HUMANISM

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THE appearance of a new "ism" is an interesting phenomenon. It is a sign that some way of thinking or some form of practice has reached sufficient vogue, and has aroused enough champions and opponents, to make it the subject of much discussion. When a man's system of doctrine has been formulated and has attracted ardent propogandists it is likely to be labeled an "ism," often at first, in a derogatory sense, as in the case of Socinianism and Calvinism. A sharply defined method of living for the purpose of promoting physical health, or spiritual well-being, is set off by this simple ending of a word, and thus we have vegetarianism, and asceticism, and mysticism. Emphasis upon human achievements and values as contrasted with supernatural or with mere animal levels of life have given us the word "humanism." At the present time, humanism has become one of the most exciting words in current thought. In one context, it excites the literary critics, and in another, it excites the theologians.

In its historical, literary usage, it became current with the revival of learning in the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries, when it signified the return to the classical tradition, and was occupied with an intense interest in the recovery of the literature and philosophy of the Greek and Latin writers who had wrought out their systems by the light of reason, rather than by the guidance of special revelation upon which medieval thought was based. The humanities comprise the body of cultivated reflection which the scholars of Greece and Rome produced, including the great wealth of their humanly wrought culture in letters and the fine arts. The recovery of this literature gave rise to the Renaissance, the rebirth of the human spirit, and the new confidence in the power of man to take possession of the world of nature by the light of reason.

It was this new faith in human nature which led to the development of direct inquiry into the facts of the natural world and established the principles of the empirical sciences in the realms of physical nature, economics, and politics. This awakening was partly the cause and partly the effect of the great adventures in exploration, travel, commerce, and scientific inquiry. The rise of city states, of vernacular languages, of Protestant sects, of national universities indicates the far-reaching influence of this new freedom and confidence of the human spirit. This movement did not consciously place itself in opposition to the prevailing religious conceptions of supernaturalism, of revelation, and of otherworldliness. It rather thought of itself as

moving on a human level without conflicting with revealed religion or with its claims in spiritual matters. Even Martin Luther did not stand in opposition to the essential principles of the religion of the Roman Catholic church, but only against what he considered to be departures from its own inner spirit and doctrine. He only sought a reformation, and not the destruction of that church. The greatest of the churchmen, on the other hand, always conceived revelation to be in accord with man's natural reason, and it was their constant effort to support the truths of revelation by reasoned demonstrations through Aristotelian logic and metaphysical speculation. The humanism of the Renaissance was not therefore regarded by its representatives as a break with the supernaturalism of the church. It supplemented and extended on the human level what was given in the prevailing theology.

Humanism of this kind, which is so vigorously advocated in our time by Professor Babbitt and his disciples, maintains the classical point of view with reference to the dualism of human nature. They hold that man has an animal inheritance of raw impulses and also a faculty of reason, or will, by which these impulses may be held in check. They cite the Greek ideal of moderation as the expression of this control of animal appetites by intelligence. It is the duty of man as a reasonable being to live a life of reason and not a life of impulse. A ration-

ally controlled life is one which avoids excesses. It is decorous and balanced. It is the ideal of the gentleman, marked by good taste, by propriety, by restraint. Naturally, Rousseau is the antithesis of this conception in the mind of Professor Babbitt, for Rousseau's slogan, "back to nature," is regarded as meaning that man should live by his natural impulses and seek his happiness in their fulfilment. This seems to threaten a welter of emotion and a chaos of passion, lacking any regulative principle. For Professor Babbitt, there must be recognized a higher power, a free will, a conscience, a rational nature, superior to and different from impulse. Therefore man is always at war within himself, constantly doing the things he would not, and failing to do what he wills: or, if he is a true gentleman, never doing what he wants to do, but wishing he could do otherwise than the stern censor compels him to do. Man in his natural state is mere animal and evil, carnal and fleshly. The humanist is, accordingly, quite at home in the use of the traditional conceptions of human nature, and Professor Paul Elmer More does not hesitate to go the whole distance in the acceptance of supernatural religion and the traditional theology. The humanists of this school are all avowed dualists, whether their dualism is in terms of impulse and reason, or in terms of impulse and divine grace.

It is from this point of view that their antagonisms are to be understood, for they are violently

opposed not only to Rousseau but to Francis Bacon and John Dewey. Bacon, for them, symbolizes empirical science and the spirit of our machine age, in which his motto, "knowledge is power," leads to the utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill, and to the naturalism and pragmatism of John Dewey. It is not strange, then, to hear these humanists proclaim that they are reactionaries in the midst of modernism. Even those among them who specialize in science, express doubt as to the validity of the general conception of evolution, and they were called into the Scopes trial in support of the cause of William Jennings Bryan. This kind of humanism, because of its literary ancestry and its present-day literary representatives, may be called "literary humanism."

What is called in this paper "religious humanism" is of very different character from literary humanism. It is called religious because it has concerned itself so much with religion. By the literary humanists it is regarded as antireligious, and is so regarded by many of its own representatives. In fact, strange as it may seem, the two types of humanism are flatly opposed to each other in regard to all fundamental conceptions except one. The one thing in which they agree is in their interest in man, but the religious humanists do not accept any dualism in man, or in nature. They are naturalistic, experimental, behavioristic, humanitarian. They accept the evolutionary doc-

trine that man comes of an animal lineage and makes his way in the world by a trial-and-error method of acquiring experience and adjusting himself to the conditions of life. Man's difference from the lower animals does not lie in any supernatural endowment, but in the superior equipment which has come to him through the cumulative processes of evolution. Yet that difference is very real. Animals have rudimentary cries and calls, but man has articulate speech, written words, and a vast literature. Animals have no tools, no art, no science, no history, no religion.

This sphere of human interests and accomplishment is the proper concern of man, according to these humanists. As obstructive of an adequate appreciation of the true task of mortals, they denounce the emphasis which traditional religion has placed upon the quest of the future life. This otherworldliness has drafted off attention from the curable ills of the present world and allowed evils and injustices to exist while men dreamed of a better world after death. It has cultivated attitudes of resignation and patience, of obedience and passive endurance where intelligent effort and daring enterprise were needed. It has taught men to expect miracles of grace and special providence where they should inquire into the facts and ascertain the causes of suffering and seek correctives in the order of nature itself, or in the inventiveness of man.

Much is also made of the exaggerated position

which the old religion ascribed to man in the universe. The discoveries of modern science magnified the vastness of the physical order and minimized man's place in it. Whereas the human being was once regarded as the apex of creation because he was the crown of life upon this planet, it is now necessary to realize that the earth is one of the smallest planets and is but an insignificant speck in the millions of stars and planets in the depths of measureless space. On the time scale, man is dwarfed in the same way. Millions of years elapsed in geological ages, and during the slow emergence of animal life before man-like creatures appeared. Perhaps the whole history of man on the earth is at most but a half-million years, and his hold upon existence in the face of changing climate, swarming insects, disease, and war is precarious in the extreme. This insignificance and precariousness may be enlarged in terms of the development of the very powers by which man seems to make his claim upon a secure existence, for wise men are pointing out that it is still uncertain whether men can look into the face of nature with full understanding and live. The educated, and the well-conditioned classes economically, seem to become soft and sterile. Educated women do not marry, or if they do, they have few or no children. In his chapter on "Science" in the notable book entitled *Whither Mankind,* Bertrand Russell questions whether scientific men themselves would pursue

their sciences if they realized the tentative and hypothetical grounds upon which those sciences rest. How could a being of such short history, of such tragic experience and limited intelligence be regarded as a primary concern of the immense universe in which he appears? The old drama of religion which gave meaning to life by the origin and destiny which it pictured for man has been destroyed by "the acids of modernity." When the facts of modern sciences are properly estimated, man must view himself as restricted to this little planet running its dangerous and limited course in a small cycle of the encompassing distances of space and time. Within the limited stage upon which he appears, man's existence may seem of primary importance to himself, and he may bravely struggle to make the best of it, but his enthusiasms are scarcely to be taken on a cosmic scale or in terms of the hopes deeply cherished by generations of men in the prescientific ages of faith.

The third chief point of attack of the humanist upon the old beliefs is the existence of God, and in general the conception of the supernatural which runs through those beliefs. Science provides no support for the simple anthropomorphic God, existing as a great king, upon a throne in the heavens. The telescope, the camera, and the spectroscope have penetrated far beyond the habitation in which God was formerly supposed to dwell, and there is found there nothing but empty space, cold and

silent. The celestial voices which men once thought they heard were but their own unrecognized voices of imagination. The inspiration of prophetic souls was their own sense of duty and the insight of their own discovery. They simply did not understand themselves and the manner in which their thoughts and hopes objectified themselves into divine illuminations and commands. Better knowledge of the sacred books has revealed the human elements at work in them and brought all their messages into terms of human wisdom, hope, and longing. The ideas of God in the sacred writings of all peoples are found to be the projections of the patterns of the heroes and kings, sages and dreamers, of the different cultures in which they appear. A nomadic people has a shepherd god; an agricultural people has a god of springtime and harvest; a fighting people has a war god; a people struggling for justice has a god of justice and mercy. The moral qualities of the deity are reflections of the moral level of his worshipers. He prescribes an eye for an eye, or peace and forgiveness and brotherly love, according to the standards of different cultures. In the childhood of the race, naïve ideas of an anthropomorphic God who listened to the prayers of men might be uncritically accepted, but with the growth of wisdom and the careful analysis of experience, the efficacy of such prayers, and the possibility of the miracles necessary to their answers, fade from the realistic

scene. Men must thus come to recognize the gods as their own creation and the necessity of answering their own prayers, if they are to be answered at all.

But when the humanists have thus dismissed the dreams of another world, and the conception of a supernatural deity, and recognized the oneness of man with the little planet upon which his life arises for a brief day, they undertake a positive interpretation of the tasks and the hopes which remain. They emphasize the function of scientific knowledge as a means of realizing a better and happier life. They point to the achievements of modern science in overcoming disease and prolonging life. They call us to the duty of destroying the evils of ignorance by education, of eliminating crime by preventing the birth of criminal types and by changing the environment which breeds crime. They picture the possibilities of eliminating war and promoting international co-operation and welfare by the concerted intelligence and practical wisdom of world-wide fellowship and council. They exhort us to the prosecution of scientific inquiry and experiment through which human welfare may be increased and the human spirit released for greater mastery of nature and the production of finer works of art. They propose to discover and illuminate the ideal qualities which are possible within the natural life of man, and to see below the surface of our machine age into the intellectual

and spiritual values which move within it and result from its proper direction and control.

This is an appealing proposal and plan. It centers attention upon the actual conditions under which men live, and it emphasizes a matter-of-fact, scientific method of dealing with the situation. The interests of human beings become the major concerns. An intensity of religious interest attaches to all human problems—to eugenics, to the family, care of the child, education, economic problems, the living wage, just distribution of wealth, international peace, and the cultivation of the arts. Otherworldliness disappears in absorption in problems of better living here and now.

To a remarkable extent, however, this process of readjustment to the needs of the present life has already been made by religious agencies. From the beginning of this century, in America at least, the most marked development in religion has been in this direction. In every field of social service work, organized religion has shown a growing interest. For a much longer period, through its missionary agencies, where most critics of religion miss the facts most completely, stress has been put on education, sanitation, medicine, agriculture, and technological enterprises. Agencies like the Y.M.C.A., which undoubtedly carry a heavy hang-over of traditional ideas and practices, have nevertheless stood in the forefront of the forces devoted to human welfare. It is scarcely a fair assessment of the

facts to consign such institutions to the scrap heap of worn-out religions on account of their stereotyped verbalizations when their practical deeds are so much in keeping with the modern spirit. Much the same might be said of all religious denominations. Their works are better than their words and in our practical age it might be expected that they would be judged more by what they do than so much by what they say. At least many practical philanthropists, like the Jew, Julius Rosenwald, are able to see in the Christian Associations more than mere survivals of traditional sectarian Christianity. If there is to be any truly scientific estimate of the significance of religion, something more objective and realistic is needed than is found in *Elmer Gantry* and *The Twilight of Christianity*. It is an interesting fact that the literary humanists despair of the modernist tendencies of present-day religion because of the very humanitarianism which the religious humanists say is too much lacking. Perhaps in each case devotion to an "ism" has led to a certain unscientific blindness to the facts.

The remainder of this paper will attempt to show that religious humanism, instead of being too radical, too advanced, in its application of scientific method to the estimate of religion does not go far enough. Usually the advocates of humanism assume that criticism of its position proceeds from reactionary and conservative considerations. But the position here taken is that humanism, in its

constructive phase, moves in the right direction but fails to carry through. Few men of scientific training and outlook would seek to controvert the conclusions of modern scholarship with reference to the old ideas of God, revelation, miracles, the fall of man, sin, heaven and hell. They are accustomed to regard science as the liberator from superstition and magic and external authority. They accept the natural history of man and of all social institutions, including churches. They do not regard religion as outgrown because many of its forms are now untenable, any more than they think the family or the state is outgrown because many of the earlier patterns of these institutions have been discarded.

This more advanced view of religion, which goes beyond the most progressive of the religious humanists, begins, as they do, with human nature itself. Religion is a human affair, and its chief concern is with human life. But unlike so many of the humanists, these more progressive thinkers do not attach so much importance to the physical insignificance of man in the newly discovered vastness of the material universe. It is true that man's body is an inconspicuous speck on a diminutive planet, in the great abyss of space, and it is true that his lifetime is but a span long. He lives a short day in an infinity of days. But he knows the measure of his day and the cubits of his height.

This fact of self-knowledge, awareness of size,

and number, and proportion, sets man in a superior dimension, so to speak, as compared with all physical objects however great in their own nature. It would indeed be absurd for man to boast of strength against the rocks which may crush him, or against the force of gravitation when he falls from a precipice. But it would be more than absurd for him to belittle the intelligence within him, or to think of himself apart from it. Therefore, when he contemplates himself in his whole nature, he ascends above the stars, measures them with his hand, and brings them under his eye to detect their substance and to frame them in distances of his imagination beyond the bounds of their own time and space. They cannot hide themselves from his gaze, nor withhold themselves from his comparisons and judgments. They cannot understand their own magnificence nor anticipate their extinction.

It is not uncommon for the humanists, in their eagerness to offset the sense of security which the man of the traditional faith felt in the face of a friendly universe, to emphasize the indifference and hostility of the physical universe to the little human creatures which cling to the surface of the earth. But this argument quickly leads to the confusion of its advocates, since it leaves scarcely enough of importance in human life to justify the effort to understand or to improve man's lot. It is certainly true that man lives a precarious life, and

his days inevitably come to an end, but that is hardly the equivalent of claiming that nature is hostile to man. On the contrary, the fact that he can exist with as much comfort and strength as he commands shows that he is not entirely an alien on the earth. In reality his life is so inwrought with nature, he is so much her child and heir that he thinks of her as his mother. She seems to have suffered the pains of a long biological labor to bring him forth, and she has left upon him the marks of a long gestation and slow birth. Gradually he learns from her the means of life and the arts of security and clever self-preservation. He is disciplined by her rigors and learns wisdom from her answers to his questions. The more he earnestly inquires into her mysteries the richer and fuller his knowledge becomes.

As he compares himself with nature's other animal children he becomes aware of his superiority to them through his inventive and comprehending intelligence. Thus he finds himself truly the lord of creation not by means of an instantaneous creative fiat from above, but by winning his place through struggle and skill developed in the long process of gathering wisdom through experience. His greatness is no longer due to the presence in him of a blurred image of a perfect Creator, but is the achieved result of his natural inheritance, and his growth through active effort and self-education. His imperfections are not now believed to be the

effect of an ancestral fall through sin, but the limitations and weaknesses of a being coming into life through an animal lineage, and finding his way through trial and error into some measure of success and understanding. Deeply conscious of his shortcomings and his ignorance, he is nevertheless encouraged by his hard-won victories and is justly proud of the power and character he has attained.

While poignantly realizing many disabilities and failures, the man of the modern mind resents the old accusations of the inherent evil of human nature, and the charges of the depravity and moral helplessness of the natural man. It is to a large extent the survival of this reputation for evil that keeps man from believing more hopefully in his own significance in the whole order of nature. It is difficult for him to overcome the deep inferiority complex which has been established in many of the best of men by canonical proclamation and pious reiteration. We know what disastrous effects are likely to occur in the character of a child who is constantly told that he is stupid, perverse, and vicious. It requires the most favorable conditions and the most sympathetic training to establish in him any normal confidence in his better possibilities, and the will to make his nobler impulses effective. The same is true of the race itself. Convince us that we are born to sin and damnation and it is difficult to change us again into aspirants for virtue. But let us know that we have natural

powers which may be developed into usefulness and moral character, and we are more likely to follow the ways men call good. There can be little doubt that the widespread distrust of human nature precludes for many minds the possibility that human nature without external aid can accomplish any really good thing. We have been taught that the greatest works of man in art, science, statecraft, and religion are due to an endowment of mysterious genius, or to supernatural gifts. We are slow to believe that Robert Burns, Abraham Lincoln, Plato, and Jesus, were natural sons of man. Or perhaps if we were certain of it we would change at once our estimate of their words and deeds.

Humanism seems at times to suffer from this prejudgment of human nature. It tends to think of human enterprise as spatially limited to an insignificantly small planet, as bounded by a term of years, and as occupied with material affairs such as the creature comforts which bulk so large in humanitarian programs. It does not quite shake off the old presuppositions of a materialistic view of the world with which naturalism is yet too much identified. For the same reason it is still unable to make impartial estimates of characters, like Jesus, who are so much enshrined in the extreme assumptions of supernaturalism. In the reaction against the concepts of the supernatural no adequate allowance has been made for the actual values and

realities which moved within it. An extreme illustration of this may be seen in *The Twilight of Christianity* by Harry Elmer Barnes, who rather lightly sets aside the Ten Commandments and alleges the superiority of certain modern ministers to Jesus in the interpretation and administration of religion.

Another inadequacy of humanism springs from its failure to take account of the fact that religion does not move primarily in the intellectual realm, and that neither does life itself. Humanism is largely intellectualistic and tends to be doctrinaire. Its interpreters are chiefly university professors and ministers of a highly intellectualized type of religion. Few, if any, of its leaders are in the larger evangelical denominations. It fails to sense the deep tides of religious feeling and to reflect the emotional stress and vivid imaginative moods of popular religion. Modern psychology emphasizes the primacy of practical activity and affective attitudes especially in religious experience. Even the thought processes are bathed in a flow of emotion and sentiment. So much is this the case that the ideational life cannot be fully understood in terms of cold logic and clear definitions. The ideas of traditional religion did not spring from abstract reflection but are the symbols of a complex process in which the strongest emotions of the heart register their influence. Their vital meanings escape the neat formulas of analytic thought. When Brooke Hereford, the English Unitarian, said to Phillips

Brooks, the Episcopalian, "I do not see how you can say the creed," Brooks replied, "We do not say it. We sing it." That reply suggests the thing which baffles many intellectuals and often makes their formulations fall short of the total experience which they attempt to interpret.

The same characteristics of complexity and practical considerations in the depth of religious experience appear in the modifications which traditional faiths have undergone in modern times. The emergence of scientific ideas such as the uniformity of nature, and the doctrine of evolution, resulted in sharp and bitter discussions between scientists like Huxley and the theologians, but the effects upon practical religion were negligible as compared with the effects of the machine age in which we live. John Herman Randall, in a very discerning book, *Religion and the Modern World*, says:

> So long as their basic emotional experiences remain unaltered, it makes ultimately little difference what system of scientific interpretation men accept. . . . . The subtle changes brought about by the new industrial and city life in which they were engulfed caused no logical conflict with older beliefs. . . . . But they have touched the very core of the religious life, for they have transformed the basic feelings and emotions with which men confront their world.

For these and other reasons there is ground for belief that humanism is only a partial statement of the transition which is now occurring in religious thought and life. It may be only a halfway station on the road from the old to the new, and perhaps

the journey beyond its stopping place is even more interesting than the way already traveled. Like many other recent attempts to deal with religion, humanism is more successful in what it destroys than in what it builds. What then lies beyond it? What is to be builded upon the place so thoroughly cleaned by the "acids of modernity"? And what are the resources with which to effect the new constructions? Let it be admitted that the new work is to be done with the materials offered by the natural history of man, and with the powers of human nature. There can be no resort to the old supernaturalism, nor to old revelations, nor to mysticism. With open eyes, guided by the scientific spirit, taking account of psychology, the social sciences, and the physical sciences, the venture is to be made.

To begin with, the humanists must admit, upon their own terms, that the old religions were creations of the human spirit, and therefore must involve something humanly significant. Further, it is scarcely probable that the needs which religion has satisfied have entirely disappeared, however much they may have changed. Modern studies in the social sciences, particularly in social psychology and in anthropology, provide an insight into the religions of the past which confirms many of the contentions of the humanists with reference to the human origins and character of religion, but also affords a constructive view which goes beyond the

present outlook of humanism. The great contribution of these studies lies in the discovery and illumination of the social nature of religion. The patterns and motivations of religion are set by the organizing and controlling interests of the group life. It is true that the individual, in his solitude, separated from his group, may re-live the religious experience of the group in his own imagination, just as he may talk to himself alone by means of the language formed in the social communication of his group. But solitary persons no more create religion than they create speech.

It is unnecessary to repeat here the abundant evidences that religion is a universal feature of the basic group life of human beings. We have no knowledge of natural, ethnic groups without religious ceremonials, and these ceremonials disclose the fundamental life-interests. For the present purpose it is sufficient to point out that this social structure and its central concerns reveal the nature of the gods of religion. The gods are the life-forces upon which the groups depend. The animal deities are the ancestors, the creators, of their groups, and it is upon these deities that the worshipers feed and maintain their life in every way. The gods are not separate from men but are of one nature with them. Gods and men constitute one living organism, one kinship group. The gods depend upon men as well as men upon gods. When a tribe is destroyed, its god dies; when the people grow strong,

their god becomes great. Even in biblical religion the fortunes of Jehovah vary with the successes and failures of the people. The biographies of the great gods of the world are written in the annals of their human followers. The names of Osiris, Shiva, Zeus, and Jehovah are bound up inseparably with the life of Egypt, India, Greece, and Israel. As Professor Haydon has said in an illuminating analysis of the great gods in his recent book, *The Quest of the Ages:* "Even a superficial knowledge of the gods is enough to show clearly that the human and social structure is the source from which they have always derived character and definition." He says also that "there could be no objection to the use of the term 'God' to signify the real guardian of our ideals, guide of our destiny, and center of our loyalties," only he thinks that such a use of the word must wait for the far future when a new social organization of human life is achieved on a scientific and humanitarian basis.

The implication of this position would seem to be that the idea of God must be omitted from the program of religion until an ideal state of society is developed which would sustain an adequate and defensible conception of God. But is this the way in which human life proceeds in the refashioning of religion? Has it not been true, rather, that projections of new ideas of God have appeared in the midst of social readjustment? The Hebrew prophets did not wait until animal sacrifices were abol-

ished before proclaiming that God as they thought of him regarded those sacrifices as an abomination. In the midst of the persistence of the old faith Jesus caught up the spirit of the great prophets and declared that God was not limited to one race or land, that he did not dwell locally in Mount Gerizim nor in Jerusalem, but that he was a spirit which could be worshiped anywhere by men of any race if they worshiped him in spirit and sincerely. In the present time equally radical changes in the nature of God are appearing in the messages of modern prophets. They are saying that God is no longer a king desiring adulation and blind obedience, but that in keeping with a more democratic social attitude, he is best conceived as a spirit of love, and as the common will with which men may be co-workers and friendly comrades in great causes.

It was the intellectualized theology of Aristotle and the Schoolmen wrought into the traditional creeds and dogmas which created the conception of a supernatural deity imposing his arbitrary will upon man. In those creeds a false idea of man was also perpetuated, for man was there pictured as inherently sinful, a creature of fleshly, carnal nature at war with the laws of God and virtue. Only by a miracle of grace could he be admitted to the kingdom of righteousness. Today, in spite of those creeds and their surviving phrases, God has been greatly humanized, and men are not regarded as

filled with evil impulses from birth. God and man are moving together out of the old dualistic framework of an outworn religious philosophy into a living social process where their kinship and common nature are better understood. This assertion does not spring from any apologetic interest. It is not the result of a desire to defend or preserve any terms or conceptions of the old religion. It is rather a conclusion based upon the history and the psychology of religion. The historical evidence of the relation of God to the cultural life of the group has been stressed. Some further considerations may be added from the standpoint of psychology.

It is not difficult to show, for example, that men naturally form general ideas of the situations which they experience. When referring to our habitual surroundings we do not enumerate all the objects, people, and characteristics to indicate our position and relations. We simply say we live in the city of Chicago, or Evanston, or Oak Park. In still larger generalizations, we speak of the world, the universe, or the cosmos. In similar fashion we refer to nature, to life, to reality. God is such a term. Much depends upon the particular sphere of discourse as to which terms we use. In science, it is likely to be nature; in philosophy, reality; in religion, God. In science and philosophy the general terms are more impersonal, while in religious usage, because of the social and personal attitudes involved, the terms are personal. There is a natural

tendency to experience social attitudes toward these general ideas. Take a man's feeling toward his own city, for example. The city of Chicago, to one who has lived safely and happily in it for many years, easily comes to have a personality, a character, and temper all its own. When admiration is aroused for its early struggles in gaining a foothold here on the dunes by the lake and in conflict with the red man, we are apt to personify the city as Father Dearborn; or when the city rises from the ashes of a devastating fire, or builds a world's fair with indomitable energy, we picture her as a noble woman, uttering the motto, "I will." Our minds work in the same way with the conception of the world itself. Mr. McCutcheon draws cartoons of the earth with a human face, smiling over a good harvest, or mourning for the death of one of her great sons. Michael Angelo did not hesitate to paint the figure and face of God on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

All such anthropomorphic representations of the deity may be taken as the expression of the same generalizing and personifying tendency which is so common in all art and poetry. It is a fundamental, human trait, and appears as the natural reaction of the mind in all highly emotionalized, social situations. The mind itself develops in what is called the ego-alter relation. The pattern of it appears in the relation of the child to the father, of brother with brother, of friend with friend. Reli-

gion moves in this social and emotional sphere so long as it is a living, vital experience. Only when it is rationalized into abstract concepts does it lose this natural warmth and personal form. Therefore I define God as reality generalized, idealized, and personified.

All the discussions of the abstract existence of God are, accordingly, futile in the form in which they are usually presented, but there can be no doubt of the existence of reality, any more than there can be doubt of the existence of the city in which we live or of the world itself. Only when God is first set off and separated from his human kin does he become problematical and vague. It is the failure of humanism to recognize this social psychological fact which cuts it off from being adequate to religious needs; and it is its failure to see this relation of God to man which makes the traditional supernaturalism inoperative and sterile. The recognition of this relation explains the true nature of God, his existence, and his continuing reality. Such a view, however, does not substantiate all the old attributes of God. No new idea has ever done that for the conception which it displaced. It is frankly admitted that God, as here conceived, cannot be thought of as literally infinite, perfect, and unchangeable. Those are, nevertheless, honorific terms which express appreciation, reverence, and love. Our terms of endearment and devotion are not held to the restraints of discrim-

inating judgment. We address any minister as the Reverend Mr. So and So; or any politician as Honorable Sir; or any man in high office as Your Excellency. Much more have men used superlative words of endearment and adulation for their God. Men, in the mood of worship, do not measure their words any more than they do in the ecstacies of adoring love for their wives, or for their fatherland. "No one," says Walter Lippmann, "has truly observed the religious life of simple people without understanding how plain, how literal, how natural they take their supernatural personages to be." But everyone must have noticed that they also address their God as the Most High, Almighty, Allwise, Eternal and Most Holy. At other times, without any sense of inconsistency they think of their God as angered, as arbitrary, as subject to persuasion, as sorrowful, as rejoicing, as longing for recognition and obedience.

Under matter-of-fact observation and analysis every God appears limited, changeable, and inconsistent; but in the language of devotion, every God also appears great, noble, and supreme. Such inconsistencies are not to be ascribed to religion. They are characteristic of human nature itself, and they appear in some degree in all the social relations of men. In all poetry and art men go beyond the plain facts by weaving into their conceptions the ardors and hopes of their souls. There is no sign that they will cease to do so. There is reason, rath-

er, to believe that the higher the level of their actual life the higher and nobler will be the reaches of their idealizations. Into the mental image of their God they are likely to continue to project their dreams of loveliness and virtue, and, in turn, from those projected patterns of divine personality, to derive guidance, encouragement, and happiness. The humanists seem not to have plumbed the profound and baffling depths of these traits of that human nature by which they undertake to estimate religion. For a more adequate assessment of man's religious life they need a more comprehensive psychology, a wider sympathy, a stronger stomach, and a stouter heart.

Here and there, in the writings of those who most wisely criticize the old religions, are germinal ideas which point toward some such reconstruction as I have suggested. As appropriate to the conclusion of this paper may be quoted one of the severest of these critics who is at the same time one of the great prophetic minds of this confused age. I quote from the closing paragraphs of John Dewey's, *Human Nature and Conduct:*

> Infinite relationships of man with his fellows and with nature already exist. The ideal means a sense of these encompassing continuities with their infinite reach. This meaning even now attaches to present activities because they are set in a whole to which they belong and which belongs to them. Even in the midst of conflict, struggle and defeat a consciousness is possible of the enduring and comprehending whole.
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> To be grasped and held this consciousness needs, like every

form of consciousness, objects, symbols. In the past men have sought many symbols which no longer serve, especially since men have been idolators worshipping symbols as things. . . . . Religion has lost itself in cults, dogmas and myths. Consequently the office of religion as sense of community and one's place in it has been lost. In effect religion has been distorted into a possession—or burden—of a limited part of human nature, of a limited portion of humanity which finds no way to universalize religion except by imposing its own dogmas and ceremonies upon others; of a limited class within a partial group: priests, saints, a church. Thus other gods have been set up before the one God. Religion as a sense of the whole is the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied. For individuality signifies unique connections in the whole. . . . .

Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal.

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