
LET ISRAEL HOPE IN THE LORD

Charles N. R. McCoy

This is a brief reflection published in the now extinct Oratres Fratres (January 1941). The consequences of the turning from common Fatherhood and the resulting loss of common brotherhood are as evident today as when this was first written. McCoy was in St. Paul Seminary at the time and was to be ordained in May 1941. He had earned his Ph.D. in Political Science (constitutional law) from the University of Chicago in 1938

During the summer of 1929 business confidence attained an all-time high record. A few months afterwards came the great crash. Today there are many businessmen who still believe that the only thing necessary for full recovery is a renewal of confidence. Incredible as this may seem, it is not altogether absurd. It shows the power that confidence has of realizing values that would otherwise lie dormant. But there is an indispensable condition to the power of confidence: it is that genuine values must be present from the beginning.

Everyone now knows that the economic collapse of 1929 was merely one phase of the moral and intellectual collapse of an epoch. That epoch began in the sixteenth century when men substituted an empty confidence for a living faith in God and dedicated themselves to their own love and glory. In the succeeding centuries this deordination ran its course. God was more completely ignored, abandoned, denied. Man, more attentive to the things of this world, constructed the wonderfully rich material culture in which we live. And lastly the self-love and glory which man sought have turned to ashes, and men are today disillusioned and disorganized, are morally and intellectually bankrupt.

The loss of God would be an immeasurable evil at any time. But we must notice that our own world, precisely because of its humanly rich and varied culture, because of the instruments at its disposal, because of its high degree of social interdependence—this world of ours has tempted the power of God and not trusted in it, has extended and deepened its moral responsibilities in the same proportion that it has lost its moral sense. For it could only be that having turned from the common Fatherhood men should have lost the common brotherhood; and as the modern world came to maturity, national, class and individual strife became the accepted law of its life.

We who do know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, we are part of this world. National and world events have a

greater and more immediate effect upon our moral security than was the case a century ago and less. We feel the tension and instability of these times – the uncertainty of getting a job, of providing for a family, the fear of war, the bewilderment and resentment at propaganda. And in these circumstances there is a peculiar danger to our confidence in God, not the danger so much of losing that confidence, but a danger more subtle and not uncommon. It is the danger of a sort of religious connivance with skepticism. We are likely to regard the whole world as unregenerate—the world in whose redemption we are actually supposed to be co-sharers with Christ. We are likely to give the world over in good riddance to the devil, from whose dominion Christ wrested it by His suffering, death, and resurrection. And in adopting this behavior we might think that we were practicing confidence in God. It would be a delusion! It would be equivalent to saying to our Lord” “This world for whose salvation You suffered and died is not worth suffering for. It is not our world, nor do we wish any part of it. When You taught us to pray, “The kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,’ was this not a pious aphorism?”

No, it was not a pious aphorism. When our Lord’s passion was accomplished the whole face of the earth was renewed in hope. The world was renewed in youth, like the eagle: Scripture sings it. For as many as believed in Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God. And to us He gave all things, things present and things to come, life, death even, and the world. A confidence in God, no matter how strong, which hopes only for one’s own individual profit and ignores the rest of the world can have no real value in the divine economy. For again, if we have real confidence in our Lord it must be confidence in His mission. And His mission was this: There was a woman suffering from an issue of blood twelve years. She came up behind our Lord and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. Now if this woman was made whole by merely touching the hem of our Lord’s garment, what should be the confidence of those who have put on Christ entire? What should our confidence be? Clearly, it should be an overflowing confidence, going out from us even at the hem of our garments. Now St. Jerome tells us that the woman who touched the hem of our Lord’s garment represents the gentile nations, suffering as it were (even today) from an issue of blood. We who have put on Christ must walk with Him in the midst of all races and nations: for who can tell when strength will go out from us, as from Him, to save a suffering and a dying world?

PETER AND CAESAR

Charles N. R. McCoy

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But the ideal society is not more real than the ideal gas of physics. Not that the true and the good are to be denied; rather, on the contrary, from the errors and evils that must inevitably arise, we ought to draw lessons in the ways of acting with greater prudence and wisdom. That is the meaning of "ideal" in politics, its meaning from the point of view of action.

The title of Mr. Goerner's book, as the title of this essay, might suggest that its central concern is the problem of religious liberty. In fact the problem of religious liberty is tangential to the main inquiry: how can every Christian who is in the world conform "the structure of the common action in which he moves" to "the archetypal Christian action?" Mr. Goerner's Caesar is thoroughly baptized and very much aware of his own lay priesthood; Peter is deeply concerned for the "secular city," schooled in St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching that the world was made to be man's habitation and "hence (he) loves the whole world naturally and consequently desires its good."

Thus we have here something rare among Catholic Scholars and writers: a contribution to a matter of current social concern that shows a special Catholic competence within a secular discipline—in this case, political science. Someone has remarked that what is most evident in contemporary works of Catholic scholars—sociologists, economists, political scientists—is the curious and striking absence of any constitutive part played by their Catholic faith in the development of their scientific interests: we have sociologists who happen to be Catholics. Political scientists who happen to be Catholics—victims, it has been suggested, of the Church's four centuries of withdrawal from and suspicion and hostility to the mainstreams of world thought. Mr. Goerner is not one of these victims—except, perhaps, by over-reacting. Indeed, as I shall try to make clear, his criticism of Father John Courtney Murray is precisely that Murray's courageous spirit and generally right instincts on the church-state question betray nonetheless the effects of the long estrangement of the Church's intellectual tradition from the modern world.

Speaking, in the Introduction, of the fateful encounter between Socrates and Athens, Mr. Goerner gives us the underlying principle that guides his whole study: the principle of the great Western tradition of political wisdom that the quality of human life is the ultimate concern of government. (Father Murray is charged with “a curious demoralization of politics” and with reducing its concern “to mere housekeeping functions.”) A second principle of the great Western tradition of political wisdom—freedom for the spirit, which prohibits the state from directly regulating by law the quality of human life—is of secondary interest to Mr. Goerner; though what he has to say on it shows, I believe, that he knows how to secure it in political principles better than does Father Murray.

Nonetheless, Mr. Goerner’s special preoccupation with the deeper levels of existence at which society lives leads to a blurring of the distinction between the good that characterizes political society and those goods which transcend the political order. Thus it is that the four major medieval theories on the relation of church and state, examined in the first half of the book, are evaluated chiefly by their comprehension of society’s roots in spiritual reality. What Mr. Goerner most deplors in the extreme papalist position of Giles of Rome is not what one might expect it to be—its denial of the independence on human law grounded in purely natural reason; rather, Giles is reproached for his failure to see that “the political order is (also) directed to procuring a natural spiritual perfection or virtue in its members.” Giles must shoulder the chief responsibility for “the depths of the disaster that papalist views helped to produce in the West”—the wholesale secularization of politics, whose first representative was Marsilius of Padua (and whose latest is John Courtney Murray?).

Again, John of Paris, who attempted a moderate position, is criticized by Goerner not so much for his faulty understanding of the Gelasian theory of the distinction of the two powers, as for the “flavor” of Semi-Pelagianism in his writings and for his failure (here Mr. Goerner’s zeal for his Father’s house seems to be a bit consuming) to develop a “theology of the layman.” Mr. Goerner appears to favor the view that the whole development of the question of church and state was essentially “a dispute about the nature of priestly power, rather than a dispute about the limits of priestly authority *vis-a-vis* political authority” (p.231). One gets the impression that Mr. Goerner has a theocratic conception of the civil community. The absence of a theology of the layman “undermines all attempts at an adequate Church-State doctrine.”

But apparently the absence of a theology of the layman was not quite the root difficulty. That “tangential” question of religious liberty is inescapably there, and Mr. Goerner now feels that “the first prerequisite

of a more satisfactory solution does not seem to be the much-called for 'theology for the layman.' The problem is deeper than that. It seems that a renewed and deepened theology of the Holy Ghost is needed (pp. 252-253). And, as Mr. Goerner observes in his Introduction, "the spirit blows where it will." The absence of a deepened theology of the Holy Ghost was the chief defect in St. Robert Bellarmine's theory of Church and State; he did not sufficiently take into account the fact that "the time between the Incarnation and the Second Coming is characterized by a pluralism in every society." Bellarmine would not have been averse to using those twelve legions of angels whose aid our Lord declined to call upon.

It is in terms now of response to the need for a renewed theology of the Holy Ghost that the contemporary positions on the church-state question are examined in the second half of *Peter and Caesar*. The "canonists," the "integrists," and the "prophetic critics" are guided in varying degrees by the light of "the pole-star of the apocalyptic vision of the City of God." John Courtney Murray, although he is given a chapter in this section, is given little else; he is considered to have so tied himself to "the rationalistic language of the absolutized individual rights" as to have in effect converted the religious essence into human essence. Father Murray has indeed said things that would lead one to suppose that the Holy Ghost is an historically conditioned concept in which man has expressed his experiences for his longing for truth and unity at a given historical time, and which now appears as "the personal and political consciousness of contemporary man."

The "deeper ground for the concern with religious pluralism as a political problem" is, then, to be discovered in man's longing for truth and unity. Mr. Goerner supplies us with an indication of the deeper ground of the political problem: H. Richard Niebuhr is quoted as saying that, "The union of church and state, of state with state and class with class, and the union of all these with the supernatural Lord and Companion is the ineluctable desire of the believer." The "canonists" (prominently among whom are Monsignor Joseph C. Fenton, Father Francis Connell, and George W. Shea) though unimaginative and "boring" express, nonetheless, "in the relatively narrow terms appropriate to legal obligations the center of . . . the integrist hope (which) rightly demands the Christianization of every aspect of man's life, rightly regards as religious-secular schizophrenia as abnormal" (pp. 263; 268). The "integrists" are the "canonists" canonized. The integrist understands that the "political community is a shared structure of action"; he perceives that "the archetypical human action is liturgical worship," and that the profound reconciliation between God and man

“calls forth and regenerates the depths of that civil amity” which Aristotle himself had prized as a binding force greater even than justice.

But the integrist has his own temptation. He is tempted to accept externals in lieu of the immense and never-ending struggle to Christianize politics—a process of interiorization of the true and the good which respects freedom of conscience. “What is involved is the utterly intimate and total spiritual condition of an existential human whole.” Mr. Goerner presents in this section a profoundly moving description of the responsibilities of the baptized and confirmed Christian for the public order of action. He suggests two main objectives: that the assent of the laity ought to be required in actions of the Church that directly affect the political order, and that “the institutions through which lay assent is to be expressed must conform to the extra-ecclesiastical structure of the common life of the people concerned.” There is no development of these points, and it is not clear how they are related to the vocation of the prophetic critic. Again, the main impression that Mr. Goerner leaves us with is that of a theocratic community. He indicates no awareness of the fact that although the separation of the two perfect societies of church and state does not prevent the church from having a social doctrine of its own, assent to this doctrine, insofar as it is the church’s, cannot be required of citizens of the state.

I have said that Mr. Goerner gives the impression of a theocratic conception of the civil community; the civil community seems to live only insofar as it operates through “the spiritual style” of “prophetic criticism.” Impelled by a deep sense of “the responsibility that men inescapably bear for the whole shape and thrust of their common life,” he allows this passion to obscure somewhat the line that separates the good that characterizes the political order from the good that transcends that order—including specifically natural goods. There is undoubtedly in the heart of the Christian a subordination between the respective ends of church and state, and one may even say that the viability of the political structure depends on a dynamism that is meta-political. The classical political philosophy understood, as does Mr. Goerner, that political philosophy is ultimately compelled to transcend the dimension of political life as such: that political philosophy points toward a discipline that is no longer concerned with political things in the proper sense. But political things in the proper sense remain, and it is these that Mr. Goerner’s theocratic tendencies bring into eclipse.

Although he would insure religious freedom, he makes this depend on the “spiritual style” of the prophetic critic (as opposed to canonist and integrist). The reason for placing responsibility for

religious freedom in the hands of the prophetic critic is that “the deeper ground for the concern with religious pluralism as a political problem” is not the pluralism which, given the human condition, is humanly ineluctable; what puts the care of society in the hands of the prophetic critic is the ineluctable drive toward the moral and intellectual unity of society. The political community appears to become truly such only with the emergence of the best regime—that *optimum genus reipublicae* that Father Murray believes to be a “perilous” notion. But Mr. Goerner has, I believe, a not quite accurate notion of “ideal society.” The conception he has of it is precisely the one that Father Murray rightly finds “perilous.” The proper notion may be understood by considering the fact that the pluralism that is humanly ineluctable is so essential to the nature of political life that political life can not be understood without it: virtue is, to be sure, the end at which every lawmaker aims but it does not itself come under the precept of law. As St. Thomas says, “it is enough that the citizens be so far virtuous that they obey the commands of their rulers.”

Mr. Goerner gives the impression of supposing that political society achieves existence only when it attains moral and intellectual unity. It can, indeed, be so understood—ideally, precisely: but the ideal society is not more real than the ideal gas of physics. Not that the true and the good are to be denied; rather, on the contrary, from the errors and evils that must inevitably arise, we ought to draw lessons in the ways of acting with greater prudence and wisdom. That is the meaning of the “ideal” in politics, its meaning from the point of view of action. We may recall that although Aristotle believed the monarchical form of government to be the best so long as it commanded the consent of the people, he also believed that it was the most risky and lent itself more readily than less ideal regimes to the destruction of the very nature of the political community.

Not having presented an entirely correct notion of “ideal society,” Mr. Goerner’s allusion to “the basic typology of constitutional systems in terms of their fundamental psychic structure” is no more than that; it lacks the substantive force of argument against the view it intends to combat—Father Murray’s view. Strangely enough, Mr. Goerner and Father Murray share the same inadequate understanding of the notion of ideal society. The difference is that Mr. Goerner’s view on the politics of church and state—to apply a paraphrase of the epigram of Maritain on Bergsonian ethics—preserves all of politics except politics itself, while Father Murray, finding the notion of ideal society a perilous one, abandons it altogether and destroys all of politics including politics itself.

In “The Problem of Religious Freedom” (*Theological Studies*, December, 1964), Father Murray expresses the view that the argument for religious freedom should begin “in the order of historical fact,” not “in the order of universal truth.” This position is amplified in the following statements:

The fact is that religious freedom is an aspect of contemporary historical experience . . .

. . . religious freedom is not (an) . . . idea that has had no history but has always somehow been ‘there’ to be seen by anyone who cared to look at it. Religious freedom is the reasonable *affirmation of the contemporary consciousness* . . . the *basis* for a systematic doctrine of religious freedom (is) the concrete exigencies of the personal and political consciousness of *contemporary man*.

The French-speaking theologians at the Council, while agreeing with Father Murray against the “traditional” view (that those in error can have *in principle* no right within civil society) launched the accusation that Father Murray’s view was “juridical modernism.” This is certainly a reasonable charge. If, as Father Murray avers, religious liberty is simply “an aspect of the contemporary historical experience,” then it has no trans-historical exigencies. And if this is so, then the concept of religious liberty is not everywhere and at all times valid. Unlike the French-speaking theologians, who wished to establish religious liberty in ethical and theological principles, Father Murray establishes it in “the *concrete* exigencies of the personal and political consciousness of *contemporary man*.” If, with the French-speaking theologians, one has formally and in the first instance established the right of religious liberty in the trans-historical exigencies of ethical and theological principles, then one may indeed readily acknowledge that the juridical notion of religious liberty reflects a genuine intellectual and moral progress. But the notion itself of religious liberty is not the fruit of this progress, is not formally and in the first instance a juridical notion whose validity is found in “the order of historical fact.”

If Mr. Goerner holds (as he appears to do) that political society has no life unless it is living at the height of its principles and beyond, Father Murray has deprived the body politic of the very principle of life. As I have pointed out, if virtue is indeed the end at which law aims, virtue itself does not come under the precept of law; and it is useful now to observe the reason for this. It does not belong to the civil authority to determine exactly what makes the good man. If it did, political life and

citizenship would be impossible: for it belongs to the very notion of citizen that he act on his own, that he be *causa sui*. Hence if virtue itself came under the precept of law, the public power would become *despotic*, thus the opposite of *political* power.

When Father Murray establishes the basis of a systematic doctrine of religious liberty in the *affirmation of the personal and political consciousness of contemporary man*, he identifies “virtue” with the simple affirmation of the political consciousness; he thus abandons the notion of “ideal” altogether, and in doing so he destroys the liberty of contrariety that defines the citizen. He destroys the distinction made by Pius XI between “freedom of consciences” (which is political) and “freedom of conscience” (which is despotic). He resolves—to use words of Marx—the “religious essence” into “human essence.” Father Murray’s statements curiously suggest Erich Fromm’s view that “the concept of God is an historically conditioned one, in which man has expressed his experience of his higher powers, his longing for truth and unity at a given historical period,” that “the realm of love, reason and justice exists as a reality only because, and inasmuch as, man has been able to develop these powers in himself throughout the process of evolution.” Indeed, Father Murray’s theoretical formulations allow us to ask whether legal intolerance may not—should it express the concrete exigencies of some future political consciousness—be quite justified. It is not without reason that Mr. Goerner hints that Father Murray’s views are a lineal descendant of those taught by Marsilius of Padua.

The fears expressed by Mr. Goerner lest Father Murray’s views be incorporated in the Schema on Religious Liberty of Vatican II have not, fortunately, been fulfilled. The Council Schema not only turns down the “traditional” view that those in error have in principle no right in civil society, but it turns it down by firmly establishing such a right in trans-historical exigencies, in theological and ethical principles. The language of the Schema appears to be that of Father Murray, but the voice is not: “A sense of the dignity of the human person *has been impressing itself* more and more on the consciousness of the contemporary man The right of religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person *as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself*. This right of the human person to religious freedom *is to be recognized* in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and *thus it is to become a civil right*.”

Mr. Goerner seems to have focused his attention on the dynamics rather than on the structure of politics—on principles that in themselves are meta-political. He writes:

The whole structure of the modern view of knowing and the knowable has excluded the possibility of science centered on a contemplative activity, since it has excluded the knowability of a contemplative object. This has been commonly accepted since Kant. It was already seen by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. All of them understood that the scientific destruction of the religious and metaphysical traditions of antiquity and the Middle Ages carried with it a profound threat to public order. (p. 206)

If the contemplative life offers, as it were, the solution to the problem of what keeps the political life in motion, this life is strictly meta-political, which is to say that the civil community cannot demand adherence to these higher principles as a condition of citizenship. When—as is the case in almost all of the modern systems of political theory—there is an attempt to “overcome” these higher principles by concretizing them in the political order (Father Murray’s position), the political structure itself is destroyed. In short, if indeed there is no analytical connection between metaphysics (theology) and politics, there is, in the order of things themselves, a profound connection—it is the very dynamism that keeps the political structure going. Mr. Goerner thoroughly understands this, and it is the chief theme of his book. But the intensity of his gaze keeps his attention from the political structure itself as a properly human perfection. Notwithstanding, Mr. Goerner has sensed the fact that it is not the church and the state that confront each other today; it is, rather, the Earthly City and the City of God. In this perspective it may very well be that the priesthood of the laity, as the *adjuvans Dei*, may be the vehicle for restoring the political structure as a properly human perfection.

CONTEMPLATION PASSES INTO PRACTICE:
RELIGION AND REALITY

Charles N. R. McCoy

This is a previously unpublished manuscript and is the last entry in the annotated bibliography above. It is related to the counter culture articles, the liberation theology and Heidegger articles, and, indeed, to the whole corpus. It is offered here with the intention, and hope, that it will stimulate the reader to look closely at the related articles and by that to turn to the entire corpus. Any one of his articles should have a similar result.

In a review of Thomas O'Dea's *Alienation, Atheism, and the Religious Crisis* (*The Commonwealth*, October 24, 1969, p. 105) Mr. Bernard Murchland gives it as Mr. O'Dea's opinion that "Western civilization arose within a value perspective that stressed withdrawal from the world." Mr. O'Dea is reported as observing that "While our European ancestors of the 10th and 11th centuries worked out the solution to difficult environmental problems . . . they accepted a definition of what man should be doing here below of a pronounced other-worldly character." The irony then, Mr. O'Dea says, is that Western man's "fundamental world view (gave) him little basis for significant interpretation of his achievements."

It is then, Mr. Murchland argues, not so much the collapse of our religious values that has left man bereft of self-definition as it is that those values were "unsatisfactorily secured to begin with;" they had "separated man from himself and severed him from the larger rhythms of nature and the community." This of course, as Mr. Murchland says, is the Marxist humanist concept of alienation and it dominates contemporary revolutionary efforts. These efforts are intent upon exploring "new ways of conceiving the human enterprise and setting forth a fresh definition of what it means to be men." They seek to relate man to "the larger rhythms of nature and the community."

That past religious values were "in themselves inadequate" to furnish "significant interpretation" of man's solving his difficult environmental problems, that those values "were unsatisfactorily secured to begin with" is surely a profoundly mistaken view, and I should like to adduce evidence to show that the traditional values were indeed rich in insights and in significant interpretations of man's solving his difficult environmental problems.

It is, I think, only just and fitting to allude first indeed to the profound connection established by classical social thought (that of Aristotle in particular) between concrete worldly activity and metaphysical realities. The undeserved neglect of this point is undoubtedly to be attributed to the fact that, as the Greeks understood it (and properly), no *analytical* connection exists between metaphysics (first theology) and concrete conduct—that is, no connection such that in order to act well in this world one must subscribe to some metaphysical doctrine. Metaphysical doctrine does not come under any civil law nor is adherence to it required for citizenship. But in the order of things themselves there was held to be a profound connection: In the first book of the *Ethics* Aristotle maintains that whether we are engaged in building a ship or curing the body, or taking part in politics, the ultimate explanation of all this human enterprise is the imitating in some fashion of the Divine activity in governing and moving the entire universe. This is why Aristotle calls the good that is achieved for a whole community of men “more divine” than the good achieved for one man only. He calls it “more divine” because it is a more perfect likeness of the good of the entire universe and of the ultimate essential goodness (God) that draws all things to itself. Man was thought of as sharing proportionately in the activity of God by being the cause of goodness in the whole community of men (solving his “difficult environmental problems”) as God is the cause of goodness in the being of the entire universe. Is there any evidence here of estrangement from “the larger rhythms of nature and the community”? On the contrary; here, I submit, were theological (if not religious) values that gave a basis for significant interpretation of man’s achievements. One may say indeed that long before Karl Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach* there was an understanding of a form of contemplation that passes into practice.

If the god of the Greek philosophers did not intervene in world history the God of Israel did indeed intervene, and intervened in the most crucial and unexpected ways to change that history. As the eminent Scripture scholar Bruce Vawter puts it, this was “the altogether revolutionary conception of the very meaning of what it was to be a god. . . . (*New Paths Through the Bible*) For Israel the separation of religion from reality was inconceivable. “When the prophets of the eighth century appeared before their countrymen to denounce their crimes, chiefly social in nature, they did not take their stand on . . . philosophy but on the experienced facts of history”: The facts here were the voice of God who spoke through the prophets of the eighth century. And what the prophets had said was that sacrifice without mercy is unacceptable. “. . . Amos made it very clear why the Lord found this people’s sacrifices

unacceptable. For, as he pointed out in detail, this religious people was also guilty of the most cynical selfishness and corruption, which included bribery, extortion, oppression of the poor, and economic enslavement.” What prophecy did for Israel it does for us today. If there have been Christians who have similarly mistaken religious values to be simply “other-worldly” this does not repudiate the authentic Scriptural message. Such Christians have simply not gotten the message. The religion of such men has lost sight of God as he has been revealed in prophecy. As Father Vawter puts it: “Theirs could only be a perversion of Christianity, cut loose as it (is) from the moorings of social morality which are of the essence of Christianity (cf. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, par.222).” It is not without reason that Karl Marx has been called the last of the great Jewish prophets. Marx spoke with such effect, Barbara Ward has remarked, because the prophetic voice of Christianity was—and is—too faint.

It was the Fathers of the Judaeo-Christian revelation who by joining together Greek and Hebrew thought overcame the separation of reality from religion that had left Greek thought an exercise and luxury for the professional philosopher. St. Augustine was a Father of the Church—a Father that is, of the new Israel. And the authentic voice of the prophets comes through in his warning that the just distribution of temporal goods is what is demanded by “the most just Disposer . . . of all the adjuncts of temporal peace—the visible light, the breathable air, the potable water and all the other necessities of meat, drink and clothing.” St. Augustine would evidently not countenance water and air pollution. What then can one mean by saying that past religious values were in themselves inadequate to furnish significant interpretation of man’s solving his difficult environmental problems? “. . . the love of country; the honesty of virtue; the faith of friendship; just dealing and all the things belonging to good manners”—these, St. Augustine tells us, are ways to praise God.

It is often supposed that the Scholastic theologians were so wedded to Greek wisdom that they simply “baptized” Aristotle. On the contrary, St. Thomas Aquinas as much as the Fathers of the Church, treats of ethics and politics in the light of sacred doctrine, in the light of the revealed Word of God—the God Who speaks to man and changes the world. From what sources does St. Thomas derive his prescription for solving the following environmental problems?

. . . one who is about to establish a city . . . must, in the first place, choose a suitable site; healthy to ensure the health of the inhabitants; fertile, to provide for their sustenance; one which will delight the eye with its loveliness and give natural security. . . . Having

chosen the site, the next task . . . is to plan the area to meet all the requirements of a civic life, . . . one must decide where to build the towns and where to leave the countryside open. (*On the Rule of Princes*)

Delight the eye? Leave the countryside open? St. Thomas seems to have been an early conservationist and planner. And what is the source of this planning? He finds its prototype in the work that God does in the world: From what God does in the universe, he tells us, we shall see what the task of politics is. “There are . . . two aspects of the work of God in the world. The first is the act of creation; the second His governance of it once He has created it.” The creative task of politics must be joined to the governing task. Further, the creative task of politics is to be linked to the considerations St. Thomas makes concerning the renewal of the world after the Last Judgment. The connection may be seen in the fact that since man does not indeed create social life out of nothing, the analogy with the creative work of God must be understood in terms of a politics of renewal. It is by a politics of renewal, likened to the renewal of the world after the Last Judgment, that the creative aspect of politics must be understood. “The world was made to be man’s dwelling. Therefore it should befit man. . . . Man has some likeness to the universe, wherefore he is called a ‘little world’. Hence man loves the whole world naturally, and consequently desires its good. Therefore, that man’s desire be satisfied the universe must needs . . . be made better.” We have noted St. Thomas’ plan for making it better right now. The politics of renewal calls for a using of resources at hand for the good of the whole community of men—for the perfection of the whole, which has to be brought into being by creative work. And of this work of renewal one may say what St. Thomas says of the renewal of the world after the Last Judgment: by it “the carnal eye will be fittingly comforted in the vision of God in His corporeal effects.” It is a form of contemplation—indeed it indicates the hidden objective of Marx’s celebrated call for a contemplation that passes into practice.

It is sufficiently clear that the fundamental world-view of Western man had not severed him from the world, we must ask what it more precisely is that prompts the holding of the contrary view. The answer, I suggest, lies in dissatisfaction with the manner in which traditional values had related man to the rest of nature. The real complaint is that the traditional religious values had not established that relation in a manner capable of reducing—as Cassirer says of the efforts of the Enlightenment—the mental and material sphere to a common denominator, composed of the same elements and combined according to the same laws. This is the root reason for the double charge of severing man from nature as well as from himself. The “self” in question

is taken to be (according, indeed, to the doctrine of Marxist humanism) man's "generic" self, the whole of nature, with which human nature is radically identified. This is the core reason too why the traditional values are said to have been "unsatisfactorily secured to begin with." And this is why "revolutionary efforts today are not concerned with reconstruction of a tradition; they are intent upon exploring new ways of conceiving the human enterprise and setting forth a fresh definition of what it means to be men." This fresh definition will seek to identify all objective reality with the reality of human forces, "that is to say," as Marx puts it, "the objective reality becomes the objectification of man himself."

In regard to this fresh definition (of what it means to be men) that looks upon objective reality as the objectification of human forces, the objectification of man himself, it would be well to heed the acute criticism made of it by Heidegger in his sympathetic examination of Marxist humanism. It sells man short Heidegger thinks; "possibility" and "passion" are greater than actuality, and this "possibility" Heidegger thinks of as anterior to all science and technics. He speaks of it as "every world-creating impulse of the spirit", and says that it is falsified when it is made to masquerade as "intelligence." If the complexus of tools and the relations of production are what first (Heidegger here agrees with Marx) give significance to the world of nature, these nonetheless have their principle and origin in something anterior to them: in "spirit" which is found neither in "the regulation and domination of the material conditions of production" nor in "the intelligent ordering and explanation of everything that is present and already posited at any time." (*Introduction to Metaphysics*) This language of Heidegger is evocative—as Werner Brock has convincingly pointed out—of the beginning passages of *Genesis*: and indeed it is suggestive of St. Thomas' allusion to those same passages in suggesting a model for the politics of renewal.

It is neither atheism nor the different contemporary understandings of alienation that are at the heart of modern man's religious crisis. Rather it is the astounding and frightening loss of touch with the authentic sources of the Western classical and Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is man's almost complete loss of contact with his moral, spiritual, and intellectual roots that has alienated him from himself. And the blame lies everywhere. Someone has remarked that what is most evident in contemporary works of Catholic scholars—sociologists, economists, political scientists—is the curious and striking absence of any constitutive part played by their Catholic faith in the development of their scientific interest. They are victims, it has been fairly suggested, of

the Church's four centuries of withdrawal from and suspicion and hostility to the mainstreams of world thought. However right the instincts and however generous and humane the intentions of these scholars, they betray nonetheless the effects of the Church's long estrangement from the modern world. It does not seem at all impossible that a renaissance of the traditional values will come in the future from the great secular centers of learning now that the doors of the Church are once more opening upon the world.