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The Solidarity of Humanity and the Moral Order.

ONE'S first feeling in considering the idea of "solidarity" is that one has raised again the ancient and endless discussion concerning the One and the Many, the Universal and the Particular, between Realism and Nominalism; or, at least, has stumbled into some side-chapel of the Cathedral of Philosophy to listen to a subsection of the great debate. Our experience is of the Many and the Particular. Has the One and the Universal as real an existence, or even more real as Plato and the Realists affirmed? When we say "solidarity", certain great words loom before the mind—Humanity, Race, Nation, Proletariat and the like. What do they represent, and what is their relation to the particular and individual? Do they stand for greater realities, for higher and more enduring values? These are urgent questions, forms of the greatest of questions: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Comte repudiated metaphysical abstractions, but, as we all know, he exalted "Humanity" into an object of worship as the only reality, and declared that the individual was a pure abstraction. Is it true then that humanity has the immense solidarity of the eternal sea, and that men are but spray blown by the wind? It is from another angle and a nobler philosophy that General Smuts still echoes "the purely individual self is a figment of abstraction", a dictum that invited the comment of McNeile Dixon, "however much an abstraction he may be, the religious and legal systems place upon the individual the burden of responsibility for his own character and conduct".[1] And this we know is true even of those modern political and social creeds which deify Race or Nation or State or Class. The individual is at least "real" enough to be taxed or imprisoned or shot in the interest or supposed interest of the "solidarity". And it is the individual who is hypnotised by the great words, who puts soul and life into them, and who will live or die for whatever they stand for in his faith and imagination. We may not meet with him in philosophical or sociological or even, at some periods, in theological discussion. But we meet him in every street, and him only do we know in our commerce with the world. As Charles Lamb said: "Have not these creatures that you and I profess to know *something about* no faces, gestures, gabble, no folly, no absurdity?" One is tempted to be flippant and to ask, what face or gesture or gabble has any solidarity?

The truth is, the one thing of which we have absolutely

[1] *The Human Situation*, 177.

certain and immediate knowledge is not of any solidarity but of our own individual selves, the self-conscious, thinking, willing beings that we are. Newman declared that in his childhood he was equally and luminously certain of a God over and against himself, but that raises another though intimately related issue. It is upon the reality of the self, the individual self-consciousness of the human being, that we must proceed in any fruitful consideration of "solidarity". It is the individual and not the solidarity that is primary in knowledge and experience. According to Jewish and Christian teaching, God made man in His own image, but it was an individual man. It is not something vague and vast called Humanity or the Race that is made in the image of God, but Tom, Dick and Harry, though the likeness may not be a striking one. It is the danger of all "solidarities", both in theory and practice, to treat them as abstractions, or to subsume them into a class which is nominally greater but actually less than they, that is to deny the image of God. Of all such solidarities it may be said, as was said of that great solidarity, Babylon of the Seven Hills, their "merchandise is . . . the souls of men".

And yet the matter is not as simple as was supposed by the philosophic and economic doctrinaires of last-century Individualism. "Suppose a man alone on a desert island" they begin, but a man cannot begin alone on a desert island, or develop under such circumstances. The individual may be the reality of experience but we only experience him as a social being. We know ourselves as dependent for our very self-consciousness on what is not ourselves in a human environment. Personality, in short, is always social. As one of Bernard Shaw's characters puts it: "There's all sorts of bonds between all sorts of people". A man is not a lonely pebble on the beach, which remains a pebble because it is alone, however pebbly the beach. He enters at birth into a system of relationships and dependencies, an inheritance of interests and values, which are essential to his existence and growth as a human being. The image of God only emerges under these conditions, and it is to these necessary conditions that the word "solidarity" can properly be applied. A natural solidarity is that system of mutual relationships and inter-dependence into which a man is born, or with which he comes to be associated in the traffic of life. It is when these mutualities are regarded as existing apart from individuals, when they are hypostasised and endowed with quasi-personality, that they defeat their own end which is the making of personalities. This is the fallacy and peril of such conceptions as "corporate personality". The phrase sounds as though it described some impressive reality, like the Shakespearean word honorificabilitudinitatibus, but it has as little substance in it. It

is at best a personifying metaphor, at worst an eidolon, a Moloch to which men are sacrificed. That the peril is no imaginary one is patent in the world of to-day, when to the "corporate personality" of Nation or State the individual is ruthlessly offered up, existing, as he is regarded, not as an end in himself, but as a mere means to the ends of the solidarity. The current disparagement of the individual can be reflected even in Christian thought as when Nygren in so fine a book as his *Agape and Eros* seriously declares that the belief in the infinite value of the human soul is not Christian but one of the errors of nineteenth century theological Liberalism. It is true that the individual cannot exist or develop apart from social relationships, but it is equally true that society centres in the individual and cannot exist apart from the relationship between individuals. And the ultimate test of any society is the quality of individual life it fosters. It is this value that must be maintained in any Christian thinking on solidarity.

The "solidarity of humanity" has been assumed in Christian thought from the beginning. Until modern times it was accepted as axiomatic that the human race was one great family derived from an original pair, and involved in one tremendous moral catastrophe which befell them at the outset of human history. The Christian shape of the doctrine derives from the writings of St. Paul, though it holds a subordinate place in them, and is not essential to the apostle's gospel. It is not necessary to enlarge on the use he makes of the Hebrew story of Adam and Eve, or on his assumption that men are mortal because the first man sinned, or on his curious assertion that death reigned from Adam to Moses though men were not guilty of sin, not having the Law. We do not regard the Genesis story as historical fact, and so cannot use it as he did. However valuable as a picturesque myth or allegory, however spiritually suggestive, the ancient narrative may be, it can no longer be regarded as the foundation for belief in the solidarity of humanity. But if we no longer believe in Father Adam or in his sin, how can we believe that humanity is a family and involved in a primitive disaster? Science does not help us much. St. Paul declared on one occasion that God had made of one blood all the nations upon earth, or so the familiar version not misleadingly translates his words. And it is true that human blood is the same everywhere, but the significance of the fact is altered considerably if, as is asserted, the blood of certain anthropoid apes answers to the same tests. "The essence of modern science" says Jeans, "is that man no longer sees nature as something distinct from himself." Evolution in some form or other is not to be denied, even if it remains at present an "inspired conjecture." But there

is no certainty that man emerged at one definite point of time or spread from one centre. There is no such thing in the world to-day as a "pure" race, but it is difficult to believe that the Negro, the Australian black-fellow, the Mongolian, and the European, are the descendants of one primitive people, still more of one primeval pair who must have been unlike any of them. We know there have been races different from any existing one, and the ancestors of none, and which have become extinct. The materials at our disposal are extraordinarily confusing—Combe Capelle, Cro-Magnon, and Negroid man, for instance, obviously unrelated but side by side. And yet the lowest type of which anything is really known, Neanderthal man, so low as to seem scarcely human, manifestly believed in a future life; and anthropology shows that all primitive peoples have reacted religiously to their environment, and in much the same way.

Again, if we think of human solidarity in terms of mutual relationships, for which much more is to be said, it is at least very discontinuous. There have undoubtedly been vast movements and admixtures of peoples and cultures from pre-historic times, but what solidarity, cultural or other, had Europeans with the natives of America before Columbus, or more recently with the fenced kingdom of Japan or the millions of China before the Gates were forced open? or with the unknown tribes of Central Africa before Livingstone made a highway for the Gospel and much else? It is in our own time, and due mainly to the triumphs of science, that the world has grown small and universal relationships established, not always with the happiest results. In its Christian meaning and implications, human solidarity cannot be discovered or realised in superficial contacts or merely economic connections. Even the Federation of the World, despite Tennyson, would not necessarily be synonymous with the Brotherhood of Man. The solidarity of relationships on the level of material interests does not, of itself, produce the great values of moral obligation, of love, of reverence for the human soul. The modern young person's question, Why should or shouldn't I? still awaits the answer in the wider field. If the reality of God and of the spiritual nature of man be denied, then the ground is taken away from any faith in human solidarity as Christianity affirms it. How that spiritual nature came into existence, whether by Immanent or Transcendent divine action, is of minor importance. Its reality is the assumption of all Christian work for men, and it is verified in all missionary enterprise apart from any question of racial origins. If we affirm our faith in human brotherhood, which is a solidarity of relationship, it is because we believe in a universal relationship to God as the Father of the spirits of all men, irrespective of their natural history. We come to men

through God. The solidarity of humanity is, for us, a religious affirmation, and like all Christian affirmations it stresses individual values.

There are, however, two important truths suggested by the ancient myth, especially as interpreted by St. Paul and in Christian theology. The first is the universality of sin, or as it is sometimes called "solidarity in sin," which can only mean that all human relationships are affected by sin because all human beings are sinful. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." St. Paul associates the universality of sin with the sin of the first man, but it is notoriously difficult to understand his thought even if it was clear to himself. Did he think of the human race as mystically present in Adam, and so symbolically guilty of his sin? Did he think of all his descendants as being physically in him, as the writer of Hebrews thought of Levi in the loins of Abraham when the patriarch paid tithes to Melchizedek? Or, as is possible, did he suppose that by his sin Adam introduced into human nature the evil impulse, the *yetza-ha-ra* of the Rabbis and Kant's "radical evil," which, of course, leaves Adam's own sin unexplained? All these interpretations have their defenders. But another strand in the apostle's thought on the myth approximates to the modern evolutionary standpoint, or is not inconsistent with it. He had no high opinion of the original status of Adam. He was "of the earth, earthy." He was the "natural man" who precedes the "spiritual man." St. Paul does not follow up this line of thought in connection with the universality of sin, or the result might have been interesting. In any case, the story of the Fall of Adam stood in his thinking not only for a fragment of pre-history, but for significant history. It described the condition of humanity itself as "fallen," or more specifically, it expressed the fact that all men sin.

It is not irrelevant, in considering this matter, to point out that neither the myth itself, nor the apostle's treatment of it, justifies the language often used of the genesis of sin. It is not represented as "an outrage on the divine Holiness," or in words once widely quoted, "a blow in the face of the Almighty." It is not described, either in the story or by St. Paul, as a revolt against "the Eternal Law of Righteousness"; and obviously the prohibition to eat of a certain tree was as arbitrary as the prohibitions in fairy tales, unless, as is hinted, the divine powers feared an awakened intelligence in man. Nothing has ever been gained by hysterical rhetoric on the subject of sin. It is natural that as men were led to relatively high ethical conceptions of God, as the Jews were, the idea of sin should be increasingly moralised; and more particularly that the fact of Christ should

create the specifically Christian conviction of sin, which is not to be expressed in heated declamations. But there is something unreal and unconvincing in denouncing human sin through a loud-speaker, and especially in speaking in awestruck and horrified tones of the guilt of primitive man or of men who, like children, are still in a primitive state. The myth, with its fairy-tale quality, is probably nearer the actual truth than any book of Dogmatic Theology. Perhaps in connection with some totally irrational taboo, perhaps in some incredibly primitive form of Isaiah's Temple experience, the consciousness of sin was awakened in man. It is impossible to discover the form in which sin entered human life, and it is probable we would not recognise it for what it was if we found it.

The apostle, in one of his most daring insights declared once and again that the Law of Moses was given in order to waken sin to life. "Had it not been for the Law," he says, "I should never have known what sin meant,"[2] and the consciousness of sin, once awakened, gave him no rest until he found rest in Christ in a life that transcended the transient Law. And the Law, he says, itself inviolable and unachievable, was given for this dread purpose! Shall we not follow the implications of his insight further, and be bold to say that the sense of sin, in however primitive a form, was awakened the moment man became perceptive of something in his environment that made a demand upon his spiritual nature, and in so doing quickened it into feeble life, that is, the moment he was truly man? He knew sin in the same action that revealed him to himself as a moral being. Sin is universal, because human nature is constituted in the tension between a demand and an instinctive resistance, and nothing can be more incredible than Dr. Matthews' suggestion that it took God by surprise.[3] To pursue the problem further would bring us into a realm of mystery in which all things are dark. It is enough to recognise the truth, as the apostle recognised it, that the myth shadows forth the universal condition of man. He is constitutionally sinful; and it is the neglect of this fact that lays in ruins the New Jerusalems which men seek to build with their own hands.

The second truth suggested by the ancient story is that the consequences of sin are not confined to the sinner, but are transmitted through the solidarity. St. Paul believed that as the result of his disobedience the first man was doomed to death and to be the ancestor of a mortal race. It is to be doubted whether this was in the mind of the original writer, but it is not necessary to re-examine the significance of the myth. It is sufficient to

[2] Rom. vii. 7 (Moffatt).
[3] *God in Christian Thought*, 241ff.

note that the causes of hardship and pain, and all the evils of human life, are traced back to the primeval act of folly. It is, of course, an artless explanation of what Winwood Reade called the "Martyrdom of Man," and the tremendous challenges of the Book of Job are the answer to this and every other explanation that rob man of his dignity by banishing mystery from his woes. Yet in its artless way the myth suggests to us one of the grandest conceptions that ever dawned upon the human mind, the conception of "the moral order of the world" and "the Eternal Law of Righteousness". It appeared in different civilisations in the East and West during the same period, the first millennium before Christ. "O", wrote Sophocles the Greek, in the lines so greatly loved by Matthew Arnold, "O that my lot may lead me in the path of holy innocence of word and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws that in the highest empyrean had their birth, of which heaven is the father alone, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep. The power of God is in them, and groweth not old". Isolated from their context in the tragedy in which they occur and in Greek life and religion, they do not suggest to us what was the fact that the "august laws" were impersonal, and that the moral order assumed was based on the natural order and the ancient ritual cycle. It has been shown that the great conception of a universal order which is both spiritual and material rose everywhere, from the Aegean to China, on the basis of archaic ritual cultures.[4] Among the Hebrews, on the other hand, though ritual was with them as with others, the starting point of development, the conception of divine law was never impersonal as it was elsewhere. The ideas of "the eternal Law of Righteousness" and of "the moral order of the world" did not arise among them in that form because from first to last their God was personal and the only law they knew was the Will of a personal God. Mainly through the teaching of the prophets, their religion was moralised, and it was recognised that the will of God was ethically holy, and that He required righteousness rather than ritual service from men. Ancient religion was shaken free from all archaic survivals in the great monotheism which declared that heaven and earth were full of the glory of the Holy One of Israel. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart . . .". The words recall the aspiration of Sophocles, though they were not spoken in the same world of religious faith. But had the faith of the prophet and

[4] Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, 121ff.

psalmist a firmer foundation in human experience than the faith of the Greek and those others, even to the far Orient, who believed in a universal order and the law of *Dike,* eternal Justice? The great Greek Tragedians, including Sophocles, portrayed a world in which the ways of whatever Powers may be were past finding out, and in which the Law was indistinguishable from blind Nemesis and Fate. The Melian philosopher Diagoras was banished from Athens on a charge of irreligion. He had said that there was no justice in the heavens, but it was a hard thing for a Melian to believe in after the massacre at Melos. In the pages of Thucydides the story is told for all generations to read and in its moral setting. In course of time, it was Fortune and not Dike in which men came to believe, or if not Fortune, then a Fate as fixed as the order of the stars. And it is significant that both in the East and West, as men ceased to look for signs of an Eternal Law of Righteousness and a moral order of the world, they turned from the visible order and the experience of life, and sought for a union with the Absolute, under one form or another, which would give peace. They saved their souls by rejecting the world of phenomena and by a flight of "the Alone to the Alone". But the Jews could not take that road. Their faith was not in an impersonal moral order, but in a personal God who ruled the world in righteousness, and who dealt out punishment and reward to men and nations according to His just and holy Will. His Will, in fact, *was* the moral order. But this faith faced the challenge of history and individual experience no better than the non-Jewish faith, as the outcries in many a psalm, the bewilderment of a Habakkuk, the futile attempt of an Ezekiel to deny that the consequences of sin flowed from father to child, and above all the tremendous protest of "Job", bear witness. "Ye say, God layeth up his iniquity for his children. Let Him recompense it unto himself, that he may know it." It is true that Jewish faith survived the shock of disillusionment, and it was also by turning away from the present world of experience but in a different way from others, in affirming a moral order which was yet to be, a coming reign of God. But, whatever grounds there may be for this hope, it does not touch the problem or answer the questions raised by the fact of consequences in a solidarity. It is nothing less than the problem of divine justice in this present world.

There are no conceptions still current among us which need closer examination than these of "an eternal Law of Righteousness" and "the moral order of the world". Unless we are going to live by catchwords we must ask, if we use them, what exactly we mean by them. Do we mean that there is a Law in human affairs analogous to a natural law which distributes

justice to every man? Do we mean that men and nations are living in a moral order, as they are living in a physical order, in which the innocent are invariably triumphant in the end, and the wicked as invariably perish by their own devices? It is a comfortable faith, especially for the successful in life, but it is not in accordance wth fact. Undoubtedly there are moral elements in every human story, man being what he is, but he is very bold who affirms that in every story it is the moral element that is decisive. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* teaches a most pertinent lesson. It is only by ignoring many facts that one can maintain that it was a "moral order" which decreed the fall of this nation and the ruin of that man. The maxim of Ecclesiastes "Be not over much wicked," or the Greek proverb, "nothing in excess," is nearer the truth. There are even historians of indisputable authority who agree with Sir Charles Oman; "I can only see a series of occurrences—and fail to draw any constructive moral from them". In any case, what kind of justice is it which in its operations in the solidarity, makes no distinction between the innocent and the guilty but overwhelms all in a common doom? It is a justice which, to all appearance, is as indifferent to personal values as a Russian bomber over a Finnish town. Browning may say:

> Man lumps his kind i' the mass; God singles thence
> Unit by unit.

But does the supposed "moral order" confirm the conviction of that profound Christian poet and teacher? Surely, if anything is clear, it is that whatever the "moral order" may be, it is not an order of distributive justice. The great tragedians, from Aeschylus to Shakespeare, see things otherwise, and the last unanswerable word is with them. Antigone, for obeying the law of heaven rather than the law of man, is entombed alive, and Cordelia lies dead in the arms of Lear.

Nevertheless this frustrate belief in a "moral order", an "Eternal Law of Righteousness" that presides over the destinies of man, must mean something or human life would be altogether meaningless. Even Tragedy must signify—perhaps that a world without tragedy in it would be less noble than a world in which it is possible, perhaps that there is a greatness in the human spirit which is revealed only in the darkness of defeat, and which challenges the finality of death. "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?" asked Job, and part of the answer is surely in Job himself confronting his fate and towering above his calamities, holding fast to his integrity in face of heaven and earth, his light unquenched though the whirlwinds of God burst on him from the four corners

of the world. In his naked humanity he was proved greater than the universe that crashed around him. And there is that light in the human spirit. The vindication of moral values may be hard to discover in the world, but they are alive in the soul. In spite of all events the passion for justice remains. "I have within my soul a great Temple of Justice" said Euripides, and none knew better than he what moral chaos there was without. "Justice" said George Eliot wistfully, "is like the kingdom of God; it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning". And if we ask whence came this birth of justice in the soul, we must answer that the immediate, though not the ultimate, source is in the very solidarity in which the great moral problems arise. It was in the necessities of social order, even of the most primitive kind, that moral values emerged. No society could exist without some recognised ethical standards, and from the beginning religion and morals have been inextricably mingled. Religion itself, according to some, is a form of sociology. It was the sanctions of religion that gave authority to the moral claim of the solidarity on the individual. There was progress and growth in ethical ideas, partly due to the growing complexity of society, and probably even more to individual insights and leadership. But the progress was within the solidarity, and even the Hebrew prophets, the most amazing line of men in history, were the products of the national religion and ethic they sought to purify. It was in the solidarities that the great values of justice, freedom, truth, mercy and love, were fostered. Can there be such a thing as a purely individual and original religion or ethic? Reference has been made to Newman's saying that in his childhood he was luminously certain of his own soul and of a God over against him. He was an exceptional person with exceptional religious susceptibility, but others who are not Newmans can say much the same thing. But was that certainty unmediated? Was his awareness, not of an undifferentiated Something beyond him but, of a *God* to whom reverence and obedience were due, unrelated to the fact that he was born in England, into a deeply evangelical home, and surrounded from his birth by English and evangelical influences? Was not he, like the rest of us, profoundly in debt to the cultural, religious and ethical solidarity to which we belong? We need not hesitate to acknowledge that debt to society and the obligations that debt imposes upon us, because it is through the solidarity that God Himself has touched us and kindled within us the light of moral values and, in them, demands our unconditional obedience. Religion and ethics are more than "a form of sociology". No naturalistic account of them can explain the authority of conscience and the sense of sin, the growing inwardness of the moral claim, the conviction that life

is not worth living if there were not things worth dying for, the imperative which compels a faithful soul to confront even the solidarity when, swept along on what St. Augustine calls "the torrents of custom", it is untrue to its values or will not follow the gleam that is in them. The solidarity is one of the great means by which the Spirit of God has revealed the realities upon which the true life of humanity depends, and in so revealing has disclosed something of the Eternity which shines above the ambiguities of Time, and which claims our loyalty.

If the experience of solidarity disproves an order of distributive justice, on the other hand it is no part of the Christian religion to maintain its reality. The teaching of Christ lends it no support. He would not allow that the victims of a fallen tower were morally distinguishable from others, or that the man born blind was afflicted for his own sin or the sin of his parents. He did not, of course, deny that there were consequences of sin as there were consequences of folly and ignorance, and that these consequences flowed out through the whole life of the solidarity. But He did not interpret these as demonstrating "the moral order of the world". On the contrary He emphasised what appeared to be the vast moral indifference of things, the apparent absence of justice from the human situation. "Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left." Where is the distributive justice in that? But it is true to life. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" is the only reply the strange householder makes to his aggrieved labourers who rightly complained that there was no justice in his wage-system. But above all there are the great words, so often sentimentalised but in their realistic truth sweeping away many well-meaning theodicies, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust". In that seeming indifference to all moral values, the indifference which has driven so many into unbelief, He saw the outskirts[5] of a divine patience and forgivingness that was the negation of all "orders" of distributive justice. He accepted the fact of human solidarity in which the problems of justice arise. In His baptism He associated Himself with the multitudes who came to the waters of repentance. His public ministry closed with the great lament over Jerusalem. Unlike His forerunner, He entered into the closest relationship with His fellows, and especially with those whose claim to social felowship was rejected. None ever stressed the value of the individual soul as He did, or dealt more directly with the individual need. But His message concerned the Kingdom of God and knew nothing of a

[5] Job xxvi. 14.

solitary salvation. No ethical teaching was ever so inward and searching and personal as His, but it assumed the solidarities of life with all their opportunities and tensions. The interwoven texture of humanity which does not yield its meaning to the test of retributive justice will, He taught, yield it to the test of a redemptive love, and along all the threads the vibrations of that love will pass, because it deals with men not according to their deserts, but according to their value to themselves and to God, which is the finest justice.[6] Burdens borne of necessity but accepted in a generous spirit become occasions of brotherly service. The inescapable sufferings of the innocent, endured willingly, become vicarious and sacramental. The highest life, He said, is the life that finds itself in losing itself, and, accepting brotherhood with all, realises a divine sonship. He called into existence the Church, a new super-racial solidarity based on faith in Himself, and in its midst instituted the Memorial of a Sacrifice for the whole world, in which mercy and truth met together. In the end He stood revealed to faith as the Eternal Son who, by an infinite act of grace, came into the solidarity of humanity, and never deceived by our infidelity, having loved us, He loved us even to the Cross and beyond. Christ and His Cross transform the whole human situation, so that there is no problem of innocent suffering in the New Testament, no complaints against the justice of God. He does not give an answer to our questionings about the "moral order". He lifts us to a level where they cease to have meaning.

If the historians fail to find evidence of a "moral order" in human affairs, it naturally follows that they discover no "Providential order", no indication of a divine purpose. "I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave" says Fisher, and his view is typical. Arnold Toynbee approaches nearest to a spiritual interpretation of history when, rejecting emphatically the materialistic doctrine, he uses the Chinese Yin-Yang philosophy, and "represents the course of history under the suggestive figure of the inspiration and expiration of the World Spirit",[7] but these alternating cycles cannot yield the idea of a divine purpose. This idea belongs to revealed religion and is valid only within its sphere. It is the mainspring of the Old Testament and the joyous faith of the New. If we believe in a providential order, it is because we believe in the incarnation of God in Christ and in His redemption, and from within the citadel of that faith see history as culminating in Him. If that faith is vain and the experience of redemption goes for

[6] Cf. Barry, *Relevance of Christianity*, 196, on "transmuted justice."
[7] Matthews, *Purpose of God*, 162; cf. Lloyd, *Christianity, History and Civilisation*, 188ff.

nought, then, with the secular historians, we must abandon the idea of a divine purpose in history. But our view of humanity and its future is conditioned by the Christian view of man as sinful and needing redemption. It is to the credit of the Christian Church that, wholly in the beginning and for the most part since, it has been under no illusion about the state of the world, or has believed that mankind could be saved from its ills by its own wisdom and power. It has always proclaimed the need of salvation from a radical evil that poisons all life and all relationships, and in the end makes all human effort a ploughing of the sand. Babylons and Bastilles are all rebuilt in other forms. The world needs a redemption which is from above, an invasion of divine grace and supernatural power, and this is to be found only in God's saving work in and through Christ. The Church itself is the consequence of that great divine intervention; it is the "new man" created in Christ Jesus, the "new race", as it once called itself, in which the purpose of God is being fulfilled. It is a Light shining in the darkness in faith that at the last all the darkness shall vanish and in Christ all men shall be one, reconciled to one another because all reconciled to God. There are times when such a faith seems desperate indeed, and it never has been easy, but its foundation is Christ. "He said not" wrote that sweet-souled mystic Julian of Norwich, "Thou shalt not be tempested, thou shalt not be travailed, thou shalt not be afflicted; but He said: Thou shalt not be overcome."

But the Christian Church, like all other solidarities, is imperfect and sinful, even though the life of Christ flows through it; and even when its hope is fulfilled and it has no boundaries but the frontiers of humanity itself, still there will be sin and sorrow and frustrating death. Our Lord taught us to pray "Thy Kingdom come", and the powers of the kingdom are even now at work, but to ignore the eschatological reference is to misread not only the prayer but the Person and work of the Saviour. Here, we but "taste of the powers of the world to come". In this world of time and space, Humanity is a Jacob, and even though it bears the new name and the sun rises over its Peniel, it halts upon its thigh. It is not within the limits of earth that God's eternal purpose can be fulfilled. It is in Eternity only where awaits the multitude no man can number out of every tribe and nation and age, and who cannot be perfected apart from those who follow them, nor these apart from them, that God's will will be done, and His purpose accomplished—"to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth . . . in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will".

B. G. COLLINS.