

# HUMANISM

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## PART I

### HUMANISM OUTLINED

1. *The Absolute Uniqueness of each Person's Philosophy.*

**A** PHILOSOPHY is the outgrowth of the unique nature and experience of the philosopher. The unique human equation cannot be removed from a philosophical system. Therefore, philosophy is not one but many. This pluralism of human outlook shows the futility of seeking a universally valid cosmic point of view. Hence the humanist is at once egocentric in that he consciously looks out upon life through his own windows, and essentially modest in that he is unwilling to read the impressions and ideas of individual persons into cosmic life as a whole. So he regards philosophy as a useful instrument, but as basically personal and improvable.

2. *Life Is in the Making and We Are Participants in the Process.*

(a) The complement of the uniqueness of each person's philosophy is in the multiple and evolving nature of life itself. Life is a complex of personal and other-than personal processes, which so interpenetrate that neither can be regarded as "higher" than the other. Hence "personality" cannot be segregated and held to be more worthwhile than the "impersonal processes."

(b) To the humanist creative evolution is a fact, not a mere figure of speech. He takes evolution seriously, and so refuses to "sew up the Universe" or to "put the end in the beginning." New levels of creation actually result in new things, not in a mere readjustment of old things.

(c) The cause of the evolutionary process is not a push from below nor a pull from above but a creative impulse within. Life processes are not mechanistic, but organic. A machine is built of inflexible parts; an organism is flexible and self-regulative. The moves of the parts of machinery are caused by anterior moves. The moves of the parts of an organism are caused by anterior moves, by inner changes, and by future possibilities, that is, by ideas and ideals. The humanist believes mightily in the causal nature of things yet to be.

3. *The Intelligent Control of Materials, Processes and Ideals for Human Ends.*

Humanism is not merely a method of solving the problem of knowing, but an attitude towards the problem of making life rich and full and glorious. It finds the test of worth in contribution to human well-being. Its basic method of personal and social progress is intelligent co-operation with and control of life processes. The technique of co-operation and control must be worked out experimentally, and altered in the light of subsequent experience. But always the primary aim is central, viz., *human well-being*.

More in detail, the fundamentals of humanism are: (1) the authority of evidence, (2) the supremacy of intelligence, (3) the validity of freedom, (4) the leadership of the competent, and (5) the commonwealth of man. Let us see what these fundamentals involve.

I. THE AUTHORITY OF EVIDENCE

Man has always tended to rely on authority of one sort or another. With some men, authority has rested in various externals—as oracles, seers, teachers, institutions, books, creeds, and the like. With others, authority has been internal—as conscience, inner light, sense of ought, pure reason,

and the like. But the tendency is more and more to rely on evidence; that is, on facts reasonably interpreted. Throughout practical life the authority of evidence is very generally accepted. Throughout the world of science evidence is the sole authority. Jurisprudence presupposes loyalty to evidence. It has been said that the most important of all distinctions is that between the questions: Might it not be so? and What evidence is there that it is so? Thomas Huxley said, "The deepest sin against the human mind is to believe things without evidence."

Religious beliefs for the most part have been founded not on carefully weighed evidence but on uncriticised desire, ecstatic experience, and false logic. Authoritarian creeds usually consist primarily of pronouncements in regard to things unknown if not unknowable, and secondarily with man's conduct in view of the primary pronouncements. But thus far there is not a shred of competent evidence in regard to the nature and purpose of ultimate reality. Hence a conduct-creed based on such pronouncements is a house of straw on shifting sand. Only man's sound instincts have saved him from the utter scandal of committing his body as well as his soul to such precarious dwellings. A healthy nature has saved many a man from the logical consequences of his formal professions.

So unfounded in point of evidence are the authoritarian systems of religion that in my judgment they may well be left out of account in the new formula-

tion. We do not need a paraphrase of Calvinism, an anemic counterfeit orthodoxy, but a new departure that will depart as far from the creeds of the pre-scientific age as can be justified by the evidence at hand. This may reduce the number of our beliefs; but it is better to have fewer beliefs than to have so many that are not true.

The genuine humanist is willing to follow the evidence wherever its reasonable interpretation may lead. He makes no reservations. There are no forbidden fields. Though the evidence slay him, yet will he follow it, firm in the belief that fact is better than fiction, that truth is better than error, that the uneasy struggle for knowledge is better than the peace that possesseth understanding. In fact, he wants very little to do with the peace that passeth understanding; he wants a peace that is understandable and that is understood.

## II. THE SUPREMACY OF INTELLIGENCE

Closely related to the authority of evidence is the supremacy of intelligence. The function of evidence is to reveal the truth. The function of intelligence is to control conduct in harmony with the desirable possibilities revealed by the truth.

The acceptance of the supremacy of intelligence has far-reaching consequences. It means a break

with the age-long habit of conformity to precedent. It means also a skeptical attitude towards one's own bias, intuition, and pure reason. Intelligence accepts the testimony of the fathers, the history of institutions, and systems of logic as evidence of what has been, but not as authority for what should be. Intelligence is intolerant both of purely external authority—including precedent as such; and of purely internal authority—including bias, intuition, and pure reason. But intelligence gives due consideration to all that which when critically considered properly bears on any proposed conduct.

Intelligence applied to any given problem involves, (1) the collation of all pertinent facts, (2) fair weighing and ordering of the facts, (3) definite understanding of a goal that is both desirable and possible in view of the facts, and (4) the technical skill to enlist and direct all available forces in the achievement of the desired goal. This is human engineering.

How different is this method of intelligence from that ordinarily in operation! Ordinarily we "catch an idea," "jump at conclusions," "take chances," or revel in mystical intoxication. It is not too much to say that with the exception of a few noble ventures the human race has never yet tried to apply intelligence to its problem of conquering the world and of living an abundant life.

Suppose we studied the race problem as thoroughly as an architect plans a steel structure; sup-

pose we attacked the problem of education as comprehensively as an international banking house surveys the resources and needs of the people it serves; suppose we set about production and distribution with the exactness of the mathematicians who measure and weigh the stars; and while we are supposing, let us try to imagine what could be done for human justice and happiness if the government of the world were a science instead of a system of conflicting ambitions. As a matter of fact the present state of knowledge gives reasonable ground for the fervent hope that we shall yet intelligently control our social destiny on this planet.

### III. THE VALIDITY OF FREEDOM

Freedom is a much abused term. It is frequently used indiscriminately as a synonym for caprice and license. Without entering here into the interminable discussion of freedom vs. determinism, suffice it to say that beyond all actions growing out of inherent trends and environmental pressure there is a wide realm in which the exercise of freedom is not only possible but necessary to noble conduct. Into this realm we throw artificial human restrictions about freedom at the peril of all that is finest in personality.

Freedom from hampering human restrictions is prerequisite to effective and creditable conduct. It

should be the definite policy of all institutions—state, school, church, home—to restrict social inhibitions and compulsions to the lowest possible minimum consistent with the public welfare. No man is at his best save when he is free.

Thus far in history it has been found safe and wise to enlarge the boundaries of human freedom. Patriarchs, barons, kings, and priests were all shorn of authority without any of the predicted catastrophes resulting, or if they resulted they were not of long continuation. Slaves have been freed, suffrage has been extended, bills of rights have been achieved, constitutions have been made responsive to the public will, and still the social structure holds together. Indeed, the very life of organized society now seems to depend more and more on the free action of free peoples. The trend of current social evolution is definitely in the direction of greater freedom for all people.

Humanists encourage the free interplay of free minds and the general extension of the realm of free behavior.

#### IV. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMPETENT

A superficial understanding of democracy has caused many people to arrive at the conclusion that democracy discounts leadership and depends primar-

ily on the spontaneous popular will. This conclusion is found to be erroneous when we understand that true democracy is not primarily a method but a spirit, a goal, a gospel.

The humanist insists that in democracy competent leadership is a matter of first importance. The great mass of the people will follow some sort of leadership. In the absence of competent leadership (and sometimes in spite of it) they will follow demagogues and charlatans. In fact, one of the greatest curses today is the prevalence of incompetent but magnetic public figures. A striking presence covers a mass of incompetence. The funeral of many statesmanlike proposals has been preached by incompetent but volatile opponents.

We must learn to distinguish between spurious and genuine leadership. That is to say, we must learn to examine for ourselves the basal facts at issue and the reasoning processes of our leaders. Of course, it is not possible for all of us to familiarize ourselves with all details of the subjects presented for consideration; but we can and should know enough general principles to distinguish between the experts and the fakers, between mature judgments and airy romance.

We must not only distinguish competent experts but we must learn to use them in the social as well as in the physical sciences. We examine the credentials of an engineer before we employ him to construct a bridge or a dam. Why should we take

chances on the men we select to enact and administer our laws? When social situations need adjusting we should employ experts just as we do in tunneling a mountain. Until we form this habit we are children directed by impulse and led by fancy. The day the world begins consciously to depend on the consensus of opinion of competent commissions then will begin the manhood of humanity.

#### V. THE COMMONWEALTH OF MAN

A worth-while world order must be based on the conviction of the worth of human personality, of the world-wide community of interest, and of the practicability and necessity of the human direction of social progress. A worth-while religion must have human life as its aim, and the fulfilment of human life as its supreme test of values. All other considerations whether of an other-worldly or of a materialistic character are of secondary importance. At the fiery altar of human life must be tested every idea, every symbol and every institution.

The building of the commonwealth of man requires the conscious dependence of the race on the human control of human destiny on this planet, subject always to the possibilities inherent in the natural order. The technique of such control involves many factors which must be experimentally worked

out through the years, but the indispensable minimum requirements are: (1) universal education, (2) social guarantees, and (3) world organization.

Only an educated people can establish and maintain a commonwealth. (a) Educational standards must be raised, (b) educational opportunities universalized, (3) compulsory education revised upward, (d) the technique of determining potential qualities developed, and (e) persons showing unusual potentialities afforded the utmost opportunity they are capable of using.

At best the risks of life are many and great. No man can stand alone. Mutual aid is a factor of the utmost importance. A new world order wherein human life shall be the first concern requires not only equality of opportunity, not only co-operation in the use of opportunity, but also social guarantees against the ill effects of misfortune. Mankind must unite to beat back from the doorsteps of the world the terrors of accident and unemployment, of improvidence and sickness, of old age and death. Chance almsgiving and even organized philanthropy are plainly inadequate. The necessity of a comprehensive plan of social insurance involving dignified and equitable preventive and redemptive methods, is increasingly evident. Whether social guarantees should be administered through private and fraternal concerns publicly controlled, or through governmental agencies, or both, is a matter of expediency. The thing of chief concern is the recognition and

application of inter-dependence as the law of social life.

Manifestly the world must be managed co-operatively. The peoples and the nations are intertwined and are forever inseparable. No nation or people can prosper permanently at the cost of any other nation or people. All the world goes up or down together. We are made one by the economic interests of every land, by the bonds of knowledge and literature, by a thousand necessities of peaceful and happy living, and by the holy stream of blood that courses through all mankind. Wise men will accept the world-wide community of interest as a fact and good men will rejoice in its truth.

## PART II

### HUMANIZING RELIGION

RELIGION is associated with the best that man does or thinks or dreams. Around institutions of religion hover hallowed memories, noble sentiments, and lofty ideals Without religion and the institutions of religion the world could not have reached its present heights; without them the heights beyond are unattainable. Amid the struggles and achievements of mankind religion has constantly evolved new motives and goals. Being of the very texture of spiritual urge, religion requires growth in its content and change in its expression. Happily, religion possesses the ability to inspire its own readjustment. Now, once again, religion is undergoing basic and significant reformation. We are now witnessing and participating in a humanistic awakening more thoroughgoing than the Christian reformation of two thousand years ago, more self-consistent than the Protestant reformation of four hundred years ago, and more intellectually daring than the liberal reformation of one hundred years ago. True and wise friends of religion will rejoice over newer and better motives and ideals.

First, let us consider some of the old conceptions that have been carried over from by-gone ages and that must be laid aside before there can be a thoroughgoing humanistic reformation.

The pre-scientific view of the world must be laid aside. As John Dewey has pointed out, primitive notions of the world were based on emotional and dramatic interpretations of experience. The motive of interpretation was not primarily the desire to be better equipped to live tomorrow, but the desire to escape the tedium of today and the thought of responsibility tomorrow. Many of the facts of yesterday's experience were distorted in the interest of emotional and dramatic effect. The world was peopled with "spirits"—both good and bad—which operated in the world's affairs. Men became subjects of this super-order of their own creation. Notwithstanding the untrustworthy character of the early interpretation of the world, views growing out of it were generalized and enforced, and so became fixed. This old world view has been carried over into and made a part of the world view of later ages. Even now both science and philosophy are struggling to free thinking from the presuppositions of this ancient world view. Religion still labors under the handicap of notions belonging to the childhood of the race.

The habit of metaphysically harmonizing contradictions between the old and the new must be laid aside. With the growth of knowledge it became

evident that conflicts existed between matters of fact and matters of a traditional nature. Hence it became the function of the early philosophers and theologians to harmonize new facts with old beliefs, and to put the spirit, if not the form of the old beliefs, on a metaphysical instead of a traditional basis. In this way were born the old philosophical methods. Only recently has philosophy begun to conceive of its functions as otherwise. Religious thinking so far as it has reached the dignity of a philosophy, has had to do largely with the fixation of the old instead of the nurture of the new. All that is worthful in the old spiritual structure should be builded into the new, but the old habit of over-emphasis on the preservation of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" must be replaced with a new spiritual habit that seeks first to learn from new facts in order to produce better experience.

The attitude of trust must be superseded by creative imagination. Throughout the history of religion the religious attitude has been characterized by trust in the values and institutions of the fathers; it must come to be characterized by the imagination that builds the future. The old faith is directed toward truths already possessed: the new faith must be directed toward achievements yet to be wrought out of the materials of experience and thought.

The animistic conceptions, the metaphysical arrangements, and the naive type of faith still prevailing in religion make a reformation imperative.

Second, let us consider the forces that make a reformation in religion inevitable and imminent.

Science, unchecked and triumphant in its march through the centuries, has won significant victories. Vast stores of knowledge in many fields have been accumulated. Effective methods of nurturing and controlling life processes have been evolved. The universe has taken on new meaning. In astronomy, physics, and biology the scientific method has been applied with happy results. No longer do we believe in a completed and fixed world. Man has been freed. He has become a co-worker with life. Greater changes have taken place in man's thought of the nature of the world than can be easily appreciated. Biblical criticism has destroyed many of the dogmas of orthodoxy and remade much of the Bible. There are new interpretations of the mind of Jesus. With many serious thinkers the thought of God is undergoing far-reaching changes. The unknown is constantly becoming the known. New light breaks over the world.

In philosophy alleged perfect and absolute standards are being investigated. The "ideas" of Plato and the "forms" of Aristotle, together with all pre-suppositions and so-called self-evident truths, are subject to careful analysis. *Experimental experience is the humanistic test of truth.* The ideal grows out of real experience; it is consciously tested and remade in the light of new facts. With this comes an aggressive attitude towards life, replacing resig-

nation and submission. Religion must take into account this changed way of thinking.

There are significant social changes in the direction of a more thorough-going democracy. Castes and stratifications are doomed. The democracy of worths is making marked changes in the political, moral and industrial life of the world. Equality of opportunity is being glorified and made effective by mutual assistance. We are confidently expecting a world league of progress embracing all the nations of the earth.

But the most important task at hand is to point out the lines along which humanistic religion is proceeding.

Already religion is remaking itself. It has begun the task of clarifying spiritual vision. It is now dealing with human conflicts and relations. Unconsciously religion is exchanging its colorless ultimates and its fixed goals for concrete worths and growing ideals. What religion is doing unconsciously it must henceforth do consciously.

The object of humanistic religion is the enhancement of the human estate. The chief end of man is to build towering personality, and to direct it into ways of complete living. This requires not merely the recognition of wrong, but active endeavor to right the wrong and to build the right.

It is becoming customary for ministers and churches to take an interest in the affairs of the world. This is one of the most promising things in

present-day religion. But this interest and activity is largely on the presupposition that righteousness is distinct from but inevitably follows the psychological experience of at-one-ment between man and God. Henceforth spiritual adjustment is to be found in the very attitude, activity, and results of righteousness. In other words, henceforth at-one-ment, in creative endeavor, of man with man, of man with his environment, of man with the orderly processes of the universe is to be found at the center of religious consciousness. And this we shall find to be the central reality in the at-one-ment desired and hoped for by all the religions of the world.

The enhancement of the human estate, i. e., the building of human personality, the righting of wrongs, and the creation of right relationships, is a moral program with the most far-reaching spiritual implications that religion has ever known. If this program be followed, religion shall be brought down to earth and the earth lifted into heaven. Everybody knows that religion needs regeneration. This it may find in a great committal to the greatest of all goals—the building of human souls for worthy habitation in a world of hard facts, and the constant remaking of the actual world about us and the ideal world beyond us.

The method of attaining the humanistic religious life is the conscious observation of experience and regulated experimental living. Ancient experience at best is of secondary importance; personal and

modern experience is of primary importance. Things heretofore central in religion must be shifted to the outer edge of the margin of the religious consciousness. Forms and ceremonies, creeds and attitudes of mind that are now thought of as central must make way for purposeful service, free fellowship, and brave living. In this way the good may be saved from rigidity, remain plastic, and so be built into the new structures.

To be genuinely experimental, life must be collaborative and mutually helpful. The keenest competition henceforth must be found in the greatest service—a genuinely co-operative competition.

The primary emphasis in humanistic religion is on exploration, discovery, and construction; not on acceptance, demonstration, and agreement. Life at its best is a series of discoveries and creations. The exchange of the attitude of resignation, acceptance, and possession for a more positive, aggressive, and constructive attitude is an immensely important addition to the vitality of religion.

Even now the venturesome and creative attitude is tolerated in religion as elsewhere. But it must come to be not merely tolerated but dominant. Exploration, discovery, construction must come to be the expected and the regular. The attitude of acceptance, demonstration, and agreement, of trust and obedience, whatever worth it may contain, must be secondary, derivative, and instrumental.

Human beings and life processes have in them spiritual values and worths little dreamed of at present. We have hardly crossed the threshold of the storehouse of spiritual things. We are now only beginning to catch glimpses of what may yet be achieved. A few scientists and artists have helped us to see new possibilities in conquest and consequent exaltation. If we bravely face the future, looking backward only in order to profit by the mistakes and the achievements of the past, we may yet know what it means to live truly, justly, and nobly.

If the old shibboleths of religion pass away (and pass they must) the essence of religion shall be recovered and enriched and ennobled. Worthy living, unconquerable loyalty to noble purposes, sympathy unrimmed by class or creed or race—these are the pillars and the pinnacle of religion.

Out of deep experience and with creative imagination religion must rebuild its content and remold its forms of expression.

### PART III

#### HUMANIZING RELIGION (continued)

A WORD is a symbol of reality. This is true whether the reality be a perceptual fact or conceptual theory. When reality changes, clear thinking requires that the old symbol be exchanged for another or that the change in content be clearly recorded. When a word symbolizes a movement with continuity of problem and of attempt at solution, the familiar symbol should be kept and its changed meaning recorded. Psychology is a case in point. Once psychology was the name of the science that dealt with the *soul*; later of the science that dealt with *mental faculties*; then of the science that dealt with *states of consciousness*; and now psychology is the name of the science that deals with *behavior*. The old symbol still holds. Much more should this be true when the symbol is weighted with sacred associations and memories. Religion is a symbol which not only has continuity of problem and of attempt at solution but which is also surrounded with the most hallowed associations and memories. Religion symbolizes the human quest to discover in the nature of man and the universe the kind of life that is inherently desirable, and to enlist in its behalf all instrumentalities, both human and cosmic, that

are capable of assisting in its realization. This quest is man's religion. In early religions the quest took the form of attempts on the part of man to relate himself to those instrumentalities and values that seemed to have significance for the welfare of the group; and later it took the form of attempts to placate the personal gods in order to gain personal peace. While the forms of religion have undergone revolution, we shall retain the term "religion." My chief purpose, however, is not to justify the word but to record certain changes in its content and form.

The common denominator of the old religions is found in *man's response to super-human sources of fortune*. This belief in and relation to super-human sources of fortune is characteristic of the old religions. Without this psychological situation the old faiths cannot admit the religious validity of any human behavior. Hence the old religions have resulted in a servile psychological attitude.

This pathetic and tragic outcome of the old religions is now somewhat relieved by humanistic tendencies which are gradually growing everywhere. Modern thinkers are finding the content of religion in human worths and its cosmic significance in man's co-operation with and control of the processes of life to the end that human possibilities shall be completely and harmoniously realized. Humanism aims at the conscious experience of the fullness of life. It regards this as the aim and end of religion and

of all social instrumentalities. In other words, humanism stands for the complete and permanent satisfactions of human life.

The object of the old religion is the superhuman unknown and the chief content of the old religion is the sentiment entertained toward the superhuman unknown. The object of humanism is *life*, and its chief content is *loyalty* to life. In the old religion right and wrong are defined in terms of conformity to standards extrinsic to human life; in humanism right and wrong are defined in terms of consequence to human life. The old religion is characterized by trust and receptivity; humanism, by aspiration and creativity.

Whatever theological significance is inferred from or attached to humanism, it is functional, tentative, secondary. The old religion judges man by his contribution to the gods; humanism judges the gods by their contribution to man. In the old religion theological beliefs are central and imperative; in humanism theological theories are types of "spiritual short hand." In the old religion a theological revolution is spiritual treason; in humanism a theological revolution is a change of mental attitude, a shifting of postulates, a minor part of the day's work.

According to the old view, religion without super-human objects of faith is impossible. But if religion is the quest of man to discover and live the inherently desirable life, manifestly theological convic-

tions and philosophies of the ultimate nature of the universe are not prerequisite to the religious life. Religion is not constituted of theology or philosophy or metaphysics—but it may use them as instruments in the enhancement of human life. Man may be utterly void of theology and yet be deeply religious. Religion is enhanced by various intellectual and aesthetic devices, such as philosophical theories and liturgical forms, but none of them is exclusively essential.

In the theocentric world of the pre-scientific days man wanted super powers or beings whom he could placate and so secure special agency. But science has discredited special agency. It has found the universe to be a self-operating system. It finds ordinary cosmic events and processes routine and impersonal, and other things cared for by highly specialized parts of nature such as man. It regards order and purpose as self-existent. Reality is found, but its ultimate nature is not yet determined. Man's whole world outlook is vastly different from what it once was and it is still subject to change. Hence humanistic religion does not regard the acceptance of any philosophical or theological hypothesis as religiously necessary.

Yet, in order to make its committals effective in the realization of its goals, humanism needs a science of values. Such a science must be evolved through long experimentation. It must be founded on enlightened experience, true to basic desires, and

attested by its fruitage in the complete and harmonious realization of human life.

Humanism regards all the normal human impulses as valid and worthwhile and it seeks the complete and harmonious realization of them all. There is no question of higher and lower impulses. None is mean or unclean. All are good and sacred. Humanism proclaims the democracy of the human impulses. Conflicts in the impulsive life are abnormalities due to the misunderstanding and misuse of the impulses. The well-balanced, fully-developed, and intelligently controlled impulsive life is the full life. Of all the needs of the race, the greatest are for freedom from repression and oppression, and for committal to the fullest possible realization of life on the highest possible human plane.

Humanism is bound up with the full life. It is intimately concerned with all social instrumentalities; with education and politics, with science and art, with industries and homes. It seeks not only to interpret these but to guide them. It aims to direct all social instruments and powers to the ends of human life, and to create new instruments and powers of life. It regards the whole sweep of life—the sex life, the political life, the economic life—as within its province. It regards the proper world order as a religious order. The whole of life goes up or down together and none of it is foreign to the interest of religion. When the purpose of thought and conduct is human well-being, such

thought and conduct is religious in character. *When thus motivated, consecration to science is religious consecration, works of art are religious works, governmental achievements are religious achievements, social relationships are religious relationships, and moral victories are religious victories.*

In its wider significance, understood as loyalty to life and reinforced with modern imagery, religion shall become man's supreme concern!

## PART IV

## HUMANIZING RELIGION (concluded)

RELIGIOUS theory stands at the forks of the road; it must choose what its future course shall be. In the first place, religion must choose between anthropomorphic theology and scientific philosophy. Humanism favors the latter.

For some time systematic thinking has been discounted. In some circles, thought of any kind is looked upon with askance. Many people are hunting for "short cuts to knowledge, power, and happiness." The contents of various psychological myths have been made the creeds of cults. Multitudes have tried the experiment of living without a reasonable philosophy of life. The experiment has failed, as it deserved to do. Modern man needs rational values. He must have science and philosophy to enrich his thought, to make it satisfying.

The popular distrust of serious thinking is not due wholly to the depravity of the masses. Philosophers have allowed their devotion to minute and subtle technicalities to lead them far away from the life of the people. The further some thinkers explore reality the further they seem to go from the facts that determine the quality of life here and

now. Little wonder that men and women of affairs neglect philosophy when it becomes too abtruse.

But the common man who supposes that philosophy does not concern him and the philosopher who supposes that common things do not concern him are bordering on spiritual pauperism. Experience, systematically thought through, results in ideals that are essential to any well-ordered life. Every person who intelligently attempts to find his place in the universe naturally evolves a philosophy.

There is urgent need of serious thinking in present-day religion. Wild theories of the religious life are rampant. The old and more or less logical theologies have broken down; and hosts of their followers are grasping at every myth that offers help. Having departed from the old ways of thinking and having tried the unsatisfactory experiment of living without a philosophy, multitudes are reaching the reflective period. They have come to feel the need of an intelligent, well-rounded theory of life. A minister of wide experience said that he found that nine-tenths of his people were interested most in sermons that presented a philosophical background for the individual's faith. There can be no substitute for a clear, comprehensive, thoroughgoing theory of life. Just as social service, to be effective, must be backed by a valid social philosophy, so must satisfying and ennobling religion be backed by a valid philosophy of life.

We need clear, straight, factual thinking in order that there may be intelligent living. Dr. George R. Dodson reports a story told by Dean Fenn. "A little girl was playing about the room; and her father heard her say, 'That square is blue.' Dr. Johnson says, 'If your child says he looked out of this window when he looked out of that, flog him.' It did not seem to be a case requiring such harsh measures; and the father said, 'No, that is red.' The little child thought a moment, and said, 'That red square is blue.' Dr. Johnson's dictum seemed to be coming dangerously near the application; and the father said sternly, 'What do you mean by that? A thing cannot be both red and blue.' The child pondered a moment, and then threw herself at her father and said, 'O Father, how I love you.'" In commenting on this story, Dr. Dodson says, "This is a parable of a great deal of our religious thinking. We say 'that square is red,' 'No, somebody says, 'that square is blue'; and then we rise to our larger unity, and our great high statements, and include a self-contradiction, and then say, 'Well, love is the greatest thing in the world'."

Without discounting the emotional elements that inhere in all religious experience, it is my opinion that religion can render its greatest service to the life of the world by adhering to methods of sane and clear factual thinking. Only in this way can religion build a philosophy able to withstand the onslaughts of ignorance and superstition, and to in-

spire and lead the world to nobler heights.

The ancient philosophy said man was worthwhile largely because he participated in or was possessed by or fused with an over-world, a supernatural will, or an over-soul. In virtue of this relation man received a supply of finished goods.

But humanistic thought conceives of man and the world as worthwhile in and of themselves. Man is regarded as an autonomous, creative, responsible unit of the world life. Humanism regards the only social world worth living in as one made, controlled, and changed by man himself. That is to say, the old philosophy was monarchic; the modern is humanistic.

Monarchy is an idea-system, the central thought of which is dependence of man on a superior order. In actual operation monarchy is merged with oligarchy, and men are dependent on Masters, Lords, Kings, Czars, Kaisers, and the like, all of whom are rapidly ceasing to function. According to monarchic and oligarchic philosophy, men get their rights, powers, and goods by a servile tenure.

On the other hand, humanism is an idea-system the central thought of which is the ability of collective man rationally and scientifically to control himself, his world, and the world of energy for the satisfaction of human desires.

In monarchy the basic idea is acceptance by man of control and finished supply from above; in

humanism the basic idea is control and creation by man from within.

Humanism bids man make himself and his world what he will. It bids man continually reorganize his impulses, his philosophy, and his social institutions in the light of his ever-increasing achievements.

This type of thinking is beginning to prevail in many fields of thought. And our nomenclature is changing accordingly. In theology we say, "Free-will"; in science, "Self-variation"; in politics, "Self-determination"; and in economics we are learning to say "Self-direction."

In the monarchic order all occurrences are the result of the will of the monarch or of the activities of his appointees. Man's will and action amount to little or nothing. At best he can only hope and pray. If he wants more water, he must pray to the rain-spirit. If he wants freedom from disease, he must petition some god or goddess of pestilence. If he wants food, perhaps some raven will bring it. But the humanistic view of the world order holds that this is man's world, that it depends largely on man what the world order shall be. This view holds that if man wants more water he must build reservoirs and lay pipe lines. If he wants freedom from pestilence, he must foster medical science. If he wants food, he must till the soil. If he would eliminate his woes, he must do it himself. If he would mount the heights, he must generate the power.

In the second place, religion must decide between the *laissez faire* theory and practice and that of the conscious direction of human progress. Humanism advocates the conscious direction of human progress.

It is unnecessary to point out the bad effect of the age-long practice of *laissez faire* theories. The evil result is too obvious. Humanity has frequently drifted like a rudderless ship on an unknown sea. Too often religion has conceived of its function as that of providing solace for those who are distressed by life's storms. It should create rudders and compasses and charts and pilots.

Modern democracy and science are based on, and contribute to the theory of the control and direction by man of himself, of his environment, and of his ideals. If religion is to be effective in the immediate future in the enhancement of the human estate it must cease its policy of trusting human affairs to the chance operation of unknown agencies, and must ally itself with the newer and saner policies of democracy and science.

The responsibility for a disordered world rests on man. Men are not mere things to be used by the fates. If the world is to be rightly ordered, if humanity is to make rational progress, man must assume the responsibility. In his control of natural processes man is proving his skill and mastery. In his development of moral ideals, man is demonstrating his wisdom and foresight. In his discovery and creation of spiritual values man is expressing

his undying hope and his prophetic insight. Already man is at work remaking both the world of things and the world of ideals.

So great things are ahead of us. In the realm of psychology this is true. The world is coming to recognize the power of mind. Specialists are beginning to examine and classify mental phenomena. We shall soon know more of the psychological laws. In the realm of social arrangements great things are ahead of us. Large social combinations individually controlled are forecasts of great social combinations collectively controlled. Humanity is learning to pool its interests and so to remove the obstructions that block the upward way. We are approaching the day when a sane humanity shall create for itself an adequate body through which to express its soul.

Man is capable of achieving things heretofore thought utterly impossible. He is capable of so ordering human relations that life shall be preserved, not destroyed; that justice shall be established, not denied; that love shall be the rule, not the exception. It but remains for religion to place human responsibility at the heart of its gospel. When this is done, science and democracy and religion will have formed an alliance of wisdom, vision, and power. In this high concert of values, religion must be the servant and through service the master of all!

## PART VII

### HUMANIZING LIBERALISM

**H**ISTORICALLY the basic content of religious liberalism is spiritual freedom. Out of this basic content has come the conviction of the supremacy of reason, of the primary worth of character, and of the immediate access of man to spiritual sources. Always religious liberalism has tended to replace alleged divine revelations and commands with human opinions and judgments; to develop the individual attitude in religion; and to identify righteousness with life. The method of religious liberalism has always been that of reflection, not that of authority. Liberalism has insisted on the essentially natural character of religion.

Believing that religion is best promoted in the presence of live issues, and that every age must achieve its own faith, liberalism has been willing to hazard its affirmations in an open field where the contestants strive for only the greatest service possible. And this experience has led liberalism not only to free religion from extraneous accretions, but also to think of religion primarily as conscious commitment and loyalty to human causes and goals. Formerly liberalism emphasized chiefly emancipation

and freedom; now it emphasizes also committal and loyalty.

Liberalism has had to face, even more than have other forms of religion, the age-old philosophical question "why?" That is, to what purpose—to what end—do we live? In answer to this question humanistic liberalism proclaims as the end and aim of religion, and of life, free and positive personality, loyally and intelligently associated, and cosmically related.

If liberalism can be reduced to a single statement, I think this is it: Conscious committal and loyalty to worthwhile causes and goals in order that free and positive personality may be developed, intelligently associated, and cosmically related.

Let us see where this leads.

## I

The liberal is not satisfied with a religious experience acquired chiefly through confession, repentance and divine communion, and terminating in a heaven of subject existence. He is not willing to accept the promise of a distant estate of doubtful character and location in lieu of concrete worths and measurable values here and now. He believes that whatever the future may hold for him it must be the outcome of his own spiritual achievements. Hence he demands that his personality be free and self-directive.

The liberal is not satisfied with purely material ends. In his swing away from mystic union with entities of doubtful existence he does not plunge into the abyss of gross material satisfactions. He may go from one of these extremes to the other, but if so, it is only for a while. In the long run he hangs tenaciously to the conviction that fundamentally his nature is spiritual—that a spiritual self adjusts and guides and controls.

The liberal is not satisfied with freedom alone. Emancipated from superstition and prejudice, he may lead a care-free and easy existence for a while, but soon the essentially positive nature of personality becomes assertive, and the liberal knows that positive commitments and loyalty are essential to the full expression of himself.

The center of spiritual gravity is shifted from objective and supernatural forms to individual man. This is not the denial of the existence of significant and objective worths, but only the removal of the seat of authority from an indefinite something somewhere, to a definite self known to be native to human existence. This is not a hasty conclusion reached by the liberal. It is the plainly observable trend of history. The lesson of the long experience of the race is that of the primary importance of human initiative and self-direction.

The outstanding characteristic of modern liberalism, and indeed of all modern thinking, is the evaluation of personality as the thing of supreme worth.

Hence liberalism now affirms in terms unmistakable that institutions are only the tentative and temporary expressions of personality, that they are frequently outgrown and must, like the hull of the chrysalis, be burst asunder and left only to mark an epoch past. Institutions—religious, capitalistic, socialistic, or what not—must now stand or fall as they are able or unable to serve effectively and efficiently in the building of free and positive human souls.

## II

Present-day liberals see the essentially interdependent nature of human beings; that the fulfillment of the individual self requires orderly, purposeful association with other selves. This thought finds expression in various terms: Brotherhood, solidarity, mutuality, reciprocity, fraternity, community. For a long time prophets, poets and statesmen have proclaimed the ambition of the race to be linked together for mutual service; and now biology and social science agree that there is and can be no complete self-realization aside from co-operation with other selves.

Ideally this is the heart of Christianity. The organic unity of the race is found in the teachings of Christianity. Jesus, at his best, thought and spoke in world-terms. Human solidarity is the heart of the labor movement. This finds expression in the

motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all." The red flag is meant to be symbolic of the blood of the race. The latest and best type of statesmanship thinks in world terms. We are now becoming accustomed to world issues, programs and achievements.

Humanistic liberalism constantly aims to promote the widest possible human comradeship and the closest possible human fellowship. And this aim is underwritten by the knowledge that co-operation and not competition is the dominant factor in the growth of the race.

In the most intimate of human relationships, the home, we know no complete satisfaction apart from the good of those whom we love. Notions of the exact character of this relationship, laws defining its social responsibilities may and do and should change with changing time; but always the race finds deep and abiding satisfaction in the solidarity of what we call the home. We now know that the positive sentiments and other hard facts of the solidarity of the home belong essentially to other social relationships. In industry we are trying as never before, and with a measure of success, to reorganize on the basis of community of interests. So with other relationships. The old notion that the individual experiencing good can be an isolated individual has gone forever.

The legacy from the best prophets of the past is a conception of a united world. The coming order is a world order. And any religion that hesitates to

proclaim this gospel is neither an heir of the prophets of the past nor the parent of the achievement of the future.

The cohesive principle in the achievement of this human world order is radical good-will. This leads to the new competition, competition in the rendering of the greatest service. The pride of the old professions—law, medicine, ministry—is in the rendering of the greatest service. The spirit of the old professions must be fused into the social order from bottom to top, from the corner grocery to the League of Nations.

Liberals think of Democracy not only as freedom and equality of opportunity but also as mutual assistance in the use of freedom and opportunity. To take one class off the shoulder of another class is not enough. All people must work shoulder to shoulder.

Radical good-will alone does not satisfy humanistic liberalism. Now comes the demand on good-will to develop a technique for making itself effective in the world of hard facts. Social science is still in its infancy. There is room for and need of creative statesmanship in the reorganization of human relationships. How to secure food, shelter, and clothes without losing one's soul is a pressing problem. At last humanity has rebelled against a state of affairs that requires the forfeiture of the soul in order to acquire a rag, a shack, and a loaf of bread. In the solution of the problems involved

in the rescue of the soul from the clutch of mammon are causes worthy of committal and loyalty. Liberalism declares that the church needs to understand the economic expression of brotherhood, and that everybody needs to understand the spiritual significance of economic co-operation. The next step in world progress is the proper co-ordination of economic forces with intellectual, moral, and spiritual forces.

### III

In the past the basic content of most religions has been that of the submission of persons to supernatural agencies, and the consequent appropriation of worths. In these systems of religion man was worthwhile because he participated in or was possessed by supernatural agencies. In virtue of this relation man received a supply of finished goods. In these systems men got their rights, powers, and goods by servile tenure. There was submission from below and control from above. This monarchic view of religion rose to its noblest height in the expression, "Thy will be done."

The realm of the divine is now subject to investigation. Here, as elsewhere, the scientific method is being applied. Here regulated observation and experiment may result in new theological discoveries, and so liberalism must remain undogmatic in regard to God. The theology of Augustine and that of

Channing, the theology of Billy Sunday and that of H. G. Wells, might all be found utterly inadequate without consequent injury to the religion of the liberal. Liberalism is building a religion that would not be shaken even if the thought of God were outgrown.

Nevertheless, the liberal recognizes and zealously proclaims the fact that purposive and powerful cosmic processes are operative, and that increasingly man is able to co-operate with them and in a measure control them. What these processes be styled is of but little importance. Some call them cosmic processes, others call them God. In life there is wisdom beyond our present comprehension. This is seen in the amoeba as it adjusts its structure for the attainment of the ends desired; in the living protoplasmic cells on the ends of the rootlets of bean and wheat, both apparently identical, the one refusing flint, the other receiving it; in the co-operative colony of the sponge and the daisy, the bee and the wolf; and in the marvellous neural arrangement of man.

To the ancients the contemplation of cosmic events led to the theory of direct supernatural operation or to that of the use of natural forces by supernatural agencies. But to an increasing number of serious thinkers and to an innumerable host of liberals everywhere the contemplation of cosmic events has given way to regulated observation of and experiment with cosmic purposes; and this has

led to conscious co-operation with and partial control of cosmic processes. The ancients bowed before the unknown; the modern man attempts to understand the unknown. Supernatural agencies and laws are giving way to natural modes and processes. With this must go much of the nomenclature and many of the forms of worship of the religions of the world.

Humanistic liberalism understands spirituality to be man at his best, sane in mind, healthy in body, dynamic in personality; honestly facing the hardest facts, conquering and not fleeing from his gravest troubles; committed to the most worthwhile causes, loyal to the best ideals; ever hoping, striving, and achieving. To know one's self as inherently worthwhile, actually to find fullest expression in the widest human service and consciously to become a co-worker with cosmic processes, is spiritual experience deep and abiding.