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live in contentment and hope. Solid and weighty evidence was at hand that nothing stood in the way of a happy life other than the stupidity and incompetence of people. Much was accomplished for a common blessing, and the promise of much more was contained in the American experience of wellbeing in a new and expanding land. Hope has been in truth integral to American existence, and it has formed the spirit of the people.

3. In European experience, the individual existed and found his good in the context of hoary institutions and their authority, represented at the last by the Church and the State. The common life was determined by stable structures of habit, and the individual existed as a member of a corporate society. He found his life and good and security and peace as an individual integrated into a complex of institutions together with other individuals. The individual existed and lived in relation to institutions. It is thus that he was an individual human being. His very humanity was in fact posited by the common life with its habits and actions. Social life was realized by way of systems of laws and offices and stations.

(a) In American experience human individuality was radically modified. The dependence of the individual has been not so much upon fixed institutions as upon the cooperation of his fellowmen in his pursuit of the good things of life. In the woods and on the prairies, in setting down on new lands and in building up new towns, in fighting nature and in making things, men have needed one another and worked together for their several goods. Even while the right of each individual to prosper has been recognized, it has also been clear that the individual without his fellowmen is lacking in the ability to make or acquire the goods of the common life. The American has developed a new kind of individualism through the prospect of an increasing success in the acquisition and enjoyment of goods available in his environment. On the other hand, he has developed a new sense of his fellow-humanity through his steady dependence upon those around him without whose cooperation he would have failed in his pursuit of happiness. He has been not so much an individual subsisting by social institutions as one existing by the trans-actions of the people around him. He has thus come, on the one hand, to be an “individualist,” and on the other, to have a peculiar awareness of the common life as constituted by mutual aid.

In our judgment, this shift in American experience, from dependence upon permanent institutions to dependence upon cooperating people, has had profound effects upon American character and religion. Men thrown together in a land of opportunity, forced to face together the perils and promises of their environment, have come to experience their very being in new ways. They have seen one another with new eyes, and have lived together in new dimensions. One is hardly surprised to find that the people of “the new world” have come to think of themselves as “the new Adam,” a new species of humanity, that has given the lie to “old world” views of man and human life. Having in fact found in the new country opportunity and prosperity beyond anything possible for them in the old, and that through their common efforts, one man adding to the power of another, they have developed a new faith one in another, and have sought to justify this faith with the exercise of good will and helpfulness which they consider as permanent traits not only of American character but also of human nature as such. There has been an openness, an outgoingness, a readiness to cooperate and help, in the American experience, which belong at the core of goodness as prized and practised by the American people of whatever origin and background. Whereas among people whose good emanates from institutions, humility, obedience, doing one’s duty, knowing one’s place, and the like are regarded as basic virtues, among Americans whose good has emanated from work together, quite a different set of virtues, such as responsiveness, mutuality, fair play, regard for another’s interests and needs, and the like, have been regarded as qualities which make a man “good.” American utopianism, moralism, sentimentality, optimism, etc., which have been severely criticized in our time, are not original traits of American nature. They are debased qualities of a way of life in which “faith in man” has been integral to American experience. It is true that in this present “power age,” American experience has undergone profound alteration. Men no longer so much work together as work for highly organized institutions. Nevertheless, the tradition of working together is still alive in the American mind, and so informs American ways that American character cannot be understood without it.

(b) The American feeling for freedom which is in a sense the American soul or life, must be understood as an expression of American experience. Its peculiarly American quality arises from work together, and the public and private well-being which have come out of it. The quest for freedom in the context of an organized society is one thing; the exercise of freedom in work together is another. Freedom from restraint in a social order is one thing; freedom of response in a social
intellectual tradition brought to this land, and produced a spirit and mind which are peculiar to this country. The European mind, in philosophy and theology alike, has in our midst suffered alterations which require that we speak of an “American mind.”

1. Let us take the question of truth which is central to the European philosophical tradition. What does this tradition understand by truth if not a given state of affairs more or less comprehensively envisaged? Truth, here, is that which is given, a factum, something made or done, out there or in here, ready for perception or intuition, and thus for knowledge. Truth, matter of fact, actuality, reality, thing, idea,—these belong together; and what is common to them is that they are already there and to be known or to become objects for the mind. Truth is something to be seen, or heard; to be thought and understood. It is what one knows through the senses, or reason, or both. It is true that roses are red; that man is mortal; that the sun illumines and heats the earth; that God exists and provides. When one knows that something exists, he knows the truth; and that, so far as truth is concerned, is the end of it. Of course, there are the concepts which are true without being things. But things and concepts go together, and are true or false as given to be objects of the mind.

In the European tradition, the Truth as characterized above has been a most precious thing. It has been tied up with the Beautiful and the Good, and has been considered divine if not God. Devotion to, commitment to, pursuit of, Truth as given Reality, has been regarded as the highest virtue and absolute human excellence. People have not been satisfied to recognize that a knowledge of the given is indispensable for a proper adjustment to it, and even for the life and well-being of man. They have endowed the given, the fact, the truth, with an aura of the sacred, and condemned any violation of the given, any disregard for it, as blasphemous and damnable. It is a matter of common sense in the European tradition that truth or reality as given is the proper object of ultimate loyalty.

Now, why this “ultimate concern” with truth, and why this deification of it? The given, the real, what is the case, out there or in here, may be an insignificant and useless and even detestable “fact.” There are innumerable facts which at any given time and place are not worth man’s knowing or thinking. And whole concatenations of facts may be both unilluminating and of little value, and so may be our classification of them. The given as such does not wear a badge of excellence. One may have to yield to its power, but one does not have to bend the knee before it. Where, in the European tradition, does truth get all this prestige in its sheer givenness if not in the Establishment, social or supposedly cosmic, which attributes to itself the sovereignty and inviolability of the ultimate? The European devotion to empirical and rational truth as the Given corresponds to European experience in which the given Order, social and presumably cosmic, is the effective incarnation of God.

The American, who has lived not by the grace of the Establishment but by the trans-actions of his fellows, does not have either the European’s feeling of Truth or his obsequiousness before it. The given to an American has been either a habit or a problem. It has been the starting point, not the content, of thought. It has functioned as a hypothesis, as a premise, opening a prospect for significant operation, in which thought and action contribute to both truth and efficiency in producing solid and satisfactory effects. The American has not been impressed with the given, except as providing premises from which he might proceed, methodically, to realize facts and truths, in conjunction with human values. He has even refused to take the things he has brought into being as final ends, and used them as means for further operations. Even where he has sought effects not for their immediate utility but for “making his ideas clear,” he has been concerned more with his method of procedure than with intuited or empirical “truth.” Thus he has kept method and results together, and sought truth by operation rather than by vision. This does not mean that he has taken the given lightly, or that he has not enjoyed it as an esthetic object. After all, the American has not been devoid of sensitivity; neither has he moved about in his world as a brute without an eye for beauty. But he has cultivated an aptitude for transmuting the given into a means of public well-being, thus finding things true with things that are good or satisfactory. In short, whereas European experience in established institutions and order has endowed the given with the glory of truth, American experience of working together has transferred the glory of truth to the outcome of human operation. European truth is unveiled as order; American truth is realized as an accomplishment. The former is presumably arrived at by the intuition of correspondences and coherences; the latter is the reward of intelligent and methodical human activity.

American experience has made it unnatural for the American thinker to intuit Nature, Reality, or God, as the given Object of pious contemplation.
ism, and the like — need not at this time detain us long. Insofar as it is a neo-supernaturalism — an attempt to substitute faith in God for faith in man, to replace method and intelligence with intuition and decision, to promote “ontological reason” at the expense of “technical reason” — it may act as an antidote to complacency in this age of perils; but, being a negation in general of American experience, it does not have the power to improve the mind or the body of American Christianity. It would of course be foolish for American Christians not to study and ponder the massive cogitations of neo-orthodox theology. As theologians the Americans are pupils of their European teachers. But the fact appears to be that no imported theology is assimilable as a whole into American experience and can provide the proper discipline for preaching in America. Preaching among us goes on largely without the benefit of neo-orthodox theology, or often without the benefit of any theology which represents coherent Christian thinking.

III. THEOLOGY ACCORDING TO AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Santayana’s criticism of intellectuals in America for failing to think in terms of “American experience” applies to theology. However, this criticism need not be wholesale. Since the time of Jonathan Edwards, a succession of theologians, including N. W. Taylor, W. E. Channing, Horace Bushnell, William Newton Clark, Walter Rauschenbusch, A. C. McGiffert, D. C. Macintosh, Shailer Mathews, H. N. Wieman, R. L. Calhoun, the Niebuhrs, and Charles Hartshorne, have produced theologies which have been deeply rooted in American experience. A serious and detailed study of the history of theology would, in our judgment, be rewarding not only for an understanding of American Christianity but also in providing much food for thought toward a hoped for American theology. In fact, it is doubtful that there is a prospect for American theology at all without a new knowledge of the history of theology in this country. America may not have produced an Augustine or a Schleiermacher, but its hope of producing theologians who shall do more than live off the European mind has little chance of being realized unless the history of theology in America is studied, not as a tributary of European theology, but, for all its derivative character, as an expression of American experience.

Still, Santayana’s criticism applies to theology in America. Even though there is a history of American theology and we need to give serious attention to it, it appears that American Chris-
tianity has done less than justice to American experience, and so have American theologians. Religion is strongly conservative, and so is the religious thinker. Religious institutions, no less than others, dread change, and thinkers who have their doctrines in custody, are inclined to keep them intact, at least in essentials. Hence, even while theologians have reflected the new experience in America more or less adequately, they have shielded from opinions which might have been contrary to the traditional dogmas of the churches. They have interpreted and reinterpreted “the faith” in ways which have been true neither to tradition nor to experience. American experience was too different from European experience to make it logically possible to make American theology a minor variation of the European. But this is what was made of it, to the great disadvantage of the Church in America and perhaps also of the Church universal.

Theology in America needs to take seriously and to build upon the following elements in American experience.

1. Although the materials for the good life are found in the physical world, the things of the good life are produced by men working together, by human effort and with the exercise of human intelligence and discipline. Nature is no provident parent, and men have to produce or make the things they want. There is little natural good which has only to be found in order to be enjoyed, and no natural process which yields by itself the things required for a human way of life. Nature means neither to bless man nor curse him. Neither “natural piety” nor rebellion against nature is congruous with a methodical and intelligent use of nature for human good. One may enjoy nature and be happy over its myriad splendors. One may even be movingly aware of one’s “organic continuity” with nature and especially with other living beings. There is much room for sensitivity toward and participation in natural processes. However it is illogical to respond to nature as though it were a person, or to commune with it as though it were a moral being. It is also, offhand, more than questionable that a moral Being is the Lord of nature. Whether there is or there is not an ultimate Reality and Cause behind or above nature, one must in any case use method and intelligence in extracting the maximum of good from it. Natural religion and theology are incongruous with the logic of American experience with the physical world. In a land where human beings have worked together to build a City of Man, natural religion survives by the presence of traditional sentiments. It is not a matter of good and evil, and much less
ends and produced particular effects toward peace. He has made particular decisions, with wisdom and energy, and has been faithful and constant in His trans-action, as they themselves have sought to do and be. The God of American experience has in short been the anthropopathic God, and any other God has bored the American, and amused rather than engaged him. The Great Being has interested him somewhat, but the living God has been his “ultimate concern.”

4. The Great Being is a myth suitable for existence in an established Order and its institutions, and is the given Object of a mind concerned with life in a fixed and immutable environment. The living God is the Creator of a community of people working toward better things, and therewith the Creator of their world in which prosperity is the outcome of work rather than the outworking of law. The living God belongs in a context not of fact or things done and finished, but in the trans-actions of fellowmen engaged in the making of better things. He is the God of the covenant, and otherwise no God at all but an idol. American experience knows no God apart from the mutual communion of fellowmen trans-acting for their several goods. There is no way from nature to God because the physical world is the world of a people, and the community of work is logically prior to the “order and connection of things.” To use Henry Nelson Wieman’s phrase, “creative interchange” is logically prior to the physical objects we call nature; whence it follows that the living God is the God of communion first and the God of the object-world secondly. In American experience, *vestigia divinitatis* are discerned in the words and works of fellowmen before (logically) they are discerned in flowers in crannied walls. If they are not found in the people’s work together, they are not found at all. The European habit of seeking God in the common world as a whole, or in Being in general, or in the several orders of being metaphysically considered, is incongruous with American experience. The living God is the God who speaks and acts, and He speaks and acts among speakers and actors who exist in the image of God and are therefore the prime bearers of the Word of God and the hearers of the Word of God. They bear as they hear, and in hearing they know at once God and their fellowmen.

5. Men who work together speak together, so that without speech there is no work and no humanity. Without speech there is no humanity, and human speech is the Word of God. The same is true of work, and human work is the Work of God. The Word of God is uttered as human speech, and the Work of God is done by His servants. We are not to confuse, let alone identify the Word and Work of God with the word and work of men; otherwise we shall be without God and without hope in the world. Still, we cannot escape the biblical language which presents to us a God who speaks and works as God who puts His Word in the mouths of His servants and sends His Spirit upon them for doing His work. He who does not hear God’s prophets does not hear His Word and He who stands apart from the work of His servants does not know the Work of God. If any man refuses to hear the prophets and to see their works, if any man refuses to hear the words of Jesus and to see his works, he will neither hear nor see the Father, the living God. God does not speak as a man next to the men of God, and He does not work as a man next to His servants. The sounds made in the speaking of God are human sounds, and the acts of God are seen as done by men. It is when we hear them and see them that we hear and see God, and there is no form of God which is not the form of a man. It is when fellowmen speak and work together that they know God. When they speak and work together they know God, not as an object next to themselves and the things around them, to be caught hiding, but as the Speaker of the Word and the Worker of the Work.

6. This speaking and working of the living God occurs in mutual communion of men as they work and speak together. Although communion occurs as men work together, the speech in communion must be distinguished from speech in work. Work together is the occasion of communion, but communion is logically prior to work because those who work together for their mutual satisfaction commune one with another for their very existence as fellowmen. Men indeed often work together as organisms rather than as human beings, and this is convenient for all concerned. However, work without communion is empty of humanity and is its very undoing. Since it is human beings that are at work, work is a fulfillment of humanity by virtue of communion, without which men neither exist nor find any good as fellowmen. Thus men exist in absolute dependence. For men to exist is to exist as those who know that they are thus dependent, and to act according to this knowledge. Such knowledge is the knowledge of communion, and it is true in the trans-actions which are at once its occasions, its vehicles, and its fruitions.

God speaks to fellowmen in their communion at their work together. He is revealed in their self-revealings one to another as fellowmen, which occur in the falling together of those who are fallen
At the Faculty Retreat in October, Mr. Meland presented an extended critique of Mr. Haroutunian's paper, challenging his monolithic description of the American experience and his sharp differentiation of it from that of Europe. Nevertheless he acknowledged that, following the 1840s when, as it were, America came of age as an economy and in matters of foreign policy and began to look to powers and possibilities within itself, there did arise a distinctive strand of American experience which Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman gave literary voice to, and which Pragmatism was a philosophical expression.

After the retreat, Mr. Meland added a postscript commenting further on Mr. Haroutunian's conclusions. Because Mr. Haroutunian regards this later statement particularly helpful in understanding his constructive effort in the paper, we have persuaded Mr. Meland to permit us to print his postscript along with Mr. Haroutunian's paper.

you to speak more explicitly of the bearing of your own Calvinistic leanings on what you now advance as a Pragmatic vision of the American experience, and on the constructive theological thesis that follows. The nearest you came to acknowledging this aspect of your thought was an incidental remark while explaining why you feel free to insinuate into the story of the American experience the imagery of the biblical account of Israel. You said, "As Calvin once remarked, 'we put on the spectacles of Scripture when looking at history'; meaning, no doubt, that in this way we see into the experiences of history depths of meaning relating to ultimate demands which might otherwise escape us in our immediate perception of events. This would be a way of pointing to the use of Scripture as a theological resource for amplifying and critically penetrating the implications of this historical experience, much as others might employ philosophy or ontological inquiry, only in the pictorial rather than in the abstract mode.

If there is anything to the rather common characterization of the distinction between the Hebraic and the Greek response to events as being a contrast between pictorial and abstract thinking, that distinction can be said to persist among theologians who partake more of one tendency than the other. Calvinism, for all its severity and chaste-ness in language, exhibits a preference for this pictorial mode; or, as you say, for putting on the spectacles of Scripture, for achieving depth of utterance and judgment in assessing events.

Now this brings me to the question as to whether there is not an affinity between the Hebraic, Calvinistic, and Pragmatic bent of mind. To speak of them as being pictorial obscures this affinity; but to speak of them as exercising an econom-
LEROY H. ADEN, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care, participated as a resource person in the Church Federation of Greater Chicago’s radio series, “Directions of Faith,” on October 9. During the fall he also served as leader for a Lutheran church retreat.


R. PIERCE BEAVER, Professor of Missions, presented the daily “policy lectures” at a consultation at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin, in June and July to the board members, staff and the missionaries on furlough of the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church of America. He lectured also at Calvin College and Theological Seminary at Grand Rapids and at the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

Mr. Beaver taught from mid-November until Christmas in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ghana. He then visited Makerere University College in Uganda and attended a conference of East African Theological Colleges at Limuru, Kenya. From January through March, he has been making a study of Christian Ashrams in India.

Two books by Professor Beaver will be published this winter: Envoys of Peace, The Peace Witness in the Christian World Mission (Eerdmans), and From Missions to Mission (Association Press).

RAGNAR BRING, Visiting Professor of Historical Theology, served, after his retirement from the University of Lund in June of 1962, as visiting professor at the Divinity School in Berlin and at Abo Academy in Finland. He also lectured in Helsinki, at Greifswald (East Germany), and at Bonn (West Germany). During the summer of 1963, he lectured at Rugby in England during an Anglo-Scandinavian Conference. He later lectured and participated in the Second Lutheran World Conference on Social Responsibilities in Stockholm. In August, he delivered lectures at a summer course at Lund.

Professor Bring is editor of the Swedish Theological Quarterly Sinsk teologisk Kvartalskrift, and has published articles there as well as in other Swedish periodicals. His translation into Swedish of the Epistle to the Galatians “Wahrheit und Glaube” was published in 1963 in a Festschrift for E. Hirsch: “Tradition und Offenbarung.”


Professor Burkhill lectured in the fall to the New Testament Club of the Divinity School on the topic: “Antinomies of Biblical Theology: Ben Sirach and St. Mark.” He is currently engaged in the final revision of A Historical Introduction to Christian Thought: Two Thousand Years of Philosophical Development, to be published by Prentice-Hall.

MICHEA ELLADE, Professor of History of Religions, lectured in September 1963 at the “Eranos” meeting in Ascona on “Paradis et Utopie.”


ROBERT M. GRANT, Professor of the History of Early Christianity, attended the Patristic Conference at Oxford in September; he delivered an address entitled “The Book of Wisdom at Alexandria: a Study in the History of the Canon and Theology.”

In September, a revised edition of his The Bible in the Church was published in paperback by Macmillan. The new title is A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible.

JOSEPH M. KITAGAWA, Associate Professor of History of Religions, delivered the American Council of Learned Societies’ Annual Lectures on His-
of Directors of the Foundation for the Arts, Religion, and Culture which was held in New York City.

Professor Scott's most recent publications are "Reinhold Niebuhr (University of Minnesota Press), an essay on Graham Greene in a symposium on Greene's work (published by the University of Kentucky Press and edited by R. O. Evans) and an essay, "Society and the Self in Recent American Literature," which appeared in the Spring, 1963 number of the Union Theological Seminary Quarterly Review.

Joseph Sittler, Professor of Theology, delivered the Gray lectures at Duke University. He also preached during the fall quarter in the chapels of North Carolina State College and Rutgers, Yale, McMurray, and Illinois Wesleyan Universities. As chairman of the Commission on Religion and the Arts of the National Council of Churches in the U. S. A., he presented its report to the General Board of the National Council of Churches.

Charles R. Stinnette, Professor of Pastoral Theology, lectured during the summer at a workshop at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and at a two weeks' pastoral conference in East Lansing, Michigan. In October, he addressed a conference at All Saints' Church in Atlanta, Georgia. During the month of November, Professor Stinnette lectured at the Divinity School, and also at a pastors' conference at Duke University in North Carolina.

Paul Tillich, John Nuveen Professor of Theology, was out of residence during the fall quarter, lecturing at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His latest publications are: "The Eternal Now," Charles Scribner and Sons, New York (September 1963), "Morality and Beyond," Religious Perspectives, New York (October 1963) and the third volume of his Systematic Theology, University of Chicago Press (November 1963).

Allen P. Wikgren, Associate Professor of New Testament, attended during the summer a working session of the international editorial committee preparing a revised text and apparatus criticus of the Greek New Testament.

During the year 1963, Professor Wikgren contributed an article entitled "Chicago Studies in the Greek Lectionary of the New Testament" to the Robert Pierce Casey Memorial Volume: he also contributed to the newly revised Hastings Dictionary of the Bible. With Ralph Marcus, he co-edited volume 8 of Josephus' Antiquities in the Loeb Classical Library.


Gibson Winter, Associate Professor of Ethics and Society, lectured on the topic, "Man in the Social Sciences" at United Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The fact is that the radical right today is but a pale imitation of the strength and pervasiveness of the Nativist Movement and the Know-Nothing Party of the nineteenth century. In spite of modern mass communication, a tremendous amount of money, and a good deal of organization at this moment, it lacks the grass-roots support once enjoyed by the Anti-Catholic and the Anti-Immigrant Movements of that same century.

Though America is a relatively young nation, the roots of the radical right go deep into its history. The very fact of America’s youth is one of the reasons that helps account for the presence of the radical right. It is but a little over a century and one half since this young nation began to engage in the “noble experiment” of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Because of its youth and because of the fact that it constantly took vast streams of people into itself, the nation always tended to overstate the danger of subversion — it was new, untried, and unsure of itself.

The Alien and Sedition Acts of the late eighteenth century, shortly after the nation was founded, represented a temporary legal triumph of radicalism over sanity in the conservative wing of American political life. It succeeded precisely because the nation was so young and so uncertain of itself and because the nation even then was taking in large numbers of immigrant peoples. This fact is frequently overlooked by European nations as they seek to understand the radical right in American life.

The Alien and Sedition Acts were but the first in a long series of symptoms of unease that marked American social and political life. In that moment of the republic’s history, a large number of people, particularly in New England, feared the overthrow of the republic by foreign influence. At that point, the foreign influence was embodied in the French Revolution and in the writings of the French infidels who supposedly were infiltrating every facet of American life in an attempt to subvert government, church, and morals. Almost all of the American churches sprang to the defense of Christianity and of American democracy in a crusade to defeat the French invader. Revivals in many of the Protestant churches had as their primary goal the conversion of a sufficient number of people to Christianity in order to make them good citizens and repulse all forms of infidelity. At this point in history, the churches were closely identified with what was then the radical right, and they provided much of the leadership and inspiration for the whole movement.

The early nineteenth century also witnessed a violent outburst of prejudice and fear against the Masonic Movement. Again, the churches and politicians linked arms in fighting off what they feared was a massive international conspiracy to overthrow the American republican form of government and to subvert the church life of the nation. So strong did the Anti-Masonic Movement become that in 1826, in the State of New York, it collected 17,000 votes with its own political party and elected fifteen members of the Lower House of the Legislature. By 1828, in that state, it garnered over 60,000 votes, and in 1832, an Anti-Masonic Party elected the governor of Pennsylvania. The single goal of the combined religious and political forces was to extirpate the Masonic Movement from American society.

Far more serious in its consequences and in its immediate results was the Anti-Catholic Movement of the early nineteenth century. Today, the Catholic Church is looked upon by most extreme right wingers as one of the bulwarks of American society, particularly in the fight against Communism. It is hard to believe that only one century ago the extreme right-wing fringe in American society felt that Roman Catholicism was the greatest danger to democracy and to the social-cultural fabric of American life. In his famous treatise, Plea for the West, Lyman Beecher, stalwart New England Congregational minister, called for an extraordinary outpouring of funds and personnel to win the American frontier for American Protestantism before Popery or sheer indifference triumphed. From his point of view, both had the same consequences — they would undercut democracy, and the American people would lose all of their political liberties. Beecher was hardly a member of the right-wing fringe. He was a very responsible, articulate, and gifted minister and theologian.

To the right-wing fringe of the 1830’s and 1840’s, Roman Catholicism embodied every conceivable evil. From their point of view, Roman Catholics owed ultimate allegiance to the Papacy which was a despotism opposed to all forms of democratic government. In addition, Roman Catholicism was composed almost entirely of foreigners and untrustworthy immigrants. It is hardly necessary to recount the violence perpetrated by the right-wing fanatics. Suffice it to refer only to the May riots in a suburb of Philadelphia in 1844, where pitched battles were fought in the streets, men were killed, and finally the state militia had to be called out.

From the Civil War right on through to the Depression, American society witnessed an unending stream of anti-immigration societies and movements. Immigrants were always suspect, because
On Friday evening, November 15, Professor Helmut Thielicke delivered a lecture entitled "Resurrection and History" as part of the regular Fireside program of the Divinity School. Dr. Thielicke is Professor of Theology at the University of Hamburg in West Germany and was Visiting Professor of Theology and Ethics at the University of Chicago during the fall quarter of 1963. A number of Firesides are sponsored each year by the Divinity School Association in order that the greater student body may hear and discuss papers presented by faculty members, visitors, and students.
Carl E. Wennerstrom was born in Cleveland, Ohio, October 28, 1925. He attended Kent State University one year but received his A.B. from Hiram College, 1949. That autumn he enrolled in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and completed his B.D. degree in 1952. He then enrolled in the Ph.D. program specializing in pastoral theology. In 1954, he was appointed advisor to students, Meadville Theological School. In 1956 he accepted appointment as chaplain to the University of Chicago Clinics and instructor in pastoral care in the Divinity School. Just one year ago, he resigned these posts to accept a full time academic appointment as assistant professor of pastoral theology in Meadville Theological School.

On August 18, 1963, Carl Wennerstrom died. He is survived by his wife, Jeanne, whom he married in 1946, by a daughter, Ann, age 9, and by a son, Erik, age 22 months.
limited possibilities, or that which so appeared to most Americans, what will the radical right do in the face of the threat of meaninglessness and boredom that now confronts so many Americans? Technological society has not only brought us increased longevity, greater comfort, and higher standards of living; it has also created vast masses of dehumanized persons who have lost a sense of purpose and meaning in their own personal lives. Nothing is more dangerous to democratic processes than people who have no faith in or concern for their own present lives. It is this that produces radical alternatives left and right.

It has frequently been pointed out that there is little or no difference between the radical left and the radical right. Both are totally dissatisfied with life as it is at the present moment in history. It is not a question of a relative dissatisfaction which most responsible people share; it is a question of total dissatisfaction. The radical right wishes to destroy the present by appealing to a past that never really existed, and the radical left by appealing to a utopia that it intends to create, which never can be realized in history. In both cases, there is a loss of the sense of value and worth in present society or in one's own life at this given moment in history.

Human nature demands a purpose for life. Fanatic forms of devotion to patriotism are frequently an attempt to give meaning to frustrated or destroyed personal lives. They can become an escape from a seemingly worthless or frustrated existence that seeks to find meaning and purpose in a great movement beyond one's personal responsibilities. Self-proclaimed defenders of freedom are seldom seeking to reestablish or maintain freedom. They are actually fleeing from the chaos and meaninglessness that marks their own lives. They do not have a center of certainty from which they can risk themselves in the free give-and-take of democratic processes and institutions. They do not seek freedom either for themselves or for others. They really seek to lose themselves in fanatic absolute certainties of a mass movement, whether it is to the left or to the right.

Unfortunately, in the face of a vacuum in life, the strongest force binding together those who seek meaning in a mass movement is usually hatred. This has the power to pull the individual out of himself, to unite him to others with a common purpose and direction against a common enemy. It unites him in a brotherhood of violent opposition and negative spirit. Thus, hatred seeks to restore dedication and purpose to a life that cannot look at itself in depth or ultimately find meaning for itself or its society. All of these factors, both psy-

chological and sociological, are at work undergirding the rise of the right wing in American life today. The simple question is, in the face of our limited society and in the face of our technological developments, will the right wing develop into a much more serious threat than it posed in the days of an unlimited frontier and with an unlimited time and future before our people?

The role of the Protestant churches in the right-wing movements of the past and in the right-wing movement of the present cannot be overlooked. We have already indicated that the Protestant churches of the past were in no sense innocent of giving aid and comfort to many of the radical fringe movements of the nineteenth century. This included the activity of even some of the major Protestant denominations. Today, however, we are confronted with an utterly new phenomenon. In the past, the Protestant churches appeared as the bulwark of freedom and the guardian of American culture. Today, they find themselves, for the first time in American history, under severe attack from the radical right. This is a new role for the major Protestant denominations, and they are not yet quite sure what has hit them. The attacks upon the National Council of Churches and upon the denominational headquarters of such leading churches as the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Lutheran, and others has been both widespread and vicious. The Protestant churches in America are not accustomed to playing the role of defender in this game of attack and vilification. It remains to be seen how they will respond.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the National Council of Churches and the major Protestant denominations now find themselves under severe attack from the right-wing fringes is simply because these denominations and their major organization, the National Council of Churches, now play a different role in American society and in American culture. There is no doubt that these churches are as patriotic as ever. In fact, from one point of view, one could argue that they are at this moment in history more patriotic than they have ever been in the past. However, the problem is the way one defines patriotism.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century and certainly up to the Great Depression, the Protestant churches by and large identified themselves so completely and so fully with American culture that some were led to question whether there was any point of transcendence within the American denominations. There was, but it was frequently difficult to discern this at crisis periods. For example, during the Civil War, Lincoln exemplified it much more fully than the official spokesmen of
bring their people and to see their nation responsible under God, they provide their people and their nation with a perspective so desperately needed in contemporary society.

If the churches can sustain and strengthen the deep commitments of the conservative and the liberal alike in order that neither falls prey to the allure of the extreme position, then they will be performing their most important function in staying the hand of the extremists. A genuine commitment to the traditional conservative or the traditional liberal position in American politics is one of the best guarantees against the radical right or left. A deeply rooted humble faith within the Christian community provides one of the best grounds on which to avoid the hatred, suspicion, and fanaticism that marks the radical right.

It must be remembered that in American society religion has always played such a key role, and still does, that it is bound to come under the attack of the extremists. Though it may be unjust and even uncomfortable to be constantly under slanders and unfair attack, it is a tribute to the vitality and the role of the churches in American life. As de Tocqueville pointed out in the early nineteenth century, religion is so commingled with all the habits of the American people and nation that it inevitably gets caught up, pro or con, in discussions of patriotism and the national welfare. Thus, the present attack on the American Protestant denominations is the result both of the role they have played in the past and the new role that they are playing at the present moment in American history.

The basic problem is that the right wing now has vast sums of money behind it, mass media of communication, and a frustrating world situation that puzzles many Americans who yearn for the simple “old fashioned” solutions based on unambiguous patriotism. This is a new context for extremism in the American scene; thus it appears more dangerous to the health of American society than it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the past, many people could be tolerant of or indifferent to extremism. We can no longer afford this luxury.

At this moment in history, we cannot condone or be indifferent towards a political fanaticism that is distinguished by hatred of personalities and irresponsible attacks on public figures. Politicians who do not openly reject the support of such groups should be suspect as to their political courage and integrity. It is difficult to estimate the damage that might be done to the internal political health of our nation, to the very mores of our people, and to our role of leadership in the free world if this extremism is allowed to grow. Only the moderates, the great bulk of Americans who are politically inactive people, can check it. They alone have not reacted to extremism one way or the other. If this great body of Americans, who finally determine elections, would speak out against extremism in political life, it would be checked before it does irreparable harm.

The role in which the Protestant churches and organizations find themselves is a strange one. In the past, they frequently promoted and provided leadership for right wing extremism. Today, the major Protestant denominations and their organ of cooperation, the N. C. C. C., find themselves under vitriolic attack by the right wing. They do not know how to respond in this new role. They should first seek to understand the history of right wing extremism in America and the past relation of the churches to it. Then they should try to understand the new role of the churches in American society today.

Perhaps this would provide a perspective for the churches that would prevent panic and frustration among responsible Christian leadership. The right wing has always been present in American life; the Protestant churches are just experiencing it in a new way—as an avowed enemy. Protestantism must stand firm in its prophetic and healing ministry to our nation and to our age. It must expose the right wing for what it is—a perversion of Christianity and a distortion of democracy. Though Protestantism must judge it, it must do so in love as it seeks to minister even to the right wing.
University held its Convocations on the first day of each calendar quarter.

As divinity deans in later years, between my return and my retirement, were Shailer Mathews, Shirley Jackson Case, and Ernest Colwell. To have any one of these either as dean or as friend would have been a memorable privilege. To have all three as both dean and friend was a precious and enriching experience. I returned from my Wanderjahre during the term of the second president of the University, Judson. So I have served under all the presidents this university had from Harper through Hutchins and Colwell. Colleagues I dare not begin to enumerate, but two of the most eminent had also been my fellow students, living for two years or more in the same dormitory, then “South Divinity,” now Goodspeed Hall. These were J. M. P. Smith and Edgar Goodspeed. We took our Bachelor of Divinity degrees at the same convocation, but I beat them to the Ph.D. because I hurried to get mine before it became too hard. Little did I then suspect that our little B. D. class included the two men who were to become the authors of the Old and New Testaments—at least of the American Translation.

I wrote a paper a year or two ago under the title, “Final Conclusions—as of Now,” hoping to suggest by that title that the finality of the opinions expressed was not necessarily absolute. This paper was, in fact, the third revision, at long intervals, of one that got into print more than thirty years ago. While I am not yet quite prepared to make my theological and philosophical Last Will and Testament (without the privilege of adding later codicils), some beliefs have been growing in me so long and with such increasing depth of conviction that I do not now hesitate to give my testimony in their favor. The impulse to do so is strengthened by the opposition they encounter in some very exalted intellectual circles for which I have the most profound respect. I am not contentious about this, for I concede that this opposition may represent a contrasting aspect of truth which is in dialectical tension with my view and so has a value if not isolated from its opposite.

The gist of my conviction is that this world is fundamentally a good world and that human life is, on the whole, good, and that existence is not “absurd.” That blunt statement of course requires qualification, but I hold it to be as true as any sweeping generalization about a highly complex subject can be. I think human life makes sense. This, of course, is not the whole of my conviction. I think men are sinners and need Christ as their Savior. I realize the wretched state in which a large part of the world’s population lives. I know something about the rugged road along which humanity has advanced in history, through periods of storm, calm and crisis, and the grim possibilities of the present precarious balance between a richer life and obliteration. I have faced death twice at short range—one point-blank—and found it not terrifying. To put it briefly and bluntly, what I am saying is that, in view of the values in day-by-day human experience and the fact that the worth of these values is not conditioned on their indefinite prolongation, the human experiment would not be a failure if it were to end tonight in the annihilation of the race.

Nothing has ever seriously disturbed my belief that God was right when he looked upon creation fresh from his hand and said that it was good. It is not recorded that he ever permanently reversed this estimate even after the “fall of man” and the appearance of what some now like to call “demonic” forces. True, there was a moment of disillusion, so it is reported, when God felt that the human experiment had no future and had better be terminated by the extinction of the breed. But this, if true, was only a passing mood, for he immediately made arrangements for the perpetuation of the human race.

I was interested in a statement by Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch in a television broadcast that I heard and saw on August 22. He quoted Genesis, as I have done, and said that he had at times been tempted to think the record was slightly inaccurate and that God had stopped declaring creation good at the end of the fifth day, before he had made man. On mature consideration, however, he rejected this thought and is now willing to include man, with some limitations. After all, the record does say that God repeated his statement with greater emphasis at the end of the whole process of creation, man included, and said not only “good” but “very good.” I grant that Mr. Krutch’s credentials as a theologian might not pass scrutiny in all quarters. Still it is something to have the favorable testimony of a critic who has always seemed to be rather exceptionally free from optimistic illusions.

So here we are, inheritors of Noah’s promise no less than of Adam’s sin, with a long and checkered history of human failure and achievement behind us, a precarious present both individually and collectively, and a problematical future, but with available resources, precious immediate values and reasonable hopes, all of which in the aggregate leave humanity solvent by a substantial margin. I lean strongly to the opinion that God is not wholly discouraged about us, and that his purpose in creation, which we try to discern as the key to
thinks well of it; certainly not in the Leibnitzian sense that this is “the best of all possible worlds.” (You know, of course, the saying that the optimist thinks this is the best possible world, and the pessimist is afraid he is right.) I think the world could have been much better than it is if men had been wiser and kinder, and that it may yet be better than it is now. Advanced technology — not vicious but dangerously clever, concentrating terrible destructive power in a few hands, or even in one hand — perhaps makes total obliteration by one man’s act a possibility. This is a serious possibility, since it might conceivably end the human experiment once and for all. Meanwhile, however, it does not diminish the values of life.

My thesis, then, is that life, here and now, can be good. The sin and suffering, which we know too well, limit but cannot cancel its positive values. I am not writing off as negligible or visionary those eternal and post-mundane values which have been central to faith and theology through the whole Christian tradition, but I am saying, this life itself can be meaningful and rewarding.

This is not “evolutionary optimism” either. It does not depend on a belief in “automatic progress.” The attribution of such a belief has, however, about passed out of vogue, and it is high time that it should, for it was always false, even when applied to the most optimistic of those 19th century evolutionists. They were very industrious men. Why? Because they realized that one had to work to get results. Their optimism consisted in their belief that you can get results if you do work. Darwin may be regarded as knowing a little about evolution, but he did not expect progress in the knowledge of evolution to evolve automatically. He toiled terribly for twenty years collecting and organizing data before making his pronouncement. Even those familiar lines by John Addington Symonds, sometimes sung as a hymn, do not assert that the marvelous future he predicted would come about all by itself without human effort:

These things shall be: a loftier race
Than e’er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free.
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song
When all the earth is paradise.

Symonds was, to be sure, indiscreet enough to foretell a terrestrial paradise “within history,” which everybody now admits is both a practical and a theoretical impossibility, but he did not say it would come automatically.

In answer to my optimistic view of life — which I prefer to call appreciative rather than optimistic — it can be plausibly said that I myself have been fortunate and that my cheerful philosophy is simply a generalization on my own good fortune. This could be partly true. People do generalize on their personal experiences, good or bad. The classic instance of generalizing on private calamity and interpreting it as an evidence of universal catastrophe is the chicken that thought the sky was falling when an acorn fell on its head. On the other hand, there was that historic but not exactly dated occasion when

The king was in his counting house
Counting out his money; and
The queen was in the parlour
Eating bread and honey,

thereby establishing the royal belief that all was well with the kingdom.

I remember also a fine young German chap with whom I once bicycled across the great Danish island of Zealand, from Korsør to Roskilde. At the end of a lovely day on good roads and after a hearty dinner at an excellent inn, my companion leaned back in total content and spoke from the heart. “Ach, die Welt ist schön.” I have cherished that remark for more than sixty years not only as part of the memory of a good day but also as a warning against generalizing too broadly on limited data. Aber, die Welt war schöhn in Jugendzeit in achtzehn hundert neun und neunzig.

Is it not equally possible that some of the philosophers who stress the tragic aspect of human life are also generalizing on the disasters that have befallen themselves or their nations in these more recent troubled years?

Yes, I grant that I have been fortunate. My being here now is evidence enough of that. I have had many days, and most of them have been good. I cannot do other than think well of life, since life has been so good to me and to those dearest to me. Even with a normal amount of altruism one feels one’s own pleasures and pains in a uniquely intimate way which forces them into the foreground of consciousness. The principle of perspective cannot be wholly eliminated. What is nearest looks biggest. It is only in a figurative sense that one can become self-forgetful. Sympathy, or feeling with, is a quality as essential to humanity as is self-consciousness, if humanity is
tries to give an account of the cosmos or find the “meaning of life.”

As a Christian somewhat left of center but certainly not an extreme left-winger, I have a belief that whatever human values have been produced and developed in this our earthly life will be conserved thereafter in some way that we can neither describe nor envisage. It seems to me not unreasonable to believe that a cosmic power that could produce personality in the first place out of the unpromising materials afforded by the earth as it was a billion or two years ago can preserve whatever there is in it now that is best worth preserving. That should include us—or what is best in us. I am content to let it rest at that.

My appreciation of the values of life does not, however, rest solely or chiefly on a conviction that some of them will in some way be permanent. For the purpose of my present argument that life is good, permanence can be regarded as a bonus. It is good to hope for it, but there would be no justification for regarding humanity as bankrupt without it. Life must be meaningful by virtue of its quality as immediately apprehended within the process or prolonged continuance could not make it so. Viktor Frankl says truly: “Something that in itself is meaningless cannot be rendered meaningful merely by its perpetuation.” This from Frankl’s book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

Frankl summarizes the results of his quest for the meaning of life by saying that we can find it in three ways: “by doing a deed; by experiencing a value; by suffering.” The original title of his book was “From Death-Camp to Existentialism.” He had observed and experienced all the horrors and agonies that Nazi Germany inflicted upon the Jews, up to the very door of the gas-chamber, from which he escaped by a hair’s breadth. It is a noble triumph of the human spirit that he could emerge from this ordeal with a heightened evaluation of human life, both in its potentiality and in its actuality. He has nothing to say about the normality of anxiety and anguish, but he does say that suffering is sometimes one of the ways in which men can discover the dimensions and the meaning of their lives. He does not say that all men can do this, or that all suffering lends itself to such treatment. Suffering can embitter, or enrich, or even dominate the life of an individual. I cannot say that it never dominates the life of any individual without his acquiescence, for I do not know the depths of suffering; but I know a few men against whom almost unimaginable sufferings have not prevailed, because their inner resources were greater than any drafts that outrageous fortune could make upon them.

I accept as my own Frankl’s other two keys to the meaning of life: “doing a deed” and “experiencing a value.” The first of these I take to mean doing a deed which will produce a beneficial result for oneself or others in the near or distant future. This is important because it signifies that life is not a series of detached moments of experience enjoyed or suffered by unrelated individuals, but is integrated, temporarily, causally and socially. The second, “experiencing a value,” is what I have been talking about all the while.

This is the locus and focus of the “meaning of life” as I understand it—the actual experiencing of life’s manifold values. These are so rich, so abundant, so available and so rewarding that life is well worth living. No wonder that, when God looked upon it in all its yet unfolded potentialities, he “saw that it was very good.”
happily, however, we are not called not to know, or merely to keep hidden what is so darkly hidden. We are called to proclaim God and his deeds to men. As theologians we are expected, and rightly, to write clearly and forthrightly about the faith of the Church; and as preachers we must in public and private proclaim the gospel. For how can men be saved unless they have faith; how can they have faith unless they hear; and how can they hear unless we speak? We are stewards of God’s mysteries, and yet we cannot keep silent.

Proclaim then we must. But what mystery do we proclaim; what that is hidden do we illumine? What can we say to our age — as Fellini cries in that powerful Italian film of the seeming meaningless of life: “What has a producer to say in our age?” Or, to put the same question in another way: what difference does faith in God make in the way the world looks, in the way we behave, in our experience of life — what can we say? These are questions we ask ourselves privately over and over, and that our people ask us — when they dare. And, incidentally, they are the questions that in a different context modern analytic philosophy is also asking us!

Our secular friends often pretend that existence is quite free of mystery until we religionists enter peddling our supernatural but now sadly tattered wares. As if the world were made up of laboratories, panel discussions of community problems, and the sterilized tidiness of last wills and testaments! Were it not for us, they imply, things would be quite clear and orderly, and none of this mystery stuff would appear. This is, of course, a vast hoax with little relation to the truth.

Mystery is not at all strange to our common, natural life. It surrounds, envelops and even penetrates us to our very marrow, coming between us and our closest dear one, or friend; even creeping between us and the reality of ourselves; and certainly dominating the history in which we live. Mystery is our daily fare: in suffering, sin and death. These are surely mysteries, and they are surely familiar. Yet they are not divine mysteries, healing and redeeming mysteries. They are the mysteries of evil, not the mysteries of God — or are they?

For surely they are, in many puzzling ways, related to the hiddenness of God. Perhaps it is not so much that God is essentially hidden, or so to speak hidden in Himself, as that these “devilish mysteries” hide Him from us so that what would and should be clear is now opaque. Is it not, more than anything else, the mysteries of fate, sin and death, as they exact their grim toll around us, within us and on us, that make our gospel so often opaque and unreal, our words so seemingly empty of meaning, and our tongues so often silent? We speak easily of despair as the fertile seedbed of faith — yes, in the hothouse of seminary life, where despair is kept at a mild room temperature. Real despair: at the stark meaningless, arbitrariness, and cruelty of life, at the inescapability and overwhelming power of guilt, and the steady factuality and insanity of death — real despair is the sheer eclipse of God for those who know it; and so we should never tamper with it or seek to enjoy its religious flavor.

These common, everyday mysteries, then, hide God from us; yes from us as well as from our people and from those who do not believe. For we too live in a world dominated by them. For example, the mystery of fate in our world, where the most important things happen to us through no rhyme or reason, except perhaps the ice on the road that causes the fatal accident, or the germ that begins the fatal disease, the personality disturbance that smashes a home to bits, or the strange malaise or grudge that speeds the assassin’s bullet. And yet through this meaningless event suddenly all our world of meaning, personal or public, crumbles to nothing before our horrified gaze. And then there is in us too the mystery of desire and sin, the demanding prodings of living desires that cause us to do what we know later we should not have done, or the sudden envies that make us forget our vocations for the sake of success. These are “life,” we say, with its fatefulness, its utter arbitrariness and pointlessness, its omnipotent drives, anxieties and pressing needs, and its sudden immorals. And with their advent our own beliefs and ideas themselves become accidental and precarious — for they too can vanish from our life. Then for us life is no longer theoretically but actually pointless, and sin no longer the theological prelude to apologies, but that which makes God actually unwanted, irrelevant and unreal in our life — except that we know we also die. Here in our experience is real mystery, blankness, despair.

Or consider the strange, not to say weird combination of innocence and guilt in those Christian youths in the universities of the deep South, where no football game begins except with prayer, and yet where with shining, innocent eyes students can begin a bloody riot. Is this sin, is it fate? Surely these kids, raised in that monolithic environment, are not responsible for what they are and do! And yet how much worse, how much more meaningless, if they are not! And, lest we look too tolerantly at them, consider the dilemma of guilt or of moral inaction that has faced us
Human Situations and Religious Experience

by Joseph M. Kitagawa

The dark angel.

It is often said that our religious inquiry begins in our actual human situations. This implies that the answers must also be found in actual human situations. One of the difficult problems is to determine from what perspective we are to ask questions and find meaning in the nebulous and complex situations of human life.

In this paper, an attempt is made not so much to discuss or interpret certain religious concepts, as to paint word pictures, depicting scenes from well-known human situations. In these pictures readers will not find the minute details of colour or figure; only a few essential characters will be portrayed—as is done in old Oriental paintings with, for example, the branch of a tree, a mountain and a brook—suggesting “perspectives” rather than reproducing actual scenes. The theme of these pictures is the “dark angel.”

This title is taken from the scene of Jacob wrestling with an unknown angel all night long (Genesis, Chap. 32), wherein Jacob probably did not see his antagonist nor could a spectator have done so either. But Jacob encountered some power, whose nature he did not know, and hence, his question: “Tell me, I pray thee, thy name?”

In these pictures, then, let us see how different men have encountered their dark angels. Thus may we find suggestions as to what kinds of questions they asked and what kinds of answers and meanings they found.

The first scene is that of Jacob at the Jabbok. We know that he was the favorite of his aged parents. It was Jacob, and not his elder brother Esau, who received Isaac’s paternal blessing. Then, Jacob fled from his father’s home, crossing the Jordan into the desert, wandering from place to place, not unlike his grandfather Abraham, who had also wandered in search of “the promised land.” Although Jacob prospered, he did not find “the promised land.” As a last resort he decided to return to his father’s home.

But this would have involved an encounter with his brother Esau, who was angry with him. The Biblical account, in characteristic simplicity, describes the confused mind of Jacob. It says: “Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that was with him . . . into two bands. And he said, if Esau come unto the company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape” (Genesis 32: 7-8). Indeed, this was good strategy and a practical solution under the circumstances.

But, deep in his heart, Jacob knew it was not the fulfillment of the promise; he knew the sorrow and emptiness of being a divided person. Jacob knew he was caught between wrath and blessing, death and fulfillment. Then, he stood at the ford of the Jabbok and wrestled with a dark angel throughout the night. The struggle lasted until the dawn, when the dark angel asked Jacob to let

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when one is haunted by such torment, he said: "Let go—submit everything you have, your power, your energy, even your will to fight; then you will find in your dark angel the real nature of yourself."

And where was Nirvana? To this question the Buddhist would say:

From the beginning
That which I sought
Lay in my hand,
How stupid I was
To have thought it an echo
Floating to me
From beyond."

The fourth scene is taken from the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son. In one sense, this story is Jesus' own description of himself. The young man gathered all he had and journeyed into a far country, and when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country. The picture of this young man is not complete without presupposing a dark angel. The mental agony of the Prodigal Son is well expressed in a simple sentence: "But when he came to himself he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!'" (Luke 15:17).

But how dared he return home? Wasn't it better for him to remain even though it meant eating the pods the swine ate? But his struggle was not solely against hunger. He felt in his dark angel the image of his own father, judging and yet loving. It was this peculiar character of fatherhood from which he alienated himself. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. ..." (Luke 15: 18-19). And he rose and went to his father—he dared to cross his Jabbok.

But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, saying "this my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke 15: 24).

In a real sense, it was "death" which enabled the Prodigal Son to be "resurrected" as the Son of God. Jacob beyond the Jabbok was dead, but crossing the river, "Israel"—the new and resurrected Son—found the fulfillment of life.

It is this picture of Jesus, as the new Israel, which is portrayed in Mark's Gospel. Jesus in this picture is not a triumphant king as in the Fourth Gospel; he is haunted by his own dark angel throughout his ministry.

As the time of his death approached, Jesus was tormented; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Mark 14:34). He prayed, if it were possible, that the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father . . . remove this cup from me." But then, he dared to cross his Jabbok. "The hour is come . . . Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand" (Mark 14:41, 42). On the cross, however, Jesus cries: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But this is not the whole picture. The author of Mark's Gospel weaves in another theme; this same Jesus is also portrayed as an unknown angel to the people around him. Jesus is a threat, and the people struggle with this dark angel. He was an unknown quantity even to John the Baptist. He was a constant bafflement to the Pharisees and the Scribes. The account of Peter's confession and the transfiguration haunted the disciples.

And those two themes—the man Jesus haunted by his own dark angel, and Jesus the dark angel, a threat to the people around him—are harmonized at the Cross in the words of the centurion: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15: 39). From this perspective, these two portrayals of Jesus are inseparably interwoven—a sort of double exposure.

It was this perspective that the Apostle Paul found on the road to Damascus. He recognized, in the unknown power of Jesus, a real threat to his own mental security. He did not forget Jesus, nor did he run away from his image. He fought against his dark angel; he actively persecuted him. But the more he tried, the more this image came back, like a bad dream.

In the meantime, Paul came to recognize in the image he was persecuting the meaning of the human situation—the struggle between meaning and meaninglessness, between the wholeness and brokenness of life. Paul saw clearly that it was he who was the Prodigal Son, struggling with the dark angel; he saw in Jesus the image of the Father, healing and transforming, judging and forgiving.

Faced with this double-exposure of his dark angel, Paul asked, much as Jacob had asked in ancient times: "Who art thou, Lord?" And the answer came to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Paul struggled with his dark angel until the break of day, and in the midst of the struggle, in the midst of the brokenness of human life, he found meaning, courage, strength and ground for hope. He crossed his Jabbok and found the fulfillment of life—"the promised land."