THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DR. JOHN DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY FOR RELIGION

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Statement and the Importance of the Problem.

The subject of the present thesis is The Significance of Dr. Dewey's Philosophy for Religion.

It was said long ago, and it has been frequently repeated, that "the proper study of mankind is man". The study of men can never be complete unless it includes the study of religion, for there is no more widespread, impressive, or significant thing in the history of mankind than religion. However crude religion may have been in origin, and however gross the superstitions with which it has often been associated, its omnipresence and centrality in the history of the race are facts to be reckoned with. In a sense, as Comte admitted, religion embraces the whole of existence, and the history of religion is a resume of the entire history of human development.[1] We should not be far wrong in saying with Max Müller that the true history of man is the history of religion.

What then is religion, which is so important and inseparable from human beings? How do we interpret it? Can we give to it any logical basis or not? Here comes in the importance of philosophy for religion, when we try to answer these questions. It is not my intention to discuss the relation of philosophy to religion or to theology in general at present. My intention is to point out the significance of phil-

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1. Positive Policy, Vol. ii., p. 119, quoted by A.S.Pringle Pattison in The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy, p. 137

osophy for religion, because one's interpretation of religion differs according to the philosophy one holds.

The importance of philosophy is indicated in the following quotation from Chesterton: "There are some people, and I am one of them, who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. We think that for a landlady considering a lodger, it is important to know his income, but still more important to know his philosophy. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy, it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but it is still more important to know the enemy's philosophy."[1]

Dr. John Dewey, unquestionably, is one of the outstanding philosophers of this age. Will Durant speaks of his philosophy as the expression of an informed and conscious America,[2] and Prof. W. H. Kilpatrick does him homage by saying that "the world has in and through John Dewey taken great steps forward in its thinking, steps which it will never withdraw and for which his name will stand clearer as time shall run".[3]

Concerning religion, Dr. Dewey has only incidentally referred to it as such, in his writings, but one writer[4] says that he has had more influence than any one else in determining the trend of present day religious thinking in America. This will be seen by the fact that most of the leading writers on Religion,[5] and especially on Religious

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1. G. K. Chesterton, Heretics, p. 15, quoted by J. H. O'Hara in The Limitation of the Educational Theory of John Dewey, p. 7.
2. Cf. Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy, p. 566.
3. John Dewey, The Man and His Philosophy, p. 3.
4. R. G. Hall, The Significance of John Dewey for Religious Interpretation, Open Court, June, 1928, p. 331.
5. I mean here men like Prof. Ames, Prof. Wieman, Prof. Montague, Dr. Coe.

Education, in this country are building their theories and programs on Dr. Dewey's philosophy.[1]

What is the significance of Dr. Dewey's Philosophy for Religion? Very few subjects, it seems to me, in the world of thought today, are more important for investigation that this; because, as Dr. Horne has suggested, so many people are building their buildings without first examining the foundations.[2]

2. The Mode of Treating the Problem.

The mode of treating the problem consists in exposition, interpretation and evaluation.

First of all we want to see Dr. Dewey as a philosopher, since man and his philosophy are inseperable. Then we will try to trace the factors which seem to be basic in forming his philosophy.

An exposition of the main tenets of his philosophy will be made, as far as possible, in his own words. In interpreting points difficult of understanding, recourse will be had to authorities on his philosophy.

An estimate and criticism will include the merits and defects of his views on religion from the writer's own viewpoint as a protestant Christian student.

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1. Cf. H. H. Horne, Religious Education - Our Dangers and Our Needs, Methodist Review, Nov. 1929, p. 815.
2. Ibid. p. 815.

CHAPTER II

DR. DEWEY AS A PHILOSOPHER

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1. A Short Account of His Life.

Dr. John Dewey was born in 1859, the year Charles Darwin published his "The Origin of Species", in Burlington, Vermont in the "effete East" and had his schooling there, as if to absorb the old culture before adventuring into the new.[1]

Of the days he attended the State University in his native city he writes: "Subconsciously, at least, I was led to desire a world and a life that would have the same properties as had the human organism in the picture of it derived from study of Huxley's treatment (in philosophy). At all events, I got great stimulus from the study, more than from anything I had had contact with before, and as no desire was awakened in me to continue that particular branch of learning, I date from this time the awakening of a distinctive philosophical interest."[2]

After a year of private study following his graduation from the University of Vermont, he entered Johns Hopkins University, from which institution he received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1884.

He dedicated himself to philosophy under the guidance of William T. Harris, whose translations, writings, and lectures helped to bring Hegelian philosophy to America. Dr. Harris was the editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy at that time. Dr. Dewey speaks himself, of his experience at that time: "In sending an article I asked Dr. Harris for

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1. Cf. Durant, op. cit., p. 566 f.
2. Contemporary American Philosophy, edited by G. P. Adams and W. P. Montague, Vol. II, p. 13.

advice as to the possibility of my successfully prosecuting philosophic studies. His reply was so encouraging that it was a distinct factor in deciding me to try philosophy as a professional career."[1]

The system of Hegel was to influence Dr. Dewey's outlook upon philosophy, particularly during the beginning of his professional career.

While at Johns Hopkins, he came under the influence of G. Stanley Hall, who was interested particularly in biology and adolescent psychology (though he does not speak of Dr. Hall so much). He tells more of the influence of Prof. G. S. Morris of the University of Michigan, who was a lecturer for a half year at Johns Hopkins, saying that "while I long since deviated from his philosophic faith, I should be happy to believe that the influence of the spirit of his teaching has been an enduring influence."[2]

As a university professor, the career he embraced immediately upon graduation, he has served in the following institutions:

University of Michigan, 1884-1888;

University of Minnesota, 1888-1889;

University of Michigan, 1889-1894;

University of Chicago, 1894-1904;

Columbia University, 1904-1930.

While he was at Chicago, he was the Head of the School of Education, as the successor to Francis W. Parker, from 1902 to 1904. The years at Chicago mark the period of his personal active experimentation in educational work.

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1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 16.

Durant writes that "in his first twenty years the Vermont environment gave him that almost rustic simplicity which characterizes him even now that all the world acclaims him. And then, in his twenty years in the middle West, he saw that vast America of which the Eastern mind is so proudly ignorant; he learned its limitations and its powers; and when he came to write his own philosophy he gave to his students and his readers an interpretation of the sound and simple naturalism which underlies the superficial superstitions of the 'provinces' of America. He wrote the philosophy, as Whitman wrote the poetry, not of one New England state, but of the continent."[1]

Dr. Dewey's seventieth birthday was celebrated in October, 1929, in New York City under the auspices of the national committee for that purpose. Though he is now a retired professor yet he is active in many ways as a public man.

2. His Main Works.

Mr. Milton Halsey Thomas and Professor Herbert Wallace Schneider of Columbia University compiled and published "A Bibliography of John Dewey" in 1929, including the writings of Dr. Dewey to July, 1929 and writings about him to the same date.

We find his writings are so numerous that we can hardly refer here even to the names of all his works. The most important, however, are the following:

Psychology, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887 (©1886) pp. xii + 427.

Leibnitz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding, A Critical Exposition. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1888, pp. xvii + 272. (Grigg's Philosophical Classics, edited by G. S. Morris, No. 7.)

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1. Durant, op. cit., p. 566

Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, Ann Arbor - Register Pub. Co., 1891, pp. viii + 253.

The Study of Ethics - A Syllabus, Ann Arbor - Register Pub. Co., 1894, pp. iv + 151.

The Psychology of Number and its Applications to Methods of Teaching Arithmetic. (By James A. McLellan and John Dewey). New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1895. pp. xv + 309. (International Education Series, edited by W. T. Harris, Vol. XXXIII).

My Pedagogic Creed - New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co., (©1897) pp. 36.

The School and Society, being Three Lectures by John Dewey, Supplemented by a statement of the University Elementary School - Chicago - The University of Chicago Press, 1899, pp. 125.

The Child and the Curriculum. Chicago - University of Chicago Press, 1902, pp. 40 (University of Chicago Contributions to Education, No. V).

The Educational Situation. Chicago - The University of Chicago Press, 1902, pp. 104 (University of Chicago Contributions to Education, No. III).

Studies in Logical Theory, (with the cooperation of Members and Fellows of the Department of Philosophy) Chicago - University of Chicago Press, 1903. pp. xiii + 388. (University of Chicago, the Decennial Publications, Second Series, Vol. XI).

Ethics, (with J. H. Tufts) - New York - Henry Holt & Co., 1908, pp. xiii + 618. (American Science Series). (Japanese translation by R. Nakashima, Tokyo, 1912).

Moral Principles in Education - Boston - Houghton Mifflin Co., (1909) pp. ix + 60.

How We Think - Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1910, pp. vi + 224.

The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought - New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1910, pp. vi + 309.

Interest and Effort in Education, Boston - Houghton Mifflin Co., (©1913), pp. ix + 101.

German Philosophy and Politics - New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1915, pp. 134.

Schools of Tomorrow (with Evelyn Dewey). New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., (©1915), pp. 316.

Democracy and Education - An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education - New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916. pp. xii + 434. (Text-book Series in Education edited by Paul Monroe). (Japanese translation by Prof. Hoashi).

Essays in Experimental Logic - Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, (©1916), pp. vii + 444.

The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy. In Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, pp. 3-69. New York: Henry Holt & Co., (©1917).

Reconstruction in Philosophy. New York - Henry Holt & Co., 1920, pp. vii + 224. (Translated into Japanese).

Human Nature and Conduct. An Introduction to Social Psychology, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1922, pp. vii + 336.

Experience and Nature, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925, pp. xi + 443. (Lectures upon the Paul Carus Foundations, First Series).

The Public and Its Problems - New York - Henry Holt & Co., (©1927), pp. vi + 224.

Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World, Mexico - China - Turkey, New York: New Republic, Inc., 1929, pp. 270.

The Quest for Certainty, New York: Minton, Balch & Co., (Gifford Lectures, 1929), 1929, pp. 313.

From Absolutism to Experimentalism in the Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II pp. 13-27, Edited by G. P. Adams and W. P. Montague, New York - The Macmillan Co., 1930.

Individualism, Old and New - New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1930, pp. 171.

3. His Philosophical Development.

The article which Dr. Dewey has contributed to Contemporary American Philosophy entitled, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" reveals the personal development of his thinking; consequently we shall draw our material in this section from his own expressions mainly.

"The 'eighties' and 'nineties'", he writes, "were a time of new ferment in English thought; reaction against atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism was in full swing. It was the time of Thomas Hill Green, of the two Cairds, of Wallace, of the appearance of the Essays in Philosophical Criticism, co-operatively produced by a younger group under the leadership of the late Lord Haldane. This movement was at the time the vital and constructive one in philosophy."[1]

Regarding his professor, Dr. Morris, he speaks: "To Mr. Morris the only philosophical question was as to the meaning of this existence; his idealism was wholly of the objective type. Like his contemporary, Professor John Watson of Kingston, he combined a logical and idealistic metaphysics with a realistic epistemology. . . . He had acquired a great reverence for Aristotle, and he had no difficulty in uniting Aristotelianism with Hegelianism."[2]

He continues to say, "There were, however, also 'subjective' reasons for the appeal that Hegel's thought made to me; it supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger that only an intellectualized subject-matter could satisfy. It is more than difficult, it is impossible, to recover that

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1. Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 18
2. Ibid., p. 19.

early mood. But the sense of divisions and separation that were I suppose, borne in upon me as a consequence of a heritage of New England culture, divisions by way of isolation of self from the world, of soul from the body, of nature from God, brought a painful oppression - or, rather, they were an inward laceration." He writes that, "my earlier philosophic study had been an intellectual gymnastic. Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however, no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction."[1]

He inserts here some remarks on the religious problems which he encountered which we shall examine later. It seems, from this very early period, his chief interest was not so much in religious questions as in social problems. He says, "Social interests and problems from an early period had to me the intellectual appeal and provided the intellectual sustenance that many seem to have found primarily in religious questions."

He "drifted away from Hegelianism in the next fifteen years", but he says he never thinks of ignoring, much less denying, that acquaintance with Hegel has made a permanent contribution to his thinking. His admiration of Hegel is shown by the following: "Were it possible for me to be a devotee of any system, I still should believe that there is greater richness and greater variety of insight in Hegel than in any other single systematic philosopher - though when I say this I exclude Plato, who still provides my favorite philosophic reading."[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 20
2. Ibid., p. 20

Of course his liking of Plato is not of Plato as an idealist but of "the dramatic, restless, co-operatively inquiring Plato of the Dialogues, trying one mode of attack after another to see what it might yield"[1] in other words, Plato as an experimentalist and as a practical social reformer.

He expresses his mood in the following sentences: "The philosopher, if I may apply that word to myself, that I become as I moved away from German Idealism, is too much the self that I still am and is still too much in process of change to lend itself to record. . . . I seem to be unstable, chameleon-like, yielding one after another to many diverse and even incompatible influences; struggling to assimilate something from each and yet striving to carry it forward in a way that is logically consistent with what has been learned from its predecessors."[2]

Thus we see Dr. Dewey's personal development in philosophy began with Idealism and through the "struggles between a native inclination toward the schematic and formally logical and those incidents of personal experience" he was compelled to take account of "actual material".[3]

From Absolutism to Experimentalism, from Idealism to Naturalistic Pragmatism[4], such seems to be the personal development of his thinking.

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1. Ibid., p. 21.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 16
4. Cf. H. H. Horne, The Philosophy of Education, Revised Ed., p. 293.

CHAPTER III

THE BASIC FACTORS IN DR. DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY

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1. The Theory of Evolution

Dr. Dewey's work has been done in a period in which tremendous social changes have taken place. America has changed from a rural and small scale manufacturing nation into the greatest capitalistic and industrial country in the world.

Interestingly enough, as has been said previously, the year of his birth saw the publication of Darwin's Origin of ~~the~~ Species, and every year since has seen the advancement of concrete application of the evolutionary hypothesis to wider and wider aspects of the world. Perhaps, Darwin little realized the importance of the evolutionary hypothesis which he developed in the Origin of ~~the~~ Species. Today many people are seeing how revolutionary and epochal was the implication of his work. "Darwin", says Dewey, "conquered the phenomenon of life for the principle of transition". Thus what distinguishes Dr. Dewey in his philosophic thinking "is the undisguised completeness with which he accepts the evolution theory. Mind as well as body is to him an organ evolved, in the struggle for existence, from lower forms."[1]

In one of his works Dr. Dewey writes: "When Darwin said of species what Galileo had said of the earth, e pur si muove, he emancipated, once for all, genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking questions and looking for explanation."[2]

His thought is built around this fact, with the result that the fixed, the final, the transcendental disappear, and in their place we have the emphasis upon the changing, the concrete, the natural elements

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1. Durant, op. cit., p. 568.
2. The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 8

of the world. This thorough-going acceptance of the genetic standpoint of evolutionary science, as Durant said, has most important results for him, and it furnishes one of the keys for the interpretation of all his philosophy.

Concerning "the philosophic significance of the doctrine of evolution" he says, it "lies precisely in its emphasis upon continuity of simpler and more complex organic forms until we reach man. The development of organic forms begins with structure where the adjustment of environment and organism is obvious, and where anything which can be called mind is at a minimum. . . . The effect upon the theory of knowing is to displace the notion that it is the activity of a mere onlooker or spectator of the world, the notion which goes with the idea of knowing as something complete in itself. For the doctrine of organic development means that the living creature is a part of the world, sharing its vicissitudes and fortunes, and making itself secure in its precarious dependence only as it intellectually identifies itself with the things about it, and forecasting the future consequences of what is going on, shapes its own activities accordingly."[1]

Man, his institutions, his moral codes, his beliefs and his values are all seen in a different light when they are placed in the evolutionary process and their genetic development traced. Thinking itself is given an interpretation in terms of its biological development. Its function and place is no longer that represented by the classical philosophies. Thinking is not a means for arriving at objective finalities. It is a secondary process and functional to the activity of the organisms.

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1. Democracy and Education, pp. 392-393.

Thinking is a means of adjustment; an instrument for ongoing processes of life.

This naturalistic interpretation of thinking, or "the naturalization of intelligence"[1], so fundamental to his philosophy, cuts under or "short circuits" the traditional theories of knowledge upon which the classical philosophies were constructed. Idealism, for example, interprets the world by the laws of consciousness and holds that reality is of the nature of mind. To idealists the universe becomes a system of ideas from which we arrive at the conception of an Absolute Spirit or Intelligence that constitutes the system.[2] Dr. Dewey's philosophy, however, eliminates the necessity of any such system; with him thinking is never general but always concrete, experimental, practical. Neither can it by its very nature give any final results or absolute values or have anything to say as regards any transcendent or supernatural world. Thinking is empirical, concrete, instrumental, arising in the evolutionary process to bring adjustment between the organism and its environment.

2. Modern Industrialism

The second creative factor that has strongly influenced Dr. Dewey seems to be modern industrialism. Modern industrialism is a product of the scientific development of the age and has been a great factor in changing the world in these days. It has created conditions which have changed the actual social relations and environments of men and thus indirectly developed new values, attitudes, interests and tasks.

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1. Cf. The Quest for Certainty, Chap. VIII.
2. Cf. W. E. Hocking, Types of Philosophy, p. 247.

Dr. Dewey is not interested in a philosophy that is seeking final truth or ultimate realities; his interest, as we have seen, is in philosophy as a way of life - as furnishing guidance in securing practical control over the world of material things in the interest of the best possible life for all men. That interest has in part, we may be sure, arisen out of the practical situation resulting from applied science in the field of industrial development.

Modern civilization is what it is because of the control of the physical forces of the world. Through their subjugation and the resultant development of industrialism, wealth and quantity production have been made possible. Such material control has for the first time made possible the opportunity of a decent life for all men. This power which we have attained in the material realm of life promises even greater possibilities for the future.

Yet everywhere there is the haunting fear that all is not well. With all the possibilities it affords, great industrialism has made poverty for many, has produced social discord and war. The last decade has startled multitudes into the realization that possibly mankind had in the process of its material achievements released forces which might prove beyond its control. The application of intelligence, so evident in the realm of material forces, is lacking in moral and social life. Social life is still proceeding on "cult values", social platitudes and traditional habits to such an extent that many feel we are in acute danger of catastrophe.

In this respect, as cognizant of this danger, Dr. Dewey is certainly an outstanding writer. Hence his practical interest in a phil-

osophy that shall furnish intelligent guidance for the social life of mankind. He has felt on every hand the result of man's intelligent control over his physical environment. He says, "Man has come to recognize that the existing order is determined neither by fate nor by chance, but is based on law and order, on a system of existing stimuli and modes of reaction, through knowledge of which he can modify the practical outcome. We can anticipate with the application of the scientific method no other outcome than increased control in the ethical sphere - the nature and extent of which can be best judged by considering the revolution that has taken place in the control of physical nature through a knowledge of her order."[1]

Dr. Dewey pleads that the same study, foresight and planning be applied to human relations that we have applied to physical nature. "Philosophy as a way of life" is his central emphasis. Epistemological and metaphysical interests take secondary place. He has, perhaps more than any thinker in this age, influenced the actual development of practical technique for achieving social betterment. His books on current issues all bear witness to that social interest; and that interest has come out of the actual needs of a civilization built and controled through intelligence in its physical order but endangered by lack of that control in its social and moral life.

3. The Democratic Movement.

Another factor which influenced greatly Dr. Dewey's philosophy seems to be the democratic movement which has been forced into wider

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1. In his Psychology and Social Practice - Psychological Review, March, 1900, VII, 105-124 quoted by Hall, op. cit., p. 336.

channels by the new and dominating industrialism, and which has become something more than a mere political arrangement.

Every one who reads Dr. Dewey's writings will feel that spirit of experimentation, of courageous adventure, of co-operative sharing, of humanism, which we have come to recognize as the deeper meaning of the term democracy. In his Tokyo lectures he says, "Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class or economic status. And this is all one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of his possibility. Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society."[1]

He has applied himself with enthusiasm and devotion to the bringing about of the kind of a world which will result in such a development of human capacity.

In another place he says, "God only knows how many of the sufferings are due to a belief that the natural scene and operations of our life are lacking in ideal import, and to the consequent tendency to flee for lacking ideal factors to some other world inhabited exclusively by ideals. . . . If a philosophy could aid in making it clear to a troubled humanity that ideals are continuous with natural events, that they but represent their possibilities, and that reorganized possibilities form

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1. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 186.

methods for a conduct which may realize them in fact, philosophers would enforce the sense of a social calling and responsibility."[1]

Upon these ideas he builds up his theory of the continuity of the "ideal" and the "real", and treats ethical and religious problems from that viewpoint.

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1. Essays on Experimental Logic, p. 72

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPOSITION OF THE MAIN TENETS OF DR. DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY.

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AN EXPOSITION OF THE MAIN TENETS OF DR. DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY.

1. His Conception of Philosophy.

So far we have tried to find the basic factors in Dr. Dewey's philosophy. In this chapter we shall examine his conceptions of the main themes of philosophy in general. In order that we may be able to clear up his thought we shall contrast his views with others in many cases. Our first topic is his conception of philosophy itself.

Philosophers for centuries have looked upon philosophy as a knowledge of all things in their ultimate causes. DeWulf says, however, that "this does not mean the aggregate of the human sciences, but 'the general science of things in the universe by their ultimate determinations and reasons' or again 'the intimate knowledge of the causes and reasons of things', the profound knowledge of the universal order."[1] He means that philosophy is the resultant expression of man's contemplation of the whole of reality.

More recently Prof. Hocking[2] said that "when in the vernacular we speak of a man's philosophy we mean simply the sum of his beliefs. In this sense, everybody or at least every mature person, necessarily has a philosophy, because nobody can manage a life without an equipment of beliefs", but "when we speak of philosophy as a science, we mean the examination of belief, - thinking one's way to a well-grounded set of beliefs, and we refer, in general, to those beliefs which have the widest scope - such beliefs as enter into a religion (existence or non-existence of God, immortality or extinction of the self at death), a code of right

1. Article "Philosophy" in Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, p. 25.
2. W. E. Hocking, Types of Philosophy, pp. 3-4

and wrong . . ., political convictions . . ., the most general scientific principles . . . Thus philosophy differs from the special sciences in its range. Each science deals with a portion of the field of knowledge; philosophy attempts to frame a picture of the whole, - to establish a world-view, a Weltanschauung."[1] Thus, he also conceives philosophy as "a study of the whole of reality."[2]

Dr. Dewey, however, has a different view from these men, at least he tries to "reconstruct" it. Such is his statement:

"Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men."[3]

According to him, the special mission of philosophy is in its application to the problems of men. Hitherto, he says, philosophy has been too much concerned with the problems of philosophers, and as a result has lost itself in innumerable cults, superstitions, and dogmas. It has attempted to justify by logically organized systems of thought the values which an inert tradition has upheld. Its extraordinary concern for abstract definition and ultra-scientific argumentation has reduced it, "at the worst to a show of elaborate terminology, a hair-splitting logic, and a fictitious devotion to the mere external forms

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1. The word "Weltanschauung" is difficult to get a precise equivalent of in English. It is the word "Welt anschauung", sometimes interchanged with another compound of the same signification, "Weltansicht". Both words mean literally "view of the world", but whereas the phrase in English is limited by associations which connect it predominately with physical nature, in German the word is not thus limited, but has almost the force of a technical term, denoting the widest view which the mind can take of things in the effort to grasp them together, as a whole, from the standpoint of some particular philosophy or theology. Cf. James Orr - The Christian View of God and the World, p. 365f.
2. Cf. also H. H. Horne, op. cit., p. 297.
3. J. Ratner, The Philosophy of John Dewey, title page.

of comprehensive and minute demonstration. Even at the best, it has tended to produce an overdeveloped attachment to system for its own sake, and an over pretentious claim to certainty. Bishop Butler declared that probability is the guide of life; but few philosophers have been courageous enough to avow that philosophy can be satisfied with anything that is merely probable. The customs dictated by tradition and desire had claimed finality and immutability."[1]

He attempts to conceive of philosophy not as it is concerned with ultimate or absolute reality, but with something very particular arising out of the subject matter of experience within specific individual or social situations. While the classical philosophies contemplated the whole life, his philosophy regards an individual situation of human life. The former sought out the ultimate causes; the latter seeks out present effects, consequences in human weal or woe. The one aimed at establishing a fixed body of truths, principles and ideals that should guide human activity; the other considers such an acquisition impossible, for it regards experience as the only reality, and experience is characterized especially by change. On that account principles and truths are not fixed and universal but are changing and particular. They are constantly in a condition of becoming, and by the assumed purposive character of evolution eventually become more and better adapted to the condition of man.[2] Thus, to him "the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day. Its aim is to become, so far as is humanly possible, an organ for dealing with these conflicts."[3] "A study of social conflicts, especially those in-

1. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 21
2. Cf. The Quest for Certainty, pp. 41, 46.
3. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 26

volved in the relation of the three alleged leading forces in modern society, viz., democracy, industry and science"[1] is alone philosophy for Dr. Dewey.

He finds the root of error in the classical conception of philosophy in the "separation that has been made between knowledge and action, between theory and practice"[2], and attempts to find the "continuity" between the two. But by doing this he limits his philosophy to the scientific method of thinking about human experience and designates it as a pragmatic philosophy. Sure enough its range is the broadly practical rather than the strictly rational, contemplative, or speculative. It sets aside any consideration of philosophical problems which have in the past but led to seemingly interminable disputes. As such it is a revolt against intellectualism; it exalts the province of sense, while it diminishes the province of intellect. Thus the intellect which has hitherto been generally considered as the highest faculty of man, is made by him the servant of the senses, as "instrumental", or as a "tool".[3]

2. His Conception of Knowledge

The theory of knowledge called epistemology is the most important and interesting philosophical inquiry in these days. Many books have recently been written on the subject, many have been devoted to the history of attempts to solve the problems involved in it. These attempts have been made from various points of view, and there is a wide difference between the solutions offered.

1. H. H. Horne, op. cit., p. 297
2. The Quest for Certainty, p. 47
3. Cf. E. G. Spaulding, The New Rationalism, p. 275.

It may, however, be granted that the epistemological problem is not the first for the individual mind or for the race. Historically we find that philosophy begins with metaphysics. What is the form of the universe? What is its origin? What is reality? What is the nature of the soul? What is the body? These were the first questions that men asked, and they gave such answers as were possible. It was the difficulty of answering them or of resting satisfied with the answers given that led to the further inquiry as to the nature of knowledge and its possibility. For the answers were not only many but contradictory, and they gave rise to the further question, Is the human intellect able to solve such problems? From the historical point of view, therefore, epistemology is a critical reflection on metaphysics. It is an endeavor to ascertain why and how the contradictory answers which have arisen in metaphysical inquiry have emerged, and whether these are not due to a disregard of the limits of the human mind, and an unwarranted application of cognitive processes to matters beyond its ken.[1]

While it is true that the epistemological problem arises out of the failure of metaphysical inquiry, it is also true that it emerges elsewhere and otherwise as soon as men begin to reflect on knowledge itself. At the outset knowledge is not a problem. Its nature and validity are taken for granted. Apart from any other implication, be it psychological or metaphysical, man has come and does come into possession of knowledge. The plain man recognizes a distinction between the subject knowing and the object known. In this, there is the expression of a metaphysics - the existence apart of two kinds of entities, mental and

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1. Cf. James Iverach, Article "Epistemology" in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p. 357f.

material. The problem of the contact of the world of mind and matter is a problem of psychology. As we conceive it, therefore, knowledge begins by the action of the object known upon the subject knowing. It involves the separate and distinct existence of the two independent realities of mind and of the world.

Dr. Dewey's position on epistemology is not an easy one to grasp. Yet some consideration is necessary inasmuch as he makes this problem of central importance, saying "the greatest effect of the scientific, industrial, and political changes has been "to substitute an Idealism based on epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, for the Idealism based on the metaphysics of classic antiquity."[1] He, as well as other pragmatists, has revolted against the intellectualistic and absolutistic preoccupation with finished logical systems, and claims at least a hearing for the theory of knowledge which he sets forth.

His favorite method of attack upon the problems which have harassed philosophers for centuries is to render them meaningless by denying their existence. The dualisms, antitheses, or separations, which have been elaborated in the past, he would have us believe, were grounded in social stratifications or artificial divisions in society. He proclaims that "all philosophy has its raison d'etre in the organization and constitution of social life."[2] Democracy is against the establishment of classes; but Dr. Dewey goes a step further and maintains that the dualisms of the philosophers are likewise set aside once the social organization, attempts to give rational sanction to, and thereby tends to perpetuate the divisions which they meet in society. According

1. Reconstructions in Philosophy, p. 49.
2. The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 277.

to him the basic dualism of all "such as mind (or spirit) and matter, body and mind, the mind and the world, the individual and his relationships to others, etc.", is considered that which isolates "mind from activity involving conditions, bodily organs, material appliances and natural objects."[1] To him, activity is the supreme ideal of life, and he says "the effective working of an idea and its truth are one and the same thing."[2]

His analysis of the problem of knowledge is considered from one point of view only, namely from the side of activity or behaviour. It makes all knowledge reducible to sensations and denies the capacity of the intellect alone acting upon the data of sense experience. It considers behaviour alone to the neglect of introspection. It also unnecessarily narrows down the field of philosophy to the particular individual or social situation, as we have seen in the previous section, and to the present, felt need which is urgent in its demand for attention.[3]

On the whole, Dr. Dewey's solution of the problem of knowledge, in its insistence upon activity, would seem to make man the measure of all things. He regards knowledge as absolutely human while the classical philosophy like Idealism holds that knowledge is universal, both immanent in human experience and transcending the limits of human experiences.[4] Consequently, Dr. Dewey's view leads man to rely exclusively on himself for his social progress; while the other view referred to leads man to rely on the Absolute as well as on himself, humanly praying, as in Tennyson:

"Let knowledge grow from more to more
But more of reverence in us dwell."

1. Democracy and Education, p. 377
2. The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 143.
3. Cf. O'Hara, op. cit., p. 23
4. Cf. H. H. Horne, op. cit., p. 299.

3. His Conception of Reality.

"All philosophies of the classic type", Dr. Dewey says, "have made a fixed and fundamental distinction between two realms of existence. One of these corresponds to the religious and supernatural world of popular tradition, which in its metaphysical rendering became the world of highest and ultimate reality. Since the final source and sanction of all important truths and rules of conduct in community life had been found in superior and unquestioned religious beliefs, so the absolute and supreme reality of philosophy afforded the only sure guaranty of truth about empirical matters, and the sole rational guide to proper social institutions and individual behaviour. Over against this absolute and noumenal reality, which could be apprehended only by the systematic discipline of philosophy itself, stood the ordinary empirical, relatively real, phenomenal world of everyday experience."[1]

He continues to say: "Philosophy which surrenders its somewhat barren monopoly of dealings with ultimate and absolute Reality will find a compensation in enlightening the moral forces which move mankind and in contributing to the aspirations of men to attain to a more ordered and intelligent happiness."[2]

Instead of having philosophy concern itself with the whole of reality, Dr. Dewey restricts it to present and urgent moral and social difficulties, saying that "it has been repeatedly suggested that the present limit of intellectual reconstruction lies in the fact that it has not as yet been seriously applied in the moral and social disciplines."[3]

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1. Reconstruction of Philosophy, p. 23
2. Ibid., p. 26
3. Ibid., p. 162

His method of reconstruction is the experimental method used in the sciences with such well-known results. In connection with it Dr. A. K. Rogers writes: "It is not obvious how the turning of philosophy from the work of reality . . . into a 'method' merely, has supplied us with any practical tool for the rectifying of specific social ills. . . . Dewey's analysis is perfectly general, and leaves concrete questions, as before, to the familiar methods of common sense and good judgment, enlightened by expert knowledge."[1]

In short, to Dr. Dewey reality is nothing more than human experience; it is entirely anthropocentric. He denies the reality of the Absolute, the Immutable, the Transcendental[2], while another system, such as Idealism, emphasizes the experience of the Absolute, the Immutable, and Transcendental. As Dr. Horne says, of Dr. Dewey's philosophy, "Man is concerned with the sensible realities of geography and history" while in the other system, man is concerned "in addition to these, with their unity in a higher synthesis."[3] In the last analysis Dr. Dewey would say that "there are realities but no Reality".

4. His Conception of Truth

According to Dr. Dewey, truth is not the conformity of intellect with reality, but consists in activity, in what happens, in what works, in what is done in a particular situation. He says explicitly, as we have quoted before, that "the effective working of an idea and its truth are one and the same thing."[4] Truth is not tested but is made by its successful operation. In place of an intellectual standard, a

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1. A. K. Rogers, English and American Philosophy since 1800, p. 393.
2. Cf. The Quest for Certainty, p. 26f.
3. Op. Cit., p. 302
4. The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 143.

volitional and emotional one is established. Instead of conceiving truth as an inherent quality of an idea, the criterion now is the resultant satisfaction in action. Thus truth to him becomes ambulatory, dynamic, subject to revision, as the particular life situation presents new conditions which are different from previous experiences.

Driscoll says: "Truth with Professor Dewey is what is 'instrumental' for 'satisfaction'. Hence truth is relative to the person; what is useful to me may not be useful to you, and what is useful to me today may not be useful tomorrow. Thus truth changes with persons, times and places. But this is skepticism and destroys the basis of physical science."[1]

Prof. Spaulding in criticizing Pragmatism says, "If the anti-intellectualistic and immediastic conception is accepted, that the outcome is the sole test, then may not what some call evil be to others the good, the false at one period may be the true at another, the beautiful to some may be the ugly to others, and, conversely in each case."[2]

In fact, to him there is no "the Truth". He says, "The adverb 'truly' is more fundamental than either the adjective, true, or the noun, truth. An adverb expresses a way, a mode of acting. Now an idea or conception is a claim or injunction or plan to act in a certain way as the way to arrive at the clearing up of a specific situation. When the claim or pretension or plan is acted upon it guides us truly or falsely; it leads us to our end or away ffom it. Its active, dynamic function is the all-important thing about it, and in the quality of activity induced by it lies all its truth and falsity. The hypothesis

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1. Pragmatism and the Problem of the Idea, p. 24, quoted by O'Hara, op. cit., p. 22.
2. The New Rationalism, pp. 288-289.

that works is the true one; and truth is an abstract noun applied to the collection of cases, actual, foreseen and desired, that receive confirmation in their works and consequences."[1]

He finds "the standard and tests of validity in the consequences of overt activity, not in what is fixed prior to it and independently of it."[2] This pragmatic criterion of truth is directly reflected in his conception of value which we are going to discuss in the next section.

5. His Conception of Value

Just as all knowledge, judgment and belief result from the interaction with environment, so do improvised principles of morality arise from the same interaction. "Good consists in the meaning that is experienced to belong to an activity when conflict and entanglement of various incompatible impulses and habits terminates in a unified orderly release in action."[3] Again, the "good" is always found in a present growth of significance in activity.

To him the "good" and the "true" are madd convertible; or more exactly, it appears that the true is subject to the good. In the conflict arising from the entanglement of habit and impulse, the good is the satisfaction concomitant with the successful issuance of energy. Instead of an intellectual criterion of reference by which something is judged to be good, there is a reversal in the process described, and that which produces satisfaction, or is felt to be good, is likewise true.

Thus, in Dr. Dewey's philosophy, reason is dethroned from its

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1. The Quest for Certainty, p. 73.
2. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 210.
3. Ibid., p. 293.

position of establishing the criterion, and satisfaction or feeling or utility becomes the criterion. As Dr. O'Hara says, this opinion is strengthened also when we recall that the system is anti-intellectualistic and reduces itself to an apotheosis of sense, because it demands that truths prove themselves in outward test or experiment.[1] In this respect he seems to be the disciple of Rousseau, exalting feeling, sentiment, activity, distrusting the intellect, supposing the natural goodness of man, and minimizing the value of logical thought.

On the other hand, he identifies the moral with the social, and the moral is determined by the attendance of success upon activity in a social medium. The viewpoint is not to be taken that society dominates activity by a repertoire of social habits and ideals which the individual is to make his own as rapidly as possible. The individual seems to be the final arbiter in what is good and in so far as his activity is dominated by what is useful or satisfactory for the needs of the present situation, thus far is it moral. He would have the individual consider the social value of his actions by directing it to the betterment of social life. But without fixed principles, without a criterion of examination for the direction of activity, he seriously weakens his program of activity. He deprives activity of that sameness of purpose which comes from a candid review and acknowledgment of all life, and also of that motivation which arises from the same source. Crassman considers that his doctrine "negates the possibility of individual and social progress which, curiously, is the burden of the whole school."[2]

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1. Cf. Op. cit., p. 33
2. P. Crassman, "Dewey's Theory of the Moral Good" in Monist, XXXVIII Oct., 1928, p. 617, quoted by O'Hara, op. cit., p. 35.

Dr. Dewey repeatedly proclaims that there is no hierarchy of values among goods. A distinction in moral goods, he seems to fear, would lead to distinctions of importance, of rank and dignity, to the establishment of classes. Again, his epistemology makes impossible any fixed, stable, and universal criterion by which various goods may be objectively evaluated. He denies, for instance, the separate and distinct existence of mind and the world in the intellectual order, and the distinction of spiritual and corporeal in the moral order. Psychologically, he sets aside any distinction between soul and body, between higher nature and lower nature, and denies in conformity with Behaviorism, the freedom of the human will. Freedom is not looked upon by him as the acceptance of the good and rejection of what is evil, but the liberation of activity from whatever hems it in.

In the last analysis, (1) he refuses to set fixed principles, aims, and ideals which shall influence conception of the whole life.

(2) He rejects all consideration of the supernatural, of the transcendental, of the universal, and of the fixed in life.

(3) He makes ethics altogether social in origin and seems to make individual desire and satisfaction the basic criterion of human activity, since to be felt as worthwhile in itself is thus the ultimate criterion of value.

In short, as Dr. Horne writes, "his conception of value is the extreme of subjectivism and individualism."[1]

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1. Op. cit., p. 305.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION OF DR. DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS TO HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS

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1. His Attitude toward Historical Religion.

We shall now investigate the relation of Dr. Dewey's philosophical views to his religious views. First of all we shall see his attitude towards historical religion. In his confession he speaks of the religious atmosphere in which he was brought up as follows:

"Although the University (of Vermont) retained pride in its pioneer work, and its atmosphere was for those days theologically 'liberal' - of the congregational type - the teaching of philosophy was more restrained in tone, more influenced by the still dominant scotch school. Its professor, Mr. H. A. P. Torrey was a man of germinely sensitive and cultivated mind, with marked esthetic interest and taste, which, in a more congenial atmosphere than that of northern New England in those days, would have achieved something significant. He was, however, constitutionally timid, and never really let his mind go. I recall that in a conversation I had with him a few years after graduation, he said, 'Undoubtedly pantheism is the most satisfactory form of metaphysics intellectually, but it goes counter to religious faith.' I fancy that remark told of an inner conflict that prevented his native capacity from coming to full fruition."[1]

"Teachers of philosophy", he continues to say, "were at that time, almost to a man, clergymen; the supposed requirements of religion,

1. Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 14.

or theology, dominated the teaching of philosophy in most colleges. I do not mention this theological and institutional phase because it had any lasting influence upon my own development, except negatively. . . . I was brought up in a conventionally evangelical atmosphere of the more 'liberal' sort, and the struggles that later arose between acceptance of that faith and the discarding of traditional and institutional creeds came from personal experiences and not from the effects of philosophical teaching. It was not in other words, in this respect that philosophy either appealed to me or influenced me - though I am not sure that Butler's Analogy, with its cold logic and acute analysis, was not, in a reversed way, a factor in developing scepticism."[1]

It seems that his rather hostile attitude toward historical and institutional religion is not always the fruit of his philosophy but is a personal reaction against his early religious environment in many cases. But on the other hand this attitude is a natural outcome of his inclination toward social interest and his peculiar intellectual temperament.

He writes: "While the conflict of traditional religious beliefs with opinions that I could myself honestly entertain was the source of a trying personal crisis, it did not at any time constitute a leading philosophical problem. This might look as if the two things were kept apart; in reality it was due to a feeling that any genuinely sound religious experience could and should adapt itself to whatever beliefs one found oneself intellectually entitled to hold - a half unconscious sense at first, but one which ensuing years have deepened into a funda-

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1. Ibid. p. 16.

mental conviction. In consequence, while I have, I hope, a due degree of personal sympathy with individuals who are undergoing the throes of a personal change of attitude, I have not been able to attach much importance to religion as a philosophic problem; for the effect of that attachment seems to be in end a subordination of candid philosophic thinking to the alleged but factitious needs of some special set of convictions."

He says that "I have enough faith in the depth of the religious tendencies of men to believe that they will adapt themselves to any required intellectual change, and that it is futile (and likely to be dishonest) to forecast prematurely just what forms the religious interest will take as a final consequence of the great intellectual transformation that is going on. . . . It seems to me that the great solicitude of many persons, professing belief in the university of the need for religion, about the present and future of religion proves that in fact they are moved more by partisan interest in a particular religion than by interest in religious experience."[1]

These utterances show that (1) Dr. Dewey is not friendly toward historical, institutional religion; here I mean, the Christianity which claims itself as a final religion, (2) The cause of this attitude should be sought, as we have seen, in his personal reaction against his early environment and in his intellectual inclination toward a social interest. (3) However, he has faith in the depth of the religious tendencies of men and believes in the religious experience. (4) Consequently, we note, his conception of religion is different from that of historical religion and his conception of religion is very closely related to his philosophical views.

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1. Ibid. p. 20

2. His Conception of Religion

Direct treatment of the question of religion by Dr. Dewey is not found often, and even when it is found the argument is rather vague to most minds, and it is not easy to grasp what he really meant.[1] This, however, I think, is due to the fact that religion with him is not a distinctive truth or experience that can be singled out as such. By him religion is treated as a natural expression of human experience; consequently the implication is that our common life in society in its every aspect, could become religious. Economics, education, science, as well as art and poetry, are all "religious" or can be religious from his point of view.

In concluding chapter in his Reconstruction in Philosophy he says:

"Poetry, art, religion are precious things. They cannot be maintained by lingering in the past and futilely wishing to restore what the movement of events in science, industry and politics has destroyed. They are an out-flowing of thought and desires that unconsciously converge into a disposition of imagination as a result of thousands and thousands of daily episodes and contact. They cannot be willed into existence or coerced into being. The wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth and the kingdom of God in such things does not come with observation. But while it is impossible to retain and recover by deliberate volition old sources of religion and art that have been discredited, it is possible to expediate the development of the vital sources of a religion and art that are yet to be, not indeed by action directly aimed at their production, but by substituting faith in the active tendencies

1. Prof. W.M.Horton of Oberlin College writes in his book Theism and Modern Mood: "I say nothing of John Dewey, the father of Chicago Pragmatism, for he is so vague and circumspect in his utterances upon religious themes that it is almost impossible to describe his position." p. 58.

of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the courage of intelligence to follow whither social and scientific changes direct us. We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration. The bare force of circumstance compels us onwards in the daily detail of our beliefs and acts, but our deeper thoughts and desires turn backwards. When philosophy shall have cooperated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace. Poetry and religious feeling will be the unforced flowers of life. . . . "[1]

In another place he says of religious experience as such: "The religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole."[2]

In the last section of his Human Nature and Conduct he describes religion as "a sense of the whole in the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied. For individuality signifies unique connections in the whole. Yet it has been perverted into something uniform and immutable. It has been formulated into fixed and defined beliefs expressed in required acts and ceremonies. Instead of marking the freedom and peace of the individual as a member of an infinite whole, it has been petrified into a slavery of thought and sentiment, an intolerant superiority on the part of the few and an intolerable burden on the part of the many."

"Yet every act may carry within itself a consoling and supporting consciousness of the whole to which it belongs and which in some sense

1. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 212f.
2. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 264.

belongs to it. With responsibility for the intelligent determination of particular acts may go a joyful emancipation from the burden for responsibility for the whole which sustains them, giving them their final outcome and quality. There is a conceit fostered by perversion of religion which assimilates the universe to our personal desires; but there is also a conceit of carrying the load of the universe from which religion liberates us. Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal. The life of community in which we live and have our being is the fit symbol of this relationship. The acts in which we express our perception of the ties which bind us to others are its only rites and ceremonies."[1]

We shall quote here another statement from his Gifford Lectures delivered at Edinburgh University in 1929. There he says: "The religious attitude as a sense of the possibilities of existence and as devotion to the cause of these possibilities as distinct from acceptance of what is given at the time, gradually extricates itself from these unnecessary intellectual commitments. But religious devotees rarely stop to notice that what lies at the basis of recurrent conflicts with scientific findings is not this or that special dogma so much as it is alliance with philosophical schemes which hold that the reality and power of whatever is excellent and worthy of supreme devotion, depends upon proof of its antecedent existence, so that the ideal of perfection loses its claim over us unless it can be demonstrated to exist in the sense in which the sun and stars exist."[2]

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 331-332.
2. The Quest for Certainty, pp. 303-304.

The reference to "the cause of these possibilities" might be taken as referring to God, or at least to some reality, yet in the following words, "commitment to", he introduces further ambiguity, for they may mean "dogmatic finality about" or they may mean "acceptance of, as a working hypothesis". He seems to be so desirous of avoiding dogmatic belief in God that he does not even consider accepting God as a working hypothesis. Prof. Brightman of Boston University[1] says that "Dr. Dewey has proposed two different substitutes for God - the infinite whole and the possibilities of existence". "The former", he says, "is far more akin to God, than the latter, which has human conduct as its center". On the whole, Dr. Dewey seems to believe that religion is more than what man is now doing; it is what man can do, what ideal goods can be realized in existence, and so it is concerned with the structure of reality. It is significant that Dr. Dewey believes that Schleiermacher's conception of religion as a sense of dependence "comes closer to the heart of the matter".[2] Nevertheless it can not be said that his reference is more than a very vague suggestion. As Prof. Brightman[3] says it lacks both the intellectual vigor and content to supplant theism, and to me that lack is vital.

3. How His Philosophical Views are Related to His Religious Views.

(1) First of all, Dr. Dewey's thoroughgoing naturalistic evolutionary viewpoint makes for him impossible any religious formulation which allies itself with supernaturalism, because a philosophy ex-

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1. E. S. Brightman, The Problem of God, p. 56
2. The Quest for Certainty, p. 304.
3. E. G. Brightman, op. cit., p. 59.

tracted out of the possibilities actually existent in this world makes impossible any supernaturalism.

The explanation of Dr. Dewey's world is found in terms of the natural and any religious formulation using the implications of his writing cannot offer supernatural explanation as part of its data.

This means the substitution of human confidence and self-reliance for the faith in and obedience to God found in historical religion.

(2) The democratic implication of his thinking has its effect on his conception of God. The conception of God in historical religion as the supreme Personal being, as the Father of mankind means nothing to him. God is not the Other One to man in any sense but is identified with man's possibilities and activities. To him religion, morality, God himself, come into the functional category. Religious interpretation founded on Dr. Dewey's thinking is certain to be humanistic and anthropocentric. It will emphasize the possibilities of human nature and voice the cry of Swinburne,

> "Glory to man in the highest, for man
> is the master of things."

He would say, to be religious is to show practical loyalty and consecration to the realization of the democratic life, to seek with all one's power to bring about the "miracle of the shared life." A religious person, according to him, would be one whose ideal was to use material resources to attain the better life for all mankind. This better life would be one which allowed for the development of human capacity to the fullest extent and made possible the widest sharing of human experience.

(3) The question of how a religion of devotion to human values might be promoted receives little consideration from Dr. Dewey. Evidently he would rely almost exclusively on the intelligent understanding of the meaning of life. The Church would have no part in such religious promotion; philosophical insight rather than theology would be the instrument of religious progress. He does not believe that the expression of the Christian experience in historical religion can be given new shades of meaning and made to serve in an effective way. He says:

"Nothing is gained by deliberative effort to return to ideas which have become incredible and to symbols which have been emptied of their content of obvious meaning. Nothing can be gained by moves which will increase confusion and obscurity, which tend to an emotional hypocrisy and to a phrase mongering of formulae which seem to mean one thing and really import the opposite."[1]

(4) As we have seen already, Dr. Dewey has given expression to a certain type of mysticism. Thus he speaks of religion making real a "sense of the whole", a "sense of the community", and the symbol of God finds somewhat incidental use, especially in the last pages of his Human Nature and Conduct. However, God as used there would seem synonymous with all those elements of our environment that have shaped our natural and social order.

(5) Dr. Dewey has not carried out religion enough himself. But the implication of his philosophy for religion is clear enough from the expressions he has made, and that implication has been developed to

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1. Hibbert Journal VI, p. 799, quoted by R. H. Hall, op. cit., p. 340.

quite an extent by his followers in the religious field. Among them we see Dr. Coe, Prof. Ames, Prof. Wieman, and many others who are conceived of as outstanding religious thinkers in this country.

Thus Prof. Ames defined religion as "the consciousness of higher social values".[1] Likewise Dr. Coe has defined it as "self-realization in a social medium", and "it involves, (1) Social immediacy, (2) Revaluation of values."[2] More recently he proclaimed that "it is true that we can no longer affirm that there is a specific religious instinct that guarantees the permanence of religion. Nor is there any universal 'sense of sin', nor 'longing for redemption', nor universally active 'sense of absolute dependence'. But the same qualities of the human spirit that guarantee the future of science, invention, and enterprise promise a future to religion also, and they determine the broader characteristics that it must more and more assume."[3] He conceives re-

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1. E. S. Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience, preface. It is interesting to note that though Prof. Ames is quite in agreement with Dr. Dewey's thought in his book cited here, he finds its own limitations in his later book, "Religion". He writes: "The idea of God may thus be seen to express more than the mere projection of human ideals, for that expression still carries within it the old dualism between an alien cosmos and man's little world of interests and values. . . . Many advocates of modern 'humanism' commit this fallacy of supposing that one term of dualistic conception may be dropped while retaining the other. . . . Denying the existence of God and the supernatural . . . they are left with a truncated world, and the lower half of the old dualistic order. They have unwittingly separated man from nature with the same stroke, and have left their humanistic realm suspended between the void of matter on the one side and the vacancy left on the other by the removal of the old supernaturalistic deity". pp. 173-175.

2. G. A. Coe.
3. G. A. Coe, What's Coming in Religion? in the Christian Century, Vol. XLVII Number 53. Dec. 31, 1930, p. 1621.

ligion to be "less and less a matter of faith, and more and more a matter of rational inference and interpretation", and says: "It will take social forms; it will deepen the sense of obligation while transforming its content; it will become, to a degree never reached in any historical religion, an active, meaningful, fertile fellowship between men and the power that 'rolls through all things'".[1]

Prof. Wieman in his latest book defines religion thus: "Religion of the sort we wish to advocate is dedicating life in supreme devotion to that order of existence and possibility which provides the highest values which ever can be actualized."[2] This seems to be based on the expression made in Dr. Dewey's Gifford Lectures on religion and might be taken as a representative definition of the pragmatic school of Dr. Dewey's type.

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1. Ibid. p. 1621.
2. H. N. Wieman, The Issues of Life, p. 135.

CHAPTER VI

AN ESTIMATE AND CRITICISM OF DR. DEWEY'S VIEWS ON RELIGION.

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As it was said in the introduction, the criterion of our estimate and criticisms of Dr. Dewey's views on Religion will be the teaching of the New Testament interpreted and experienced by a protestant Christian student. We shall see the merits first and then the defects.

1. The Merits of His Views.

(1) In as far as his philosophy is based on an evolutionary theory and uses the terms of a biological hypothesis, it can be used in appreciating Christianity as a developing religion. Of course we must be very careful not to confuse the usableness of biological terms in Christian truth with their basis bearing on the determination of Christian truth. Perhaps the relation of biological terms to Christianity is more by way of illustration and comparison than of fundamental value. Christianity had at first to struggle for its existence, but it survived despite all opposition because of its fitness to meet the needs of man's cry for salvation.

(2) When Dr. Dewey's philosophy applies the psychological test it has offered a valuable and usable medium. Prof. Brightman says that Dr. Dewey's philosophy "has contributed one idea of the value of human consciousness, ~~in~~ individual and social. It is probably this factor in his philosophy that makes it seem to many the gospel of a new age."[1] It is true that through pragmatism in general

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1. E. S. Brightman, Religious Values, p. 152.

the psychological view has been furthered. It has rendered real service in classifying and differentiating religious phenomena, and has aided in the study of religious consciousness.

(3) The attitude of Dr. Dewey's philosophy towards verification has an element through which it can be brought into harmony with Christian ideals and claims. In its unfoldment and history Christianity has constantly gained strength and has become its own evidence, because its truths met the demand, and satisfied and answered the need of man. It is through the comparison of its history with the history of other faiths, it is through the study of its results and effects that it has justified itself. The immediate verification and validation of Christianity to the conscience is also an establishment of its truth in and through the experience of the recipient. The good tree can be known in no other way than by its fruits.[1] It may be good, but men do not know it to be good until it bears fruit.

(4) The conception of satisfaction, which is a particular application of the idea of verification, also contains a true point of view. Of course Christianity interprets satisfaction in the highest sense, and it makes the supreme satisfaction of man to be the satisfaction of the soul. While there are some who interpret Christianity's proffer of satisfaction in a selfish sense, there are others who realize that even spiritual satisfaction should not be the main motive. Nevertheless even these advocates of a Christianity in which man does not primarily seek the salvation of his soul, do not deny the final

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1. Cf. Matthew, 7:16f.

attainment of a satisfaction. The practical outcome and utility of Christianity as an evidence and an establishment of its claim is indicated even in sayings of Christ. Besides the verses mentioned in the previous section we find a place where he says that even his own doctrine he submits, for its establishment, to the test of its results and effects.[1]

(5) Again and again it has been borne in upon us, that the truth of Christianity is not merely intellectual. When Dr. Dewey emphasizes the continuity of thought and action, it has some affinity to the Christian truth which emphasizes the continuity of faith and works, ideals and life.[2]

(6) Dr. Dewey's interest in social reform, which led his philosophy to be essentially educational, is also a great contribution. Though we do not think that social reform is the whole of the Christian mission, yet it was, is, and should be, the natural outcome of its mission. The Master himself was perhaps the greatest social reformer in the history of mankind as well as the greatest teacher of the human race.[3]

2. The Defects of His Views.

We have set forth the aspects of Dr. Dewey's views on religion which we conceive as merits. But after considering these aspects which may be said to be favorable to the Christian religion, it is necessary to pass to the examination of other aspects, which are inimical to Christian truth.

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1. John 7:16, 17, etc.,
2. Mt. 7:24f; Lk. 10:28, etc.
3. In almost every page of the Gospels you will find it and the history of the world will show you its proof.

(1) The fact of development, in his philosophy, has been stated in such a naturalistic manner as to ignore the spiritual content of Christianity. There exists in his philosophy a trend to see and stress the merely natural side of development and process. Because the finding of the truth is in the process, it is through the process that truth is made.

Now while Christian history and its development shows that truth has assumed many forms, and that it cannot be explained apart from human receptivity, yet Christianity can never grant that the receptivity produced the reality of the truth. The changing forms of the Christian message are not the explanation of its essence. If it is true that human experience made Christianity, then Christianity must surrender its claim to be really supernatural. It is not supernatural without a history into which the supernatural descends, but it is also not an historical and a natural development without a deposit of eternal. While religion is not reason, it is reasonable. The inner reasonableness cannot be found in the confusion of development and history in which both the reasonable and the unreasonable occur. The very substance of Christianity is denied when development claims to be the solvent of the truth of Christianity.

(2) Dr. Dewey's thinking fails to give real value to the separation of the psychological facts from biological facts, and finally reduces phenomena of the mind too largely to the objective biological data.[1] Because of its material and naturalistic tendency it is detrimental to a spiritual conception of mind. When the spiritual idea of the mind is lost there is no adequate basis in human nature for

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1. Cf. H. H. Horne, op. cit., p. 293.

religion. Thus it has injured the idea of the soul, of the conscience, and of the character of man. Religious ideas become subservient to feeling and will, and this subservience is aided by the naturalistic conception of both feeling and will.

Christianity demands, in opposition to all such notions, that man's spiritual nature remain intact and that it be given an ideal value.

(3) Another difficulty with Dr. Dewey's theory is the manner in which it seems to restrict the working out of truth to the basis of perception. There is no real place for ideas. Because these are depreciated, there is no real way of explaining some very fundamental notions of the human mind. He fails to furnish a foundation for ideas, because he is too much entranced by perception, and it has led to the denial of the separateness of logic. There is no real logic to him, but only a descriptive psychology.

Now Christian truth demands a norm and a standard. The demand for a standard cannot be upheld, if there is no value, from the point of view of truth, for any logical norm apart from its psychological derivation. The psychological conditions of a standard do not explain its essence. If they are stressed we shall finally have a standard which always moves and shifts, but a shifting standard is a perishing standard. The mere occurrence of any fact is sufficient in his theory to justify it, if it does not actually disagree with another experience. Now this matter of mere practical agreement or disagreement may be a working basis and a provincial platform[1], but the standard of truth demands a higher

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1. Dr. Dewey says that the whole Western European history of two thousand years is but a provincial episode, but how about his philosophy?
Cf. Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 27.

justification. Christianity cannot abandon its claim, that there is a fixity and a certainty about its truth which is due to its own inner nature. Therefore, no change of interpretation and no varieties of experience can decide as to the final worth of Christian truth.

(4) His pragmatic theory of the workableness of truth, of its satisfaction, and of its utility, which has a favorable side, also has a very dangerous implication. It seems to rest truth on the possibility of its being tested. A claim and a truth which cannot be tested can never be established.

Now Christian truth claims to be ethically right and justifiable on its own foundations. It works, it satisfies, and is truly useful, because it is what it is. The truth is the cause of the workableness, not the workableness the cause of the truth. The followers of Dr. Dewey's philosophy are compelled to eliminate many and perhaps all transcendent ideas of Christianity. Some truths may not at all appear practicable. They must be believed to become practicable. In other words, it would not be the workableness which would establish the truth, but the truth accepted would make its way.

Dr. Dewey utterly rejects the classical philosophies and historic religion by reason of the fact that they are the arts of acceptance and not of control.[1] We cannot deny the fact that the acceptance of the ideal can be translated into action, but it is not the translation and the success of the action that make the ideal. Great religious ideals are not taken up by men because they work, but

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1. Cf. The Quest for Certainty, Chapter IV,

they work because they are believed. A true belief is not a blind venture, for there is an inherent reasonableness in a great ideal. Great ideals and great ideas create true reality because of their inner truth and reality.

Dr. Dewey has transferred the principles of the scientific laboratory to the realm of spiritual values. He has reduced the inner certainty of Christian truth to the uncertainty of a human experiment.

(5) It is necessary for religion when it admits that its judgments are values to know more about them than that they are values. If values are only values, it is easily possible to declare the question of their existence irrelevant or to doubt existence and its necessity.

The truth of real religion is never the mere statement of "the possibilities of existence" nor the mere "sense of the whole". If we believe in God it must be assumed that He exists. Christ does not remain a mere estimate of what He is worth to us. The maintenance of religious value suffers if its existence is uncertain. Any theory of truth, therefore, which demands that religious judgments are to be tested by their adaptability to and their existence within human experience alone, and which does not begin with the belief in the existence and reality of truth before and beyond human experience, will fail to satisfy the demands of Christianity. The estimation of value through test alone makes truth ambiguous. It can then only become certain when it is established by the thought and experience of men.

Dr. Dewey's claim that, apart from truth through the experience of men, truth is doubtful will fit human generalizations and human assumptions in scientific experimentation and in deducing certain results from life, but in religion the prime assumption must be that God is true though all men be liars.

The submission of divine truth to human experience is for the sake of humanity and not for the sake of truth. It cannot be claimed that, if Christianity remains pure, its validity and permanence is due to human testing. It may be necessary in the human reception of divine truth to show its real harmonization with the demands of the soul and of life, but such harmonization is not the establishment of the fundamental verity of Christian truth.

(6) Dr. Dewey's logical theory, which can possess no firm certainty before it has been tried out and whose hypothesis of truth allows truth to have only as much validity as it has practicability, can never furnish a basis for strong moral postulates.

Now an ethical religion like Christianity must hold to the certainty of its moral principles and demands. The persistence in emphasizing the certainty of moral principles in Christianity arises from the fact, that its ethics are not due to the assumption of a mere speculative theory, but that they are founded on the sure foundation of a truth divinely communicated. As long as Christianity claims a specific revelation, the assurance of the right and truth of its moral system is not subject to the uncertainties of experience. A virtue like mercy is true, therefore, not because mercy is practicable, but because mercy is an eternal reality in God who is merciful. Even though mercy would be a failure among men it could not be doubted as long as it is sustained by the nature of God. In the same manner forgiveness is of larger worth in human life than revenge. Justice and truthfulness, honesty and purity are right not because they are expedient or prove to be the best policy, but because they are divine in their origin and claim. Their certainty

must lie within the immediate authority of the divine command, and not with the problematic establishment by human test.

(7) The constant appeal to proof and test undermines finally all authority in morals and faith. If authority is needless in religion, this difficulty does not in the least trouble us. But if authority of some sort or kind is necessary to maintain and propagate faith, it follows that any theory which disturbs authority is detrimental. The proof that can be demanded is only the proof that authority is the right authority.[1]

Authority is authority prior to all proof, and it must be received and accepted directly. The authoritative claim of Christianity upon the conscience and upon the soul of man asks to be received not through argument but upon its own demand. It is true that men accept authority in religion because they feel its need and recognize its necessity, but the feeling of this need and the satisfaction which may come through authority do not constitute authority. Real religious authority and divine authority must rest upon itself. Christianity permits and encourages the demand for authority to be tested, but the test is not that which makes authority.

(8) The lack of authority appears in the manner in which Dr. Dewey arrives at his conception of God. Dr. Brightman pointed out that Dr. Dewey's proposed two substitutes for God, i.e., "The infinite whole" and "the possibilities of existence", - are "an analysis of personality into abstraction".[2] "Every view which is based on an inter-

1. Cf. James Iverach, Article "Authority" in Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, p. 249.
P. T. Forsyth, The Principle of Authority, p. 10.
2. E. S. Brightman, The Problem of God, p. 56.

est in one aspect of personality, taken by itself apart from the whole personal life, leads to an abstract and incomplete view of what religion is and, on account of its inadequate basis, arrives at an inadequate God."[1] As Dr. Brightman has suggested, if we are to find the truth about religion or about God, we must take all the evidence into account. The evidence with which we start in religious experience is not feeling alone or thought alone or will alone, but is the whole self, the feeling, thinking, willing person. If we start by examining the full evidence of human personality, it may be that clear thinking will compel us to arrive at a conception of divine personality. Also, it is possible that the divine personality may satisfy the mind's need for a rational interpretation of religious experience in such a way as to provide for all the values which are dear to those who propose substitutes for God. On the whole, if we are to understand the idea of God in a liberal and intelligent fashion, we should consider it, not in the light of our own beliefs or disbeliefs merely, but in the perspective of the religious experiences and beliefs of humanity in the past and present.[2]

(9) It follows legitimately from such an inadequate conception of God that there can be no real purpose of God in the world. God is not really the First Cause. He lives altogether in a world of secondary causes. He clearly states this:

"Merely because Spencer labeled his unknowable energy 'God', this faded piece of metaphysical goods was greeted as an important and grateful concession to the reality of the spiritual realm. Were it not for the deep hold of the habit of seeking justification for ideal

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1. Ibid., p. 58.
2. Ibid., p. 59.

values in the remote and transcendent, surely this reference of them to an unknowable absolute would be despised in comparison with the demonstrations of experience that knowable energies are daily generating about us precious values."[1]

He does not explain the real reason of the deep hold of ideal values and of the human trend to seek a single transcendent energy. He claims that we do not really need it. "And were it a thousand times dialectically demonstrated that life as a whole is regulated by a transcendent principle to a final inclusive goal, nonethe less, truth and error, health and disease, good and evil, hope and fear in the concrete, would remain just what and where they now are."[2]

But the question remains whether all experiences would be "what and where they are now", if there were not in the world and in the religious history of man the belief in a transcendent, divine power and purpose. Does such an hypothesis of God's objective non-existence make no difference in the life of man? Does it not aid righteousness and its cause both in deepest distress and in temporary failures? Is life, without belief in a purposing and powerful God, finally the same and will it create the same results as a belief in mere purpose found in the working of the world?

Christianity claims that the world and the life of the soul of man do need faith in God's determination. Without it man is lost in the world of secondary causes. Dr. Dewey's denial that there is purpose beyond the experience of man is a real indication of its enslavement to biologism. He has not shaken off the accidentalism of

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1. Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 16ff.

Darwinian theory. And because it is not free from this it cannot have a real God.

If we suppose God to be immanent in the universe, He can be immanent, according to his theory, only as a result. The consistent pragmatists must believe that God is being shaped and made in the world. As Truth will be the final summing up of many truths tried out and found valuable; so God will be the final summing up of man's religious experiences. He will come at the end, and not at the beginning; He will be the Omega, but not the Alpha of the world. His immanence is not a real one but a developing one.

It is quite possible with pragmatists, as Prof. Van Til says[1], to ask, "Who made God?" Back of God lies mere possibility. Possibility is a wider concept than actuality. God and man both dwell on the island called Reality. This island is surrounded by a shoreless and bottomless ocean of possibility and the rationality that God and we enjoy is born of chance.

The Christian theist thinks, however, that it is impossible to ask "Who made God?" God is, for him, the source of possibility - actuality is a wider concept than possibility. The little island on which we dwell rests upon the ocean of the reality of God, our rationality rests upon the rationality of God.

Pragmatism maintains a thorough metaphysical relativism, while Christianity will not compromise on the conception of God as a self-conscious absolute Personality.

In the last analysis, Dr. Dewey's religion is a religion with-

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1. C. V. Til, God and the Absolute, in the Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 4, Oct. 1930. Edinburgh, pp. 358-386.

out God in the true theistic sense. Dr. Dewey is at one with Dr. Perry's statement: Religion is "man's sense of the disposition of the universe to himself."[1] Man is not responsible to God but to the environment or to the universe. Since the universe is impersonal, responsibility returns to man; religion is morality and morality is autonomous.

It is this emphasis on humanism, humanism against theism, it is this proud claim of pragmatism, whether it be openly uttered or not, that brings it into opposition with Christianity, which teaches humility, and whose central figure, Jesus Christ gloried as man to be meek and lowly. For Jesus only God was good. The God of Jesus is not the God of pragmatism. Humanity as Jesus sees it is not humanity as Dr. Dewey's philosophy paints it.

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1. R. B. Perry, The Approach to Philosophy, p. 66.

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