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Permanent Characteristics of Liberal Religion

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Permanent Characteristics of Liberal Keligins. most of our poblems are fretty much a question of boggage. Une of my accestors in the year 1769 found the town of afsuich rother too stable and fixed in its habits and cus= town to suit him. In the spring of that year, equiffed with are ax, a gun, a bog of seed-com and a few other necessities, this young wor wounted his torse and started for toto for the fronce of maine. He relected a track of land, flanted his seeds, and built a robic, Having finished there felininary lasks he returned to Ifsmich for a brief wirit. In the lote summer again he set firth for the new land of fourise. With him ment his bride. Into are unsettled region for hard work, flain living, and dangers, but, withall, into a life of whotesome. creative offert with its manifold joys and sorrows, they were going. They carried very lettle bog = gaze. Some twenty years or twors ago a remote section of Berkshine County was innaded by

a her york mare of affairs. His standing in financial and sporting circles had been acheined, not by any constructive effort, but by shrend, and after questionable methods of fluidering. From marins farmers he bought some 14000 acres of farm and woodland, HE established a great game fresence, built great stables and bouses. Into this quiet and rewote sfot that had known lette more of humon life than the hard loil of farmers and wood cutters, he brought, lervery, exhavagance, and mantonners. The ferer lasted but a few years. tour or five years ago a member of this family came to the great bourse on his toney: woon, Great pefarations mere made for this hovery woon in the hills, both at Berkeshine, and as I recall it, in the divorce courts, The sundry fafars took due notice. Since there only the fassing stranger visits the flace. Last spring, just as the Hefaticas mere and Treliam mere breaking through last years conening of leaver, I walked at one the mometain, along the neglected roads of the

estate. The bourses and stables, exforsed un both to the weather and inquining man, I examined, Doors broken in; windows ofened; furiture, shacles, scattered about, Every thing told the story of neglect and delay. Those money had been exfended here than most families have during an entre lifetime. The whole thing seemed to symbolize a great tragecy. The M. Y. teleftone directory, the seusool novels, the stock ticker, the gaudy, and grandiose offermance of every thing, ever the fire-flace, told the tole of a tragic failure in judging lifes volues. They had nort loads of boggage, Leaving these crumbling buildings behund I continued my fort fast deserted and decaying fame toures until at last & came to the little cem: elang, where rested the loilers and who are lined and lobued here. The cemetary wor neglected, the marble slabs were falling; many of the graves had caned in, Here and there a lilae bush bore mitness to haven saum and offection, These falling stines, and the deverted faun touses mue all that remained of those who had area, lined, labored and lined, awang there

hearte ful, but exacting hills. These had but little baggage, but they mere creature of the notions life The two fictures, and the cerue lang, suggest more than I care to foint out, or enere wish to imply. But the deserted mansion in the hills, with all its imflications, may have mitness to a gennine impulse that feels the failure, and limitations of much that has been and still is characteristic of our great poorferity woden life. It may betran a blind, and mintellight, but yet real desire for real volues, - an me defined need to of getting free from suferfluous baggage. For me have accumulated so much baggoge of every kind and description, that me are no longer marten of the baggage. but have become its bouch servants. WE go where the baggoge trick us go, and when the baggage hick us refrain, me refrain. the have builded us great states, to potect us in life, likerty, and the fursuit of hoffiners, but these states & have trought us to the nerge of anaichy, and decay, hankrufter, to alothe peech, and shelter ourselves, we have

left many stately mansions with all

Their contents to not on monitains and hill sides of history. This fassing terrible

and remorreles in its destructionenes,

-5-

and after gloriously heroix in its uf buildings is pessing us to examine on baggage, to decide what me need; to chircard what euclanes us, and to take up our journey to a new band of fromine. "Shoulder your duds. my son.

Nuch see the stern commande of our decade, In no uncertain loves are they issued. The clash armies, the rise and fall of nations, the oneithow of empires, the collafse of religious the conflict of classes, - no one is exempt, and the fressure in terrific. The quat man which negan in a quanel oner

baggage, is ending in a fassionate and terrific revolution, whose master spirit is a determination to cast aside suferfluores baggage, that men may again theore hecome marters of their budens, For year men have noted the increasing suchiner of our social at worthere, the story clouds gathering on the bonizen. She storm has broken, the first terrific gusts of mind and rain tone sulft over us but neither is the fuel bury of the storm spent, nor have me hegun to affraire the extent of the devartations. The situation fresses upon us, for hisight judgment, and action. To some it sfells a terrible, and mure: liened fear. To others it is an unclouded fromine of the reign of justice, and feace that heckores us formand. To many a great hope, not without clangers, of calls prom the future. But no one questions

the statement, that the trives need whatever of misdow, and sound method, each may have to offer, to one questions the general statement, that each will contribute very langely in terms of his wateral feedingo: artions, and limitateons. The legislation mill fars suggest legislatein, both seusible and foolish. The militant will call for the use of force, the industrialist mill ruge the starting of the wheels of industry. The bouker mice misist on the re-estab: lishment of credit. The devote of authrity religion will call for a return to the age of faith, and oked. each his own farticular interest, There there are there to whom comes a stern call to spend and he spent in some imrequited labor as bold adrentmens in marx flored regions, bet you no gold wood silver, vor bass in your fures: no mallet for your jourey: neither two coats, un stores, how stapp " said fesur to hus

disciples. Thus equiffed with only a great fassion, many will go forth. They will be stern, harsh, micompromising, - ferbop foundtical, Source mill be moving, and some mill be right. Some mill find only sand! Uthers mill fan out fine gold. How me love such in history, and have me show them in life, But I sometimes think me shim them just because me secretty leve theme the wose for their new obandomment, their sheer ability to forget themselves into invortabily as Wendell Phillip fluared it. God knows me could not live if all the world mere like their, but what woned like become mere it not for this legion of the last ones, this cohort of the clauned." In them the saet has next last its savor, nor the rinegan its acidity. Weither has the spiil become inchained, HE wist not that his fore stone."

' Fallowing along in the trail of these breek adventiness, some there of a nurr social disfasition, who see clearly the cloud by day, and the fillar of fire by night, that leads them formand. But they check the sfeed of their travel that they may have comfairy along the may, and, ferchance, transform the unblaged trail who a fathway. I suffure that I idealize the facts, but I like to ficture there Pilgruns of the Forest, who with Stowas Hooken set out from hewlows in 1636 to make a new settlement in connection! In my imagination I see them journerping through the forest - the strong determined may the national women, the structy children, the herd of cattle, Esfecially do I recall that the price hus. Howhen was carried the entire joining on a litter. After I rinagine myself lurking about the campfine at night, ever droffing upon them, I hear them tolk over the chay's former, discuss their difficulties, Ejoking and bankening. I math the settleing down

for the night, - The farting of the sentivols, the guards for the cattle, prefarations for sleef. as the camp fire burned low I have heard the men talking of their furfarer. I have heard them talk about the foundation of authority heing laid in the free consent of the feofle: I have heard them soy that the choice of fublic magistrates helongs to the feafle by God's own ordinance." Many other Things, both interesting and uninteresting I have heard in my everchoffing expeditions. Sometimes I have gleaned suggestines concerning the flace, and tork of likerol religion in the economy of huwan society; suggestions both as to the necessary boggoges that helongs to the equipment of likeral religion beth for its urgent torks of critical times, as well as those extra comforts and luxeries, that like al religion mor expor in wors feocefue lunes without seriously effecting its moral filme,-

Among there filgins of the frest, as among their spiritvol kinsmen energwhere, There seems to have been a very strong grif after reality. you may call it common sense. you may call it a sense of the fractical mature of things, or what you like, the fact remains that this here former of alisewation, this searching insight into things as they are, this grif sefor reality is a man ked characteurtie of such liberals, this there are no fretenseins to infallability, no finality of judgements, no errors of interpetoties are claimed for them, but just a wholesome seure of reality, - They use their eyes, their cars, their minule. testher " Up course this characterister is unt comprined to those unlesergroups and feafle where tite the fluore titeral Religion is used. In fact if there is anyone thing that characteristic that differentiates the modern world from the mediaenal it is this tenchency to a strong gif on reality. The wast strides that have been made in the

systematic observation of matine in the field of the natural sciences, the gleanings of ocientific Rumledge, and its afflication to arts and inclus = tries, - all there herfeak! the increase, buch in scofe and interrity, of the teacher to say the emphesis to on this serve of reality. while the morement to by no means acheired its fully recognized flaces, yet it has developed far everyt to make two generalizations Une is in the nature of a fact, and the other a moral volue. The first is that social developments, both foliticol, industrial, and religious, grow out of forces alreachy oferating in life, whether one's interfretation of life he in terms of mechanical materialism, or theistic iclealism, or mostener very he our language for expressing ultimate things, we have come fretty much to the conclusions, that there is no fomer without the porers that integeres, and either brings order out of chaos, or to through a workey - mench into the wheels, We un longer look wito

the heavens to wotch for the internention of an absentee land lovel, or the coming of a messich with a new heaven and a new earth ready made, If me have any grash at all on the meaning of modern knowledge, me must assume that forces of evaling mithin the frocess, are the forces that mill carry us from the fart, through the fresent into definitely reflaceds the idea of both creation and internention. The increasing serve of reality, characteristic of worden thright, seems to fore clearly established this generalization, But the fassi hility of the generalization, based on from the wast facts gamed by scientific unestigations, has been made fassible throught the faithful ternestigatures, observations and results obtained by following what has come to be called the method of science. The Doctrine of free Luguing for which the frotestant reformers contended in the limited field of religious experience

controneiry has been growing in importances and afflication, wintil it has become the established and accepted method of enlight= ennent, Eeven frofaganchits have to bow their knee to the method of science, and some their sloth their material in the garb af sæientigen innertigations. This leady to the second generalization of moral in its nature. Free inquiry, is not merely a dactrine, or a right, It has he= come a fourdamental word abligation. frincifle. It is afflicable vot only to fine science, and afflied science, but also to history, fast and surrent; to social and industrial froblems to folition and religious problems. Freedom of inquiry, facedon of thought; peedon of expression, have become social volves than which no other is more infortant. Cando Faithfulners in inquiry, clarity in thought, and randor in expression have become individual word volues than which no other is more needed at the perents

With the broad aspects of woden thought, in which this sense of reality has become so established, likeral religion is on its real tome ground. It recognizes the frinciple of evolutionary grow the through the operation of immanent forces. It recognizes the moral volue involved in the method of free in= puiny, and candid expression. This a fermament characteristic of libercef religion, - a characteristic that differentiates it from all former of authority religions, whether the authority he ofenly recognized, a secretly follower . But it is affarent that formerful influences are at work in our to- day, seeking to cutail the scafe of pre inquiry, and fieden of utterance. It is not yet clear four serious has been the clamage mought by the man upon this principle of predom. whether it is merely a fhare of hysteria, or strong re-entrench 2 ment of the method of the diction of

authority, time only con disclose. In either care the very frivary assumption of liberal religion is at stake, to contribute to the reinstatement of this method of preaching both by the candor of utterance, and the worth of the thing said, mill be no small tark in the years that are before us, and Such a contribution mill her fricelers. Hue science, education, folitical and social reform stand on common ground with likeral religion.

Choral Purfuse a more distinguishing characteristic of liberal religin, is and one in which I judge to dange a title do not share, is hardly work than are extension of the sense of reality. It is the fercepters of a moral furgures at the new heart of there forcess of thick me debator I know full well that nost puncher of mere and women. who boart of their common servere. Their Here strong grif on reality, then adherence to volues of wodern thought, fass by on the

other side of the road, when the concept of moral fuifare is mentioned. I recall an address which I heard Dr. Uster deliver at Harvard, Sfeaking as a won of science, the upon the enidences of involatily he said that the only forces that he could see uperaling in humon life mere the frimany unfulses to get, and heget. I have heards here fractical business men, soy substantially the some thing. So have all of us, and will continue so to hear. I have also heard of great this offers and scientists make The some general abservation, Mations even have staked their destring on the faith that there ous is no validity to the claims of moral volues, and word furfases in the Universe, But the trouble is with their fomers of observation, The sense of reality is not Keen enough. They may see things, and reachfacts, but they do not see behind the things, and know vot the meaning of facts, ilf course they cannot see that

Movel Purfore

while liberal religion shares with all the . to whom the find general fourt of men of woden thright is notwood, this surre of reality, there is a second characteritic which offenes to a les inclusine georf. as me nien with enquiring winds the pocesses of human life, me are conforted with many seaching question, and an equal variety of answer. the turn to this world forces, WE see natural low earily evorgh, We say understand something of the times for ferolin of the two gravitation, We have learned unch about the manifestations of electricity, and even of life, WE care trace on way through hirtinical documents, and gain some idea of what has token flace. We con truce the evolution of religious ideals, customs, and thought. But in the borky come is alway the hauting, yet evance question, as to the meaning of it all. Bhind chance" soy my priends, first

flain machine womenent, with vo faiticular meaning. Two elemented forces, To get, and to hegel." account for see things, "Eat, druch, and he many for two wowen me die " all these boart of their sense of readily, the see only what the announcey. They see force, they see fassion, they see conflict, blovel, wor, hafring and flunder, there things are men see, But many see all these things, and something wose, Sebartin Castello, one of the less conficien, but not the less real froffets of the reformation, in describing the life of a christin, -I court do violence to my conscience for fear of dischering christ. I must be samed or last by my own ferrouse firth, not by that of auother, I ask you, whether Christ, who forgane Hore who ment astray, and commanded his followers to forgive until seventy times seven, Christ who is the first juckge of us all if he were here, worked command a ferror like that to be killed ..., l' Christ Reater, and king of the world, dort

there see, and affeore there things. Hart there become a totally clifferent ferror from what it ment. When there ment on Earth, nothing correct he worr gentle, and kind, more reachy to suffer injuries. Those ment like a sheef dumb before the shearers, Beater, sfit upon, worked, crowned with thour, crucified between Thieves, Ihr dicht fray for those who injured the Hart thou changed to this ! but this now so cruel and contrary to thyself? Dart I for command that there who do not understand thy ordinances and printingual as the one us require stoned he drowned, or drawn and quartered, and burned at the stoke. In sfite of the midiaevol language that he user, we understand the full foint of his inquiry " Do word volues. have a standing in the uninerse, he they simply magice sectimental efforing of meak men, who come their lasses

in the struggle for existance by enthroning in these Minere Their selfish whinings. and their sentimentalism, the do moral volues, moral standards, moral funfases affect in the thoughts of men, because in a fevren of evolution, they refresent the mining qualities hert adapted to the universe me live it the the men who dering the validity of woral values to a flace in the luinere, forserved of a Reener sense of reality, than those who see moral volves, moral order, and moral furfose, aferating every where, and with an unering nicity in all the relationships of surver life. Mor is right! Here liberal religion may make a distinctine and gennine contribution to the thought and conduct of the times, that the heart of the Uninene in moral, the esseure of life is word, Moral volues rise above force, fairin, states, and clunch, the great forsein that controls all farriers is worden, and, of me can see this tome

Permanent Characteristics of Liberal Religion

Earl Clement Davis

Pittsfield, MA

No Date

Most of our problems are pretty much a question of baggage. One of my ancestors in the year 1769 found the town of Ipswich rather too stable and fixed in its habits and customs to suit him. In the spring of that year, equipped with an ax, a gun, a bag of seed-corn and a few other necessities, this young man mounted his horse and started for the frontier of Maine. He selected a tract of land, planted his seeds, and built a cabin. Having finished the preliminary tasks he returned to Ipswich for a brief visit. In the late summer again he set forth for the new land of promise. With him went his bride. Into an unsettled region for hard work, plain living and dangers, but, withal, into a life of wholesome creative effort with its manifold joys and sorrows, they were going. They carried very little baggage.

Some twenty years or more ago a remote section of Berkshire County was invaded by a New York man of affairs. His standing in financial and sporting circles had been achieved, not by any constructive effort, but by shrewd and often questionable methods of plundering. From various farmers he bought some 14,000 acres of farm and woodland. He established a great game preserve, built great stables and houses. Into this quiet and remote spot that had known little more of human life than the hard toil of farmers and wood cutters, he brought luxury, extravagance, and wantonness. The fever lasted but a few years.

Four or five years ago a member of this family came to the great house on his honeymoon. Great preparations were made for this honeymoon in the hills, both at Berkshire, and as I recall it, in the divorce courts. The Sunday papers took due notice.

Since then only the passing stranger visits the place. Last spring just as the {???} and the {???} were breaking through last year's covering of leaves, I walked over the mountain, along the neglected roads of the estate. The houses and stables, exposed now both to the weather and inquiring man, I examined. Doors broken in; windows opened; furniture, shades scattered about. Everything told the story of neglect and decay. More money had been expended here than most families have during an entire lifetime. The whole thing seemed to symbolize a great tragedy. The old N.Y. telephone directory, the sensual novels, the stock ticker, the gaudy, and grandiose appearance of everything, even the fireplace, told the tale of a tragic failure in judging life's values. They had vast loads of baggage.

Leaving these crumbling buildings behind I continued my walk past deserted and decaying farm houses until at last I came to the little cemetery where rested the toilers who once lived and labored here. The cemetery was neglected, the marble slabs were falling; many of the graves had caved in. Here and there a lilac bush bore witness to human sorrow and affection. These falling stones, and the deserted farm houses were all that remained of those who had once lived, labored and loved among these beautiful but exacting hills. These had but little baggage, but they were creators.

The two pictures, covering roughly the span of the nation's life and the cemetery, suggest more than I care to point out, or ever wish to imply. But the deserted mansion in the hills, with all its implications, may bear witness to a genuine impulse that feels the failure and limitations of much that has been and still is characteristic of our modern life. It may betray a blind, and unintelligent but yet real desire for real values, an undefined need of getting free from superfluous baggage.

For we have accumulated so much baggage of every kind and description that we are no longer masters of the baggage, but have become its bond-servants. We go where the baggage bids us to, and when the baggage bids us refrain, we refrain. We have built us great states to protect us in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but these states have brought us to the verge of anarchy and bankruptcy. To clothe, feed and shelter ourselves, we have built a great industrial system, but while its wheels stand idle, we lack adequate food, proper shelter, and sufficient clothing. We have built a great religious system to deliver us from a fear of the Universe we live in, but it has bound us to form and dogma, and strife without giving the truth that may make us free. On top of each of these systems, to remedy their limitations and shortcomings, but [sic] [we] have built system after system, until to use a figure borrowed from industry, our productivity staggers under its load of overhead charges and expense. We are overburdened with baggage, and we chafe under the load.

Hence the unrest of the times. The turbulent revolutionary spirit reminds us that a passion for freedom and life still exists, a passion, let it be remembered, that has left many stately mansions with all their contents to rot on mountains and hillsides of history. This passion, at times terrible and remorseless in its destructiveness, and often gloriously heroic in its upbuilding, is pressing us to examine our baggage, to decide what we need; to discard what enslaves us, and to take up our journey to a new land of promise.

"Shoulder your deeds, my son."

Such are the stern commands of our decade. In no uncertain tones are they issued. The clash of armies, the rise and fall of nations, the overthrow of empires, the collapse of religions, the conflict of classes. No one is exempt, and the pressure is terrific. The great war which began in a quarrel over baggage, is ending in a passionate and terrific revolution whose master spirit is a determination to cast aside superfluous baggage, that men may again become masters of their burdens. For years men have noted the increasing sultriness of our social atmosphere, the storm clouds gather on the horizon. The storm has broken, the first terrific gusts of wind and rain have swept over us but neither is the full fury of the storm spent, nor have we begun to appraise the extent of the devastation. The situation presses upon us for insight, judgement and action.

To some it spells a terrible and more {???} fear. To others it is an unclouded promise of the reign of justice, and peace that beckons us forward. To many a great hope, not without changes, calls from the future. But no one questions the statement that the times need whatever of wisdom and sound method each may have to offer. No one questions the general statement that each will contribute very largely in terms of his natural predispositions and limitations. The legislator will suggest legislation both sensible and foolish. The militarist will call for the use of force. The industrialist will urge the starting of the wheels of industry. The banker will insist on the reestablishment of credit. The devotee of authority in religion will call for a return to the age of faith, and obedience. The reformers will press each his own particular interest.

Then there are those to whom comes a stern call to spend and be spent in in some unrequited labor as bold adventurers in unexplored regions. "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey; neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff,"1 said Jesus to his disciples. Thus equipped with only a great passion many will go forth. They will be stern, harsh, uncompromising, perhaps fanatical. Some will be wrong, and some will be right. Some will find only sand. Others will pan out fine gold. How we love such in history, and how we shun them in life. But I sometimes think we shun them just because we secretly love them the more for their very abandonment, their sheer ability "to forget themselves into immortality" as Wendell Phillips phrased it.² God knows we could not live if all the world were like them, but what would life become were it not for this "legion of the last ones, this cohort of the damned." In them the salt has not lost is savor, nor the vinegar its acidity. Neither has the spirit become enchained. "He wist that his face shown.3"

¹ Matthew 10:9-10.

² Wendell Phillips (1811-1884) was a prominent abolitionist, also a crusader for women's rights and the rights of indigenous people. This expression, "to forget themselves into immortality," is from a letter he wrote to the National Anti-Slavery Standard, April 27, 1867, and describes the editor of an abolitionist newspaper, Elijah P. Lovejoy, who was murdered outside his place of business by a pro-slavery mob in Alton Illinois.

³ Exodus, 34:29.

Following along in the trail of these bold adventurers, come those of a more social disposition, who see clearly the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night⁴ that leads them forward. But they check the speed of their travel that they may have company along the way, and, perchance, transform the unblazoned trail into a pathway.

I suppose that I idealize the facts, but I like to picture those Pilgrims of the Forest, who with Thomas Hooker, set out from Newtown's {???} to make a new settlement in Connecticut.⁵ In my imagination I see them journeying through the forest, the strong determined men, and the valiant women, the sturdy children, the herd of cattle. Especially do I recall that the frail Mrs. Hooker was carried the entire journey on a litter. Often I imagine myself lurking about the campfire at night, eavesdropping upon them. I hear them talk over the day's journey, discuss their difficulties, joking and bantering. I watch them settling down for the night, the posting of the sentinels, the guards for the cattle, preparations for sleep. As the campfire burned low, I have heard the men talking of their purposes. I have heard them talk about the foundations of authority being laid in the free consent of the people. I have heard them say that the choice of public magistrates belongs to the people by God's own ordinance. Many other things, both interesting and uninteresting I have heard in my eavesdropping.

Sometimes I have gleaned suggestions concerning the place and task of liberal religion in the economy of human society, suggestions both as to the necessary baggage that belongs to the equipment of liberal religion, for its

⁴ Exodus, 13:21

⁵ Thomas Hooker (1586-1647) was an early settler in New England. Originally he arrived in Boston, but moved to Newtown (subsequently named Cambridge) where he became pastor of the Church of Christ at Cambridge. Owing to his disagreement with John Cotton over the right to vote-following Cotton's leadership in Massachusetts Colony, voting was then limited to individuals who had been formally admitted to the church after a formal interview-Hooker and Samuel Stone (1602-1663) led about 100 followers to Connecticut to establish the settlement of Hartford (named after Stone's birthplace, Hertford, England).

urgent tasks of critical times, as well as those extra comforts and luxuries that liberal religion may enjoy in more peaceful times without seriously effecting its moral fiber.

Among these pilgrims of the forest, as among their spiritual kinsmen everywhere, there seems to have been a very strong grip upon reality. You may call it commonsense. You may call it a sense of the practical nature of things, or what you like, the fact remains that this power of keen observation, this searching insight into things as they are, this grip upon reality is a marked characteristic of such liberals. No pretentions to infallibility, no finality of judgements, no errors of interpretations are claimed for them, but just a wholesome sense of reality. They use their eyes, their ears, their minds. Of course this characterization is not confined to those groups and people where the phrase liberal religion is used. In fact if there is any one characteristic that differentiates the modern world from the medieval it is this tendency to a strong grip on reality. The vast strides that have been made in the systematic observation of nature in the field of the natural sciences, the gleanings of scientific knowledge, and its application to arts and industries, all these bespeak the increase, both in scope and intensity, of the emphasis on this sense of reality.

While this movement has by no means achieved its fully recognized place, yet it has developed far enough to make safe two generalizations. One is in the nature of a fact, and the other a moral value.

The first is that social developments, both political, industrial, and religious, grow out of forces already operating in life. Whether one's interpretation of life be in terms of mechanical materialism, or theistic idealism, or whatever may be our language for expressing ultimate things, we have come pretty much to the conclusion that there is no power without the process that interferes, either to bring order out of chaos, or to throw a monkeywrench into the wheels. We no longer look unto the heavens to watch for the intervention of an absentee landlord, or the coming of a messiah from the clouds with a new heaven and a new earth ready-made. If we have any grasp at all on the meaning of modern knowledge, we must assume that forces operating within the process are the forces that will carry us from the past, through the present into the future. The idea of growth, evolution has definitely replaced the idea of both creation and intervention. The increasing sense of reality, characteristic of modern thought, seems to have clearly established this generalization.

But the generalization, based on the vast facts gained by scientific investigations has been made possible through the faithful observations and results obtained by following what has come to be called the <u>method</u> of science. The doctrine of free inquiry for which the protestant reformers contended in the limited field of religious controversy has been growing in importance and application until it has become the established and accepted method of enlightenment. Even propagandists have to bow their knee to the method of science, and cloth their material in the garb of scientific investigations.

This leads to the second generalization, moral in its nature. Free inquiry, is not merely a doctrine, or a right. It has become a fundamental moral principle. It is applicable not only to pure science, and applied science, but also to history, past and current, to social and industrial problems, to political and religious problems. Freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, have become social values than which no other is more important. Faithfulness in inquiry, clarity in thought, and candor in expression have become individual moral values than which no other is more needed at the present time.

With the broad aspects of modern thought in which this sense of reality has become so established, liberal religion is on its real home ground. It recognizes the principle of evolutionary growth, through the operation of immanent forces. It recognizes the moral value involved in the method of free inquiry, and candid expression.

This is a permanent characteristic of liberal religion, a characteristic that differentiates it from all forms of authority religion, whether the authority be openly recognized or secretly followed.

But it is apparent that powerful influences are at work today, seeking to curtail the scope of free inquiry, and freedom of utterance. It is not yet clear how serious has been the damage wrought by the war upon this principle of freedom. Whether it is merely a phase of hysteria, or strong re-entrenchment of the method of the dictum of authority, time only can disclose. In either case the very primary assumption of liberal religion is at stake. To contribute to the reinstatement of this method of freedom both by the candor of utterance, and the worth of the thing said, will be no small task in the years that are before us. Such a contribution will be priceless. Here science, education, political and social reform stand on common ground with liberal religion.

Moral Purpose⁶

A more distinguishing characteristic of liberal religion is hardly more than an extension of the sense of reality. It is the perception of a moral purpose at the very heart of the universal forces. I know full well that vast numbers of men and women who boast of their commonsense, their strong grip on reality, their adherence to values of modern thought, pass by on the other side of the road, when the concept of moral purpose is mentioned. I recall an address which I heard Dr. Oster deliver at Harvard. Speaking as a man of science, upon the evidences of immortality, he said that the only forces that he could see operating in human life were the primary impulses to get, and beget. I have heard keen practical businessmen say substantially the same thing. So have all of us, and will continue so to hear. I have also heard of great philosophers and scientists make

⁶ At this point, this essay, which clearly was never finished—at least this manuscript was not a finished manuscript—becomes more incomplete, unfinished. The paragraph beginning here after the "Moral Purpose" heading is mostly crossed out. But the cross-out stops mid-sentence and the paragraph continues not crossed out. But then it ends mid-sentence. Then there is a break in pagination—seemingly a missing page (page 19)—and on the start of the next page a new attempt at "Moral Purpose." This second version takes a very different approach than that taken in the first version. It too is incomplete and ends mid-sentence. the same general observation. Nations even have staked their destiny on the faith that there is no validity to the claims of moral values, and moral purposes in the Universe. But the trouble is with their powers of observation. The sense of reality is not keen enough. They may see things, and read facts, but they do not see behind the things, and know not the meaning of facts. Of course they cannot see that

Moral Purpose

While liberal religion shares with all those to whom the general point of view of modern thought is natural, this sense of reality, there is a second characteristic which appears to a less inclusive group. As we view with enquiring minds the processes of human life, we are confronted with many searching questions, and an equal variety of answers. We see natural law easily enough. We can understand something of the operation of gravitation. We have learned much about the manifestations of electricity, and even of life. We can trace our way through historical documents, and gain some idea of what has taken place. We can trace the evolution of religious ideals, customs, and thoughts. But in the background is always the haunting, yet evasive question, as to the meaning of it all. "Blind chance," says my friend. Just plain machine movement, with no particular meaning. Two elemental forces, "to get, and to beget," account for all things. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." All these boast of their sense of reality. They see only what the {???}. They see force. They see passion. They see conflict, blood, war {???} and plunder. These things all men see.

But many see all these things, and something more. Sebastian Castellio,⁷ one of the less conspicuous, but not the less real prophets of the reformation, in describing the life of a Christian,

I cannot do violence to my conscience for fear of disobeying Christ. I must be saved or lost by my own personal faith, not by that of another. I ask

⁷ Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563) was a French theologian, an early proponent of religious toleration and freedom of conscience and thought.

you, whether Christ, who forgave those who went astray, and commanded his followers to forgive until seventy times seven, Christ, who is the final judge of us all, if He were here, would command a person like that to be killed! Oh Christ creator, and King of the World, dost thou see, and approve these things? Hast thou become a totally different person from what thou wert? When thou wert on Earth, nothing could be more gentle, and kind, more ready to suffer injuries. Thou wert like a sheep dumb before the shearers. Beaten, spit upon, marked, crowned with thorns, crucified between thieves, thou didn't pray for those who injured the. Hast thou changed to this? Art thou now so cruel and contrary to thyself? Dost thou command that those who do not understand thy ordinances and commandments as those over us require, should be drowned, or drawn and guartered, and burned at the stake?⁸

In spite of the medieval language that he uses, we understand the full point of his inquiry. Do moral values have a standing in the Universe? Are they simply vague sentimental effusions of weak men, who cover their losses in the struggle for existence by enthroning in the Universe their selfish whinings, and their sentimentalism? Or do moral values, moral standards, moral purposes appear in the thoughts of men, because, in a process of evaluation, they represent the surviving qualities best adapted to the Universe we live in. Are men who deny the validity of the claim of moral values to a place in the Universe, possessed of a keener sense of reality, than those who see moral values, moral order, and moral purpose operating everywhere, and with an unerring {???} in all the relationships of human life. Who is right?

Here liberal religion may make a distinctive and genuine contribution to the thought and conduct of the times. The

⁸ From the Preface of the French edition of *De Haereticis an Sint Persequendi, etc.* 1554. This was an argument for toleration with contributions by Luther, Erasmus, Sebastian Franck and others. The Preface bore the name "Marinus Bellius," but was written by Sebastian Castellio.

heart of the Universe is moral. The essence of life is moral. Moral values rise above force, passion, states and church. The great passion that controls all passions is moral. If we can see this⁹

⁹ Here the manuscript ends mid-sentence.