obscene theatrics of Billy Sunday, was a phenomenon which perhaps has never been seen elsewhere in the modern world.[13] It represented a form of religiosity in which the individual became a vital participant, in which he projected himself, plunged himself with primitive abandon. It provided him with a sesame to truth. It made him the divine possessor of a wisdom that no one else could rob him of, that no one else could surpass, for it was the wisdom of origins and ends, the wisdom that was greater than worldly wisdom, the wisdom that mundane minds, critics, scholars, professors, might attack, but could never weaken or destroy. It was the possession of this wisdom, this inner light, which helped give the frontiersman his impregnable confidence, fortified his faith in himself as an individual, made him unashamed of his ignorance and illiteracy, and strengthened his scorn for the culture and punditry of the East. With this individual inner light to guide him, he could defy the rest of the world, defy reason, learning, science.

This development of religiosity, of course, did not intensify in the West until the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, the frontier territory was still too sparsely settled to encourage the growth of sufficient communities in which the church could implant itself as an institution. In fact, as R. S. Cotterill has observed, in Ken-

[13] The only other country in the modern world which provided any parallel was tzaristic Russia. Along many stretches of the Russian frontier, the peasants were given to spasms of religiosity not unakin to those on our frontier. But the element of individualism which saturated frontier religion in America was undeveloped there.

tucky, in the eighteenth century, there was a notable "absence of piety in the land." Less than one-tenth of the population in 1792 were church members.[14] Crevecœur related in his *Letters from an American Farmer* how, in the absence of a church and pastor, he had gathered the people in his vicinity into an improvised meeting-place, and preached to them himself in his own simple, humble way. On the extreme boundaries of the frontier, boundaries which were being steadily swallowed up into the interior as the population moved onward, religion did not penetrate at all, save as an individual frontiersman observed it in his hut or in the familiar homestead.

After the Revolutionary War, however, when conditions on the coast became economically unstable, owing in part to the closing of the ports of the British West Indies, and to the difficulties in trade which grew up between the new government and France and Spain, the prospect of the West became a compelling allurement. From that time on, the Westward migration became a force in the affairs of the nation, attracting hordes of pioneers who were determined to found new communities wherever they ventured. It was those communities, increasing in size as the migration continued, which made it possible for religion to grow and disseminate in the West, and finally to extend itself, through the agency of the lay preacher as well as the established cleric, into the remote places of the frontier.

While many of the pioneers set out to create a "New England of the West," as the Ohio Valley was described,

[14] R. S. Cotterill: *History of Pioneer Kentucky*, p. 241.

it was really a new America which they founded. The intolerances of the East lost their meaning in an environment in which the possibility of control concentrating itself in the hands of a few was removed. Moreover, the individualistic, democratic tendencies of mind which the new conditions of life inevitably bred inspired divergence instead of unity of outlook. Where each individual was prone to think himself an authority, where it was the individual inner light which glowed within him and not the outer guiding light of church or state that determined his convictions, Dissent was certain to prevail.[15] The religious history of the West soon became marked by the rise and fall of various sects, one more fantastic and hysterical than the other, and with the splits and divisions of those sects which survived in the struggle.[16] With all sects, ranging from the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Campbellites, and Disciples of Jesus, to the Shakers, Groaners, Muggletonians, Come Outers, New Lights, and Mormons, this spirit of independence flared. In no other civilized country has religious liberty ever raced to such wild and savage extremes. The stamping and screaming preach-

[15] Indeed, it was in such a soil that the religious traditions of the Dissenters could root themselves with best success (Thomas Cuming Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 170).

[16] Terrified at the individualistic nature of frontier religions, many New England preachers advocated that missionaries be sent into the West in order to introduce "the social and religious principles of New England among them." Already, as a result of such superciliousness, the antagonism of the West to the East developed into an issue. In reply to the words of the New England clergymen the frontier periodical, *The Western Monthly Magazine*, discharged a sharp rejoinder:

"New England's desolate sons are called upon to go among the desolate population of the West for the purpose of sowing virtue in the minds of an ignorant generation. But they are to come not in a mass to excite an envious feeling —how kind! how philanthropic! to spare us the mortification of witnessing the concentrated brilliancy of a mass of cultivated intellects from the glowing East!" (*Western Monthly Magazine:* December, 1834, p. 655).

ers who populated the frontier, and who were noted for stripping off their upper garments, leaping out of their pulpits at times and clapping their hands in frenzy between sentences in their sermons,[17] constituted even less of a spectacle than their congregations which often exceeded them in their orgies of enthusiasm. Crooning congregations, moaning congregations, shaking congregations, jumping and howling congregations, rolling and wrestling congregations, were popular throughout the West. Camp meetings tumultuous with men and women swaying to strange macabre rhythms, stripped naked often as they were in the excitement of their ecstasy,[18] spread far west of the Mississippi. In a camp meeting of Presbyterians and Methodists held at Cain Ridge in August, 1801, thousands of people gathered for an extended service, lasting uninterruptedly for nearly a week. Over 1000 people swooned as a result of the excitement and frenzy of preaching and singing.[19] No excess was too great to prevent those hysterically minded masses from exploiting it in pursuit of the religious experience. Religion consequently took on a militancy among those people which shattered almost every evidence of restraint. When emotion moved them, no matter how trivial the cause, sects and even new congregations split themselves asunder and set up new sects and new congregations.[20] The Presbyterians in Lexing-

[17] Frederick L. Paxson: *History of the American Frontier*, p. 180.

[18] Dorothy Anne Dondore: *The Prairie—and the Making of Middle America*, p. 176.

[19] R. L. Rusk: *Literature of the Middle-Western Frontier*, p. 46.

[20] "The worshippers split on trifling differences. The more trifling the more pertinaciously they cling to them, and where but a few Sabbaths before all seemed union, you soon find that all is discord" (Timothy Flint: *Recollections of the Last Ten Years in the Valley of the Mississippi*, Boston, 1826, p. 113).

ton, Kentucky, fought each other over a disagreement on psalmody[21] and split themselves in two as the result of the clash. The Society of Friends divided themselves into the orthodox and the Hicksians—the latter following the leadership of Elias Hicks.[22] The Baptists split themselves up into the Regular Baptists, the United Baptists, the Hard Shell Baptists, the Particular Baptists, the General Baptists, and the Primitive and Free Will Baptists. Feuds sprang up everywhere without the slightest provocation. Religious debates became a common occurrence. Various sects organized their own papers and periodicals which devoted most of their space to spreading their own propaganda and exposing that of their adversaries. Every means of defense and attack was exploited by those religionists in an attempt to establish their varied and conflicting creeds.

While the majority of those sects were intensely individualistic in psychology there were a certain number that began with communistic conceptions. In the overwhelming majority of cases, to be sure, the influence of the environment militated against their success and caused them to abandon their ideal. Among the more interesting of such communities was that of the Moravians who settled in Pennsylvania and who established there, as part of their Christocracy, a General Economy which was communistic in character. The Amana Community which originally settled near Buffalo and later moved to Iowa has remained there till the present time.[23] The Harmo-

[21] W. H. Venable: *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley* (Cincinnati, 1891), p. 225.

[22] Frederick L. Paxson: *History of American Frontier* (1763–1893), p. 342.

[23] Peter G. Mode: *Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, p. 95.

nists settled north of Pittsburgh; the Separatists of Zoar located themselves farther to the west; the Economists who, under the leadership of Doctor Keil, built their original community in Bethel, Missouri, later moved to Aurora, Oregon. Then there was the Cedarvale Community in Kansas and the Bishop Hill Swedish Colony in Illinois. In many ways the most memorable of all were the Shakers whose centre was near Albany, although sections of them ventured as far North as Maine and as far South as Kentucky. More glamorous and in some ways even more memorable than the Shakers were the *Perfectionists* of the Oneida Community, who established their communism on sexual as well as economic grounds. The disappearance of all those groups, including the Brotherhood of Perfection and the Brethren of Solidarity, can be attributed in the main to the influence of the environment which tended to encourage individual instead of communal endeavor.

The experience of the Quakers was typical. A radical sect in Europe, they became in America a middle-class group that forsook radicalism as soon as the environment began to yield them wealth and power. The only radical doctrine to which they continued to adhere, and which the Mennonites adhere to also to this day, was that of non-resistance which in no sense conflicted with their economic advance. The only group which managed to preserve something of its original co-operative spirit amid the individualistic, competitive environment of America was the Mormons. Instead of organizing their communities in the haphazard, devil-may-care manner which characterized

most of the Western Communities, they pursued a plan of state capitalism, and organized their life about a social instead of an individualistic pivot. Centralized control prevailed from the very beginning. Indeed, part of the opposition to the Mormon settlements grew out of this contradiction between their economic way of life and that of the rest of the frontier. To be certain, the differences reflected in religion, and even in moral concepts, were active elements also in the conflicts which arose between them and their neighbors.

In the far West, Brigham Young determined to irrigate the desert land, "believing that the close organization of the Mormon Church (the central authority) could carry it through, whereas the individualistic and poor, typical farmers of the frontier, could not imitate it. As the colony grew through the arrival of the converts, new sub-colonies were marked out, but they were not planted in the go-as-you-please manner of most frontier developments. Instead of this, the officers of the church made the reconnaissance, selected the site, and then told enough of the members of each craft or line of business to make the venture a success."[24]

It was the individualistic, democratic philosophy which the Dissenters bequeathed to this country as a religious heritage, plus the geographic and economic nature of the environment which endowed that heritage with new life, that made America the land of pullulating sects and creeds. In England the Dissenting groups multiplied with less frequency because of the limitations of both population and

[24] Frederick L. Paxson: *op. cit.*, p. 346.

soil. Moreover, as subordinate groups, they tended to split off with less rapidity in England than in America, where they constituted, especially in the frontier regions, the dominant group in the community. While the frontier in particular abetted that tendency, the nature of the Dissenting tradition kept it alive in the old colonies as well as the new. The division of the country into states, which ofttimes sought to look upon themselves as sovereign units, tended to multiply differences and prevent any effective national organization of churches. Although the West still has the greater number of denominations, the East is not very far behind, which simply goes to prove that while the frontier was a most important factor in determining the multiplication of sects the whole individualistic tradition, upon which the country was founded, was more fundamental and decisive. Indiana with 107 denominations stands first, with Michigan a close second with 87, and Iowa following with 85, Kansas with 77, and California with 74. But when we turn to the East, the discrepancy is far from marked. Pennsylvania with 79 denominations possessing less than 10,000 members each takes precedence over most of the Western states. Even Massachusetts, where originally religion was so unified, has 50 denominations. In Connecticut there are 30 denominations, and in Rhode Island, "there is a different sect for every 2000 church members."[25]

Notwithstanding the fact that the frontier has been closed since the 1880's, the number of sects has not diminished with any appreciable rapidity in either the East or

[25] Mode, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–84.

the West. There are still, or at least there were in 1916, 202 religious denominations active in the United States. It is revealing to note that there are only 35 denominations which have memberships that are over 100,000, while there are 82 denominations that have memberships that range between 1000 and 5000. In addition, there are 42 religious sects which have memberships that are under 1000. What all this discloses is a spectacle of religious splits, schisms, and divisions which has no parallel in any other country in the world.[26] It represents a forthright, direct expression of the results of the individualistic philosophy of Dissent applied in a country where that tradition could have full sway.

The sects that triumphed on the frontier as well as elsewhere were the ones whose philosophy was in keeping with the economic challenge of the environment. The communal and semi-communal sects decayed and disappeared just as did the New Canaan which the New England theocrats believed they had established for eternity. In the words of the Reforming Synod, penned more than a generation after New England had been founded, the simple explanation of their fate is to be discovered:

> There have been in many professions an insatiable desire after hand and worldly accommodations, yea, so as to forsake Churches and ordinances, and to live like Heathen, only that so that they might have elbow-room enough in the world. Farms and merchandising have been preferred before the things of God.[27]

But not only do those words explain what happened to

[26] William Adams Brown: *The Church in America*, p. 74.
[27] Clause X, Reforming Synod. Quotations taken from: Mode, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

New Canaan and to the communal and semi-communal sects; they provide also a magic key to American psychology. It was that spirit that triumphed—in religion, in economics, in politics, in education. Everything, every value, was brushed aside, to create "elbow-room" for the individual. In time it made the whole psychology of the country callous to all values but the economic. Since the religious compulsive was still dominant, however, it was a natural expedient that investment should be given the aspect of piety and exploitation the character of virtue.

When the New England traders and smugglers began to bring slaves to America, they justified it as "God's work," for they were persuaded that the evil of slavery was more than compensated for by the good of Christian conversion. When centuries later the Chinese were encouraged to come to America the same type of persuasion was employed. The conference of planters and capitalists which met in Memphis in 1869 in order to promote immigration, went on record as favoring the introduction of Chinese labor because, in this way, "not only could we (Americans) avail ourselves of the physical assistance these pagans are capable of affording us," but at the same time, it was added, we could "bring to bear upon them the elevating and saving influence of our holy religion."[28] But the capitalists and planters were not the only ones who ad-

[28] It would be an exaggeration to suggest that this practice of providing religious justification for exploitation was singularly American. Every imperialist nation has resorted to the same gesture. It is interesting to observe, however, that whereas other countries used it as a means of justifying their domination over the natives in their colonies, we resorted to it in order to find a pretext to justify bringing them to our shores. One of the most striking illustrations of how religious missionary work has been used to forward imperialistic expansion was revealed by Livingstone in his Cambridge address in 1857 when he said:

"I beg to direct your attention to Africa. I know that in a few years I shall

vanced such subtle arguments. In 1849, after Upper California had been annexed to the United States as a result of our war of aggression against Mexico, the following item was published in *The Home Missionary:*

> The growing ascendancy of the English in China and the Asiatic Islands simultaneously with the transfer of California to our people completes the control of the four great coast lines of the Northern Hemisphere, by two great Protestant nations, speaking the same language, and one in all the great features of their character. . . . Herein a great trust is committed to us by Providence, for the benefit of a new empire, about to rise in the Pacific World. God kept that Coast for a people of the Pilgrim blood. . . . The Spaniard came thither a hundred years before our fathers landed at Plymouth; but though he came for treasure, his eyes were holden that he should not find it. But in the fulness of time, when a Protestant people have been brought to this Continent, and are nourished up to strength by the requisite training, God commits to their possession that Western Shore.[29]

Items similar in spirit and tone appeared in other church papers and on the lips of numerous preachers. By that time practically all trace of the "old religion," which had prevailed in New England in the seventeenth century, had vanished. A new type of preacher as well as a new kind of church had been born.

The Great Revival of 1734 and 1735 had marked the last fight which the Church had waged against the growing commercial spirit of the country. Far-sweeping as the effects of that Revival had been for a time, they had left no lasting impression upon the populace. The dismissal of

be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again. *I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity;* do you carry out the work I have begun." (Italics mine.)

[29] Quotation from Mode: *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Jonathan Edwards by his congregation had revealed the futility of the struggle. No pastor henceforth was able to attack the economic practices of his parishioners with impunity. By the time the Revolutionary War broke out, the decline of religious sentiment in the country had become notorious. The War itself converted the growing indifference to religion into an intense hostility for it as an institution. Part of the reaction against organized religion at the time was due to the pro-English stand which most of the churches took before and even during the War. Both the Methodist Church and the Episcopalian were practically wiped out on the Atlantic Seaboard as a result of their support of England during the Revolutionary War.

Many Americans were thus led to oppose religion in the beginning on political rather than intellectual grounds. Thomas Paine, for example, had originally opposed religion for political reasons. As a young man he had written that he would never "attack religion either by ridiculing or cavilling at any denomination whatsoever," and in all likelihood he might very well have adhered to his promise if the political developments in both America and Europe had not revealed to him the reactionary influence of religion in social and economic affairs. Like most liberals of his day, Paine began his fight against organized religion by assailing the ecclesiastics for their political backwardness which was disclosed by their unbending opposition to economic reform and social revolution.[30]

[30] In England and France the ecclesiastics were even more reactionary. Politically allied with the cause of the middle class, Paine had no alternative but to assail established religion as an obstacle to social progress. Nevertheless, it is

A combination of political and intellectual factors, then, led to the early breakdown of the religious compulsive in America in the eighteenth century. Without doubt it was the conflict between a moribund feudal society and a nascent capitalistic one which precipitated the revolt against religion that sprang up in various parts of Europe as well as in America. It was the entire reorganization of society necessitated by that conflict that made it possible for the mind, during the transition from one culture to another, to escape from the spiritual death-weight of the religious compulsive.

It is always during such transition periods, when one way of life is being superseded by another and every aspect of culture is in a state of flux, that all cultural compulsives lose something of their social authority. The intellectual challenge of the whole period of the Enlightenment was closely bound up with the advance of the new social outlook of the middle class which was developing its own culture as well as its own economic power within the framework of an old form of society. That revolt made more rapid headway in France, under the leadership of the Encyclopedists, than elsewhere, because the political power of the Roman Catholic Church made a strong, anti-religious opposition necessary in order to undermine the authority of the Church and thus prevent it from blocking the way to social and economic ad-

altogether likely that Paine would have continued to limit his attack upon religion to the political sphere if the developments in France during the nineties had not convinced him that it was necessary to expose the false doctrines of Christianity in order to save the "true cause of religion." Paine had begun to question the truth of Judaic lore and Christian evidences long before he began *The Age of Reason* but had refrained from putting his arguments to paper until he felt they could be delayed no longer.

vance. In England in the eighteenth century neither the Established Church nor the Roman Catholic Church possessed such powers, the Third Estate having already expressed its opposition in effective form in its various sects and schisms. It is very possible that if the Huguenots in France had managed to express their opposition to the Roman Catholic Church as effectively and as successfully as the Puritans and Dissenters had been able to do in England, there would have been no more active an anti-religious movement among the French people in the eighteenth century than there was among the English people during that period. It was because the English people succeeded in voicing their political and economic opposition in powerful Protestant sects which were able to combat and neutralize the influence of the Established Church and the Roman Catholic one, that anti-religious movements never spread in England in the eighteenth century as widely as they did in France. As far back as the seventeenth century, Puritanism and Dissent functioned as spiritual shock-absorbers for the economic and political protest of the time.

In America, where, owing to the factors we have already discussed, no one ecclesiastical body was able to dictate to the others or dominate the affairs of the country as a whole, there was little social need for an anti-religious organization or movement. It was only when the conflicts preparatory to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War began to develop, and the native patriots discovered that most of the churches adopted a reactionary instead of a revolutionary stand, that the anti-religious spirit began to

gain favor and influence. This so-called anti-religious sentiment was really not so much anti-religious as anti-Christian. More precisely still, it was anti-ecclesiastical which meant anti-organized religion. Beginning in most cases as Deism, it exalted rather than opposed the concept of God as the metaphysical source of things; as in the case of Paine, who was one of the leading Deists of his day, God was "the great mechanic of creation," who was to be worshipped as the guiding principle of the universe. It cannot be too strongly stressed that those Deists, who in their own way marked the beginning of the release of the European and American mind from the bondage of the religious compulsive, were not irreligious in the sense that the later atheists became or the citizens in Soviet Russia have become today. On the contrary, they were often more religious in their sentiments than the believing Christians.

The coming of the French soldiers to the Colonies during the Revolutionary War lent sudden strength, as Doctor Koch shows,[31] to the revolt in America against Christianity. In fact whatever revolt against Christianity existed in America before that time was individual and not social.[32] In France the fight against the Roman Catholic Church, which, as we have described above, turned into a struggle against Christianity, had become a social issue. Voltaire's underground pamphlets and the dissemination of the revolutionary ideas of the Encyclopedists had begun to influence the mind of the populace as well as that of the

31 G. A. Koch: *Republican Religion*, pp. 31, 32.

32 The Unitarian revolt, if it can be so called, was not against Christianity, but merely against the Trinitarian concept of it.

intelligentsia. In the French army those ideas were voiced by privates as well as generals. Their effect upon the American soldier was immediate. The pro-English stand of most of the American churches had broken the ground for the ready acceptance of the French anti-religious ideas by the American patriots.

Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain boy whose name has been apostrophized in American history as one of our Revolutionary heroes, must be credited with being the first important American in Revolutionary days to translate his response to the new ideas into philosophic form. In 1779, excited over his new contact with French ideas, Allen declared "my affections are Frenchified . . . I begin to learn the French tongue, and recommend it to my countrymen before Hebrew, Greek, or Latin." While Allen had been influenced originally by the English Deist Charles Blount[33] and had developed most of his criticisms of the Bible in line with Blount's approach, it was his Revolutionary War experiences and the challenge of the new day that the patriots of that time believed had dawned, which made him become such an ardent crusader in the fight against Christian influences. By 1784 when Allen's now famous book, *Reason the Only Oracle of Man or a Compenduous System of Natural Religion* appeared, anti-religious movements in America had become extremely active and pugnacious.[34] Allen's exclamation that he was conscious that he was "no Christian" had become part of the recalcitrant spirit of the time. Allen's deistic revolt was

[33] Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[34] I. Woodridge Riley, *American Philosophy, the Early Schools*, p. 32.

advanced several steps farther by Elihu Palmer, who, after being converted from a Baptist to a Unitarian, finally dedicated himself to the struggle against all organized religion, which he assailed as the work of "ambitious, designing and fanatic men." By that time the French Revolution had already occurred and its challenge had inspired radical support in many parts of the world. In England the young Wordsworth, Coleridge, William Blake, Robert Burns, William Godwin, and many others had become its most enthusiastic advocates. Not much later Percy Bysshe Shelley was to relight the torch that they had once flourished. In America Jefferson and his followers took up the cudgels in defense of the ideals of the French Revolution. One of the issues which the Revolution had raised and which had immediate influence here, revolved about the concerted struggle that the French sansculottes had waged against religion.

Palmer had determined to forward that same struggle in America. "Moses, Mahomed, and Jesus were all of them impostors," Palmer wrote in his *Principles of Nature: or a Development of the Moral Causes of Happiness and Misery Among the Human Species*, "two of them notorious murderers in practice, and the other a murderer in principle; and their existence united perhaps cost the human race more blood and produced more substantial misery than all the other fanatics of the world."[35] He was convinced that human progress could result only from the destruction of superstition (which was synonymous in his

[35] Quotation taken from Koch: *op. cit.*, p. 64. Several other quotations from this period are also taken from Koch whose book *Republican Religion* represents a most thorough study of that phase of American religious history.

mind with organized religion) and monarchy. All this he viewed as part of a universal crusade. "Attack the thrones and hierarchies of the world and level them with the dust; then the emancipated slaves must be raised by the power of science into the character of an enlightened citizen." But Palmer was not only a writer. He was also a most effective agitator and gifted organizer. Shortly after he arrived in New York in 1794, he organized the Deistical Society and six years later brought out *The Temple of Reason*, a deistic weekly sheet. New York, however, was not the only large city in which the movement advanced. It soon became active in Philadelphia, spread to Baltimore and other cities. Although a large percentage of the American intelligentsia had developed an indifference to religion, if not a hostility for it, they were convinced for the most part, like Napoleon, that it was not a wise policy to encourage the masses to develop such an attitude. Palmer's activities, therefore, frightened a great number of Americans who were very far from Christians, because his society and paper were consecrated to the cause of spreading opposition to Christianity among the lower classes. For a few years Palmer's movement grew. When *The Temple of Reason* failed it was succeeded by *Prospect, or View of the Modern World.* By 1804 and 1805, however, the movement had lost its influence.

Closely allied with Palmer's movement was Thomas Paine, who, after his return to America in 1802, became a leading force in the struggle to uproot Christianity from American soil. Like Palmer, however, Paine was a Deist and not an atheist. He had written *The Age of Reason* in

order to save the human race from the evils of atheism. *The Age of Reason* became the new Bible of the Palmerites. "Paine is one of the first and best of writers," exclaimed Palmer, "and probably the most useful man that ever existed upon earth." Paine literally transported part of the Paris atmosphere to America. An attempt was actually made in New York to revive the church of Theophilanthropy which Paine had founded in Paris in 1797. *The Temple of Reason* welcomed Paine with the following apostrophe:

> The prayers of Christians have not been attended to— The Supreme and Wise Ruler of the Universe was not to be diverted from his eternal purpose by their petition— Thomas Paine, the friend of liberty, and the apostle of the one only God, has arrived at Baltimore, in good health, sound intellect, and high spirits, agreeable to the wishes (not the prayers) of every real friend to reason and humanity.

A special dinner was given in his honor by the deists in New York. Paine contributed articles to *The Prospect*, lectured frequently, and wrote various "open letters" to clergymen denouncing the falsehoods of priestcraft and the dangers of superstition.

So intense was the fight against the deists of that day, that, despite the warmth of the reception which he received from Palmer's friends and followers, Paine found America a very unhappy place in which to live. His old friends deserted him. The leaders of state, with the exception of Jefferson, disowned him. *The Age of Reason* had marked Paine's political Waterloo. After its publication he was a marked man, hounded with the stigma of the

infidel. His life became a closed book which aged so rapidly that its pages stuck together and could scarcely be opened without damaging them in the process. When he returned to America, after the French Revolution had entered its stage of the jitters, he realized that he was a man without a country. The nation in which he had been the first to ring the liberty bell, the first to galvanize the indecisive protests of the Washingtons, Jeffersons, and Franklins into a clear-cut program of independence, now greeted him like a dangerous immigrant, a red-trousered Mephistopheles who had come to tear down the walls of the temples and the tabernacles and convert the land into an unholy place. The author of *Common Sense,* which had sold more than 100,000 copies in four months and had done more than any other piece of writing in the colonies to inspire the Americans with the spirit of independence, was described by the Americans as a "detested reptile," a "lily-livered sinical rogue," and a "composition of a knave, beggar, coward, panderer, and the son and heir of some drunken she-devil." Newspapers of every cast scorned and berated him, satirized and caricatured him, and set him up as an example for youth to abhor. Preachers fulminated against him from a thousand pulpits, picturing him as an avatar of Satan, a spectre of evil who threatened to destroy religion by the pen instead of the sword. People refused to ride in stage coaches with him fearing that a bolt of lightning would destroy the coach in which he travelled; crowds howled him down; and upon one occasion an attempt was made to murder him. In an inglorious way, he became for native mothers the "black Doug-

las" of America with whom they frightened their children when they were naughty by the threat that "if you're not good, Tom Paine will get you." The epigoni of the Revolution completely ignored him and refused to recognize the heroic rôle which he had played in the birth of the nation. In New Rochelle in 1806, he was prevented from voting on the ground that he was not an American citizen. Only Jefferson, who, in the face of a mounting barrage of opposition, had invited him to return to America aboard the U.S.S. *Maryland*, remained faithful to him to the end.

Thus did a single book which attacked established religion remove from the pages of American history one of its greatest figures, a hero in the most heroic sense of the word. Paine represents one of the few leaders that this country has produced who never compromised principle for prestige and never sacrificed honor for gain.

The odd irony of it all—and no man's life was full of more tragic ironies than Paine's—was that *The Age of Reason* was a profoundly religious book. Repelled by the rapid growth of atheism which he witnessed in the revolutionary Paris of that day, Paine set forth on the task of writing *The Age of Reason* in order to prevent his contemporaries from losing "sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that was true." Paris had revolted with such hostility against the tyranny of the Church that the very concept of religion had become the butt of satire and burlesque. God had become a bewhiskered octogenarian at whom politicans made jibes and gutter gamins poked fun. Without expressing it in such words, he

agreed with Franklin that "if men are wicked *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?" and therefore was convinced that what man had to do was not to destroy religion but to replace a bad religion by a good one. Judaism and Christianity were bad religions, he maintained, sustaining the arguments of his American compatriots, Ethan Allen and Elihu Palmer, because they were anachronistic in philosophy, childish in conception, and false in doctrine. Founded upon superstition instead of science, they kept the mind from becoming "enlightened and serene," which, in his opinion, was the object of true religion. True religion, Paine contended, makes it possible for man to look "through the works of creation to the Creator himself."

Such was the religious philosophy of the man, the anti-atheist, anti-infidel Thomas Paine, whom the Quakers refused to grant a burial place and whom Theodore Roosevelt, a century later, paraphrasing John Adams, was to condemn with reprehensible naïveté as a "filthy little atheist."

Characteristically enough, Paine was too honest, too uncompromising, too courageous, to conceal his convictions in order to retain his prestige or win the favor of posterity. "He flew in the face of a whole generation," wrote Hazlitt, and "did not care what offense he gave them." While Franklin, like Paine, avowed himself a Deist, he contributed to all the churches in his neighborhood in order to stand in good grace on all sides and declared that "he saw a certain advantage in the multiplicity of churches in the world, as that made for competition and competition made for trade." A greater and more honest man, Paine could not stomach such evasion. "My religion is to do

good," declared Paine, and he spent his life trying to realize that ideal.

Paine suffered mainly from the reaction that set in as a result of the growing influence of the frontier which went religious with dismaying rapidity as soon as the Baptist and Methodist missionaries made it into their new spiritual hunting ground.

The work of Paine and Palmer was carried on with less successful results by John Foster, a free-thinking clergyman who relied more upon the power of voice than upon strength of ideas to win his audience, and "Walking" Stewart, who added a salt-cellar full of Hindu philosophy to his peppery denunciations of current morality as well as contemporary religion. The last of the anti-religious societies was the ancient Druids which was composed largely of renegade Masons, and which soon developed a worship of the Sun as the great first cause.[36] Their paper, *The Mirror*, ceased to appear about 1800. By that time the anti-Christian cause was lost. The religious force of the frontier had won.

As in France, this whole struggle against organized Christianity had a class base. It was bound up inextricably with the economic and political conflicts of the time.[37] During the period of the Revolutionary War and even the

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[37] During the period of the Commune, under the influence of the Hebertians, it was decreed that all the churches be closed and "whoever should petition for their re-opening was to be arrested as a suspect, and the priests were held responsible for any disturbances that might take place in consequence of what had been done" (Pierre Gaxotte: *The French Revolution*, p. 333). While Robespierre shortly after vetoed all this, recommending his Goddess of Reason as a substitute for their atheism, he did not sanction the Catholic Church. It was only later, when Thermidor set in, and property became extolled again, that religion in its old sense returned. The Muscadins, who in a loose sense were the Fascists of their day, descendants of the middle class rather than the aristocracy, not only worked

decade that immediately followed it, Christianity was far from popular in America. The pro-English stand which so many of the clergymen had adopted, as we described before, and the spread of the anti-Christian ideas of the French among the American people, plus the disorganization of the churches in general, robbed Christianity at the time of social and political force. Consequently, this country was born practically without ecclesiastical blessing or baptism. Priestcraft figured very inconspicuously in the early life of the nation.[38] In fact, we even refused to classify the country as Christian. A considerable number of the political founders and leaders of the newly created nation were without religious affiliations or convictions. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were free-thinkers; they attended no churches, except perhaps on special occasions, and subscribed to no particular creed. John Adams and Gouverneur Morris were latitudinarians to say the least; George Washington, Randolph of Roanoke, and Madison were sceptics even though they were members of the Established Church. When it came to the creation of the Constitution the religious issue was shelved by denying its pertinence. The two references that appear are negative. The one asserts that "no religious test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States"; the other declares that

for the restoration of religion but also for respect for property. Consequently, after Thermidor, we not only have religion returning, but we discover Cambon, of the Finance Committee, declaring that whereas "the status of merchant, artisan, and tradesman were titles of proscription: it is time to restore to this important section of national industry the dignity and strength which it has the right to expect from a just government." "We quite understand all the declamations against traders," stated Giraud, "and we know now that those who propagated them only wanted a redistribution of fortunes." (*Ibid.*, pp. 350, 351.)

[38] Charles and Mary Beard: *The Rise of American Civilization*, vol. 1, p. 448.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Christianity is nowhere mentioned. In fact, in 1796, in our treaty with Tripoli, the American Government explicitly declared:

(Art. XI) "*As the Government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion* . . . no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."

But not only was this attitude dominant among the leaders of the nation and in the Government itself. It also flourished among a considerable percentage of the populace. The colleges were infected with it. Students at that time called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, and D'Alembert. At Dartmouth College only one member of the class of 1799 described himself as a Christian.[39] At Princeton, which was then called the College of New Jersey, only three or four students were religious.[40] Similar conditions prevailed at Yale, Harvard, and William and Mary.

It was that bonfire of anti-religious sentiment which the Palmerites hoped to fan into a conflagration. With a Government which was not opposed to them, and a people whose ideas and ideals were in a state of combustible flux, the anti-religious movements of that day had good reason to believe that they might win over the nation.

What prevented them from doing so was the success of the Methodists and Baptists on the frontier. The tactics employed by the Baptist and Methodist missionaries on

[39] Koch: *op. cit.*, p. 242. [40] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

the frontier were exceedingly shrewd and sagacious.[41] Instead of preaching reactionary doctrine in a revolutionary age, they outwitted the religious revolutionaries at their own game by identifying their religious creeds with the republican cause. Whereas before the election of Jefferson in 1800 republicanism had been the handmaiden of deism, after the election that relationship was severed. Before long, owing to the activities of the evangelical creeds, in particular those of the Baptists and Methodists, republicanism became an ally of Christianity.[42] Step by step, republicanism became more and more respectable until within a few years it was entirely removed from any association with infidelity. While this separation also took place in the cities, it was on the frontier that it gained its actual momentum. By acquiring the support of the ignorant farmers and trail-blazers in the backlands, most of whom had had no contact with French ideas or the infidelity of the Eastern cities, the Christian missionaries were able to build up a strong bloc against the movement of the infidels. As the voting-power of the frontier became more and more decisive in the political affairs of the nation, a number of the political leaders who once had adopted a non-religious if not an anti-religious stand, became open advocates of Christianity. By 1828, when the frontier plunged Andrew Jackson into the White House, all trace of the anti-religious revolt of post-Revolutionary War days had disappeared.

[41] Gilbert Seldes: *The Stammering Century*, p. 37.

[42] H. Richard Niebuhr: *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, p. 175. To H. Richard Niebuhr great credit is due for having done the most important pioneer work in interpreting American religion in terms of its economic and class sources.

But not only were the masses thus prevented from becoming anti-Christian and anti-religious; the wealthier classes and the intellectuals were also provided with a spiritual substitute in the form of Unitarianism. Both developments marked the beginning of the reaction. The triumph of the Evangelical creeds with the masses signified the victory of intellectual reaction; and the success of Unitarianism marked the advance of political and economic reaction. At approximately the same time that the evangelical creeds swung to the political left, and succeeded in divorcing republicanism from deism and atheism, New England Congregationalism split and gave birth to the Unitarian movement which rendered Christianity palatable to the deistic and sceptical intelligentzia and at the same time a bulwark for the economic conservatives. Such a marriage of religious radicalism and economic conservatism served as a social and intellectural shock-absorber for both the intelligentsia and the upper classes of the time.

The Unitarian revolt, to be sure, dates back much further than post-Revolutionary War days. Its inception can be traced to the period of the Great Awakening in 1735. Beginning with Ebenezer Gay, who is often called "the Father of American Unitarianism," the eighteenth century produced a growing number of Congregational preachers who adopted the Unitarian outlook.[43] At first a revolt mainly against the Calvinist conception of Christianity, Unitarianism finally evolved into a struggle against the whole Trinitarian basis of the Christian religion. Jonathan Mayhew, who became an ally of the *patriots* dur-

[43] J. Henry Allen and Richard Eddy: *The American Church History Series*, pp. 174, 175.

ing the Revolutionary War, went so far as publicly to ridicule the Trinitarian conception as a naïve fiction. Simeon Howard, Tucker, Willard, and many other clergymen, fathered the same tradition. Because the Unitarian revolt started in Boston, which has continued ever since to be its centre, the question was often raised in those days, by way of opposition: "Shall we (America) have the Boston religion or the Christian religion?"

No doubt one of the reasons that Unitarianism originated and found its centre in New England, in particular in Boston, was that the cultural level of the New England states in the eighteenth century was still considerably higher than that of the rest of the country. The Puritan minority which had settled in New England brought with it a cultural heritage which was unquestionably superior to that of the Dissenters. That superiority indubitably influenced the whole psychology of the community, notwithstanding the fact that the Dissenters soon came to dominate New England life. In addition, trade played a large part in encouraging the revolt. The fact that New Englanders engaged more actively and aggressively in commerce with other peoples, non-Christian as well as Christian, than did the other colonies had a great deal to do with the broadening of their religious perspective. As with the Greeks, such foreign contacts inspired increased tolerance for conflicting ideas. It is even recorded that "the supercargo of the first ship that traded in those (Mahommedan) waters . . . volunteered at home a defense of Mahommedanism."[44]

[44] Allen and Eddy: *op. cit.*, p. 184.

Long before Channing's speech in Baltimore, which has since been looked upon as the "declaration of independence" of the Unitarian faith, Reverend Greenwood transformed the first Episcopal Church in New England into the first Unitarian Church in America. On June 18, 1785, it was voted there, "twenty against seven, to strike out from the order of service whatever teaches or implies the doctrine of the trinity."[45] From time to time many other congregations made the same change. By 1800, a large majority of the Congregationalist pastors had deserted Trinitarianism. In Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont as well as in Massachusetts Unitarianism triumphed.

At the same time that Elihu Palmer was verbally tearing down the gods from the tabernacles of the masses, the Unitarian clergy in churches where, to quote Doctor Lyman Beecher, "the elite of wealth and fashion crowded," were undermining the divine authority of New Testament scriptures, relegating Jesus to the status of a man instead of a God, and discounting the imposing array of Biblical miracles as the product of ancient superstition.

Whereas the work of Palmer was swallowed up ultimately in a fog of still deeper superstition, the work of the Unitarian clergy has continued ever since to influence the religious outlook of the upper classes. Aghast before a crisis when all the institutions of society were exposed to question and a new economic world was in the throes of birth, religion became as open to challenge as economics. All cultural compulsives lose their hold upon the minds

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

of men during periods of revolutionary crisis. It is during periods of reaction that they regain their power. Nevertheless residuals of periods of social revolution always linger and provide new outlooks that color and challenge the old. The deism which finally culminated in atheism and agnosticism grew out of an earlier period of revolt. The revolutions in America and in France were instrumental in converting deism from a religious argument into a social issue and thereby weakening the religious compulsive more profoundly than ever before. In France the Revolution was allied with the revolt against religion and in the Goddess of Reason and the more godless episodes the religious compulsive was ripped at the root. In America the religious compulsive for a considerable period suffered an equally severe shock. While in both countries, during the period of reaction, religion triumphed again over those anti-religious forces, the influence of the latter did not disappear or die. Driven from the foreground to the background, they became cultural residuals which were later to fructify. All the anti-religious movements which have developed in this country since that time have sprung from that residual, drawn their strength from that tradition.

Even American Unitarianism, in a subtler way than has often been suspected, derives much of its intellectual impetus from the same movement of forces which provoked the anti-Christian crusade of Palmer, Paine, Foster, and Stewart. The clergymen who constituted the vanguard of the Unitarian movement before it split from the Congregationalist Church were, in the main, men who stood

with the patriots in their struggle against the English. Mayhew was a close friend of Otis, Adams, and other leaders among the American revolutionaries. In a certain number of cases, too, where Congregationalist clergymen supported the English cause, they were replaced by younger men who were at one with Unitarianism and the American Revolution.[46] Wherever Unitarianism spread after the Revolution, it served as an intellectual outlet for the growing religious dubiety of the times. Although the anti-religious movements of Palmer and his followers lost their influence early in the nineteenth century, the doubts and scepticisms which had been stirred into life by the whole anti-religious revolt did not disappear as quickly from the minds of the upper classes as they did from the minds of the masses. Unitarianism had to declare itself as a separate church in order to save those doubts and scepticisms from terminating in atheism. It was because Channing understood the need for that clarity that he made his famous Baltimore sermon in 1819. "We must choose," declared Channing, "between rational Christianity and infidelity." Unitarianism, in his opinion, represented rational Christianity.

So thus, while the masses forsook infidelism and flocked back to orthodox Christianity, the upper classes in New England and in certain of the mid-Atlantic and Southern states deserted orthodox Christianity and adopted rational Christianity, which in the eyes of the more orthodox Christians was only another form of infidelity in religious disguise. While the Unitarian revolt originally sprang

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

from a deep-rooted antagonism for Calvinist doctrine, substituting an American form of Arminianism in its place, by the time Channing and Sparks became conspicuous in the movement Calvinist doctrine had practically fallen into desuetude. The Congregationalist Church itself, it must be remembered, was derived from the tradition of the Dissenters[47] and not from that of the Calvinistic Puritans, and, therefore, developed from its early beginnings, in the Plymouth Colony, a religious philosophy that was not only opposed to Calvinism but also one that directly prepared the way for the rise of the Unitarian deviation.

The oft-described conflict between the democratic practices of the Plymouth Colony and the aristocratic organization of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, can only be understood in terms of their differences in class origin and religious tradition. The Congregationalists were a Dissenting group which from the beginning had desired separation from the State Establishment; the Calvinistic Puritans, on the other hand, had been strongly opposed to such separation, and sought to establish, as they very well did, a theocracy and not, as did the Pilgrim fathers in Plymouth, a religious democracy. The final declaration of the Unitarian revolt, therefore, was not so much in opposition to Calvinism,[48] although Channing's epoch-making sermon tended to foster that notion, as in opposition to the growing anti-Christian infidelity of the day.

As the Unitarian Church grew in members it rapidly

[47] Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[48] The mistake which most authorities on American religion have made and which Thomas Cuming Hall has corrected is that Congregationalism and Calvinism were one and the same (*cf.* section on Unitarianism in Hastings's *Encyclopedia and Religion*, where this error is most conspicuous). That confusion, as we

absorbed most of the upper-class free-thinking elements of the period. In New England the majority of the men of distinction, especially in the literary field, became members of the Unitarian Church.[49] The movement spread to Washington, Cincinnati, Louisville, Buffalo, Baltimore, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, and later on extended to the Pacific Coast. By 1893, it possessed 444 churches, many of which, however, did not employ the name Unitarian in their title.

III

By the time the Unitarian movement had begun to make marked headway, it was suddenly called to a halt, as were all the other churches, by the clash between the North and the South over the issue of slavery.

Before that clash achieved national proportions, Christianity had been divided into white and black in the South. This division of Christianity along color lines was an inevitable product of the class relations which existed between the whites and blacks. As slaves, the Negroes could not hope to be welcomed as equals in the churches of the whites who constituted the ruling class. Nevertheless, both races at first worshipped in the same churches. Many of the early Negro preachers such as William Lenon and Joseph Bishop preached before mixed congregations,[50] and even down to the Civil War certain mixed churches

showed above, has grown from the failure to distinguish between the different traditions of the Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. Only the latter was uncompromisingly Calvinistic. The former was derived from the Lollard tradition which dates from the authority of Wycliffe.

[49] Allen and Eddy: *op. cit.*, p. 202.

[50] Benjamin Elija May and Joseph W. Nicholson: *The Negro's Church*, p. 4.

survived in the South. In such mixed churches, however, the Negro was subjected to so many restrictions and regulations, and discriminated against on so many issues, that the creation of Negro churches became a psychological necessity. Most of the early Negro churches grew out of conflicts involving racial discrimination.[51] The tendency, prevalent throughout the South and also in various churches in the North, to make the Negroes sit in the gallery, and take the sacrament only after whites had done so, led to open ruptures which resulted in the creation of various Negro churches.[52] In his own church, the Negro soon developed a strikingly original form of Christianity. With his *Spirituals* he produced a new form of hymn which surpassed anything the whites created. The nature of his life induced him to develop a symbolism to which he was able to respond with hysterical enthusiasm. In time the Church became for him, as Carter Woodson has pointed out, a social citadel. Not only did he worship there—but his whole social life was lived there, his ideals were born there, and his revolts were hatched there. At the same

[51] While there were white clergymen in the South in the early days who encouraged the Negro in his religious life, none of them had the courage to intervene in their behalf when the issue became crucial. There were no Father Las Casas among them who would brave disaster in order to defend the interests of the slaves against those of their masters. Father Las Casas, in Mexico, as Carleton Beals has vividly described, "crossed the ocean fourteen times to implore better treatment for the Indians . . . and Bishop Vasco de Quiroga of Michoacan . . . protested year after year at the conduct of the viceroys, of the Spanish aristocracy, and of the military officers" (Carleton Beals: *Mexico, An Interpretation*, p. 164). No white Southern clergymen threatened to lead the Negroes to revolt in order to attain their independence as the Mexican priests, Miguel Hidalgo and Jose Maria Morelos, had done with the Indians in Mexico in 1810 and 1814. (It is only fair to add, however, that Father Las Casas did not oppose slavery as an institution. While he was opposed to the enslavement of the Indians, he was in favor of the enslavement of the Negroes, who, he claimed, could endure the hardships of slavery with less difficulty and distress.)

[52] Niebuhr: *op. cit.*, p. 260.

time, his mind was fettered there. By worshipping a white man's God in a black man's church, and adopting an otherworldly symbolism that tended to make him accept his suffering here as a necessary preliminary to the joys of the hereafter, he robbed himself of a large part of that social strength which he can only capitalize when he turns his religiosity into radicalism. Although black madonnas and black Jesuses, as Garvey advocated, can be of no avail, black radicals allied with white radicals can.

But slavery did more than divide Christianity into white and black organizations. It split the whole American church organization into sectional segments.

Before the rise of the slavery issue, American Christianity was divided into numerous denominations and sects, all of which sprang from differences of religious principle. Afterwards, divisions on the basis of religious principle became far less important than cleavages along the lines of sectional opposition.

In the eighteenth century the Christian Churches were united to all practical purposes in their attitude towards slavery. They all condemned it as an evil institution. From the days of Cotton Mather, who attacked slavery with such vigor that his words had to be deleted from *Essays to do Good* when they were republished by the American Tract Society,[58] to the early part of the nineteenth century when anti-slavery societies still persisted in the South, there was nothing but opposition for the institution on the part of organized Christianity. In 1780, the Methodist Church, which at the time was stronger in the

[58] Leonard Woolsey Bacon: *A History of American Christianity*, p. 153.

South than anywhere else, assailed slavery as "contrary to the laws of God, man and nature and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not that others should do to us and ours." Four years later when the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded, it was definitely stipulated that every member of the Church must agree to free his slaves within one year or cease to be a member in good standing.[54] The Baptists were equally sweeping in their condemnation of the institution. The Presbyterians adopted the same anti-slavery position. This unanimity of religious outlook continued until the middle of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

What changed it was the revolution which took place in Southern agriculture. Once more, as we have seen in the history of religious doctrine in the past, religion altered its complexion in harmony with the pressures and tensions of the changing environment. As the new agricultural régime, which resulted from the invention of the cotton gin in 1792, began to serve new class interests, Southern Christianity sprang to their defense. As soon as the effects of the cotton gin were felt in the South, Southern Churches refused to defend their anti-slavery stand. Between 1791 and 1795, for instance, before the cotton gin had been put into successful operation, only 5,200,000 pounds of cotton were produced; between 1826 and 1830, however, after the cotton gin had become the dynamo of Southern agriculture 307,244,400 pounds of cotton were produced. With the new efficiency which the cotton gin

[54] William Warren Sweet: *The Story of Religions in America*, p. 421.

brought into cotton manufacture, the slave became more valuable because of the increased profits which could be derived from his labors as a cotton picker. Consequently, the slave who sold for $300 in 1790 rose to $1200 in value in 1830.[55] It was this increase in value of the slave which directly conditioned the new attitude of Southern clergymen toward the institution of slavery. Beginning with the discovery of the Presbyterian minister, James Smylie, "that the system of American slavery was sanctioned and approved by the Scriptures as good and righteous," and the declaration of the Baptist preacher, Doctor Furman, that "the right of holding slaves is clearly established in the holy Scriptures both by precept and example," the rest of the Southern clergy rapidly learned to repeat the same formula which resulted in the creation of a Dixie brand of Christianity. Without doubt the alarm that spread through the South during and after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831 had an immediate effect upon the psychology of the clergy. By 1845, the Church Secession was in full swing. In that year both the Southern Methodists and the Southern Baptists seceded from the national body. The Presbyterians, after having once refused "to pervert God's word to make it either denounce or sanction slavery," seceded in 1857. No abolitionist could be admitted to the ministry of the Southern churches. The fact that a number of Southern clergymen, especially among the bishops, were slaveholders undoubtedly tended to add vigor to their pro-slavery enthusiasm. By the time the Civil War broke out the Christian Churches were among the first to spring to

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 424.

arms. Not only did many of the clergymen engage actively in the conflicts,[56], but all of them exhorted their parishioners to participate in the War, which, as *The Southern Presbyterian* declared, was being fought "not alone for Civil Rights, and property and home, but for religion, for the Church, for the gospel."[57]

It is doubtful if there is a better illustration of how the religious compulsive is conditioned by the clash of class interests than that which is to be found in the history of American Christianity during the period which preceded and culminated in the Civil War. Religion was made to subserve directly the sectional and class interests involved. The Methodists and Baptists in the South sent their men to War with the same Christian convictions as the Methodists and Baptists in the North.[58] While various individuals such as the Abolitionist Sunderland attacked the Church and renounced orthodox Christianity, and leaders such as William Lloyd Garrison declared that "American Christianity is the main pillar of American slavery," the majority of the existing Christians adopted positions in ac-

[56] It was a Protestant Episcopal Bishop, Polk, for example, who was made a major-general in the Southern Army.

[57] One could easily fill pages with quotations from various Southern clergymen, extending from obscure, rustic pastors to pompous, affluent bishops, illustrating how completely Southern Christianity was bound up with Southern economics in its advocacy of slavery. Before the Civil War, however, there were also Northern bishops who justified the institution. "The slavery of the Negro race," declared the Bishop of Vermont, "appears to me fully authorized in the Old Testament."

[58] In this connection Abraham Lincoln's words, in reply to the Methodist Episcopal group which came to see him, are of interest:

"The Methodist Episcopal Church sent more soldiers to the field and more nurses to the hospital and more prayers to heaven than any! God bless the Methodist Episcopal Church! Bless all the churches! And blessed be God, who in this our trial giveth us the churches." What Lincoln neglected to note was that the churches in the South in those days of trial were praying to the same heaven and the same God for the opposite cause.

cordance with their geographical location north or south of the Mason and Dixon line.

After the Civil War American Christianity developed a new form of alliance. While the sectional scars were not healed, they eventually faded and lost their significance. In the North where industry became the imperial tyrant that subjected the rest of the country to its sway, Christianity became dominated by big business. The wealthy industrialists and financiers who arose during those days when the vast American fortunes were being accumulated were all church members who converted religion into an extension of big business. With the exception of Andrew Carnegie who did not affiliate himself with any creed, they almost all found the church a social asset which could be very easily and effectively exploited. Within a very short period of time the control of church finances was taken out of the hands of the clergymen and thrust into the hands of business men.[59] These business men were soon able to transform the churches into financial institutions which were more concerned with paying off mortgages and making wise investments than in saving souls. Even the Methodists, who in earlier days had sprung almost exclusively from the lower middle class, proceeded to build expensive churches and Sunday schools, with the result that many of their poorer members soon split off into independent congregations. In the main, however, the poor continued to stay in the old church bodies, unaware of the financial control which the wealthy exerted over church organization and doctrine. That control has increased

[59] W. W. Sweet: *op. cit.*, p. 497.

with rapid strides since those days and is more firmly entrenched at the present time than ever before. In a word, even the humbler churches, which had once been dominated by the people of the lower middle class, fell into the power of the more prosperous.[60]

Consequently, by 1920 it was possible for Roger W. Babson to declare:

> We should point with pride to the fact that most of the church people are prosperous and that most of the poor people are outside the church. We should be much more ashamed if the church were made up of the poor people and the prosperous people were outside of the church. Then we truly would have something to fear. Then we should be ashamed to ask others to join us or become interested in religion.
>
> Under a free competitive system the acres naturally go to the men who are able to get the most out of them; the industries naturally come under the control of the men who are able to most efficiently operate them; and wealth naturally gravitates to

[60] That does not mean, however, that in numerical ratio the rich have become the majority in these church bodies. On the contrary, the lower-middle-class elements still dominate in numbers but not in control. Financial power drove democracy out of the churches as well as out of politics. In the matter of *who's who* in the American churches of today, Niebuhr's analysis in his *Social Sources of Denominationalism* is still sound. André Siegfried has described the same categories a little more picturesquely, if less precisely and conclusively, in his book, *America Comes of Age:*

"In general the Anglicans belong to the wealthy upper classes, while the Methodists are the well-to-do tradespeople whom God has pleased to bless in business. The Baptists are smaller folk, without prestige, who live in the third-rate towns; the Presbyterians and Congregationalists are the descendants of the New England intellectuals of fifty years ago; the Lutherans, the timid and suspicious Germans; the Quakers, the solid bourgeois with money bags and scrupulous consciences; and finally, the Catholics are foreigners 'inferior' in race and class, and accordingly despised by the Anglo-Saxon Pharisees." (P. 38.)

Siegfried has exaggerated the categories in certain places, but in the main he is reasonably accurate. He is, of course, entirely wrong in his original contention that American religious tradition is "essentially Calvinistic." In many ways, it has been the very reverse. Dissent, with its Wycliffian, Lollard origins, drove Calvinism to retreat in America, as we have shown, and substituted a democratic, anti-Calvinistic tradition from which the main tendencies in American religion have been derived.

those people who use it for the good of the community rather than to those who use it only to satisfy their own selfish and sensual desires.[61]

In this manner big business was able to get control of almost every religious institution in the country. Whereas in the old days the evangelical sects had succeeded in maintaining certain of their more ascetic and republican ideals and sentiments, in the new era that was no longer possible. Christianity, henceforth, was to voice only the interests of big business.

As the industrialization of the country sped ahead in the post-Civil War era, the working class, out of whose labors the new America was being built, became more and more restive. The labor movement began to develop into a national force. The creation of the Knights of Labor in 1869, which was succeeded by the American Federation of Labor in 1886, marked the beginning of the realization that the struggle between capital and labor was a nation-wide issue. From the point of view of the capitalists, who were the owners of industry and finance, there was only one thing to do and that was fight labor on the economic front. Labor was fought there by the lockout, the open shop, the use of *scabs,* the employment of injunctions, the resort to police and militia, and upon critical occasions the use of the National Guard. But despite such concerted opposition the labor movement continued to grow. By the 1880's it had developed radical characteristics and become a dangerous menace to the hegemony of capital. It was obvious to the ruling class by that time that the fight had to

[61] Roger W. Babson: *Religion and Business,* p. 24.

be carried on other fronts. Religion was one of the fronts that was immediately utilized for the extension of that fight.

By virtue of their control over the financial destiny of the churches and their ministers, the representatives of big business succeeded in making American Christianity defend their interests in the struggle between capital and labor. Christianity took this stand, as Charles Stelzle pointed out, "because it did not dare to oppose the men or the government which gave it support."[62]

This subtle marriage between big business and religion resulted in converting Christianity into an apologist for capitalism. It soon came to favor the open shop, justify child labor, oppose strikes, and rebuke strikers. It managed to do this not so much by taking a definite stand in the struggle as by declaring its lack of connection with it. It attempted to take an above-the-battle stand, and assume a position of neutrality. Since the power of capital was so much greater than that of labor, the church's affected neutrality only helped to assure the defeat of the latter. Its position was very much like that of a Pharisee who, out of a formal respect for the rights of both parties, refuses to interfere in a life-and-death struggle between a lion and a lamb. Whenever specific situations arose where it was necessary to take a stand, however, the Church forsook its spiritual neutrality and defended the vested interests against those of labor. As Josiah Strong states he "knows personally of a committee of labor men who tried to secure the passage of a law limiting child labor, and in a great city not

[62] Charles Stelzle: *The Church and Labor*, p. 9.

one clergyman could be found to give them more than casual help"; while, "in another city, some years ago, not one clergyman could be found to aid the bakers agitate for a law giving them Sunday rest."[63] As in the case of the English bishops who, in the House of Lords, voted against the Workingmen's Compensation Act, American ministers frequently condemned strikers but very seldom attacked employers for perpetuating conditions which made strikes inevitable.[64] Keir Hardie's reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had declared that he worked seventeen hours a day and had no time remaining to solve the unemployment problem—

> A religion which demands 17 hours for organization and leaves no time for thought about starving men, women, and children, has no message for this age—

had few echoes in this country where Christianity had become so completely middle class that no minister dared articulate his opposition to the "Princes of Privilege." In the past it was possible for the clergymen in the churches, which were independent organizations existing in their own right, to preach what they pleased, and even advocate, as did such communal sects as the Anabaptists and Diggers, a complete change in the economic organization of society. Once the wealthy industrialists and financiers became deacons and trustees of the churches that independence and freedom vanished.

One of the effects of Christianity in this change in the control of the churches was expressed in the new type of

[63] Quoted from B. M. Balch: *Christianity and the Labor Movement*, p. 19.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.

minister who appeared. G. G. Atkins has described this new minister in graphic detail:

> The cloistered cleric has gone with the frock coat and white tie he used to wear. He wears bright business clothes week-days and generally a gown on Sunday. He may possibly change his spats from gray to black before he enters the pulpit. He is a man among men, civically recognized and much in demand. He sings with Rotarians and answers to his first name at Kiwanis Clubs. He discusses finance with men of affairs at one o'clock and tells a woman's club about his last visit to Russia or Bagdad at four o'clock. He has met his staff at nine o'clock and spent a telephone-punctuated season of meditation in his "study." He belongs to good clubs, plays (with exceptions) good golf which he excuses as a parochial duty and a physical means of grace. He reads as much as his predecessors and far more vital books, though he spends less time with his Hebrew and Greek. He is "up" on art, literature, music and the drama. And he preaches well—he has to.
>
> The representative pastor of a strong church is a picked man with rare natural faculties, rich in practical and disciplined experience. He can hold his own with the leaders of business and the other professions. The politicians who occasionally meet him often find they have met their match. He is unlike the "pattern" minister of the movie or the stage as "came the dawn" is unlike the normal issues of life.[65]

Like Wilberforce in the nineteenth century, who contended that the main purpose of religion was to instruct the poor in the belief "that their more lowly path has been alloted to them by the hand of God; that it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties, and contentedly to bear its inconveniences,"[66] this new type of minister preaches

[65] Gaius Glenn Atkins: *Religion in Our Times*, pp. 78–79.

[66] A better illustration still of this doctrine of submission which middle class Christianity perfected to a point of pathos is to be found in Goldsmith's *Vicar*

the same doctrine of submission, but in a more subtle and sophisticated form. Instead of stressing submission as a philosophy, which with an aggressive labor movement confronting them is impracticable, they endeavor to subdue and suppress proletarian militancy which they condemn as anti-Christian. In this way they aim to achieve what Wilberforce, releasing the cat from the bag, described as the "blessed effects of Christianity on the temporal well-being of political communities."

One way of combating such militancy, which threatens to disturb the relationships between the rich and the poor, is to reiterate the arguments of the Reverend Robert Flint, who contended that "the great bulk of human misery is due, not to social arrangements, but to personal vices," or those of the Reverend Sanday that "where God has been so patient, it is not for us to be impatient."[67] A more subtle way is to work with the labor movement itself in an attempt to convince its leaders that

of Wakefield, in the sermon which the Vicar delivered to the prisoners in jail where he was confined for debt:

"Thus Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life—greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all the superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment.

"Heaven gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter; and even though this should be called a small advantage yet being an eternal one, it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intenseness.

"These are, therefore, the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects, they are below them."

[67] These quotations are taken from Upton Sinclair's *Profits of Religion,* p. 78, which will provide the reader with a veritable gold-mine of material that indicts the preachers and priests by words quoted out of their own mouths. No book on religion in recent years has supplied so much damning evidence in proof of the fact that Christianity has been converted from an original communal creed into an oblique extension of a financial racket.

the labor problem is not an economic problem, but a religious one. "The churches had better use their influence in helping labor organize under religious leaders," Roger W. Babson advised, and added that "the church should not want to damn the stream of progress; but the church should direct the flow of the stream.... The Labor problem is really a question of religion rather than of economics.... The church should ... insist that the leaders both of the employers and the wage workers should be religious men and that the principle of the 'open shop' shall be kept as the goal."[68]

Not only was Jesus Christ made an opponent of socialism and an advocate of the "open shop," but in the words of the Reverend Lyman Abbott he was converted into a direct exponent of big business:

> My radical friend declares that the teachings of Jesus are not practicable, that we cannot carry them out in life, and that we do not pretend to do so. Jesus, he reminds us, said, "Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth"; and Christians do universally lay up for themselves treasures upon earth; every man that owns a house and lot or a share of stock in a corporation, or a life insurance policy, or money in a savings bank, has laid up for himself treasure upon earth. But Jesus did not say, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." He said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal." And no sensible American does. Moth and rust do not get at Mr. Rockefeller's oil wells, nor at the Sugar Trust's sugar, and thieves do not often break through and steal a railway or an insurance company or a savings bank. What Jesus condemned was hoarding wealth.[69]

[68] Babson, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[69] These words appeared in Doctor Lyman Abbott's article on the "Ethical Teachings of Jesus" which appeared in *Outlook*, vol. 94, p. 576, quotation taken from Sinclair's *Profits of Religion*, p. 176.

The last step was left for Bruce Barton, who in his book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, made Jesus into the high-pressure salesman of his day, an Ivy L. Lee of the ancient world who succeeded in selling a religious form of Tono-Bungay to Western civilization. "The ad-man's religion is today the prevailing American religion," James Rorty notes suggestively in his book, *The Master's Voice*, and adds that "the true heretic must therefore concentrate upon this modern aspect of priestcraft."

The Roman Catholic Church pursued a different and more direct tactic in its struggle against the advance of the revolutionary forces in the labor movement. In Europe and also in Canada and Mexico the Catholics had created Catholic labor organizations to attract Catholic workers and compete with the anti-religious trade unions; in America, however, the Catholics found it more successful to work within the existing unions than to create dual ones. They organized the *Militia of Christ* which was a secret organization of Catholic labor leaders whose direct purpose was to counteract radical tendencies in the American Federation of Labor.[70] Because in America the main adherents of the Catholic Church were impoverished immigrants who were driven to the labor movement in order to protect their economic interests, the Catholic churches have always stood in a closer relationship to American labor than the Protestant churches.[71] It was the vast immigrant

[70] David J. Saposs: "The Catholic Church and the Labor Movement," *Modern Monthly*, vol. 7, no. 4.

[71] The Catholics continue to derive their main strength from what may be called the "foreign" elements in the population. Although most of the immigrants who join the Roman Catholic Church in America were European Catholics to begin with, the fact still remains that it is the only church in America which re-

invasions of the Irish, French, and Italians in the nineteenth century which gave the Catholic Church its main strength in this country.[72] The leaders in the Molly MacGuire movement were Irish Catholics as were also most of the labor leaders in the American Federation of Labor a half century later. The influence of the Church, however, prevented those leaders from becoming radical. When radicalism grew in the A. F. of L., the Catholic leaders, as David Saposs shows, allied themselves with the National Civil Federation, an organization created by big business, in order to acquire sufficient strength to defeat the radical forces. Like the Protestants, the Catholic clergy, despite its closer connection with labor, took its stand on the side of the capitalists. We have seen, declared Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical, that "this great labor question cannot be solved except by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable."[73] In another part of the Encyclical socialism is directly attacked as contrary to human nature. In words somewhat reminiscent of Goldsmith in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, the Pope proceeds to point out that "to suffer and to endure . . . is the lot of humanity; that men, try as they may, . . . will never succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which beset it. If any there are who

ally welcomes them. André Siegfried described the situation very well when he observed that "Catholicism (in America) is a sort of refuge, because more than any other it is the church of the foreigner. This is because it is not regarded as the exclusive sanctuary of the *élite*, but much more humanly as a haven with a welcome for all" (André Siegfried: *America Comes of Age*, p. 42).

[72] H. K. Carroll: *The Religious Forces of the U. S.* (American Church History Series, vol. 1), Introduction, p. liii.

[73] *Four Great Encyclicals: The Condition of Labor*, by Leo XIII, p. 26 (section dealing with "Benefits of Property Ownership").

can pretend differently—who hold out to a hard-pressed people freedom from pain and trouble, undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment—they cheat the people and impose upon them, and their lying promises will only make the evil worse than before."[74] When we turn to the letters issued to all Roman Catholic churches by the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church, at assemblies of the American bishops, we discover even better illustrations of the stand of the Church on economic questions. In the letter of 1919, it is declared by Leo XIII that the remedy for the economic situation in America is "to induce as many as possible of the humbler classes to become owners. This recommendation is in exact accord with the traditional teaching and practice of the Church." In another section of the same letter, the Pope observes that "whatever may be the industrial and social remedies which will approve themselves to the American people, there is one that, we feel confident, they will never adopt. That is the method of revolution. . . . The radicalism, and worse than radicalism, of the labor movement in some of the countries of Europe, has no lesson for the workers of the United States, except as an example of methods to be detested and avoided."[75]

By the close of the nineteenth century Christianity and big business had become such inseparable kin that President McKinley had little difficulty in having God come out in open defense of American imperialism. McKinley's remarks in this connection reveal how pliable and adapta-

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[75] *The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy*, 1792–1919, edited by Peter Guilday. National Catholic Welfare Council.

ble the Christian concept of God and Christ had become in those days:

> The truth is I didn't want the Philippines and when they came to us as a gift of the gods, I did not know what to do with them. . . . I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night it came to me this way . . . there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and *uplift and civilize and Christianize them and by God's grace do the very best we could by them as our fellow men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed and went to sleep and slept soundly.*[76]

McKinley's words prepared the spiritual soil for the acceptance of that later and more tragic identification of the interest of religion with that of big business in the World War. By that time, the dollar having already driven the cross off the map, as Sinclair Lewis put it, God and Christ had become open allies of wealth and station.[77]

[76] Quotation taken from Harry Elmer Barnes: *The Twilight of Christianity.* Doctor Barnes in this book has provided us with a forthright, thoroughgoing analysis of the corrupting influence of present-day Christianity, in its big-business phase. In his discussion of the decay of Christian ethics he is at his best. While most American professors, at least in the Northern and Eastern universities, are no longer religious-minded, few of them have had the courage, which Doctor Barnes displayed both as a professor and a writer, to attack religion in public.

[77] Many of the pastors themselves had come to realize the truth of the situation. Very few of them, however, had the courage to do anything about it. "There was a time when the poor came to the Episcopal Churches seeking and obtaining aid for body and soul," declared the Reverend Falkner and then went on to ask . . . "Is this so today?" and added that in many churches "the presence of the poor is regarded as bad form. If Christ Himself were to enter them, the pew openers would ask: 'What is that carpenter doing here?'" Quoted from Henry George, Jr.: *The Menace of Privilege,* p. 307. While the Methodist and Baptist churches, and other evangelical congregations treated the poor with more tenderness, it was the men of wealth, nevertheless, the nouveau riche, who governed their organization. George's book provides us with the following illustrations which tell the story in a few words:

"A distinguished Methodist preacher, now bishop, who, called to officiate at the funeral ceremonies over the heir of a Western railroad king, compared the youth

The economic tie-up between America and the Allies, tangibly illustrated by the loans that this country made to the latter, which practically made our participation in the War inevitable, is too well known today to require analysis here.[78] What interests us in this study is how all the clergymen, big and little, Protestant and Catholic, Gentile and Jewish, high-church and low-church, metropolitan and rural, Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western, declared themselves patriotic Americans and defended the War.[79] The Prince of Peace was swiftly converted into a War-Lord who was dedicated to the proposition that the many should die for the dividends of the few. In a great number of cases the preachers out-vied the laity in their jingoistic clamor. "It is neither a travesty nor exaggeration to call this war on the part of America a truly Holy War,"[80] declared one pastor; other pastors, not to be outdone in their declamatory zeal, asserted that "it is God

alive to the boy Christ. Or like the Presbyterian doctor of divinity, who over the body of one of the worst political corruptionists Pennsylvania ever knew, calmly declared that the deceased 'was always on the right side of every moral question.' Or, like the Unitarian minister, who, delivering an oration in the U. S. Senate chamber beside the casket of a man who had become Senator by sheer bribery and who had boasted that he carried the 'larger business methods' into national politics, eulogized this 'whole-souled child of God who believed in success and who knew how to succeed by using the infinite powers.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 314.) One of the most notorious illustrations of the growing alliance between the churches and the financial interests was disclosed originally by Charles Edward Russell in an article on "The Trinity Corporation" in *Everybody's Magazine* (July, 1908). The owners of the corporation "are the communicants of Christ," and the properties they own, Upton Sinclair maintains after having examined them all, "are not fit for the habitation of animals" (*The Profits of Religion*, pp. 95–96).

[78] C. Hartley Grattan in *Why We Fought* has made the most thorough and authoritative study of that relationship. Dozens of other writers such as Harry Elmer Barnes, Charles Beard, and Louis Hacker have also dealt with it in illuminating detail.

[79] One of the few courageous exceptions was John Haynes Holmes, who opposed the War after we had entered it as well as before. Roy Abrams estimates that only 90 out of 200,000 American ministers and priests "held aloof from the War hysteria."

[80] Roy H. Abrams: *Preachers Present Arms.*

who has summoned us to this war. It is His War we are fighting," "think it all through, and, at bottom, the war is religious"; "it is simply to say that we are in the war because we believe that thereby we are somehow serving God." Still other pastors maintained that "we must fight pacifism not only because it is contrary to the teachings of Christ, but because its whole tendency is to make a yellow streak where you want a man," and that "the man who is disloyal to the flag is disloyal to Christianity; the state must be obeyed under pain of incurring the guilt of mutiny against God." The peak of all these calamitous diatribes was reached by a Boston pastor who avowed that "three inches are not enough, seven inches are too many, for while you are pulling out the bayonet you are losing the opportunity to drive it into another man five inches. We must keep the flag and the cross together."

But all this patriotism on the part of the pastors was not only in direct response to our entrance into the War. In 1915, Admiral Fiske averred that "the Christian religion is at this moment being made to exert a powerful influence, not towards peace, but towards war."[81] The Massachusetts Clerical Association declared itself in favor of War a month before Congress did. Later on, after America had entered the War, Secretary Lane confessed that "the War could not have been won without the churches."[82] Even liberal clergymen, such as Shailer Mathews, who had argued so strenuously in favor of "social Christianity," attempted to pervert Christ from a lover of peace into an advocate of the sword. When Reverend E. F. Weise

[81] Granville Hicks: "The Parsons and the War," *American Mercury*, 1927.
[82] *Ibid.*

stated at a Methodist conference, "I am an American but a Christian first," the rest of the ministers shouted: "Sit down! Shame on you! Traitor!"[88] Worse than that, thousands of American preachers did nothing more than deliver sermons based upon the propaganda sheets that were sent out by the government.

But it should not be thought that the American clergy was singular in that respect. The clergymen of all countries were guilty of the same gesture. Catholics and Protestants on both sides of the battle field in Europe appealed to the same God and the same Christ to destroy the other. Once more Christianity became a spiritual mask behind which nationalist passions were concealed. Rendered subordinate to civil authority by the rise of the modern state, the Christian Church had no alternative but to support that state in all its actions. Whereas in the Middle Ages the state and Church had been indisseverably allied, with the Church imposing an international outlook upon the state, in the modern world the state, disallied from the Church, imposed its national outlook upon the latter. The Christianity which had once been looked upon as the international religion of Western civilization broke up into national Christianities which, whenever crises arose, obeyed the bidding of the national states. This dissolution of the international spirit of Christianity converted every church in every land into a spiritual policeman for the national state. The Catholic Church underwent this transformation as well as the Protestant. Despite its international bureaus and branches, the Roman Catholic Church during

[88] *Ibid.*

the War succumbed to national interests in every country in which it was a force. The Catholic soldiers of Austria and Germany killed the Catholic soldiers of Italy and France, notwithstanding their common allegiance to the same Pope. Catholic priests in the warring countries attacked their national adversaries with no less zeal than Protestant. American Catholics in this connection proved no exception.

In a number of ways, many of which are incalculable, this spectacle of war-mad priests exhorting their countrymen to fight and kill their fellow-Christians in other lands did more than anything else to undermine the faith of myriads of individuals in the efficacy of Christianity as a religious force. At least part of the failure of Christianity to grow in America since the War can be attributed to that factor. If calculated in terms of population growth, Christianity has not only not made any progress in this country in the last two decades but it has gone backward. Between 1800 and 1900, Doctor Stelzle points out, the Protestant churches in America increased in membership from "7 to 100 of population to 24 in 100," whereas since 1900 those same churches have been unable to keep pace with the growth in population.[84] In another place, Doctor Stelzle shows that the whole Protestant Church "has not increased its ratio as much as one percent during the past thirty years."[85] During the present period of depression,

[84] *The Literary Digest:* "Is Traditional Christianity Losing Its Grip?" January 20, 1934.

[85] Charles Stelzle: "Decline of American Protestantism," *Current History*, October, 1930. "The increase from 1916–1926," Doctor Stelzle adds, "consisted of a mere sliver of three one hundredths of one per cent, the percentage being 24.66 in 1916 and 24.69 in 1926."

Doctor Stelzle shows, the Christian churches, contrary to the general expectation, have declined instead of grown in membership. Taking the experience of the Presbyterian churches as typical of that of other churches in America, he shows one-third of them "did not receive a new convert last year, and half the remainder own fewer than five each." The Presbyterian churches as a whole revealed a loss of 41,000 members, with a decrease of 23,600 in their Sunday-school attendance. The Methodist Episcopal Church lost 25,000 members.[86] Besides, the Sunday-school movement has ceased to grow. There were fewer Sunday schools in 1926, for example, than in 1916.

In the process of his analysis, Doctor Stelzle refers to an illuminating study of how 1000 proletarians spent their leisure time. That study showed that the workers who were the least interested in religion and the Church were those who labored fewer hours and got higher wages, that is presumably the more skilled and intelligent workers. "In every comparison between church, lodge, labor union, theatre, motion picture, shows, social club, etc.," Doctor Stelzle adds, "the church has always suffered." In other words, the more intelligent the present-day worker, the less attracted he is by the church, and the more interested he is in secular organizations and activities. The moment we ascend the intellectual scale, from industry to the professions, the more marked the indifference to religion becomes. In a study of *Who's Who in*

[86] Contrary to the usual notion, the Roman Catholic Church, despite its opposition to the practice of birth-control on the part of its members, has not been able to keep pace with the Protestant churches in terms of growth (*cf.* chapter on "Religion" in *Recent Social Trends*).

America, Ellsworth Huntington and Leon F. Whitney discovered, to quote Mr. Henry L. Mencken, "that, of every 100,000 Unitarians, *i.e.*, heretics, in the population, 1185 were sufficiently distinguished to be listed therein, and only eight Lutherans, and only seven Catholics. What the science of statistics thus reveals is ratified by everyday experience. One seldom discovers a true believer who is worth knowing."[87] Confirming Mr. Mencken's conclusion about the relationship of religion to ignorance, Paul Hutchinson points out, citing *Social Trends* as his main proof, that "while our recent boom years witnessed a substantial increase in the financial strength of the religious institution, they also *witnessed a substantial loss of authority of religious ideas over the more intelligent portion of the public. Alert church leadership was aware of this sometime ago.*"[88]

[87] Henry L. Mencken: *Treatise on the Gods*, p. 327. In this connection it is illuminating to note the results of a questionnaire on the topic of religion which was sent out by *The Nation and Athenæum*, a high-brow English weekly, and by *The Daily News*, a low-brow English daily:

Questions	Nation & Athenæum			Daily News		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
Do you believe in a personal God?...	537	736	65	9,991	3,686	366
Do you believe in personal immortality?...	578	646	114	10,161	3,178	704
Do you believe in any form of Christianity?...	666	585	87	10,546	2,879	618
Are you an active member of any church?...	475	837	26	8,796	4,896	351

"Is it not more likely," Quincy Howe, the American editor asks, commenting on the above responses, "that the lowbrows will follow the highbrows away from religion than that the reverse process will occur?" It is interesting also to quote Crockford's *Clerical Dictionary* (in 1927), to the effect that "if the history of the last ten years is continued for another ten, anything that can fairly be called 'The Church of England' will have ceased to exist."

[88] Paul Hutchinson: "The Future of Religion," *The Forum*, April, 1933.

Among the younger people, as was inevitable, the Church has lost its hold even more completely than among the older. "Young people the world over," Doctor Stelzle confesses reluctantly, "are identifying themselves with radical movements in the same spirit and with the same devotion that we find among missionaries who go to foreign fields. . . . It is strange that the church which should offer these young crusaders the opportunity to live lives of service and devotion to a great cause is not making the slightest impression upon them."

Quincy Howe, the editor of *Living Age*, after considering the present status of religion in England and America, goes even further than Doctor Stelzle, and declares that "the United States is the one country in which the collapse of organized religion may precede the collapse of other institutions."[89] Most interesting indeed, however, in reflecting the decay of religion in America is the observation of the author of the chapter on "Religion" in *Recent Social Trends:*

> During the period [*i.e.* since roughly 1900], the Church has held fast to its historic moorings and has retained the allegiance, in form at least, of half the population.

Commenting upon that sentence, Mr. Howe justly observes that "in other words, three centuries of religious freedom and unparalleled economic progress have brought the U. S. half way toward the same goal of complete atheism that Soviet Russia has set itself. The value of church property increased from $1,258,000,000 in 1906 to $3,840,000,000 in 1926, but as wealth accumulated

[89] Quincy Howe: "The Twilight of the Gods," *Living Age*, October, 1933.

faith decayed." Since the depression, as we have seen from Doctor Stelzle's figures, the churches in proportion to the population have lost instead of gained members. "No matter how badly the nation has suffered," an officer of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America has reported, "it cannot be said that any large number of people have gone to the churches for solace. This effect has been the occasion for a good deal of comment, and I think it has been one of the most conspicuous features of the depression."[90]

But the decline and decay of religion in America is more of a qualitative than a quantitative phenomenon. It is in spirit far more than in numbers that American religion has deteriorated. Unable to sell themselves to the people on a purely religious basis, the American churches have been forced to exploit all the technique of high-pressure salesmanship in order to maintain the interest and support of their members. Almost every variety of side-show has been utilized by the churches to attract the young and give a reminiscent thrill to the old. Eight hundred and seventeen million dollars are spent each year on the average by American churches,[91] an enormously large part of which is expended for extra-religious activities. The people who used to sing the old hymns by candlelight, and feel the power of God rush through them as they sang, now prefer a new hymnology, a lighter service, and a less exacting religion.

In the meanwhile, religion has become a fourth or fifth-

[90] Quoted from Howe article.

[91] Benjamin Ginzburg: "Religion and The Lost Leadership," *The Nation*, October 21, 1931.

rate phenomenon which has lost its front-page challenge and vitality. If the newspapers are an accurate gauge of interest-values, and they provide the best gauge we have today, it is obvious that religion has become sixth and seventh page copy, commanding less and less importance in the eyes of the public. Whereas a pugilistic victory by Max Baer, a political pronouncement by President Roosevelt, a new discovery in physics by Einstein, a trip from Prinkipo to Copenhagen by Trotsky, or a dare-devil expedition to the Arctic regions by Byrd, constitute front-page copy, what happens to the churches and the churchmen very rarely ever reaches the second or third page. In other words, in the battle for human attention and support, secular interests have definitely triumphed over religious. The fact that people are members of a church, or even attend a church, is of far less importance than how they rate that church in their scale of cultural values. What has happened to religion in America in that connection is not reflected by membership-statistics but by social attitude and outlook. It is in that latter respect that the decline in the religious mentality is most apparent and the decay of the religious institution most obvious.

One of the ways in which that decay has been most conspicuous has been in the inferior quality of clergyman which the modern churches have cultivated. Prior to the eighteenth century, the clergy could lay claim to many of the best minds in the community and the nation; in the eighteenth, and even in the nineteenth, a considerable number of first-rate minds were still attracted to the ministry; within the last two or three generations, however,

that is no longer the case. The first-rate minds in our day and age almost invariably gravitate in secular directions; they become engineers, physicists, chemists, economists, doctors, lawyers, politicians, writers, artists. The clergyman is no longer an intellectual force in advanced economic countries today. Many of the leading American colleges and universities have revealed such an indifference to religion and the possibility of encouraging men to become preachers that they have either eliminated their courses on theology or converted them into electives and classified them as special subjects. "Many of them (the colleges and universities) have no faculties of theology at all," Doctor Bell, the professor of Religion at Columbia University, declares, "and where such faculties do exist they are commonly isolated from undergraduate teaching and from vital contact with colleagues in other fields of knowledge. *It has come to pass that theology is looked upon as a professional subject.*"[92] Only in the special theological schools and seminaries does theology maintain its former importance and influence.

Even New Thought and Christian Science, which are vestigial derivatives from the frontier impulse in American religion, could not stay the disintegrative process. They contributed nothing significant to the mental stature of American religion. As a matter of fact, the men and women who became their professional exponents in most cases marked a lowering instead of a heightening of ecclesiastical I. Q. voltage. Both New Thought and Chris-

92 Quoted from article entitled: "Materialism on the Campus," *Literary Digest*, September 10, 1932.

tian Science promise the individual what every frontier religion had once endowed him with, a power within himself to remake his personality and reshape the world. By exalting psychology over sociology, New Thought guaranteed the individual the strength to conquer adversity and attain success. By destroying the phenomena of disease and death, Christian Science fortified the ego with an illusion of power which freed it from worry and fear and, by releasing the spiritual synapses of psycho-neurotic constitutions, spurred it on to success. It is important to note that both religions won their early and continued support from the more successful members of the middle class. They fulfilled a special need for a religious success-doctrine at a time when the closing of the frontier had made the struggle for success much more difficult than ever before. They inspired those who had not succeeded to join them in order to attain success—in the case of Christian Science, success in the struggle against physical disease as well as economic disease—and made those in their ranks who had succeeded believe that their success was due to the doctrines they espoused. In the case of Christian Science that is borne out obviously by the fact that 94 per cent of its members are in the cities where the struggle for success is most acute and costly, and where disease is a more crucial factor than in the country. That both religions went into business was almost inevitable. Gibert Seldes in *The Stammering Century* gives a vivid picture of "the business side of New Thought," which "advised stockbrokers to become at one with God so that they might put over big deals," and which made "loud complaints against the

'peculiar laws' of the postoffice department (which) prevented prophets from selling sacred handkerchiefs guaranteed to cure cancer and barrenness."[93] Ernest Sutherland Bates and John V. Dittemore in their study *Mary Baker Eddy* describe in arresting and illuminating detail how successfully Christian Science was able to function as both a religion and a racket. Mary Baker Eddy's constant admonitions to buy new editions of her *Science and Health* in order to assure the full understanding of her message, are interesting in that connection:

> Be sure and get the 3rd edition, of the last Revised book. It will contain fifty improvements; sometimes one word, again a sentence, sometimes the meaning is flashed through like lightning by these little touches.[94]

And then again:

> Let your Bible alone for three months or more. Don't open it, nor think of it. But dig day and night at *Science and Health.*

And later:

> Burn every scrap of Christian Science literature so-called except *Science and Health* and publications bearing the imprint of the Reverend Mary Baker Eddy.[95]

While such advice from the author herself may be accounted for as an expression of megalomania, the manufacture of Christian Science articles cannot be explained on that basis:

> The manufacture of Christian Science jewelry, a monopoly obtained by the J. C. Derby Company, threatened to become one of the major interests of Concord. Cuff buttons, rings, brooches, watches, pendants, all carrying Christian Science em-

[93] P. 362. [94] P. 305. [95] P. 302.

blems, were sold at prices varying from $2.50 to $325. An otherwise ordinary silver spoon, embossed with Mrs. Eddy's portrait, her signature, a picture of Pleasant View, and the motto: "Not Matter, but Mind Satisfieth," sold for five dollars. The "mother spoon" was advertised in *The Journal* as follows:

"On each of these most beautiful spoons is a motto in bas-relief that every person on earth needs to hold in thought. Mother requests that Christian Scientists shall not ask to be informed what this motto is, but each Scientist shall purchase at least one spoon, and those who can afford it, one dozen spoons, that their families may read this motto at every meal, and their guests be made partakers of its simple truth."

The best proof that the number of church members in a city does not correspond with or determine the prevailing power and influence of religion in a community is to be found in the statistical ratio of church-membership in the United States. There is abundant evidence to show, for instance, that religion has exercised much more influence over rural communities in America than over urban, and yet church statistics prove that whereas only 52 per cent of our rural population is composed of church members, 58 per cent of the urban population are members of churches.[96] In the South, where Fundamentalism has its last stronghold, and where despite its defeat in its attempt to uphold the Eighteenth Amendment it still exerts more influence upon politics and cultural life in general than in

[96] C. Luther Fry: *The U. S. Looks at Its Churches,* N. Y. Institute of Social and Religious Research. A recent study of church-attendance, however, contradicts these statistics of church-membership. In a study which has been undertaken during the last four years by the General Council of the Congregational and Christian Churches it was found that "the average attendance of the group of selected churches in places of all sizes in these [urban] states was thirty-six per cent . . . whereas in the rural Southeastern states the average was seventy-eight per cent"—which only proves that church-membership statistics in the cities are flagrantly padded, and that the number of members a church possesses has little to do with the number of people who attend its services.

any other part of the country, the percentage of church members is less than in the East and West where religion exercises far less sway over the life of the community. In such well-known Eastern cities as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia over 60 per cent of the population is affiliated with the Church. In such Midwestern urban centres as Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Milwaukee between 50 and 60 per cent of the population constitute church members. In the far West, in San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles the church members comprise only 40 per cent of the population.

It is not the quantity, then, but the quality of the church members in a community that is decisive. Where the ruling class is dynamically religious, as in the South today, and where the intellectuals in the community do not resist that religiosity, religion is bound to have a deep-rooted and wide-spread influence over cultural life. In other words, if the people who *count* in a community are religious, the church will function as a dominant cultural force. On the other hand, when the ruling class is indifferent to religion and its intellectuals lose their respect for religious authority, religion is forced to play a backward rôle in the cultural scheme. Most important of all, however, is the fact that in urban centres, where science has been largely responsible for the progress of the community, the scientific mentality has tended to undermine the religious mentality and rob religion of its hypnotic power over the mind of the group. Only in rural communities, where science has made little progress and where the scientific tradition has

made practically no inroads upon the religious mentality, does religion continue to supply the illusion of power for which science provides a substitute in industrial communities.

It is in this latter respect more than in any other that religion has begun to decay in America as well as in other advanced countries. Wherever industry and science have spread the religious compulsive has weakened and the dependence of individuals upon religion for support has waned. As a result religion has been thrust upon the defensive. While it has managed to maintain its churches and hold on to a large number of its members, it has seen its influence over life as a whole dwindle year by year in steady recession. The spirit of fight has gone out of it. The attempt on the part of various modernists such as Harry Ward and Reinhold Niebuhr to restore the spirit of fight into it by converting it into an agency for social revolution is futile.

When religion is shorn of its supernatural power and converted into a branch of social ethics, it has become nothing more than a power-plant without a dynamo. When Harry Ward declares, "the religion of tomorrow is ethical. It will be ethical because it is social,"[97] what he is really confessing is that it will not be religion but a form of social service. When Theodore W. Darnell asserts that "religion for the modern man no longer means the worship of God"[98] but the exaltation of man who has made nature obey his will, he has deprived religion of its

[97] Harry F. Ward: *Which Way Religion,"* p. 214.
[98] Theodore W. Darnell: "Is There Anything Left of Religion?" *The Forum,* September, 1929.

psychological power and creative energy. Instead of religion becoming an aid to the social revolution, as Reinhold Niebuhr believes is possible,[99] it will become a form of "revolution-insurance," functioning as nothing more than an emotional extension of existing social work agencies. If, on the other hand, it should orient itself in the direction of the working class instead of the middle class—which, considering the economic structure of American Christianity, is practically impossible—it would result in exactly the opposite to what the Wards and Niebuhrs desire. What would happen would be that the Christian Church would "sell out" the social revolution for the sake of *godliness* in the preservation of its own power as the dispenser of godliness on earth. Instead of a working class led by "godless revolutionaries" we should have one led by "god-fearing priests and prophets." Following in the lead of the Berdyaevs such "god-fearing prophets" would teach the people to "rise above the class hatred that torments the world,"[100] which would be but another way of telling them to throw away their guns and destroy their ammunition before they enter the social conflict.[101]

But the decay of the religious mentality has advanced at too rapid a pace to permit the revival of Christianity as a progressive social force. Science has destroyed the

[99] Reinhold Niebuhr: "Marxism and Religion," *The World Tomorrow*, March 15, 1933.

[100] Nicholas Berdyaev: *Christianity and the Class War*, p. 115.

[101] In fairness to Niebuhr, it should be stated that he is definitely opposed to the exaltation of the Christian ideal of love insofar as it can be "used to stabilize a world reeking with injustice." Nevertheless, the economic organization and traditional outlook of Christianity being what they are, the inevitable tendency of the Christian Church if it ever shifted left would be to adopt the logic of the Berdyaevs and not that of the Wards and Niebuhrs.

mainsprings of religious faith. The emotional substance of religion has lost its power. The fears and promises of religion have been robbed of their terrors and thrills. A large percentage of the people who still attend the churches are religious only in name. The faith and passion of religion have gone out of them.

Some one, I do not know who, said of pre-war England that it was as though "a slow and deepening twilight were darkening a once brilliant drawing room. There are twilights one sees as they fall, there is another and darker chill marking the ends of great epochs, which one does not recognize at all as the gray shadows steal on. The light is still there; only the most sensitive are aware of the menacing shadows. I suppose light is now reaching the earth from star-suns whose light is already in eclipse at the source. Who can tell that the light is failing at its source till the darkness falls?" Something like this, we now see, had by the end of the century already begun to affect the American churches.[102]

In such words G. G. Atkins describes what has happened to religion in America in the twentieth century.

Within another generation, when the youths of today become the adults of tomorrow, that twilight will have darkened into a deeper and more enveloping night.

[102] G. G. Atkins: *Religion in Our Times*, p. 35.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION

"But we're crumbling away before we're dead. Crumbling! We have already. An old man with one foot in the grave, who might snuff out any day from a cold in the head, keeps his ancient throne by the sheer miracle of still being able to sit on it. How long? How long! This age has no use for us. What people all want nowadays is to form independent states. *You see they no longer believe in God. And their new religion is nationalism. In Austria the nation doesn't go to church, they go to independence meetings instead. Monarchy*—the Austrian monarchy—*is founded on piety, on the belief that God chose the Habsburgs to reign over a certain number of Christian peoples.*"

—*Radetzky March*, by Joseph Roth.

THE religious compulsive has been such a potent force in shaping the human mind because religion has been, from the days of the early shamans down to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the main agency through which the traditions of the community have been preserved. In magic as well as religion it was the medicine man and later the priest who transmitted the cultural heritage of the race. The ecclesiastics for a long period possessed the superior knowledge of the group. Only when, as with the Greeks and Romans, secular agencies competed with the religious in that respect, did the religious compulsive recede in influence. Even in the Middle Ages the priests were literate whereas many of the kings were scarcely able to sign their own names to documents. The people, therefore, had no choice but to derive their mental as well as spiritual sustenance from the lips of the priests. Since this dependence of the people upon the priests began in childhood, it was almost in-

evitable that the religious compulsive should get a firmer grip upon the mental processes of the individual than any other force.

It was only when the people managed to derive their ideas and opinions from other sources than the purely religious, which became inevitable with the advance of education and the development of science and the scientific mentality, that the religious compulsive began to lose something of its power over their minds. The development of capitalist society with its stress upon the individual as the centre of things, in economics as well as religion, did more to release the mind from the domination of the religious compulsive than any influence which had preceded. By creating a society in which the economics of paucity was superseded by the economics of plenty, and in which the individual himself became the judge of truth, capitalism robbed religion of its ancient validity and vigor.

Why do people continue to believe in religion, the question immediately arises, when, notwithstanding its exalted and unearthly claims, it is bound up so obviously with material values instead of eternal ones? The answer is to be found in that very contradiction. If religion were really bound up with eternal values to the exclusion of material ones, no one would cling to it. It is because religion actually serves material ends, and has from its very inception, as this book has endeavored to prove, that it has succeeded, despite its fallacies and contradictions, in maintaining its influence over the human mind. It provides the psychological strength which the individual and

the group need in order to survive in the material world. Like primitive magic it supplies an imaginary control over the environment which saves man from that sense of frustration which he would otherwise experience in his struggle to survive and succeed. Where science has supplanted religion in supplying that power, it has succeeded in undermining the foundations of the religious mentality. Whenever science fails, on the other hand, both the individual and the group resort to the religious residual. If an individual is ill, for example, he goes to the doctor who is a scientist and not to the priest or quack in order to be cured. If the doctor fails him, however, and still other doctors also prove of no avail, he turns to the charlatan, the chiropractor, or the Christian Scientist, in an attempt to escape his illness. In a less precise sense, something of the same tendency prevails with the group. Whenever a crisis arises and economic decay ensues, large sections of the group, notwithstanding class divisions and conflicts of interest, tend to become an easy prey to the power-promising prophecies of the faker—which makes it possible for a Hitler or a Mussolini to dominate it.

Religion will persist so long, therefore, as science and society fail to provide the individual and the group with sufficient power to control the environment in their behalf. It is not so much power in itself that the individual and the group desire but security. Power is sought mainly for the sake of security. In the past, when the economics of scarcity prevailed, security was possible only by the conquest of power.[1] Those who were in power endeavored to

[1] Only among early groups where certain forms of primitive communism prevailed was that not true.

hold on to their power because of the security it assured, and those not in power sought to achieve power in order to escape the insecurity from which they suffered. The essence of that relationship has not altered in any important respect today. What has happened, however, is that today, in an era of plenty, security is possible for all, and not just for the class that owns and controls the economic power of society. How to attain that universal security is a problem for science and society to solve. In other words, it is a problem of social science, which means a problem of social revolution, for only a social revolution can change the character of the existing economic organization of society.

During the period which we are living through today, in which that revolution, except in Soviet Russia, is a matter of the future instead of the present, religion is liable to make certain tentative gains as the collapse of the prevailing economic system deprives more and more individuals of the hope of security. Those gains, however, will be more marked, as they are already today, among the intelligentsia and the upper classes in general than among the masses. With the breakdown of capitalist culture the spiritual security which the intellectuals possessed before the World War has evaporated. The favorable outlook upon religion conspicuous today in such divers types as Jean Cocteau, Sheila Kaye Smith, Compton Mackenzie, T. S. Eliot, Henri Massis, and Eugene O'Neill is closely connected in most cases with the spiritual chaos of our age. The new-fangled emphasis upon religion as the necessary corollary of science which has been made by

Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead, and Bavink is an even more immediate reflection of that same condition.

With the masses, on the contrary, that reaction has not occurred. Radicalism, as we have seen in a previous chapter, by freeing itself from its earlier allegiance with the churches, has tended to thwart the spread of religion among the downtrodden. By teaching the masses to identify their interests with its own power-promising philosophy, which in Soviet Russia today is being tested and proved in practice, Marxism, which is the philosophy of radicalism, has challenged religion at its very source. Marxism has become thus the great enemy of religion. Even where Marxism has not succeeded in converting large sections of the impoverished populace to its cause, and Fascism has won their allegiance, it has been nationalism rather than religion which has provided the intermediary motivation. Terrified by economic insecurity, the European populace today has increasingly tended to ally itself with the power-promising philosophies of the Socialists, Communists, or Fascists rather than with those of the preachers and priests. The Fascists, to be sure, have employed religion wherever possible as their ally, but always in a secondary rôle. Their appeal has not been to the salvational power of Christ, but to the saving power of the *Vaterland*. Like the *Muscadins* after the French Revolution, the Fascists are reactionaries and not revolutionaries in the social struggle. They are far more anxious to save the old order than create a new one.

By actually endowing the masses with the security and power which religion only had promised them in the past,

Soviet Russia has succeeded better than any other country in destroying the roots of the religious mentality. It is not only the anti-religious education dispensed by the Soviet state, then, which has made the Soviet Union the most non-religious country in the world. That result has been attained by a combination of the economic and the educational factor. In other words, science and society in Soviet Russia fulfill the need that the illusion of religion satisfied in the development of the race in the past. Wherever the individual and the group achieve that security and power, the religious mentality as a social force is bound to disappear.

All life, in a fundamental sense, is a struggle for security through attaining power over the environment, and it is only through the evolution of science and the advance of society that such security can be attained. The first step in achieving such security is economic. Society must be socialized, production must be undertaken for service and not for profit, and the plenty which we are able to produce distributed to every one in growing abundance so that the elemental fear of economic insecurity will be removed irrevocably from the face of the earth.

But there are still two other fears, both of which have been props to the religious mentality in the past, that economic security alone cannot dispel. Those fears, expressive of physical or bodily insecurity, revolve about disease and death. The fear of disease played a more and more conspicuous rôle in magic and religion as primitive society advanced. Part of the power of both magician and priest was derived from their control over the forces that created

and destroyed disease. Many of the earliest prayers of primitive peoples were devoted to spirits and forces that prevented or cured disease. Such supplications have continued to be part of the psychological paraphernalia of religion ever since. Even today they have not ceased, as the numerous supplicants at the therapeutic shrines as well as the believers in Christian Science so eloquently attest. Nevertheless, the large majority of people in the civilized nations today have forsaken their belief in the efficacy of prayer as the best means of conquering disease, and have placed their faith instead in the science of medicine. With the advance of medicine, in particular preventive medicine, there is every reason to believe that disease, in its more pernicious aspects at least, will be rendered less of a menace and all civilized peoples will come to view it as an evil that can be combated by science and not by superstition. Already today that attitude has become dominant in Western civilization with the result that the religious mentality derives but little impetus from that source.

II

THE DEATH PSYCHOSIS

But death at least will forever remain, and whatever defeat religion meets in this world it still holds the trump card when it comes to the next. The assurance and faith in an after-life will be the last mainstay that religion will possess. Such is the nature of the argument advanced by many people today. While the development of science

has undoubtedly tended to discourage the Christian belief in individual immortality, no one can question the fact that the large majority of Christians today not only believe that there is a life awaiting them beyond the grave but they hold on to their Christianity primarily because of that hope.

Although many courageous people may acquire the philosophic fortitude of a Bertrand Russell, who in his memorable essay *A Free Man's Worship* challenged man to rise above his fear of death, the great mass of mankind, beaten and buffeted about in the ego-driven straits of modern civilization, can seldom achieve such intellectual emancipation. A Nietzsche may thunder from the distant mountain tops, exhorting man to defy the annihilating power of the ultimate, and yet his "yea-saying" philosophy can have meaning only to those who have been able to climb intellectually to the higher places of the spirit.

Before the rise of Christianity, such challenge and exhortation were superfluous. The individual in the primitive and ancient world was less afraid of death than the individual in the modern world. It was only with the emergence of the ego, differentiating its interests from those of the group, that the fear of death was able to develop into an individual obsession. While almost every people in primitive and ancient times entertained some idea of the continuance of life after death, no individual in those days ascribed to it the significance that many of the early Christians did and which Bunyan's Christian did in the sixteenth century—and that most Christians have done ever since. The after-world for many peoples in those

earlier times was far from an exciting or inspiring prospect. Even those tribes who conceived of the other-world as an attractive abode never allowed their day-by-day lives to be dominated by that conception. Christian's religious craving for "everlasting life," with its blind inconsiderateness of the fate of wife and progeny, would have impressed a religious primitive as outrageously sacrilegious. That an individual could be concerned only with his own personal salvation, regardless of that of his family and group, would have struck a primitive as criminal.

That difference in religious attitude reflected a profound change in the basis of civilization. Bunyan's Christianity, of which his character Christian stands as a symbol, was an outgrowth of a society that was aggressively individualistic, in which the ego of the individual rather than the spirit of the group had become the dominant factor in the religious equation. In the primitive and ancient world the ego was too circumscribed by group regulations to play a conspicuous rôle. Only the kings and pharaohs had an opportunity to achieve ego-emergence. Even they were severely limited in the number of ways in which they could express their individuality. In the main, they were forced to observe the rituals and regulations of the group in order to effect their ends. The career of Aknaton, who defied both ritual and custom in his battle against an age-old dynasty of gods, constituted a singular exception in the history of the ancient world.

For the most part, as we have seen in previous chapters, rulers derived their power by preserving the authority of the old religion rather than by revolting against

it in favor of a new. Within the scope of the extant religion, however, they succeeded in stamping their own personalities as divine, which meant making them separate and distinct from the rest of the community. That separateness and distinctness provided the main outlet for ego-emergence which they possessed. The ego of the king or the pharaoh thus became a reality that merited preservation beyond that of the rest of society. In Egypt, as is well known, the pharaohs cultivated the art of embalming and developed the science of pyramid-construction in order to preserve and protect their bodies against the ravages of time and place. The pharaohs were concerned with death and the preservation of their egos. The commoners, on the other hand, who built the pyramids were, relatively speaking at least, without such concern, the nature of their lives having provoked no such ego-emergence or assertion. They thought in terms of the group instead of the individual. They were as submissive before their fate in the next world as in this one.

With many groups, as Frazer has shown, the boon of immortality was denied to all but the men of rank in the community. Among the Samoans, immortality is granted to all but in forms varying with the social status of the individual. After death the soul of the chief enters an island of ecstatic delights, whereas the souls of the commoners find an abode in the barren underworld beneath the sea.[2] The tribes of New Britain have a special "Hades" for the poor.[3] With the Gnanji immortality is an exclusively male privilege. Women are not supposed to

[2] George Peter Murdock: *Our Primitive Contemporaries*, p. 78.
[3] Effie Bendann: *Death Customs*, p. 254.

possess spirits that are immortal.[4] Yet there is no instance on record when the members of such groups, or the women of the Gnanji, terrified by the fear of personal extinction, revolted against such discrimination. As a matter of fact, as Doctor Bendann points out in her exhaustive study of the death rites of primitive peoples, one of the few generalizations that can be drawn in that field is that the main factor which has determined attitudes toward death and "actuated different ways of burial in the same tribe, embracing not only the manner of the disposal of the dead, but also certain definite ceremonials connected with the death ritual, *is the rank of the individual.*"[5] Yet, as Doctor Bendann herself shows, when one approaches a community in which all trace of rank is absent, save that of the shaman, such differences do not—because they cannot—exist. Among the Chukchee and the Koryak, where the social organization of the group is democratic, and where property differences are inconspicuous and the family is the unit of organization, such distinctions in burial rites do not prevail. Among such groups there is as much democracy in death as in life.

The individual's fear of death or personal extinction, developed in direct ratio, it is reasonable to assume, with the emergence of the individual ego. Only those who succeeded in differentiating themselves from the rest of the group, which meant conceiving of their own interests as separate from those of the community, tended to cultivate ego-aspirations and ego-fears to any marked degree.

As a general rule, most primitive peoples fear death

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 252. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

far less than they fear the dead. The attitude of most primitives toward the dead "is dominated by fear rather than by affection," Frazer declares and in further description of that attitude adds that "the living have to be constantly on their guard against the dead."[6] Among many primitive peoples the conviction still persists that the spirits of the dead have to be placated upon every occasion in order to avert their evil influence.[7] When a man dies among the Limbus of Bengal, the shaman commands his soul to follow his fathers and "not to come back to trouble the living with dreams."[8] In West Africa, among the Cameroons, the men brandish their clubs at the soul of the dead one, and in no uncertain words command it: "Soul, remain in the grave. Come not out of it. Every man must die. Give us no trouble."[9] A similar ceremony prevails among the Verre of Northern Nigeria, who command the deceased one to "return not to earth to interfere with our crops or prevent our women bearing children."[10] The tendency, which prevails among some tribes, to exalt the dead as benefactors of the living is singular rather than common.

While in the ancient world the primitive fear of the dead was largely converted into affection and reverence, the attitude of the individual toward death and the life beyond did not undergo any deep-rooted psychological change. The concept of the next world which the Greeks, Jews, and Romans entertained was more repelling than

[6] Sir James George Frazer: *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion*, pp. 10–11.
[7] Murdock: *op. cit*, p. 77.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

inviting. At all events, ancient peoples did not tend to focus their attention upon the next world, or to encourage the idea that it was more important to attain salvation in that world than success in this. Among some ancient peoples, as in the case of the Jewish sect, the Sadducees, there was a widespread contempt for the whole concept of immortality with its promise of another world beyond the grave. It was mainly in the ranks of the ruling class, where the ego of the individual reached a degree of emergence which made it fear personal extinction, that that attitude was contradicted. The rest of society thought of itself still as a group and centred its attention upon this world and not the next one.

It was Christianity which did more than any other religion to change that psychology. While centuries before Zoroastrianism had proffered emancipation for the individual, it was Christianity which gave that emancipation active meaning. Christianity not only promised salvation to every individual, but it promised a salvation that was individual instead of racial or social. While in earlier times various religions had promised salvation for the tribe, the group, the race, or the nation, Christianity promised salvation to every individual, regardless of tribe, group, race, or nation. Whereas the Jews had looked upon themselves as the chosen people whom God had blessed as a separate nation, and the Greeks had scorned all non-Greeks as *barbarians*, Christianity in its inception made every individual, whether he were Jew, Greek, Roman, or Abyssinian, equal in the eyes of God. In that sense Christianity was at once individualistic and international.

Christianity arose at a time when the Asiatic nations were in a state of disintegration, and the Roman Empire, expanding beyond all possibilities of cultural absorption, destroying local loyalties in a futile attempt to implant a larger one, had become unable to support its teeming population. The older solidarities of group and nation had lost their original tenacity. Robbed of his primeval dependence upon the social solidarity of the group, deprived of his belief in the perpetuity of the ideas of his community or nation, the individual became suddenly aware of himself as an entity having interests of his own instead of interests which had meaning only in terms of the group.

Since in those days the economic structure of society did not permit the realization of those separate interests in this world, the other world of Christian prophecy supplied a solution that was instantly seized upon as the only way out for the oppressed of the time.

Christianity thus provided a spiritual substitute for group loyalty. When Jesus told the individual to give up father, mother, and even wife and follow after him, he began the disruption of that sense of social and familial solidarity about which group life had been built for untold thousands of years. But Christianity did not succeed in emancipating the ego of the individual for fulfillment in this world; it released it only for realization in the next. The early Christians, therefore, did not fear death as did the later Christians; since this world offered them so little, they focussed their eyes upon the next, in which, amid a tempest of bugles and trumpets, they believed they would find the fulfillment of their egos. There was thus a

highly individualistic element in the new quality of heroism developed by the ancient Christians; they subjected themselves to persecution and torture and sacrificed themselves to the lions not from a sense of social loyalty but from that of ego-centric aspiration.

For over a century and a half the early Christians continued to believe in the imminent return of Christ and the destruction of this world by the powers of the next. So long as that faith persisted death was welcomed rather than feared. After that belief faded, however, and Christianity began to adapt itself to a realization that the world of the flesh and the devil was going to continue, a this-worldly institution became necessary to afford a social haven for the individual ego in its struggle for security and survival. By erecting itself into a state, and cultivating all the group loyalties which accompany such an institution, the Roman Catholic Church succeeded in supplying the individual ego with a new form of social solidarity. The Church absorbed the ego of the individual by providing it with the social machinery which was necessary for it to function in a group sense in this world.

It was not until over a thousand years later, when the landed economy of feudalism broke down and was gradually supplanted by the commercial economy of capitalism, that that group solidarity was destroyed. The rising middle class, revolting against the bonds of feudalism, developed an individualistic psychology which reflected itself in religion, economics, and politics. It carried over into religion and politics the same fight for individual freedom which it waged in the economic field in its strug-

gle for the freedom of the market. Protestantism in religion, democracy in politics, and *laissez faire* in economics, became its cultural triumvirate. Underlying all of them was this renascent individualistic psychology which gave them cultural unity. That individualistic psychology, releasing the ego of the individual once more from its intimate dependence upon the group, gave a new cast to the whole character of modern civilization.

There is a vast difference between the other-worldly individualism of ancient Christianity and the this-worldly individualism engendered by the culture of the middle class. This new, modern individualism focussed the attention of the individual upon this world but at the same time left his isolated ego uncertain in the face of the next. Whereas the early Christians believed the next world was more real than the one in which they lived, and anticipated its coming day by day, month by month, and year by year for over a century and a half, the middle-class Christian, with but few exceptions, entertained no such conception of the immediacy of the millennium, and tended, therefore, to develop a profound fear of death. Part of that contradiction between the psychology of the ancient and the modern Christian was due undoubtedly to their differences in class character and property status. The early Christians, during the millennialist period, were largely poor people, without possessions of any kind; they had few if any stakes in this world. On the other hand, the middle class Christians of the sixteenth century and thereafter were members of a rising economic class; they not only had stakes in this world, but, what was more im-

portant, they hoped to increase those stakes from time to time as circumstances favored.

It was easy enough for the early Christians, therefore, to focus their aspirations upon the next world, since they had comparatively little or nothing to lose in this. It was not so easy, however, for the upward struggling middle-class Christian, standing at the threshold of the modern world, to focus his attention upon the other world. He was much too concerned with what he could do or achieve in this. Consequently, he developed, in the form of Protestant Christianity, a compromise concept which made it possible for him to *succeed* in both worlds. Unfortunately, however, the compromise never worked psychologically. The more the modern Christian tended to focus his individual ego upon the things of this world, the less possible it became for that ego to believe in the certainty of its survival in the next. It was as a result of that uncertainty that the fear of death came to play such a formidable and devastating rôle in the life of the middle class Christian. The craving for everlasting life which obsessed Bunyan's character, Christian, was typical of the new attitude toward death that grew up in the modern world. The middle-class Christian, enamored of this world by virtue of his possessions in it and his hope to add to them, was more concerned with protecting his interests here than in investing his hopes in the golden-carpeted mansions and castles in heaven. He developed a fear of anything that threatened to destroy his equilibrium as an individual. Death became his great fear because it threatened such destruction.

The key to understanding the different attitudes toward death that have prevailed in various civilizations is to be found in the relationship which exists between the individual and society. When the social organization of the group is of such a coherent character as to establish a harmony of interests between the individual and society—a condition that prevailed in the main in the primitive and ancient world—which means that the individual tends to think of his interests in terms of society and not of himself—the death-fear as an individualistic phenomenon is an inconspicuous force.[11] When, on the other hand, the social organization of the group is of a loose variety, making it possible for individual emergence on an extended scale, as in the case of middle class society in the modern capitalistic world, the death-fear develops into a major compulsion. The more individualistic a society is, the more concerned each individual becomes with his specific fate. In a society such as ours, in which the very principle upon which it is constructed is anti-social, the personal becomes more important than the social. Since the credo of our society is to buy cheap and sell dear, or translated into more colloquial form "each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," each individual has struggled to get as much as he can regardless of how little is left for those who compete with him. As a result, the individual in our society has developed the illusion that the advance of his ego is more important than the

[11] Of course, even in primitive society, there were—and are—individual deviates and intermediates who no doubt developed psychological eccentricities and singularities which made them think less socially and more individualistically than the rest of the group. But our concern is not with such exceptions save insofar, as shamans or kings, they tended to influence the rest of society.

progress of society. No illusion in modern society has proved more costly to the race. A large part of the spiritual failure of post-Renaissance civilization can be traced to that fallacy. To individuals born of such an individualistic civilization, ego-extinction has necessarily proved a great source of terror. Not the terror of an animal or a man at the point of death, which is the automatic psycho-muscular response of all advanced forms of life at the moment of extinction, but the terror which tends to live as a constant part of the ego, and which makes it crave an assurance of "everlasting life" as an escape from its ravages! One of the most vivid expressions of that terror is to be found in the following passage, descriptive of the reflections of Daudet and Zola, upon the fear of death:

"Daudet declared that in his case it (death) was an obsession, *a poisoning of his life,* and that he never moved into a new house without looking round for the place where his coffin would come to lie. Zola told us that his mother had died at Medan, and that, as the staircase proved too narrow, the coffin had had to be lowered from a window; he declared that he never looked at that window without wondering who would be taken out that way next, he or his wife. "Yes," he said, "ever since that day death has always been in the background of our thoughts, and very often during the night, looking at my sleepless wife, I feel that like me she is thinking of it, and we lie quietly without saying aloud what is in our minds—for shame, yes, for very shame—*Oh! it is terrible, that thought—and the terror of it becomes visible!* There have been nights when I have leapt suddenly out of bed, and held myself for a second or two in a state of abject terror."[12]

That terror, that pursuing fear of death, can be abated only in a socialized society in which the ego of the individual

[12] Quotation taken from E. Metchnikoff: *The Nature of Man,* p. 121.

can find itself once more in harmony with the spirit of the group.

It is difficult for the average individual whose very being has been determined by the pressures and tensions of our type of society, which is the most individualistic the race has ever known, to understand the dependence of the ego upon the social structure. The individual in America or England or any Western nation where industry has advanced and individualism developed, thinks of himself as an integer, a reality that is separate and distinct from everything else in the scheme of things. He thinks of himself as more important than society, or rather, if he is an American, he doesn't think of society at all except as a nebulous abstraction that exists as a national fact which has meaning to him only when outer circumstance, a war or a depression, makes him aware of his group identity.

Society for the American, when conceived of in terms of the government or the state, is a necessary evil, something to be plundered if possible and exploited in every way for the benefit of those individuals who can secure a share of the spoils.[18] In that respect as well as in almost every other, the United States has represented the most extreme development of individualism in the world. If one wishes to discover what happens to the individual when he is plunged into an anarchistically individualistic environment, America is the best laboratory for such study.

[18] For an analysis of the economic factors in American life which produced this psychology *cf.* the author's *Liberation of American Literature*, chaps. II and IV, and an article of his in *Scribner's Magazine* on "Our Revolutionary Tradition" (May, 1934).

The whole historical background of the country, with its theory of independent colonies and later of autonomous states, was not an outgrowth of political theory but of economic practice. The economic and political philosophy of Jefferson, which was perpetuated in a more primitive form by the Jacksonians and which continued as a challenge throughout the nineteenth century, flaring up in more modern form in the Granger and Populist movements and flaming forth once more in the LaFollette revolt of the twenties, was founded upon the simple but revolutionary belief that the individual was more important than the state. Jefferson's theory of a decentralized government, in which the national authority was deprived of dictation over the individual states, was a stone from the same political stratum. Its irreducible denominator was the individual farmer whose main interest was to protect his independence as an individual against the tyrannous hand of the state. In a country which gave him land, where he could earn his own livelihood without the aid of governments or states, he became an independent entity, a fortress in himself. When the government or state oppressed him, he was ever willing to take up arms against it, as in the case of Bacon's Rebellion, Shays' Rebellion, the Whiskey Insurrection, or to leap a span, as in the shooting of deputies and the dethroning of judges by the farmers in our own day when their land was threatened with confiscation by the moneyed interests. In short, the state in the eyes of the average American, worker as well as farmer, is not an institution to be loyal to, but one to get something out of. It is that attitude which accounts for the

widespread prevalence of graft in this country—paralleled in no other—and for the American's ready acceptance of it and refusal to condemn it. Each American, in other words, thinking of himself exclusively as an individual and not as part of a social whole, psychologically identifies himself with the individual grafter and in words that are all too familiar throughout the length and breadth of this land is prone to remark that "he would do the same thing if he were in the grafter's place."

For the average American to conceive himself as the product of society or to conceive of his ego as the creation of the strains and stresses of social forces, is almost as difficult as convincing him of the reality of the adventures of *Alice in Wonderland*. He can believe more readily in the absurd miracle of a virgin birth in the outskirts of Kenosha, or in the therapeutic properties of a snakeoil concoction, than in the dependence of the individual upon society. Life for him begins and ends with the individual. Even the family has never maintained the hold over him that it did over individuals in other civilizations. Marriage and divorce are romantic, that is individualistic, considerations, and not social ones. In death too, and the common fear of it, the same psychological drive is present. Concerned with his individual ego above all else, he has been eternally harassed by the conflict between his desire for its perpetuation and his fear of its extinction. That conflict which has developed with varying intensities in all individualistic civilizations has been more marked in this country, because its individualism has been more deep-rooted and widespread, than

in any other. It has been the cause of more of the frustrations and fears that have beset the human mind, turning it into a hothouse of neuroses and psychoses, than any other force.

What has rendered its effects more destructive in this century than in any previous, particularly among the intelligentsia and the upper middle class, has been the unprecedented breakdown of religion as a dynamic ego-absorbing instrument without the rise of a social substitute to fulfill its function.

What we must relearn, and what the individuals in an individualistic civilization will relearn only by force of circumstance, is that the ego cannot stand alone, isolated from its kind, in conflict with the group. The strength of the individual, as well as the mental and moral stuff which constitutes his personality, is derived ultimately from the group and not from himself. The great achievements in Greek art, exemplified in the works of Phidias, and in pre-Renaissance art, embodied in the magic genius of Michel Angelo, were possible only because of the identification of the interests and outlooks of the individual artist with those of the group ideal. The individual cannot find himself nor develop his full powers by means of centrifugal extension but only by centripetal intensity. The failure of modern art and literature when contrasted with classical can be understood only in the light of that fact. In the modern age the individual has been driven inward instead of outward in search of his materials; he has striven to be eccentric instead of concentric in his exhausting and self-defeating attempt to stamp his ego

somehow, somewhere, some way on the art-object created by his hands. Ancient and mediæval and early Renaissance artists were not concerned with exaggerating the strange or intensifying the odd or peculiar; that development follows with baroque art and the art of the modern age.

Classical art derived its superiority over romantic by virtue of its greater perfection of form which was an outgrowth of the unifying rather than dispersing character of its culture. The classical artist, working within the bowels of his culture, strove to perfect on bronze, marble, canvas, or in written word the *mythos* of his group, the legends of his people, the religion and folklore handed down to him by his forefathers, the dreams that his fellow countrymen lived by. The romantic artist, on the other hand, sought mainly to translate the inner *mythos* of himself, the dreams *he* lived by, the subjective stuff that disallied rather than allied him with his fellow citizens, and produced in consequence a personal art in which the autobiographical became a substitute for the epical. The dissolution of the alliance between the individual and the group, precipitated by the rise of modern individualism, converted the artist thus into a spiritual *sport*, a declassed eccentric who endeavored to draw his inspiration from the inner wells of his own being, from strange sensations, artificially induced moods, dark psychiatric emotions, and fantastic crepuscular visions, rather than from the deeper, more strength-giving wells of his culture.

Living as we are today, however, at the end of an epoch, in which the great champions of individualism are

being driven out of the temples as well as the market place, even those who have grown up and matured within the walls of an individualistic culture can discern something of the intimate relationship between the individual and society, which they had not perceived before. Even the average American, still the most arrant of all individualists, is beginning slowly to realize that he is no longer an independent entity in himself; that the nature of society has a great deal to do with what he is or may become; that what he thinks and how he feels are determined as much if not more by society than by individual grit and determination.

American civilization as a whole has gone through such an extensive as well as intensive period of individualistic development that no doubt it will take a number of years yet before it can adjust itself to a non-individualistic way of thinking. That change will be less protracted in Europe, where, owing to differences in economic structure and class relationships, the individualistic philosophy lost its hold on the working class in the nineteenth century. Already in Soviet Russia the individualistic philosophy has been eradicated as an economic and psychologic force. Even in Fascist countries such as Italy and Germany, both of which still cling to a futile belief in the possible perpetuation of the capitalist philosophy of economic individualism, an attempt has been made to orient the state—the so-called totalitarian, corporate state, which is the first step in the direction of state capitalism—about a non-individualistic pivot. Nationalism becomes the social agency which the Fascists use to absorb the individualistic factor in the

economic equation. The fallacy in the Fascist approach lies in the fact that it protects and abets individualism in economic enterprise but tries to quell it in social life. That contradiction, founded upon a false economics, will eventually lead to its own destruction. In this connection, however, what we are most interested in is that even such a reactionary movement as Fascism reveals the bankruptcy of individualism as a psychological and cultural force.

While no one would deny that such developments prove that the rôle of the individual in contemporary society has become an increasingly recessive one, many in all likelihood would still contend that such a change has nothing to do with the persistence of the death fear in the religious equation. Such a contention, however, is based upon a psychological fallacy, namely, the belief that the ego suffers from the same phobias in a socialized as in an individualistic society. In non-individualistic societies the ego of the individual tends to identify itself with group emotions and group ideals and therefore does not develop in any intense sense the introverted tensions and terrors which dominate it in an individualistic society. In the case of death, for instance, there are abundant instances that can be culled from the history of primitive and ancient society that illustrate in striking fashion the lack of fear of it which prevailed among those who sacrificed their lives in keeping with a group command or ideal. One of the most notable of such illustrations was the practice of widow-sacrifice which was once so common throughout India. What baffled the Christian missionaries beyond belief was the anxious insistence of the Hindu

widows that they be allowed to continue to burn themselves alive even after they had been taught the folly of the practice in the light of Christian ethics. In a word, the compelling force of the group *mores* was sufficient to dispel and destroy the individual fears involved—even the fear of pain and death. A similar illustration is to be found in the practice of hari-kari by the Japanese. No upper-class Japanese would consider the possibility of not committing hari-kari when the situation involved dictated it—the individual ego being so subordinated to the group *mores*. In primitive life a multitude of such illustrations could easily be cited. It is mainly in individualistic societies that that relationship between the ego and the group is altered.

The contrast between the attitude toward death which prevails in Oriental and Asiatic countries and that which is to be found in Western nations sheds an interesting light upon the different psychologies developed by non-individualistic and individualistic civilizations. Among Oriental and Asiatic peoples death carries with it little of the ego torment and despair that are so conspicuous among the peoples in the more advanced economic nations in the Occident. Of course, it should not be assumed that that means that Oriental peoples, for example, do not fear death; it simply means that their fear of it is of a less intense order and that in their day-by-day lives they have not been terrorized or victimized by it as have most of the modern Christians in the Western hemisphere. An illuminating illustration of the Oriental attitude toward death is to be found in the episode reported by an Ameri-

can newspaper man of the remark made by a Chinese swordsman a moment before he was to be decapitated. The swordsman in question was eighteenth in a line of over a hundred Chinese whose heads were being slashed off by the executioner of the enemy forces. As the executioner, who was a remarkable expert at his job, severed the head of the seventeenth Chinese, the swordsman, although about to experience the same catastrophe, could not but express his admiration for the perfection of stroke with which the executioner had dispatched the head of the seventeenth victim, and at the very moment that the executioner moved toward him, exclaimed: "What a marvellous stroke!" Such an attitude toward death is not uncommon in the Orient. It is not uncommon among the Slavic peoples—in contrast with the western Europeans. It is not uncommon wherever the ego-factor is undeveloped and undifferentiated. It is only in individualistic civilizations that it is unfamiliar. The development of the ego in individualistic civilizations creates a different attitude toward death, which, as we have seen, expresses itself in the psychology of the individual as well as in the psychology of his religion, which for the most part is one of Protestant derivation.

Yet even in individualistic civilizations the death-fear is subject to immediate modification the moment the group is threatened or a social issue springs into the foreground and compels the allegiance of the populace. In the case of war such a modification becomes unequivocally obvious. The individual at once, out of sheer desire for self-preservation, tends to identify his interests with those of the

group, which means, except in the instance of a civil or class war, with the nation. He surrenders his ego-centric concerns for the social concerns of the group.[14] He realizes that he cannot stand alone. He leaves his wife and family, gives up his position, forsakes his way of life in order to fight for his group, his country. No social emotion is more deeply rooted or more easily aroused, or dates back farther into primeval antiquity, than that which springs from the struggle for group-preservation. That is why in war all intra-group distinctions, economic, political, radical, or religious, tend to become dissolved into a temporary composite of group solidarity. That is why even certain radicals and revolutionaries often cannot withstand the hypnotic power of the group-compulsion and surrender to it, as in the World War, with or without a struggle. It is part of the ancient cry of the race. It results, even in individualistic civilizations, in the temporary socialization of the in-

[14] Such surrender, of course, is not absolute, or universal. There were both bankers and industrialists in America, for instance, who not only did not sacrifice their individual interests in advocating our entrance into the War, but as a matter of fact protected them by the gesture. There were profiteers, too, and one dollar a year men who found the War an aid to personal aggrandizement and not one in which they had to sacrifice their individual interests to the superior needs of the social whole. It is not to such types that the above observations apply, but to the vast majority of the populace who had everything to lose but nothing to gain from our participation in the War. Even in that connection, however, certain qualifications of the above observations are in order. The extreme individualism of the country did not break down in complete collapse before the overwhelming tide of social emotion which our entrance into the War provoked. Here, more than in any other country, we were forced to depend less upon volunteers and more upon drafted soldiers to defend the American cause. In short, changed as every one in America became by the social, that is national, issue of the War, it is obvious that there was not as complete an identification of individual interests with social objective as was found in most of the European countries that participated in the conflict. That disparity, it should be noted, was not due to any widespread radical opposition but to the greater psychological resistance of our ultra-individualistic way of thinking and living. Even at the time of the Revolutionary War, to leap back a century and a half, when all America was supposed to be up in arms, hardly more than a quarter of the population was aroused to a patriotic fighting point. (Max Farrand: *These United States.*)

dividual who loses in consequence a good part of his death-fear and becomes almost Oriental in his attitude toward fate. A number rather than a person, the individual soldier discovers that his ego is little more than a recollection.

But war is not the only group emotion in Occidental society that conditions the individual's social response. Within the existing national groups, as we have noted, exist divers other groups, many in conflict with each other, and each of these groups in turn demands a certain allegiance of the individual which modifies his individualistic appetencies. In strikes, for example, we find a vivid illustration of individuals submitting to a social discipline for a common end. But the social discipline of strikes is not very enduring unless it is converted into a class discipline which has a revolutionary objective. Such class discipline, which is to be found in varying degrees in every industrialized country in the world today, is a direct negation of the egocentricity of individualistic civilization. To the extent to which that class discipline is able to root itself in the mind of the individual, his ego becomes socialized, which means that it has succeeded in identifying its interests with those of a group. That does not mean, it is important to make clear, that he is no longer an individual, a separate locus of matter and mind, but that in his way of thinking, in the things for which he strives, the interests which he seeks to defend, he is much less concerned with the advance of his ego than with the progress of his class. As in the case of individuals who identify their egos with the nation in time of war, those individuals who ally their

interests and egos with a class lose in considerable part their individual frustrations and fears. They live in a constant state of war—the class war. Their alliance with the group gives them a new quality of strength, confidence, and courage which they would not otherwise possess.

Man is by nature, biologically speaking, an individualist. Any study of the behavior of children, primitive or contemporary, will corroborate that fact. "The innate egocentricity" of children, which Jean Piaget[15] has pointed out as basic to an understanding of child behavior, is rooted in the nature of man. It was environmental necessity no doubt that forced men to band themselves together into social organizations. Without such social organization the human race could never have survived or progressed. Just as every parent and teacher has had to train the child to become social, that is not to steal, not to try to seize everything for itself, and not to be cruel, so society has always had to discipline the individualistic, ego-centric tendencies of its members in order to function. So imperative has been the need for social organization, and so necessary has it been to command the social support of the individual in order to achieve that end, that the overwhelming concern of the race has been with the exaltation of everything social and the condemnation of everything individualistic. Everything that man has extolled and apostrophized has been that which is social, non-individualistic, non-egoistic. The race has always admired the man, even though he be an enemy, who defies death for the sake of a cause, a belief, an ideal. The hero is one who risks his life in be-

[15] Jean Piaget: *The Child's Conception of the World*, p. 33.

half of something bigger than himself, who is willing to sacrifice his ego for something that is non-egoistic. The really great individual, thus, the superman, is the one who gives up what is individual for that which is extra-individual; he is willing to surrender the personal for the impersonal, the social. His very greatness, whether that of a Jesus Christ, a Giordano Bruno, or a Nicolai Lenin, lies in his contempt for what others fear, namely, the death-fear; his very strength is derived from his concern for the group, for truth, for a cause, for a movement, instead of for himself.

The more closely the individual identifies his interests with those of the group, the more willing he is to sacrifice his personal ambitions for a social objective, and the less subject he is to the fears and frustrations that he would be bound to suffer as an isolated individual, a separate ego, unsupported by such an identificatory alliance. Of course, when that identification is at all complete, as in the case of countless thousands of men who have died in wars or the still more countless myriads who have enlisted as soldiers in the class war, there is no consciousness of sacrifice involved. What, judged from an individualistic point of view, is considered sacrifice becomes, from a social point of view, merely a form of duty. In large part, it is the conjunction effected by such an alliance between the ego and society that endows the individual in varying degrees with the power to become more than an individual, to become a Phidias, a Cincinnatus, a Michel Angelo, a Thomas Munzer, a Thomas Paine, a Richard Wagner, a Diego Rivera, a Nicolai Lenin.

III

For untold centuries, as we have seen, it was religion which served as the great social cohesive, the vast ego-absorbing instrument of the community. It endowed Phidias with the belief that all his work was done for the glorification of the gods, just as it gave Michel Angelo the conviction that he was dealing in his art with the indestructible mythos of a universe that God had created for the benefit of the human race. Religion gave to all men, then, a vicarious sense of social power in which their egos could be resolved. It was the tradition-bearing caravan of the race, giving man an illusion of security as he crossed the endless deserts of time, lost often in a wilderness of waste, afraid to look before him, and yet still more afraid to look behind.

Exploited as it was by the ruling classes, and debased often by the quackery and charlatanism of the priests, it nevertheless functioned as the social spine of the community, welding the group together, emotionally and intellectually, into a united whole. More than politics, more than economics, more than patriotism, it made men know one another, stand by one another, fight for instead of against one another. While it acted thus as a smoke-screen for the ruling class, by giving a false sense of power to those who were otherwise powerless, it gave the individual ego a locus about which its centrifugal impulses could cluster and cling. It is because the ego needs such a social matrix to which it can attach itself, and feel itself a

part, that religion has been able to satisfy something deep within human nature.

But what deep something in human nature does the individual have to satisfy? In a word, the conflict between the individualistic appetencies of his biological nature and the social discipline of his cultural heritage. The whole argument over human nature has revolved about that simple contradiction. Human nature is unquestionably individualistic; human beings are not born social-minded, or with a sense of the gregarious as are birds and a great number of other animals. Social-mindedness with man is an artificial product of society; it is super-imposed upon his biological nature by virtue of environmental necessity.

While it is true, then, that human nature in a biologic sense does not change, human beings change in their outlooks and reactions with every mutation of society. Human beings are what they are not because of biology, but because of culture. What they are is essentially what society forces them to become. Their biological heritage has been a constant for hundreds of thousands of years, whereas their cultural heritage has shifted, and changed, and advanced in various places and in still more various ways in accordance with the nature of society: its mode of production, its class relations, and its intellectual tradition.

The old Adam in us is the atavistic tendency to revert to our biological nature instead of adhere to the social regulations of the group. Wherever the social bonds of the group begin to weaken and decay, as when one state of

society is in the process of being superseded by another, the anti-social, ego-centric tendencies of the individual spring forth, manifesting themselves very often in open revolt against the old morals and taboos. Not until the new society can establish itself, and the group enforce its new *mores* upon the individual, do those anti-social tendencies recede in favor of a more socialized form of behavior.

In the struggle of the group to socialize the individual, religion has been a dominant force. Seeking to stand alone by virtue of his biologic propensities, the individual finds that he cannot stand alone as a psychological entity. A product of culture and not of biology, his ego, in its emerging forms, is social and not individual in continuity. It derives its meaning in relation to society and not through itself. An individual body isolated from the group could manage to survive like any animal by acquiring food and shelter and through contact with a female secure a sexual outlet; an individual mind, however, or ego, cannot live isolated from the group, for all its tools of operation, language, ideas, concepts, beliefs, convictions, have meaning only in connection with the group. The ego, therefore, representing the link of continuity between the individual and the group, can realize itself only in terms of its full powers when it identifies its interests with those of the group and feels itself a part of the culture which has created it. The ego, in the last analysis, is a product of culture and not of biology; it cannot like the physical body stand alone, isolated from the cultural matrix from which it is derived. It may, it is true, as in the case of cer-

tain individuals, reject the immediate traditions of one culture for another but it can never escape its dependence upon culture as a whole for the source of its being.

The decline and decay of religion as a social force has driven the individual ego into a spiritual corner from which it has been unable to escape. For countless centuries religion cemented the ego and the group into a spiritual whole. The ego-compulsions of the individual found a social solution in the religious culture of the group. With the disintegration of the religious mentality, however, religion has lost its psychological power over the individual, and left his ego isolated from the group force. As a result the afflictions and agonies of the ego have become the psychological malaise of our civilization. Unable to find itself in terms of a group force, the ego, by turning inward, has attempted to find itself in terms of itself, which has resulted in the development of the multiplying neuroses and psychoses which have infected it.

"The neurosis," as Jung points out, "is the state of being at war with oneself," which is inevitable when the self loses its sense of oneness with the group and is forced to function in an individualistic instead of a social way. In his book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* Jung has analyzed in careful detail, after an extended survey of a large number of patients, the effects of the loss of religion upon the mental life of the individual. "Side by side with the decline of religious life," he observes, "the neuroses grow noticeably more frequent." Even religious people today, he contends—which we have already shown in earlier pages of this book—have "the feeling that our religious

truths have somehow or other grown empty." The scientific mentality has undermined the religious mentality at the root. The individual, for all his verbal declarations to the contrary, prefers to put his faith in the wonder-workings of science rather than in those of religion. His church affiliations have become an extrinsic instead of intrinsic part of his life.

In consequence of that loss of religious faith, modern man is seeking everywhere for a new faith—a faith that will give him that sense of alliance with the group, that social strength which his individual ego needs to sustain its sanity and fulfill its cultural function. Science has endowed modern man with that power over the environment which he has always needed and craved, and which religion had once promised him by means of its magic and mysticism, but science has not solved the relationship of the individual to society or re-established the continuity between the ego and the group. To do that science itself would first have to be socialized.

But science can be socialized only in a socialized society, that is in a society in which the interests of the ego and the group become identical, and the chasm that now separates them is bridged.

In the absence of such a socialized society however—that is, with the exception of Soviet Russia—the quest for a new faith will intensify instead of weaken among all those who find it impossible to identify themselves with a social movement in which their ego-isolation can be dissolved. The intellectual in particular and the middle classes in general have already begun to feel that need in an in-

creasingly acute form. The reversion toward religion, toward orthodoxy even, on the part of T. S. Eliot, Eugene O'Neill, Sheila Kaye Smith, Sigrid Undset, Henri Massis, Jean Cocteau, Jacques Maritain, is all a reflection of the desperation of the individual ego faced by a culture in which it feels itself an isolated alien. They are all trying to find, as are most of Jung's patients, "a religious outlook on life," and like those same patients "every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age had given their followers, and none of them have been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook." In other words, the ego having been driven to the nethermost edge of instability, the psycho-analyst or psycho-therapist is very often forced to function today as a medical clergyman.[16] With many of the intellectuals, however, that relationship has been reversed. For them the clergyman has become the mental doctor or the modern medical (or medicine) man. Unable to ally themselves with a radical movement which would endow them with that sense of power and fulfillment which is derived from an alliance between the ego and the group, they have been forced to revert to religion

[16] In that connection, it is illuminating to record the results of a questionnaire which Jung refers to in his book. The questionnaire relates to whether individuals "in spiritual distress prefer nowadays to consult the doctor rather than the clergyman." The questionnaire was answered by Swiss, German, and French Protestants and Catholics. Those who decided for the doctor represented 57 per cent of the Protestants, and only 25 per cent of the Catholics," Jung reports, "while those who decided for the divine formed 8 per cent of the Protestants and 58 per cent of the Catholics. There were some 35 per cent of the Protestants who couldn't make up their minds, while only 17 per cent of the Catholics were undecided (Jung: *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 265). The presence and influence of the Catholic confessional undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the decision of the Catholics. More important than that, however, is the difference between the ultra-individualistic nature of Protestant psychology, and the semi-feudal character of Catholic.

in order to escape the imbalance and possible insanity which inevitably threaten the ego when isolated from the group.

But it is not to religion that most people are reverting today in their struggle to find social security for their egos and economic security for their bodies. Religion is too bankrupt to provide them with such security. It is rather to social movements that they tend to turn.

Wherever we look today we see social movements arising, all of which attempt, among other things, to establish a harmony between the ego and the group. These new movements, with their fresh promise of power, have endeavored to provide a social and psychological substitute for religion.

The emotional matrix of the right-wing section of these movements is nationalism.[17] The form in which they have manifested themselves has already become known as Fascist. In both Italy and Germany and within the womb of all Fascist movements, it is the cult of the nation which has been developed to supersede the cult of the individual.

While the origins of modern Fascism are predominantly economic, springing out of the despair of the lower middle class in its hopeless struggle to survive in a capitalist society which is monopolistic, there can be no adequate understanding of the emotional drive behind the movement which does not take into consideration the psychological rôle which it is playing in affording the ego a means of

[17] Many theologians are aware of the close competition which is being waged today between nationalism and religion. "Nationalism has become intensified and in many instances has become the religion of the nation," the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church declared at their recent annual conference in Philadelphia, and added "[Nationalism] erects its own god. Its chief symbol of faith and central object to worship is the flag with its curious liturgical forms and attitudes, to which the child is taught the strictest allegiance."

dynamic identification with the group. As a matter of fact it is that psychological function which the movement fulfills that gives it its force and fury, and endows it with its volcanic vitality. The nation becomes the new social bond in which the ego can resolve itself and escape the futility and despair of isolation. By making nationalism into as intense a force in peace time as in war time, the Fascists are able to galvanize the nation into that state of mind which all nations experience in time of war, and by virtue of that psychology fuse the group together into a temporary whole.

All attempts to interpret the phenomenon of Fascism as a simple economic movement, a bread and butter revolt of the lower middle class, fall short of explaining the forces involved. Fascism is more than an economic revolt, more than an expression of lower middle class recalcitrancy. Fascism has succeeded in gaining power, in Italy and Germany, not because of its economic doctrines but very often despite them. Its whole economic program is impossibly confused and contradictory. It promises profits to the small capitalists and national socialism to the workers; it employs a reactionary verbiage when it addresses the capitalists and a radical one when it appeals to the workers. But in the psychological excitement and ecstasy of ego-identification with the group which is affected by the movement, all such economic contradictions are lost sight of, just as they are in religion. It is that identificatory fusion, which in the past has been consummated by religion, that makes Fascism resemble religion and gives it its hypnotic hold over the mind of its followers. The Fascist salute is not the salute

of men and women dedicated to an economic movement but of those who are consecrated to a holy cause.

But what will break Fascism eventually is what breaks an army when it is driven to defeat, and the discipline has gone out of it, namely the failure to supply the security and success it promised. It is Fascist economics which will prove the undoing of Fascist psychology. Its attempt to gear down the productive capacity of the modern industrialized nation from an international to a national level is as futile as its hope of regulating an economic order equipped for mass production in ways beneficial to the small manufacturer and business man.[18] Only by steadily lowering the standard of living of the working class and of the lower middle class, as has happened already in both Italy and Germany, can it delay its downfall. When the high-strung nationalist psychology accompanying Fascism is driven into such an economic corner, war becomes the only alternative.

The emotional matrix of the left-wing section of these movements is Socialism or Communism. In Soviet Russia, where an embryonic Communist state already exists, and within the ranks of all revolutionary parties dedicated to the creation of a collective society, there is that same psychological identification of the interests of the individual with those of a group that is to be found in Fascism. It is that similarity which makes the two movements seem so alike to those who do not understand their fundamental economic and class differences.

[18] This is not the place to go into a detailed analysis of the fallacies of Fascist economics. For the reader who is interested in such analysis, see the author's "What is Fascism?" in the July, 1933, *Modern Monthly*, or John Strachey's *The Menace of Fascism*.

The emotional voltage released by both movements, the dynamic fervor they both inspire, spring from the same psychological source, namely the identification of the ego with a group. They fulfill the profoundest psychological craving of the individual, the projection of something which the ego can hold on to, attach itself to, and derive support from in its struggle for survival and success. It is that fact which makes the individualist declare that both movements are religious. The fact of the matter is, neither movement is religious, although Fascism does utilize established religion as a buttress to the Fascist state. What the individualist means when he describes such movements as religious is that they both tap the same emotional reservoirs of response that religion has tapped through the ages. It is that which makes them seem so similar in behavior response. Without being religious, however, they function as a social substitute for religion; they give the individual ego an opportunity to ally itself with a group force without having to resort to religion to consummate that alliance. It is that alliance which endows the individual with added passion and power and lends a crusading zeal to his convictions.

Aside from their similarities of psychological response, Fascism and Communism represent very different economic and cultural objectives. Fascism aims to perpetuate capitalism by retaining the profit-motif and by building the economic base about a private-property conception of society; it seeks to keep the middle class in power, to protect religion, fight Communism, exalt nationalism and war, return women to the kitchen, eliminate democracy,

and strengthen the dictatorial state. Communism, on the other hand, aims to destroy capitalism, as it already has done in the Soviet Union, and construct society about a co-operative, propertyless base; it seeks to eliminate the middle class and create a classless society, to exterminate religion, substitute internationalism for nationalism, outlaw war by removing its economic causes, advance women to an equal status with men, and ultimately destroy the state. Its conception of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* is but a means of destroying all dictatorships and all proletariats and creating a truly democratic, classless society. In addition, Fascism aims to restrict production to a national situation, exploiting machinery only to the extent that the domestic workers can consume its products or foreign markets absorb them, whereas Communism aims to exploit the existing technology to its fullest extreme in order to realize all the potentialities of our age of plenty and distribute its products to the whole race instead of confine them to the people of any one nation.

It should be obvious, therefore, that the only satisfactory and lasting solution to the ego problem in our age is to be found in Communism. Whereas Fascism may offer a solution for the moment, it cannot be an enduring one, for the economic base about which it is built contradicts its psychological objective. The perpetuation of an individualistic economics, which is the Fascist aim, cannot conduce toward the continued development of a socialized ego. Only a socialized society, that is, one constructed about a non-individualistic economics, can achieve that end.

It is very seldom to religion, then, that the individual turns today for ego-security or the promise of power. The decline of the religious mentality and the rise of the scientific deprived religion of its intellectual force and social purpose. It can no longer create new ideas or satisfy old emotions. It is to social movements rather than to religious gatherings that the contemporary individual is drawn in his attempt to find himself and harmonize his interests with those of the rest of society.

Religion is dying today, and the gods are passing, not so much because the human race has no more need of the function they served, but because it has built up superior substitutes for them. The illusion of power over the external world which religion once promised the race has been achieved in reality by science, which accounts for the decline of the religious mentality and the triumph of the scientific. And the social alliance which religion once effected between the ego and the group, and which was so abruptly severed with the beginning of modern individualistic society, can be better accomplished today by a social movement which links the individual with society in terms of the future as well as the present.

That future belongs not to religion but to science, not to the gods but to men.

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