

the truth about the first, or fallen nature of men. But this is not a truth about the balance of power. It is the truth about the condition which the balance of power can be used to correct.

Each contender for power, we must assume, will seek to win the contest—to become the ruler, and to exercise the deciding voice. But there remains still what the ruler—when he has the deciding voice—is interested in deciding. Will he use the position he has achieved in the system of forces in order to aggrandize his own power, and to increase his own privileges? Or is his chief interest in the order itself—that is to say, in the nation, the commonwealth, the great community—in its survival and in its harmony and in its development?

There is a radical difference between being a contender for power, a rival among rivals, and being the guardian of the order which intends to regulate all the rivalries. In the one, the technique of the balance of power is used as an instrument of aggression and defense. In the other, it is used as the structural principle of public order in the good society.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Defense of Civility

1. *The Thesis Restated*

WE HAVE now made a reconnaissance in the public philosophy in order to test the chances of its revival. Our warrant for making this attempt rests on certain general findings about the condition of the Western world.

The first is that free institutions and democracy were conceived and established by men who adhered to a public philosophy. Though there have been many schools in this philosophy, there are fundamental principles common to all of them: that, in Cicero's words, "law is the bond of civil society," and that all men, governors and the governed, are always under, are never above, laws; that these laws can be developed and refined by rational discussion, and that the highest laws are those upon which all rational men of good will, when fully informed, will tend to agree.

The second finding from which we have proceeded, in our inquiry, is that the modern democracies have abandoned the main concepts, principles, precepts, and the general manner of thinking which I have been calling the public philosophy. I hold that liberal democracy is not an intelligible form of government and cannot be made to work except by men who possess the philosophy in which liberal democracy was conceived and founded. The prospects of liberal democracy in this time of mighty counterrevolutions are, therefore, bound up with the question whether the public philosophy is obsolete or whether it can be revived, reunited and renewed.

I believe that the public philosophy can be revived, and the reconnaissance which we have made has been a demonstration that when it is applied to such central concepts as popular sovereignty, property, freedom of speech, and education, the public philosophy clarifies the problems and opens the way towards rational and acceptable solutions. The revival of the public philosophy depends on whether its principles and precepts—which

were articulated before the industrial revolution, before the era of rapid technological change, and before the rise of the mass democracies—depends on whether this old philosophy can be reworked for the modern age. If this cannot be done, then the free and democratic nations face the totalitarian challenge without a public philosophy which free men believe in and cherish, with no public faith beyond a mere official agnosticism, neutrality and indifference. There is not much doubt how the struggle is likely to end if it lies between those who, believing, care very much—and those who, lacking belief, cannot care very much.

2. *The Communication of the Public Philosophy*

WE COME now to the problem of communicating the public philosophy to the modern democracies. The problem has been, to be sure, only too obvious from the beginning. For, as we have seen, the public philosophy is in a deep contradiction with the Jacobin ideology, which is, in fact, the popular doctrine of the mass democracies. The public philosophy is addressed to the government of our appetites and passions by the reasons of a second, civilized, and, therefore, acquired nature. Therefore, the public philosophy cannot be popular. For it aims to resist and to regulate those very desires and opinions which are most popular. The warrant of the public philosophy is rational and disciplined government will be good. And so, while the right but hard decisions are not likely to be popular when they are taken, the wrong and soft decisions will, if they are frequent and big enough, bring on a disorder in which freedom and democracy are destroyed.

If we ask whether the public philosophy can be communicated to the democracies, the answer must begin with the acknowledgment that there must be a doctrine and pertinent to our modern anxieties. Our reconnaissance has been addressed to that first need.

But beyond it lies the problem of the capacity and the willingness of modern men to receive this kind of philosophy. The concepts and the principles of the public philosophy have their being in the realm of immaterial entities. They cannot be experienced by our sense organs

or even, strictly speaking, imagined in visual or tangible terms. Yet these essences, these abstractions, which are out of sight and out of touch, are to have and to hold men's highest loyalties.

The problem of communication is posed because in the modern world, as it is today, most men—not all men, to be sure, but most active and influential men—are in practice positivists who hold that the only world which has reality is the physical world. Only seeing is believing. Nothing is real enough to be taken seriously, nothing can be a matter of deep concern, which cannot, or at least might not, somewhere and sometime, be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, or touched.

Julius Caesar was a real person because we feel sure we could have seen him in Rome had we been there in his lifetime. By the same kind of popular common sense, communities have believed that werewolves were real. Had not a woman named Thiebemne Paget admitted that she was one of the wolves that was seen on July 18, 1603, in the District of Couvres? To common sense the real is what, but only what, we believe has weight, mass, energy.

... What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?

What are the ideas and ideals, the laws and the obligations, of the rational order if, like Hecuba, they are not flesh and blood?

Common sense is positivist and credulous, and the usual human way of satisfying it has been to materialize ideas when those ideas had to be treated as real. Men have incarnated the gods, they have re-embodied their ancestors, they have personified the laws, they have hypostasized their ideas. They have made the abstractions and universals intelligible in concrete terms, and so matters of genuine concern, by connecting them with the realities of everyday experience.

The difficulty of communicating imponderable truths to common sense is not a new one. Through the ages truths that could not be materialized have been regarded as esoteric, and communicable only to an initiated few.

¹ *The World's Great Folktales*, arranged and edited by James R. Foster (1953), p. 135.

The Gospels state that there were mysteries which Jesus could unveil only to a few. He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."²² But—

"When he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables . . ."²³

Only privately to his own disciples, says Mark, did he explain "everything";²⁴ to "the whole crowd" he spoke the word "as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable."

Why? Because, says Dante, the divine mysteries are beyond the reach of human understanding—

It is needful to speak thus to your wit, since only through objects of sense does it apprehend that which it afterwards would make worthy of the intellect. For this the scripture condescends to your capacity, and attributes feet and hands to God, and means otherwise.²⁵

There is a need to condescend to our capacity because, as Paul Tillich puts it, "It is impossible to be concerned about something which cannot be encountered concretely, be it in the realm of reality or in the realm of imagination, the more concrete a thing is, the more the possible concern about it. The completely concrete being, the individual person, is the object of the most radical concern—the concern of love."²⁶ There is in consequence, he says, an "inescapable inner tension in the idea of God"—between God conceived as Transcending all that is particular and finite, on the one hand, and the concrete-humanness of an image of God on the other. In order to have a human concern there is needed a "being to being relationship" a concrete God, a God with whom man can deal" in his religious experience.²⁷

While Tillich is a theologian examining the meaning

²²The Gospel According to St. Mark, IV:9.

²³*Ibid.*, IV: 10-12.

²⁴*Divine Comedy*, translated by C. E. Norton (1941), *Purgatory*, Canto IV, verses 40-45.

²⁵Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (1951), Vol. I, Part II, p. 211.

of God, which he defines as the "name for that which concerns men ultimately," his findings illuminate the problem which we are studying. How can men be concerned effectively with ideas and ideals that transcend their personal experience and cannot be verified empirically in the realm of existence? The principles of the good society call for a concern with an order of being—which cannot be proved existentially to the sense organs—where it matters supremely that the human person is inviolable, that reason shall regulate the will, that truth shall prevail over error.

Because it is difficult to care about that which is not concrete, there is, in Tillich's language, "a tension in human experience." In order to become concerned about, to feel committed to, transcendent objects, we have to believe in them: to believe in them they must be concrete, they must in fact or in imagination be drawn into the orbit of our sense organs. But as we condescend in this fashion to our capacity, attributing foot and hand to God, the belief becomes involved with, often dependent upon, the materialization. Because of this dependence, the belief is vulnerable. For a little knowledge, as for example that the foot and hand are a metaphor, may destroy the belief.

3. Constitutionalism Made Concrete

HARRY in the history of Western society, political thinkers in Rome hit upon the idea that the concepts of the public philosophy—particularly the idea of reciprocal rights and duties under law—could be given concreteness by treating them as contracts. In this way, freedom emanating from a constitutional order has been advocated, explained, made real to the imagination and the conscience of Western men, by establishing the presumption that civilized society is founded on a public social contract.

A contract is an agreement reached voluntarily, *quid pro quo*, and likely, therefore, to be observed—in any event, rightfully enforceable. Being voluntary, it has the consent of the parties. The presumption is not only that one party has acceded to what the other party proposed, but also that, in the original meaning of the word, both parties have consented—that they have thought, felt and

judged the matter together.⁶ Being a contract, the agreement will, presumably, be specific enough to minimize the quarrels of misunderstanding. It will say what the parties may expect of one another. It will say what are their respective rights and duties. In the field of the contract, their relations will be regulated and criteria will exist for adjudicating issues between them.

These are the essential characteristics of a constitutional system. It can be said to prevail when every man in and out of office is bound by lawful contracts. Without this, that is without constitutional government, there is no freedom. For the antithesis to being free is to be at the mercy of men who can act arbitrarily. It is not to know what may be done to you. It is to have no right to an accounting, and to have no means of objecting. Despotism and anarchy prevail when a constitutional order does not exist. Both are lawless and arbitrary. Indeed, despotism may be defined as the anarchy of lawless rulers, and anarchy as the despotism of lawless crowds.

The first principle of a civilized state is that power is legitimate only when it is under contract. Then it is, as we say, duly constituted. This principle is of such controlling significance that in the Western world the making of the contracts of government and of society has usually been regarded as marking—historically or symbolically—the crossing of the line which divides barbarity from civility.

Yet, as a matter of fact, there were not many actual documents. The public men who developed the constitutional systems of the West had a few texts, actually signed and sealed and delivered, to work with. There were, says Gierke, some "actual contracts between German princes and the estates of their realms." There are the celebrated contracts like Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the American Constitution. But genuine historic contracts are scarce, and they do not begin to cover all the political powers that need to be regulated.

There are not and never have been, and indeed could never be, specific contracts covering the unwritten laws of the good society, covering the domain of manners, as Lord Moulton called it, which includes "all things that a man should impose upon himself, from duty to good

taste."⁷ It is necessary somehow to give authority to these unwritten laws, to invest them in some way with the reality of concreteness. The public philosophers drew by analogy upon the Roman Law, which presumed that in certain cases an agreement had been reached and an obligation incurred by acts unaccompanied by any express pact (*quasi ex contractu*).⁸

The general idea that the unwritten laws of public behavior are contractual and rest on consent was materialized in myths of an original covenant entered into by the first ancestors and binding upon their descendants. These myths, which appear in many versions at various times and places, make credible—by materializing it—the ethereal notion that civility is a fabric of understandings. The Ark of the Covenant, says Deuteronomy, contained the two tables of stone on which were written with the finger of God the Ten Commandments. Now, as a matter of fact, the Ark and the two tables of stone did not exist when Deuteronomy was compiled. But if they had never existed, how would the authors of Deuteronomy have convinced the Israelites that they must obey the Ten Commandments? They would not have gotten much obedience to the Commandments if they had told the Israelites that it was not certain, but merely probable, that they had been drawn up by Moses himself, and that it could be assumed that the Commandments reflected the considered judgment of Moses of how best to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of Israelites. The Ten Commandments had a better chance of being obeyed by the Israelites if they were written by God, rather than by another Israelite. And it was easier to believe that God did write them if, once upon a time, the two tables of stone had been deposited in the Ark of the Covenant.

Many in the modern age have rejected the idea of the contractual basis of power because, as a matter of fact, there never was an historic contract. Bentham, for example, knew that the two tables of stone could not be found and he wrote that "the origination of governments from a contract is a pure fiction, or in other words a

⁷ Lord Moulton, "Law and Manners," in *Atlantic Monthly* (July 1924).

⁸ Charles Howard McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West* (1932), p. 118.

⁶ Cf. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV, article "Contract."

falsehood . . . where it is but from government that contracts derive their binding force."⁹

To this we must reply that a fiction is not necessarily a falsehood. It may be the vehicle of a truth. Where do governments derive the power, which Bentham speaks of, to bind contracts? Only where the governments are conducted by men in a community who feel themselves bound by the belief that contracts are binding. The laws prevail when the lawmakers and the judges and the law enforcers are attached to the laws. When they are not attached to the laws, the laws of contract and the laws of the rights of man—the laws of the constitution, of charters, of treaties—are a dead letter, like, for example, the encyclopedic bill of rights in the Soviet Constitution of 1936.

"The personal liberty of the individual," says Blackstone, in the celebrated chapter on "The Legal Rights of Englishmen,"¹⁰ is protected in part by the Habeas Corpus Act, which provides that "no subject of England can be long detained in prison" unless it can be proved in court that he is lawfully imprisoned. "Lest this act should be evaded by demanding unreasonable bail or sureties for the prisoner's appearance, it is declared . . . that excessive bail ought not to be required."

But the Habeas Corpus Act, which is a legal device to protect the personal liberty of the individual, does that—obviously enough—only where and when it is observed and enforceable. That will be only in a country where the executive and the assembly, the judges, the jailers and the lawyers feel bound, as if by personal contract, to the principles of the Habeas Corpus Act. Otherwise, no matter what the words of the law, it can happen to anyone, as to the man in Kafka's story, that he might never find out why he was in prison. Blackstone could not have written with such assurance that the Habeas Corpus Act prevents arbitrary detention in prison if in the England of his time the rights and duties that the Act declares had not become concrete and real, had not become matters of genuine concern.

⁹ Jeremy Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies: Being an Examination of the Declaration of Rights Issued During the French Revolution*, Art. II, Sentence 1.

¹⁰ *Commentaries*, Book I, Chapter 1, 2.

4. *The Language of Accommodation*

MEN HAVE been laboring with the problem of how to make concrete and real what is abstract and immaterial ever since the Greek philosophers began to feel the need to accommodate the popular Homeric religion to the advance of science. The theologians, says Aristotle, are like the philosophers in that they promulgate certain doctrines; but they are unlike them in that they do so in mythical form.¹¹

The method of accommodation employed by the philosophers has been to treat the materialization in the myth as allegory: as translation of the same knowledge into another language.¹² To converse with the devil, for example, could then mean what literally it says—to talk face to face with the devil, a concrete materialized personage. But it could mean, also, the imitation of a wicked nature without—as the Cambridge Platonist John Smith wrote, "a mutual local presence,"¹³ that is to say without meeting a devil in person. This was an accommodation to those who, believing in the wickedness of evil, could not believe in the personified devil. The devil could mean either "some apostate spirit as one particular being," and also "the spirit of apostasy which is lodged in all men's natures." This is the method of plural interpretation; it uses "the language of accommodation."¹⁴ It is justified, and legitimate, said John Smith in his discourse entitled "A Christian's Conflicts and Conquests," because "truth is content, when it comes into the world, to wear our mantles, to learn our language, to conform itself as it were to our dress and fashions . . . it speaks with the most idiotical sort of men in the most idiotical way, and becomes all things to all men, as every some of truth should do for their good."¹⁵

¹¹ Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (The Gifford Lectures, 1936), p. 10. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. III, Ch. 4, 1000a 4-18.

¹² Cf. Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (1952), Ch. IV.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 138 et seq.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

5. *The Limits of Accommodation*

BUT THERE are limits beyond which we cannot carry the time-honored method of accommodating the diversity of beliefs. As we know from the variety and sharpness of schisms and sects in our time, we have gone beyond the limits of accommodation. We know, too, that as the divisions grow wider and more irreconcilable, there arise issues of loyalty with which the general principle of toleration is unable to cope.

For the toleration of differences is possible only on the assumption that there is no vital threat to the community. Toleration is not, therefore, a sufficient principle for dealing with the diversity of opinions and beliefs. It is itself dependent upon the positive principle of accommodation. The principle calls for the effort to find agreement beneath the differences.

In studying how accommodation is achieved, we may begin by observing that it is the philosophers, using Aristotle's broad terminology, who work out and promote the plural interpretation. They propose the terms for accommodating their immaterial belief to the concrete and materialized imagery of the fundamentalists. Thus it was the Cambridge Platonist, John Smith, who took the initiative about the devil. John Smith was not addressing the fundamentalists who believed in the personified devil; in fact what he said about the whole matter was not meant to trouble the fundamentalists at all. He was addressing men who were unable to believe in the personified devil and yet were still in essential communion with the fundamentalists. For they did believe in the spirit of the devil which, as everyone knows, is in all of us. In this accommodation the Christian Platonists gave up trying to believe what they could not believe. They went on believing that which in its essence their fundamentalist neighbors believed. Thus they could continue to live in the same community with them.

There is an impressive historical example of how by accommodation it is possible to communicate these difficult truths to a large heterogeneous society. In mediaeval Christendom a great subject of accommodation was the origin and sanction of the public philosophy itself. Of the natural laws of the rational order. Otto von Guericke says

that despite the innumerable learned controversies of the lawyers, the theologians and the philosophers, "all were agreed that there was natural law, which, on the one hand, radiated from a principle transcending earthly power, and on the other hand was true and perfectly binding law . . . the highest power on earth was subject to the rules of natural law. They stood above the Pope and above the Kaiser, above the ruler and above the sovereign people, nay, above the whole community of mortals. Neither statute nor act of government, neither resolution of the people nor custom, could break the bounds that thus were set. What-ever contradicted the eternal and immutable principles of natural law was utterly void and would bind no one."¹⁵

But though there was agreement on this, there was deep controversy over whether the natural laws were the commands of God or whether they were the dictates of an eternal reason, grounded on the being of God, and unalterable even by God himself. How were men to imagine, to materialize and make concrete the natural law which is above the Pope and the Kaiser and all mortals? As decrees of an omniscient and omnipotent heavenly king? Or as the principles of the nature of things? There were some who could not conceive of binding laws which had to be obeyed unless there was a lawyer made in the image of the human lawyers they had seen or heard about. There were others to whose capacity it was not necessary to condescend with quite that much materialization.

The crucial point, however, is not where the naturalists and supernaturalists disagreed. It is that they did agree that there was a valid law which, whether it was the commandment of God or the reason of things, was transcendent. They did agree that it was not something decided upon by certain men and then proclaimed by them. It was not someone's fancy, someone's prejudice, someone's wish or rationalization, a psychological experience and no more. It is there objectively, not subjectively. It can be discovered. It has to be obeyed.

¹⁵ Otto von Guericke, *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, translated with an Introduction by Frederick William Maillard (Cambridge University Press, 1927). Cf. pp. 73-87 and more especially Note 256.

6. *The Death of God*

AS LONG, then, as both the philosopher and the theologian believe in the objective order, there can be accommodation about the degree and kind of materialization. The range and variety of men's capacity to understand is very great. So, too, must be the range and variety of the images which descend to their varying capacities. We can, therefore, avoid much misunderstanding if we do not confound the materialization—which is the mode of communicating belief—with the subject of the belief. For not until we go down under the comparatively superficial question of belief or unbelief, in any particular materialization, do we find the radical problems of belief and unbelief.

When Martin Buber speaks of "the great images of God fashioned by mankind,"¹⁶ he recognizes that there can be many images, or indeed that there can be no image which has concreteness to our sense perceptions.

The critical question does not turn on whether men do or do not believe in an imagery. It turns on whether they believe that a man is able "to experience a reality absolutely independent of himself." When Sartre, following Nietzsche, says that "God is dead," the critical point is not that he refuses to believe in the existence however attenuated, of an anthropomorphic God. There can be, indeed there is, great faith and deep religion without any concrete image of God. The radical unbelief lies underneath the metaphor of God's death. It is in Sartre's saying that "if I have done away with God the Father, someone is needed to invent values . . . life has no meaning *a priori* . . . it is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose."¹⁷

With this, Sartre has done away not only with God the Father but with the recognition that beyond our private worlds there is a public world to which we belong. If what is good, what is right, what is true, is only what the individual "chooses" to "invent," then we are outside the

¹⁶ Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God* (1952), p. 22.

¹⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism*, translated by Bernard Frechtman (1947), p. 58. See also Martin Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

traditions of civility. We are back in the war of all men against all men. There is left no ground for accommodation among the varieties of men; nor is there in this proclamation of anarchy a will to find an accommodation.

And why, we may ask, is there among such modern philosophers as these no concern like that of their great predecessors, to find an accommodation? It is not only because they themselves have ceased to believe in the metaphors—in the sacred images. They have ceased to believe that behind the metaphors and the sacred images there is any kind of independent reality that can be known and must be recognized.

Thus they reject "the concept of 'truth' as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control," which, as Bertrand Russell says, "has been one of the ways in which philosophy hitherto has incucated the necessary element of humility. When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte . . . and to which modern men, whether philosophers or not, are prone. I am persuaded that this intoxication is the greatest danger of our time, and that any philosophy which, however unintentionally, contributes to it is increasing the danger of vast social disaster."¹⁸

7. *The Mandate of Heaven*

AT THE end, then, the questions are how we conceive of ourselves and the public world beyond our private selves. Much depends upon the philosophers. For though they are not kings, they are, we may say, the teachers of the teachers. "In the history of Western governments," says Francis G. Wilson,¹⁹ "the transitions of society can be marked by the changing character of the intellectuals, who have served the government as lawyers, advisers, administrators, who have been teachers in the schools, who have been members of professions like medicine and theology. It is through them that doctrines are made to

¹⁸ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), p. 828.

¹⁹ Francis G. Wilson, "Public Opinion and the Intellectuals," in *American Political Science Review* (June 1954).

operate in practical affairs. And their doctrine, which they, themselves, have learned in the schools and universities, will have the shape and the reference and the direction which the prevailing philosophy gives it.

That is how and why philosophy and theology are the ultimate and decisive studies in which we engage. In them are defined the main characteristics of the images of man which will be acted upon in the arts and sciences of the epoch. The role of philosophers is rarely, no doubt, creative. But it is critical, in that they have a deciding influence in determining what may be believed, how it can be believed, and what cannot be believed. The philosophers, one might say, stand at the crossroads. While they may not cause the traffic to move, they can stop it and start it, they can direct it one way or the other. I do not contend, though I hope, that the decline of Western society will be arrested if the teachers in our schools and universities come back to the great tradition of the public philosophy. But I do contend that the decline, which is already far advanced, cannot be arrested if the prevailing philosophers oppose this restoration and revival, if they impugn rather than support the validity of an order which is superior to the values that Sartre tells each man "to invent."

What the prevailing philosophers say about religion is not itself, in Tillich's terms, religion as an ultimate concern of worship and of love. But if the philosophers teach that religious experience is a purely psychological phenomenon, related to nothing beyond each man's psychic condition, then they will give educated men a bad intellectual conscience if they have religious experiences. The philosopher cannot give them religion. But they can keep them away from it.

Philosophers play the same role in relation to the principles of the good society. These require, as we have seen, the mastery of human nature in the raw by an acquired, rational second nature. In the literal sense, the principles of the good society must be unpopular until they have prevailed sufficiently to alter the popular impulses. For the popular impulses are opposed to public principles. These principles cannot be made to prevail if they are discredited—if they are dismissed as superstition, as obscurantism, as meaningless metaphysics, as reactionary, as self-seeking rationalizations.

The public philosophy is in a large measure intellectu-

ally discredited among contemporary men. Because of that, what we may call the terms of discourse in public controversy are highly unfavorable to anyone who adheres to the public philosophy. The signs and seals of legitimacy, of rightness and of truth, have been taken over by men who reject, even when they are not the avowed adversaries of, the doctrine of constitutional democracy.

If the decline of the West under the misrule of the people is to be halted, it will be necessary to alter these terms of discourse. They are now set overwhelmingly against the credibility and against the rightness of the principles of the constitutional state; they are set in favor of the Jacobin conception of the emancipated and sovereign people.²⁰

I have been arguing, hopefully and wishfully, that it may be possible to alter the terms of discourse if a convincing demonstration can be made that the principles of the good society are not, in Sartre's phrase, invented and chosen—that the conditions which must be met if there is to be a good society are there, outside our wishes, where they can be discovered by rational inquiry, and developed and adapted and refined by rational discussion.

If eventually this were demonstrated successfully, it would, I believe, rearm all those who are concerned with the anomy of our society, with its progressive barbarization, and with its descent into violence and tyranny. Amidst the quagmire of moral impressionism they would stand again on hard intellectual ground where there are significant objects that are given and are not merely projected, that are compelling and are not merely wished. Their hope would be re-established that there is a public world, sovereign above the infinite number of contradictory and competing private worlds. Without this certainty, their struggle must be unavailing.

As the defenders of civility, they cannot do without the signs and seals of legitimacy, of rightness and of truth. For it is a practical rule, well known to experienced men, that the relation is very close between our capacity to act at all and our conviction that the action we are taking is right. This does not mean, of course, that the action is necessarily right. What is necessary to continuous action is that it shall be believed to be right.

Without that belief, most men will not have the energy and will to persevere in the action. Thus satanism, which prefers evil as such, is present in some men and perhaps potential in many. Yet, except in a condition of the profoundest hysteria, as in a lynching, satanism cannot be preached to multitudes. Even Hitler, who was enormously satanic and delighted in monstrous evil, did nevertheless need, it would seem, to be reassured that he was not only a great man but, in a mysterious way, a righteous one.

William Jennings Bryan once said that to be clad in the armor of righteousness will make the humblest citizen of all the land stronger than all the hosts of error.²¹ That is not quite true. But the reason the humblest citizen is not stronger than the hosts of error is that the latter also are clad in an armor which they at least believe is the armor of righteousness. Had they not been issued the fact, be a host at all. For political ideas acquire operative force in human affairs when, as we have seen, they acquire legitimacy, when they have the title of being right which binds men's consciences. Then they possess, as the Confucian doctrine has it, "the mandate of heaven."²² In the crisis within the Western society, there is at issue now the mandate of heaven.

²¹ Speech at Democratic National Convention (Chicago, 1896).

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