

IS THERE AN ANSWER TO THE CURRENT LACK OF A  
SATISFYING PHILOSOPHY AMONG THE  
AMERICAN PEOPLE?

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THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North  
Texas State Teachers College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

132005

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Denton, Texas

August, 1945

132005

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## CHAPTER I

### PHILOSOPHY -- WHAT IT IS

Philosophy has been termed the search for wisdom. It has been defined as the study and knowledge of the principles that cause, control or explain facts and events; as, serenity and practical wisdom that come from knowledge of general principles; as a system of general beliefs or views as regarding God, existence, etc.

Philosophy has two characteristics; it is reflective in its method, and it takes as its data not the data of the sciences but the sciences themselves. It is concerned with things as a whole, while the sciences are departmental. In almost every age of philosophy or new upsurge of some phase of it there has been conflict between science and morality. The great Greek philosophers were men who cared for both, but it was their task to show that there really was no contradiction between the two.

The Grolier Encyclopedia defines it in this way:

Philosophy is a Greek work, invented by Socrates in the 5th century B. C. to express the distinctive attitude which he took toward knowledge. His scientific contemporaries and predecessors had called themselves Sophoi -- wise men; he called himself a philosopher -- one of or seeking wisdom -- to show

that, while he believed in wisdom or science, he did not think he or anyone else had attained it. The philosopher is someone who is seeking wisdom and has begun by a consciousness of his own ignorance -- and philosophy is the name for the inquiries he makes, or for his thinking.<sup>1</sup>

To assume that the American people lack a philosophy is to state a paradox in some respects which is shown by the following quotation:

The importance of American philosophy is evidenced by the number of works which have appeared in the field. I. Woodbridge Riley's American Philosophy: the Early Schools, a pioneer work of spade-digging, his American Thought, a general summary, H. G. Townsend's Philosophical Ideas in the United States, a more selective interpretation, and Herbert W. Schneider's The Puritan Mind, together with a number of other volumes of more limited scope, all have their appropriate place in the study of American philosophy. Histories of American thought are now printed in German, French and Czech, and philosophy on this side of the Atlantic is receiving attention in general histories of philosophies.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that if one thinks of philosophy in a personal sense, one must acknowledge that every individual has some sort of credo, regardless of how he may have arrived at it; so for the purposes of this thesis it may be well to assume that there is a current lack of or need of a satisfying philosophy among the American people and to ask if there is an answer to such a lack. However, this study will seek to show that what appears to be the cause of such a lack, as

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<sup>1</sup>"Philosophy," The Grolier Encyclopedia, VIII, 1944 ed.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, Preface, p. xi.

evidenced by restless, disintegrating behavior of individuals, is in reality the effect of such a lack. If such a statement sounds involved, perhaps it will be clarified by a quotation from a man who has given of himself freely in helping to shape a philosophy worthy of America. Ralph W. Sockman has said:

A life is left at loose ends if it has only temporary and transient purposes. These must be tied by a philosophy into purposes and plans which transcend our individual welfare and outrun our individual existence. . . .

But our democratic way of life, which boasts itself the political embodiment of Christian principles, has diverted its emphasis from self-commitment to self-enrichment, forgetting that the individual best gets what belongs to him when he has a sense of belonging. Truly, institutions are made for man and not man for the institutions, whether they be the Sabbath, the family, the church, or the state. Nevertheless, man must have a sense of belonging to these institutions if he is to receive richly what they are designed to give. And we of the democracies, with our emphasis on rights rather than on responsibilities, have trained our citizens to be concerned with what the group can do for them rather than with what they can do for the group.<sup>3</sup>

Our forefathers were committed to a common purpose, that of establishing a new land and founding a new government. There was a unifying thread to their lives. There is danger of a complacency which might be engendered by the thought, "There are no new worlds to conquer." Every American, by virtue of birth, is heir to the benefits of the greatest philosophy known to man, which is so aptly stated

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<sup>3</sup>Ralph W. Sockman, Date with Destiny, pp. 72-73.

in one of the greatest documents in history -- the Declaration of Independence.

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly America can be said to have a political philosophy based on this high premise. It is reiterated in the Preamble to the Constitution.

We the people of the United States in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish the Constitution for the United States of America.<sup>5</sup>

All Americans, from whatever high or low estate, are imbued with the doctrine that the individual is of more moment than the state; that nothing is more precious or inviolate than the dignity of the human spirit. This is the ruling spirit of the American people. It is a philosophy for which countless thousands, in every war since America won her independence, have sacrificed their lives. When a national crisis arises, Americans will die to defend such a philosophy, but will they live to demonstrate its workability?

In reading the works of any great philosopher one is constrained to see that the philosopher has come to understand

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence, 1776.

<sup>5</sup>John Hancock and others, The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America.

more of the meaning of life than the ordinary man. One can grasp and effectively react to the problems set by these great thinkers only by the most persistent and penetrating thinking.

Philosophy defies defining in the last analysis, because it is constantly changing and also because it is always colored by the personality of its exponent. Leighton bears this out when he says:

Experience, as the primary datum of metaphysics, is always individual -- yours or mine. The individual's experience is the window through which he views reality or perhaps, better, the point at which reality acts on him and he reacts on it.<sup>6</sup>

He says further:

Philosophy is not the science of the possible; it is the science of the real, that is of the actual and the ideal in their relations. . . . man's social, ethical, affectional, aesthetic and religious valuations are just as good facts in the empirical sense, as are inertia, electricity, or light in the physical order, and the former order of facts plays an even larger role in human life than the latter.<sup>7</sup>

Since this study is placing the emphasis on philosophy as it applies to America, it is interesting to note what Riley has to say in discussing the early schools of American philosophy. He traces the evolution of philosophy as it developed in the growth of America, and opens his book with an historical survey. He quotes:

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Alexander Leighton, Man and the Cosmos, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 12.



"I think that in no country in the civilised world is less attention paid to philosophy than in the United States. The Americans have no philosophical school of their own; and they care but little for all the schools into which Europe is divided, the very names of which are scarcely known to them." They are the words of the French Alexis de Tocqueville. Uttered in 1835, at the close of the period of the early schools, this sweeping generalisation was based on the assumption that in a political democracy there could be no intellectual aristocracy; that in a rule of the most there could survive little of the thought of the best, and that an entire country two hundred years after its settlement, could offer scarcely anything beyond backwoods philosophies, or speculations from log cabins.<sup>8</sup>

Early movements of philosophy were five in number:

first, Puritanism as it spread from English sources; second, Deism, or free-thinking, as it began in reaction against a narrow Calvinism and ended with the revolutionary French scepticism; third, Idealism, as it arose spontaneously with Jonathan Edwards and was fostered by the Irish Bishop Berkeley, through his adherent Samuel Johnson; fourth, Anglo-French Materialism, as it came over with Joseph Priestley and developed in Philadelphia and in the South; fifth, Realism or the philosophy of common sense, as it was imported directly from Scotland, and came to dominate the country until the advent of the German transcendentalism. These five movements, extending over the two hundred years between 1620 and 1820, constituted the early schools.

President John Adams made an interesting observation when he said literature was represented on the conservative

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<sup>8</sup>I. Woodbridge Riley, American Philosophy: the Early Schools, p. 3.

side by such men as Cotton Mather and Bishop Berkeley and on the radical by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. It is interesting, if one takes the time to analyze one's beliefs about the men who made major contributions to their country either politically or in the field of literature, to note how rarely does one consider someone a radical in retrospect. This is true when applied to Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. To be sure, they were strong characters and fought doggedly for their beliefs, but how else does one get over a new idea? One could scarcely select any other two men whose influence has been so potent in shaping history right down to the present era.

An interesting bit about Jefferson is related by Riley as follows:

As Philadelphia was intellectually dominated by Benjamin Franklin, so was Virginia by Thomas Jefferson. But while the former represented utilitarian ambition for palpable results, the latter stood for liberty of thinking for its own sake. This was manifest in the President's express desire to have inscribed on his tomb: "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom and the Father of the University of Virginia." Jefferson was but the embodiment of his class.<sup>9</sup>

Riley reveals that in examining the books of early colleges and the thoughts of their representative men, there have been found numberless signs of colonial free-thinking, which he interprets as mental independence before political

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

independence.

Since this study purports to discuss current aspects of philosophy among the American people, perhaps it is sufficient merely to have touched on the early movements which influenced America and get down to the present.

For several decades the European's opinion of the American, gained chiefly from contact with American tourists, was anything but flattering. Doubtless before the present war if one had asked the average Britisher, with whom Americans originally shared a common heritage, to state the philosophy of the American people, he would have replied, "It is the pursuit of the almighty dollar."

It is a travesty indeed that the quality of leadership which has made America great industrially, scientifically and historically has in many respects kept her the gawky, unlettered, almost crude and headstrong female, who in her eagerness to learn about life, has refused to take the necessary time to acquire the polish and good manners which would admit her to the best universities of learning on the subject.

It has been the purpose of this chapter to deal in a general way with the meaning of philosophy and to mention briefly theories which influenced early American thinking.

In the next chapter a discussion of some current exponents of modern philosophy, with particular emphasis on their personal credos, will be attempted.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME CURRENT EXPONENTS OF PHILOSOPHY

If one were selecting data by which to judge a nation or its people, one would surely turn to its writers, to its newspaper commentators and to its educators and governmental leaders for supporting evidence. As a sort of cross-section on current beliefs of well-known people in philosophical circles in America, it might be well to touch on the personal philosophy of a few such individuals. Certainly no two are alike. This is explained in part by these words of William Henry Chamberlain:

I should certainly not wish to nurse the illusion so widespread in America, that there is some simple recipe for a satisfactory life, to be learned by reading a book. There is a vast variety of human tastes and one man's pleasure may be another's purgatory -- one of the many reasons why Collectivist schemes to promote human welfare in mass production fashion are doomed to fail.<sup>1</sup>

One aspect of America's problem seems to have been the inability of her philosophers to resolve their beliefs on a common ground. Until this is done, there should be little wonder that the ordinary man has no articulate philosophy. It is not difficult to accept the possibility that the personal beliefs of many individuals whose opinions have proved

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<sup>1</sup>William Henry Chamberlain, "Credo of an Individualist," American Mercury, XLIX (April, 1940), 462-468.

of worth in modern philosophy might be so resolved and a satisfying philosophy result from the culmination of all philosophical viewpoints. Indeed many of these men have come to agree on some points on which they once strongly differed. Let us keep this thought in mind while considering the personal beliefs of some outstanding individuals.

#### Albert Einstein

Let us consider first Albert Einstein, who certainly belongs to the world but who is an American by adoption. He believes we have no freedom in the philosophical sense; he thinks we are under both external compulsion and an inner necessity. He claims he was early impressed with Schopenhauer's saying, "A man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine what he wills."<sup>2</sup>

Einstein says he has always been consoled by these words when he has witnessed or suffered life's hardships. His political ideal is democracy. And though he admits the public has not always agreed with him, he says:

Everyone should be respected but no one idolized. . . . The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.<sup>3</sup>

Like most anyone who has given it real thought, he cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of

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<sup>2</sup>Living Philosophies, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

his creation, who is but a reflection of human frailty. He does not believe in a life after death but he explains his religion in this way.

To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms -- this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.<sup>4</sup>

#### Bertrand Russell

Russell explains how his philosophy has changed from that of a free thinker to that of a pacifist. However, in the light of experience gained during the present conflict his philosophy does not sound glaringly different to that held by many people who do not consider themselves pacifists. Russell concedes that his ideas are utopian, but perhaps the world has gone far along the road toward Utopia. At least, much of the present day world has come to agree with his ideas contained in the following quotation:

There will be no safety in the world until men have applied to the rules between different states the great principle which has produced internal security -- namely, that in any dispute force must not be applied by either interested party but only by a neutral authority after due investigation according to recognized principles of law. When all the armed forces of the world are controlled by one world-wide authority, we shall have reached the stage in the relation of states which was reached centuries ago in the relation of individuals. Nothing less than this will suffice.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

## John Dewey

Dewey says in industry and science people will accept the idea of change but that moral, religious and articulate philosophic creeds are based upon the idea of fixity. In the history of the race change has been looked upon as the source of decay and degeneration; so for this reason, "Ruling philosophies, whether materialistic or spiritual, accepted the same notion as their foundation."<sup>6</sup> This seemed to make man feel secure. Natural science lives on the belief that to exist is to change, but man is not willing to accept this in regard to other things. A feeling of fixity colors the individual's idea of economics, morals, religion and marriage. Dewey says of it,

Wherever the thought of fixity rules, that of all inclusive unity rules also. The popular philosophy of life is filled with desire to attain such an all-embracing unity and formal philosophies have been devoted to an intellectual fulfillment of the desire. Such happiness as life is capable of comes from the full participation of all our powers in the endeavor to wrest from each changing situation its own full and unique meaning.<sup>7</sup>

Dewey feels that the joy of constant discovery and growing may be found even in the midst of trouble and defeat when such experiences are used as a means to a fuller and richer future experience. He also feels that religion has become too respectable -- "a sanction of what socially exists." Whereas, primitive Christianity was a religion of

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.26

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

renunciation and denunciation of the "world," modern Christianity serves only as a gloss to cover existing conditions. He does not recommend the primitive conception of Christianity as a remedy for present ills, but rather an intelligent application of Christian tenets to social and economic ills. He contends that present ideas of love, marriage, and the family are almost exclusively masculine construction. He says they are consequently one-sided and romantic in theory and prosaic in operation. He seems a bit pessimistic as evidenced by the following quotation:

The chief intellectual characteristic of the present age is its despair of any constructive philosophy. The Victorian age had a philosophy of hope and progress. Now man sees it has not worked. So the many unsolved social problems telescoped by war add to the confusion. We have lost confidence in reason because we have learned that man is chiefly a creature of habit and emotion.<sup>8</sup>

#### H. G. Wells

Wells believes not in the immortality of men but of man. He feels that the thoughts, personalities, mental growth and moral development of each individual are somehow synchronized and fused with like attributes of all other individuals and that the whole has been and forever will be passed on to the race. In that sense only does he feel that man is immortal. He says for him it is a good credo; that it has taken away the fear of death. He says it is stoicism

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 28.



seen in the light of modern biological science. He expresses it thus:

People who died in Egypt five thousand years ago and whose names and faces and habits and sins are utterly forgotten were talking about it what is immortal in ourselves. Plato, Buddha, Confucius, St. Paul have all had something important to say on the matter. That discussion came into our lives as we grew up. We may participate in it, change it a little, before we pass it on. It is like a light passing through a prism which may test it, refract it perhaps, polarize it perhaps; and send it on again changed. We are the prism. The thoughts existed before we were born and will go on after we are finished with altogether.<sup>9</sup>

Robert Andrews Millikan

Millikan has this to say:

There are three ideas which seem to me to stand out above all others in the influence they have exerted . . . upon the development of the human race. Each of these ideas can undoubtedly be traced back until its origins become lost in the dim mists of prehistoric times, but it is only when the times are ripe that an idea, which may have been adumbrated in individual minds milleniums earlier, begins to work its way into the consciousness of the race as a whole, and from that time on to exert a powerful influence upon the springs of human progress.<sup>10</sup>

Millikan lists three ideas which he thinks have stood out in developing the human race. They are

- (1) The idea of the Golden Rule;
- (2) The idea of natural law;
- (3) The idea of age-long growth, or evolution.

He feels the essentials of the Christian religion consist in just two things; first, in inspiring mankind with the Christ-like idea -- which means concern for the common good --

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

and in inspiring mankind to do its duty. He feels the essential task of religion to be to develop the consciences, the ideals, and the aspirations of mankind. To him the growth of religion and environment where it can develop is the contributing element together with the other two ideas in a world of growth of stability. He says:

Within the United States, then there is not the slightest reason why religion cannot keep completely in step with the demands of our continuously growing understanding of the world. Here religious groups are to be found which correspond to practically every stage in the development of our knowledge and understanding. Personally, I believe the essential relation is one of the world's supremest needs, and I believe that one of the greatest contributions that the United States ever can, or ever will, make to world progress -- greater by far than any contribution which we ever have made, or can make, to the science of government -- will consist in furnishing an example to the world of how the religious life of a nation can evolve intelligently, inspiringly, reverently, completely divided from all unreason, all superstition and all unwholesome emotionalism.<sup>11</sup>

#### Beatrice Webb

Beatrice Webb is another authoritative example of one who seems to lack a satisfying philosophy. One can find no quarrel with her belief; indeed it appears to be the sort of philosophy which could be completely satisfying except that she apparently cannot resolve religion with science. She says:

It can be summed up in the proposition that wherever no hypothesis must be accepted as a starting point for thought or as a basis for conduct, the individual is justified in selecting the hypothesis

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

which yields the richest results in the discovery of truth or in the leading of a good life. Such a justifiable hypothesis seems to me the faith I hold: that man is related to the universe by an emotional as well as by a rational tie; there is a spirit of love at work in the universe, and that the emotion of prayer or aspiration reveals to man the ends he should pursue if he desires to harmonize his own purpose with that of the universe.<sup>12</sup>

She claims that because science is in the ascendant the religious impulse is in eclipse. She feels the decay of religious faith, as she calls it, is a reaction from what is false within the current religious creeds. Because of this, she asserts that she is a religious outcast. To the writer such an attitude employs the same reasoning one might use to decide he would outlaw friendship because one friend, or two, or three had proved unworthy.

In further support of her belief Webb says:

While I rejoice in the advance of science, I deplore the desuetude of regular religious services with the encouragement of worship and prayer for the good reason the personal experience and the study of history convince me that this absence of the religious habit leads to an ugly chaos in private and public morals and to a subtle lowering of the sense of beauty -- witness the idol of the subhuman, the prevalence of crude animalism, in much of the music, art, and literature of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

It has not been the purpose of this chapter to prove anything or to draw any conclusions. Equally interesting viewpoints of such men as Theodore Dreiser, Fridtjof Nansen and others might have been given but for lack of space.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

## CHAPTER III

### HUMAN NEED OF A SATISFYING PHILOSOPHY

Perhaps there was a time when man was not conscious of the need of a satisfying philosophy. According to available maps the world was a closed circle, geographically, at the close of the fifteenth century. Only Europe, Asia and Africa were known. To the superstitious mind of that day unknown lands were peopled with unknown animals and the seas were infested with dreaded monsters. The people got their ideas from reading fabulous stories, chiefly from Mandeville's Travels and Pliny's Natural History. Likewise the world of mind at the close of the fifteenth century was also a closed circle; people were satisfied with what they knew; their conceptions of everything were due to be changed.

The Middle Ages are sometimes spoken of as the age of authority -- authority of the church and of the king. It was true that few ideas were ever challenged. To prove something they merely cited some established authority. This was superseded by the rule of reason or rule of experience at the beginning of the Renaissance.

The most typical representation of the life of the Middle Ages is the monk seated in church, living on what people

bring him; persecuting his body for the sake of the hereafter. Then a new philosophy in the name of Humanism brought a new conception of the body in which flesh was no longer to be distrusted.

Most writers of the day did their utmost in their philosophy, writings and daily lives to shift the emphasis from the worlds to come, as it had been in the Middle Ages, to the complete life with comforts and luxuries on earth. This developed particularly under the study of Greek language and Greek literature. Among these writers were Brown, who wrote Pseudoxia Epidemica and Elyot, who wrote The Governor.

In the Novum Organum one finds such statements as the following:

Human understanding is most excited by that which strikes and enters mind suddenly. . . . Man's greatest impediment is dullness of the senses. . . . In general men take for the groundwork of their philosophy either too much from a few topics, or too little from many; in either case the philosophy is founded on too narrow a basis of experiment and natural history and decided on too scanty grounds.<sup>1</sup>

In general the conflict between the old theory that this world is a place to prepare for the hereafter and the new conception of it as a place to live in shattered conventionalities. The lack of restraint became symptomatic of the internal change in the philosophy of the period. Virtue became synonymous with ability. Emotionally the bounds

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Bacon, Novum Organum, Book I, Sec. 38-64, pp. 392-400.

of decency were overstepped in a worship of beauty. They had no modern distinctions of right and wrong. This was true only in Italy until the middle of the sixteenth century. Not until Nashe and Shakespeare and Marlowe does one find English literature at all comparable in sensuousness with the Italian. Humanism in England was on the side of morality. It was chiefly intellectual in character in England the first half of the century. An interest in classic literature was revived by stimulating man's intellect and in the natural world about him. One evidence of this was the invention of printing by movable type. One might show if space permitted that the development of Humanism has had a long history. Curtius said of it that it had been a classroom word for four centuries and that during its youth it was an exciting movement. He says:

It could adapt itself to the spirit of the Middle Ages, to the spirit of the Renaissance and the Reformation, to enlightenment and classicism, but it also has something of its own. The humanism of academic circles is only a secondary or tertiary form of eternal humanism.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Mann says:

Rather humanism is an attitude, a spiritual constitution, a human mood having for its object justice, freedom, knowledge, tolerance, mildness and serenity; also doubt -- not for its own sake but as a seeking after truth, a loving care for it, standing higher than any arrogance of truth-owners. Such an attitude and mood is rightly called "humanism" because it is the

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<sup>2</sup>Ernst Robert Curtius, "Necessity of Humanism," Living Age, CCCXLIII (April, 1932), 152-154.

spiritual attitude par excellence, the attitude of the spirit, borne up by pride over the spirit of man and directed toward that which distinguishes man from the rest of creation, which brings him much sorrow, but also the highest joy -- sorrow and joy that have found great and lovable adherents who were ready heroically to back the honor of man's spirit, and to bear witness for it unto death.<sup>3</sup>

This reference to Humanism has a definite purpose, because it not only was the first philosophy to carry great influence in world affairs, but also it was the forerunner of a kindred modern philosophy known as Pragmatism. Indeed some present day writers use the terms synonymously. Since an attempt will be made later to present Pragmatism as a possible answer to the question raised, the discussion of Humanism at this juncture is not irrelevant.

An assumption has been made that there was a time perhaps when men had little consciousness of the need of a philosophy; that very slowly, almost imperceptibly at first, men became conscious of a system of thought or action which assigned a predominant interest to the affairs of men as compared by the supernatural or abstract; that gradually there was a revolt against ecclesiastical authority, forecasting all modern intellectual developments; that Humanism had a definite place in this awakening.

To no two writers does the word Humanism carry the same connotation; to many it is still the study of the classics, or at least a study about the classics; to others, it is a

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Mann, "Humanism and Europe," Living Age, CCCL (September, 1936), 67-68.

challenge and the enemy of established religion; to still others, it is just the opposite of classical learning and is the very exponent of manual labor, and man's right to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. With this thought in mind and the possible implications of a connection between Humanism as it was originally conceived and as it is now regarded, the question is asked, is there an answer to the current lack of a satisfying philosophy among the American people? While assuming there have been periods when people did not appear to be conscious or demanding of more than they had, one must concede that apparently the human being is born with an innate need or longing for something which life seems never quite able to give to him.

Even in the infant one can observe that psychological yearning; it is evident in his responses to a feeling of security and equally evident in his reactions to lack of such feeling. One who believes in reincarnation or one who owns only to a belief in the mystery of life which one cannot understand, may well quote the poet to support the fact of a need, though perhaps not a conscious one, in all mankind. Wordsworth gives expression to the thought in his poem, "Intimations of Immortality."

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,



But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God who is our home:  
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
 Upon the growing Boy,  
 But he beholds the light and whence it flows  
 He sees it in his joy;  
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
 And by the vision splendid  
 Is on his way attended;  
 At length the man perceives it die away,  
 And fade into the light of common day.<sup>4</sup>

One may, if he wishes, carry the picture further through adolescence, when the first faint tangible stirrings of unrest proclaim the eternal loneliness of man. The child often is torn with feelings he cannot define. He has not attained to the maturity which recognizes the need of a mystical union with a higher force; yet he senses enough to make life difficult for him.

The tragedy of American life seems to be that so many individuals never get beyond this stage. We say of them, "They never grow up; they merely grow older." Apparently only the tragedies of life touch them and those only fleetingly. They never think far enough along the pathway of life to learn that, perhaps,

There is no Death! What seems  
 so is transition.  
 This life of mortal breath  
 Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
 Whose portal we call death.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>William Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality."

<sup>5</sup>Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Resignation."

To the most unobserving individual it is apparent that something is needed to correct the ills of the world, but to the masses it always seems to be a better job, more money, economic security, perhaps even "sixty million jobs," as promised by Henry A. Wallace. Life has assumed a pattern and man rigidly adheres to it. Eager for the future, he gulps at life on the surface, too impatient to take time to learn what it is about. Then he is in the death-dealing grip of routine -- struggling with poverty, ill health, disillusionment, grasping at what he thinks is happiness; yet always having it elude his grasp. Every man possesses the key to successful living, because he and he only holds the secret of a satisfying philosophy within himself, but even this is hidden from his discernment because of his inability or unwillingness to discipline himself.

This reaching out for something which seems unattainable, this feeling of a lack of a satisfying philosophy is not experienced alone by the "common man." Almost without exception men who have achieved something worthwhile in life arrive at the same point of view regarding philosophy. They may have varying ideas regarding social and political theories, but invariably they acknowledge that the one eternal question, what is life all about and why am I a part of it? must be answered by every thinking man. One can find no quarrel with the man who does not believe in immortality if

for him this is a satisfying creed. However, if such a man has achieved success in his chosen field of work, especially if he be a philosopher, to express this view nullifies in a sense, whatever good his living has contributed to the scheme of things. This is so because to the untried mind the expressed beliefs of the great or famous have the stamp of infallibility. One can never explain to another how he comes by the conviction on which he would stake his all; it comes within the realm of the unexplainable, because it is of the spirit. To one who holds such a conviction the inability of a man to give a reason for the hope that is within him -- in fact, his very lack of hope -- is but the evidence of fruitless, groping futility in his life.

For example, Albert Einstein says he does not believe in a life after death. If in the march of eternity Einstein learns that he was wrong, one is willing to concede that perhaps it will have made no difference to Einstein, for possibly he has caught and lived the essence of the eternal life, notwithstanding. But what of countless others who may have been robbed of their faith, who but for the supposed infallibility of a great man, might have heeded the words of Him who said,

Ye are the light of the world! A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it

giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

The writer of this thesis can expound no theories of relativity, nor can she write a learned treatise on philosophy, but she has experienced what the great teachers of all ages have declared to be true: that there exists one single esoteric "secret" which will enable all men, irrespective of what they may know or may not know intellectually, to develop themselves spiritually on the inner side, esoterically, to the highest point; so that in their outer or exoteric life they may express the highest they are evolutionarily developed to express.

The world is making rapid scientific advancement. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion and the feeling of being swept from religious moorings, one must have not only an open mind toward the advancement of science but also a knowledge of certain fundamental truths. There was a time when religion and rationalism became mixed up and religion was strengthened by rationalism. There were many problems religion had hoped to solve which were settled by science. It appears that man instead of being confused by this would rejoice in it and recognize the presence of a universal spirit running through all life, scientific or religious.

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<sup>6</sup>St. Matthew, 5:13-16.

It is well to remember that religion always deals with the new, the unorganized and the unknown. As our knowledge of all things is widened, religion must keep pace, but man must ever be willing to concede that religion will always be on the speculative rim of things.

Baker Brownell says:

Religion hardly can take the rigid cast of rational organization. . . . Religion is native in the human heart like love, and like love needs no promoting. It is a wild, hardy plant, for all its sweetness, that might well be let alone. The world has been too serious about religion, and through seriousness is near losing it. For religion wants no institution nor establishment, no creed, no organization, no mass standards. It needs no projected uniformity, called heaven, nor the postmortem status of an abstraction called the soul. Religion shines in life. It lives in living. It should be let alone.<sup>7</sup>

In speaking of religion and the social world Brownell says:

When a man laughs or loves, he becomes love or laughter; he does not define it with his knowledge or cast it into dynamic forms of quest and progress. What he loves he spiritually becomes. What he laughs with -- or at sometimes -- he profoundly is. Religion is of such stuff in man. When considered outside of man's individual experience it becomes something of the spiritual character and identity in concrete things, or their being.<sup>8</sup>

To reiterate, science is practical and deals with facts, while religion by the very nature of it is speculative. It can never settle a disputed point merely by making assertions, and yet it does not prove facts by the laboratory

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<sup>7</sup>Baker Brownell, Earth Is Enough, pp. 11-12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

method. Apparently it poses an unanswerable problem, but William James, whose philosophy of Pragmatism will be discussed in the following chapter, is thought by some to represent the scientific way of life; yet his religion is a warm, pulsing reality permeating the many things he has written. In discussing pragmatism and religion James says when speaking of a moralistic view of something, "In the end it is our faith and not our logic that decides such questions."<sup>9</sup>

A similar idea is expressed by Brownell in defining eternity. He says:

To define this eternity, so called, in purely logical terms or mathematical -- to define it indeed at all -- is rather beyond possibility, for its realm is appreciative as well as logical, of value as well as of fact. In religious life value is ontological in character, and being is concrete, warm, primitive, undispersed by abstraction and classificatory segmentation. This is its mystery, this the eternity that always may be found there, for religious life is not amenable to reason, at least not wholly, nor is it an organic part of an objective cosmos. It can repudiate time orders and mensurations. It can insist on its own mode, its own eternity, its own way to the real.<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter an attempt has been made to show that there was a time perhaps when man was not conscious of the need of a satisfying philosophy; that with the advent of the Renaissance man became conscious of a new interpretation of life and that life took on new meaning through the influence of Humanism. Mention has been made of the

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<sup>9</sup>William James, Pragmatism, p. 296.

<sup>10</sup>Baker Brownell, Earth Is Enough, p. 15.

characteristic unrest of America and of man's apparent inability to reconcile religion with science, both of which things seem universal, regardless of one's station in life.

In the following chapter an attempt will be made to show that the unrest, while apparently creating chaos, is also provoking some real thought on the part of leaders. One must recognize there is a problem before a solution can be found. Some problems are mentioned and some solutions suggested.

## CHAPTER IV

### IS THERE PHILOSOPHICAL CHAOS IN AMERICA?

It is human nature, usually, to take the line of least resistance. This appears to be always true, generally speaking, until some calamity or catastrophe, either of local or national scope, occurs. Then man is galvanized into action. This is evidenced in children after they pass the fourth grade -- when the wonder of living has become a bit commonplace. It is demonstrated in the ordinary housewife who dismisses any suggestion of thinking on political or social questions as politics. It is never more apparent than when there is to be a bond election, a school board election or any sort of election relating to civic affairs of a purely routine nature. Countless numbers of citizens in Texas of voting age have never possessed a poll tax. This was especially true until recent years when certain business firms encouraged or required their employees to pay this tax. But even those who have paid the tax seem to be gripped by a lethargic indifference which is appalling in its significance.

Though America is now in the midst of a struggle to preserve her historic traditions, one can observe the same habit-



pattern of the American people being worked out in the present day thinking on world affairs. Following is a concrete example of the attitude mentioned:

Calling the San Francisco conference with its basis in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals "first among our possibilities for peace," District Judge Sarah T. Hughes told the Crozier Technical High School assembly Thursday morning that a recent poll taken by the League of Women Voters showed 50 per cent of adults as unaware of the provisions of Dumbarton Oaks.

"Our government's support of the machinery for peace which is set up at San Francisco later will depend upon the extent to which we make Congress feel our support as a people," she pointed out. "So it is up to us, both adults and those of you who are fast becoming adults ready to take your part in world decisions, to inform ourselves more fully."<sup>1</sup>

Though Americans pride themselves on living in a country which allows equal opportunity to all, there is an almost universal lack of interest in taking advantage of these opportunities, especially if the thing required demands thinking and intelligently informing oneself, or if it demands taking a stand for or against an issue.

The trend of world affairs was evident as far back as 1937; yet witness how the masses were led by a handful of isolationists; the President, whose achievements and far-sighted vision have been so recently acclaimed and eulogized, was branded a war-monger. It took a national catastrophe to shock America into action and into constructive thinking. Then, as is characteristic of her, she went all out for a global war, devoting all her great manpower and

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<sup>1</sup>Dallas Daily Times-Herald, May 17, 1945.

enormous wealth of material resources to the task.

But for ten years previous to 1941 America appeared sunk into a lethargy which was fast placing her in the role of a regimented nation. Not only did many children of high school age believe that only one man possessed the qualifications for being America's leader, but also many of their parents accepted this preposterous premise.

The discrepancy between the dream of a humanitarian who visualized for every American, as well as for all peoples everywhere, the benefits of the Four Freedoms and the inertia with which tens of thousands of Americans accepted the results of the social and economic application of the dream, was appalling. There are those who feel that our system of education is largely responsible for a situation of this kind. The following quotation shows this trend of thought:

In the field of education the struggle has gone on between those who would make of the education a fixed and mandatory system of studies characterized by a high degree of discipline from above, and an opposing group who would leave the child free to make his own choices and discoveries. If the first type of education may be said to have failed by destroying initiative in the individual and forcing upon him studies not in keeping with his character and needs, the second system has too often left him without either discipline or education.<sup>2</sup>

One would raise the question: Will the cataclysm into which America has plunged and for which she is so valiantly

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<sup>2</sup>Ralph T. Flewelling, Personalism in Twentieth Century Philosophy, p. 336.

giving her life blood change the course of her thinking? Will her sons and daughters returning from every corner of the globe and from soul-shaking experiences make for America a clarified philosophy? Or will the thing which is America -- the corner drug store, the neighborhood movie, the football game, the system of free education, the family automobile, the complicated thing we call a democracy -- succumb to the old routine? Will she slump to the old easy ways of "letting George do it"? Will she lose the opportunity so gloriously gained? Perhaps the beginning of that answer is contained in the Charter so recently signed within the walls which housed the Allied Security Councils.

There are men of forceful character who are trying to arouse America to a realization that she has just begun to fight for the freedom which she was so sure was hers by right of birth, tradition and past well-fought wars. One of these men is H. W. Prentis, Jr., who said in a speech before the joint dinner of the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of Junior Colleges at Baltimore, Maryland, on January 2, 1942, these prophetic words:

A terrible indictment can be justly drawn against American business and professional men, including many teachers and preachers. . . . We have been so busy with our personal affairs -- so absorbed in material things -- that we have tried to live without a political philosophy, and that cannot be done successfully in this country or anywhere else in the world. . . . The love of liberty, we must ever remember, was not born in an automobile, lullabied with a radio,

nourished with quick-frozen foods, raised in central-heated houses, clothed in synthetic fabrics, entertained by movies or educated in palatial structures of granite and marble! It was born in a dungeon -- in the fetters of tyranny.<sup>3</sup>

It would appear that there is philosophical chaos in America. Going on the assumption that this is true, let us try to get at the "why" of the matter. Whatever is believed by the man-in-the-street or by the man of letters, much of the thinking of all Americans is in a state of flux because this seems to be an age of transition. Our problems seem to be more pressing than those of other periods, but regardless of one's station in life, one must concede that the philosophy acquired by the average man has come to him through the channels of religion.

For purposes of convenience and reference let us consider all people as being divided into three separate groups. By far the larger number of Americans will fall into the group which shall be designated as the man-in-the-street. He is your barber, your dentist, your real-estate man, the president of your local Chamber of Commerce, your groceryman or your plumber. Does he have a philosophy of life? Is he concerned about the state of affairs in which he finds the world? Does he doubt his system of government, his monetary system or moral beliefs? The answer is yes to all except

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<sup>3</sup>H. W. Prentis, Jr., Vital Speeches, VII (February 15, 1942), 258.

the last question. For the most part he does not doubt his moral beliefs, because they came to him through religion; furthermore he will be shocked to learn that any of his contemporaries, or particularly, that any of his own children, doubt them.

There is a second group of people mentioned; the members of this group are students, teachers, progressive ministers of the gospel, people who get a college education. Though they do wield an influence they do not usually help to shape the thinking of others through their support of philosophical trends or books they have written; they are vastly in the minority as are also the members of the third group mentioned. In this group let us place the college professors, authors, columnists, in some cases radio commentators, the philosophers per se.

The writer contends that the average businessman, though he may have had professional training in college, knows little or nothing of philosophical trends in America. True, he has observed certain political changes and may even have noticed changes in ideology, but he does not know the explanation. The reason for this is evident to the philosopher, but it does not erase the fact that to have a stable philosophy a nation's people must engage in directed thinking. This is illustrated in an article called "Authority and Resistance to Social Change" by Dewey. He says:

The last four centuries have displayed an ever increasing revolt against authority. This was directed first against dominant institutions of church and state. The real problem is the relation between authority and freedom. Authority stands for stability of social organization by means of which direction and support are given to individuals; while individual freedom stands for the forces by which change is intentionally brought about. The idea of attaining a solution by separation instead of by union misleads and thwarts endeavor, wherever it is acted upon. This false idea is a strong contributing factor to the present state of world confusion. The force of habit that leads individuals to cling to that which has been established is as genuine and in the main, an even stronger part of the constitution of individuals. Tradition and social custom, when incorporated in an individual, have authority over his beliefs and activities. He does not consider them as hostile when they are a part of him. They support him and give him direction. Whatever has become authority of long tradition and custom the human has attributed to it divine origin.

In philosophy the conception that social authority exists by nature was formulated by Aristotle. The Christian philosophers of Middle Ages reinstated the doctrine of Aristotle -- but with a significant revision. They put God as the author of nature and the church as its agent and interpreter.<sup>4</sup>

In undertaking to set forth what appears perfectly apparent to the writer, one must keep in mind the three types of people mentioned earlier. One is as aware of the lack of conviction likely to be achieved through simply stating one's belief as one is convinced that the question cannot be answered merely by giving the documented references of those whose opinions have been recognized in philosophical circles. Let us recall the statement previously made that the majority of people --the masses -- know little about philosophical

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<sup>4</sup>John Dewey, "Authority and Resistance to Social Change," School and Society, XLIV (October 19, 1936), 440-457.

trends and care less; yet these people are blindly groping their way through life. The average man wants a good life, but he is carried along in the whirlpool of transition getting more and more confused and seeking the solution to his problems in the most obvious ways. His reasoning seems to be: "Everyone else is doing it; so it must be the right thing to do."

Do the educators, the schools, and the churches have a responsibility in seeking to direct the thinking of confused humanity; do they have a responsibility in these conditions beyond just deploring them, or ignoring them, or refusing to acknowledge that they exist? This is getting on touchy ground. Even teachers have a wide divergence of opinion on whether educators have any moral right to try to influence a child's philosophy. For twenty years it has been more or less generally accepted that to study the child psychologically and to seek to apply the best psychological methods to his needs was the thing to do. However, this was done chiefly in the field of the curriculum -- fitting the subject matter to the child. In recent years guidance has come to the forefront; that it has been given increased impetus by the exigencies of war, no one can gainsay. The experience gained in the first World War, when the psychiatrist was more or less merely tolerated and known as the crazy doctor, has been utilized in solving the problems of this war. In the meantime a whole new field, new to the public, that is, has had

the advantage of twenty-five years of growth. Now it seems to have reached the stage, as all things do, when the public very glibly prates of things it knows hardly anything about. Current magazines filled with articles on "How to Treat the Returning Service Man" have added still more to the conglomeration of half-facts, half-truths acquired by the man-in-the-street.

Up to now the average man has had emotions but simply accepted them for good or ill, according to whatever experiences life seemed to have in store for him. Now he is hearing that these things can be measured; that they may decide the difference between success and failure in one's life. Undoubtedly, the leaven has been working, but like all things related to educational or scientific growth, caution is the watchword.

So true is this that it can be shown that practically all functions of the public school not directly related to book learning had their inception outside the school room. Among these one may mention athletics, vocational guidance, recreational and social life and health education. It now appears that guidance in a fuller sense is being thrust upon the schools -- and as with other phases of education -- from the pressure of the man-in-the-street. Does this seem to refute the premise from which the writer is seeking to work -- that there is a current lack of a satisfying philosophy among the American people? Rather it would appear to support



it. However, one must give credit where credit is due. This chapter poses the question whether there is philosophical chaos in America; it does not purport to show that the American people do not think, rather that oftentimes their thinking lacks direction. So it appears that the group which has been designated as the man-in-the-street group, or at least the more progressive part of it, has been doing some thinking. Members of this group have designated a second group to formulate policies and carry them out. So the problem is, will that group accept the challenge? Strictly speaking, one should say, will the other two groups accept the challenge, since, though they constitute a minority, the two groups do share the same plane or understanding, so to speak, if not the same problems.

To give a concrete example of what is meant, consider the problem of juvenile delinquency, which is receiving more and more thought on the part not only of teachers, welfare workers, and child guidance experts, but also of the progressive thinkers of our large cities, especially. These problems grow directly out of other problems, but they are not just war-inspired. Nearly ten years ago the writer suggested to the principal of the school in which she taught that she be given official sanction and a designated period to help students with their personal problems; this was because of the fact that quite a number of students came voluntarily with problems after school -- really serious emotional

problems -- problems which appeared not only serious to the students, but also to the teacher. The suggestion was received with ill-concealed disdain; though the school has done much for guidance since, this important phase of it has been ignored.

In May of 1945 the Central Dads Club of Dallas, in which city is located the high school mentioned, asked that the school board make a survey to determine what might be accomplished in dealing with the delinquency problem. The following questionnaire was sent out to all Dallas teachers:

#### ALL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

Please check the answers to the questions below if they can be answered yes or no; check the answer you prefer.

1. Do you think that the alarming increase in juvenile delinquency is due to either of the following causes:
  - (a) Upset conditions caused by the war?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Lack of proper training at home?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) General influence of adult example?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Lack of supervision of child's unoccupied time?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Others? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Assuming you have answered yes to either of the above, and further assuming additional teachers were provided, do you believe that the present situation might be improved by either of the following:
  - (a) Adding emphasis on moral training in the schools generally? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Through having a definite uniform course scheduled on the program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. In your opinion, since religion and moral training are so closely associated, which of the following would be more desirable:
  - (a) Eliminate religious matter entirely from curriculum? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Have religious matter approved by a committee, such as the National Conference for Christians and Jews? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. (a) Do you believe that a thorough course in marriage and sexual relations is both necessary and advisable in high school training? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Assuming time, money, and teachers are provided, do you believe such a course could be successfully taught? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) What grades would you recommend for such a course? 9th \_\_\_\_\_ 10th \_\_\_\_\_ 11th \_\_\_\_\_  
12th \_\_\_\_\_
5. If you have any further recommendations or suggestions as to how we all may combat this problem of delinquency, please list them below.

By June 15th complete tabulations had been done only on Item 4 as follows:

(a) Yes, 405; No, 226

(b) Yes, 395; No, 208

(c) 9th, 101; 10th, 116; 11th, 179; 12th, 315

Bearing on this subject of what educational leaders can do to help create a stable philosophy is an article by Raymond Holder Wheeler, in which he says:

Psychology and social science face the task of enlightening humanity to the level of understanding that moral and scientific law are one. In a sense, humanity was better off in the middle ages than now. Even at low level of intelligence, there was universal brotherhood. There are signs that a spirit of universal brotherhood and another major emancipation period are in sight, but that our present state of confusion and mutual suspicion will last for 20 or 30 years, through another period of revolution, civil war and imperialism.

Two major cycles seem to be converging -- religious cycle whose peak occurred in 1200 and acceptance of natural law, whose last peak fell at about 1650. These should converge about 1990 or 2000. It will mean a benevolently planned society which will enhance rather than curtail the freedom of the individual. This awakening will be characterized chiefly by the universal acceptance of psychology and social science.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Raymond Holder Wheeler, "Problems of Educational Reconstruction," Educational Administration and Supervision, XXI (October-November, 1935), 497-506, 582-591.

Since this article was written about ten years ago, there seems to be evidence to bear Wheeler out in part of his contention, at least. He lists twelve objectives for education as follows:

The first objective for education is the correction of erroneous inferences of the naive mind regarding the world in which it lives. Individuals must be made to see the world as a whole and their relation to it. The untrained mind sees only the separate units.

The second objective of education is to guarantee the discovery by the growing mind of evolutions in the physical, biological and social world and in himself. Evolution is basically a cooperative and not a competitive process. The growing mind must learn that permanence depends upon change. There is a normal rate at which change must be made in order to maintain stability.

The third objective is educating for participation in the natural laws of social evolution. While man accepts evolution in respect to animal kingdom, he has no consciousness that society follows natural law. He is still laboring under the misapprehension that societies can grow and function at the direction of his personal will and need. . . . To surrender such an idea would be to surrender his freedom, he thinks.

The fourth objective is the building of insight into the ethical character of natural law. If we are to have a stable, peaceful society, it must be rooted in all its aspects, in an ethical naturalism. Eg. To explain the facts of nature in such a way that they will transpose to a code of morals for scientific and moral law are one. The fallacy of religion has always been that of being too abstract. Penalties under such a scheme are too remote and heaven is too far away. Ethical naturalism shows how error exacts its own penalties.

The fifth objective is that of watching the trends of cultural evolution to the end that education can anticipate problems 25 to 30 years in advance and prepare the individual to accept them unhesitatingly when they arrive. This does not mean laying down solutions in advance but preparing the child to live in the world in which he will find himself when he is fifty. Eg. The political trend has been toward democracy and toward more and more comprehensive federations. "Anyone who cannot see beyond the temporary predominance of dictatorship today simply does not know his history. A

river may flow in the opposite direction to the ocean. Man may be at war but headed for peace. This is an important principle."

The sixth objective holds that the educational system must overcome the specialization of human knowledge in the absence of an adequate general knowledge. This means: (1) Teaching each subject on a background of universal, transposable principle. (2) Unifying cultural and vocational education. (3) More continuity between the different levels of the school system. (4) Carefully planned orientation courses all along the line.

The seventh objective: Education faces the specific task of insuring that the major experiences of the race are passed on from generation to generation without loss and without cultural lag. We are teaching lies when we teach the achievements of war. Not the colonists' Declaration of Independence that was important but the difficulty of getting them to unite.

Eighth -- The gap must be closed between the child and the adult. Education should see to it that mores whose usefulness is gone do not continue to function.

Ninth -- The gap must be closed between leader and follower, the gap between the scientist, the poet, the artist, and the public.

Tenth -- Education should be teaching a general conception of the state. It should teach no isms. It should be studying nature and teaching her laws.

Eleventh -- Neither in science nor in history can it be demonstrated that the present is determined by the past.

Twelfth -- We think of society as intangible when in reality it is the densest medium in nature.<sup>6</sup>

These objectives set forth what is known as the organismic point of view. This view involves a philosophy of life and a philosophy of life involves innumerable objectives.

Wheeler says:

Man is not yet sufficiently elevated to prevent a recurrence of civil and imperialistic war, the symptoms and aftermaths of emancipation periods. We must go through the process at least once more, perhaps twice before a stable society is achieved, but with a fuller

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

knowledge of history and a more complete understanding of the laws of nature, including the laws of social evolution the problem can be solved.<sup>7</sup>

A popular slogan, used on many occasions since the start of the present war, has been, "Let's Keep America American." It was tossed around quite freely in various local option elections in 1944, as if to keep "America American" meant to have her stand still for four, six or ten years while the bulk of her manpower was away fighting to preserve her status quo. The America of that dreary Sunday of December 7, 1941, is as extinct as the dodo. The startling news "Pearl Harbor has been attacked" ended one era in America and began another. So crippled was her proud fleet the secret was jealously guarded for many months. Once more America had been attacked unprepared, undisciplined for the rigors of war. As the United States as a nation daily triumphs over her enemy, she may well feel as does one when he gazes on a human derelict, "There but for the grace of God, go I." Does any thinking person really believe she could have sent twelve million men and women into service, most of them overseas, for periods of from three to six years or more and have them return to find America unchanged?

In a very challenging Independence Day sermon a Dallas minister who thinks and who compels his hearers to think with

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

him, made this statement:

As a minister of the gospel I believe in the Bible, but I do not believe the Bible ended with the book of Revelation. New books and new chapters are being written in every age by men with just as broad vision as those who penned the original books of the Bible.<sup>8</sup>

Citing a man with such a vision and the book he has written, the minister made extensive use of Ralph W. Sockman's Date with Destiny, a Preamble to Christian Culture. Sockman has taken the Preamble to the United States Constitution and has written a very moving book, using each of the six purposes as the heading for a chapter. He says in the Preface:

The mind of man is haunted by the persistent idea that

There's a divinity that shapes our ends  
Rough-hew them how we will.

With some this belief has hardened into determinism which holds man powerless to shape the patterns of his life, since whatever he thinks to be his own contribution is really the resultant of external forces playing upon him. If these forces are regarded as chaotic, then determinism dissolves into an "accidental collocation of atoms." If man's external master be thought of as theistic, then we have the doctrine of predestination. Or these outer controls may be viewed as impersonal and naturalistic, and then we have mechanistic materialism. The trend of intelligent thought, however, has led away from these rigid deterministic theories. But while scientific thought has been rescuing the concept of destiny from the clutches of determinism, popular thought has been betraying it into an emotional fatalism. Contact with youth today reveals how prevalent is the view that we are the slaves of fate and not the masters of it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Statement by Bolton Boone, sermon, Grace Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, July 1, 1945.

<sup>9</sup>Ralph W. Sockman, Date with Destiny, pp. 13-14.

He shows how natural it is that youth, caught in a war which they did not cause and struggling in a sea of circumstances too deep for them to fathom, should accept certain fatalistic views, such as, "When the bomb or bullet comes along with my name on it, it will get me, no matter what I do." However, he points out that our boys do not really hold to this fatalistic view, else they would not be aroused to fight. He says further:

There is a new tonal depth to the interpretations of our time. Let us listen to a quartet of voices drawn from the background of four different national cultures. Thomas Mann, writing while the war clouds were gathering, but before the storm actually broke, said:

"Outwardly we live in an epoch of retrograde civilization wherein treaties are worthless, lawlessness and disloyalty are the contagious mode. But there is an inward spirit among men which has entered upon a new moral epoch: one of simplification, of humbleminded recognition of the difference between good and evil. This is its way of returning to the primitive and renewing its youth."<sup>10</sup>

Sockman continues:

Thus speaks perhaps the greatest living German, himself a victim of his own nation's convulsions. He sees the elemental barbarism bared by the upheaval, but through it all he sees the possibility of moral simplification and spiritual renewal.

Put alongside this word of Thomas Mann the thesis of P. A. Sorokin, the Russian, now chairman of the department of sociology at Harvard. His contention is that we are now witnessing the final stages of disintegration in what he calls our "sensate culture." During the Christian era Western culture has gone through three stages. First, the "ideational" culture, in which the supersensory and the suprarational were treated as the only true reality and value. About the twelfth

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<sup>10</sup>Thomas Mann, "Culture and Politics," Survey Graphic, February, 1939, p. 151. quoted in Ralph W. Sockman, Date with Destiny, p. 21.



century this began to decline and was superseded by an "idealistic" culture, which blended the other-worldly and the this-worldly. During its dominance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries interest in earthly affairs began to be emphasized, but only in their heroic and godlike aspects. But the concerns of this world, once welcomed into the vestibule of the Western mind, began to fill the whole house of thought. Thus developed a "sensate" culture, which has written great chapters of material and social progress since the eighteenth century. The spirit of this sensate culture fostered the rights of man, the principles of liberty, the foundations of democracy, the spread of physical science. But having so completely divorced itself from the oversoul, it is now losing its soul. The realms of science, law, the arts, have lost their creativity, have become decadent. Our present world situation is not, therefore, a mere contest between democracy and dictatorships, or between race and race. It is a struggle of our sensate culture to recover its soul.<sup>11</sup>

The other two men mentioned in Date with Destiny are Alfred Noyes and William Hocking. Noyes believes the world is now at the edge of the abyss and that literature and art have never really recovered from the shock of two great scientific discoveries: the Copernican theory, which dwarfed man's stature by enlarging the size of the universe, and the Darwinian theory, which filled mankind with doubts as to the value of human personality. Sockman quotes him as saying:

Small clever minds have been exalted into leaders of sects and schools of thought, chiefly on account of their quickness in seizing isolated fragments of truth -- fragments that are not even true until they fall into place as parts of an organic whole.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ralph W. Sockman, Date with Destiny, pp. 21-22, citing The Crisis of Our Age.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 22, quoting The Edge of the Abyss, p. 143.

In speaking of Hocking, Sockman says:

To complete this quartet of authoritative interpreters, let us hear from our own American philosopher, William E. Hocking. In dramatic style he declares that history will soon enter on its shelf a new section under the caption "Self-styled Modern Times (1540-1940)." A new era has begun -- not precisely in 1940, for epochs do not start on definite dates. It was dawning perhaps as far back as 1914. It must not repeat the error which has vitiated "modern times." The vice of modernity has been a lust for abandonment, a worship of change and relativity to the point where it ceased to discriminate between the outworn and the eternal. "The new era will be founded on that discrimination."<sup>13</sup>

Sockman then seeks to show that the victors will not see a return to the neat normalcies expected from prewar precedents. He says:

If both the victors and the vanquished come out of this war humbly recognizing that they must reckon with forces of destiny too great for their clever manipulation, then they will be in the mood to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace. If we can delve below the renescent barbarism to what Mann sees as the spirit of inner moral renewal; if our "sensate" culture, as Sorokin terms it, can reach up to recapture its soul; if agonized voices like that of Noyes can call our secularized specialists back from the edge of the abyss to main highroads from the spirit; if with Hocking we can turn the tide of modernity from the latest thing to the lasting things -- then we shall be on our way to keep our date with destiny. . . . The hands that would shape the pattern of things to come must work fast. . . . Today consecrated minorities can do what it may cost millions of lives to do twenty years hence. Reforms which would require a century of ordinary existence can now be wrought in a decade.<sup>14</sup>

An attempt has been made in this chapter to show that there is a marked lack of a satisfying philosophy, or of one which is directed, among the American people. This does not

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-23, citing What Man Can Make of Man, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-24.

preclude the fact that there are some systems of philosophy in America; nor does it mean to imply that individuals generally do not have some sort of creed, but if for large numbers of people life is so confusing that they can find articulate expression only in the popular phrase of a few decades back, "Ishkabibble," meaning "I should worry," then there is need for a study of the problem and pointers toward a wholesome solution.

To sum it up briefly, modern philosophy originated in America and grew out of old-world philosophies. The rapid strides made by science seemed to offer a conflict between philosophy and science. Various philosophers have attempted to reconcile the apparent conflict. Some have appeared to do so for a time, only to find new conflicting developments among the scattered ideas of philosophy. There are those who feel that Pragmatism, as defined by William James, has had a stabilizing effect. While not offering James' philosophy as the final word in the solving of the world's difficulties, the writer will attempt to show in the following chapter that Pragmatism has been efficacious in solving some problems. Other views particularly from the religious standpoint will also be offered.

## CHAPTER V

### PRAGMATISM'S ANSWER

America has just finished twelve years under the leadership of a man who had a definite philosophy. Circumstances were such that he was given an unprecedented opportunity to try out his philosophy on a national scale in a democracy. Perhaps one might assume that Roosevelt was a pragmatist; he put into practice many of his theories; only time will reveal the success or failure of some of them. But it can be said with certainty that America has proved her people are not soft. They will follow leadership to defend the principles they believe in; they will die for those principles; they have done so by the tens of thousands.

This chapter will seek to show how Pragmatism might be America's answer to interminable metaphysical disputes.

Although in an editorial in satirical vein appearing in The Saturday Review of Literature Roosevelt was accused of Pragmatism, the accusation was a criticism of Roosevelt's management of government. The author says:

Pragmatism -- "a thing is true if it works" -- has at last, become the official way of thought of the United States government and of our citizens more or

less. . . . We have seen it enthroned. How long it will remain enthroned only the perverse Gods of history can tell.<sup>1</sup>

The Gods of history have spoken, but whether the period just closed was more productive of good or ill, it is too soon to say. To decide whether or not Roosevelt was a pragmatist is not the province of this study; to attempt to explain what Pragmatism is does come within its scope.

Though William James is thought of as the exponent of Pragmatism in America, he gives full credit to Peirce as its originator. James says:

An American philosopher of eminent originality, Mr. Charles Sanders Peirce, has rendered thought a service by disentangling from the particulars of its application the principle by which these men were instinctively guided, and by singling it out as fundamental and giving to it a Greek name. He calls it the principle of pragmatism, and he defines it somewhat as follows: Thought in movement has for its only conceivable motive the attainment of belief, or thought at rest. Only when our thought about a subject has found its rest in belief can our action on the subject firmly and safely begin. Beliefs, in short, are rules for action; and the whole function of thinking is but one step in the production of active habits. If there were any part of a thought that made no difference in the thought's practical consequences, then that part would be no proper element of the thought's significance. To develop a thought's meaning we need therefore only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance; and the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions is that there is not one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.<sup>2</sup>

Pragmatism regards life as a workshop where one may work

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<sup>1</sup>"Apotheosis of Pragmatism," Saturday Review of Literature, X (July 23, 1933), 4.

<sup>2</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 444-445.

out the problems and difficulties he encounters under conditions conducive to their solution; indeed, the problems themselves may serve as an instrument to their solution. Pragmatism fuses the best of materialism and idealism. It takes the position that nothing is static or an accomplished fact --not even the doctrine of Pragmatism, because all of life has not been lived. It stresses particularly the present life, though it does not deny immortality; it takes the position that each man must not necessarily be "able to give a reason for the hope that is within him" but that each man may take it as something to be tested by practical consequences; that the results may not all be known now, because the data are not all collected.

James says of it:

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means. Shadworth Hodgson keeps insisting that realities are only what they are "known as." But these forerunners of pragmatism used it in fragments: they were preluders only. Not until in our time has it generalized itself, become conscious of a universal mission, pretended to a conquering destiny.<sup>3</sup>

Josiah Royce defines Pragmatism in this way:

By the name Pragmatism we all of us mean a certain set of tendencies in recent discussion which lay stress upon the importance of defining the truth of propositions or judgments or ideas in terms of those empirical

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<sup>3</sup>William James, Pragmatism, p. 50.

facts and relations of facts which are said to constitute the "workings" of the propositions, or judgments, or ideas which are in question. Pragmatism consists in the assertion that all propositions should be tested as the hypotheses of science are tested.<sup>4</sup>

In his book on Pragmatism James explains what he means over and over by taking such subjects as "Pragmatism and Humanism" or "Pragmatism and Religion" and trying to make clear the way in which the pragmatic method is applied to various things. He says:

For the philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos.<sup>5</sup>

James divides the people of the world into two groups according to their philosophy, thus:

The Tender-Minded	The Tough-Minded
Rationalistic (going by principle)	Empiricist (going by facts)
Intellectualistic	Sensationalistic
Idealistic	Materialistic
Optimistic	Pessimistic
Religious	Irreligious
Free-Willist	Fatalistic
Monistic	Pluralistic
Dogmatical	Sceptical <sup>6</sup>

He says that what the average person wants is a philosophy that will not only exercise his powers of intellectual

<sup>4</sup>Josiah Royce, "Some Psychological Problems Emphasized by Pragmatism," Popular Science, LXXXIII, 394-411.

<sup>5</sup>William James, Pragmatism, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

abstraction, but will also make some positive connection with this actual world of finite human lives. He tells the story of a young man who said he had always taken for granted that when one entered a philosophic classroom, one had to open relations with a universe entirely distinct from the one he left behind him in the street; that the world of concrete personal experiences to which the street belongs is multitudinous beyond imagination, tangled, muddy, painful and perplexed, but that the world to which one's philosophy professor introduces one is a simple, clean and noble one. This, doubtless, is the universal reaction of the beginner in the study of philosophy, but it is very astutely put by the young man.

James says the pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable, such as, Is the world one or many? -- fated or free? -- material or spiritual? The pragmatic method is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequence. In other words, if the result would be the same, why argue? In this connection James says:

It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence.<sup>7</sup>

James takes whatever may be under consideration and

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 49.



applies what he calls the pragmatic method to it. To illustrate, he says:

If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much. For how much more they are true, will depend entirely on their relations to the other truths that also have to be acknowledged.<sup>8</sup>

James' philosophy touched off a stormy controversy, some of which was amusing. One must wade through a great deal of satirical material in regard to pragmatism. Yet some of those "who came to scoff," if they did not "remain to pray," may have pointed out the way to others unknowingly. In an article titled "This Then Is Life" Lee Wilson Dodd begins by saying that though it is no longer considered good form to quote Omar Khayyam, he will do so, because he has found his philosophy good, or words to that effect. He says of Khayyam:

He decided in favor of wine, woman, and song. He tested these Gods pragmatically, nor did they fail him. Others they might have failed, but Omar makes it plain that in his case they worked splendidly. The Grape did not become a snare and a delusion; quite the reverse.

Then he mentions that some people never find the highest good in life unless they be always sacrificing for others; so for them the Golden Rule way is life lived pragmatically. Almost unwittingly, it appears, he unearths a truth, which properly applied and understood, might save countless marriages; if sincerely practiced by all people it would

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

contribute immeasurably toward oiling the machinery of living. The fact that apparently Dodd uttered a great truth without intending to does not detract from its validity.

He says:

If I cannot make a good workmanlike job of living unless convinced that I am immortal, then for me the doctrine of immortality has proved itself true. It doesn't follow that it is true for my wife. She may find it personally more stimulating to believe "that dead men rise up never." And if you rise up with your musty school man's logic, to protest that immortality is either true or not true -- we shall laugh you to scorn! Intellectualist -- Va! Autre temps!<sup>9</sup>

James has been accused, among other things, of leaving religion out of life, but if one will read his views on religion and the pragmatic way, or his book on The Varieties of Religious Experience, it is easy to think of him as being deeply religious. He quotes the following lines from a letter which he received from a friend:

I can conceive my acts and my thoughts and my troubles as supplemented by all the other phenomena of the world, and as forming -- when thus supplemented -- a scheme which I approve and adopt as my own; for my part I refuse to be persuaded that we can not look beyond the obvious pluralism of the naturalist and pragmatist to a logical unity in which they take no interest or stock.

James said of it: "Such a warm expression of personal faith warms the heart of the hearer."<sup>10</sup>

James himself defines religion thus:

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<sup>9</sup>Lee Wilson Dodd, "This Then Is Life," Unpopular Review, IV (July, 1915), 120-126.

<sup>10</sup>William James, Pragmatism, p. 120.

Religion shall mean for us the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.<sup>11</sup>

In order to keep in mind the stated purpose of offering Pragmatism as a solution to the eternal metaphysical disputes, one would like to know whether it worked for James; whether it worked for others; whether it might work for oneself. To answer the first query, one may allow James to speak for himself. In writing for the Hibbert Journal in 1910 James is introducing some ideas of a little known man, Benjamin Paul Blood. He has just quoted Blood; then he says:

This has been my moral sustenance since I have known of it. In my first printed mention of it I declared: "The world is no more the alien terror that was taught me, spurning the cloud-grimes and still sultry battlements whence so lately Jehovan thunders boomed; my grey gull lifts her wing against the night-fall, and takes the dim leagues with a fearless eye. And now, after twenty seven years of this experience, the wing is greyer but the eye is fearless still, while I renew and doubly emphasize that declaration. I know as having known, the meaning of Existence; the same center of the universe -- at once the wonder and the assurance of the soul."<sup>12</sup>

In discussing the difficulties some people experience in trying to resolve religious beliefs without sacrificing their sense of intellectual integrity, MacDonald says:

It may be interesting to those who thus turn yearningly and inquiringly toward a temple from which

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<sup>11</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup>William James, "A Pluralistic Mystic," Hibbert Journal, VIII (July, 1910).

they are excluded to learn that a new method, or rather the revival of an old method under a new name, has recently been introduced in the schools of philosophy. This novel approach to philosophic truth is sometimes designated by the word "humanism," more frequently by the less familiar term "pragmatism." The "pragmatic," or "practical" principle in philosophy is a mode of discovering truth, and a test of its validity, with reference to active and living values. It calls upon all metaphysical ideas and doctrines to give an account of themselves by showing that they serve some useful purpose in response to living needs. . . . All truth, pragmatism declares, must in some way be verifiable by experience. A conception that does not work -- that is, that does not to some degree modify our experience -- is either not true, or is a conception the truth or falsehood of which can never be discovered.<sup>13</sup>

Still pursuing the thread of thought, one might assert that a philosophy to be satisfying and to answer life's problems for large numbers of people must be one which is applicable to all phases of whatever difficulties men as individuals may encounter. That James has given to the world such a philosophy in the doctrine of Pragmatism seems to be supported by the opinion of L. P. Jacks. He says:

Whether it be true or false that philosophy as cultivated hitherto stands aloof from "facts" and produces little effect on the course of the world's history, there can be no doubt that philosophy as presented by James would become at once, either for good or ill, an active and stimulating influence, and in some respects a powerful solvent, in the affairs of human life.

It is hardly too much to say that the adoption of the pragmatic temper would involve a change both in the form and spirit of every type of official teaching, religious, ethical, political and scientific, that is now being offered for the guidance of man.

He quotes James as saying, "I find myself willing."

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<sup>13</sup>Loren B. MacDonald, Life in the Making, pp. 2-3.

Then he says it does not follow that Pragmatism is either agnostic or atheistic, and that James is certainly neither, but he shows that belief in God as the finite Helper, immeasurably more powerful than man, though not all-powerful, still remains a possibility to be accepted or not according to empirical evidence. He says:

We are so accustomed to looking our for definite and final conclusions that we cannot keep touch with a philosopher whose whole procedure requires that we should look out for no such thing. We want a scheme for the guidance of life; we want a fixed form of thought for the interpretation of our experience, and we assume that anyone who calls himself a philosopher must have this and nothing but this to offer us.

No one can catch the spirit of the pragmatists' argument unless he approaches it in an attitude of complete detachment from the power of mere words. Unless one can do this the argument in favor of Rationalism will be in the ascendant.<sup>14</sup>

It has been shown that for James Pragmatism was a workable philosophy and that others also have found it to be workable in life's experiences; but the final query, whether it will work for oneself, somehow always takes on special significance. In embracing any philosophy the individual is usually most concerned about what it may do to his "good, old-time religion." James recognizes this when he explains:

The pragmatistic philosophy preserves a cordial relation with facts, and unlike Spencer's philosophy, it neither begins nor ends by turning positive religious constructions out of doors -- it treats them cordially as well.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>L. P. Jacks, "William James and His Message," Contemporary Review, XCIX (January, 1913), 20-33.

But James not only sets one's mind at ease about this; he goes the second mile; he takes one to the "valley of decision," but then he also gives one a fleeting vision of the "Mount of Transfiguration." In his lecture on "Pragmatism and Religion" he says:

But as philosophers aiming at clearness and consistency, and feeling the pragmatistic need of squaring truth with truth, the question is forced upon us of frankly adopting either the tender or the robustious type of thought. In particular this query has always come home to me: May not the claims of tender-mindedness go too far? May not the notion of a world already saved in toto anyhow, be too saccharine to stand? May not religious optimism be too idyllic? Must all be saved? Is no price to be paid in the work of salvation? Is the last word sweet? Is all "yes, yes" in the universe? Doesn't the fact of "no" stand at the very core of life? Doesn't the very "seriousness" that we attribute to life mean that ineluctable noes and losses form a part of it; that there are genuine sacrifices somewhere and that something permanently drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of its cup?

I cannot speak officially as a pragmatist here; all I can say is that my own pragmatism offers no objection to my taking sides with this more moralistic view, and giving up the claim of total reconciliation. The possibility of this is involved in the pragmatistic willingness to treat pluralism as a serious hypothesis. In the end it is our faith and not our logic that decides such questions, and I deny the right of any pretended logic to veto my own faith. I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying "no play." I am willing to think that the prodigal-son attitude, open to us as it is in many vicissitudes, is not the right and final attitude towards the whole of life. I am willing that there should be real losses and real losers, and no total preservation of all that is. I can believe in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract, not the whole. When the cup is poured off, the dregs are left behind forever, but the possibility of what is poured off is sweet enough to accept.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>William James, Pragmatism, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

To one who has known the total, crushing ruthlessness of sorrow and burden-bearing; to one who has experienced inexplicable suffering at the hands of life, such a philosophy perfectly exemplifies and gives purposeful meaning to the words of Solomon, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."<sup>17</sup>

If one attempts to compare his life with that of another in point of what one may reasonably expect of life, he may find himself hopelessly floundering in a morass of doubt, bitterness and frustration, but if he can accept the belief that "there are genuine sacrifices somewhere, and something permanently drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of the cup," then he can find real satisfaction in life, without attempting to understand the "why" of the bitterness in accepting the sweetness of that which is poured off.

Since the title of this chapter indicates a possible solution or solutions to the problem posed in this thesis, the writer offers some viewpoints held by noted Americans, which may have a bearing on the subject under discussion. These are chiefly from the religious angle.

Ralph W. Sockman feels that Americans are too complacent and that they offer numerous alibis for failing to fulfill their obligations as good citizens. He says:

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<sup>17</sup>Proverbs 4:18.

We the people are called to be the creators of atmosphere. We, individually, are summoned to be the pace setters of serious and intelligent thinking. We, individually, must be the creators of encouragement if morale is to be preserved. We cannot offer our insignificance as an alibi for our inaction. Each of us, even the least, does count. In a world as plastic as ours, the impact of every individual is a shaping influence. Our conversations, our unconscious attitudes, create atmosphere. Each day offers some opportunity to every one of us for affecting the racial attitudes and social outlooks of those around us.<sup>18</sup>

He says further:

We the people of the United States could recondition the atmosphere of our whole country within a decade if we were to treat the religious and cultural ideals of the democratic way of life with the formula enjoined upon ancient Israel: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. . . . And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."<sup>19</sup>

In speaking of the problem of integration Sockman says it is not so much one of divided, but of subdivided, personality. He says:

According to William James, a man has "as many different selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares." And in keeping up these external social fronts, he so often develops basic divisions between the inner self and the outer selves. A person uses up his energy in conserving an inner emptiness under a shell of pretense.<sup>20</sup>

In discussing the blessings of liberty Sockman dwells

<sup>18</sup>Ralph W. Sockman, Date with Destiny, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 69.



on the four freedoms and stresses freedom from fear as the paramount goal to be achieved. He deals with the freedom from fear of the individual and of the nation. He says:

Granted that we can pull the teeth of aggressor nations in a way to prevent their attacks, men would still be fearful of economic insecurities. And if we could make the world wantproof as well as warproof, we should still run the risks of disease and accident. And if health programs and safety campaigns reduced these dangers to a minimum, the best of body machines would still run down, and eventually we would confront

the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns.

If we are to attain freedom from fear, we must envisage the full range of human experience. Fear is a realm which can be conquered only by gaining control of the air, the atmosphere, in which "we live, and move, and have our being."

When the guns cease this time, shall we show a spirit brotherly enough to cast out fear from the youth who are making Europe's tomorrow? And before firing stops we can cultivate a good will sufficient to still the fears of our neighbors to the south; of the Chinese, whom we have been wounding by our Exclusion Act; of the Russians, for whom our admiration is alloyed with so much suspicion; yes, even of the Japanese within our borders, whom we have interned. . . .

Yet despite all social safeguards the spirit of man is not free from fear until he feels at home in a universe which he can trust. Here is voiced the full attainment of this fourth freedom: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Such is the faith which insures the "blessings of liberty."<sup>21</sup>

Whatever one's belief about philosophy, it appears that

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 147-151, quoting Romans 8:38-39.

hardly anyone would be loath to assume in the light of present day knowledge, that God is not an anthropomorphic being; that He is a creative force in the lives of mankind; that He can work only through the human medium.

Ernest M. Ligon, in his book The Psychology of Christian Personality might have had as his purpose in view the setting forth of Pragmatism as a way of life. Because he is so adept at making the application, his views on the matter will be set forth rather in detail. To the writer he deals in a satisfying way with the problems mentioned in this thesis. Ligon begins by showing that religion has usually been considered outside the scope of science, but that there is a growing belief that the methods of science can and should be brought into religion. He draws an analogy between the law of gravity and the moral law. He shows that though it is generally thought the majority of people obey moral law because of fear of future punishment, they would not think of breaking the law of gravity, should they learn there is no God. He takes the assumption of science -- that the universe is orderly -- and the philosophy of pragmatism and shows that these same assumptions may apply to religion. He says in this connection:

Certainly, if the universe is orderly, mental health will be evidence of conformity to its spiritual laws. Furthermore, if God is good, mental health will

be one of the results of obeying His laws. It is unbelievable that God would so order the universe that Godliness would produce unhappiness and mental disorder.<sup>22</sup>

Ligon says that all behavior is fundamentally an effort to discover satisfaction for one's appetites and urges and expression for one's abilities, and that the emotional attitude is the functional unit of personality. He classifies personalities into three groups: the so-called psychopathic personality, the inhibited personality, and the integrated personality. Of course, the integrated personality is the desirable one, as is indicated by the adjective used. To support his thesis, Ligon says that the most universally recognized source of integration, and therefore of mental health, is a dominant purpose in life.

His aim is to study the emotional attitudes which are implied in Jesus' teachings and to ascertain whether they are integrating or disintegrating factors in personality. He takes an accurate account of Jesus' words and that which will give the very spirit of the Master -- the "sermon on the mount."

Though almost every religion emphasizes faith and love, Jesus gave precise meanings to these two terms. He taught a definite type of faith and was specific about the nature of the love he spoke of. Jesus believed in an experimental

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<sup>22</sup>Ernest M. Ligon, The Psychology of Christian Personality, p. 10.

faith. To explain what he meant, Ligon mentions other types such as intellectual, which certainly may confess with the mouth but does not believe with the heart; the faith of credulity; atrocity stories in war propoganda are an example of this type of faith; then there was experimental faith, that which Jesus advocated and that which could be accepted by science, if unbiased. In fact, it is the kind of faith by which science has accomplished its wonderful achievements.

Jesus begins the "sermon on the mount" by introducing the word happy. To no two people does the word carry the same exact connotation. Ligon says: "Happiness consists in finding an ever attainable group of satisfactions for all of the instinctive urges."<sup>23</sup> Ligon shows that one may seek happiness either by searching for an environment which will satisfy his every wish, and meeting almost certain defeat, or he may build such personality traits that he will be happy in any environment. Jesus taught this last method in the Beatitudes, which consist of a series of eight fundamental emotional attitudes.

Such an attitude would certainly seem to be a pragmatic one. Ligon expresses it this way:

Adjusting to one's environment is not synonymous with being satisfied with it. A scientist loves his field of research, but devotes his whole life to changing it. No progress is made except where the need of

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

progress is felt. If anyone imagines that Jesus taught his followers simply to accept the world as it is, with no vision for making it better, let him read the first verse of the Sermon on the Mount, which is the first characteristic of an experimental faith.

"Happy are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>24</sup>

Ligon says that only when men adopted the experimental faith of modern science did they begin to do greater things. Jesus has urged that men apply such faith to the spiritual realm. He believed that there are spiritual laws which are the will of God, but that one can discover them only by painstaking search; that if he devotes his life to it he will find the divine, inherit the earth, learn of the true nature of the kingdom of God, and experience the happiness which comes to him who lives in the kingdom of heaven.

To the writer this appears to be the pragmatic way. It has been tried by countless numbers of people, who have proved that the satisfying life comes from the disciplined life. Such discipline involves every part of a person's being. In such a belief one does not ignore the body, or endure it, or persecute it; one accepts it as the "temple of the living soul" and as such seeks to use it in such fashion as will further the living in harmony with an orderly universe. To entertain such a belief one cannot reconcile coarseness of body with spiritual expression. That is, one's body must be in harmony with the law, through correct habits of eating,

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 52, quoting Matthew 5:3.

sleeping and exercise, but the discipline does not stop here. It involves the right use of one's time and a willingness to work for spiritual harmony as well, which can be had only in meditation.

Ligon counsels:

Find a life purpose, which uses all of your capacities, in some form of social service, in the value of which you have an enthusiastic faith, for which you have faith in your ability to perform, and in the performance of which you get your greatest pleasure. . . . If one makes the Beatitudes his philosophy of life, he fulfills every requirement of this formula for mental health.<sup>25</sup>

There is a challenge to the writer in James' belief that the "notion of a complete experience to which everything is learnt and everything is known is flat and flagrant nonsense." To believe differently places one with the vast army of people who seem to have a beautiful-sounding philosophy, but the practice of which forces them to a belief only in mortality. To subscribe to Pragmatism one can know not with the certainty of the Absolutist but with the conviction of an open mind, that there will ever be new worlds to conquer. Then one does not need to wait for physical death in order to enter on Eternal Life; one has it when he accepts the hypothesis that he may begin living it now. What matter, then, where one's soul may find sanctuary, with the cessation of physical life? It will be only a more far-

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

reaching and greater experience of Eternal Life. If one is sustained by such faith, then one is not forced, as H. G. Wells mentioned, to seek for something which takes away the fear of death, because in the last analysis, there is no death. It is a glorious philosophy to have and finds no quarrel with Pragmatism.

To conclude, each of us possesses the wisdom of the Universal Spirit of all Life, and it can be made to work out in our lives whatever we truly desire and deserve. The way is so simple that a "wayfaring man though blind, may find it," and yet so obscured for the uninitiated that one is likely to lose it, because he must have the faith of a little child. Each man must experience it for himself, and when he has done so, he has discovered beyond the shadow of a doubt that he has the power of immortality within him here and now. He does not wait to cast off this earthly garment to enjoy the fruits of immortality. He is the instrument, the temple of the living soul, through which the Universal Spirit works to teach a class, to cook a meal, to dig a ditch, to write a sonnet, to employ four strings and a bow to turn the "Ave Maria" into the music of the angels. This is living in harmony with the universe; this is going with the stream -- not against it. This is to "know whom I have believed and to be persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."<sup>26</sup> This is to have a philosophy

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<sup>26</sup>II Timothy, 1:12.

and to live it so that others will know one knows.

Is this America's answer? The writer of this thesis offers Pragmatism as a workable philosophy, the principles of which if applied consistently, might hasten the day when many apparent differences, which have caused confusion, might disappear.

It is safe to assume that if James could speak for himself, he would applaud the following words of L. P. Jacks:

I think James would be the first to admit that "Pragmatism" as he left it has not yet attained its final expression. But there is no doubt in my own mind, that beneath the temporary defeats of James' presentation, Pragmatism embodies a living force of human conviction and experience, which in the long run will succumb to no gainsaying.<sup>27</sup>

To summarize briefly, an attempt has been made to show that humanity is now in the throes of a world-wide struggle between authority and freedom; that America's part in this struggle is first to preserve her historic traditions.

In doing this she must face the fight of autocracy versus democracy; at the same time she must solve vexing social problems growing out of the universal confusion. Problems, such as juvenile delinquency, may be solved by setting up objectives for education, such as have been listed by Raymond Holder Wheeler.

In Chapter V an attempt has been made to show that even though philosophy may have produced little effect on

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<sup>27</sup>L. P. Jacks, "William James and His Message," Contemporary Review, XCIX (January, 1913), 20-33.



the course of the world's history up to the present time, philosophy as set forth by William James in the doctrine of Pragmatism, if applied to problems of education and government, would prove workable. Though no attempt has been made to prove such a statement, it is true that America's more recent and progressive educational methods are based on Pragmatism or pragmatic methods. In seeking to solve her problems pragmatically, America must keep uppermost in mind the basis on which the doctrine works: that is, that no definite and final goals must be set up; that always satisfying experience and the workableness of a plan constitute the chief criteria of the success of Pragmatism.

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