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HUMANIST TRENDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE most noteworthy theological development of the present age is without doubt the recent fresh and vigorous reaction against the dominant Humanism of an earlier epoch.¹ Humanism, once hailed as a re-interpretation, or even a re-orientation of the Christian faith, has now become rather a term of opprobrium as the very antithesis of all that the Gospel of Christ truly represents. Its denial of the Transcendence of God, its obscuring of the radical nature of human sin, its assertion of the self-justification of man, its anthropocentric conception of the Universe: all these fundamental divergences from the Christianity of the New Testament and the Reformers have been brought into relief and have been the subject of an energetic protest.

The danger is, however, not, as some imagine, that this protest should be pressed too far, but that it should be uttered without any clear conception of the nature of the enemy opposed. Humanism presented itself to the late nineteenth century in a bewildering variety of guises, ranging from the militant atheism of Marx to the mild Social Gospel of Harnack, or even in some respects the Catholic Reconstruction of Gore. Yet in all cases forces fundamentally the same were at work.² In order then that the protest against Humanism might be given a unity which otherwise it could not have, and that in making the protest the evil influences might be as far as possible recognised, and points of real or potential value assessed, and the lesson of the Humanist heresy learned, it is necessary to attempt some disentanglement of those basic forces.

The sources of Humanism may, of course, be traced back to the very earliest stages of human thought, in Greece especially, and of modern Humanism to the period of the Renaissance (which was in effect a refflorescence of Greek thought) at the very

¹ Barth and Brunner, and perhaps Heim are, of course, the outstanding names, but this movement is reflected in widely varying spheres of thought, e.g., in the Anglo-Catholic Signpost Series in England.

² A forceful if not over-critical presentation may be found in Davies: *On to Orthodoxy*.

latest. It is not, however, until the eighteenth century, the century of English Deism, of French Rationalism, and of the German Aufklärung, that the forces in modern Humanism really begin to manifest themselves clearly, and that the process of coalescence becomes observable. It will, therefore, be most practical to limit our study to that period, paying particular attention to that country which emerged as leader of European thought and thus as the chief exponent of Humanism, namely Germany.

Now although the eighteenth century has been summed up under the general title of the Age of Reason, it is a hasty and a very wrong conclusion to draw, that Rationalism was the sole, or indeed, in the long run the most potent thought-movement in that period. A more careful analysis of eighteenth-century thought discloses the fact that there were in reality three broad movements, overlapping, of course, and intercrossing, but not on that account any the less distinct.¹ And these three movements coalescing in a variety of combinations, give the main elements in all the Humanist systems of the Modern Age. The examination of these three movements will be the main subject of our study.

I

The most obvious, and on the surface the leading movement of the century was, of course, Rationalism itself, the belief in human reason as the fundamental and inerrant principle in life. Rationalism in the eighteenth century was a development of the Cartesian Philosophy. With Descartes, it found in the ability of man to think, in reason, the only known and certain factor in life—succinctly expressed in the well-known Cartesian formula: *Cogito, ergo sum.*² Upon this basic acknowledgment Rationalism proceeded to build up the whole structure of life. No branch, not even religion, certainly not art, or ethics, or politics, could escape this primacy, and consequently this dominance of human reason. In art, the insistence that the aim is utilitarian, to please,³ the setting up of a fixed and rational standard,⁴ and

¹ For a very general appreciation of this fact, Hibben: *Philosophy of the Enlightenment* is valuable.

² Descartes: *Discours de la Méthode* (4e partie).

³ Cf. Corneille: *Discours sur le Poème Dramatique*; Racine: *Préface de Bérénice*; Boileau: *L'Art Poétique*.

⁴ In France, Boileau: *L'Art Poétique*; in England, Pope: *Essay on Criticism*; in Germany, Gottsched: *Versuch Einer Kritischen Dichtkunst*.

the inductive method of character-portrayal¹ are all sure signs of the domination of reason. The characteristic keynote is sounded in ethics with an utilitarian ethic, the pursuit of goodness for rational ends, whether of pleasure, or of the advancement of the race,² and the dismissal of sin as ignorance.³ In politics the inquiry into the rational nature of law and of the constitution,⁴ the naïve confidence in the ability of human reason to control historical development,⁵ and the equally naïve, but strangely persistent rational fiction of the Social Contract,⁶ all betray a similar yoke. It is, however, in the religious field that the effect of Cartesian Rationalism is most instructive, since here from the outset the belief in human reason was face to face with the very different conviction of the supremacy of Divine Revelation, held in varying degrees both by the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Scholastic Orthodoxy.

Now it is a mistake to imagine, as some do, that first and last Rationalism was uncompromisingly hostile to the Christian Revelation. In actual fact, three stages may be marked in the attitude of Rationalism to Christianity, evidenced most clearly, because more or less chronologically, in the German Aufklärung.⁷

1. There was the harmonising attitude. This was adopted, outwardly at least, by Descartes himself, and certainly by eighteenth-century France, which could see no inconsistency in being both Cartesian and Christian. In Germany the great Leibnitz adopts this attitude, and it is enthusiastically taken up and systematised by his populariser Wolff.⁸ According to this view, two different branches of religious truth may be distinguished, both equally valid. There are first the truths demonstrable by human reason: the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and so forth. These are quite independent of Revelation, and

¹ Seen at its height in Racine (whose real greatness as a result often escapes those nourished on Shakespeare).

² Cf. Voltaire: *Sur L'Homme* (5e discours) (Poèmes Philosophiques); Pope, *Essay on Man*; Lessing: *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*—and right up to Bentham. The interest in Masonry as an ethical force is important here, since it touched so much activity. Cf. Lessing, *Ernst und Falk*, and even Tolstoi: *War and Peace*.

³ Hence Lessing: *Die Erziehung*; and Voltaire: *Sur la Loi Naturelle* (3e partie).

⁴ Montesquieu: *L'Esprit des Loix* is the greatest work.

⁵ Cf. the Physiocrats, but especially Condorcet: *Esquisse*.

⁶ Most fully developed by Rousseau, but common to the age.

⁷ A thorough study of this question is Aner: *Theologie der Lessingzeit*, upon which this summary is based.

⁸ Wolff, Professor at Halle University.

are known to all religions. But then, side by side with these, there are the truths of Revelation, quite unknowable to human reason, and given to us directly by God Himself. To this class the specifically Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Atonement belong. Thus Revelation, far from being antagonistic to, is rather complementary to the human reason. This type of Rationalism, represented, of course, in England in Butler, became the orthodox theology of the eighteenth century.¹ It preserved a continuity with the Thomist Scholastic theology, in spite of the radical difference of approach of Descartes and the Scholastics, and persists in Orthodox textbooks even to the present age, where the Christian Revelation is grounded upon, or super-imposed upon, the religious findings of the human reason.²

2. There was the Neological attitude. It was soon quite evident that Rationalism could not stop at the innocuous, if in itself erroneous view of Wolff, and by the middle of the century a new and more drastic movement, the Neology, was getting into stride. Its leaders were, first Jerusalem, then Sack, Eberhard and Spalding, with Lessing, Herder and even Kant as free exponents. The aim of the Neology was, not to place the truths of Reason and Revelation side by side, but, whilst still acknowledging the truths of Revelation, to interpret them too in terms of human Reason. Already the fertile Leibnitz had pointed the way with an attempted rational vindication of the Trinity³ and it was about the Trinity, with other disputes upon the Atonement, Eternal Punishment, and the Sacraments, that the Neological battle raged. Good examples of the Neological process may be seen in Lessing's discussion of the Trinity,⁴ Herder's substitution of the idea of an almost mechanistic Wiedervergeltung for Judgment,⁵ Kant's subjectivising of the New Birth,⁶ and Schleiermacher's conception of Christ as a religious ideal figure.⁷ Even the doctrine of Revelation itself was treated along similar lines, becoming with Lessing the divine educative process, and with Herder part of a general Revelation in Nature,

¹ Pünjer asserts that there are no textbooks of the older Protestant Orthodoxy after 1707 (*History of Christian Philosophy of Religion*).

² As for example, Griffith-Thomas: *The Principles of Theology*.

³ Leibnitz: *The Monadology*, Section 48, and *The Theodicy*, 150.

⁴ Lessing: *Die Erziehung*, Section 73.

⁵ Herder: *Postscripten zur Geschichte der Menschheit—Nemesis das Gesetz der Natur*, etc.

⁶ Kant: *Religion innerhalb der blossen Vernunft*.

⁷ Schleiermacher: *Reden*, Chapter V.

Poetry, History and indeed in every branch of cosmic activity.¹ The neologising tendency reached its culminating point in Hegel, who, although he condemned the attempt to rationalise Christian truth, himself understood it as but the pictorial representation of the Hegelian philosophy, a bold inversion, and yet a logical fulfilment of the Neology.² Of course the Neology is still with us. It rejoices under the new and praiseworthy title of restating the Gospel in the language and the thought-forms of to-day. The error of Neology does not lie in the attempt to throw new light upon the content of the Gospel from modern research and modern thought: that in itself is rather to be desired than blamed—but that so easily it becomes the substitution of a new content altogether, whilst retaining the original form. Baumgarten's summing-up of Herder in this connection is significant: Was er als blosser Umgestaltung der Form ansah, wurde unter der Hand zu einer Veränderung des Gehalts.³

3. There was the frankly hostile attitude. At this point the truths of reason were separated from and opposed to the delusions of Revelation. Deism, Immortality, Morality remained, but all supernatural beliefs, Miracles, Providence, the Trinity, etc. were cast off. This was the stage represented in Germany by the Wolfenbüttel Fragmenten,⁴ in France by Voltaire and indeed the majority of the Rationalists proper, in England by the Deists. Naturally the main attack centred upon the Scriptures, and now Revelation was not interpreted, but opposed, criticised, dissected and derided by the human reason. Voltaire especially excelled in pouring the ridicule of a scornful, unhistorical Rationalism upon the Scripture narratives, especially in passing asides.⁵ Lessing undertook an inquiry into the origins of the Gospels,⁶ such as had been undertaken earlier by Spinoza in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, and it is clear from the similar, but more sympathetic work of Herder⁷ that Lessing was but the foremost of a number of similar investigators, many of whom, however, were not so radical as he.⁸ Thus Rationalism,

¹ Herder: this appears throughout the "Ideen" and is discussed philosophically in "Gott".

² Hegel: *Die Philosophie der Religion*.

³ Baumgarten: *Herders Lebenswerk und die religiöse Frage der Gegenwart*, p. 100.

⁴ Published by Lessing, usually ascribed to Reimarus.

⁵ Cf. articles in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, etc.

⁶ Lessing: *Neue Hypothese über die Evangelisten*.

⁷ E.g. his work on John, James and Jude, and the Apocalypse. In his inquiry into the Synoptics, *Regel der Zusammenstimmung*, he follows Lessing.

⁸ Aner devotes sections to a full account of work both upon the Old and New Testaments, ut supra, pp. 202ff.

at first the ally of Revelation, became, and inevitably, its opponent. Claiming to subject everything to the ultimate test of the human reason, it could not finally leave unscathed the Revelation of God Himself, and Reason, the gift of God, was set up to be His judge.

This last aspect of Rationalism, much modified, is also still with us. Not only may it be seen in the narrowest sense in Free Thought, but it still colours much of the historico-critical work upon the Scriptures (in spite of the new historical sense) and gives to it an unnecessarily hostile tone. It is present, too, in the modern attitude to the miracles and the general ideas of the New Testament, and to the doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. Only too often Christians seek an apologetic interpretation, and the men of science simply and utterly reject. Other factors have, of course, entered in since the Rationalist age of Voltaire, but the basic claim of Rationalism, in all its guises, has never faltered, the claim that the human reason is the final and only court of appeal. As Brunner has pointed out in his fine little book, *The Word and the World*, this is still the ultimate issue in the modern world, the only ground of conflict between Revelation and Science, the core of the struggle of Christianity with Humanism. Is man with his reason the final arbiter, or is there another beyond the human reason, its Creator, its Giver, God?

II

Contemporaneously with, and in many ways complementary to, Cartesian Rationalism, however, another force of major importance for the modern world may be seen emerging in the eighteenth century, a force destined finally to challenge and to overthrow Rationalist dogmatic philosophy, whilst retaining much of its spirit. This new movement, largely of English origin, can best perhaps be summed up under the one general name of Empiricism. Its pioneers were Hobbes and Bacon in England, Gassendi being a well-known French exponent in the seventeenth century. The man, however, who may truly be said to have given to it an European significance was Locke, whose new theory of perception¹ emphasised the dependence of the human understanding upon that which is empirically apprehended through the senses. From England the Sensationalism

¹ Locke: *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

of Locke spread rapidly to France, Voltaire himself being an enthusiastic adherent after his English exile,¹ and men like Condillac developing the doctrine in systematic fashion.² Germany, under the sway of the Wolfian Rationalism, was not so easily permeated by the antagonistic teaching, but by the turn of the century its influence may be seen³ and with the publication of Leibnitz' *Nouveaux Essais* in 1765, a criticism which admits much of what Locke advocated, its ultimate success was assured, with very far-reaching consequences.

Two main features of the Empiricist Philosophy call for notice as having contributed to modern Humanism. Of these the earliest in point of time is the deductive method, the reliance upon exact observation as the basis of human knowledge. Of special importance is this method as the foundation not only of the great discoveries of physical science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but indeed of all modern science, and of modern history and historical criticism as well. For our present purpose it is not necessary to study in detail the growth of the scientific method, nor the application of that method to history, literature and religion; but we may notice its influence in the growing interest in natural science (seen at its greatest perhaps in Buffon),⁴ in the revival of geographical and historical studies on the basis of observed fact and the exact study of sources—this appears in the remarkable popularity of travellers' tales, notably Niebuhr, Shaw, Carver, etc., and the patient if unimaginative activity of men like Möser, Schlözer, etc.,⁵ and in the application to literature of a new and more outward realism, reflected in the *Bürgerliches Trauerspiel*⁶ and the subjective studies of Rousseau and the *Sturm und Drang*. In religion the foundations of exegetical work were being laid along empiricist lines, more especially by the German school, the two Michaelis, Semler, Mosheim, Ernesti and later Herder, Eichhorn and De Wette.⁷ The stimulus given here by the Rationalist challenge has already been noticed.

Now it is clear that the Empiricist method in itself is not

¹ Voltaire: *Lettres Anglaises* and *Philosophiques*.

² Condillac: *Traité des Sensations*.

³ As for example in Hamann, Herder, and, under the influence of the sceptic Hume, Kant.

⁴ *L'Histoire Naturelle*.

⁵ On this point see Dilthey: *Das XVIII Jahrhundert und die Geschichtliche Welt: gesammelte Schriften* III.

⁶ Cf. the theories of Diderot and Lessing, and Lessing's dramas.

⁷ See Aner, *ut supra*.

necessarily hostile to Christianity. It is rather a neutral. But the fact has to be noted that from the first, perhaps owing to the persecution of its early exponents, it took the form of an opposition which constantly verged upon pure Naturalism, as with Gassendi, or Scepticism, as with Bayle¹ and later Hume. It was inevitable that sooner or later the principles of the scientific method should be fused with Rationalism in a non-Christian and even non-Theistic Weltanschauung, and indeed it may well be argued that this was the leaven which gave to Rationalism its bitter and hostile tone. This process of fusion is already apparent in Leibnitz, perhaps the greatest and most fruitful genius of this great age, who, himself a man of science of great note, in some sort a follower of Locke, and yet with a significant reservation,² was quick to apply the principles of Natural, or physical science to his monistic conception of the Universe. The two main principles thus introduced were the two which dominate Humanist thought to the present day: Continuity and Development,³ both of which occupy a prominent place in the Monadology. Two important corollaries may also be observed, the conception of the Universe as a whole, and the virtual elimination of evil by denying it any reality in the ultimate sense.⁴ Now although these suggestions were largely ignored by the Aufklärung⁵ proper, yet the belief in Progress was already gaining ground in France after the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes, and the application by Montesquieu of the laws of cause and effect to history indicates the trend of thought. By the end of the century, largely under the influence of Leibnitz and Spinoza the battle was won. In Lessing, Herder and Kant the sense of oneness and of a general purposiveness are both strongly marked, although very differently conceived. From the discussions of Kant⁶ upon this point, and later Hegel⁷ it is clear too that Evolution was beginning to play a dominant role in Natural Historical thought, either in the Herderian sense (developed in different ways by Fichte, Schelling and Hegel) of Divine activity progressively manifesting itself⁸ or in a more

¹ Bayle : *Dictionnaire*.

² Nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius fuerit in sensu, nisi intellectus ipse.

³ This is well brought out in Carr : *Leibnitz* : Chapter 4 (Part II).

⁴ The general theme of the *Théodicée*.

⁵ Bury remarks upon this point with reference to Mendelssohn in his *Idea of Progress*.

⁶ Kant : *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, Review of Herder's *Ideen*, etc.

⁷ Hegel : *Die Philosophie der Natur*.

⁸ Even the word Evolution is used by Herder (*Tithon und Aurora*).

purely materialistic sense suggestive of the later Evolutionism. The suggestion of a genealogical descent from the animals had already been made.¹ A further development of great importance bound up with the deductive method and with the observation of cause and effect is that of the doctrine of necessity in the historical process. Its philosophical basis is to be found in Spinoza, and it first becomes prominent, as applied to human history, in the *Ideen* of Herder.²

Now together with this growth of the deductive method a second feature went hand in hand, the sensationalist philosophy of Locke. Into the ramifications of this philosophy it is beyond the scope of this study to inquire. The Idealism of Berkeley; the scepticism of Hume, the pure Sensationalism of Condillac; the crass Materialism of La Mettrie;³ the Critical Philosophy of Kant; all in varying degrees owe allegiance to this general movement. In all these widely differing interpretations, however, one thing is plain: the rejection of all knowledge apart from that directly apprehensible by the senses, and a common opposition against either the confident Rationalism of Descartes or the authoritative voice of Revelation. In certain cases it is true—Kant is a notable example⁴—provision is made for a knowledge of God outside sense-perception, but the rejection of dogmatic speculative systems is final.

Apart from the rise of the new Idealism on the basis of Kant's work, this Sensationalist development had a threefold effect.

1. It led with some to the denial of religious truth altogether, in the form both of the eighteenth century and also the nineteenth century Materialism. Man was reduced to the status of a mere machine, the product of so many influences, dependent for his whole thought and being upon external circumstances. But in this case it may be noted that with religion, Humanism itself also perished in pure Naturalism. Man, as man, ceased to be of any particular importance in the Natural Scheme.

2. It led with others to the withdrawal of religion from the sphere of intellectual life, the attempt to justify it either as a

¹ As is clear from the discussion of this point in Kant: *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, and his review of Herder.

² Cf. *Ideen*, Buch 14 "Das Werk des Vorsehung geht nach allgemeinen grossen Gesetzen . . . fort," etc.

³ La Mettrie: *L'Homme Machine*.

⁴ In his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Kant introduces the idea of God as a necessary postulate of the moral law.

direct emotional intuition, as with Jacobi, or merely as a human emotional experience having its proper place in the full life of man, as with Schleiermacher.¹ At this latter point, the complete subjectivisation of religion, Humanism reached its peak, and religion became a sphere of human activity. But here again the victory of Humanism was only transitory, since the banishing of religion from the philosophical field prepared the way, not only for the retreat upon emotional experience, but also for the despairing leap out into the Unknown, faith in the Word of the Living God.

3. It led, and this in every case, to a concentration upon the psychological problem, the possibility of knowledge, the concern with the capacities of man and the nature of his gifts. Whatever system was adopted, this was the core of the problem. And although at first the Kantian Kritik led to an intoxicated and proud metaphysical reconstruction; although the empirical method, as applied to the sciences, bade fair to explain every problem, and answer every question, whether of art, politics, economics, religion; although man was still the centre around which the battle raged, and upon whom everything was thought to depend (in this at least the Humanistic trend is apparent): yet once again the Empiricist philosophy was to prove a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to Humanism. The only logical outcome of Empiricism, and of the psychological inquiry which it demanded, is scepticism and blank despair.² And scepticism and despair are the first steps of true faith. As long as we live in the bold and confident world of Leibnitz or Herder, in spite of outward similarities and verbal alliances, we live outside the world of the Gospel. But when we see the limitations of human knowledge, the harsh bondage of the human mind, the tragic hopelessness of human systems, we are not far from the Kingdom of God.³

III

Thus far our inquiry has been concerned with two movements, both intellectual, opposed in many ways to each other, and yet closely akin, and bound to interact and coalesce. The eighteenth century, however, also witnessed the rise and spread

¹ Heim brings out this tendency excellently in his small book: *The New Divine Order*, Introduction.

² The findings of the new psychology of Freud, Jung and Adler are instructive here.

³ This is magnificently brought out by Barth and Brunner.

of a third great movement of quite another order, one which appears strangely out of place in the so-called age of Reason, and yet which contributed to the formation of modern Humanism, an element no less important than the other two. This was the movement which might best be summed up under the general title of Emotionalism—the titles of Sentimental^{ité} and Pre-Romanticism have also been used—a movement which assumed many different and sometimes self-contradictory forms, and may be seen variously allied with the intellectual forces, but which runs through and touches the century at almost every point.

The immediate origins of Emotionalism are variously explained. Modern scholarship tends to the view that in the seventeenth century, when Cartesian Rationalism and Protestant Scholasticism were dominant, a strong stream of emotionalism ran silently underground, coming to open expression only in the mysticism of Jacob Boehme and the Quietists. This is *a priori* extremely natural, since it is hard to imagine that even the cultured society of French Classicism was completely devoid of true emotional feeling. Be that as it may, the late seventeenth century certainly witnessed a great outburst of emotional feeling in the great German religious movement known as Pietism, a revival of personal religion initiated by Spener and Francke which was profoundly to influence German life throughout the eighteenth century.¹ The ramifications of Pietism were enormous, spreading abroad to English Methodism,² as well as affecting the whole religious life of Germany. The religious power of Pietism was immense, whether we view it in its stricter and more mystic forms in the communities or in the looser and more general forms as in the life and activity of a Lavater, a Jung-Stilling, or even the Neologist and critic Spalding. Its part in the growth of German literature, from the *Messias* of Klopstock to the Sturm und Drang, and even the Romantics, is incalculable. All the leaders of German thought owe something to it: Klopstock, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Goethe, Kant, Schleiermacher, Schelling. In itself, of course, Pietism was often no more than a true religious fervour: it was not necessarily deeply emotional or mystical; but in its stress upon the necessity of an individual emotional experience it opened the way for all the poetical movements of the late eighteenth century, as well as for the religious

¹ See Hossbach: *Spener*, for a clear and painstaking study.

² Wesley's *Journal* makes clear the great initial impulse of Moravian Pietism.

revolution wrought by Schleiermacher. For different men it meant different things: for Hamann, a deep, poeticised faith, for Goethe, a dabbling in mysticism and alchemy, for Herder a recognition of the place of emotion in religion and a poeticised interest in the Scriptures, for the Romantics later even a return to a highly sentimentalised and mystical Catholicism, as seen in Novalis in Germany,¹ in the Oxford Movement in England, and in Chateaubriand in France.² But in every case, even when there was no apparent outward attachment, the central power, the real, vivid, living, expression of the emotional life, whether religious or poetical, remained.

Pietism, or the emotional awakening in general, was not, of course, a movement apart. It took its place in the criss-cross of life. With Rationalism in the stricter sense it had little in common, and Nicolai, the archpriest of the Aufklärung,³ was its opponent at every point. The tension with Rationalism is most clearly illustrated in the life of Herder in his years at Riga and Bückeberg,⁴ although a final synthesis was achieved with the broadening of the concept of revelation to cover every branch of human life, God speaking through both the reason and the emotions. With the new Empiricism the emotionalist movement had many points of contact, the most important being perhaps the interest shared in Biblical study,⁵ the prosecution of natural science (which had a traditional association with mysticism) and more especially the psychological interest. As may readily be imagined, the intense subjectivity of emotionalism, e.g. in a Hamann or Lavater, led on naturally to psychological analysis of a more acute and realistic type. The crop of confessions, autobiographies, and diaries⁶ is indicative of this trend, and it is to be seen in a higher form in the highly subjective poetry and drama of the Sturm und Drang.

Pietism was a specifically German growth, but it took its place in a wider movement common to England and France as well as Germany. In England, quite apart from the great emotional revival associated with the Wesleys, an Emotionalist cur-

¹ Novalis: *Die Christenheit, oder Europa*.

² Chateaubriand: *Le Génie du Christianisme*.

³ Editor of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*.

⁴ See Haym: *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinem Werken*. Haym, however, over-emphasises the tension and is too partial to the Rationalistic Herder, regarding the emotionalism as an Abirrung. The modern view is to see Herder struggling for fusion in his view of Offenbarung.

⁵ Halle, the Pietist University, was the early centre of work on the Bible.

⁶ E.g. Rousseau: *Confessions*; Lavater: *Tagebuch*, etc.

rent runs strongly through the century. It appears early in Shaftesbury, with his advocacy of Genius and his great Pantheistic Hymn to Nature.¹ The sentimental novels of Richardson² reveal a growing sensibility, and with the poetic movement most closely associated with Young³ the place of emotion and the necessity of genius were strongly advocated. Macpherson's *Ossian*, although its influence was greater abroad, and Percy's *Reliques*, are part of this same development in which the naïve poetry of the past is exalted, passion is openly expressed and the cult of the wild, the primitive, the natural, begins to challenge the sophisticated, the cultured and the conventional. The Shakespeare revival under Garrick is a clear indication of the trend of opinion, whilst such passing fashions as the English garden, with its irregularities and exoticisms, and the beginning of the delight in rugged nature point clearly in the same direction. In England, too, the century of Classicism and Rationalism was also a century which saw the rebirth of Emotionalism, in religion, literature and general thought.

In France⁴ the current ran no less strongly, and here two clear streams may be distinguished, the movement of sensibilité, reflected in the comedies of La Chaussée, and a far more powerful poetic naturalism, more subjective, more closely connected with religion and nature mysticism, expressed in Rousseau. Of these the former was little more than a passing fashion, of a piece with the English Garden, the tales of horror, the exoticism, the Bardic enthusiasm and the taste for ruins and tombstones which swept across society in the mid-eighteenth century. But the Emotionalism of Rousseau was of major significance, different from and yet profoundly influencing the parallel movement in Germany. In Rousseau the new trends of the century may be seen in an impressive and incalculably significant synthesis: the belief in human goodness, the psychological realism, the natural Theism, the attack on artificial conventions; above all the vivid and emotional appeal to emotion, the cult of nature, the stress on the rights of man, the religion of the heart, the poetry of feeling. Upon this synthesis of Rousseau, powerfully set forth in the *Discours sur L'Inégalité*, *Émile* and *Le Contrat Social*, much of the humanist religion may in the last resort be said to depend.

¹ Shaftesbury: *Characteristics*.

² E.g. the great novel *Pamela*.

³ Young: *Night Thoughts* and *Thoughts on Original Composition*.

⁴ For careful studies see Trahard and Mornet.

In Marx, and the modern educational theory, where the whole stress is upon the right environment, the right structure of society, in the prevalent Immanentist emotional theism, where Christianity only exists as a pure ethic, and God is sought and worshipped in the revelation of nature, and art, and humanity, in the firm belief in the potentialities of man, of his supreme power as a great creative genius: in all these forms of modern Humanism, an outworking of the Rousseauist doctrine is clearly to be seen.

IV

Three movements may thus be traced in the Humanist revolt during the eighteenth century; and Modern Humanism is at root a coalescence of these three movements, already partially achieved in the great leaders of thought of the late eighteenth century, and especially in the creative poet Goethe and the creative critic Herder. The forms of synthesis in the modern world are many, but basically the features are the same; the confident belief in the unaided power of man; the bold assertion of human progress; an immanent view of Divine and human activity; the denial of reality to human sin; the reduction of religion to the status of a mere branch of the creativity of man; legitimate, but of no higher order than music, poetry or science; the consequent emotionalising of religion, together with the neological tendency sharply to separate form and content; a rigid application of the empiricist method to every department of life. At its core, Humanism was and is the replacing of a theocentric and other-worldly view of life by an anthropocentric and this-worldly, and this was the guiding principle in all three of the eighteenth-century thought movements, the principle which gave unity to the century, and made certain the ultimate fusion.

In our estimate of these forces three facts are surely evident. First, it is clear, once and for all, that in the last resort Humanism is totally irreconcilable with the Christian Gospel, whether applied to the knowledge of God or to the ordering of earth. For the Christian Revelation means something quite other than the pious sense of God in Nature; faith something quite other than an emotional sense of what Otto has called the Heilige; the Kingdom of God something quite other than a man-devised and man-produced Utopia; Redemption in this world or the next

something quite other than the progressive Evolution of Humanity. Here is a gulf fixed which no Neology can ever bridge; and in our own day, when Humanism has found its logical development in effete democracies on the one hand and Militant Nationalism on the other¹ the true width and depth of the gulf is revealed.

Second, it is clear that Humanism has within itself the seeds of its own disruption. As this point has already been discussed in relation to Empiricism, there is no need to labour it again. All that need be said is that of the eighteenth-century movements Empiricism was to prove the strongest and the most influential, and that although it was incorporated in Humanist systems in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, logically it could only lead either to Scepticism or to pure Naturalism. For the Empiricist man may be the highest natural product, but he cannot by his very nature be the centre of the universe; and although his work is valid it is valid only in the sense that all natural products are valid.² But if man is reduced to a purely natural organism, then Humanism has been swallowed up and the reality of all higher values denied.

Third, it is clear that the men who led the Humanist revolt, many of them, like Herder and Schleiermacher, sincere believers, were groping after something of value for the Christian church and for Christian society. In an age when intellect was fettered by barren scholasticism, when free inquiry was prohibited, when the emotional life could find no outlet, the urge which they felt was to dig up the buried talent and put it to service, to clear the way for human thought, to open the gates for knowledge and art, to find a channel for emotion. It is easy for us, looking back, to see that the talent was put to the service of man and not of God, that the use of reason became an unreasoning confidence in reason, that the Empirical sciences became the basis of a Naturalist Philosophy, where man at most was the crown of a natural system, without responsibility to God, that emotionalism became a mere faith in human goodness, or in a poetic experience, at the expense of the Word of God; in short that the great facts of Revelation—Creation, Sin, Redemption, Judgment—were replaced by Humanist theories

¹ This point, denied by some, is brought out unmistakably by Heim: *The Church of Christ and the Problems of Today*, Chapter II.

² A position already dangerously approached by Herder in his *Ideen* where he terms the Kultur eines Volks die Blüthe seines Daseins, eine Pflanze (Buch XIII, 7, 3).

—Evolution, Natural Goodness, Immanence, Humanity. But the ultimate question has still to be asked, Whose then was the fault? If these fine powers of mind and heart were turned against the Gospel of Christ, was it perhaps that they were allowed no place within? Is not Humanism a challenge to the Church of Christ, not to the repression of natural powers of intellect and emotion, but to the consecration of all powers, of body, mind and spirit, to the service of God, to the full development of the redeemed man of God, that by his life and activity in this world as well as in the next he might in his own sphere bring glory to his Redeemer? The true answer to the abuse is not correction merely, but the rightful use, and this is the last word which to Humanism the Church of Christ must both speak and act:

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.¹

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¹ Colossians i. 17.