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World situation

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The World Situation

by PAUL TILLICH

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PORTRESS PRESS

PHILADELPHIA

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Published by Fortress Press, 1965

Introduction © 1965 by Fortress Press

Second Printing

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 65-12765

Introduction

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TO try to analyze the whole present-day "world situation" in one brief essay may seem an impossible undertaking, though it would no doubt be highly useful if it could be accomplished—useful for the man of action as well as the thinker. For as Abraham Lincoln once observed in the midst of another great historical turning-point:

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. (Speech of June 16, 1858.)

President Lincoln, however, was speaking about a national situation; Professor Tillich proposes to deal with the entire world. Is it really feasible to work on such a scale?

The opening sentences of Tillich's essay provide part of an answer to this question. Today for the first time, he points out, "world" (that is, the *oneness* of the world) has become an actual reality, in life as well as thought. In the mid-twentieth century, it is literally true—as every morning's newspaper headlines confirm—that "events occurring in one section" of humanity "have direct repercussions upon all other sections" (p. 1 below). In view of this, it might well be said that nothing *less* than a world scale is really adequate, today, for the analysis of a major social problem.

Tillich has no wish to gloss over the tremendous differences that still exist between various parts of the world—between Nor-

way, say, and Tanganyika; between Mexico, Yugoslavia, Ireland, India, Japan, to give examples quite at random. The very names are enough to conjure up an image of the cultural variegation that (fortunately) still exists even in this jet-plane age. But Tillich feels that it is possible, nevertheless, "to discern common structural trends which characterize contemporary world society in its various types." The present essay is devoted to uncovering those trends.

Tillich, then, is going to explain to us the patterns that he finds in present-day society, and in the historical developments that have brought us to this point. Here, however, another question arises. What about these "patterns"? Has Tillich really *found* them in the material that he has studied, or has he superimposed them upon it?

With this question we touch on the controversy over whether, or to what extent, it is possible to write "objective" history, a debate into which we cannot enter here. Tillich himself has said a good bit about the matter in the third volume of his *Systematic Theology*, as well as in his earlier book *The Interpretation of History* (see the "For Further Reading" list at the end of this pamphlet). Suffice it to say that, according to Tillich's view at least, there are no such things as "naked" facts; we cannot help clothing them in our interpretive categories. Nor can any sense be made out of history without some effort, which will always remain largely subjective, to divide it into periods. The interpretation of history is an aspect of man's interpretation of himself.

When all this has been acknowledged, however, it must be admitted that Tillich's thinking does tend to move in terms of patterns and systems much more than is customary in the Anglo-Saxon world. No doubt this is an effect—whether beneficial or detrimental, the reader may judge for himself—of Tillich's German background, and more specifically of the Hegelian element in that background. A triadic pattern, something like Hegel's "thesis—antithesis—synthesis," appears remarkably often. If the reader reacts against this, we would propose that he may still find Tillich's formulations to be fruitful if he will take them quite

tentatively, not so much as finished conclusions but rather as "interpretive hypotheses" for the understanding of our situation.

One thing is clear: that Tillich has resisted the temptation to interpret this patterning of history as a kind of fatalism or determinism. No matter how powerful may seem the trends that he describes, they remain simply that: trends, not irresistible forces or unbreakable laws. As he further explains in the *Systematic Theology*, there is present in every situation, counterbalancing the element of "trend," what he calls the element of "chance." This means chance not in the sense of accident, but in the sense of opportunity. "Chances," he writes, "are occasions to change the determining power of a trend." But he adds the warning that in order to become effective these chances must be "taken" by someone; otherwise the "trend" prevails.¹ Tillich's view of history is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but open. This openness is implicit in the following essay at the point in each section where the author, having analyzed a particular aspect of the world situation, proceeds to urge an appropriate course of action upon the churches. His expectations of the role that the churches can play in shaping history are great indeed.

"The World Situation" is here being reprinted exactly twenty years after its first appearance. Has it not, one may ask, been outdated by the passage of these two decades?

In some respects, the essay does bear the marks of authorship during the closing years of World War II. Explicit references to "the present disruption" and the like are only the more obvious of these. More significant is the uncertainty about whether, or to what extent, the Western democratic system would be able to survive the strain of final completion of the war and the rebuilding of the post-war world. On the economic side, it was difficult to foresee how successful the formula of a judicious mixture of government "interference" and private enterprise would be. There is, of course, no mention of the United Nations or-

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 326 ff.

ganization. The whole development of the post-war split between Russia and the West, as well as the subsequent partial reconciliation, lay still in the future. On the theological scene, trends toward a revival of biblical and Reformation theology were to make Tillich's references to "liberal Protestantism" seem somewhat dated.

But when these elements have been allowed for (and they only serve to confirm Tillich's point that history can be written only from *within* history, not from a supra-historical vantage point), the way in which the essay's main lines of interpretation have been confirmed by the events of the past twenty years is striking. Especially prophetic are Tillich's words about Asia and Africa, which, as he already perceived, have been drawn into the "single revolutionary vortex" of our time. His reminder that the viability of democracy as a constitutional procedure depends upon certain very definite historical presuppositions has been amply confirmed by developments in the new nations, many of which have indeed taken the leap "from the first to the third stage of modern social development, from a feudal and authoritarian society to a totalitarian order" (page 6 below). Likewise Tillich's depiction of the trend in the Western countries themselves toward a "mass society" inhabited by the "mass man" (alias the "other-directed man" or the "organization man") has been confirmed by many other studies.

"The World Situation," finally, is of permanent interest to the student of Tillich's thought, constituting as it does probably the major piece of social analysis done by him after his arrival in America. His short book entitled *The Religious Situation*, which is similar in scope and purpose, had appeared already in 1929 when he was still in Germany. The essay will also be found to contain compressed statements on the meaning of existentialist philosophy, the significance of modern art, the symbolic character of religious knowledge, and other topics of basic importance for Tillich, which will prove illuminating even to those who may have read his more extended discussions elsewhere.

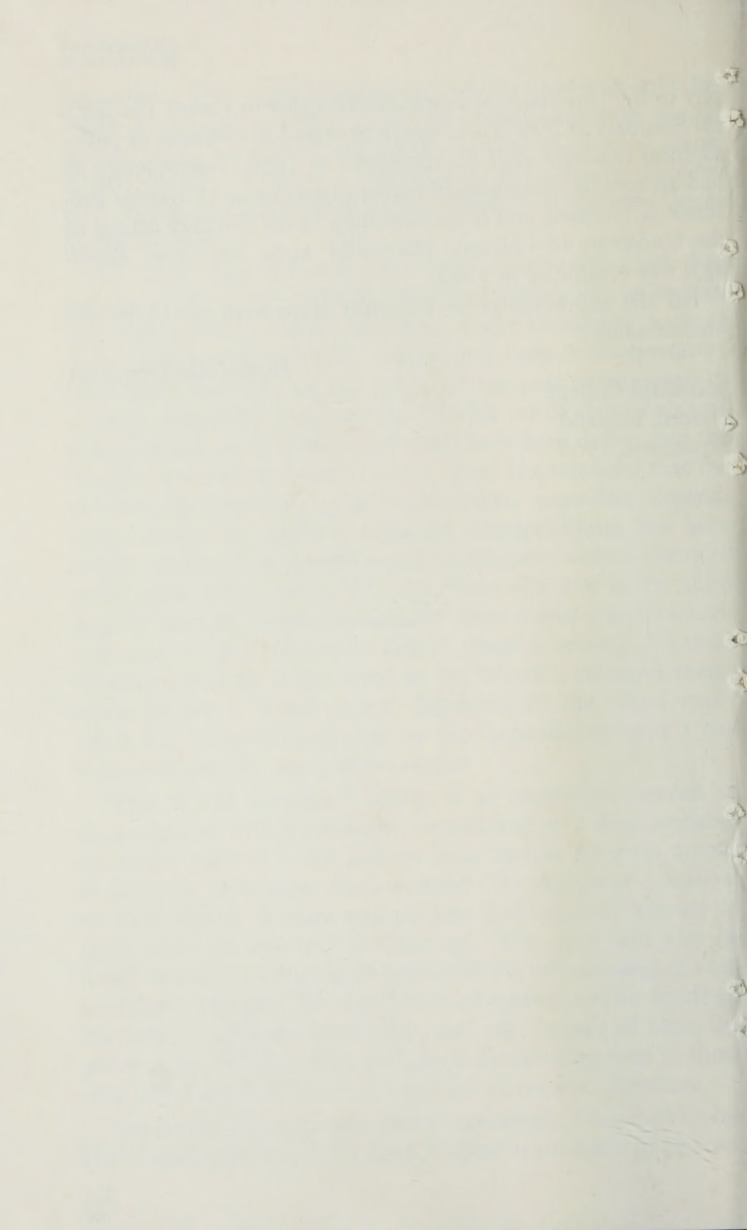
The author himself needs little introduction. Dismissed by the Hitler government in 1933 from his post as professor of philoso-

phy in the University of Frankfurt, he came to Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he served as professor of philosophical theology until his retirement in 1954. Subsequently he had an equally distinguished period of service as University Professor at Harvard, and is now teaching in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. His major work, *Systematic Theology*, was completed in 1963.

All the sub-headings in the essay have been added by the present editor.

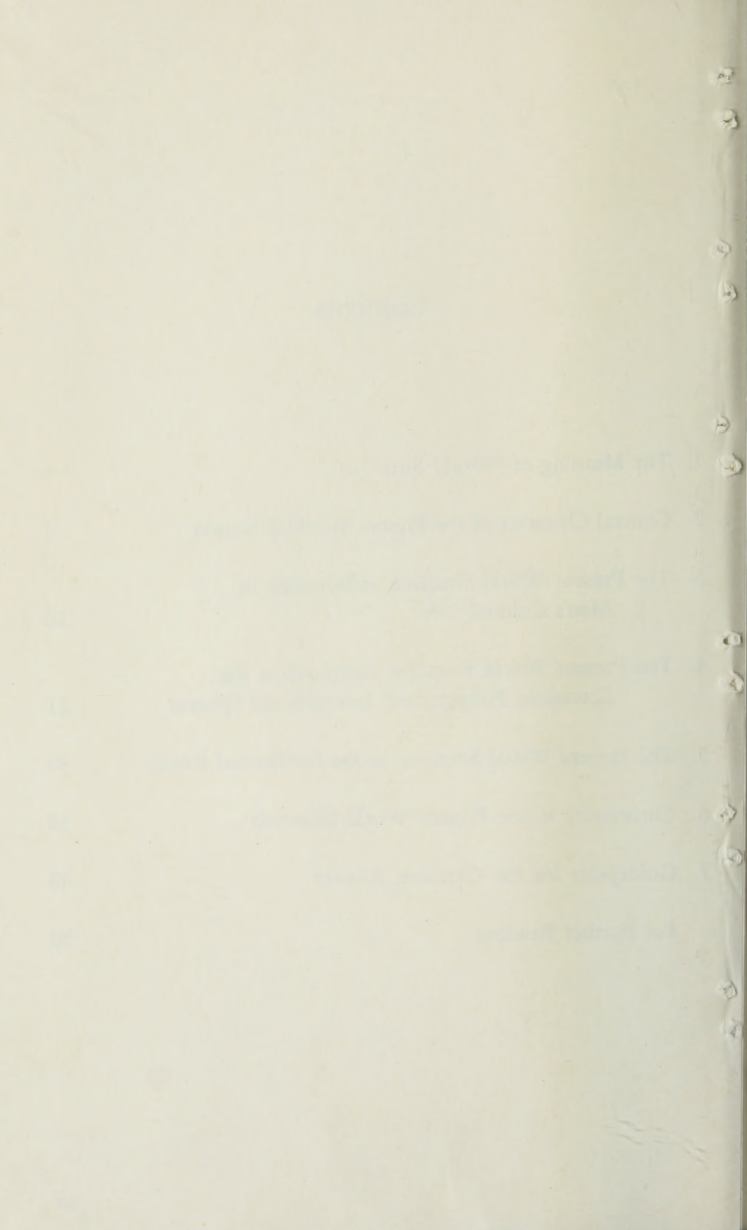
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September, 1964



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THE MEANING OF "WORLD SITUATION"

TO speak of a "world situation" is no longer, as it was even during the nineteenth century, a matter of daring anticipation or utopian vision. Two world wars within a quarter century reveal that "world" as an historical reality has come into being.

"World" in the historical sense connotes such an interrelation of all political groups constituting mankind that events occurring in one section have direct repercussions upon all other sections. "World" in this sense, anticipated by a steady increase in world-wide communication and traffic, by world economic and political relationships, has existed since the First World War. The process advanced with accelerating speed before and during the Second World War.

To be sure, such a "world" exists only in the formal sense of the universal interdependence of all nations. As yet there is no unity of spirit, of culture, of organization, of purpose. Moreover, even the formal unity of the world is more apparent in the West than in the East, and the analysis which follows is necessarily mainly from the perspective of the Occident. Nevertheless, the forces which are transforming civilization are dominant not only in Europe and the Americas. They have penetrated from the West to the East, and not conversely, and have drawn Asia and Africa and Australasia also within a single revolutionary vortex. Therefore, it is not only possible but necessary to speak of a "world situation," to seek to discover the inner logic and meaning of that situation, and to ask what message Christianity has to offer it.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION

THE present world situation is the outcome—directly in the West and indirectly elsewhere—of the rise, the triumph, and the crisis of what we may term “bourgeois society.” This development has occurred in three distinguishable though overlapping phases. In the first, the new society struggled to establish itself over the remnants of a disintegrating feudal society—the period of bourgeois revolutions. In the second, mainly through the creation of a world mechanism of production and exchange, the new society came to triumphant power—the period of victorious bourgeoisie. In the third, mankind struggles to regain control over the self-destructive forces loosed by a regnant industrial society—the present crisis in civilization. The disintegration and transformation of bourgeois society is the dynamic center of the present world situation.

THE PERIOD OF BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONS

The first period was marked by great political, economic, and cultural revolutions in Western Europe and America. Feudalism and absolutism, both religious and political, were crushed. The bourgeois way of life became the determining, though not the only influential, factor in Western civilization.

The guiding principle of this revolutionary period was *belief in reason*. Reason did not mean the process of reasoning, but

the power of truth and justice embodied in man as man. Man controlling nature and society was the ideal born in the humanistic theory of the Renaissance, ripened under the patronage of enlightened authoritarianism, and brought to fulfillment through the bourgeois revolutions. Reason was the very principle of humanity which gives man dignity and liberates him from the slaveries of religious and political absolutisms. It is much more akin to the divine *logos* of the Stoics than to the manipulation of technical skills which won such triumphs in the second period of bourgeois society. The adoration of "Reason" as goddess in the French Revolution was a characteristic expression. The acknowledgment of every man as a rational being, capable of autonomy in his religious as well as his secular life, was the basis of the victorious struggle against the repressions of feudalism and every form of authoritarianism and tyranny.

In this struggle, out of which the modern world was born, one presupposition was always present, sometimes avowed, sometimes tacit. It was the belief that the liberation of reason in every person would lead to the realization of a universal humanity and to a system of harmony between individuals and society. Reason in each individual would be discovered to be in harmony with reason in every other individual. This principle of automatic harmony found expression in every realm of life. In the *economic* realm, it was believed that the welfare of all would be best served by the unrestrained pursuit by each individual of his own economic interests; the common good would be safeguarded by the "laws of the market" and their automatic functioning; this was the root-principle of the economy of *laissez-faire*. In the *political* realm, it was supposed that the political judgment of each citizen would lead automatically to right political decisions by a majority of citizens; community of interest would assure sound democratic procedures. In the *international* realm, the play of interest among the nations would result in a comparatively stable balance of power between sovereign states. In the sphere of *education*, the essential rationality of human nature would produce, through free self-expression by each individual, a harmonious community. In *religion*, personal interpre-

tation of the Bible and individual religious experience would follow a sufficiently uniform course among all believers to assure moral and spiritual conformity and to create and maintain a religious community of individual worshippers, the church. Finally, this all-controlling idea found *philosophic* expression in various doctrines of pre-established harmony, those of Leibnitz, Descartes, and their schools. The individual monad is a microcosm of the world. Ripening according to its own inner laws of logic, it develops in pre-established harmony with the whole of being.

This was the creed of the revolutionary movement in virtually all its intellectual and political leaders. Reality seemed to confirm it. Elements of automatic harmony could be discovered in every realm. The liberation of individual reason in economics and religion, in politics and education, did not bring on the disruptive consequences forecast by traditionalists and reactionaries. On the contrary, tremendous creativity was set free without the destruction of sufficient conformity to maintain national and religious communities. The enthusiastic belief in reason was vindicated by the prodigious achievements of mathematical science in the seventeenth century, by the development of autonomous national states after the disruptions of the Wars of Religion, by the establishment of natural laws in social and personal ethics. The law of harmony appeared to express the nature of reality. In the power of this belief, the new society overcame the resistance of feudalism and absolutism. In spite of all reactionary opposition, the nineteenth century may be regarded as the period of victorious bourgeoisie.

THE PERIOD OF THE VICTORIOUS BOURGEOISIE

Reason was supposed to control nature, in man and beyond man, because nature and reason were held to be in essential harmony. But in the measure in which the bourgeois revolution succeeded, the revolutionary impetus disappeared, and the character of reason as the guiding principle was transformed. The new ruling class could and did compromise with the remnants of feudalism and absolutism. They sacrificed reason as the principle

of truth and justice, and employed it mainly as a tool in the service of the technical society they were bent upon perfecting. "Technical reason" became the instrument of a new system of production and exchange.

Technical reason provides means for ends, but offers no guidance in the determination of ends. Reason in the first period had been concerned with ends beyond the existing order. Technical reason became concerned with means to stabilize the existing order. Revolutionary reason had been conservative with respect to means but "utopian" with respect to ends. Technical reason is conservative with respect to ends and revolutionary with respect to means. It can be used for any purposes dictated by the will, including those which deny reason in the sense of truth and justice. The transformation of *revolutionary reason* into *technical reason* was the decisive feature of the transition from the first to the second period of modern society.

This displacement of revolutionary reason by technical reason was accompanied by far-reaching changes in the structure of human society. Man became increasingly able to control physical nature. Through the tools placed at his disposal by technical reason, he created a world-wide mechanism of large-scale production and competitive economy which began to take shape as a kind of "second nature," a Frankenstein, above physical nature and subjecting man to itself. While he was increasingly able to control and manipulate physical nature, man became less and less able to control this "second nature." He was swallowed up by his own creation. Step by step the whole of human life was subordinated to the demands of the new world-wide economy. Men became units of working power. The profit of the few and the poverty of the many were driving forces of the system. Hidden and irresponsible powers controlled some parts of it, but no one the whole. The movements of the mechanism of production and consumption were irrational and incalculable. So it became for the masses a dark and incomprehensible fate, determining their destiny, lifting them today to a higher standard of life than they had ever before known, throwing them down tomorrow into utter misery and the abyss of chronic unemploy-

ment. The decisive feature of the period of victorious bourgeoisie is *the loss of control by human reason over man's historical existence*. This situation became manifest in the two world wars and their psychological and sociological consequences. The self-destruction of bourgeois society and its elaborate scheme of automatic harmony is the characteristic of the present period of transition.

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN CIVILIZATION

Today the world stands in the third phase of modern history, though in varying degrees in different countries and continents. It has come to fullest expression in the industrial nations of continental Europe. In Anglo-Saxon lands, it has thus far achieved a fairly successful maintenance of the main features of the second period. In Russia and parts of Asia, it has come to power before the second stage had fully developed. These differences must be borne in mind. Their neglect would falsify the analysis and might lead to practical proposals which would be doomed to frustration. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern common structural trends which characterize contemporary world society in its various types. The dynamics of bourgeois society which have precipitated the present world situation have been dominant not only in the industrial nations of the European continent with their unbalanced economies, but likewise in Britain, America, and some smaller European countries with their comparatively stable situations, and also in Russia and the East where resentment against the intrusion of dominating Western exploitation has led to a leap from the first to the third stage of modern social development, from a feudal and authoritarian society to a totalitarian order.

In the third period which determines our world situation, the foundation of bourgeois society has broken down: namely, the conviction of automatic harmony between individual interest and the general interest. It has become obvious that the principle was true only to a limited degree and under especially favorable circumstances. Its validity was dependent upon certain conditions—the continuing power of traditional values and institu-

tions strong enough to counteract the disruptive consequences of the principle; the increasing strength of a liberal economy powerful enough to counteract the inner contradictions of the system through intensive and extensive expansion; the vestigial hold of feudal and absolutistic remnants powerful enough to allay the transmutation of all social life into a market-system. When these retarding and disguising factors disappeared, the principle of automatic harmony was revealed in all its patent insufficiency. Attempts to replace it by a planned economy began. "Rationalization" was invoked as a method of control over the "second nature."

Totalitarianism was the first step in this direction. One expression is the *Fascist systems*. They could achieve partial success because they understood the breakdown of the principle of automatic harmony and satisfied the demand for a planned organization of the life of the masses. In certain important respects, the Fascist systems mark an advance beyond bourgeois society. They have provided minimum security for all. They have re-introduced unassailable authorities and commanding obligations. For these purposes they have employed technical reason in the most effective manner. But the Fascist systems could not succeed ultimately because their basis was national, and thus they increased the disruption of mankind instead of uniting it according to the principle of reason. They destroyed any remnant of revolutionary reason and replaced it by an irrational will to power. Absolutism returned, but without the social, cultural, and religious traditions which furnished solid foundations for the earlier absolute systems.

The other radical expression of the trend toward a planned society is the *Soviet system*. It could succeed for the same reasons which brought partial success to the Facist systems. And it achieved an even greater security for the masses. Moreover, it has retained, at least in principle, revolutionary reason as an ultimate critical principle. But it also was a return to absolutism without the traditional foundations. It has come under the control of a bureaucracy which is inclined to replace revolutionary

reason by technical reason after the pattern of the second phase of bourgeois society. Freedom for the individual is as completely lost as under the Facist systems.

Both systems are reactions against the bourgeois faith in automatic harmony. Both are ambiguous: on the one hand, they attempt to bring the incalculable mechanism of world economy back under the control of man; on the other hand, they aggravate the self-destructive forces generated by the second stage of bourgeois society. Both seek to elevate technical reason to "*planning reason*"—the characteristic feature of the third period and the determining principle of our present world situation.

The logic of bourgeois society in its struggle for survival is expressed in the development of reason from "revolutionary reason" through "technical reason" to "planning reason." This development must be held clearly in mind in every analysis of the present situation, in every question and answer regarding the future. This development cannot be reversed. We cannot return to a half-feudal absolutism. Neither the spiritual nor the economic conditions for such a return are present. We cannot return to the principle of automatic harmony epitomized in *laissez-faire* liberalism in economics. The political and social conditions for re-establishing the status quo have been destroyed by the present world catastrophe. And faith in automatic harmony cannot be re-established among the masses for whom it has meant oscillation between war, boom, depression, and war renewed through thirty years. We must go forward under the direction of planning reason toward an organization of society which avoids both totalitarian absolutism and liberal individualism. This is not an easy course to define or to follow. Repelled by the inhuman brutalities of totalitarian planning, we are tempted to seek a return to a more or less concealed *laissez-faire* solution. Or, disillusioned by the catastrophic discredit of the philosophy of automatic harmony, we incline toward some kind of absolutism. Our task is to find a way between and beyond these extremes.

A biblical symbol may aid us in this attempt. When Hobbes

developed his theory of the absolute state, he had recourse to the figure of "Leviathan," the all-embracing portent which, in the interests of the state, swallows all elements of independent existence, political and economic, cultural and religious. Struggle against the Leviathan of late-mediæval authoritarianism was the genius of the bourgeois revolutions. But the revolutionaries did not foresee that Leviathan was able to assume another face, not less formidable though disguised behind the mask of liberalism: the all-embracing mechanism of capitalistic economy, a "second nature," created by man but subjecting the masses of men to its demands and its incalculable oscillations. Since the First World War, the demonic face of this Leviathan has been unveiled. The battle against the destructive consequences of this mechanism has led to the totalitarian organization of national life, and Leviathan appears again with a third face combining features of the first and second faces. The struggle between Leviathan in its second and third phases, and the effort of individuals and groups to discover a way by which both of them may be brought into subjection, furnish the basic structure of the present world situation. Christianity must give its message to a world in which Leviathan in its different aspects threatens all human existence to its very roots.

THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION AS REVEALED IN MAN'S CULTURAL LIFE

THE general character of the present world situation determines every aspect of mankind's existence. In each sphere of life, the underlying structure can be recognized as directly or indirectly controlling. In some realms, resistance against the general trend is stronger than in others, but none is independent of the determining factors.

Although social and economic forces are predominant in our present world, the spiritual realm shows the traits of the "triple-faced Leviathan" as clearly as the economic sphere, and in certain respects more significantly. The mechanism of mass production and distribution has had profound effects not only on economic and political structures but also on the innermost center of *personal life*, on the character of all human *communities*, and on the aims and methods of *education*. We begin therefore with an examination of man's cultural and spiritual life, and return later to the economic and political factors which are there disclosed as more fundamental and determinative.

CHANGES IN PERSONALITY, ILLUSTRATED FROM ART

Personality and community in their interdependence are the very substance and basis of all social structures.

The prophets of bourgeois society believed that victory over feudalism and authoritarianism would create both fully devel-

oped autonomous persons and true communities of those who had been emancipated to personal freedom; the principle of automatic harmony seemed to guarantee a harmonious society. But in no realm did the disintegrative influence of bourgeois society become more obvious than in that of personality and community. The "rational" individual is separated from every other individual. Society replaces community; co-operation replaces unity in a common reality.

We may take an illustration from art. The æsthetic realm always furnishes the most sensitive barometer of a spiritual climate. "Art indicates what the character of a spiritual situation is; it does this more immediately and directly than do science or philosophy. . . . Science is of greater importance in the formation of a spiritual situation, but art is the more important for its apprehension."¹

If we study the portraits of Rembrandt, especially in his later period, we confront personalities who are like self-enclosed worlds—strong, lonely, tragic but unbroken, carrying the marks of their unique histories in every line of their faces, expressing the ideals of personality of a humanistic Protestantism. To compare these portraits with Giotto's pictures of St. Francis and his monks is to recognize the difference between two worlds. Giotto's Francis is the expression of a divine power by which man is possessed and elevated beyond his individual character and personal experiences. So are all other figures in Giotto's paintings. Between Giotto and Rembrandt are the portraits of Titian—individual expressions of humanity as such, representatives of the greatness, beauty, and power of man. The transcendent reality to which Giotto subjects all individuals, their actions and emotions, has disappeared; but the unique individual, as in Rembrandt, has not yet appeared. The personality which found its highest portraiture in Rembrandt's pictures is the personality of the early bourgeois spirit, still subject to absolute forces, still shaped by the Protestant conscience, but already standing by itself, independent alike of transcendent grace and of humanity. In these three

¹ Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 85, *q.v.*

painters, the development of the ideal of personality in the modern world finds classic expression.

If we take the long step to portraits painted since the middle of the nineteenth century, we are in still another world. Individuals with a highly developed intellectuality and strong will appear—the bearers of technical reason, the creators of large-scale world economy, of the great monopolies, the conquerors of the forces of nature, and the anonymous directors of the worldwide mechanism of capitalistic society. Personality has become at once the ruler and the servant of Leviathan. Will power and technical rationality are united, and thus the way is prepared for the Fascist type in which the last remnants of the classical and humanistic ideal of personality are completely lost.

In the time of Giotto, relation to transcendent reality gave meaning, center and content to personal life. In Titian, belief in the divinity of the human and the humanity of the divine furnished the center of meaning. In Rembrandt, the experience of life with its tragedy and its ultimate hope determined personal existence. But the person of the period of triumphant bourgeoisie was dominated by purposes without ultimate meaning and by sensations and actions without spiritual center. It was a personality which could still use the traditions of the past for æsthetic enjoyment, but which was not shaped by them. This naturalistic personality was formed by the demands of modern economy, and by neither divinity nor humanity, even if humanitarian and religious obligations were retained in the form of the moral or conventional standards of the bourgeois era.

The principle of harmony between reason and nature had promised the harmonious development of personal life if only ecclesiastical and political restrictions were removed. It was supposed that each man's personal center would organize all bodily and mental functions in meaningful unity. The ideal of personality as the actualization by each educated individual of all human possibilities displaced the ideal of participation by every man, whether educated or not, in a common spiritual reality which transcends him and yet at the same time gives him a personal center. In this fashion, the majority of human beings, since

they could not share in the realization of the individualist goal, were excluded from significant participation in the ideal. They were consigned to remnants of religious tradition, or to education in technical reason and conventional morals. But even in the privileged strata of society, the situation was not greatly different. Technical intelligence replaced humanistic reason. Prophetic minds of the nineteenth century saw this transformation taking place, and they foresaw its destructive consequences. But they could not prevent it. Despite their protests, the technical depersonalization of man spread, not only in Europe and America but all over the world.

But man is fully rational only on the foundation of, and in interdependence with, non-rational factors. Therefore the predominance of technical reason evoked a reaction by the vital forces in man. They arose and made themselves manifest in both theory and practice. Whether called "instinct" or "passion" or "libido" or "interest" or "urge" or "will to power" or "*élan vital*" or "unconscious ground," they cannot be denied. They make it impossible to transform man into a psychological mechanism with intelligence and adjustability. They revolt against control by merely utilitarian reason. The conventional veil concealing the dynamic center of living man has been torn aside. *Élan vital* displaced the rational center of early humanism.

However, the vitalistic protest against the mechanization of man is as ambiguous as reactions against Leviathan in other realms. These protests have changed its face, but not its being. Consciousness, discovering the unconscious, tries to bring it into servitude to its own purposes. Instead of suppressing it, as early Victorian morals demanded, it elevates it into equality with consciousness. The "adjusted" personality becomes a more perfect instrument of an all-controlling will, surrendering itself with fanaticism to irrational and unconditioned purposes.

CHANGES IN STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITIES

The development of the modern idea of personality in its main stages has had its parallels in the structure of all commu-

nities, natural communities such as the family, and historical communities such as the state.

In the *first stage*, represented by the pictures of Giotto, every individual participates in a communal movement created by loyalty to a transcendent reality. It is an all-embracing community in which every individual, both peasant and prince, is borne forward by the same spiritual reality. In the life of the Renaissance, outstanding individuals are predominant. They are isolated, each in his own way representing general humanity, dealing with one another in the relations of a privileged society but no longer in terms of community. The person of Protestant humanism is a member of an active group united by common purposes—the defence of pure doctrine, the struggle against absolutism, the crusade for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This is a community, however, not on the basis of a common ground of universal authority but on the basis of common devotion to particular aims for which it is necessary to fight. The spiritual center of this community lies in the future.

In the *second period* of bourgeois society, not only a common spiritual ground but a common spiritual purpose was lost. In consequence, the different forms of community disintegrated. The family disintegrated into individuals each of whom lives for himself in the service of the mechanism of society. Communities of workers were replaced by mass co-operation of a non-personal character. Patriarchal responsibility for the servant, his welfare and his loyalty, gave way to the relations of legal contract. Neighborhood as a form of community lost its meaning. The national community recovered reality only when attacked, and lost it again when danger passed. Even the community of friendship was destroyed by the universal sway of competition. Bourgeois society in its second phase destroyed community because it destroyed any common foundation and any common purpose. The service of the mechanism of mass production is not a possible spiritual center for community. It separates individuals from one another in spiritual loneliness and competition. It turns them into atoms in the service of mechanical processes. It is not based on a common idea but on the controlling eco-

conomic and psychological necessity that each man subject himself to the mechanism. Thus communities disintegrate into masses. Masses have neither common ground nor common purposes. They are driven in their objective existence by the incalculable movements of the mechanism of production, subjectively by the laws of mass psychology. This was the main sociological feature of the second period of bourgeois society. Many keen observers during the nineteenth century noted the dissolution of personality into atoms and community into masses, and forecast the cultural and political self-destruction of society.

To be sure, the trends just described were never completely victorious. Pre-bourgeois groups and pre-capitalist attitudes survived. In Russia, the majority of the populace were hardly touched by the disintegration of community. In America, the Protestant humanist ideals of personality and community are still vital in large sections of the country. In Asia, the family system resisted bourgeois atomization. But all these forms are under continuous and advancing attack. The dissolution of family, of neighborhood, of personal co-operation is rapidly progressing. Even more important is the fact that every attempt to halt the general process of mechanization was finally subjected to the mechanism against which it protested. For example, European youth movements sought escape by fleeing to nature and emotional communion. But they were caught in the totalitarian movements and transformed into instruments of its authoritarian machinery. To be sure, individuals in these groups no longer felt isolated and lonely. They were organized and their every activity, thought, and emotion was planned and prescribed. Often they became not dissimilar to the "fighting orders" in the earlier opposite transition from feudalism to freedom. These groups which now embrace the whole younger generation in Fascist and Communist countries are "commanded" communities, logically a contradiction in terms, but in practice a very effective method for overcoming the feeling of solitude which was so prevalent in the second period, much more effective than the invocation of solidarity in the labor movements of the nineteenth century. The new type of personality produced in these communities has its

spiritual center completely beyond itself in the collectivity to which it belongs. The individual has become the self-dedicated instrument of a controlling will—not the unconscious and half-resisting instrument of the "second nature" in large-scale capitalism. Unconditional surrender to an unconditionally accepted purpose, resignation of any kind of autonomy, fanatical devotion are features of their existence. These are consciously dehumanized groups of human beings, very different from the automatically dehumanized industrial masses of the nineteenth century.

Thus, in the *third stage* of the bourgeois development, the attempt has been made to re-establish community on the basis of anti-bourgeois doctrines through fighting groups fired by a fanatical will to a new order of life and forged into the unity which always characterizes the fighting period of any revolutionary movement. The question is whether a real community has been born in these groups, whether a new "we-consciousness" has arisen which can overcome the atomization of a mechanized society. The situation is as ambiguous as in all other realms. On the one hand, a great effort has been made to overcome the loneliness of the individual within an absolutely devoted community. On the other hand, the method employed in this attempt represents the most radical employment of mechanization in the service of the new idea. The struggle against the dehumanization produced by the mechanism of modern capitalism has used even more fully mechanized methods and has thus carried through the process of dehumanization to its logical end.

CHANGES IN EDUCATION

The disruption and transformation of personality and community were furthered, both consciously and unconsciously, by changes in the philosophy and methods of education.

Prior to the modern period, a principal aim of education had been the induction of persons into the living community and tradition of the church. It was significant that education originated within the church, was conducted mainly by the church and was impregnated with the presuppositions and aims of Christian faith.

Reason as the principle of truth demands education for and through reason for everyone, and the massive achievements in educational theory and practice in Western civilization are due to this creative impulse. Humanistic education aimed to actualize humanity in each individual. World citizenship was the social goal and classical humanism the shaping tradition. Religion was recognized as one element in the development of the humanistic personality, but not its ground or center. This ideal had great power all through the *first period* of bourgeois society. It was set over against traditional ecclesiastical education and it produced many notable representatives of Christian humanism.

But this humanistic ideal for education could not touch the masses. It requires favorable circumstances which society provides for only a few—a large measure of economic independence, outstanding intellectual abilities, rearing within a tradition of culture, etc. Consequently, education for the masses could not follow this pattern. Either it was neglected as in England or was adapted to a more technical pattern as in Germany.

In the *second period*, the humanistic ideal of education lost its hold and was employed more and more as a decoration necessary for social prestige or for professional advantage. Vocational education for particular purposes increasingly replaced humanistic education for a perfect humanity. In subservience to the demands of a technical reason, so-called "realistic" education based on the natural and technical sciences step by step supplanted education through the humanities. Meantime, technical education of the masses for the service of large-scale industry was extended and refined. "Adjustment" became more and more the principle of education, adjustment to the existing society. Everyone must receive public school education, everyone must learn those skills most useful for success in the mechanism of production, everyone must subject himself to the ideals and norms of the dominant system. For many, the main purpose of education became that degree of adjustment which prevents serious disturbance of the existing order by uncontrolled individual initiative or revolutionary group action. To be sure, this was often hidden to the educators as well as to those educated. Individual spon-

taneity was cultivated. Productivity was not suppressed but encouraged. Religious and humanistic traditions were appreciated and used. So it seemed to be a truly "liberal" education, faithful to the humanistic and Christian heritage. Actually, the cultural achievements of the past wove an idealistic veil over the nakedness of this education and hid the face of Leviathan who was its real master. They had lost their original significance, their power as the expression of human possibilities and ultimate realities. In the measure that education has been subjected to the mechanism of modern society, it has lost its relation to truth and justice and consequently any ultimate meaning. Thus it becomes a ready victim of various kinds of non-rational powers which seek to give it meaning.

The whole trend is clearly reflected in developments in specifically *religious education*. Religious education was originally introduction into the tradition, the faith, and the sacramental experience of the Christian Church. This was still true of the churches of the Reformation though emphasis upon individual experience had increased. In the early stages of the modern period, autonomous reason could use religion as an element in the full development of human personality. But the more radical types of bourgeois education excluded religious education or recognized religion simply as a subject of historical interest. Within the churches, religious education either sought to adapt itself to the demands of autonomous reason or cultivated seclusion from the dominant trends in the surrounding culture. If the method of adaptation was chosen, religious education tended to become more and more a means of confirming the ideals of bourgeois society with the authority of religious tradition. If seclusion was practised, religious education became more and more unacceptable to the younger generation. Indeed it created powerful resistance against both religious education and religion itself and thus prepared fertile soil for totalitarian education to pseudo-religions.

But education without a determining center is impossible. Since the church with its beliefs and symbols was no longer the

agent of educational indoctrination, the nation or local community increasingly took its place. States or cities took over responsibility for education. The nation was the community whose life must be interpreted by the teacher. Its history, constitution, and present needs were the realities to which the teacher must adapt the pupil. Many emotional elements such as language, home, landscape, friendships are tied up with it. The nation became the ideological center which demanded absolute devotion though itself above criticism. Here, likewise, the way was prepared for the third phase.

Vacillation in educational method between the ideals of autonomy and adjustment has been brought to an end in the *third period*. Adjustment as complete subjection increasingly swallowed the autonomous elements of liberal education. The breakdown of belief in reason had created intellectual insecurity and cynicism. Bourgeois conventions which, in the period of victorious bourgeoisie, gave an impression of rational harmony had lost their power. In the totalitarian schemes, education became introduction to a fighting, and eventually ruling, group. Rational criticism is excluded. Knowledge for its own sake is discounted. Everything is related to the ultimate purpose of the group. The individual must resign all personal autonomy beyond the life of the group. Education for death, the demonic symbol created by National Socialism, expresses this final form of education in the service of Leviathan. Although there may be little danger that controlled education of this extreme type will prevail widely after the overthrow of Fascism, it must be recognized that standardized communication through radio, movies, press, and fashions tends to create standardized men who are all too susceptible to propaganda for old or new totalitarian purposes.

The ambiguous character of totalitarian education is obvious. On the one hand, it leads beyond sterile adjustment to the mechanism of the industrial system. It overpasses the emptiness of such an aim. It creates enthusiasm, devotion, even fanaticism. On the other hand, it sacrifices personal life and individual crea-

tivity, the remaining elements of reason and harmony, more completely than has ever happened before.

The Christian answer to the educational problem must be given in unity with the answer to the problems of personality and community. Christianity achieves actuality in a community based upon the appearance of Ultimate Reality in a historic person, Jesus Christ. For Christian faith, this event is in a profound sense the center of history. The community which carries the spirit of Jesus Christ through the centuries is the "assembly of God," the church. But this church follows upon an age-long preparation—a general preparation in all religions and cultures throughout the world and a special preparation in an "elect people." Accordingly, we must recognize not only the manifest church but also a "latent" or "potential" church existing everywhere and at all times.

Ideally, education should be introduction into this church, the interpretation of its meaning and the communication of its power. Such education would embrace humanistic, scientific, and technical elements. But it would provide meaning and cohesion for them all. The more collectivist periods of history were right in holding an aim for education equally valid for everyone and bearing directly or indirectly on everything. They were wrong in limiting free development of individual and social powers by the spiritual center toward which all education was oriented. The Christian answer to the present educational situation must point men toward such a community as is sufficiently concrete and commanding to claim the hearts of individuals and masses and yet also sufficiently transcendent and universal to embrace all human ideals and possibilities.

THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION
REFLECTED IN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL,
AND INTERNATIONAL SPHERES

THE ECONOMIC REALM

AS already noted, it was the assumption of bourgeois civilization that, in the economic realm, the welfare of all would be best served by the unrestrained pursuit by each individual of his own interests; the common good would be safeguarded by the automatic functioning of "laws of the market." This was the root principle of *laissez-faire*.

As a matter of fact, there was never a time when the economy of *laissez-faire* was in complete control. Since the beginning of the present century, a trend away from its rigorous application has been observable. State support and regulation more and more supplemented the operations of a free market. The necessity for such interference has become increasingly obvious since the First World War and especially in the days of the last great depression. Even in America, the insufficiency of liberal individualism for a large-scale economy under the dominance of rapid technical progress has become apparent. Economic crises become more frequent, more widespread, more disastrous. Chronic unemployment with its attendant misery and despair for large sections of the population, intolerable insecurity and fear for others, the dehumanizing effects of life bereft of meaning and hope for many—all these revealed the fundamental illness of the capitalist economy. At the same time, failure to maintain a sound balance between the potentialities of production and the

demands of consumption, and the necessity of bolstering private enterprise to prevent total collapse argued to the same conclusion. A revolutionary situation emerged. In more critical moments when the threatened breakdown of large industries endangered the whole national economy, even the most ruthless individualists in big business sought state intervention. In these moments, they welcomed the "socialization of their losses," though in the next moment, when the immediate danger had passed, they vigorously opposed any attempt by the state to create conditions which might forestall a recurrence. The present phase of economic development is determined primarily by state interference with the self-destructive mechanisms of the capitalist economy.

But state intervention was in most cases an ambiguous device: on the one hand, it saved the monopolistic system from complete collapse; on the other hand, it produced resentment in those who were saved by it because it limited their free use of economic power.

State interference was a half-way measure which, in the long run, could not survive. In Fascist countries, its contradictions were solved by an amalgamation of the leading monopolies with the state, and the dictatorial administration of both of them, though without abolition of private ownership. In Russia, private ownership of industry was completely abolished and the entire economy is dominated by a bureaucracy interested in furthering production and in the prestige and power associated with it, but not in private profits. In the United States, on the other hand, state interference has induced a growing reaction against the managing bureaucracy and a strong trend back toward industrial autonomy. In Great Britain, public opinion oscillates between the two extremes and seeks a third way in terms of an all-embracing scheme of social security with the maintenance of capitalist ownership. In the meantime, the economies of all countries have been brought into complete subservience to centralized war administrations.

The basic question in the present situation is: Shall mankind return to the monopolistic economy from which our present eco-

conomic, political, and psychological disintegration has resulted? Or shall mankind go forward to a unified economy which is neither totalitarianism nor a war expedient? If the former rulers are able to effect the first course against the demands of the masses for security, a re-enactment of the history of recent decades leading to a final catastrophe can be forecast. On the other hand, if the masses are powerful enough to force their way forward against the vested strength of the traditional rulers, the question will arise as to how a rational organization of world economy can be developed without the creation of a mechanism as oppressive as the "second nature" created by capitalism. In summary, how can security and a decent standard of life for all be attained according to the infinite productive power of mankind, without the complete mechanization and dehumanization of man? This is the question to which Christianity must seek to bring an answer.

Christianity cannot offer technical advice for economic planning, but that is not necessary. According to leading economists, the economic problem can no longer be regarded merely as a problem of perfecting economic techniques. The technical aspects of planning for stability and efficiency have been explored in all directions, both theoretically and practically. The problem of an economic system able to give security of permanent full employment and certainty of decent livelihood for all is much more largely in the realms of political and moral decisions. It is in the realms in which religious principles are decisive. Christianity can insist that the virtually infinite productive capacities of mankind shall be used for the advantage of everyone, instead of being restricted and wasted by the profit interests of a controlling class and the struggle for power between different groups within that class. Christianity should reveal and destroy the vicious circle of production of means as ends which in turn become means without any ultimate end. It must liberate man from bondage to an incalculable and inhuman system of production which absorbs the creative powers of his soul by ruthless competition, fear, despair, and the sense of utter meaninglessness. Christianity

must denounce equally a religious utopianism which talks about abolishing the profit motive by persuasion in order to evade necessary social transformation, and a religious escapism which proclaims a transcendent security of eternal values in order to divert the masses from their present economic insecurity. At the same time Christianity must reject totalitarian solutions of the economic problem insofar as they destroy spontaneity in the relations between man and his work and deprive the individual of his basic rights as a person. Christianity must support plans for economic reorganization which promise to overcome the antithesis of absolutism and individualism, even if such plans imply a revolutionary transformation of the present social structure and the liquidation of large vested interests.

POLITICS

Politics and economics cannot be separated. They are interdependent.

Democracy was the weapon with which the fighting bourgeoisie conquered absolutism. It was, however, a limited democracy. In England up to the present century, it was limited by restrictions as to the right to vote and by an aristocratic and exclusive system of education for and election to political leadership. In France after the Great Revolution, it was limited by the device of a census designed to safeguard the bourgeois upper classes against participation in the control of the nation by the disinherited masses. In the United States, it was limited by the tradition of a two-party system which prevented the industrial classes from becoming an independent political power and, in the South, by a poll tax which prevents the masses from influencing policy. In imperial Germany, the power of conservative Prussia and of the King-Emperor were effective checks upon the autonomy of the Reichstag. Alongside these limitations on democratic procedure, there were important outlets for the rising pressure of the masses—in America, the frontier and the inexhaustible resources of a continent; in France, the dominance of the petty-bourgeoisie and an incomplete industrialization; in Germany, a rapidly rising standard of life; in Britain, the colonial

empire and shrewd adjustment by the ruling classes to the needs of the hour.

Today, the situation has changed, partly through dislocation in the factors which made effective democracy possible, partly under rising pressure from the masses who have become restive under the impact of recent political and economic catastrophes and demand full participation in democratic processes. In large sections of the world, democracy has never existed. In many countries where it existed in varying degrees of strength, it has been destroyed. In still others, it has been saved by drastic modifications in original theory and practice. In all democratic countries, a marked anti-democratic trend is noticeable. There are three main expressions of this trend toward new forms of political life. In one, a single party attempts to gain totalitarian control over the entire nation, abolishing any democratic check upon its use of power—the Fascist type. In the second, aristocratic and monopolistic elements seek to strengthen their control by undermining democratic methods and a democratic faith—the reactionary type. In the third, a democratically established bureaucracy achieves more and more independence and creates the tools for a planned reorganization of society; the New Deal is representative of this type. By recourse to such measures democracy seems to be saved very much as capitalism was temporarily saved by recourse to state interference.

All these varied developments prove that the theory of liberalism has as limited possibilities in politics as in economics. It can work only under comparatively favorable conditions. Democracy presupposes a natural harmony between the different interests and, therefore, the likelihood of a satisfactory balance between them. When this balance is destroyed, democracy no longer works. More particularly, democracy is successful so long as the interests of different groups are harmonious to such a degree that the minority prefers acceptance of the majority decision to a revolutionary effort to overthrow it. When the point is reached where the minority no longer accepts the majority decision, democratic procedures fail. This may happen through the initiative of revolutionary groups from below or of reactionary

groups from above or, in the case of Fascism, by an alliance of revolutionary and reactionary elements at the middle.

The great political question which emerges in the present situation is: Can we return to democratic institutions which have been partially abolished, by the development of democracy itself? Can we turn backward while facing the gigantic task of reconstructing a world in ruins with millions of human beings at the limit of a tolerable human existence? If it is not possible to go back, must we go forward to a centralized world bureaucracy? Would that not mean the end of democratic procedures everywhere? And would that, in turn, not involve the exclusion of the common people from the establishment of a world which is supposed to be their world?

In seeking answers to these questions, a first requisite is to recognize the ambiguity in the term "democracy." *Democracy as a constitutional procedure* for the establishment of government is a political form which embraces a great variety of methods. It must be considered as a means to an end but not as an end in itself. It can be employed as long as it works successfully and no longer. *Democracy as a way of life* which does justice to the dignity of every human being is the basic principle of political ethics. But it may be that democracy in the latter sense can be realized only by a limitation or transformation of democracy in the first sense. Jefferson's prophecy that democratic procedures will work only as long as differences in power and property are not too great has been vindicated. New methods are demanded in order to save "the democratic way of life" in the ethical and religious sense. Such methods must effect a planned organization of society which is neither Fascist nor reactionary. Christianity must support them as it must support corresponding plans for social security and a higher standard of life. Christianity must support both, not by technical or legal suggestions, but primarily by the creation of a new community which can find expression in political forms. Christianity must not identify itself with any particular political form, whether feudalism or bureaucratic patriarchy or democracy. It cannot sanction democratic forms

which disguise the destruction of community and personality. It cannot accept the double-faced Leviathan whether he presents himself through democratic or authoritarian structures. Christianity must declare that, in the next period of history, those political forms are right which are able to produce and maintain a community in which chronic fear of a miserable and meaningless life for the masses is abolished, and in which every man participates creatively in the self-realization of the community, whether local, national, regional, or international.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Thus the problem of international relations is raised.

The present international situation shows one fact with unchallengeable finality: The division of the world into a large number of states, each possessed of unlimited sovereignty and right of self-determination, does not effect what was expected of it—a balance of power according to the principle of automatic harmony. The present international situation, not less than the economic and political situations, is the definitive refutation of that principle. This is true not only of continental Europe where it is most obvious but also of the Americas and Asia and the Middle East. It is true of all sections of the world, just because today "world" is a historical reality.

Balance of power was the obvious principle for relations between nations at a time when the unity of the Holy Roman Empire had disintegrated and a number of independent sovereign states had appeared. Just as in economics and politics the former bases of unity were replaced by the theory of automatic harmony, so in the world scene the religious cohesions were replaced by the assumedly automatic harmonies of sovereign states. There is always a measure of natural balance of power in life, but the "balance of power" theory goes beyond this natural adjustment between all the forces of life. Moreover, it presupposed a second principle, that of national sovereignty. Logically the two principles are contradictory; only a powerful belief in pre-established

harmony could assume their compatibility. This confidence was not wholly misplaced. As the frontier situation in America was the most favorable condition for liberal democracy, so the economic world-frontier situation of early capitalism was the most favorable condition for the balance of power. In a world with practically infinite spaces for external development and equally infinite possibilities for internal development, conflicts between states, though not avoidable, were not fatal in their consequences. Always some nations were not involved; wars between nations did not become global wars. World was still an idea but not yet a reality.

Today, world is a reality. The conflict between absolute national sovereignty and automatic harmony expressed through the balance of power has become manifest. The more internal and external extension by individual nations was blocked by world competition and the industrial development of backward and subject peoples, the sharper and more sanguine became international conflicts. The formation of the League of Nations was a recognition of the breakdown of natural harmonies in international relations. But the League, like state interference in economics and bureaucracy in domestic politics, was a half-way measure. It sought to limit sovereignty, but on the basis of the recognition of sovereignty. The League members retained final sovereign rights. Thus it saved the principle of sovereignty as state interference saved the principles of monopolistic production. And in similar fashion, it evoked resentment in some sovereign nations guaranteed by it, just as state interference evoked resentment in monopolist capitalists who were maintained by it.

In comparison with the ambiguity of the League of Nations, Fascism attempted a radical solution. It wiped out lesser sovereign states and created unity by conquest and economic consolidation. This destruction of sovereignty and balance of power by military occupation may produce a trend back to absolute sovereignty. Hate of the conquerors by the subjugated peoples is already leading to an increase of national fanaticism and self-reliance. It is ominous that in Asia enmity toward the white

race drives in the same direction, toward intensified nationalism and exaggerated claims of absolute sovereignty. In the meantime, the necessity of achieving world unity tempts the victor nations to establish a centralized system of world domination under their control, but raises the question whether one group of nations can establish unity in the world without destroying creative freedom throughout the world. In still other quarters, there are efforts to find a "third way" in terms of "federation."

To the latter Christianity may lend its support as it must support the third way in economics and domestic politics. But Christianity must raise the question: What is the realistic basis of federation? Without a common ground in the substance of social life, federation cannot survive. Such a unifying basis may be found in the first instance in the obvious economic interdependence of all the nations. Indeed, the problem of international relations is much more likely to be solved by this emphasis than by a direct attack upon national prejudices and loyalties which may well be aggravated rather than allayed by the war. But beyond the undermining of absolute sovereignty through stressing the economic unity of mankind, Christianity must stress the necessity of a common spirit within each federation of nations.

THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION IN THE INTELLECTUAL REALM

FROM PHILOSOPHY TO NATURAL SCIENCES

IN the *first period* of modern history, the realm of knowledge and philosophy was the most important for discerning the deeper character of the age. Here belief in autonomous reason declared and justified itself to the mind of man. Reason was conceived as the organ of truth, in philosophy as well as in science, in the humanities as well as in psychology and sociology. The development of reason as the quest for truth was identified with the development of humanity. If every individual surrenders himself to the search for knowledge, truth will be discovered, and a "natural system" of thought and action will be established. Truth was conceived as the truth about life as a whole, embracing politics, ethics, æsthetics, religion. Although mathematics furnished a pattern of method, all realms of being and meaning were to be included in the construction of the "natural system of thought and life." The eighteenth century delighted to call itself the "philosophical century," not because it was productive of great systems but because it sought to bring every aspect of life within the sway of philosophy, in both theory and practice. Thus reason in the eighteenth century was revolutionary reason. It was not interested in describing what is merely because it is, but because it supplies materials for the reconstruction of society in conformity to what is natural and reasonable.

Very different was the outlook of the *nineteenth century*. The

gargantuan mechanism of an industrial civilization was swelling to the height of its power and bringing every aspect of thought as well as life under its sway, thus radically transforming the guiding principles of the human mind as well as the actual conditions of human existence. Reacting against the revolutionary rationalism of the eighteenth century, the spirit of the times became skeptical, positivistic, and conservative in every respect with the single exception of technical science. The natural sciences furnished the pattern for all knowledge, and also for practical life and religion. Science itself became positivistic: reality must simply be accepted as it is; no rational criticism of it is permissible. The so-called "fact" and its adoration replaced the "meaning" and its interpretation. Statistics replaced norms. Material replaced structure. Logical possibilities replaced existential experience. The quest for truth became a method of foreseeing the future instead of creating it. Rational truth was replaced by instincts and pragmatic beliefs. And the instincts and beliefs were those of the ruling classes and their conventions. Philosophy was largely restricted to epistemology. It became the servant of technical progress, its scientific foundations and its economic control. Following the breakdown of belief in rational truth as the determining factor in life, "technical reason"—not aspiring to provide truth but merely to furnish means toward the realization of ends determined by instincts and will—became decisive throughout the world as far as the dominance of Western influences reaches.

The general trend in the first two periods of the modern development is clearly reflected in men's attempts to interpret themselves. It is the story of man's estrangement from himself and of his efforts to return to himself. After he had divided human nature into two distinct realities after the manner of Descartes—the "thinking self" and the "extended self"—he detached his thought from each of these realities and made each of them objects alongside other objects to be analyzed and subjected to general laws as he might analyze and classify a stone or an amoeba. His physical mechanism, without spontaneity, and his

psychological mechanism, without freedom, were separated from each other and then, one after the other, treated as elements in the universal mechanism of nature, in terms either of physical mechanics or of mechanistic psychology or of a metaphysical mechanism assumed to underlie both. In this fashion, the living unity of all human existence became lost in the process of man's self-interpretation. Man had become a part of the abstract mechanism he himself had created for purposes of control. He had become a part of the machine into which he had transformed himself and his world in both theory and practice. In order to establish control of reality for mechanical ends, man had lost himself. This self-estrangement was the price he had to pay modern science and economy.

To be sure, there were always reactions against the dominant tendency—old feudal and new mass revolts against the practical dehumanization of life, old idealistic and new vitalistic protests against the loss of spontaneity, of creativity, of concreteness in conceptions of man's being and of reality generally. But these reactions were suppressed as long as the bourgeois spirit was mounting in power and the contradictions of bourgeois civilization were not yet apparent. The tremendous success of natural and technical sciences doomed every theoretical protest against their universal applicability to futility.

THE AESTHETIC REALM

As we might expect, it was in the æsthetic realm that the same all-embracing tendencies found most sensitive and extreme manifestation. And, in accordance with a principle we noted earlier, it was in the field of the arts that the reaction from the dominance of a technical civilization and its consequences for personality first became evident.

Naturalism in literature and art accompanied the triumph of the mechanistic economy of large-scale production and its theoretical counterpart, the mechanization of all reality. Aesthetic naturalism, like scientific naturalism, started with the realm of objective reality. *Realism* was the depiction in word and color of a world under the domination of mechanism, the "second

nature." But it revealed both the enmity between man and his creation and the gulf between man and man in the prevailing society. Inevitably there was a strong reaction against realism. It threatened the society which for decades had sought to cover its brutal reality with idealistic pretensions. Thus naturalism retreated into the realm of the subjective, trying to describe the impression reality makes upon the sensual subject. *Impressionism* is subjective naturalism which uses objective reality with all its distortions and horrors as material for æsthetic intuition. It is a method of escape, available only to those belonging directly or indirectly to the ruling groups, into a sphere of *l'art pour l'art* in which æsthetics becomes an end in itself and man's alienation from himself is forgotten through pure æsthetic enjoyment. Thus æsthetic naturalism had a double significance. On the one hand, it was an expression of the general development of the second period, supporting its dominant trend toward a mechanized world. On the other hand, it was also a disclosure of the self-alienation of man in this period, and thus has contributed to the revolutionary reactions of the succeeding epoch.

Naturalism in its two forms was the great creative style of nineteenth-century art and literature. To be sure, it was not the only one. Romantic and classical opposition were always present since bourgeois society was never all-embracing. But only those æsthetic works showed creativity and progress which either were in harmony with the general trend toward a mechanized naturalism or anticipated revolutionary opposition to it. Idealism in art and philosophy was cultivated by the middle-class creators of the "second nature" as a veil over the naturalistic face of Leviathan. When the veil was torn away by the contradictions of history and the rapid proletarianization of this group, they often became principal supporters of Fascism.

The development from the second to the *third* period is revealed in the realm of art by expressionism and surrealism. It is worthy of note that the artists and writers of the early twentieth century showed an almost prophetic sensitivity to the catastrophes soon to come. They turned away from naturalism in both its forms, either in the more mystical manner of expressionism or

in the more demonic-fantastic fashion of surrealism. *Expressionism* has been well characterized as the warning of the earthquake which was approaching. In *surrealism*, the mechanisms of bourgeois society are used and cut into fragments at the same time, the real world disappears and objectivity is transformed into a phantasmagoria constructed out of pieces and fragments of the bourgeois reality. A panic-driven humanity reveals the doom of its world in its artistic and poetic creations.

THE RISE OF EXISTENTIALISM

Since the close of the nineteenth century, the breakdown of mechanistic naturalism in all fields of knowledge has become apparent. History, psychology, biology, physics and even mathematics entered a period of crisis with respect to their true foundations, their interrelations, and their meaning for life. A unifying truth was sought, a truth not merely theoretical but also practical. Philosophy itself helped to prepare the new situation. Against the imperious reign of technical reason yielding the detached impersonal knowledge of mechanistic naturalism, there arose the demand for knowledge concerned with life in which the very existence of the knower himself is involved. "Existential truth" was the new goal. A truth which concerns us as living, deciding men has a character quite different from the truth which reason, whether humanistic reason or technical reason, was supposed to provide. It is not general truth to be accepted by everyone on the basis of his rational nature. It cannot be gained by detached analysis and verifiable hypothesis. It is particular truth claiming validity on the basis of its adequacy to the concrete situation. Existential truth in its many forms has one common trait: it has no criterion beyond fruitfulness for life. The dismissal of reason as guide to truth is the surrender of any objective standard of truth. Consequently the only basis of decision between contradictory claims to represent concrete truth is a pragmatic test: the power of an "existential truth" to make itself universal, if need be by force. Thus political power could become the standard of possession of truth.

Truth which concerns life, it was claimed, must originate in

life. But, whose life? The "philosophies of existence" are as different from each other as the experiences out of which the various philosophers of existence interpret reality. It can be the ethical existence of the anxious and lonely individual concerned about eternity, as with Kierkegaard. It can be the revolutionary existence of the disinherited proletariat concerned about its future, as with Marx. It can be the existence of the dominating aristocracy concerned about its power over life, as with Nietzsche. It can be the existence of the vital intuitionist concerned about the fullness of experience, as with Bergson. It can be the existence of the experimenting pragmatist, as with James. It can be the faithful existence of the religious activist, as with apostles of the Social Gospel. In each of these definitions of existence, truth has a different content; but in each of them truth is a matter of fate and decision, not of detached observation or of ultimate rational principles. Nevertheless, it is claimed to be truth, possessing universal validity though not general necessity. It is supposed to be verifiable by subsequent experience, although not in the fashion of scientific experimentation. **1976491**

The issue of existential truth has arisen and cannot be silenced. But it is ambiguous. On the one hand, it represents a protest against the mechanism of production to which reason as a principle of truth has been surrendered. On the other hand, through existential truth the mechanism, the "second nature," is greatly strengthened. For existential truth also surrenders reason and uses only technical rationality for its non-rational purposes. It dissolves the criterion of truth and with it the safeguard against irrational forces.

Truth in this sense concerns human existence as such, and not specialized knowledge except insofar as the latter is dependent, directly or indirectly, upon decision about the nature and meaning of human existence. "Existential truth" need not interfere with methods of empirical research; it does interfere with the interpretation of the meaning of such research and its results. It does interfere with the foundations of knowledge, with man's understanding of himself and his situation in the world.

The issue, therefore, concerns not only philosophy but also all

realms of knowledge. The steady progress of knowledge in the special sciences is not questioned, but their relation to other sciences, to truth as such, to the totality of life, to the meaning of existence. It is the issue of the right relation between empirical and existential knowledge.

In practice, it is always difficult to draw a clear line between empirical and existential knowledge. The totalitarian systems have drawn a boundary in such fashion that everything with direct bearing upon technical processes and therefore on the power it supplies over nature and man is left outside of the question of existence. Technical science is not interfered with. Its task is merely to produce tools by which "existential truths" may be carried into reality. All other realms of life have lost their autonomy and are required to express the chosen existential truth. Thus, in the third period of modern society, technical reason is employed to execute the commands of an existential decision above which there is no rational criterion. The vitalistic interpretation with its irrationalism is radically opposed to the revolutionary interpretation with its cold use of reason for chosen ends—a basic contrast between Fascism and Communism. But in both cases, the idea of truth is grounded in a particular type of human existence which claims to have discovered an existential truth which is at the same time universal.

The abuses of existential thinking and the self-estranged position of reason demand an answer in which existential truth and ultimate truth are united. A very similar demand faced Christianity in its earliest period when Greek rationality, empty of all vitality and relevance for life, met a new existential truth springing from the experience and faith of the young Christian community. At this critical moment in its history, Christianity found an answer in its Logos doctrine. It pointed to a concrete event which it passionately proclaimed as both existential and universal truth for every man—the specific and concrete embodiment of the ultimate divine reason. "Jesus the Christ is the

Logos." In this brief formula, early Christianity united, at least in principle, existential and rational truth.

The present world situation puts an essentially parallel problem before Christianity. It must give essentially the same answer, though in different terms and with different intellectual tools. Above all, Christianity must seek to develop the church toward an inclusive reality which unites different existential interpretations as far as they are compatible with each other and with Christian principles. The more the church succeeds in this, the more readily can it receive rational truth as an inherent part of Christian faith. If rational truth, with its contributions to the different realms of knowledge, is excluded, Christian faith necessarily becomes sectarian and exclusive. If existential truth with its practical bearing on religious and ethical activity is excluded, Christian faith becomes relativistic and sterile. Only by a proper union of the two can the intellectual needs of our present world situation be met.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION

CHRISTIANITY is a faith and a movement far older than bourgeois society. In its nineteen centuries of history, it has had to come to terms with the most diverse cultures and philosophies. Inevitably it has adapted itself to the development of modern civilization in its three successive phases. But the relation of Christianity to any culture can never be adequately interpreted merely in terms of adaptation. By the very nature of its message, it must seek to transcend every particular historical situation, and history demonstrates that the church has in fact succeeded always in maintaining some measure of independence. Therefore, the role of Christianity today can be seen as one of both adaptation to, and transcendence over, the present world situation.

DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

Insofar as Christianity has adjusted itself to the character of modern society, it is able to bring only a very incomplete answer to its problems, for Christianity, as it has been drawn into the destructive contradictions of the present stage of history, is itself a part of the problem. In some measure this is true of the church in every age. But it is especially important in the present period because the latter by nature has less affinity to a Christian order of life than former periods.

Indeed, in the later Middle Ages and at the Reformation, religion itself helped to prepare the soil for the growth of autonomy in all realms of life. Religion revolted against the totalitarian control exercised by the Roman church. Through the pre-Reformation and Reformation attacks upon Catholic authoritarianism, religion paved the way for the autonomous national state and the independence of science, economics, and the arts. Religion liberated personality and community from hierarchical control. Above all, religion freed itself from ecclesiastical bondage.

But in so doing, religion helped to create alongside itself a secular sphere which step by step invaded and mastered the religious sphere. Thus religion itself became secularized and was drawn into the conflicts and contradictions of the new society. This process can be clearly discerned in every major aspect of that society.

The growth of secular *arts* independent of the church not only impoverished the religious arts but secularized them. They became secular arts with a religious content instead of religious art with a universal content. We have noted this transformation in the development from Giotto through Titian and Rembrandt to the various schools of contemporary painting. Indeed from a religious perspective, expressionism may be interpreted as an attempt toward a new religious style and a new fusion of religion and art. The failure of this attempt proves that contemporary life cannot be expressed in a genuine religious style. Christianity cannot change this situation merely by ritual reforms however useful they may be. A new unity of cult and art is necessary and this can be effected only if the present separation of the secular realm from the religious realm is overcome. Religious art presupposes a religious reality embodying a transcendent source and a spiritual center. The totalitarian attempts to create such a reality on a limited and immanent basis have produced only a few fragments of quasi-religious art. Their sterility in this respect proves that they lack any ultimate and universal significance. But at least they have sensed the problem, while the problem of

religious art as the expression of true religious reality has not yet been widely recognized within the Christian churches.

The emergence of autonomous *personalities* and *communities* has virtually destroyed true religious personality and community.

With the supremacy of autonomous reason, the transcendent center of personal life was destroyed and personality was broken into divergent elements, the unity of which was partially maintained by the continuing hold of traditional beliefs or by conventional and technical demands. Within the religious sphere, personality fought a desperate struggle against dissolution. From Pascal's protests against the Cartesian mechanization of human existence to Kierkegaard's passionate affirmation of the "existential personality," the person in the crisis of decision about his eternal destiny, and Dostoevski's vivid contrast between Jesus' personal confrontation with God and the Inquisitor's secular arrogance, the battle to maintain true religious personality continued. But, for the most part, theology did not follow these prophets because its effort was mainly one of negative resistance. In this attempt some present-day theology has returned to antiquated forms of orthodoxy and produced a fighting type of religious personality great in its negations but weak in its affirmations. For example, Barth sought to save Christian personality from both secular disintegration and totalitarian mechanization, but did not produce a new type of personal life. His movement did not attempt to master the new Leviathan but rather retired before it, and thus left the field to the fanatical dynamics of the totalitarian "impersonal personality."

Religious community, prepared by the lay movements of the later Middle Ages and carried to fulfilment by the Reformation and sectarianism, was another victim of the development. Religious community must be grounded upon objective beliefs and sacraments. It can be created for a short time by collective enthusiasm but it cannot endure in this form. It requires "objectivity." And, since the rise of autonomous reason, there was no universally potent objectivity except the mechanical objectivity of a technical process. Therefore religious community was largely

destroyed, as was religious personality, because a determining spiritual center was lacking. There was, and still is, a religiously colored society, but there is no true religious community. The general religious background of society resists the destructive influence of naturalism as long as the background persists. But when it has exhausted itself, the way is open for new totalitarian systems. Totalitarianism, especially in its early phases, produced fighting groups with an absolute faith, an unconditional devotion, and a dominating spiritual center. They are neither religious communities nor religious societies, but fanatical orders with quasi-religious features in which both personality and community are swallowed up.

Especially clear and important is the situation in the *intellectual realm*. The triumph of autonomous knowledge, particularly in the natural sciences, has pushed aside religious knowledge. Either it is repudiated altogether or it is relegated to a corner, or it is transformed by secular interpretations. The last fate is the most disastrous just because it appears to preserve the whole body of Christian truth. In reality it alters the meaning of all beliefs. It makes them a phase of secular knowledge, knowledge which deals only with *some* objects within the whole of reality or with *some* subjective processes mainly in the sphere of feeling. Religious ideas are drawn down to the level of physical or psychological objects. God comes to be thought of as one being alongside other beings, even though the highest. Christ is regarded merely as an historical person whose character and very existence are at the mercy of the conclusions of historical research, very much as God's existence and nature are matters of scientific research or of human value-judgments. Faith becomes one emotion among others, or a lower level of cognitive apprehension; it conveys probability but not certainty; its objects may exist or they may not. These transmutations bring religious knowledge into subjection to rational knowledge, and thus destroy its ultimate character. Oscillating between a doubtful objectivity and an unsubstantiated subjectivity, religious knowledge loses its authority. No longer does it express the presence in

every reality of the transcendent source of being and meaning; rather it deals with particular realities, the existence and nature of which are matters either of argument or of irrational belief. But neither the way of argument nor the irrational way of vindicating religious knowledge is able to shake the grip of technical rationality, the former because it remains within the presuppositions of technical reason, the latter because irrationalism is only a negative denial of a false rationalism and is therefore unable to create anything new.

It is a well-known fact that this process of secularization has affected all of the great religions. Inasmuch as the influence of Western civilization has penetrated most sections of the world, religious faith has lost its power and the danger of a naturalistic quasi-theology threatens all nations. The absence of a Christian theology able to express an ultimate reality and spiritual center in terms of religious belief has produced skepticism and cynicism regarding all questions of ultimate concern.

Totalitarianism has sensed this situation, and has formulated doctrines and symbols supposed to express an ultimate reality. It has tried to indoctrinate its followers with an "existential truth." But this ultimate is not truly ultimate because it does not transcend relative interests and concerns. It tries to invest a particular loyalty with unconditional validity. On the one hand, the totalitarian "theologies" reveal the final result of the discredit of genuine religious truth by technical rationality. On the other hand, they disclose the powerful desire to break through this situation to new ultimate beliefs and loyalties.

The fate of religious knowledge is symptomatic of the fate of the churches. The Christian church should furnish the answers thrust forth by the present situation in the economic, political, and international orders. But the churches largely lack that power because they themselves have become instruments of state, nation, and economy. After the shattering of the authoritarian control of Roman Catholicism, national churches replaced the one church. They were supported either by the state or by the dominant groups in society—the former predominantly in Eu-

rope, the latter especially in America. In both situations, the churches largely surrendered their critical freedom. They tended to become agencies of either the state or the ruling classes. Therefore they were unable to conquer the Leviathan of modern industry, or the liberal dissolution of community, or the nationalistic disruption of the world. In large measure, they became social agencies for the safeguarding of accepted moral standards. In this fashion, their influence was to support the governing classes and the existing social order, even when criticizing them within the general presuppositions of bourgeois culture. Only prophetic individuals and revolutionary groups attacked the system as such; the official churches did not follow. The latter exposed the evils of a class society; they sought to transcend the national divisions of mankind; they struggled against the disintegration of liberal individualism. But they did not recognize or understand the deeper nature of the system which they tried to improve.

Inevitably, the totalitarian attack on the system became an attack on the churches. Indeed, the totalitarian movements put themselves in the place of the church; they cannot be rightly understood apart from their semi-ecclesiastical pretensions. Since they offer an all-controlling idea, however demonic it may be, they are in fact serious competitors of the church. Their attacks on the Christian churches are thoroughly consistent. They can never tolerate a church with an absolute claim in competition with their own.

The problem for the church implicit in this situation is tremendous, especially for the Protestant churches, and most especially for liberal Protestantism. Protestant orthodoxy can hold aloof from the present world situation, at least to a considerable extent. Roman Catholicism can look forward to the moment when anti-Christian totalitarianism will be replaced by a revived Catholic totalitarianism. Liberal Protestantism can go neither way. It must, however, solve the problem of its relation to the present stage of civilization. It must not return to a position of servant to a social and cultural system whose contradictions have

now become manifest. On the other hand it must not follow the totalitarian way in either its pagan or its Catholic form. Only if liberal Protestantism becomes truly "catholic" can it meet the needs of the hour.

CHRISTIAN ACCEPTANCE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF REASON

Christianity has not only adapted itself to the contemporary world in its dominant aspects. In many respects and to varying degrees, Christianity has transcended modern culture. It has attempted to preserve its authentic message despite all ecclesiastical and secular distortions. Christianity is not only a part of the contemporary world; it is also a protest against it and an effort to transform it by the power of Christian faith. This is true in both the intellectual and the practical realms, with respect to both belief and life.

First of all, it must be emphasized that Christianity has accepted the reign of reason not only as a factor in the secular world to which it must seek adjustment, but also as an agency for its own regeneration. The acceptance and employment of reason as the principle of truth have dissolved certain orthodox "stumbling blocks" which had not been touched by the Reformation but rather had been more firmly anchored by the scholastic dogmatism into which Reformation thought hardened. Thus reason has enabled Christian theology to face fresh questions and seek new answers in the light of contemporary insights and problems. Historical criticism of the Bible has liberated Christian truth from legendary, superstitious, and mythical elements in the historic tradition. The honest radicalism of this work of Christian self-criticism is something new in church history and brought values never before recognized or accepted. Without it, Christianity could not have confronted the modern mind and made its message intelligible and relevant to that mind. Much the same may be said of more recent inquiries into the psychological and sociological roots and processes of Christian thought and action.

All this, however, would not have sufficed to protect Christian truth from complete adaptation to the prevailing intellectual milieu. The Christian message itself had to be borne through the high tide of technical rationality. This has been done in three principal alternative ways which we may call the "preserving," the "mediating," and the "dialectical" types. Each type has many varieties. The first is represented by *traditional theology* in either strictly orthodox and fundamentalist form or in the form of moderate adaptation to the new influences, adaptation of structure but not of matter. It is due to this type of Christian interpretation that the treasures of the past have been preserved through a period when for many there was no possible way of comprehending them. The second type is represented by the so-called *school of mediation* from Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Ritschl through liberal theology to certain current formulations of ecumenical theology. These are distinguished from humanism by their refusal to adapt Christianity entirely to the demands of current vogues. They are distinguished from orthodoxy by their readiness to re-examine all theological issues in the light of the questions of our day. It is due to this type of Christian reinterpretation that theology has continued a living power in the Church and the world. The third type is represented by Kierkegaard and his followers who, though themselves shaped by the modern world, are aware of the dangers of adaptation and mediation. The *dialectical approach* rejects the otherworldliness through which the first type seeks to preserve the Christian tradition. It breaks the protecting shell to reveal the relevance of its content to our time. But it does not intercept this content through the ideas of our period; thus it differs from the second type. Rather, it relates them to each other in radical criticism. In this sense, it is dialectical. It delights to declare "No" and "Yes" in the same breath. It is due to this type of Christian interpretation that both the dangers of all adaptations to current thought and also the riches and profundities of tradition have again become visible within the churches. But the danger of the dialectical method has also appeared. When this type of theo-

logical thinking tried to become constructive, it simply relapsed into the mere reiteration of tradition. It became "neo-orthodoxy."

Not only in the theoretical but also in the practical realm, Christianity has used reason as an instrument of self-regeneration. Reason has completed the religious emancipation of the layman which had been begun by the Reformation but had been halted among the orthodox Protestant churches. Following the abolition of the priest's rule, it has broken the minister's rule. The Enlightenment was in certain respects a Protestant lay movement. As such it produced new ideals of personality and community. In many parts of the world it destroyed the patriarchal form of community with all its implications for sex relations, for family, and for the workshop. Reason has accomplished much the same emancipation for Christian personality. It has opened it to receive the riches of humanism. It has released the suppressed levels of personal life. It has freed the individual from cruel religious absolutism.

However, Christianity would have been drawn wholly within bourgeois society if it had only used and had not also transcended reason in its practical application. Christian faith had to maintain true Christian life over against the demonic powers of the modern world. This, likewise, was accomplished in three alternative ways, analogous to the three types of theological reinterpretation—the pietistic or evangelical, the ethical, and the paradoxical types. *Pietism* in all its varieties has preserved the warmth, intensity, and creative power of personal relation to God. It has poured forth spiritual vitality in many directions. It is due to the evangelical tradition that elements of early Christian enthusiasm have never been wholly absent in the churches of the modern period. The *ethical* type, corresponding to the mediating school in theology, is the most influential in contemporary Christianity. It is not mere morals, as the mediating theology is not mere humanism. In it personal religion and ethical concern are so joined that religion is measured by ethical fruits and the ethical life receives its impulse from religion. It is due to this type of practical Christianity that the latter was able to penetrate dif-

erent areas of cultural life and for a long time guard modern society from complete relapse into nationalistic paganism. But the inadequacies of the merely ethical form of Christian life became so obvious that a third type arose, corresponding to the dialectical school of theology. The *paradoxical* (or, in Kierkegaard's phrase, the "existential") type transcends both the ethical and the pietistic types. It makes religion the measure of ethics, rather than the reverse, stressing the paradoxical character of all individual Christian existence, denied and affirmed by God at the same time. For the same reason, it transcends the pietistic type which is more interested in intensity of religious experience than in the paradoxical action of God.

Through this resistance of Christianity, both theoretical and practical, against the complete domination of technical reason and technical economy over human life, the church has succeeded in maintaining an authentic spirituality and transcendence. Despite its partial secularization, the church has profoundly influenced "Christian" nations and secular culture. Its very existence was and is a signpost pointing beyond the mechanism created by man's technical skill and now turned against man's freedom and fulfillment. Through preaching, education, and action, the churches have exerted a largely subconscious effect upon both masses and individuals. This often unrecognized influence became strikingly visible in the resistance of the Christian masses to the attempts by pagan totalitarianisms to replace Christianity by tribal cults. Moreover, despite the adaptation of the churches to modern society, they have produced individuals who recognized, exposed, and attacked the system and all Christian subservience to it. The deeper meaning of the present world situation is not unknown to many individuals and groups within the churches. Indeed, against the nationalistic opposition to the religious and cultural unification of mankind, the Christian churches have created the ecumenical movement uniting Christians of all countries, Christian and non-Christian, enslaved and free. This movement is the only world unity left in the present demonic disruption of humanity.

GUIDEPOSTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER

IT is not within the province of this essay to attempt the Christian answer to the questions posed by an analysis of the present world situation. However, certain points which must guide the answer may be indicated.

1. One thing is certain: The Christian message to the contemporary world will be a true, convincing, and transforming message only insofar as it is born out of the depths of our present historical situation. No single thinker or theological movement can plumb the depths of the *world* situation. No merely theoretical group and no merely practical group, no one in America or Russia or China or Europe alone, can claim to comprehend the depths of the present *world* situation. The depths are not simply the depths of suffering or of profound insight or of proletarian revolution or of personal communion, but something of all of these, and more. The more a Christian group embraces elements from all these different aspects of the present world, the more adequately will it comprehend the true questions and formulate right answers. This means that the Christian church can speak authoritatively and effectively to our world today only as it is truly "ecumenical," that is, universal.

2. Next, the Christian answer must accept the modern development as an historic fact which cannot be evaded or reversed, and which, like every historic destiny, is ambiguous in its meaning and value. Our analysis has dealt primarily with the negative features of modern culture, its contradictions and aberrations which demand answers. The answers themselves must acknow-

edge and accept the positive contributions of the modern period. Here the principal point is the elevation of reason as the principle of truth above all forms of authoritarianism and obscurantism. This is a truly Christian issue even if it be fought out largely in humanistic terms. Christian faith which proclaims Christ as "Logos" cannot reject reason as the principle of truth and justice. The Christian answer must be framed with full recognition that the gains of the bourgeois period must not be lost from the future of mankind.

3. Furthermore, the Christian message must be illumined by the insight that the tragic self-destruction of our present world is the result not simply of the particular contradictions bred by that world but also of the contradictions which characterize human life always. History shows that, over and over again, the achievements of man, as though by a logic of tragedy, turn against man himself. This was true of the great creative achievements of sacramental faith as well as of the achievements of technical reason. Therefore the Christian message cannot anticipate a future situation devoid of tragedy even if the demonic forces in the present situation be conquered. The authentic Christian message is never utopian, whether through belief in progress or through faith in revolution.

4. Again, Christianity does not give its answer in terms of religious escapism. Rather it affirms that the influences of divine grace are never absent from each historical situation. It relates them directly or indirectly to the history of divine revelation and especially its central reality—Jesus Christ. It repudiates a tendency among many people, Christians and humanists, to withdraw from the struggles of our time. Christianity faces the future unafraid.

5. Lastly, the Christian answer must be at the same time both theoretical and practical. It will have reality only if it is the answer in action as well as in interpretation of men and women deeply involved in wrestling with the times. Despite the measure of their bondage to the present world situation, the Christian churches are the historical group through which the answer must be given.

For Further Reading

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