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ABSTRACT

THE PHILOSOPHIC SOURCES AND SANCTIONS OF THE FOUNDERS OF ETHICAL CULTURE

JAMES FRANKLIN HORNBACK

Felix Adler and his first four American assistants who founded Ethical Societies in the decade after his Society for Ethical Culture in New York (1876) are presented in comparative intellectual biographies, to note their varying adherence to Adler's announced philosophic principles: the metaphysical independence of ethics, and its supremacy over all other categories.

Only Adler, who led the Ethical movement forcefully until his death in 1933, has been previously and now extensively studied. The other four and their dates of full acceptance into the Fraternity of Ethical Teachers are: William M. Salter of Chicago (1883-1907), S. Burns Weston of Philadelphia (1885-1934), Walter L. Sheldon of St. Louis (1886-1907), and Stanton Coit of London (1886-1944).

The metaphysical independence of ethics, in the neo-Kantian sense for Adler and a more generally Idealistic sense for the other four, was often mistaken by people both in and out of the Ethical movement, and even by some professional philosophers and critics, as a claim of exemption for ethics from metaphysics or intellectual grounding. It is the intent of these philosophical biographies to show how this first generation of Ethical leaders remained relatively faithful to Adler's stated principles, carrying them consistently through the second quarter-century and second generation of Ethical leadership.

A brief appraisal is given to the philosophic sources and sanctions of the third, fourth, and even the new fifth quarter-century or generation of Ethical leadership. In the third generation, a gradual and uneven transition was made from the independence of ethics sanctioned by philosophic Idealism, to independence understood and sanctioned as naturalism or scientific humanism. At the start of the fifth quarter-century or generation (1976-2001), a shift "back" to Adler's original sanctions is claimed, but more in terms of existentialism and the new (non-rationalistic) mysticism.

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OF THE FOUNDERS OF ETHICAL CULTURE

by

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FOREWORD

Felix Adler and the four slightly younger men who joined him as founding leaders of the first Societies for Ethical Culture were united in their assertion of the independence and the supremacy of ethics. Adler in New York (1876), William Mackintire Salter in Chicago (1883), S. Burns Weston in Philadelphia (1885), Walter L. Sheldon in St. Louis (1886), and Stanton Coit in London (1888) all sought continuing sanction for strongly felt ethical codes in the rational or intuitive certainties of idealistic or transcendental metaphysics. They added the assurance of empirical "verification" in "exemplification" or practice, and in learning through doing, among themselves, their larger constituencies, and all who could join--whatever their sanctions or apparent lack of sanctions--in "moral experience."

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth, traditional religious sanctions for ethics were giving way for many of their contemporaries to scientific and social Darwinism, romantic or rugged individualism, the cultural relativism of the new anthropology, comparative religions, the higher criticism

of the Hebrew-Christian Bible, and even to complete moral skepticism or nihilism. These five pioneer Ethical leaders were less distinctive in their idealistic philosophies, which had often been used for more traditional religious apologetics, than for their frank declaration of the independence of ethics in organizations devoted to that philosophy.

Like the more loosely organized and academic Metaphysical Society and Aristotelian Society in England,¹ and the New England Transcendentalists, St. Louis Hegelians, and Free Religious Society in America, they helped to focus the attention of the literate world on ethical alternatives to the revealed and supernatural faiths. There were slight overlappings in membership among the leading intellectuals of these movements, even crossing the Atlantic at times, and frequent philosophic exchanges and controversies. In America, Emerson and his followers (among others) in the Free Religious Association were the Ethical leaders' early inspiration and closest religious kin.

Among the five Ethical founders, only Adler has been given detailed philosophical and biographical attention, and only recently at that. His son-in-law and literary executor, Professor Horace L. Friess of Columbia University, labored for many years after Adler's death in 1933, in a

¹See Alan Willard Brown, The Metaphysical Society: Victorian Minds in Crisis, 1869-80 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), especially pp. xvii and 248 for lists of members.

sensitive and definitive study which has been edited and published since his own death in 1975.² It was my privilege and fate to work under the sponsorship of this scrupulously kind and thorough man, after my own matriculation for the doctorate in 1951, indebted chiefly to him for the joint research on Adler as he, with characteristic modesty, expressed indebtedness to me for research on the other men.

There have been other, more specialized studies of Adler. The late Robert S. Guttchen did his doctoral dissertation on Adler's philosophy of education at New York University in 1962, posthumously published,³ and my friend and colleague Howard B. Radest did his dissertation at Columbia on Adler's philosophy of culture and education, as it might be applied today.⁴

Even more specialized was the research of Benny Kraut, who also worked with Professor Friess, on Adler's roots in Reform Judaism and his respectful departure from that faith.⁴ I share both Kraut's and Friess's conclusion that Adler did indeed leave Judaism, in his departure from the "unitary" conception of cosmos or godhead, and his frank abandonment of a continuing "distinctive mission" or separate identity for the Jewish people.

²Felix Adler and Ethical Culture: Memories and Studies, edited by Fania Weingartner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. xi, 272.

³An Identification, Analysis, and Evaluation of Felix Adler's Ethics and Philosophy of Education (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973), pp. 293.

⁴From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Evolution of Felix Adler (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979), pp. xv, 476.

The ideal. The core of power are left to us as far as they are rationalized. Ethically, the rational ideal manifests its reality in as far as it proves itself to be an actual motive force in conduct. In as far as there is that it can be called a motive force to his ideal of his nature.

CHAPTER I

FELIX ADLER AND THE ORGANIC IDEAL

A few days after his eighty-first and final birthday celebration at St. Huberts in the Adirondacks, Felix Adler wrote of "the many kind messages it brings," and added, in a letter to Percival Chubb, the slightly younger leader of the Ethical Society of St. Louis:

. . . Some of these messages are distinguished more by goodwill than by insight. For instance, there is the frequent recurrence of the wish that "all your ideals may be realized." It is not even meant ironically, as it well might be.¹

Whether Mr. Chubb caught the irony or not--and years of exposure to Dr. Adler's manner and vocabulary should have taught him to catch it--few others could have guessed that for him the ideal was already "realized," though far from being "actualized." As he liked to put it, in more technical philosophic discussions:

. . . The moral ideal is real in so far as from it is derived the impulse to organize our lives. To ethi-
cize and to organize are synonymous terms. Conscious organization implies the idea of organism as a pattern; the idea of organism and the rational nature are identical.

. . . Not the realization of the ideal, is our earthly goal, but the realization of the reality of

¹ Address of May 15th, 1876, Ethical Address.
Letter from St. Huberts, New York, August 27, 1932; in Ethical Society files, St. Louis.

the ideal. The data of sense are real to us so far as they are rationalized. . . . Ethically, the rational ideal manifests its reality in so far as it proves itself to be an actual motive force in conduct, in so far as there is that in man's nature which responds to his ideal of his nature.²

This is heady stuff, especially to those inside and out of the Ethical Culture movement who have interpreted the movement as a moralistic, activist revolt against the subtleties of intellectual and doctrinal distinctions. As the founder of the first society in New York in 1876, Adler himself contributed to the misunderstanding with his early emphasis on "deed, not creed." The phrase first appeared in his trial sermon as a bright young Ph. D. in 1873, just back from Heidelberg and Berlin as the likely assistant and successor to his father as rabbi of Temple Emanu-El. The young Adler called for "a religion such as Judaism ever claimed to be--not of the creed but of the deed."³ He repeated the call to persons of all religious backgrounds, or none, in the inaugural address of the Society for Ethical Culture (not yet so named) in Standard Hall, New York, when he spoke of "Diversity in the creed, unanimity in the deed!"⁴ The emphasis continued in deeds themselves--in the

²Felix Adler, "The Relation of the Moral Ideal to Reality," International Journal of Ethics, XXII (October, 1911), pp. 15, 18.

³"The Judaism of the Future," October 11, 1873, reprinted in part in a special report by Howard Radest, "The Founding of Ethical Culture," inserted in Ideals at Work (March, 1962); p. 4 of insert.

⁴"Address of May 15th, 1876," Ethical Addresses, III (May, 1896), pp. 83-98. The quotation is from p. 96.

extensive reforms, philanthropies, and educational experiments of Adler and his new society--and in and through the publication of his first volume of addresses and articles, about 1877.⁵

Adler's son-in-law and literary executor, Horace Friess, speaks of three stages in his adult life. First, after the break with the Reform Judaism of his parents, came a period of "eudaemonist's optimism for improving this or that condition of human welfare." But he found a lack of "deep and powerful motives" among secular reformers, "and so he turned next to preach the performance of moral duty as a way to create a sustaining sense of dignity and worth." The problem remained: how to know one's duty, and how to do it effectively. "Thus, the final period of his life--the longest of the three--was one of a searching reconstruction of principles." This final period began at about the time of his appointment in 1902 to a new chair of Social and Political Ethics at Columbia University, endowed by such friends and co-workers in civic causes as E. R. A. Seligman, the political scientist at Columbia, and William H. Baldwin, Jr., the railway executive.⁶

Of these three complementary stages, the last is the most productive of consistent and systematic statements

⁵ Creed and Deed (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, for the Society for Ethical Culture, n. d.), pp. iv, 243.

⁶ Horace L. Friess, "Felix Adler: Professor of Social and Political Ethics 1903-1933," Columbia University Quarterly, XXVI (June, 1934), pp. 140-41.

of the organic ideal, but the earlier two show his dawning "realization of the reality" of that ideal. Even a fourth stage--of birth, boyhood, and schooling--gives us insight into the construction of his mature philosophy.

Felix Adler was born on August 13, 1851, the second son of Rabbi Samuel Adler and Henrietta Frankfurter of Alzey on the Rhine, Germany. He and his parents and the older brother Isaac came to America in 1857, when Dr. Samuel Adler succeeded Dr. L. Mertzbacher as rabbi of Temple Emanuel in New York City.

We are dependent on Felix Adler's own reports of his early life and impressions, on the facts he and his family gave to biographical dictionaries, and on the insights gained by Dr. Friess, who knew him first as a student in his seminar at Columbia in 1917-18 and then as his academic colleague and son-in-law, "intimately for the fifteen remaining years of his life."⁷

Both of Rabbi Adler's boys attended Columbia Grammar School and Columbia College, and Isaac preceded Felix by two years at Berlin and other European universities, taking his doctorate in medicine at Heidelberg in 1871. Isaac went on to practice medicine and teach pathology in New York. Felix Adler responded to the challenge and example of the scholarly, competent father and brother. He was particularly grateful to his teachers at the Grammar

⁷Friess, *ibid.*, p. 135. Dr. Friess also wrote the article for the Dictionary of American Biography (XXI, Supplement 1), pp. 14-15.

School for giving him a thorough classical background for higher education, but his enthusiasm did not carry over to the curriculum and student life of Columbia College, where it was undoubtedly hard for a young man of Jewish background and belief--however broad and receptive--to feel at home.⁸ After telling of earlier questioning of the doctrine of creation, and of surprise at a revered Sunday school teacher's taking refuge in Spinoza and pantheism, Felix Adler went on to criticize "the narrow theology of the lectures on Christian Evidences as taught at that time in Columbia College," and to praise the teaching of Zeller, Duhring, Steinthal, and Bonitz at the University of Berlin--and, "above all," of Hermann Cohen, later of Marburg, who taught him philosophy in general and "the rigor, the sublimity, of Kant's system" in particular.⁹

Adler was later to list as the "chief influences" on his life (quite aside from "studies") "the profound ethical influence of the father and the early training of the mother in visiting and helping poor families in the tenements of New York."¹⁰ Despite his gradual departure from the particular forms and sanctions of his parents, there seems always to have been mutual respect and communication,

⁸Conversation with Dr. Friess, July, 1967.

⁹An Ethical Philosophy of Life (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1918), pp. 8-9.

¹⁰Biographical sketch in Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ethical Movement (1876-1926), ed. H. J. G[olding] (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1926), p. 30.

without pain or controversy.¹¹ Also influential, of course, was his own marriage in 1880 to Helen Goldmark and her participation in community service and philosophic interests, along with the rearing of their family.

Hermann Cohen had tried unsuccessfully to teach him socialism, as a replacement for religion, but Adler at least recognized the need to meet "the issues that Socialism raises." The books of Friedrich Albert Lange helped him to do this, especially the one called Die Arbeiterfrage (The Labor Question, "epoch-making in my life," though "not a great book") and his History of Materialism, which "dispelled some of the fictitious glamor that still hung about the materialistic hypothesis."¹²

For reasons that are not at all clear, after nearly three years of study in Berlin, Adler completed his doctorate in Semitica at Heidelberg in March, 1873. He returned to America and gave the fateful trial sermon at Temple Emanu-El on October 11. Years later he recalled it in a newspaper interview:

"... Then some member brought up the fact that I had not mentioned God in what I had to say.

"The committee came to me and asked whether I believed in God. I said: 'Yes, but not in your God,' and such being the case I could not conscientiously accept the ministry. I was called a suppressed atheist, but that meant nothing to me, because I was true to myself."¹³

¹¹ An Ethical Philosophy of Life, especially chapter on "The Hebrew Religion," pp. 14-26.

¹² Ibid., pp. 10-11.

¹³ S. J. Woolf, "Dr. Adler, at 80, Surveys Man's Advance," New York Times Magazine, August 9, 1931, p. 7.

Adler's "first action" on returning from abroad, and one somewhat more lasting, was the founding of "a little society which we ambitiously called a Union for the Higher Life based on three tacit assumptions: sex purity, the principle of devoting the surplus of one's income beyond that required for one's own genuine needs to the elevation of the working class, and thirdly, continued intellectual development."¹⁴ It included such contemporaries as Leo Rosenblatt, Alfred Wolff, Henry Morgenthau, and--after 1881--William M. Salter.¹⁵

By December of 1873 Adler was appointed to a non-resident lectureship in Hebrew and Oriental Literature at Cornell University. The lectures, though they "revealed much rare knowledge and great ability in its presentation," drew criticism from "sundry denominational newspapers--the organs of various sectarian colleges," according to an open letter sent to alumni and undergraduates of Cornell by President Andrew D. White after the three-year grant expired. Citing similar criticisms of lectures by Louis Agassiz, Goldwin Smith, James Russell Lowell, Bayard Taylor, George William Curtis, and James Anthony Froude, and reviewing the high and nonsectarian purposes of the State of New York and such donors as Ezra Cornell in endowing the university,

¹⁴ An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 13.

¹⁵ Undated notes by S. Burns Weston in Philadelphia Society files. Henry Morgenthau, attorney and later a versatile United States ambassador, was the father of the late Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Dr. White defended the Adler appointment and the lectures without reservations:

The University having no funds applicable to such a purpose, a number of gentlemen in New York, headed by a distinguished Israelite well known for his public spirit, provided the funds to establish a lectureship for three years at Cornell University, and Dr. Adler was called to lecture on Hebrew and Oriental Literature.

Had the trustees neglected this opportunity, they could have been justly censured. Dr. Adler's ability was undoubted; his character was, as you have seen, vouched for by some of our most distinguished Christian scholars; into his religious tenets the laws of the State strictly forbade any inquiry.

.....

Later [after hearing two or three of the lectures] I heard that Dr. Adler was charged with "atheism," but as that charge has been made against nearly every man who has ever told any new truths, including John Milton and Isaac Newton, and as Dr. Adler was certainly not an "atheist" and disavowed any desire to proselyte students in any direction, and as no student was required to attend his lectures, since they formed part of no regular course, I saw not the slightest occasion for interference save in recommending him to avoid statements likely to be misunderstood.¹⁶

Throughout the Cornell period Adler returned to New York on weekends for meetings with his friends. These were increasingly formalized, until the evening of May 15, 1876, when "perhaps a hundred people assembled" and "after the address, the first Society for Ethical Culture was established in New York."¹⁷ This was in the midst of the

¹⁶Open letter of May 4, 1877; copy in New York Society files. Andrew D. White, first president of Cornell, is best known for his classic History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1896).

¹⁷Felix Adler, "Some Characteristics of the American Ethical Movement," an address delivered in South Place Chapel, London, June 7, 1925, reprinted in Fiftieth Anniversary volume, pp. 3-4.

period Dr. Friess called "eudaemonistic." Adler himself, looking backward, spoke more harshly of it:

. . . At this period, the notion of personality in my mind still being without determinate content, empirical matter intruded, and a species of millennialism for a time vitiated my thinking. In order to set up a goal for humanity, I dallied with Utopias, and flattered my imagination with the vision of something like a state of ultimate earthly felicity. The cheap cry of "Let us have heaven on earth" was also on my lips, though the delusion did not last long and perhaps never penetrated very deeply.¹⁸

Also looking backward, he acknowledged a "passing debt" to Emerson:

. . . As in the case of Kant, a strong attraction drew me toward Emerson with temporary disregard of radical differences,--although the spell was never so potent or so persistent in the latter case as in the former. I made Emerson's acquaintance in 1875. I came into touch with the Emerson circle and read and reread the Essays. The value of Emerson's teaching to me at that time consisted in the exalted view he takes of the self. . . . But I soon discovered that Emerson overstresses self-affirmation at the expense of service. . . .

. . . I came to see that Emerson's pantheism in effect spoils his ethics. Be thyself, he says. . . . But why! Because the One manifests itself in endless variety. . . . Difference is not cherished on its own account. And here, as in the case of the uniformity principle of Hebraism, I found myself dissenting.¹⁹

"The Emerson circle" included the Free Religious Association, organized in 1867 with Octavius B. Frothingham as its president. Adler became a member of the association before organizing his Society for Ethical Culture in 1876, and succeeded Frothingham as president in 1878, at the close of the annual meeting in Boston. In his introductory

¹⁸ An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 43.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

remarks at the next annual meeting in Parker Memorial Hall, Boston, on May 29, 1879, Adler praised the ailing Frothingham on retirement,²⁰ but he made it clear in his first presidential address that night that his own administration would move from ideas to action. He called for "a new education for the young," a journal, "a scheme for local organization," and "a School for the Science of Religion," with endowed chairs of religion, ethics, and social science.²¹

A newspaper account of Frothingham's "semi-recantation" of free religion a few years later dramatized the difference between the two men:

The Free Religious Association, which is preeminently a Boston institution both in its matter and its methods, has had but two presidents--the polished, intellectual and eloquent Frothingham, a man of maturity and conservative stamp, with more enthusiasm for ideas than for men, and the young and somewhat impetuous Adler, with his consuming love for humanity, his fine ideals of morality, and his ardor for social reform.²²

The article went on to tell of Adler's Ethical Society and Workingman's School, where "the Kindergarten is upon Froebel's plan of developing the mind through the senses," and of his United Relief Works in New York. It also assigned his "philosophic parentage" to Spencer and Kant.

Adler's activism was shared by William J. Potter and Francis Ellingwood Abbot, among others. Abbot's journal, The Index, came to the Free Religious Association in

²⁰Proceedings at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Free Religious Association (Boston, 1879), pp. 16-18.

²¹Ibid., pp. 40-57.

²²Boston Transcript, November 28, 1881.

1880, after which it was edited by Potter and Benjamin F. Underwood until it ceased publication in 1886. Abbot had founded The Index in 1870 with a subsidy from David R. Locke, the proprietor of the Toledo Blade, and a call to the Toledo Unitarian Society, which agreed to become "Independent" and to spare him from pastoral duties. He moved The Index to Boston in 1873.²³

Even Frothingham joined in the increasing activities, which included the Cooperative Colony Aid Association founded in 1879 by Adler, the Rev. Dr. Heber Newton of All Souls Episcopal Church in New York, and others, to help idealistic farmers and immigrants to set up utopian communities in the West. At least one such colony was established, briefly, in Salina County, Kansas.²⁴

But Adler remained unconvinced that the Free Religious Association could ever turn its attention effectively from the more remote of the two things which had filled Immanuel Kant with awe--"the starry heavens above"--to the one nearer at hand--"the moral law within." He was never to take an interest in interfaith movements as such, nor to encourage his associates to join them, not even those linking liberal theists with agnostics and freethinkers, though he could make common cause with moral idealists of all faiths. And so he resigned from the presidency of the

²³Stow Persons, Free Religion, An American Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), pp. 85-87.

²⁴Ibid., p. 144.

Free Religious Association in 1882, with another appeal for deeds rather than creeds.²⁵

Potter succeeded him as president. Adler remained a member for many years, though less active thereafter than those who became his colleagues in the founding of the other Ethical societies--William M. Salter, S. Burns Weston, Walter Sheldon, and Stanton Coit. Salter, Weston, and Sheldon spoke often at FRA conventions, and their names appeared frequently among the officers and directors. They mingled at meetings, and in correspondence, with such varied writers and lecturers as John Fiske, Julia Ward Howe, Dr. Edmund Montgomery of Hampstead, Texas, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Even Adler was listed as a vice-president as late as the year 1903-04.²⁶

Adler's stated ethical philosophy during this period was eclectic, full of Emersonian phrases, and somewhat inconsistent with his professed Kantianism:

From the background of the old Ideal stands out in bold relief the new. It is the reverse of the supernatural; if it takes pride in anything, it is in marking a return to nature. Trammels of the flesh, contamination of the body? . . . The body is not alien to the mind, it is the seed plot from which mind flowers out in every part. . . .²⁷

His "ideal" seemed more a projection of nature and the empirical than a necessary outcome of "the reality-producing

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

²⁶ FRA Convention programs, St. Louis files.

²⁷ Creed and Deed (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [1877]), p. 67.

functions of the mind." He even used the word "real" in its popular and common sense:

... Now the Ideal is the perfection of the Real. To find it we must go beyond the Realities. We study the nature of the tree, of man. We note the suggestions of the various parts, complete and produce them in utmost harmony, each perfect in itself, each serving by its own perfection, the rounded symmetry of the whole. In the image thus created we grasp the ideal form. Art with its genial enchantments, creates such images and gives them permanence. . . . Art is the idealism of form.

The intellect also, which looks out from behind the features, the indwelling man, exhibits the same twofold aspect of the Real and Ideal. Our real thoughts are incomplete and inadequate. . . . But deep down in the basic structure of the mind are true laws, unerring guides. Logic expresses them, logic is the idealism of the intellect.

And lastly we recognize the same distinction in the realm of feeling. To the untutored caprice, the overmastering impulse, in brief to the realism of the passions is opposed the law of right feeling, which ethics expresses. Ethics is the idealism of character. . . . An attempt has indeed been made to base morality upon a certain commonplace utility, but true morality scorns your sad utilities . . . is itself an end, and needs and admits no sanction save its own excellency.²⁸

The failure and frustration in many practical enterprises, and apparently inherent in the whole human enterprise, led Adler to the determination that there must be something more than pleasure, utility, and success as ethical sanctions. One of the instructive early experiments was a cooperative printing shop. "This having failed," he said, "because of the selfishness actuating the members, the Workingman's School was founded, with the avowed object of creating a truly cooperative spirit among workingmen."²⁹

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 79-80. Emphasis added.

²⁹ An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 13.

More and more his attention turned to the sense of duty itself, and to ways of teaching it to children and rationalizing it for adults.

So Adler turned in the early 1880's to recruitment and training of ethical teachers--"a new profession," he proudly called it. The selection of his first colleagues and their founding of new societies will be treated in coming chapters. But one experience, an abortive one in St. Louis, convinced him of the need for trained and trustworthy men as leaders for new groups in the pattern of the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Having been called to Chicago in April, 1883, he placed William Salter as lecturer of a new society there in the fall. Adler was also invited to St. Louis in June of that year, to address a gathering under the chairmanship of Dr. Emil Preetorius, who had come to America from Alzey as a young man in 1853, a few years before the Adlers. According to news reports, this gathering organized a Society for Ethical Culture, adopted a constitution and bylaws, and elected a distinguished board of trustees, whose names indicated almost exclusively German origin.³⁰ But the new society was allowed to languish. A report after the authorized organization three years later said only that

... Prof. Adler had been invited to lecture before the public at Memorial Hall and the plans were then devised to immediately organize a society in St. Louis. But among the people who came together at that time there were a great many who went into it under a

Chagy,

³⁰ St. Louis Globe-Democrat, June 5, 1883.

misapprehension of what it was, who really did not understand the thing itself. There was no one ready at that time to take the leadership of the society, and for this reason the effort at that time subsided.³¹

The "misapprehension" may be explained in part by a letter from the late Adolphe de Castro, former American consul in Madrid, written in his ninety-first year.³² He had fled to America as a young German radical, seven years younger than Adler, with a letter from the sister of Carl Steinschneider, and de Castro "said it was in German that Schurz, who was then co-editor with Preetorius of Die Westliche Post. Reaching St. Louis shortly after Schurz's departure for New York to edit the Evening Post, de Castro stayed on to write for the St. Louis paper.

The letter continues:

The result of my writings was an attack or an attempt on my young life. Preetorius thought it best to take me to his own palatial home on Lafayette Square, and there the "best minds" of St. Louis met to engage me in conversation. . . . They called my articulae vitae "Ethical Culture"; and so the dominical group . . . urged me to lead the class in ethical culture. We actually formed a society, I--the beardless runt, was the "leader" and it was arranged to have Dr. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture in America (I had completely forgotten the man), to come to St. Louis to give his episcopal benediction.³³

De Castro recognized Adler immediately as an older student of Steinschneider of Berlin, the expert in Semitica, but was not recognized in return. Adler asked to see the address de Castro had prepared for delivery in German (he knew no English), on "Die Religion der Zukunft--The Religion

³¹ St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 16, 1886.

³² From Los Angeles, December 17, 1948, to Gideon Chazy, editor, The Standard (American Ethical Union).

of the Future . . . a bold attack on the cult system and attendant superstitions." It clearly did not meet Adler's expectations as an inaugural address for an Ethical Society. His cool response angered de Castro, who taunted him with "der amerikanisher Adler"--the American Eagle--a derisive nickname from German student days. At that point Adler recognized him as "'the boy that ran errands for Steinschneider,'" and de Castro "said things in German that . . . I would hesitate to repeat in the original." Dr. Preetorius arrived, to lead them into the meeting, and Adler used all the time for his own presentation of Ethical Culture, deliberately crowding "Die Religion der Zukunft" from the program.³⁴

Whatever there may have been of personal rejection in the St. Louis episode--probably exaggerated by de Castro, as his name appears nowhere in the public record before or after the meeting--there was undoubtedly a rejection of negative rationalism in approach, and probably an attempt to diversify the national background of the initiating group. Adler insisted that each new society should be clear in both theory and practice, on the positive philosophy of the Ethical movement and its openness to members of all racial, religious, and national origins.

Adler also continued to press for "A School of Philosophy and Applied Ethics," a professional school less

³⁴Ibid.

dogmatic than the theological schools and denominational colleges, and more practical than the schools of philosophy. A symposium on his printed prospectus was presented at the Convention of Ethical Societies in Philadelphia on January 25, 1889, immediately after addresses on "The Practical Value of Philosophy" by Josiah Royce and "The Scientific Treatment of Religion" by Duren J. H. Ward, a Harvard instructor in philosophy who had known Sheldon in Berlin. Brief commentary addresses were given by President Potter of the Free Religious Association, speaking only for himself; Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer of Providence, Rhode Island, a Unitarian minister who was later to join the Ethical leadership; and Thomas Davidson of New York, the itinerant Scottish philosopher and teacher, whose own summer schools at Farmington, Connecticut, and Glenmore, New York, were to become famous, as did his Breadwinners' College on the Lower East Side. All these statements were published, along with the prospectus by Adler and written responses to it from more than twenty friendly specialists, including Frothingham, William James, Daniel G. Brinton of Pennsylvania, and William Torrey Harris of the St. Louis Hegelians, newly appointed U. S. Commissioner of Education in Washington.³⁵

The full plan of "A School of Philosophy and Applied Ethics" was never realized. In its stead Adler was able to establish a School of Applied Ethics for four summers in

³⁵ Ethical Record, II (April, 1889), pp. 1-46.

Plymouth, Massachusetts, starting in 1891 and omitting 1893; a winter session early in 1895 at Columbian University in Washington, D. C.; and another series of the Summer School of Ethics from 1908 through 1911 at the University of Wisconsin. Its first three departments were not the originally recommended Philosophy, Science of Religion, and Applied Ethics, but rather Economics (an intended division of Applied Ethics, along with Education and Reform), History of Religions, and Ethics, directed respectively by Dr. Henry C. Adams of Michigan, Dr. Crawford H. Toy of Harvard, and Adler himself. Each offered a general course of eighteen lectures in six weeks the first year, with additional lectures by such distinguished guests as Professors James, Kittredge, George Foot Moore, William Sheldon, Taussig, and Thayer of Harvard, Professor Jastrow of Pennsylvania, and Messrs. Salter and Sheldon of the Ethical movement.³⁶

Adler's first series of lectures at Plymouth emphasized the moral instruction of children, after a general introduction to ethical philosophy. The specialized lectures were published, slightly condensed and with the addition of an earlier and pioneering address on "The Influence of Manual Training on Character," as delivered before the National Conference of Charities and Correction in Buffalo, in July, 1888.³⁷

³⁶Announcements and programs, esp. in International Journal of Ethics, I (July, 1891), pp. 483-94.

³⁷The Moral Instruction of Children, Vol. XXI of International Education Series, ed. William T. Harris (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1892), pp. xiii, 278.

Adler warned against the temptation of moral fanaticism, with its narrow interests, and clearly stated a eudaemonistic ethics:

Ethics is a science of relations. The things related are human interests, human ends. . . . The ends of the natural man are to be respected . . . so long as they remain within their proper limits.³⁸

Stressing "ethics as a science of limits," he went on, far in advance of his time and of educators later known as progressive, to show how learning could and should be combined with doing in every aspect of life and of education proper:

. . . The non-moral faculties are not only not anti-moral, as has been shown, but . . . they lend to Morality a friendly, an almost indispensable support. The aesthetic, the intellectual, and the emotional faculty have not in themselves a moral quality, but when used as auxiliaries they pave the way for moral considerations pure and simple. . . .³⁹

As Adler named and illustrated the fields of science, history, literature, manual training, music, and gymnastics, the chief hint of his incipient rigorism and transcendental idealism was his separation of these "natural" auxiliaries from the "ethical" per se. He learned and borrowed from Froebel and other pioneers in kindergarten and childhood education, of course, but never consciously borrowed, as some have suggested, "directly from J. J. Rousseau."⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁰ See Robert H. Beck's otherwise accurate and perceptive "Progressive Education and American Progressivism: Felix Adler," Teachers College Record, LX (November, 1958), 77-89, and his successive articles on Margaret Naumberg and Caroline Pratt. Dr. Beck, professor of education at Minnesota, wrote (p. 78) that "Adler need yield to no one, not even John Dewey, as a leader of American progressivism

In the coordination of feeling, will, and reasoning, Adler always came out on the side of reasoned control instead of romantic assertiveness or self-expression. "There is a great danger," he said in the lecture on manual training, "lest we exaggerate the importance of the emotions for morality. . . . The will may be compared to the power which propels a ship through the waves. Feeling is the rudder. The intellect is the helmsman."⁴¹

Manual training he saw as an effective way of disciplining the will, especially in "delinquent" children or those not gifted in academic subjects. It would help to correct the three "salient traits" of "mental incoherency," "indolence," and "deficiency in the sense of shame," for which "the severest punishments fail to act as deterrents."⁴² But he saw manual training in "our common schools" as a corrective for the privileged and intellectual classes, too, teaching the interrelation between thought and action, the dignity of labor, and the organic unity of the laboring and managerial classes.⁴³

from 1875 to 1914. His educational trail blazing is certainly the clearest exemplification of what American progressive thought meant in progressive education, 1875-1940. All of its varied elements came to the fore in Adler's crusade to save the 'perishing classes,' not by revolution or socialism, but by education."

⁴¹The Moral Instruction of Children, p. 258.

⁴²Ibid., p. 260.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 269-70.

In more general terms, he favored regularity and order, and recognized the need to start it in the cradle:

... Regularity is favorable to morality. Regularity acts as a check on impulse. . . . I do not maintain that regularity itself is moral, but that it is favorable to morality because it curbs inclination. I do not say that rules are always good, but that the life of impulse is always bad. Even when we do the good in an impulsive way we are encouraging in ourselves a vicious habit.⁴⁴

This is much more a lesson from Kant than from Rousseau, of whom Adler usually spoke disparagingly.

The Workingman's School was so exciting an educational experiment that soon the parents of the Society for Ethical Culture were clamoring for admission of their children, too. They were first admitted in 1890, on tuition, still under the old name and educational policy.⁴⁵ In 1895 the name was changed to the Ethical Culture School and the location to Central Park West. A friendly educational historian gave this summary of the gradual and profusely documented change in student body and in methods, and in the founder's own statements as the Ethical Culture Schools grew and entered the era of "'progressive' practice" as distinguished from "direct moral instruction" in progressivism:

The move to Central Park West signaled alteration of Adler's tactics in effecting reconstruction of the poor. The Workingman's School was designed to build the strength of each poor boy and girl educated in it.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 48-49. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵Julie Wurzberger Neumann, "Reminiscences of the Workingman's School," The Standard, II (May, 1916), 218-21.

The Ethical Culture School, whose students were children of members of the Ethical Culture Society, and, perforce, were not poor, was to be infused with the ideals of Ethical Culture. In a word, they were to be reformers, or, as Adler came to call them, "leaders." The leaders, ostensibly, would be middle-class men and women devoted to the improvement of the "perishing classes." It was as though Adler had returned to the years 1875-1880, when he was a "minister" of the social gospel.⁴⁶

In his own later years the students in the Ethical Culture Schools were children neither of workingmen nor of members aspiring to reform, for the most part, but of parents seeking the best in college preparatory education combined with creative self-expression. Adler's statements on education bristle with resistance to the new form of progressivism, as in the address chosen for the Fiftieth Anniversary volume:

The last and most menacing tendency of our time to which the Ethical Society must relate itself may be called Voluntarism--marked by exaggerated claims put forth on behalf of the individual will, the repugnance to binding ties. . . . In the schools, especially of the United States, the voluntaristic doctrine is at present spreading far and wide. Its main contentions are that the tradition of the past is to be ignored as far as possible, that all things are to be made new by the new generation, and that the young shall learn only what interests them--this possibly to lead to a certain form of discipline, but the discipline itself to be accepted only on the ground that it is advantageous to the individuals concerned.

Voluntarism arises out of the overemphasis of one of the two poles of ethical experience--the incontrovertible value of selfhood--to the neglect of the opposite pole. It is easy to account for its temporary triumph. We are still in the period of revolt, partly against what remains of the feudal organization of society, partly against the smugness of the middle class. . . . The habits which the experience of the sacredness of binding ties must create have still to be formed.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Robert H. Beck, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁷Adler, op. cit., pp. 18-20.

After Adler's resignation from the presidency of the Free Religious Association in 1882, he paid little attention to its journal, The Index, which died in 1886. Still lacking the journal which was a part of his larger plan, he decided to turn the quarterly of the Union of Societies for Ethical Culture, The Ethical Record,⁴⁸ into the more widely influential International Journal of Ethics, with the issue of October, 1890. He chaired its editorial committee, which first included Stanton Coit of London, Alfred Fouillée of Paris, Georg von Gizycki of Berlin, Friedrich Jodl of Prague, J. S. Mackenzie of Manchester, J. H. Muirhead of London, and Josiah Royce of Harvard. S. Burns Weston of the Philadelphia society was managing editor, and the Journal remained his major responsibility until 1914, when Adler's insistence that "it does not sufficiently count for the Movement" and should not be continued "after July next"⁴⁹ finally caused its transfer to an independent editorial committee. Adler remained on the committee at first, but set up The Standard in May, 1914, as an organ of record and editorial expression for the American Ethical Union. A glance at the wide range of philosophic opinions in the Journal, almost from the start, shows why Adler did not consider it representative of his ethical ideal.

⁴⁸First issued in October, 1888; resumed December, 1899, under editorship of Percival Chubb and continued until December, 1904, when it merged with the lecture supplement, Ethical Addresses, 1895-1914.

⁴⁹Letter to Weston from Berlin, March 9, 1909; in Philadelphia files. The message was often repeated.

Adler also turned his attention back, about 1900, toward academic acquaintances and higher education, where the finer epistemological and metaphysical points of his organic idealism might be discussed and related to other philosophies, as well as to problems of the day. Dedicated though he was to serving, educating, and inspiring the laymen of the Ethical movement and the larger community, he missed the challenge of academic minds and the banter and private jokes of the learned professions. Much later he confided, in some "Notes on Jung" dealing with sublimation and substitution in particular:

I have great pleasure in repartee. It is very rare to find a partner in the game.

And all my life I have sought for minds congenial to my own in philosophy, in religion, etc., without being rewarded by finding them--I mean persons on an equal plane uniting the qualities required to really supplement my point of view.⁵⁰

Early in this search, he proposed formation of a Philosophical Club in and around Columbia University. It held its first meeting on February 28, 1900. Adler's notes include brief characterizations of those attending: Professor Knox [George William, of Union Seminary], a "predestinarian," an ex-missionary, forced to learn Western philosophy in order to talk to educated Japanese, Hindoos, and Chinese; Dr. Simkhovitch [Vladimir G.], "a Pan-Slavist" and follower of Schelling or Hegel who "considers himself

⁵⁰ "Psychology" file, no. 203.04-3 (n. d.), New York Society; p. 12 of "Notes on Jung." Adler went on to claim, characteristically, that for him such pleasure was "renounced, not driven into unconscious."

an orthodox Kantian"; Marshall, "a religious nature," with a hedonist theory in art but not in ethics, almost a Spenserian; Nichols, a poetic humanitarian interested in reconciling realism with idealism; Strong [Charles Augustus, then lecturer in psychology, soon to publish Why the Mind Has a Body (Macmillan, 1903)], with "a father conflict" against orthodoxy, influenced at Harvard College by James especially, Palmer, and Royce, and committed to Matthew Arnold's "verifiable tendency" rather than to religion as a source of righteousness; and Hall [Charles C., president of Union Seminary], "a skeptic at fourteen" but back to denominational theology as a Christian pessimist influenced by Schopenhauer and humanitarianism.⁵¹

Suggestive as these typical personal items are, they do not get to the heart of Adler's philosophy. The remaining notes, however, often specify the main point or intent of his published papers or popular utterances. Of this first meeting he wrote, for instance:

The relation of empiricism to theological belief is apparent in Marshall as also in James and others, whereas idealism of the Kantian type is, at bottom, anti-theological. The empiricist declines to accept any constitutive principles of experience. Experience is simply a set of coherent or recurrent happenings. And, this being so, things might happen very differently and yet enter into experience. The Kantian position is that our experience is indeed accidental, in an absolute sense, but relatively for us necessary. Things cannot happen except according to the laws of causality, etc., because they would not enter into our experience.

⁵¹"First Meeting of the Philosophical Club, Feb. 28th, 1900," typed notes, pp. 4, New York Society files (numbered 129), pp. 1-2.

. . . [E]xperience is the Socratic mid-wife that brings to light the laws of the mind themselves, the exigent requirements of the mind, which alone satisfy the demand for certainty. . . . [W]e must abstract our knowledge of the a priori from the achievements of the mind in science, and not seek to obtain it in the genetic fashion by studying the psychological conditions of ordinary, unscientific thinking, feeling and willing. . . .

Furthermore, the difference between ethical truth and scientific truth is that, in the latter case, we have, at least, certain data which approximately fill out the vacant forms; in the former case we have no such data. . . . In ethics we become more and more certain of the nature of ethical truth without ever being sure of any adequate exemplification of it in actual experience.⁵²

The second meeting of the club, a month later, was devoted to James's "Will to Believe," with the usual arguments pro and con led by Strong and Marshall. Adler added a postscript of dismay at the amount of disagreement, subjectivity, and writing of books among philosophers. "Living experience the real fount of progressive thought," he noted. "And as for the masses, I have wondered whether the active, semi-philosophical thinking on metaphysical, religious and moral questions, which is now so common, will do them much good."⁵³

At the meeting of the club on April 20, 1911, there was a discussion of Adler's crucial paper on "The Relation of the Moral Ideal to Reality." The participants had changed completely, and this time there was no description of them, beyond a brief report of their appraisals of the

⁵² Ibid., pp. 2-4.

⁵³ "Second Meeting of the Philosophical Club, March 27th, 1900," typed notes, pp. 5, New York Society files, pp. 4-5.

theory. A. O. Lovejoy protested that the ideal must be either real or futile. Adler responded: "This dilemma grows out of the old metaphysical assumption that the world is knowable." He promised to dispose of that assumption in a later paper. W. P. Montague objected that the relation between the one and the many, unity and variety, is not the only organic relation. He suggested "triangularity," which Adler immediately dismissed as sequence rather than organic relation. Montague also objected to the exclusion of animals from the ethical relation, but did accept the distinction between value and worth, alone among the participants in the discussion. McGiffert [Arthur C., church historian at Union Seminary] and Miller both urged sympathy instead of the rational ideal as a basis for ethics. Only Hobhouse [Leonard T.] agreed with "the metaphysical contention," calling it an "anticipation" of his own. Adler wrote, "He understands the purpose of the paper to be that of transcending the ordinary distinction between empirical and transcendental."⁵⁴

Continuing this discussion, he made notes for meetings in the fall, when he was to explain his sense of the relation of mind and body, idealism and materialism:

. . . Materialism I should regard as a kind of idealism. The ions and electrons are as met-empirical,

⁵⁴Notes, New York Society files, 209.10-1, p. 1. Adler often denied that his was "a transcendental derivation of ethics," as in An Ethical Philosophy of Life, footnote, p. 134: "The ideal of the infinite society is a fulguration out of ethical experience, to be ever renewed in it. We build not only our world, but our universe."

as transcendental, as the ideas of Plato. A deeper distinction seems to me capable of being founded on temperamental approaches to the problem.

Maintenance of the individual as he is is the mark of one kind of temperament. Identification of the individual with that which is larger than himself, a species of submergence, marks another.⁵⁵

Adler elaborated. Skeptics, rationalists, absolute idealists, and pragmatists (James, Dewey, and Schiller) are all individualists; mystics and materialists submerge themselves, the mystics in "a being apprehended through the feelings," the materialists in "a law intellectually conceived." Spinoza's "Amor intellectualis" combined the mystic and materialist methods, he said.

Mind and body were not separate objects to Adler. Nor did images constitute the mind, as in sensationalist psychology. They were rather "the product of the mind, just as much so as external bodies." Mind itself he defined as "the process or function of unifying a manifold." So mind is never in space or time, but

Space is a product of mind, of this function acting on the accidental datum called extension. The notion of manifoldness is purely mental. The fact that a certain datum such as extension or the three dimensions is given is purely contingent. Hence it does not matter for the a priori value of Kant's theory whether a space of three dimensions or of four and more dimensions be given. So is time a product, the ideal unification of states realized in the three given directions of past, present and future.

. . . The miracle of inter-relation is that of something not mind being subject to mind, and this dualism remains, whatever shifts or devices are resorted to.

The problem of free will, from this point of view, takes on a new form. In the exercise of mental function

⁵⁵ "Notes for Philosophy Club, November 16, 1911," New York Society files.

on the data of sensation, the mind reacts on subject matter that is forced upon it. To that extent it is passive. In the field of ethics it is creative. Here, mind deals with mind, personality with personality, that which is postulated as purely rational with that which is purely rational. Hence in this field, the mental function, at least in tracing the ideals of conduct, is entirely free from outward constraint. . . .⁵⁶

In notes for another paper for the Philosophical Club, Adler tried to show how his organic ideal avoided the "premature ascription of an ultimate character" on the one hand and "pure relativism" on the other. He believed that empiricism, utilitarianism, and other forms of evolutionary ethics all relied on a "secret" ultimate, such as race preservation. Over "the superficial empiricism of the evolutionists," he could recommend a philosopher like Schopenhauer. But better than Schopenhauer's wilful assertion was his own rational statement of the organic ideal:

It is really not the race, those other empirical beings, those human faces, that have the ethical authority in them. It is the fact, that in the guise of those others are presented to me in provisional fashion the infinite many, that supplies the authority.⁵⁷

An earlier, published paper on "The Problem of Teleology" had been read at the Philosophical Club in January, 1904.⁵⁸ In it Adler was precise in his distinction between the empirical preoccupation with origins and "causality"

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Memoranda for a Paper on the First Principles of Ethics, to Be Prepared for the Philosophical Club," typed notes, pp. 3 (n. d.), No. 27 in Adler files, New York Society.

⁵⁸ International Journal of Ethics, XIV (April, 1904), 265-80.

and the teleological "science of ends," or "finality" shorn of its popular sense "of being final, or settled, or arranged." He gave Darwinism the better part of the argument with Paley and other mechanistic teleologists, who needed an outside purpose or creator, but he found Darwinism still wanting "as a theory of life" because of its reliance on natural causality, or chance, and its denial of human need for a final cause, or causes.

His line of reasoning led again to the organic ideal and the supreme ethical rule:

. . . . The error generally committed, as I conceive, has been to seek for the telos along the line of a single causal series. . . . There is no such thing as a single end. An end is what it is only in a society of ends. . . .

. . . . The fallacies thus far met with are due, in my view of the matter, to the persistent attempt to reconcile causality and finality by deriving the latter from the former. . . . Finality is as much a part of the aboriginal equipment of the mind as causality. . . . The category of causality establishes the nexus of necessity between antecedent and consequent in the same causal sequence. The category of finality establishes a relation of unity or synthesis. . . .

. . . . It follows, and this is my final proposition, that the notion of end as being bound up with the notion of organism, exists in idea only and not in fact; that it cannot serve us in the business of explaining nature at all, but only of evaluating it. . . . The organic idea, the teleological idea, the principle of finality, is a directive of conduct. We are so to act as to convert human society into an organism, or rather ever to work in asymptotic approximation toward that ideal, though we know well that under finite conditions we shall never attain it. . . .

. . . . So act as to elicit what is autotelic (that is, mentally and morally unique) in the self of others, and thereby develop what is autotelic in thyself is the formula which I should choose.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 275-76.

Adler had developed this variation on the Golden Rule as his own organic improvement on Kant's abstract Categorical Imperative. He presented it for the first time in that context in a paper read before the Philosophical Club in October, 1900:

. . . So act, not as if the rule of thy action were to become a universal law for all rational beings (for I shall presently show that this is impossible), but so act that through thine action the ideal of an infinite spiritual organism may become more and more potent and real in thine own life and in that of all thy fellow beings.⁶⁰

In his earlier references to Kant there had been almost unqualified praise. For instance, in his address to the Society for Ethical Culture on the hundredth anniversary of the Critique of Pure Reason in 1881, there was little more than an eloquent and popular elaboration of its opening sentence: "Among all the human beings that have ever lived, considering the intellectual service which they have rendered to mankind, I believe Immanuel Kant to have been the greatest."⁶¹

Though he continued to accept the basic Kantian analysis of reason and ethics with gratitude and praise, Adler became sharply critical at his new point of departure. He compared the Categorical Imperative to "the

⁶⁰"A Critique of Kant's Ethics," Mind, N. S., XI (1902), 181. This critique was reprinted in Essays Philosophical and Psychological in Honor of William James by His Colleagues at Columbia University (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1908), pp. 305-65.

⁶¹"Immanuel Kant," The Index, N. S., I (December 8, 1881), 271.

commands of the corporal" in the Prussian army of Kant's time, under Frederick the Great:

. . . Kant's Categorical Imperative comes to us with the impact of a blow on the head. "Thou shalt." Why? We are forbidden even to ask that question. . . . Kant's ethics is a species of physics. His moral law is natural law dipped in a bath of consciousness.⁶²

Adler was skeptical of Kant's universalizing from empirical experiences, such as lying and stealing, to establish his formula through the "veritable anti-climax" of "enlightened self-interest." He also questioned the natural derivation of the theory of human equality, despite its reversal of the "artificial inequalities" of the feudal system in the philosophy of Rousseau and the American and French revolutions. Adler saw no evidence that "the strong and the unscrupulous" would be deterred by such considerations. Even the genuine misanthrope, whose existence Kant doubted but Adler accepted, would be willing to ask no help so long as he would not be expected or required to help others.⁶³

For Adler this individualistic and abstract dilemma, created by Kant's reliance on the method of physical science, was transcended by the ultimate distinction between science and ethics:

. . . The manifold with which science deals, which it is its business to unify, is given in sensation, in experience. The manifold with which ethics deals is not given, not supplied at all from without, but is a purely ideal manifold. . . . The organic ideal is that of an infinite system of correlated parts, each of which is necessary to express the meaning of the whole,

⁶²"A Critique of Kant's Ethics," pp. 183-84.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 185 ff.

and in each of which the whole is present as an abiding and controlling force. The ethical ideal is produced by applying this purely spiritual conception of an infinite organism to human society. To act as if my fellow-beings and as if I myself were members of such an infinite system in which the manifold and the one are wholly reconciled is to act morally.⁶⁴

Adler's inclusion of the "as if" in these early versions of his supreme rule indicates his own underlying pragmatism, though he disavowed the term, and his defensiveness for Kant's practical overriding of the antinomies of pure reason. He believed that Kant's retention of traditional terms was more functional and "symbolic" than it was sentimental and supernaturalistic. Allowing for his boyhood Pietism and his traditional philosophic training, Adler nevertheless stressed his theory of the symbol:

. . . A symbol, in the sense in which Kant employs the term, is a noumenon represented for the nonce as if it were clothed with phenomenal attributes. . . . Thus, for instance, the conception of God, as Kant employs it, is symbolic. He does not say that God exists. On the contrary, he has taken the utmost pains to destroy the proofs of his existence. . . . He tells us we are to think and act as if such a being existed, for practical purposes. . . . And in the same way he has invested the noumenon of freedom with phenomenal attributes. . . . A noumenon is treated ad hoc as if it were a phenomenon.⁶⁵

In a word, Kant was better than his philosophy, falling a bit short of assuring in his metaphysics the promptings of his character and experience. Adler himself fell back on practical verification, saying characteristically that "ethical systems are to be judged by their

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 180-81.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 175-76.

fruits,"⁶⁶ that "the test of the truth of a theory is in the practice to which it leads," and that "verification, both in science and in ethics, is nothing more than exemplification."⁶⁷ He could never rest content with a vision of the organic ideal, however exalted and sustained. He closed his crucial essay on "the organic ethical conception" with these lines:

. . . The purpose of human life . . . is to get new vision! Not sterile, contemplative vision, but such as prompts new activity in consonance with itself, the new activity to lead to newer vision, and this again to renewed activity, and so on without end.⁶⁸

This organic idealism, Adler was always careful to explain, differed markedly from Platonism, in which "the divine is, and man participates; . . . from the Ethical standpoint I should say that the idea of the divine was created by man, and that thereafter, in a mystical experience, he is touched with the actuality of that which he has symbolically produced."⁶⁹

Early in the development of his theory of the organic ideal, he continued to speak and to write for the public in terms of more popular moral exhortation. His addresses printed and books published at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth often

⁶⁶"The Relation of the Moral Ideal to Reality," p. 10.

⁶⁷An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 134-35.

⁶⁸"The Relation of the Moral Ideal to Reality," p. 18.

⁶⁹"Meeting of the Philosophy Club, October 13, 1920," p. 2 of 5 typed pages of notes.

hinted at the sanctions, or claimed infinity, indefeasibility, or independence from other disciplines for them. But in such collections as The Essentials of Spirituality (1895), Life and Destiny (1903), Marriage and Divorce (1905), and The Religion of Duty (1905), he had not entered fully into the construction--much less the reconstruction, as he was later to call it--of the spiritual ideal.⁷⁰

Adler had returned to university teaching in 1903, a few months after the endowment of the chair in Political and Social Ethics for him at Columbia University. He continued his work with the New York society as usual, except for the period of his teaching, from February through May, when he limited his platform appearances to "special occasions like Easter and Anniversary Sunday."⁷¹ Society schedules for the next few seasons show the introduction of such guests as the Rev. Edgar Gardner Murphy on "Child Labor," Booker T. Washington and Josiah Royce each several times on race questions, W. E. B. DuBois, Charles Evans Hughes and Seth Low on civic investigations, Oswald Garrison Villard of The Nation, and Professors Charles Zueblin, G. Lowes Dickinson, E. A. Ross, Harry Overstreet, Kirsopp Lake, and Lucien Levy-Bruhl. Even so, the other Ethical leaders and lecturers gave most of the winter and spring addresses.

⁷⁰ See Bibliography for details of publication. Each was reissued at least once.

⁷¹ Editorial [Percival Chubb?], "Dr. Adler at Columbia," Ethical Record, N. S., III (June-July, 1902), 195-96.

Adler conducted his seminar at Columbia for fifteen years, until university retirement in 1918, and then in his office until the month of his death in 1933. Dr. Friess, who entered the seminar in 1918 and stayed close to it throughout the remaining years, has arranged the "salient teachings" of the Columbia lectures under four headings, as follows: 1) Foundations of ethics--autonomous, "in distinctive inner experiences of esteem, violation, obligation, love, reverence, and the like," as against the intellectualistic derivations of Kant or Hegel, or of materialism; individual, but "not isolated," and looking to experience for confirmation of the sense of "unique personal worth" and "indefeasible selfhood"; 2) Private and public or group morality--the development of personality, or toward personality, in family, school, vocation, the new family, the state, religious fellowship, and finally the organic community of all mankind, as against the dualism of private and public ethics in popular Christian culture; 3) Critique of democracy--the democratic ideal based on "a sound ethical perception," as against the "raw and ill-fashioned" techniques and fundamental principles of existing democracies, with their declarations, charters, and bills of rights and their "amorphous mass of citizens, entitled to vote," rather than "a superior form of representative polity"; and 4) An ethical world-view--"the quest of life . . . to learn how men should cooperate with each other in order to discover that they have souls," as against traditional

religion's initial assumption of the existence of souls and preoccupation with their salvation.⁷²

The Columbia lectures and society work were both interrupted for the year 1908-09, when Adler was chosen Theodore Roosevelt Exchange Professor at the University of Berlin. The Berlin lectures were prepared and delivered in German, apparently quite successfully. Adler reviewed their purpose and some of their content in addresses both before and after the year's leave. In St. Louis a year before the lectures began, he spoke of America as a brash, young, powerful nation of 90,000,000 people, "without the age of monarchical or aristocratic institutions, without any check, free to effect our energies for good or evil, left to struggle with materialistic tendencies." And yet, he said, "[I]n communities given over to the grossest materialism, one may personally strike the keynote as high as he can and he is certain to get a response. The moral core itself is not rotten."⁷³

Speaking to the New York Society in Carnegie Hall for the first time after his return from Germany, he described his academic mission and similar exchanges as "essentially in the interests of international peace" and predicted their success in the long run, against astonishing mutual ignorance. He had found a curious mixture of genuine admiration and scorn for America among cultivated

⁷²Horace L. Friess, op. cit., pp. 142 ff. Phrases quoted are his indirect quotations or summaries of Adler.

⁷³St. Louis Globe-Democrat, October 14, 1907.

Germans. To counteract the scorn for materialism, vulgarity, and democracy itself, he spoke of the ideals of the Puritans and the early settlers, the American Revolution, abolition and the Civil War, and idealism lingering under the surface. Germany, formerly a "nation of thinkers and idealists," had become to him "a nation of power." But despite great political upheavals as the lectures began, he was assured complete liberty in scholarship and teaching. Indeed, he felt less social pressure than is usual in the United States. This scholarly mellowness and aristocratic restraint, along with workingmen's benefits and other apparent signs of social democracy, he attributed to German "specialism," and even in flourishing institutional religion and art he found no "ethical reconstruction." So he rededicated himself to American ideals, recognizing the need for their support and improvement.⁷⁴

The issues raised in the Berlin lectures continued to occupy Adler's philosophic and propagandist attention until the outbreak of the World War in 1914, when he was able, with a slight shift in emphasis, to publish a series of addresses on The World Crisis and Its Meaning.⁷⁵ To his concern for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the various national psychologies, and their organic interrelation instead of sovereign self-determination, he

⁷⁴"Foreign Experiences and Loyalty to American Ideals," Ethical Addresses, XVII (1909), 37-53.

⁷⁵New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1915. Pp. 233.

added his continuing concern for the moral use of wealth in making an organic interrelation of vocations possible. Instead of the competitive and destructive "egoism" of the capitalist motive of profit or reward on the one hand, and the voluntary or enforced "altruism" of socialist rewards on the other, he urged "sustentation" for every worker of whatever skill or class, "at the highest possible pitch of efficiency in doing his work." This included appropriate food, shelter, clothing, study, recreation, travel, and companionship.⁷⁶ And among the several ways of rephrasing his supreme ethical rule, he offered this occupational variation:

So work that the work of the world shall be better done because you have worked in it.⁷⁷

Now in his sixties, Adler treated each publication as possibly valedictory. He found himself "on the brink," yet still pursuing his "personality," his "essential self"--paradoxically as far ahead as ever, being infinite.⁷⁸ He had never avoided the question of failure or frustration. To many, he seemed to revel in it. In his major work, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, which appeared in 1918 after long preparation and discussion with his colleagues and an inner core of members, he made it "the main practical

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 145 ff, especially p. 159.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 196. To the inevitable drudgery of "the human situation," Adler added the challenge of "some true vocation" as well for every willing worker (footnote, pp. 196-97).

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 232.

argument of the book--that frustration is the condition of our intensified conviction as to the reality of the super-sensible universe."⁷⁹ By frustration he meant something more than simple pain and disappointment, even more than the major ironies and tragedies of life he so frequently used for illustration. Indeed, he meant more than the probable extermination of the human race. He meant an ultimate, metaphysical frustration, in frank recognition of the unattainability of the organic ideal.

From the very start of his quest for confirmation of the idea of worth, of inviolability, of man as an end per se, he found little evidence or justification for it. ". . . I do not discover the quality of worth in people as an empirical fact," he said. "In many people I do not even discover value."⁸⁰ For Adler the distinction between a man's worth as an end per se and his value for some use or pleasure to others, or to himself, was crucial. Value was of course subjective, dependent on satisfaction of wants and needs, but "the worth notion is the most objective conceivable."⁸¹

How then did he find or establish worth?

I do not find worth in others or in myself. I attribute it to them and to myself. And why do I attribute it? In virtue of the reality-producing functions of my own mind. I create the ethical manifold. The pressure of the essential rationality within me . . .

⁷⁹ P. 134.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 117.

drives me forward. . . . I must look upon the other as an ethical unit or moral being in order to become a moral being myself.⁸²

In An Ethical Philosophy of Life Adler repeated the themes of most of his earlier notes and papers in a teeming, discursive way:

Book I, the "Autobiographical Introduction," includes chapters on "The Hebrew Religion," in which he paid his respects to a faith he had rejected because of its partiality and exclusiveness; on "Emerson," an indebtedness already noted; on "The Teachings of Jesus," whose originality he found (despite the skepticism of Jews and Christian liberals, and the denial of freethinkers) in the theory of spiritual triumph over evil and oppression, and the doctrine of love as an expression of the spiritual nature; on "Social Reform" and reformers, with whom Adler was disillusioned because of their "provisional" and impatient views; and a chapter on "My Vocation," a description of philanthropic and educational projects, public addresses and ministerial functions, and the frustrations in them which tested his "ascription of worth to man."

Book II, "Philosophical Theory," a section the lay reader was well advised to skip, at least temporarily, included another "Critique of Kant," which stressed Adler's special indebtedness to the Metaphysik der Sitten and the Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, then indicated his differences; "Preliminary Remarks on Worth, and on the Reasons

⁸² Ibid., p. 121.

Why the Method Employed by Ethics Must Be the Opposite of That Employed by the Physical Sciences"; "The Ideal of the Whole" and "The Ethical Manifold" as two ways of looking at the same unknown reality; and "The Ideal of the Spiritual Universe and the God-Ideal," in which Adler attributed Kant's disproof of the Ontological Argument for God's existence to his agnosticism about existence outside the sensible realm of space and time, and then he (Adler) reinstated the argument in behalf of the Spiritual Universe, which he held not to exist in space or time but rather in the supersensible.⁸³

Book III, "Applications," drew the implications of the supreme ethical rule for "The Three Great Shadows: Sickness, Sorrow, Sin"; for "The Spiritual Attitude" toward life, property (including "sustentation" again), and reputation; "The Meaning of Forgiveness," not in forgetting but in remembering the crime or unethical act, and in encouraging the admission of guilt and the intention to do better without which (in Adler's terms) forgiveness is impossible; and "How to Learn to See the Spiritual Numen in Others," by trying gently to project and encourage our own ideal of their better selves.

And Book IV made further "Applications" of the supreme ethical rule to the Family, Vocations, the State,

⁸³ "The difference between 'supersensible' and 'supernatural' is capital," said Adler in a footnote (p. 128). "I do not encourage relapse into supernaturalism. The supernatural is the opposite of the supersensible. It is an attempt to represent in natural or sensible guise what is

International Society, and the Religious Fellowship. Adler's best summary statement of the organic ideal appeared as a footnote to his statement that "the state and especially the democratic state must be organized":

I use the word Organize in the spiritual sense. The empirical, animal organism is commonly taken as the type upon which the notion of organism is modeled. The animal organism, however, fails to express the implicit idea, for the following reasons: The number of members is limited; the combination of organs is, so far as we can know, accidental, and the relation is hierarchical,--there are inferior and superior organs. The spiritual conception differs in each of these points. The number of members is infinite; the relation is necessary; and they are equal, that is, of equal worth. To distinguish the spiritual pattern from the animal type the term metorganic may be used for the former, in analogy to such terms as metempirical, metaphysical, etc., and the system of ethics expounded in this volume may be called the metorganic system of ethics.⁸⁴

Adler seems to have altered his manuscript little after the discussion of it at the annual fall conference of Ethical leaders and their guests at Glenmore in 1917.⁸⁵ He was there, of course, as was Weston from the first generation of leaders. The younger men were John Elliott, Percival Chubb, David S. Muzzey, Alfred Martin, Henry Neumann, Horace Bridges, George O'Dell, and Nathaniel Schmidt of Cornell. Among the listed guests were Professor James H. Leuba of Bryn Mawr and the Philadelphia Society, the Rev. Henry S. Leiper, Professor E. R. A. Seligman of Columbia and the New York Society, and the noted heretic and

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 310.

⁸⁵"Glenmore Conference of Ethical Leaders, 1917, September 5 to 9," typed notes, pp. 127, New York Society.

defrocked Episcopal priest, Algernon S. Crapsey, a frequent Ethical lecturer.

Much of the time at Glenmore was spent in Adler's presentation, and in questions seeking clarification of the text. Bridges of Chicago, whom Stanton Coit had found and trained in England, was among those who ventured strongly negative criticism. He recommended publication of Books I, III, and IV, the autobiographical and practical sections, and the omission or separate publication of parts of Book I and all of II, on "Philosophical Theory." He confessed difficulty with the "abrupt disposal" of the problem of the One and the Many, and admitted to the "prejudice of causality" in relating the "empirical" and the "ideal" self. He noted that Adler had restored God "on a republican basis." But most of all, he objected to "the despondent term 'frustration'" as the final defense of the organic ideal.⁸⁶

Bridges was to explain many years later that he had been under the influence of Coit and "unduly empirical." He became more and more a disciple of Adler, whom he considered a sort of "Prussian father," a "beloved Fuehrer" to his German-Jewish followers though more genuinely helpful to gentiles, even those highly critical of him, if they showed firmness. Bridges did, however, doubt that Adler, being more European in outlook than the transplanted American, Coit, would have approved and trained him for Ethical

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 84-98.

leadership, as Coit had, despite his working-class background and lack of formal education.⁸⁷

Muzzey, the teacher of history and associate leader of the New York Society, offered a number of minor criticisms but summed up the majority opinion of Adler's book with this tribute:

It is the legitimacy of this new ethical creation that impresses me chiefly: ethics is freed from the bastard parentage with which it has been so long cursed. The bars sinister of dogmatism, naturalism, intellectualism, and heaven knows what other isms are removed. We have a new transcendental unity, not of apperception but of appreciation.⁸⁸

But it was Alfred Martin, who had moved from Unitarianism to "Free Churches" in Tacoma and Seattle and on to associate leadership of the New York Society in 1906, who countered "the very foundation-thesis of his system-- such as his doctrines of reality, of certitude, of verification, of personality, of the One and the Many." Martin compared Adler's "reality-producing functions" and "spiritual universe" to the theosophists' "two extra senses" (pituitary and pineal) and "the astral body." He questioned Adler's distrust of the phenomenal world and called his system "as dogmatic as any other, more so than Kant's." For Kant had at least sought evidence of the worth of every person; Adler based his ideal derivation of worth on the apparent lack of empirical evidence. Further, Martin said,

⁸⁷ Interview in retirement, Greenport, Long Island, October 3, 1950.

⁸⁸ "Glenmore Conference," notes, p. 120.

he doubted the effectiveness of Adler's formula for eliciting the best in others and ourselves, and the correctness of seeing the universe as "our construct."⁸⁹

Martin repeated his "conviction of nine years ago" (1908), which had at that time received the "cordial assent" of Salter:

. . . [T]here is more help for the future of ethical theory in persistent efforts to find a basis in what Nature reveals to man than in any of the past or present attempts to find a satisfying basis in philosophic idealism, which treats Nature as having only the reality which certain of our mental functions ascribe to it.⁹⁰

To Adler's claim that "without intellectual agnosticism there is no ethical certainty,"⁹¹ Martin replied, "Rather do I incline to hold that without intellectual certainty there must remain some measure of ethical agnosticism."⁹² Martin, a naturalistic theist, closed his criticism with a plea for personal immortality, as against Adler's mere rational eternality--a plea which must have given intellectual comfort to Adler.

The Glenmore Conference papers by Chubb, Schmidt, and Neumann were published as reviews in The Standard in the fall and winter of the book's publication, 1918-19. Elsewhere, J. H. Tufts contrasted "the peculiar interest of Dr. Adler's book . . . in its frankly personal point of

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 99-117.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 111.

⁹¹An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 357.

⁹²"Glenmore Conference, 1917," notes, p. 112.

view" on the one hand, and its claim that "ethical principles are to be deduced from pure reason" on the other. "[I]t should matter little who deduces them provided his thinking machinery works smoothly." He questioned the emphasis given to frustration, sin, and guilt, and the order of reasoning from the idea of worth as given "in the twofold nature of mental action" to the fact of man's worth, rather than vice versa.⁹³

Professor Thilly of Cornell treated Adler's system as essentially Kantian, despite its open disagreements and some misunderstandings. He considered Adler's "unique self" not so different from the idealists' "true self" as he seemed to believe.⁹⁴ In an article immediately preceding his review of the book, Thilly found Adler guilty of the same things he criticized in Kant, especially of starting from an empty formula to achieve something intrinsically worthwhile. Kant, like Adler, mistrusted the partial knowledge of Newtonian physics, but not the full knowledge of ethical principle. The physical language of Kant's ethical system, said Thilly, was only an analogy.⁹⁵

Professor Fite of Princeton wrote a thorough review, in which he too welcomed the personal flavor of Adler's

⁹³J. H. Tufts, review, International Journal of Ethics, XXIX (October, 1918), pp. 100-03.

⁹⁴Frank Thilly, review, Philosophical Review, XXVII (November, 1918), pp. 651-59.

⁹⁵"The Kantian Ethics and Its Critics," ibid., pp. 646-50.

ethical philosophy while questioning many of his intellectual positions.⁹⁶ It began:

From discussions of the nature of the good, of virtue and happiness, of social welfare and self-interest, and from the impersonal "consensus of moral consciousness," i. e., of respectable opinion rather than of personal feeling and conviction to be found in our ethical treatises and textbooks (of which I also have been guilty), one turns with a certain relief and fresh interest to such a book as Felix Adler's An Ethical Philosophy of Life.

Fite joined the many critics of "Mr. Adler's rather dogmatic rejection of happiness," and countered his criticisms of Kant and of pragmatism:

. . . Mr. Adler's correction consists precisely in affirming boldly what Kant dared affirm only rather haltingly, namely, the right of the will (as well as of esthetic taste) to rank with the intellect as a final criterion of truth. But we are not to call him a pragmatist. "Exasperation with absolutism does not of itself justify recourse to the opposite extreme [equally exasperating, I presume] of pragmatism."⁹⁷

Fite disagreed both methodologically and metaphysically with the separation of the empirical world from the ethical, and considered "the spiritual universe . . . not less anthropomorphic than the older conceptions, but only more modern and democratic."⁹⁸

Adler was to give his philosophy its most felicitous expression and application, though hardly its most

⁹⁶ "Felix Adler's Philosophy of Life," Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods, XVI (March 13, 1919), 141-51.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 142. The sentence quoted is from An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 106. Both the parentheses and the brackets are Fite's.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 143.

technical elaboration, in the Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College, Oxford, in May, 1923.⁹⁹ Addressing himself directly to "moral regression all along the line"--in the family, vocational and industrial relations, the social order (which he saw as limited still to the distinctive character of each nation state, however vague its cultural or geographic boundaries), and international relations--he called not for a reform or reconstruction of society, but for a review and reconstruction of the spiritual ideal upon which any good society must be based.

Once more, in each area of human relations, he posed "the ethical problem . . . of reconciling the individual sacred as an end per se to other individuals no less sacred than himself."¹⁰⁰ He repeated his clear definitions of 'organic' relations and 'metorganic' philosophy, to distinguish them from ordinary 'organism' and 'organization' on the one hand, and from 'transcendentalism' on the other. And he developed further his ideal goal of a corpus spirituale, "a genuine civilization" to which each nation would bring its "certain type of the imperfect civilization which already exists"--including the vastly different types of East and West.¹⁰¹

In trying again to explain his organic ideal as the solution to the mistaken antinomies of the One and the Many,

⁹⁹The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1924), pp. 218.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰¹Ibid., passim.

the individual and the manifold, egoism and altruism, Adler resorted to one of his favorite analogies:

. . . The truth is that unity and plurality are two blades of a pair of shears, and that one can cut with neither singly; that one can derive neither from the other, the mind being constrained to use them jointly. . . .

Now the ideal of a system such as is noted by the word "organism" is nothing else than the ideal produced by the mind of the complete use of the two polar concepts.¹⁰²

Putting the concept in theological terms, as he often did for illustration and comparison, he said, "We speak no more of the God of Hosts, but, as it were, of the host as god-head. . . . Seek to educe in the other the consciousness of his indispensableness, that is, of his membership in the infinite spiritual commonwealth, and in so doing you will gain the conviction of your own membership therein."¹⁰³

Seldom in print did he slip into Freudian comparisons or terminology, for fear he might seem to be endorsing a materialistic subversion of morality or an invasion of the privacy of the self. But in rhetorical response to those who might consider his ethical philosophy unduly metaphysical, he wrote:

. . . There is a certain metaphysic, as I have already observed, underlying every ethic. It is usually latent. There are metaphysical powers that work in what the Freudians call the subconscious, even in the case of those who are the least aware of them, and there is gain in exposing them at least to the metaphysically inclined.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 51-52.

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 55-57.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 53.

Adler kept struggling, both theoretically and practically, with "the Ethical Problem, . . . that of reconciling the spiritual equality of man with the inequalities that exist in human society," the "horizontal" system with the "vertical."¹⁰⁵ Theoretically, he went at the problem again and again with his transcendental shears, confident that they cut through the ancient paradoxes. Practically, he went at it through a lifetime of "verification" through "exemplification" in educational and civic projects and reforms.

There were the schools, for instance--from the first free kindergarten east of the Mississippi River, in 1878 (Susan Blow had opened a public school kindergarten under William Torrey Harris in St. Louis in 1873),¹⁰⁶ through the older children of Workingman's School (also 1878), Ethical Culture School (so named in 1895), the Normal School for teacher training (1898), the Arts High School (1913), and the Fieldston Plan (1926), a plan for the education of moral idealists which was long in the making and drastically adapted by others who had to carry it out, even in Adler's last years. There were such projects as the District Nursing, among the New York Society's United Relief Works, set up by Adler with the aid of social worker Lillian Wald in 1877, on

¹⁰⁵"The Ethical Problem," Philosophical Review, XXX-VIII (March, 1929), 105-24. This was Adler's presidential address to the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, in Philadelphia, December 29, 1928.

¹⁰⁶Latest confirmation in St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 12, 1974.

"Florence Nightingale's splendid suggestion."¹⁰⁷ There were the cooperatives--for farmers and printers, already mentioned, and for dressmakers.¹⁰⁸ There were the slum projects and model tenements, and Adler's appointment to the New York State Tenement House Commission in 1882.¹⁰⁹

Late in 1900, Adler joined the Committee of Fifteen, all prominent citizens concerned with vice and political corruption in New York City. Appointed by the Chamber of Commerce, the committee included Charles B. Stover and Edward King of University Settlement at first, according to Stanton Coit's *Ethical journal* from London, while Adler and the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst accepted appointment and Bishop Potter of the Episcopal Church declined.¹¹⁰ An unidentified newspaper clipping in the New York Society files reported the appointments made by the Chamber's Charles Stewart Smith and their first formal meeting in the office of George Foster Peabody, secretary. Four appointees had declined, but the following were announced as accepting: John S. Kennedy, Dr. Felix Adler, Jacob H. Schiff, John Hanson Rhoades, Joel B. Erhardt, Prof. Charles Sprague Smith of Columbia, Peabody, William H. Baldwin, Jr., Alexander E.

¹⁰⁷ Adler, Sunday address, October 26, 1879, p. 42.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Adler and Louis R. Ehrlich on "Ladies' Cooperative Dress Association," New York Daily Tribune, March 28, 1881.

¹⁰⁹ More fully documented by Radest, Toward Common Ground, pp. 40-42, including parts of a personal tribute to Adler by fellow commissioner Jacob Riis.

¹¹⁰ "The Anti-Vice Crusade of New York City," Democracy, IV, No. 1 (January 1, 1901), p. 5.

Orr, Adrian Iselin, and the Rev. Robert L. Paddock of the Pro-Cathedral.¹¹¹ This committee, with its changing but impressive composition and its cooperation with the Chamber's Committee of Seventy and other organizations with similar purposes, succeeded in curbing the worst excesses of Tammany Hall and deposing its notorious Richard Croker.

More often than not, though he seemed to disparage the verification of his organic ideal through consequences, Adler threw himself into the empirical problem situations. Indeed, he found his duty there, regardless of consequences. There were such desperately unpopular causes as the fight for child labor laws, first pressed upon him by Edgar Gardner Murphy, the Episcopal clergyman from Montgomery, Alabama, who spoke for the Ethical Society at Carnegie Hall on March 20, 1904. On April 15, in the same building, the National Child Labor Committee was formed, with Adler as chairman--a post he held for the next seventeen years, despite charges of "Bolshevism" and "orders from Moscow" by major newspapers and the plaintive opposition of some of his own members in business.¹¹²

There were, of course, the usual and more than the usual national and international conferences--the American Ethical Union, established in 1886; the International Ethical Union, gathered by the German colleagues at Eisenach in

¹¹¹Dateline December 10, 1900, on story on other side of clipping.

¹¹²Adler, "The Child Labor Panic," The Survey, LIII, No. 10 (February 15, 1925), pp. 565-67.

1893 and more fully organized at Zurich in 1896, though dormant during and after the First World War; the Moral Education Congresses, commanding his attention if not attendance every four years, excepting the war years, after the first in London in 1908; and the International Races Congress in London in 1911. Despite his rigor in keeping mornings free for study and preparation and for dictation to his amanuensis Ernest Jacques, and his usual long summers of study and vacation with family in the Adirondacks, Adler was justified in his occasional complaints to colleagues about the lack of time for serious intellectual work. He seldom wrote directly for publication, but rather collected and edited Ethical Society addresses and other occasional pieces.

Even so, his stated sanctions struck many, including the academic, as too formalistic and unscientific. He conceded that "applied ethics is dependent not only on the regulative principle but on empirical science, that is, on an extended and ever-increasing knowledge of physiology, psychology, and of the environmental conditions that influence human beings."¹¹³ But for Adler science was like force,¹¹⁴

¹¹³An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp.257-58.

¹¹⁴"Force is a moral adiaphoron. The stigma attaching to the use of force belongs rather to its abuse. The employment of force is good or bad according as the ends for which it is used are good or bad." So began Adler's paper on "The Exercise of Force in the Interest of Freedom," read at the Fourth Conference on Legal and Social Philosophy at Columbia University in November, 1915, and reprinted in the International Journal of Ethics, XXVI (April, 1916), 420-23, and Appendix II, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 369-72.

or natural pleasure or cultivated taste--one of a number of adiaphora, useful in serving or accentuating ends, whether good or bad, which were otherwise chosen and justified.

Adler summarized his position on science and ethics, using the history and the ideal of the family as an extended illustration, in the keynote address for Walter Sheldon's prestigious department of Social Science at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in September, 1904.¹¹⁵ Putting the rhetorical questions usual for a deontologist in defense against the empirical, axiological spirit in ethics, he answered them in detail. These are crucial sentences:

. . . What is it in the nature of social science to accomplish, and what in the nature of the case is beyond its reach? . . . My answer in this paper will be that it can enrich the code but cannot supply the authority for the code. . . .¹¹⁶

. . . [I]n the strict sense there are no social laws, and, therefore, in the absence of laws there cannot be prediction of the future, or ethical imperatives based on the conscious adoption into the will of a natural order of social development. I would not, indeed, be understood as denying that social science is a science. . . . Nor do I deny that there are social uniformities. . . .

. . . Physical law is the expression of a fixed relation between antecedent phenomena as cause and sequent phenomena as effect. A social uniformity, on the other hand, is the expression of a relation between ends and means. . . . The point of view from which man operates is teleological. Nature is governed by forces. Man is determined by ideas. The difference is vital.¹¹⁷

This vital difference could of course be recognized by several philosophies, including a staunch positivism and

¹¹⁵"Relation of Ethics to Social Science," Congress of Arts and Science, Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904, ed. Howard J. Rogers (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1906), Vol. VII, pp. 663-81.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 664.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 674-75.

an ethical skepticism or nihilism. But Adler's distinctive and ideal sanction derived from, or rather inhered in, the reality-producing functions of the mind. Mind, as previously noted, was for him the process of unifying or synthesizing a manifold. "Synthesized and real are synonymous terms," he said. "Hence the idea of the completed synthesis necessarily is the idea of the ultimate reality."¹¹⁸

In some "Jottings" on Nature, he included this: "The relations do not inhere in Nature but inhere in us, and Nature exists only in so far as it submits to the yoke of relations which we place upon it."¹¹⁹ Similarly, in notes on "Weak points in the Theory of Evolution," he wrote that "not only do our moral ideals create environments which have not previously existed and are thus, in part at least, the authors rather than merely the products of environment,--but apart from this, the whole theater on which evolution takes place--space and time, the elementary environment, are themselves products of mind."¹²⁰

Evolution, then, was simply not relevant to ethics for him, except in the genetic sense of the history of ethical discovery and teaching. Notes on "The Scopes Trial" make this abundantly clear:

Why is the greatest ethics bound up with the poorest science? is their problem. That the ethics itself falls

¹¹⁸An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 137.

¹¹⁹Notes, New York Society files, No. 216-2, p. 1.

¹²⁰Notes, loc. cit., No. 209.08-1 (n. d.), pp. 1-2.

short does not seem to dawn upon them. . . . The phenomenal world is the world of broken relationships, the noumenal world of complete relationships.

The deepest paradox is the irreconcilable antithesis between the mind in its business of creating reality for itself and the spatial and temporal forms to which it is tied, or between the inter-penetrating unity and irremediable separateness--body separate from body in space, event separated from event in time. For the mind to say, this my architecture is without foundation, and without a dome, is its last word of wisdom--for this world I have constructed is a Noah's ark, that supports me while I float on the flood.

. . . But as the universal context is unknowable, and the pain and suffering are only too real, the ideal of perfection cannot be affirmed as it is by the theist, as a datum, but rather as a symbolic representation of which we can only be certain in ethical experience.¹²¹

Adler was frequently embarrassed by the assumption that his ideal conception of organism came from biology or evolutionary theory, where at most it was "adumbrated." He dissociated himself from the "organic conception" of St. Paul in Christianity, especially the "headship of Christ." It had indeed been "tried," he said, but was simply not "functional." According to his notes on an address and discussion at Union Theological Seminary, "I also added that strangely enough the most pronounced individualists are fond of using the picture of organism--thus the Stoics, Herbert Spencer, etc."¹²²

He continued to read about science, especially the new physics and the vitalistic biologies, and to ponder the similarities of his own "functional finalities" to the "conventions" of the physical scientists, and to the a priori.

¹²¹Notes, New York Society files 1925 , pp. 1-3.

¹²²Notes, loc. cit., March 26, 1923, p. 1.

(The term a priori he tended to avoid, while defending the principle of a priorism, because of the popular connotations of priority in time, or prior knowledge.)¹²³ He retained the sense of constitutive, constructive patterns of thought, as inevitable or necessary rather than merely optional or conventional. So it is surprising to find him asking, even rhetorically in his private notes, "Is there a real difference between what the scientist calls convention and the a priori? And are not the paradoxes which it is so impossible to digest rationally simply the evidences of thought necessities to which the sense data never conform?"¹²⁴

Science of course was like that, to Adler--agnostic, pragmatic, statistically probable, and based on the partial coincidence of spatial, temporal, causal sequences with the synthetic processes of mind. Ethics, the ideal synthesis of a teleological manifold, could admit no such irrationality or incompleteness. To those who might suspect such a formal outlook to be passive and perfectionist, Adler gave not only the example of his energetic and strong-willed life, but also the rationale of a new theory of energy and substance. Oblique public references and fuller discussions of energy and substance in his notes are more meaningful when set in the context of passages such as this:

[T]hings transpire in the inner life of human beings more marvelous than the chemical processes or the flux

¹²³An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 92-93.

¹²⁴Notes, "Professor Schlick on Einstein's Theory," New York Society, probably based on Moritz Schlick, Space and Time in Contemporary Physics, tr. Henry L. Brose, 1920.

of electric waves, did we but attend to them. There is in particular one kind of energy to which the quality of worth may well attach itself. It is unlike the physical forces; it is not a transformed mode of mechanical energy. It is sui generis, underivative, unique; it is synonymous with highest freedom; it is power raised to the Nth degree. It is ethical energy. . . . And because the energy is unique, it points toward a unique, irreducible, hence substantive entity in man, from which it springs. This entity is itself incognizable, yet the effect it produces requires that it be postulated. The category of substance, which is almost disappearing from science, is to be reinstalled in ethics. Ethics cannot dispense with it. . . .¹²⁵

The "category of substance," for philosophers of Adler's age and training, was freighted with ambiguity and crucial importance. In whatever system of thought, it was the basic, the constant, the irreducible, the essential being, as distinguished from the changing, the apparent, the derivative, the accidental. In his notes, he analyzed a series of philosophic views of substance, disavowing the Kantian and Spinozistic as too subservient to science and matter, but guardedly favoring Aristotle's energetic version of the Platonic ideas and Leibnitz' monadology without his theodicy, a pluralism of interacting monads. "Aristotle's metaphysics," he wrote, recognizing the grounds for its popularity in Christian and Jewish theology, "is a first-rate example of the use of ethical categories in ontological explanation, and of the consequent failure of the enterprise. . . . The ethical conception of substance departs wholly from the Kantian and Spinozistic, and its congeners are the

¹²⁵ An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 92-93.

conceptions of Aristotle and Leibnitz stripped of their ontological ambitions."¹²⁶

The chief intellectual sin remained, for Adler, this confusion of the categories, though he urged their mystical and moral commingling as much as possible in his own life and in the lives of others, according to the promptings and imperatives of the spiritual universe. But however much commingling could be achieved by the feelings and the will, the intellectual distinction was flatly stated, as in this passage from An Ethical Philosophy of Life:

[T]here is no intellectual bridge between the finite order and the infinite order. This involves dropping creation at the beginning and immortality in its usual sense at the end. . . . In this volume man's dealings with the finite order are represented as having for their purpose the achievement of the conviction that there verily is an infinite life, a supersensible universe. Creation systems, pantheistic systems, certain evolutionary systems, also the Hegelian system, are futile attempts to explain the How. But explanation is impossible; for to explain means to understand, and to understand means to trace an effect to its cause. And causality is not the kind of synthesis applicable to a coexistent totality.¹²⁷

Though the prerogatives of the founding leader of a religio-philosophic and educational organization were hard to relinquish, Adler tried to follow his own stated discipline of "right abdication"¹²⁸ after the later middle years. His public utterances were greatly reduced, from the dozen major addresses a year which he had considered the maximum

¹²⁶ "Philosophical Notes" (n. d.), New York Society, No. 209-1c, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁷ P. 139. Emphasis added.

¹²⁸ The World Crisis and Its Meaning, pp. 228-31.

allowable to any man, down to fewer than half that number in the late 1920's, and to two in each of the first two seasons of the 1930's. His last address to the New York Society, on "The Ethical Attitude Toward the Abolition of Poverty," was given on November 13, 1932, when he was far and stoically along in his final illness.

The seminars and the private conferences and note-taking continued, with a vigor and competence retained through sheer will power. At St. Huberts in the Adirondacks during his last summer, for instance, he discussed education with his associate in the leadership of the society, John Elliott, and Herbert W. Smith, an experienced teacher in the new Fieldston Plan. "To what end do we educate?" Adler asked, and responded with an extended definition of the "ethical" end as "functional relationship."¹²⁹

From this constructive summary he permitted himself several digressions on the "pointless educational system of the United States," including this one:

. . . I have my repugnances to the teachers' college idea, but that is an aside, a minor matter. Teachers' College is a product of this aimlessness--pragmatic aimlessness consecrated as a philosophy of life. Muddle through, get ideas as you go along; pick up and test your ideas by the way they ease the situation, give you elbow-room, etc.¹³⁰

The last complete "Sketch of Dr. Adler's Philosophy" (a typescript so labeled apparently in Dr. Friess's hand,

¹²⁹"Notes on conversation with Dr. Elliott and Mr. Smith, July 27, '32," New York Society files, pp. 9.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 3.

with the added aid in dating, "Early 1933") was prepared by Adler for leadership training conferences with Harold Buschman, a young teacher from the University of Chicago who went on to chair the department of philosophy at the University of Kansas City (now the University of Missouri in Kansas City).¹³¹ The document contains no basic changes or surprises, excepting perhaps the first item in an introductory section on "Topics fundamental for the understanding of my Weltanschauung, especially as it has developed since the publication of my books":

1. As against both Dualism and Monism there are no two worlds, the world of sense and the supersensible world, but there are two interpretations of the unknown ultimate.¹³²

Whether this represented a softening of the previous intellectual distinctions or not, the other familiar distinctions were repeated, between the ideal and the factual, the real and the actual, the two polar blades of the metaphysical shears. Were these, too, just "two interpretations of the unknown ultimate"?

In either case, the unified impact of the life remained. When Adler died on April 24, 1933, private and public tributes poured in, to his family and to the Ethical movement. Implicit in many of them was the question whether the movement could survive without him, so great was the

¹³¹"Work With Dr. Buschman," New York Society files, No. 209-1, pp. 6.

¹³²Ibid., p. 1. Adler's last published book, Incompatibility in Marriage (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1930), included applications of his Weltanschauung to marriage and the family, but no apparent changes in it.

identification with his personality and policies. Publications as diverse as Publishers' Weekly and the Christian Science Monitor, Child Study (which hailed him as its founder and guide for forty-five years) and the Nation (whose editor Oswald Garrison Villard had quit the New York Society because it took "no position" during World War I), the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, the Eagle and Jewish Chronicle of Montreal and the Intermountain Jewish News of Denver--all printed respectful obituaries. Others were not so respectful, though all tended to acknowledge outstanding good works, and Jewish publications in particular used such defensively possessive expressions as "religious atheist" and "outpost of Reform Judaism."¹³³

Memorial services were held at the New York Society on May 7, and the following speakers shared its platform in the spirit of Felix Adler's ethical ideal: President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, President Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Seminary, Dr. John L. Elliott, Robert D. Kohn, the distinguished architect and president of the New York Society, presiding, Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch of Greenwich House, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of the Free Synagogue.

The New York Times editorial, "Felix Adler," on April 26, 1933, credited "parental prescience" for the name Felix, and added that "his religion was always showing its usefulness by guarding mankind against the evil forces of nature and human nature."

¹³³Clippings and scrapbooks, New York Society.

CHAPTER II

THE TWO MINDS OF WILLIAM MACKINTIRE SALTER

"I seem to find two minds in Mr. Salter, with one of which I am in hearty agreement," wrote John Dewey in 1891, renewing a perennial debate with Salter and other Ethical leaders on "Moral Theory and Practice."¹ A little later, in a review of Salter's First Steps in Philosophy,² Josiah Royce could say, in partial agreement at least with his other mind, "He approaches the promised land of the idealist, but declines to enter."³ And on December 23, 1907, Salter himself could say to his Chicago Society, announcing his early retirement from active Ethical leadership by way of brief annual lectureships at the University of Chicago:

. . . I confess I have a deep desire for studies for which I have no leisure in this work. . . . I undoubtedly have a double self; one that loves preaching, and one that loves the still severe air, in which thoughts of preaching have no place--in which one only wants to know, to know the essence and core of things. Whether for weal or woe (and that of my family), I am

¹International Journal of Ethics, I, 2 (January, 1891), p. 198. Salter's articles were in the preceding and following issues. Earlier discussions with Dewey will be noted later.

²Published in Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1892. Reviewed, International Journal of Ethics, II, 4 (July, 1893), pp. 539-41.

³Loc. cit., p. 541.

determined to cut loose and satisfy my mind. . . . I have been trying to save others--now I want to save myself.⁴

Lest any should think his twenty-five years of Ethical leadership (including one with Adler in New York and five relieving Weston in Philadelphia) had been escapist or free from "the good fight" against practical as well as intellectual evils, Salter reminded his Chicago audience:

. . . I believe I have been right in the main contentions of my career,--in agitating for Eight Hours, against the wholesale sentence of the "Anarchists," for the right of Labor to organize, for what as far back as 1885 I called "Rational Socialism," against Anarchy in every shape, whether working man or business man, for industrial Arbitration, for Profit-sharing, for Co-operation, for the cause of Woman, for the Negro, for the Children in our factories and shops, (for the Income Tax, against the Russian Treaty making America an accomplice in Russia's barbarism, for President Cleveland in his attitude to England in the Venezuelan case), for the essential principles of the Single Tax, for the war to liberate Cuba, against the war to subjugate the Philippines. I retract nothing. I repent nothing. And you have always left me free--free to speak and to act.⁵

In 1919, at sixty-six, Salter could still rise to defend himself against frequent aspersions cast at his early retirement, his lecturing on Shaw, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, and his exhaustive if not perhaps definitive study of Nietzsche the Thinker.⁶ "Unfortunately for my peace of mind in the past," he wrote, "I have had two bottom

⁴"The Good Fight--With a Closing Word," Ethical Addresses, XV, 5 (January, 1908), pp. 124-26 (this quotation only).

⁵Ibid., p. 132. Parentheses his, for stands taken in Philadelphia (1892-97).

⁶New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917; pp. x, 539. Reprinted with introduction by Richard Gambino, pp. v-xiii (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1968).

impulses, neither quite dominating--one to philosophical inquiry, the other to practical helpfulness to my fellowmen."⁷ And in 1931, shortly before his own death at seventy-nine, he completed a long review of The Sanctity of Law (1927), the last book by his favorite professor from Knox College, John W. Burgess, who later founded the first School of Political Science at Columbia University. "The immediate occasion for writing the book," Salter reported, "is 'the apparently growing disregard of law and order' at the present time, not only in our country but in the world at large."⁸

Salter's lifelong tendency toward "two minds" or a "double self," at least from late youth until early old age, makes him perhaps the most interesting and appealing of the early Ethical leaders to students of philosophy, and at the same time the most exasperating and hard to classify. An apparent classicist, metaphysical idealist, dualist, contemplative, and genteel friend of law and order, he was nevertheless irresistibly drawn to romanticists, experimental naturalists, monists, political activists, and anarchists. These contrasts created more ambivalence than neat paradox, but they set the pattern for his long and conscientious intellectual life.

⁷"A Word of Explanation," Standard, V, 6 (March, 1919), p. 149.

⁸Burgess's Political Philosophy, As Indicated in His Recent "The Sanctity of Law" (New York: American Ethical Union), p. 1. Abridged, Standard, XVIII, 1 (July, 1931), pp. 11-31.

William Mackintire Salter was born June 30, 1853, the oldest son of the Reverend William Salter and Mary Ann Mackintire Salter of Burlington, Iowa. The parents had settled there and built up a Congregational Church as members of the "Andover Band" of pioneer seminary graduates and their wives who came west to the Iowa Territory in 1843, by almost equal stages of train, steamboat, and farm wagon. The father was a theological and economic liberal, an opponent of the Mexican War, an ardent abolitionist who helped runaway slaves and visited Union troops in the South, and a firm but kindly moralist. An older daughter died at fifteen, and a younger son at birth. The three surviving boys--"Willie," Sumner, and George--grew up in an idyllic hillside setting of house, gardens, and orchard overlooking their town, called "Catfish Bend," and the Mississippi River.⁹

Like his father, who tutored him, William M. Salter began Latin at ten and Greek at twelve. He entered Knox College at fourteen, in nearby Galesburg, Illinois, and began his "intellectual awakening" about the junior year, when "disturbing questions" arose. A reading of his father's copy of Seeley's Ecce Homo first inclined him to the ministry, and after his discovery of Channing and Emerson the following year, "the thought of a personal quest for truth

⁹ Philip D. Jordan, William Salter: Western Torchbearer (Oxford, Ohio: Mississippi Valley Press, 1939), pp. x, 273. Jordan also wrote the article on William Mackintire Salter for the Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, 315-16.

in the religious realm, regardless of results, entered my head." At graduation from Knox in 1871, he gave an oration--"Is Orthodoxy in Theology Necessary for the Christian?"--which moved his father to embrace him afterward, and some of the Trustees to question his degree.¹⁰

The record of Salter's next ten years is one of increasing doubt and disappointment, as he moved from Yale Divinity School (1871-73) to Harvard Divinity School (1873-76) to the University of Göttingen (1876-77) with his B. D. degree and a Parker Fellowship from Harvard--all in a vain attempt to find a more sophisticated apologetic for his diminishing theology. Report forms from Göttingen, "from Michaelmas 1876 till Easter 1877," indicate his enrollment in Psychology, with Lotze; History of Modern Philosophy, Baumann; Comte and His School, Ueberhorst; History and Critique of Materialism, Muller; and Nature and Problems of Church History as a Science, Reuter.¹¹

Salter told of his personally happy but intellectually frustrating year as Unitarian minister at Wayland, Massachusetts (1874-75), between his academic years at Harvard. After one year in Göttingen, the hopes and rigors of studying Greek philosophy and church history ended with a breakdown in health, forcing him to come back for "two

¹⁰ Autobiographical sketch in Fiftieth Anniversary volume, p. 38. There is no copy or listing of the oration in the Knox College Archives; it was not a "prize" oration.

¹¹ Anmeldungs-Buch, Georg-Augusts Universität zu Göttingen, for William Salter, 17 October 1876--in New York Society files. Also enrollment form "during the summer six months 1877." (Translations mine.)

years of home nursing and particularly experience of Colorado air (one winter herding sheep there)" before being able to work again with enthusiasm. While herding sheep, he sent letters to eastern friends about a possible place in Channing's type of liberal Unitarianism, and wrote "a little pamphlet as a kind of feeler in that direction, 'On a Foundation for Religion' (Boston, 1879)."¹²

On his way back to Boston, late in 1879, he met Felix Adler for the first time. The challenge of specific human service and organization, without a dogma to defend, had an immediate appeal for Salter, though he "moved slowly," as usual, having to "weigh and ponder," and did not report for training with Adler until the fall of 1881.¹³ On April 6, 1880, he wrote Adler from Boston, indicating agreement with his "faith in something moral at the heart of things," rather than "agnosticism" (his first impression of Adler's philosophy), "liberalism," or "Free Religion." He turned down invitations to nearby Unitarian churches, he said, in favor of study through the spring and summer and would be "able in the fall to start an Ethical Society somewhere." If that seemed premature, he considered moving to Minneapolis.¹⁴ Adler apparently was not ready to make a place for him, and so Salter turned again to the Unitarian ministry

¹²Autobiographical sketch, loc. cit., pp. 39-41. The pamphlet seems to be unavailable.

¹³Ibid., pp. 41-42.

¹⁴Letter lent by Dr. Friess.

in Wayland, Massachusetts. His new friend S. Burns Weston, the frankly non-theistic and non-Christian Unitarian minister in Leicester, Massachusetts, met him occasionally in Boston or Roxbury, where he lived, and spoke for him at Wayland on March 27, 1881, after resigning reluctantly from a church partially dependent on an endowment for "Unitarian Christianity." Both were invited to speak at the fifth anniversary of the New York Society for Ethical Culture on May 14, 1881, but Weston had a prior commitment.¹⁵

Salter failed to make it to the New York meeting, but sent Adler his regrets and told him of his first address, given without prayers or theology, at the Parker Memorial Society on May 15:

I spoke of ends, of moral ends as existing whether we will or no. . . . No one knows but that the realities of nature herself are ideal in their origin. . . .

This general conception of things seems to me best fitted to our world & has impressed itself upon me particularly in reading Zeller's Aristotle. Of course proof, verification &c in such matters are impossible--I can only ask what seems most reasonable; it is the realm of philosophy or speculation, not of science.¹⁶

So began--or so persisted--the chief theoretic difference between the "two minds" of William Mackintire Salter. He spoke in similar terms at the fourth anniversary of the New York Society in 1880, in closing his ministry at Wayland on October 2, 1881, and in speaking again at Parker Memorial on January 15, 1882, on "The Practical Meaning of

¹⁵S. Burns Weston, Diary from Leicester (1879-81), lent by Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Weston, Washington, D. C.

¹⁶Letter to Adler, May 15, 1881, lent by Dr. Friess.

Religion." A note on the manuscript of the Parker Memorial address, in Salter's own hand, said simply, "W. James spoke of this as 'rather dreary conscientiousness.'"¹⁷ It was indeed Salter's practice, not unlike Adler's, to give to moral or ethical terms the aura and exaltation previously reserved for deity,¹⁸ and to make service to humanity in "practical religion" a new form of worship.

Salter seemed to lack, in person at least, the fire of Adler's passion for righteousness. So Adler went ahead, as the founder of the successful New York Society, to prepare the way in cities where there seemed to be good prospects for new societies. Chicago seemed ready, if he but had a man suitably trained in Ethical Culture to install there. Adler spoke there in April, 1882, giving the inspiration and the background for organization. A committee met afterward, including such community leaders as Judge Henry Booth, George C. Miln, Julius Rosenthal, Otis Favor, Max Eberhardt, Levy Mayer, Judge C. B. Waite, Max Morgenthau, Albert Schultz, Max Stern, and Messrs. Odell, Brown, and Hutchens. They agreed to organize and then recessed until the fall, when they invited Adler to return with his colleague, Salter, on a date of their choice--October 1.¹⁹

¹⁷"W. M. Salter: Addresses Filed" (manuscripts and typescripts, 32 bundles, ca. 500 items, 1880-1907), New York Society.

¹⁸Cf. Adler's "the Ought in all its awful majesty," Moral Instruction of Children, p. 13.

¹⁹"An Ethical Society," Chicago Times, September 27, 1882.

Adler and Salter spoke together that day in Chicago, with Judge Booth presiding before an overflow audience, predominately Jewish, at the Grand Opera House. A news report described Salter as "a well-read, dreamy idealist, without magnetism, speaking on the ethics of Jesus and possessing more refinement than force." Adler was compared unfavorably in appearance, voice, and diction. "But when he speaks," the report continued, "he charms."²⁰

Salter, back in New York and "wanting to stay the year through, but fearing that I may have to leave in the midst of it," wrote at length to his friend Weston in Germany, where he had urged him to go the year before, to learn the language and culture before settling down to in-service training with Adler. He enclosed "clippings which will explain themselves," presumably on the October meeting and the attacks launched upon Ethical Culture and the Chicago experiment by the Jewish religious community. "I had no thought of their using our coming there in so serious a way," he said. "But since then, steps have been taken toward organization, a preamble & statement of principles adopted & signed by some 30 gentlemen (about equally made up of Jews, Americans, & Germans), and later still bylaws adopted; & in less than a fortnight, another meeting will be held & officers elected & perhaps an invitation extended to me to come out there. . . ." He expressed misgivings to Weston

²⁰"The New Religion," Chicago Times, October 2, 1882.

about leading "in an enterprise, wh. must inevitably be brought into comparison with Prof. Adler's Society here."²¹

Salter also reported Stanton Coit's arrival in New York, to teach in the Ethical School for a year before going to Germany to study. He asked Weston for his impressions of Coit, on their brief meeting in Europe, and added, "He seems almost over modest in regard to himself, and to have a positive aversion to metaphysics." Salter advised Weston to consider coming back upon Coit's departure, to "do his work" and to enroll, as Coit and he himself had, for seven hours each term at Columbia in Burgess's lectures on Constitutional Law and Political History. "Burgess is a strong man," he said of his old Knox College teacher. "It is an education in itself to come under his influence."²²

As Salter expected, the new society called him to Chicago. He wound up his classes and other projects, and gave a farewell address to the New York Society on March 4, 1883. His inaugural address for the Society for Ethical Culture of Chicago, on April 1, was "The Basis of the Ethical Movement." Often printed and reprinted, it served as a key chapter in his collection of addresses called Ethical Religion²³ and, considerably abridged, as his distinctive statement in the Fiftieth Anniversary volume of 1926.

²¹Letter, November 4, 1882, lent by Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Weston.

²²Ibid.

²³Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1889. Pp. 332.

These are key paragraphs and sentences from that first Chicago address:

. . . A vision of law and order is dawning upon us; the sphere of caprice is diminishing and vanishing before our eyes; a conception of the universe is developing which if it has less fascination for a childish mind, has infinitely more and is unspeakably grander to the thoughtful and mature. Arbitrary will, purposes that change and bend, these may be in man, but they are not in Nature; they are not in that ultimate and total order of things of which man and Nature are parts. . . .²⁴

. . . . Agnosticism is no more than a confession of the limitations of our knowledge. . . . Nor is science, teaching us positively what we do know, a sufficient guide for us. . . . It tells us simply what is; it tells us nothing of what ought to be. . . .

Here, then, is to my mind the true basis of our movement,--not the old religions; not religion itself, in the popular understanding of that term; not agnosticism, though as matter of fact some of us may be agnostics; not science, though the facts of science, every one of them, should have our recognition. It is something deeper and more ancient, I might say, than any of these: it is the rock of conscience, the eternal laws that announce themselves to man's moral nature. Our knowledge may be limited to the senses; but conscience is not knowledge,--for knowledge is of what is, and conscience is the thought of what ought to be. . . . The Conscience, in a word, ushers us into an ideal realm. Genuine ethics have in this respect more in common with art than with science. . . .²⁵

And then, as if to summarize and conclude, and with a footnote of moral support from T. H. Green (discovered afterward), Salter wrote:

For let me make clear that the basis of our movement is not a theory of morality, but morality itself. The moral teacher is not primarily to give a metaphysical philosophy of ethics, to propagate transcendentalism or utilitarianism,--though he may have views of his own, and on occasion need not refrain from expressing them. . . .²⁶

²⁴ Ethical Religion, p. 289.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 293-95.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 302.

This parting shot against individualistic utilitarianism was retained even in the 1926 abridgement:

. . . There is but one theory of morals against which I have any feeling, and this not because it is a theory, but because it is subversive of morality itself. I mean the view which we now and then hear advocated, that morality is but a refined selfishness, a long-sighted prudence; that the end of life is and can be nowhere else than in the accumulation of individual pleasures, and the avoidance of individual pain. That man cannot go out of himself; that he cannot love another equally with himself; that he cannot find an end of his being in his family, in the community, in the State; that for all these he cannot live, and cannot die rather than see them dishonored--that is what I call the real infidelity, and, whether uttered by priest or philosopher, has, and always shall have, my dissent and rebuke. . . .²⁷

"The Basis of the Ethical Movement" and most of Salter's chapters in Ethical Religion were published first as Die Religion der Moral, translated and warmly introduced by Professor Georg von Gizycki of Berlin, a utilitarian.²⁸ A Dutch translation followed,²⁹ and three American editions.³⁰ The success of the German version led the same translator and publisher to issue another collection of Salter's lectures, Moralische Reden, reportedly "prohibited in Russia."³¹

Stanton Coit negotiated a sixpenny edition of Ethical Religion through the Rationalist Press Association in

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 302-03.

²⁸ Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1885. Pp. 363.

²⁹ Zedelijke Religie, trans. P. H. Hugenholtz, Jr. (Amsterdam: Tj. van Holkema, 1888). Pp. 282.

³⁰ Ethical Religion (3rd ed. only; Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1899).

³¹ "General Notes," Ethical Record, II, 4 (January, 1890), p. 246.

England.³² In the introduction Coit lauded Salter as "the first to keep the emotional side of the highest moral idealism perfectly intact, and yet adjust himself to the naturalistic view of the origin of the moral sentiments, and of the life that is true to them." Coit did not exempt "those two more glowing rhetoricians of a naturalistic ethic--Professor Clifford and Monsieur Guyau." Nor did he slight Felix Adler, except to say delicately that "no one else's writings excel his in depth, strength, and purity of moral conviction, yet in them a distinctly scientific cultivation of mind is not so much in evidence as the philosophical and critical method of the German dialectical schools."³³

In his own introduction to the American editions, Salter responded to "occasional criticisms" of Gizycki's German edition by disclaiming "any scientific pretensions." The lectures had been written only for oral presentation, he said, and were neither connected previously nor edited afterward for continuity or consistency. "My purpose in allowing this book to come before the public is not intellectual, but practical and moral," Salter wrote, falling into the very cleavage between theory and practice which Dewey and others found so unacceptable.³⁴

There were several other basic chapters; several on specific doctrinal and institutional relationships with all

³²London: Watts & Co., 1905. Pp. 128.

³³Ibid., p. 7.

³⁴Pp. ii-iii. (This and all following references will be to the first American edition.)

Christians, Jews, and other traditionalists, and with Unitarians and Protestants in particular; and a few chapters on topical issues such as labor and poverty. Among the basic chapters, "Darwinism in Ethics" took note of the advantages in natural selection for morally sensitive and co-operative communities and nations, and denounced as a crude and spurious Darwinism the idea of a ruthless struggle for individual power or survival among men. But Darwin wrote as a scientist, Salter insisted, and not as an ethical philosopher.³⁵

Whatever concessions Salter made toward Darwinism and the other natural and factual tendencies toward ethical living, he returned inevitably and emphatically in all his earlier works to "The Ideal Element in Morality." This element is the distinguishing one, he said, the essence of morality--of what should be, hence is not, as distinguished from what is. Nor does recognition of this "ideal element" depend upon metaphysical idealism. Salter criticized those who try to give the ideal a prior existence or authority in Platonism or theology. Its authority may be recognized by idealist and materialist alike, by utilitarian and intuitionist alike, individualist and socialist. Facts are of no help whatsoever, or projections of them, for facts may be good, bad, or indifferent. And to Salter, starting from "good" facts--facts already evaluated--was but reasoning in

³⁵Ibid., pp. 102-20.

a circle.³⁶ (He made no axiological distinctions between intrinsic and instrumental values, for instance, or between the good and the right, the bad and the wrong.)

Morality was the supreme metaphysical category for Salter, and not derived from anything else. Nor did it consist in giving reasons.

. . . In truth, there is nothing on which to base morality. We do not so much find it, as demand it in the world. All the separate moral rules may be resolved into the supreme one,--to seek the general welfare, the universal good. But who can give a reason for the supreme rule? Indeed, no serious man wants a reason. The supreme command appeals immediately to the human mind; it is an assertion of the human mind. . . .³⁷

He was, as Coit had suggested, less Kantian or dialectical than Adler, and more empirical. He did, however, share in Kant's and Adler's strongly moralistic pragmatism. "The imperative itself brings the power to meet it," he said. "To say that duty commands us but that we cannot obey, is to suppose a lie in the nature of things. There is no duty if I cannot perform it."³⁸

Duty, then, was his common element, not just for the present Ethical movement, but for the eventual unity of all mankind. In "The True Basis of Religious Union," his closing chapter, he wrote,

The truth which it appears impossible to doubt is that duty binds a man. Not that we always know our duty, and not that we need always be sensible of its binding force. . . . For duty may become one with life, happiness, and joy; the antagonism between what we wish

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 22-41.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 320-21. Emphasis added.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 312.

to do and what we ought to do may pass away. Yet duty does not cease to be binding because it is no longer felt to be. We may sometimes be ignorant of duty; but when we learn what it is, we know that we are bound by it. It is also true that men may differ in their theories of the ultimate grounds of duty; but the fact of moral obligation and the broad outlines of personal and social duty remain under any theory. The truth is, that the thought of what ought to be is as elemental a part of man's being as the sense of what is. . . .³⁹

Despite the enthusiasm of Gizycki and Coit for Salter's Ethical Religion, and the favorable reviews on philosophical grounds as well as on personal and moral grounds from such internationally respected philosophers as Harald Höffding of Copenhagen and Friedrich Jodl of Prague,⁴⁰ the later response from American philosophers was less than enthusiastic. Probably anticipating the embarrassment or the hostility of the more academic and secular critics, Salter wrote Weston suggesting that Thomas Davidson be given the book for review, if he would promise to "read it all, including the preface" and "criticize its main theme" of practical ethics. "Send this to Mr. D. if you like," he added.⁴¹

With all the precautions, the resulting review was devastating. Davidson dwelt at length on the obvious conflict between Salter's head and heart, and the frequent inconsistencies and paradoxes of his attempt to reconcile the self-effacing ethics of Jesus with the facts of secular life. He did weaken his criticism, however, and make it easier for

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 320-21.

⁴⁰ Reviews listed, with some excerpts, Ethical Record, II, 1 (April, 1889), pp. 62-64.

⁴¹ Postal card from Burlington, Iowa, April 30, 1889.

Salter to respond, by trying to show that the self-effacing ethics he urged in this life would be rational only in combination with the expectations and rewards of personal immortality.⁴²

The review was delayed for one quarterly issue of the Record, apparently so that it might be accompanied by Salter's equally lengthy reply. He devoted himself less to clearing up his own inconsistencies--aside from reaffirming several of them--than to questioning the depth and historical accuracy, as well as the logic, of Davidson's theory of Christian immortality. Salter also repeated his disclaimer of scientific or theoretical intent, and brought the exchange to a close, publicly at least, with these words:

I am by no means insensible to the praise which Mr. Davidson pours on my defenceless heart if not head; I am perfectly sure it is undeserved, and that my heart is worse and my head better than he thinks. . . . Yet I, too, have an intellectual interest in ethics; and if leisure and strength are given to me, I hope some day to present "a consistent theory of ethics." I cannot say this is my highest ambition, but it is a very eager one. . . .⁴³

An anonymous review in the Nation, which Salter himself marked "Royce" on a tear sheet among his papers, was as generous as Davidson's in praise of Salter's heart and even more incisive in criticism of his head. The style and content are typical of Royce's reviews, and quite consistent

⁴²Davidson, "A Critique of 'Ethical Religion,'" Ethical Record, II, 4 (January, 1890), pp. 230-34. See also Davidson, "The Ethics of an Eternal Being," International Journal of Ethics, III, 3 (April, 1893), pp. 336-51.

⁴³"Reply by Mr. Salter," Ethical Record, II, 4, pp. 234-38.

with his later appraisals of Salter. After a brief reference to the "well-deserved attention" given the lectures in the earlier German translation, the reviewer continued:

The book is, as one might expect from its origin, rather didactic than speculative, and the author disclaims in his preface any other than a practical purpose. Mr. Salter's theory of ethics is, indeed, not entirely kept in the background in the course of the book; nor is he silent as to his opinions upon a number of philosophical and theological problems of a very grave sort. . . .

. Our author's "nature of things" is . . . a paradoxical conception, involving a very baffling esse in potentia as the "supreme truth" beyond our world of experience. . . . But such potential realities have had, since Aristotle, an important place in speculation.⁴⁴

The reviewer went on to compare Salter to Bishop Butler, in all but style (somewhat livelier, like Emerson) and "theology proper." Like Butler, he said,

. . . our author is glad to appeal, for didactic purposes at least, to the facts of experience, in so far as they illustrate, and even sometimes seem to confirm, those moral truths which are all the while not "matters of fact" at all, but ideals. With a delight in the natural world such as is very natural for one whose moral ideals must grow occasionally lonesome in their empty heavens, our author follows with satisfaction the partial triumph of morality which Darwinism has made plain as a tendency in human evolution.

. Is there not danger in these endless paradoxes and unexplained self-contradictions in one's teaching?

. . . If one leaves behind what one takes to be superstitions in tradition, may one not end in making one's morality a superstition? . . . We hope that Mr. Salter will soon develop the "philosophical views" of which he speaks in his preface.⁴⁵

Between the German and the American publications of his Ethical Religion, in 1885 and 1889, there were crucial

⁴⁴ [Josiah Royce,] "Salter's Ethical Religion," Nation, L, 1283 (January 30, 1890), p. 95.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

developments in Salter's life and career. Having completed two successful years in Chicago, and started well in a third, he was married on December 2, 1885, to Mary Sherwin Gibbens of Cambridge, the sister of William James's wife Alice. The Salters had one child of their own, Eliza, born in 1888, who died in her first year. Soon after, they adopted a son, John Randall Salter.⁴⁶

The Haymarket Riot of May 4, 1886, was a turning point in Salter's career, and in the early fortunes of the Chicago Society. Though making it clear that he himself was no anarchist, he spoke out against the public pressure and judicial haste with which eight known agitators, mostly Germans, were prosecuted as "accessories" or conspirators in the dynamite bombing at Haymarket Square, which killed a policeman. In a public address before the Ethical Society at the Grand Opera House on October 23, 1887, he asked whether all were guilty as charged (three were, he agreed); if not, of what they were guilty (sedition, yes, but not murder defined by a law passed after the fact); and what a reasonable penalty would be (not capital punishment, he believed, in the absence of murder). Salter distinguished, as Judge Joseph Gary and the final ruling of the Illinois Supreme Court did not, between the admitted prior activity

⁴⁶Letter to the author from John R. Salter, Jr., of Raleigh, North Carolina, October 23, 1963. He tells of his father's life as an artist and teacher in Arizona, and of his own work as a teacher and civil rights worker in the spirit of William M. Salter.

of several of the accused and the specific conspiring and bomb preparation of the night and day before.⁴⁷

Salter stood out almost alone among public spokesmen in Chicago, in his pleas for calm and orderly justice in the Haymarket case. His society suffered with him from the general hysteria and the attacks of the Tribune and the Daily News. Two Unitarian ministers stood with him--James Vila Blake and Jenkin Lloyd Jones--as did Rabbi Emil Hirsch, in asking their congregations for signatures on a petition to Governor Oglesby for commutation of the death sentences imposed on seven of the eight.⁴⁸ Henry Demarest Lloyd, the lawyer-journalist and patron of good causes who had left the editorial staff of the Tribune in 1885, may have helped, too. He was a friend of the Ethical Society, and his name was easily confused with Jenkin Lloyd Jones.⁴⁹

John Peter Altgeld, a Cook County judge not known for his doubts or protests at the time, won later fame as a civil libertarian and defeat for reelection as governor of Illinois, for pardoning the three conspirators who survived in 1893.

Henry Neumann, the second-generation Ethical leader in Brooklyn, knew Salter well in his later years in Chicago,

⁴⁷"What Shall Be Done With the Anarchists?": A Lecture with Editorial Criticisms from the Chicago News and Mr. Salter's Replies (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1887, pp. 25.

⁴⁸Charles H. Lyttle, Freedom Moves West (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), p. 157.

⁴⁹As in Radest, Toward Common Ground, p. 64: "Henry D. Lloyd, a Unitarian minister, secured signatures"

and in retirement, and spoke of him as one of the noblest and gentlest of men. He also knew, from his own pacifism in World Wars I and II, something of the institutional hardship and personal loneliness which come from persistence in an unpopular cause. Dr. Neumann (1882-1966) liked to tell of Salter's standing at the back of the hall to count the audience of the Chicago Society in the days of the Haymarket case. There were often only forty, or fewer, who wistfully compared themselves to the Immortals of the French Academy. Continuing concern for equal justice, especially for the poor, led Salter and his members Joseph W. Errant and Frank E. Tobey to organize the Bureau of Justice, which grew with them into the Legal Aid Society.⁵⁰

Through all the organizational turmoil, Salter continued to write and to publish. It was his article on "A Service of Ethics to Philosophy" in the first issue of the International Journal of Ethics⁵¹ which drove John Dewey to protest the "two minds of Mr. Salter." Salter's article, even more pointedly than the earlier statements in Ethical Religion, contrasted the realm of science and the realm of ethics, of fact and ideal, 'is' and 'ought,' observational and rational truth.

Dewey had emphasized the close and necessary inter-relation between theory and practice in his contribution a

⁵⁰Neumann, Spokesmen for Ethical Religion, pp. 95-96. Also in conversations and public addresses, 1941-66.

⁵¹Vol. I, No. 1 (October, 1890), pp. 114-19.

few months earlier to an extended series by university professors on the teaching of ethics.⁵² Now, he dissented vigorously from Salter's view (and to a lesser extent from Adler's and even Sidgwick's and Bosanquet's as he understood them) that "a great service" is performed in the separation of theory from practice, of the 'ought' from the 'is' into a "realm beyond science." But in Salter's position, for all its contrast, he saw a hopeful ambiguity. Dewey put it this way:

. . . After contrasting in the blankest manner the world of fact and of morals, he goes on to suggest that moral forces are not only rightfully supreme over the actual forces of the world at any time, but "are so interwoven with the order of things that nothing out of harmony with them can long stand" (p. 117). This would imply that moral forces are, and that they do exist nobody knows where outside the actual world, but are themselves supremely actual. With this view I find myself . . . in large sympathy; but (aside from the fact that I can see no way of reconciling it with Mr. Salter's other mind) it needs much analysis. . . .
 . . . I should say (first) that the "ought" always rises from and falls back into the "is" and (secondly) that the "ought" is itself an "is,"--the "is" of action. The "ought" is never its own justification. . . .⁵³

In a footnote, Dewey disavowed criticism of "the wisdom of founding an ethical society" without commitment to a specific philosophic system. "It is one thing," he said, "to believe that moral theory is in so chaotic and fractional a

⁵² "Ethics in the University of Michigan," Ethical Record, II, 3 (October, 1889), pp. 145-48. Others in the series were Royce at Harvard, Schurman at Cornell, Ladd at Yale, Fullerton at Pennsylvania, Mackenzie at Cambridge, and Alexander at Oxford.

⁵³ "Moral Theory and Practice," International Journal of Ethics, I, 2 (January, 1891), pp. 198-99.

state that consciously to build an organization on some one part of it would lead to formalism and inefficiency. It is surely another to hold that moral practice and moral theory have no essential unity."⁵⁴

Salter alone responded, and professed to agree in part, while re-emphasizing the cleavage:

. . . Professor Dewey says duty is determined by facts, by the actual relationships in which we find ourselves. I have never thought of doubting this. What I tried to say was somewhat different, though by no means inconsistent. It was that a moral rule was necessarily an ideal rule, not an induction from or generalization of facts, after the manner of physical laws. . . .⁵⁵

He took up Dewey's homely illustration of the street-car conductor who must decide between the values of tranquility and those of a strike, and concludes that he "ought" to strike. Here Salter gave the discussion its subtlest and most crucial twist--still refusing to consider the 'ought' as derived or projected from facts about values--by posing the problem of the status of the ideal unrealized, or of the 'ought' not acted upon:

. . . Undoubtedly the "ought" in his case is determined by all the various considerations enumerated by Professor Dewey; but when the conductor has thus learned the "ought" completely, he may not have the courage to act accordingly. . . . Professor Dewey defines the "ought" as the "is of action"; but here it is the "is not." Certainly, "action or the following out of ideas is a fact"; but sometimes ideas are not followed out and the (right) action does not take place. . . . Define duty as closely as we may, on account of conflicting interests and passions, it may yet remain a "barren

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 197.

⁵⁵"Theory and Practice," International Journal of Ethics, II, 1 (October, 1891), p. 112.

reality," the "deadeast of dead things." It is only saved from complete nonentity in that it is a command. . . . Nothing out of harmony with justice can long stand in this world; but whether justice will ever be incorporated into an individual or a social order (*i. e.*, become an empirical reality) is another question. . . . I am afraid that the "ought" as the "is of action" is a myth; it may be so and it may not be so, there seems to be no organic or necessary relation between them.⁵⁶

Salter clung still to idealism as the only remaining support and sanction for ethics, despite his essential empiricism, even in ethics, and his temperamental susceptibility to romantic naturalism. But however much of the naturalist there was in Salter by 1891, and however much of the idealist still in Dewey, they were talking different philosophic languages. Salter indeed had his "theory and practice" of ethics, however dualistic and unsatisfactory the combination seemed to Dewey. Their further debate was fruitless.

Dewey was to repeat his general criticism of the Ethical movement at the close of an important article on "The Chaos in Moral Training,"⁵⁷ in which he deplored the separation between precepts and practice in American life, and stressed consequences and reasons over preachments and punishments. His "final point" was this:

. . . . An influential movement of the present times (I refer to the ethical culture movement) holds, as I understand it, that it is possible to separate the whole matter of the moral education of children and adults from theoretical considerations. With their contention that education can be (must be, I should say) separated from dogmatic theories I am heartily at one;

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

⁵⁷ *Popular Science Monthly*, XLV, 33 (August, 1894), pp. 433-43.

but as, after all, a dogmatic theory is a contradiction in terms, the question is, whether such an emancipation can be effected without a positive theory of the moral life. . . . What reasons shall I present to my child? . . . What motives . . . ? What interests . . . ?⁵⁸

Again, it was Salter alone who responded for the Ethical leaders, when the article was called to his attention months later. He attributed Dewey's disagreement in part to a misunderstanding of Adler's emphasis on nonsectarian education in the public schools, in the Moral Education of Children. This time it was for readers of his own newsletter, chiefly within the Ethical movement, that Salter insisted on the aim, at least, of unity between theory and practice.⁵⁹

The metaphysical basis for Salter's dualism, and for his gradual and never quite complete transition to romantic naturalism, appeared in full in 1892 in the crisp, clear little book called First Steps in Philosophy (Physical and Ethical), which won Josiah Royce's qualified praise for its hesitant idealism. "The first and perhaps more valuable part of it was written," Salter was proud to say years later, "before I went into the Ethical Movement."⁶⁰ That first, physical part was published earlier in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy.⁶¹ The second, ethical part was given

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 442.

⁵⁹ Salter, "The Chaos in Moral Training," The Cause, IV, 5 (May, 1897), pp. 40-41.

⁶⁰ "A Word of Explanation," Standard, V, 5 (February, 1919), footnote, p. 151.

⁶¹ "A Popular Statement of Idealism," in Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3 & 4 (July & October, 1884), pp. 246-60 & 383-99.

first in lectures at the Plymouth School of Applied Ethics in 1891. Together, the parts presented a sharp contrast between his major categories of Matter and Duty, the Physical and the Ethical.

Alone, the preferred and slightly shorter Part I (seventy-one pages) remained well within the British empirical tradition of physical or "sensible" idealism. Salter would have called it "Scientific" Idealism, "but for an air of presumption about such a title."⁶² Unlike Bishop Berkeley, to whom frequent indebtedness was acknowledged, often by way of scientific confirmation from Herbert Spencer, W. K. Clifford, or Chauncey Wright, Salter stopped short of theism or any unifying being or principle (even materialistic). His analysis remained phenomenological, and he frequently used the word "psychological" as scientifically all-inclusive, without meaning to suggest any "metaphysical" knowledge of "causes." This is a key passage:

... [T]he whole sensible (material) world is but an effect upon ourselves. But because nothing sensible or material is left, it would be a hasty inference to say that nothing whatever is left. If we are asked, What?--we answer, All that causes sensations. . . . But though we know of no causes, we have an inextinguishable faith that there are such causes. . . .⁶³

Even the sense organs, the brain, the nervous system "only exist as sensations," he said, ". . . save in their supersensible or transcendental causes."⁶⁴

⁶²First Steps in Philosophy, p. 33.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 24-25. ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 30.

Salter rejected the "semi-idealist" distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' qualities--at least in so far as primary qualities, though more universal, might be thought to exist apart from experience. All qualities were for him, as for James, Huxley, and Spencer arrayed against the naive realist, equally subjective.⁶⁵ While citing Huxley for his first lessons in idealism, and for harmonizing idealism and materialism "by furnishing a solvent for materialism," Salter seemed to prefer Spencer for his definition of the properties of matter as "subjective affections" and his refuge in the unknown and unknowable power behind them. For Salter, "If any one of the properties of matter is not such a 'subjective affection,' but a reality apart from all subjective affections, idealism is overthrown and the sensible world to this extent exists as truly when we do not experience it as when we do."⁶⁶

Salter in his early writings also rejected strongly individualistic or voluntaristic statements of idealism, as found in the more extravagant moments of Emerson and Carlyle, among others. He agreed, of course, that reality had no meaning or existence outside actual or possible experience. "But," he said, "because the outward world is our experience (and not something apart from us), it does not follow that we give it to ourselves."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 65.

⁶⁷ Ibid., footnote, pp. 40-41.

The transition from physical philosophy to ethical philosophy was easy in this context. As Salter had said, "Philosophy may be acknowledged to be not unlike ethics in that it holds before us not so much what is (in our thoughts), as what ought to be."⁶⁸ Idealism, unlike common sense materialism, was for him proper thinking, if not philosophy itself. But when philosophy was thinking properly of matter alone, it was still scientific and factual, rather than speculative and ethical. When philosophy turned from Matter to Duty, it was proper thinking about what should be.

The Ethical Part II of First Steps in Philosophy differed less from the ethics of the early Ethical Religion and Salter's other Ethical Society addresses than it did from the Physical Part I of the same book. He stressed again the ideal character of ethics, the self-evidence of duty, and (a bit less than usual) the sublimity of it all.

Salter found individual capability a limiting factor in duty, somewhat more than Adler in his Kantian rigorism of deriving the "can" from the "should."⁶⁹ But Salter's imperative remained categorical: "Ethics deals with what I ought to do, not with what I ought to do, supposing I wish to reach certain ends."⁷⁰

Even so, there was more than before of the sense of ethics as self-realization, or as the realization of each

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 84 ff.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

conscious being to the extent that his nature is compatible with the highest realization of others.⁷¹ Salter rejected both popular intuitionism and popular utilitarianism--the former with the suggestion that all systems are intuitive in that they stop ultimately with some directly apprehended or further unjustified goal (virtue, happiness, or utility), the latter with the admission that if the definition of happiness or utility is noble enough, no proponent of virtue or righteousness can reasonably reject it either.

Salter noted again as in Ethical Religion, after developing his own theory independently, its similarity to the views "advanced by the late T. H. Green in his Prolegomena to Ethics" and its general indebtedness to Aristotle, Butler, Kant, and Sidgwick.⁷² Finally, he proposed a combination of the ideal qualities without being able to name the resulting philosophy or to assign its historic sources. To be "complete, self-sufficient, self-consistent," he said, his ethical philosophy needed them all. "Hence science, art, 'virtue' (in the limited sense), happiness are parts of the ethical ideal; they are all things that should be; they alike give a basis for duty."⁷³

It was this cautious eclecticism, without commitment to "Absolute Idealism," which Royce in his review found acceptable enough to an idealist, and much beyond Salter's

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 101-26.

⁷² Ibid., p. 154.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 153.

modest promise of "First Steps," but still incomplete. He rejected the identification of idealistic metaphysics with the "causes" of experience, however mysterious, and pointed instead to a logical or teleological "truth-world," the "Object of Insight," which is not a "cause" in the physical sense.⁷⁴

In commending Salter for recognizing, if not developing, the metaphysical background of ethics, Royce called attention to another running controversy. He expressed the hope "that our honored friend, Dr. Paul Carus, will take Mr. Salter's book into account when next he is disposed to assert that the leaders of the 'Ethical Movement' in this country are not sufficiently alive to the logical dependence of ethics upon fundamental philosophical considerations."⁷⁵

The early relations of Paul Carus (1852-1919) and the Ethical movement are obscure and apparently undocumented. His son Gustav Carus, who came to share his father's hope that Ethical Culture might become more avowedly scientific in method and monistic in world view, was a friendly visitor to the Chicago and St. Louis societies in later years. He concluded that much of that hope had been realized, though too long after the pioneer naturalists in American philosophy to enlist them or most of their followers in Ethical Culture.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Royce, review, International Journal of Ethics, II, 4 (July, 1893), pp. 539-41.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 541.

⁷⁶ Conversations with Gustav Carus, St. Louis, 1954-61.

Salter's first known reference to Paul Carus was in a letter to Weston, dated February 13, 1890:

... I took an hour or two to read our Open Courts lately--the contributions, do you realize it, are from some of the most eminent names in science in England & France (e. g. Romanes, Muller, Binet) & are of very real worth, especially to students of psychology. I have done making light of the Open Court. If I had time I should devote myself for a while to just such psychological researches as Carus is trying to popularize. There is no other weekly quite like it. . . .⁷⁷

He may have regretted writing this tribute, or wished that he had written it sooner and more publicly. Four months later, on the first three Sundays in June, Carus spoke on "The Ethical Problem" at public meetings of the Chicago Society in Emerson Hall. The three lectures--"Ethics as a Science," "The Data of Ethics," and "The Theories of Ethics"--were published immediately,⁷⁸ and followed by a rejoinder from Salter⁷⁹ and many months of controversy with him in the Open Court, augmented by brief exchanges between Carus and John Maddox of Minneapolis, Frederic May Holland of Concord, Friedrich Jodl of Vienna, Robert Lewins, V. C., formerly of the British Army, Goldwin Smith of Toronto, L. M. Billia of Turin, and Harald Höffding of Copenhagen--all collected years later in an enlarged second edition.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Letter lent by the Westons.

⁷⁸ Paul Carus, The Ethical Problem: Three Lectures delivered at the invitation of the Board of Trustees before the Society for Ethical Culture of Chicago, in June, 1890 (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1890), pp. xii, 90.

⁷⁹ "Dr. Carus on 'The Ethical Problem,'" Open Court, IV, 32 (October 2, 1890), pp. 2546-49.

⁸⁰ Carus, The Ethical Problem: Three Lectures on Ethics as a Science (2nd ed., enlarged; 1899), pp. xxiv, 351.

Carus liked to believe that his invitation to speak at the Chicago Society was due to his earlier criticisms of the Ethical movement and the Ethical Record, and their effect on members of the Board of Trustees, but Salter took full responsibility for the series, explaining that he had gained respect for the man and his journal, and simply wanted to introduce him to the society.⁸¹

In his lectures, Carus went straight to the point of recognizing the value of the Ethical movement as a step beyond the churches, while criticizing it for its vagueness and lack of any firm basis for ethics. He defined ethics:

. . . Ethics, without a principle or maxim, without a standard for discrimination, is no ethics. It may be enthusiasm, it may be sentimentality, it may be zeal for some unknown good; it may be mysticism or romanticism, but it is not ethics, for judgment as to right or wrong, according to a definite conviction, is the very nature of ethics.⁸²

Among the leading theories of ethics, he rejected both intuitionism and utilitarianism--the former, which he found prevalent among the Ethical leaders, as supernatural if not downright superstitious, and the latter as mistaken in its interpretation of the facts of nature and value. "It is true," he admitted, "that the good is always useful, but we cannot invert the sentence and say the useful is always good."⁸³

Salter's first response was characteristic. Facts? A basis for ethics? Of course. But which facts? And what

⁸¹Salter, "Dr. Carus and 'The Ethical Problem,'" in Ethical Problem, p. 86. (All references are to the enlarged second edition.)

⁸²Carus, Ethical Problem, p. 37.

⁸³Ibid., p. 57.

conception of truth and the universe? He agreed that he and some of the other Ethical leaders (Adler, for instance, and perhaps Coit) might properly be called supernaturalists. And he repeated his own summary point in a number of ways, including this: "To ask why we should do the right is meaningless, it is to go out of the moral region altogether."⁸⁴

This "tautology" drew some of Carus' most pungent criticisms, and the debate went on and on. Salter emphasized the difference between organizational agnosticism and the right of the individual member--or even his responsibility--to develop a clear ethical philosophy. Granting this difference, Carus concentrated on Salter's own view and that of other leaders as dominant if not required:

This ethical view will naturally appear to him who holds it, deeper than positivism and broader than monism. To the monist however it must appear dualistic, to the positivist metaphysical, to the man of natural science, supernatural. The former standpoint recognizes a profundity where the latter finds a vagary.⁸⁵

Salter's final statement, on "First Principles of Ethics," agreed with Carus that the "ethical field" is the field of all voluntary human action--including even circulation and digestion insofar as they are influenced by the will, especially with the intention of improvement. But the "science" of ethics remained for him "an ideal science," with standards derived not from actual conduct or the history,

⁸⁴Salter, ibid., pp. 86-96.

⁸⁵Carus, ibid., p. 148.

sociology, or psychology of conduct, but from ideal rules intrinsically worthy of reverence.⁸⁶

Carus closed the lengthy debate with Salter, before going on to the other writers, with a strong criticism tempered by its parting deference to Salter's scientific mind:

When the Ethical Societies were founded many people hoped that a movement was started which would supply the demand of a religion of science and of scientific ethics applied to practical life. This hope was not fulfilled. The founder of the ethical societies is swayed by principles which are little short of an actual hostility toward science, and Mr. Salter is not as yet free from the belief that the ultimate basis of science rests upon some transcendental principle. Science in his opinion fails at this crucial point.

The Societies of Ethical Culture can be called progressive in so far only as they discard rituals and ceremonies; but they are actually a reactionary movement on the main point in question. . . .

It seems to me that in the present article Mr. Salter has considerably approached our position. . . .⁸⁷

Salter's only public references to the controversy with Carus appeared in The Cause, a monthly newsletter he started in Philadelphia in 1895 and brought back with him to Chicago early in 1897. In May, 1897, he welcomed "the old Open Court . . . in a new dress" and "the translations it gives from first-rate foreign writers in the realm of religion and ethics." But he added, "We regret to find the editor continuing a somewhat narrow attitude toward the Ethical societies."⁸⁸ A year and a half later he wrote a book notice on the recent translation of Wundt's Ethics,

⁸⁶Salter, ibid., pp. 264-78.

⁸⁷Carus, ibid., p. 281.

⁸⁸Salter, The Cause, III, 5 (May, 1897), p. 36.

which "maintains that we must look to ethics to supply the corner-stone of metaphysics," and not vice versa. Then he added this note of ambivalence:

. . . This was the point of view we maintained against Dr. Carus many years ago (in a controversy in The Open Court, recently republished in a new edition of Dr. Carus' The Ethical Problem). We confess we are not so sure of our original contention now, and find the question a somewhat complicated one; yet Wundt's opinion must be admitted by everyone to be of great weight. . . .⁸⁹

By 1892 it became clear that the struggling Chicago Society could not soon overcome the dual handicap of Salter's reputation for radicalism and his contrastingly mild, scholarly manner. Besides, Weston had virtually retired from the platform to purely organizational duties in Philadelphia, and M. M. Mangasarian, the Presbyterian minister from Armenia who left his Independent Christian Church in Philadelphia in 1888 to train with Adler in New York,⁹⁰ had the dramatic appeal needed to revive Chicago.⁹¹ So Salter went to Philadelphia as leader in February, 1892, and Mangasarian to Chicago.

Salter's chief philosophic controversy in his five years in Philadelphia was more moralistic than technical. It involved the poet and editor Horace Traubel of neighboring Camden, New Jersey, and other followers of Walt Whitman,

⁸⁹ Ibid., IV, 7 (November, 1898), p. 59.

⁹⁰ "General Notes," Ethical Record, I, 3 (October, 1888), p. 111.

⁹¹ Adler had written Weston regarding Mangasarian's "secret alternative" to the ministry--the stage--and urging Weston to recruit him for Ethical leadership instead. (Letter of May 1, 1888, in Philadelphia Society archives.)

many of whom were members of the Philadelphia Society. In Chicago, Salter saw preliminary announcements of the monthly Conservator, the first of several Traubel journals. Weston in the Record identified the editor as "a close personal friend and daily companion of Walt Whitman" and a contributor to the Index, its successor, the New Ideal, and "other liberal journals." He went on to quote Traubel's full "Greeting" from the first issue of the Conservator (March, 1890), which included these lines:

"The Conservator originated in the conviction of a group of members of the Ethical Society that the different Liberal Societies of this section (as of all sections) ought to know more of the intimate social and spiritual life of each other. . . .

"It is not pretended that this idea, especially at the outset, can be perfectly embodied. Philadelphia has Unitarian, Hebrew, and Ethical societies, all working in similar lines. . . .

". . . Not less than Thoreau at Walden shall we spiritually realize all climes and seasons. . . .

"Although the outcome of the labor of members of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, it is not the organ of that society. . . ."92

Salter himself, from Chicago, was one of the early contributors. His address on "Ethics and Philosophy" (distinguishing clearly between them, at least in behalf of the Ethical movement) and another, "What Is the Moral Life?" (straight thought and motivation, as well as overt action), had both been heard in Philadelphia and Chicago. In print, each filled one issue of the Conservator.⁹³ But as Salter

⁹²Ethical Record, III, 1 (April, 1890), pp. 62-63. Quotation marks Weston's, ellipses mine.

⁹³Vol. II, Nos. 1 & 2 (March & April, 1891), pp. 12 & 14 respectively.

relieved Weston as Ethical lecturer in Philadelphia, his more austere manner and rigorist philosophy soon alienated the Whitman group, whose leadership passed to Traubel with the death of Whitman himself. A running controversy developed, with little public record or acknowledgement beyond oblique references and aspersions in the Conservator, and apparent slights from the Ethical Society platform. If Weston sided with Salter at all, the effect was not lasting. Both he and Traubel were newly wed, and children born years later recall only long and cordial relations between their fathers.⁹⁴

Salter first discussed the issue publicly in a Sunday address on "Liberty of Thought and Action in the Ethical Society," at the Philadelphia Society on May 6, 1894. He referred to the recent resignation of twenty-six members, including Traubel and other supporters of the Conservator, whose sense of "freedom," he explained, misrepresented the society as "a mere debating club"--"a mere arena, a mere stamping ground for discussion." He would continue to recognize the Conservator as a private organ, he said, carrying it at the society's book table, but he refused to announce it without definite instructions from the board of trustees or the annual meeting in April, both of which sustained his point of view.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Interviews with Miss Gertrude Traubel, Germantown, Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Esther B. Weston King, Philadelphia, March 26, 1967.

⁹⁵Unpublished address, typed, pp. 13.

An unsigned article in the Cause nearly a year later outlined the controversy for the first time in print, and added "as a matter of record and history," and to put an end to "misapprehension":

. . . The Ethical movement, according to the Conservator, could neither be for "dynamite" or "free love" [Salter's crucial illustrations in the address], nor against them; it must simply be free and give equal hospitality to these and any other contrasted views as to what right and wrong practically are. Mr. Salter felt that this was a grave misrepresentation of the movement. . . .

The dissidents formed "The Fellowship for Ethical Research" soon after leaving the society, and no doubt appreciated the editorially expressed "hope that our old friends are finding that they can learn the way of duty more clearly under the new conditions than they could before."⁹⁶

Salter had tried to clarify and objectify the issue in the autumn of 1894, with a pair of addresses on Whitman which were printed five years later. In the first, "The Great Side of Walt Whitman,"⁹⁷ he let the poet speak for himself in affirmation, contagious enthusiasm and melody, and respect for the varieties of individual human existence. In the second, "The Questionable Side of Walt Whitman,"⁹⁸ he pointed--again with ample quotations--to the very promiscuity of approval and action which made Whitman appear to be a man without conscience, philosophy, or humor.

⁹⁶"An Episode in Our Society's History," Cause, I (March, 1895), p. 14.

⁹⁷Ethical Addresses, VI (Sept., 1899), pp. 121-44.

⁹⁸Ibid. (Oct., 1899), pp. 145-66.

But for all his troubles with the Traubel faction, and for all his temperamental tendencies toward the quietly ordered life, Salter was again drawn to the defense of romantic bombast and anarchic freedom. He found "the great side" of Whitman greater than "the questionable side," and deferred the final judgement to the wisdom of the ages.

Early in 1894 Salter gathered his thoughts on anarchy and government for presentation as a course at the third summer session of the School of Applied Ethics in Plymouth. Encouraged there by Dean Henry C. Adams of Michigan, the economist, he revised the course for Sunday morning addresses at the Philadelphia Society and published them as Anarchy or Government? An Inquiry into Fundamental Politics.⁹⁹ Granting the abstract ideal of a society so completely ethical it would need no laws, or at least no law enforcement, he recognized government first as a grim necessity and then as an instrument of mutual aid. He noted, too, the inconsistencies of his favorite scientific spokesmen for freedom, Huxley and Spencer, especially the latter, in accommodating their principle of 'natural selection' to police protection for life and property, and for group life of nations at war, while refusing to extend government farther in the direction of economic and social justice. Using the Pullman strike of 1894 as his crucial example, Salter answered his rhetorical question this way:

We seem to be in this country at a parting of the ways. . . . If it is liberty, then there must be

⁹⁹Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1895. Pp. 176.

liberty all around. To say that railroad or any other employees may not act as they see fit (whether it be by striking, boycotting, or other procedure that involves neither violence nor breach of contract) and yet to leave their employers free to fix wages, hours of labor and other conditions of employment as they like, is simply monstrous. Either hands off,--or hands on impartially.¹⁰⁰

Having recouped his membership losses in Philadelphia (the total was again about 160), Salter announced his next move with typical restraint. "The Chicago Society has lost its lecturer, Mr. Mangasarian," he wrote in his lead editorial for January, 1897, "and in its need has turned to the present writer." He went on to assure the availability of Philadelphia's "old lecturer, Mr. Weston," and of "Professor Adler and his young associates" from New York.¹⁰¹ In the next issue of The Cause, from Chicago, he stressed his diffidence "in succeeding so brilliant a speaker as Mr. Mangasarian" and his regret "for our own sake and for the sake of the large numbers whom he has attracted."¹⁰² The real reason for the change, well known in inner circles of the Ethical movement for years but first published in Howard Radest's history in 1969, was Mangasarian's shrill and incessant anti-Catholicism, which led Adler and Chicago's founding president, Judge Booth, to press for his resignation.¹⁰³ Mangasarian continued to speak and write for the Ethical societies, especially in Philadelphia. By the fall of 1900 he was back in Chicago

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 163-64.

¹⁰¹ Cause, III, p. 1.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰³ Op. cit., pp. 67, 154.

to stay, and to organize the Independent Religious Society, which soon claimed five hundred members (as against the Ethical two hundred), regular audiences of seventeen hundred, and nine prominent trustees, six of whom were former members of the Ethical Society.¹⁰⁴ Mangasarian and his new society, always more rationalistic and flamboyant, were the most eagerly watched competitors of the Ethical Society in Chicago until his retirement in 1925.

Whatever Salter lacked in flamboyance and popular following, however, he more than made up in good works and reformist crusades. Like Adler, he found the verification of his ethical ideal in its exemplification. His sanctions were more pragmatic and empirical than their "idealist" formulation. Early in the spring of 1898 he organized a Women's Union to staff most of the practical projects of the society, including the newly acquired social settlement house in the predominantly Russian Jewish ghetto of the seventh ward, near Jane Addams' Hull House. Upon Judge Booth's death in May, it was named Henry Booth House and put under the full-time direction of a young ex-missionary, W. H. Noyes.¹⁰⁵

Salter continued to crusade for the right of labor to organize, and for the even more controversial eight-hour day.¹⁰⁶ On wages or salaries or other income, he shared the view he had so often heard from Adler--that labor should

¹⁰⁴"Notes from Chicago," Ethical Record, N. S., II (April-May, 1901), p. 184.

¹⁰⁵The Cause, IV (Feb. through June, 1898), passim.

¹⁰⁶As in "A Phase of the Eight-Hour Question," Ethical Record, N. S., IV (Dec., 1902-Jan., 1903), pp. 44-46.

be freely given by all, according to strength and skills, and support or sustentation (Adler's favorite word) given to all, according to need or capacity for doing their best. Salter reaffirmed this view, with obvious pride in discovering that it had also been endorsed by John Stuart Mill and attributed by him to Auguste Comte.¹⁰⁷

On the larger question of general motivation and education, Salter was clearly sympathetic to rewards and punishments. He praised the principal of the South Side Ethical School (the society had Sunday schools on the North Side and West Side, too, and sometimes Central) for her defense of "Attendance Prizes."¹⁰⁸ He also commended the paddling of "young toughs" for minor crimes, instead of making them into heroes and martyrs with jail sentences.¹⁰⁹ One Sunday late in 1898, he chided his fellow liberals:

. . . We believe in law, order, human power and possibilities and in a spirit in things ever urging man on and yet never doing man's work. . . .
 . . . Some liberals have the idea, however, that they should not interfere with the liberty of their children. . . . Others think children should choose their religion for themselves. . . . We should rather prepare them for a wise choice, just as we prepare them for self-maintenance, but do not expect them to maintain themselves while still children.¹¹⁰

Like his colleagues, Salter spoke out frequently against imperialism, especially before, during, and after

¹⁰⁷Cause, V (May, 1899), pp. 37-38.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., II (Nov., 1897), p. 59.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., IV (Feb., 1898), p. 16.

¹¹⁰"What Are Liberals Doing for Their Children?", Cause, V (Feb., 1899), pp. 10-11.

the Spanish-American War. In an address called "America's Duty in the Philippines" he looked back at his own pre-war hopes for America to liberate the Cubans from Spanish rule, hopes betrayed by the continuing occupation of Cuba and the outright imperialism and atrocities in the Philippines.¹¹¹ He took pride in authorship of a resolution condemning the "forcible annexation" and "criminal aggression" in both Cuba and the Philippines, adopted "with but one dissenting vote" at a special meeting of the Chicago Ethical Society on February 15, 1899.¹¹² But five of his most prominent and devoted members, including three trustees, protested Salter's publication of the resolution as representing the society rather than just the individuals who supported it, and received his promise to report at least the number of voters next time.¹¹³ From as far away as Miles City, Montana, came editorial outrage at "such utterances" as those attributed to the lecturer of the Chicago Society for Ethical Culture, and surprise "that he is not treated to tar and feathers."¹¹⁴

Salter's brother-in-law, William James, stood by him in all these practical encounters, if not in the more philosophic ones. James also knew Weston, who continued to edit the International Journal of Ethics and other Ethical Union publications after the Salters moved to Philadelphia,

¹¹¹International Journal of Ethics, XII (April, 1902), pp. 360-75.

¹¹²Cause, V (March, 1899), pp. 19-20.

¹¹³Ibid., (Oct.), pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁴Miles City Journal, April 7, 1899.

and Dickinson Miller, his former student at Harvard, who started teaching philosophy at Bryn Mawr in 1893 and helped Salter regularly as a volunteer in the Ethical Sunday School and the Philosophical Section, one of four special interest groups in the society. The names of Mrs. William James and Mrs. E. P. Gibbens of Cambridge, her mother, appeared from time to time in the lists of "contributors" to The Cause, during both the Philadelphia and the later Chicago years.

The announcement of the membership of Professor and Mrs. William James, however, did not appear until the issue for May, 1895, which also listed James as the guest speaker for the first time on Sunday, May 5, on the topic "Is Life Worth Living?"¹¹⁵ Salter summarized the lecture faithfully in the next issue, agreeing with the speaker in conclusion that "perhaps the most striking point in the lecture was Professor James' frank and radical confession of what he called the bankruptcy of a purely naturalistic theology."¹¹⁶ The full lecture was published in the International Journal of Ethics, with the footnote that it had been given first at the Harvard YMCA, and then at the Philadelphia Ethical Society and the Plymouth School of Applied Ethics.¹¹⁷ After many reprints, it appeared in The Will to Believe, and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, of which it was an integral part.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵Cause, I, pp. 23, 21.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁷Vol. VI (Oct., 1895), pp. 1-24.

¹¹⁸New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1904 (Copyright 1896). Pp. xiv, 332.

James introduced as "the soul of my discourse" the point Salter had recognized as "perhaps the most striking":

. . . Religion has meant many things in human history, but when from now onward I use the word I mean to use it in the supernaturalist sense, as signifying that the so-called order of nature that constitutes the world's experience is only one portion of the total Universe, and that there stretches beyond this visible world an unseen world of which we now know nothing positive, but in its relation to which the true significance of our present mundane life consists.¹¹⁹

After developing that point for several pages, in disparagement of naturalistic theism, agnosticism, and atheism, James was careful to define God supernaturally as well, in the essay on "Reflex Action and Theism":

. . . A power not ourselves, then, which not only makes for righteousness, but means it, and which recognizes us,--such is the definition which I think nobody will be inclined to dispute.¹²⁰

Many avowed theists, of course, would be inclined to dispute James's definition as not genuinely supernatural at all, or at least not "supersensible" in Adler's sense of the term, but rather a sort of magically projected naturalism or even spiritualism. If Salter developed similar criticisms of James at this stage, he did not record them. Wavering in his "idealism," Salter probably accepted the definitions as valid, while doubting their alleged embodiment.

James spoke again for Salter late in December, 1897, this time in Chicago, on "Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine."¹²¹ Again, though doubting personal

¹¹⁹Journal, p. 15; Will to Believe, p. 51.

¹²⁰Will to Believe, p. 122.

¹²¹"Ethical Society Notes," Cause, III (Dec., 1897), p. 67.

immortality himself, Salter apparently made no public comment on the lecture, and no later announcement or sale of the little book which amplified it.¹²² Even so firm a believer in immortality as Thomas Davidson, who did the review for the International Journal of Ethics, was embarrassed by James's wishful handling of the first objection (that consciousness is a function of the brain) and his odd choice of the second (that there would be too many immortal beings).¹²³

It remained for Dickinson Miller to challenge the popular theology of his Harvard teacher. First, he wrote a dutiful and laudatory review of The Will to Believe for the Journal, with a hint of strong disagreement at the end, and the promise of an article to detail it.¹²⁴ The article followed--a critical review called "'The Will to Believe' and the Duty to Doubt."¹²⁵ It was a polemical masterpiece, analyzing The Will to Believe as "the philosophy of a psychologist. His teaching," Miller demonstrated in passage after passage, "is not an objective cosmical construction; it is a medicine for souls."¹²⁶

James did not deign to reply. On a postal card to Weston at the Journal, dated February 8 1899, he wrote:

Miller seems to be in a sufficient amount of hot water already, so I don't think I will do anything to

¹²²William James, Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1898), pp. 70.

¹²³IX (Jan., 1899), pp. 256-59.

¹²⁴VIII (Jan., 1898), pp. 254-55.

¹²⁵IX (Oct., 1898), pp. 169-95.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 175.

the controversy--at any rate not in the forthcoming number.--By the way, are the Life Worth Livings so few that they need no longer be advertized in the list of my works?¹²⁷

Henry Rutgers Marshall, the New York architect and Columbia graduate, who was soon to join Adler in the Philosophical Club, wrote a stout, humorless defense of James for the Journal,¹²⁸ and William Caldwell of Northwestern University a somewhat subtler attempt at mediation between belief and will, through "experience."¹²⁹

Salter proudly announced the selection of James to give the Gifford lectures on "Natural Religion" at Edinburgh in 1899 and 1901, and his election--"an honor both ways"--as a correspondent of the French Academy.¹³⁰ James had already called Miller to assist him at Harvard, before the critical review of The Will to Believe appeared; C[harles] M. Bakewell succeeded Miller at Bryn Mawr, and Ethical member E[rnest] C. Moore of Chicago replaced Bakewell at the University of California.¹³¹ Miller lectured for James at Harvard when he went to Edinburgh for the Gifford lectures.¹³²

These Gifford lectures by James became the much reprinted classic, The Varieties of Religious Experience.¹³³

¹²⁷New York Society files.

¹²⁸"Belief and Will," IX (April, 1899), pp. 359-73.

¹²⁹"The Will to Believe and the Duty to Doubt," loc. cit., pp. 373-78.

¹³⁰Cause, IV (Oct., 1898), p. 55. ¹³¹Ibid., p. 54.

¹³²Cause, V (Oct., 1899), p. 58.

¹³³New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902. Pp. xii, 534.

Propounding a pragmatic, 'piecemeal' supernaturalism, James made many references to abstract universalists and to once-born moralists which might have applied to Salter or other leaders of the Ethical movement. He made but one explicit reference. It followed a typical characterization of Emerson as "a platonizing writer," elevating "the abstract divineness of things" to the level of worship. "In the various churches without a God which today are spreading through the world under the name of ethical societies," James continued, "we have a similar worship of the abstract divine, the moral law as an ultimate object."¹³⁴

Percival Chubb, a romantic idealist who had come to America from England in quest of the spirit of Emerson and Whitman, commended James for his leadership in "this new emotionalism," "a wave of reaction against rationalism." In an editorial review in the Ethical Record he rejected as "inadequate and misleading" the suggestion that the Ethical movement has "a negative attitude toward God." Indeed, he said, "several of the leaders of societies are pronounced theists," but their distinctiveness lies in "a positive and emphatic recognition of righteousness."¹³⁵ On the other hand, Stanton Coit, the American who first assisted Adler and then moved to England, agreed sadly that "the passage in James undoubtedly classifies and labels us correctly."¹³⁶ He had

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 57.

¹³⁵"Professor James and the Quest for Religion," N. S., Vol. IV (Feb.-March, 1903), pp. 111-15.

¹³⁶Ethics, V (Aug. 23, 1902), pp. 265-66.

written an earlier editorial review criticizing James for his pragmatic subjectivism.¹³⁷ The reviewer for the International Journal of Ethics was J. H. Muirhead of Birmingham, who also praised James for his wealth of detail and his appreciation for feeling, but charged him with "cutting our coat according to our cloth with a vengeance, as most readers will probably think," in his final pluralistic theology.¹³⁸

Salter usually shared and defended Coit's attitudes in philosophy and propaganda, rather than Adler's. He probably shared Coit's critique of James as well. After a visit to England in the summer of 1902, Salter wrote of the openness and expansion there (seven societies in London alone), the "more democratic character of the English Ethical Movement," the greater prevalence of ideas, and the work of the Society of Ethical Propagandists, at that time led by Miss Zona Vallance, J. Ramsay MacDonald, J. A. Hobson, and G. H. Ferris.¹³⁹

Salter's first open and outspoken criticism of James came after the publication of his Pragmatism,¹⁴⁰ and near the time of Salter's own early retirement from Ethical leadership in Chicago. Writing to Weston from Cambridge on February 9, 1908, Salter mentioned his need for money to make

¹³⁷Ibid. (July 19, 1902), pp. 225-26.

¹³⁸XIII (Jan., 1903), pp. 236-46.

¹³⁹"Contrasts of the English With the American Ethical Movement," Ethical Record, IV (Oct.-Nov., 1902), pp. 16-18.

¹⁴⁰William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907), pp. xiii, 309.

a trip to speak in Philadelphia, his recent "gorging away" at Bradley's Appearance and Reality, and his plan to bring Royce's The World and the Individual "to read down there." He closed with this news: "I read my lecture on Pragmatism to James the other day, & he liked it so much I braced & sent it to the Atlantic, wh. has accepted it."¹⁴¹

His article on "Pragmatism: A New Philosophy" was based on an address given at the Chicago Ethical Society, reviewing the new James book.¹⁴² In it, Salter noted the international furor over the new movement, with "converts and enemies . . . like 'evolution' thirty years ago," and the projection of utilitarianism or of "Humanism" (from Protagoras to F. C. S. Schiller) to the level of metaphysics. "I regard Pragmatism," he said, "as a half-truth--or to be a little nicer, a three-quarters truth. . . ." To "get" Pragmatism, to "be interested in it," he recommended reading James. To see it in its system and subtleties, he recommended Dewey and the "Chicago School." He granted that "the world we know . . . is a human world. . . . It is our experience--more or less, our selected experience. But there is a strange thing about this experience, selected or involuntary: we don't give it to ourselves--we get it."

Even if sensation is a "reaction" rather than an "impression," he asked, "what has occasioned the reaction?" Salter hastily, almost boastfully, admitted the question to

¹⁴¹Postal card lent by Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Weston.

¹⁴²Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CI (May, 1908), pp. 657-63.

be "entirely curious" and "without the slightest practical importance." But he indicated his own need for at least "a provisional answer," such as Berkeley's "God," Kant's "Ding-an-sich," Spencer's "Unknowable," or Montgomery's "power-endowed existents."¹⁴³

Salter spelled out the two views of pragmatism, and called attention to their confusion in James:

. . . One is that the theory blends with experience, leads us into it, is not defeated by it--in a word, is borne out by the facts, concrete, sensible facts. Another is that the theory attracts us, pleases us, gives us comfort, makes us happy, and all that.¹⁴⁴

For the first view, he showed a large measure of agreement. But for the second, especially as James and even Kant used it to retain a personal God, "it is weak--deplorably weak."¹⁴⁵

The Montgomery he referred to, with the "power-endowed existents" behind experience, was Edmund Montgomery, the Scottish physician from London who studied and practiced throughout central and southern Europe before settling with his artist bride on Liendo Plantation, Hempstead, Texas, in 1872. Montgomery often spoke before the annual conferences of the Free Religious Association in Boston, and wrote for its Index, as well as for Mind, the Fortnightly Review, and the later International Journal of Ethics.

Montgomery became a philosophic favorite of Salter's, and a good friend and correspondent. In a letter from Liendo Plantation in the fall of 1904 he wrote enthusiastically of

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 661-62.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 662.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 663.

the World's Fair in St. Louis, including a week of superb scientific conferences--his first in America. He also told of the completion of "the biological part of my book" and of steady progress on "the philosophical part," arriving at "the same conclusions" as earlier articles and books.¹⁴⁶

Montgomery's Philosophical Problems in the Light of Vital Organization appeared in 1907,¹⁴⁷ and Salter reviewed it for the International Journal of Ethics, quoting from their private correspondence and the earlier articles as well as from the book.¹⁴⁸ He bemoaned the scarcity and the superficiality of American reviews, while commending the British and the French. In particular, he cited the Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, for getting Montgomery's point and comparing it to L'Evolution creatrice by Bergson, also published in 1907. Rejecting both subjective idealism and mechanistic materialism, Montgomery used his wide biological knowledge and experimentation to make a case for monistic naturalism. "Creation" of both sentient beings and lifeless conglomerates, including hard-to-classify borderline cases, he attributed to "power complexes" or "power-endowed existents," unconsciously structured teleological tendencies of undetermined origin. The goal of organisms, even those with consciousness or self-consciousness, should not be pleasure, he believed, but rather the progressive attainment of more

¹⁴⁶Two pages, handwritten, Oct. 23; New York files.

¹⁴⁷New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Pp. 446.

¹⁴⁸"A New Type of Naturalism--Montgomery," in Vol. XIX (Oct., 1908), pp. 90-107.

rational, ethical, and esthetic organization, both within the individual organism and among such individuals, each in tune with the creative cosmic force.

Though not given to traditional religious language, Montgomery indulged in equivalent rhetorical flourishes, Salter noted, and had confessed privately to a kind of "naturalistic mysticism."¹⁴⁹ Salter paid him the tribute from Hippocrates which he had previously used for Lotze, Wundt, and William James: "Godlike is the doctor who is also a philosopher."¹⁵⁰

Salter's growing interest in self-realization, voluntarism, and identification with vital surges and life forces led him steadily in the direction of romantics whom he had previously ignored or rejected, and step by step in the direction of early retirement from organizational life. The Chicago Society renewed its "invitation" to him as its "lecturer" for three years at the start of 1905, granting that the middle year should be one of rest and travel. He reported on that year of freedom from all care, even from systematic study or drawing of morals for addresses, in his first address after return to the society in November, 1906: "Reflections of a Traveler in Italy."¹⁵¹

The trip had led, however, to at least one other subject for an address, systematic study, and continuing interest. On shipboard he had acquired a copy of Shaw's Man

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 91, 107.

¹⁵¹Ethical Addresses, XV (May, 1908), pp. 247-64.

and Superman from a fellow traveler who could make nothing of it. It was a book he had been planning to read, and expecting to reject, but it led him eagerly back through the novels, plays, and critical works he had been missing, deliberately, since his ethical revulsion at The Essence of Ibsenism. Salter reported to the society on his new-found and audacious ethical hero, though somewhat cautiously and apologetically, in his address of April 14, 1907.¹⁵²

By this midpoint in his year back from Italy, it was apparent that Salter could not make the Chicago Society self-supporting, not even with him and Mrs. Salter in residence at Henry Booth House for economy and coordination. Adler wrote Weston in Philadelphia, and must have written Salter himself more extensively, expressing the hope that Salter might somehow stay on in Chicago as chairman and occasional lecturer while coordinating a panel of lecturers which would include Jane Addams and Charles Zueblin, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago.¹⁵³ Near the end of 1907 Salter's retirement was announced, along with his appointment to the panel of lecturers which also included Nathaniel Schmidt [professor of Semitic languages and literature at Cornell] and John Graham Brooks [a friend of Salter's since Harvard Divinity School and now a university extension lecturer in political science].¹⁵⁴ Salter's

¹⁵²"Mr. Bernard Shaw as a Social Critic," International Journal of Ethics, XVIII (July, 1908), pp. 446-58.

¹⁵³Letter, March 25, 1907; New York Society files.

¹⁵⁴"Will Quit Society of Ethical Culture," Chicago Evening Post, Dec. 21, 1907.

"Good Fight--With a Closing Word," his last address as lecturer of the Chicago Society and the one which stressed his "double self," was given on December 27. In it, no plans were announced beyond his retirement to Cambridge, Massachusetts, for study and writing after January 1, and an occasional return visit as a speaker.

But Adler and Weston had been busy, trying to set up a university lectureship for their respected colleague at Harvard or the University of Chicago, and soliciting subscriptions for one to three years from society members in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis. Weston administered the fund, which seemed adequate, but university administrators were slow in considering the appointment.¹⁵⁵ Salter was embarrassed and Adler annoyed at the delays and the attendant publicity. "But a certain limited publicity seemed necessary," Adler wrote Weston, "both to secure subscriptions and also to lend a certain honorable eclat to Salter's retirement."¹⁵⁶

At last the good news came. James had been of little help with the Harvard corporation, though he tried only for a one-year appointment, but Tufts at Chicago had seen the matter through by inviting Salter to lecture for the department of philosophy, without a university appointment, in the winter session from January through March, 1909. Weston had speculated that Salter's affinity for anarchists

¹⁵⁵Full record in New York Society files.

¹⁵⁶Letter, Jan. 10, 1908.

and G. B. Shaw might have held things up, but Salter reemphasized that affinity by announcing a course of eleven lectures on Shaw's favorites--Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.¹⁵⁷

In his defense of his book on Nietzsche years later, Salter attributed his choice of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to an "accident." He first thought of a series on "Moral Progress," he said, or perhaps "The Idea of Justice in Relation to Political Economy," but had as yet no "positive view to communicate." So he decided to expound the views of someone else, preferably someone new. Having just read most of Shaw, and lectured on him, he decided to follow up Shaw's references to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. He used up ten lectures on Schopenhauer and squeezed Nietzsche into the eleventh. "Another" year he concentrated on Nietzsche, but did not finish until a third year.¹⁵⁸

Schopenhauer was for him an old interest renewed and enlarged, an old hope for metaphysical idealism not yet entirely abandoned. Salter's outline notes for the first Chicago course, with revisions for the Summer School of Ethics at Madison, Wisconsin,¹⁵⁹ show that Professor C. C. Everett of Harvard Divinity School had introduced Schopenhauer to his classes as "the most brilliant of the profound philosophers." Salter clearly intended to submit these lectures to a publisher. He opened the series in Madison with

¹⁵⁷Salter, letters to Weston, April 24 & May 9, 1908.

¹⁵⁸"A Word of Explanation," Standard, V (March, 1919), p. 151.

¹⁵⁹All in Knox College Archives.

a new lead sentence, dated July 9, 1909, preceding his previous introduction and disavowal of sectarian intent:

The object of this book is not to state conclusions, much less to argue for them, but to develop certain processes of thought--only this, in my judgment, is philosophy. The Ethical movement, as I understand it, has no philosophical system, being open to all. . . .

For those who might find Schopenhauer "a strange subject," he added, "How singular a phenomenon in our western world--this man who feels a kinship to oriental mystics, this man who looks down on our earthly life and finds it more evil than good, this man who flouts the notion of human and social progress."

His "book" on Schopenhauer never appeared, as his interest shifted to Nietzsche, but several lectures appeared as articles. The fourth lecture, on "Idealism," was published as "Schopenhauer's Type of Idealism,"¹⁶⁰ in which Salter gave his usual thanks for the combination of the idealist assertion of "the experiential nature of all objects" with the realist contention that there must be something outside experience to be experienced. Critical idealism, he called it, because of its point of departure in Schopenhauer and himself; otherwise, critical realism. The eighth and ninth lectures, on "Will as Experience" and "Redemption and Nirvana," became "Schopenhauer's Contact With Theology,"¹⁶¹ in which Salter showed the somewhat Buddhistic approach to "theology" in Schopenhauer--his "reasoned treatment of the

¹⁶⁰Monist, XII (Jan., 1911), pp. 1-18.

¹⁶¹Harvard Theological Review, IV (July, 1911), pp. 271-310.

first principles of things." And the seventh lecture, on "Pragmatism, and Philosophy and Art," appeared as "Schopenhauer's Contact With Pragmatism,"¹⁶² a study of his theory of perception and sensibility itself as an act of will, and of his method of transcending pessimism, frustration, and necessity through understanding--through saintliness, philosophy, and art.

Salter had at first been repelled by Nietzsche, or by the popular understanding of him. In an address on "One Side of Kipling," he denounced Kipling's imperialism as tending toward barbarism like that of Bismarck in Germany, or in "the spirit that Nietzsche exemplified in philosophy."¹⁶³ And in his Nietzsche the Thinker, published in 1917, he noted that as late as 1907, when he undertook his first Ethical Society address on Nietzsche, he "could only consider him as an enemy who stood 'strikingly and brilliantly for what we do not believe.'"¹⁶⁴

With characteristic fairness, sympathy for the underdog, and his own philosophic ambivalence, he read everything by and about Nietzsche, usually in the original language. His lecture notes in the Knox College Archives include the reading notes and clippings behind the hundreds of footnotes and cross-references of his book. He accepted the obvious

¹⁶²Philosophical Review, XIX (March, 1910), pp. 137-53.

¹⁶³Ethical Record (Lecture Supplement), II (Oct.-Nov., 1900), pp. 41-48.

¹⁶⁴P. 1. Arabic page numbers the same in first edition and 1968 reprint. Lower case Roman numerals of Salter preface increased by Gambino introduction in latter.

division of Nietzsche's life into decades--especially the four ending his life and the twentieth century: as serious student, professor of classical philology at Basel, creative and prolific writer, and finally a man virtually without a mind. But Salter emphatically joined those writers, before and after him, who rejected the view popularized by the notorious Dr. Max Nordau that Nietzsche's madness infused his writings and alternated with his creative periods.¹⁶⁵

For the first time in English, in a growing list of books both sympathetic and condemnatory, Salter provided a long, meticulous, and often tediously objective commentary on all of Nietzsche's works. This was indeed the best defense against ridiculous charges and misunderstandings of such terms and phrases as "superman" (Übermensch, which he tended to render as "superhuman," or man surpassing himself or the masses), "blond beast," "will to power," "beyond good and evil," and "transvaluation of values." It was also a passable way of presenting some of Nietzsche's inspired insights, frustrations, and paradoxes--without a clear system.

Disclaiming any "wish to prophesy," Salter nevertheless did say, in accord with Nietzsche's own claim:

. . . I have a suspicion that sometime--perhaps at no very distant date--writers on serious themes will be more or less classified according as they know him or not; that we shall be speaking of a pre-Nietzschean and a post-Nietzschean period in philosophical, and particularly in ethical and social, analysis and speculation--and that those who have not made their reckoning with him will be as hopelessly out of date as those who have failed similarly with Kant.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Nietzsche the Thinker, pp. 5-6. ¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 4.

The "suspicion" has been borne out by the existentialist trend in mid-twentieth-century philosophy, though Gambino makes a bit too much of Salter's leadership in that trend in his introduction to the Nietzsche reprint of 1968.¹⁶⁷

The reception to Salter's book in his own day may be more instructive. He himself gave special credit to his predecessors Dr. Dolson, Mr. Ludovici, Miss Hamblen, Dr. Chatterton-Hill, Dr. A. Wolf, and Professor H. L. Stewart, among the Nietzsche scholars in English, and Professors Raoul Richter in German and Henri Lichtenberger in French. He pointedly rejected Paul Elmer More's Nietzsche and the "heavier blows,--I will not say they are more skilful" of Dr. Paul Carus.¹⁶⁸

Dr. Dolson reciprocated by ranking Salter's Nietzsche with the "hitherto unrivalled studies of Riehl and Lichtenberger," granting the need of the "thinker" for a higher morality than the average man, and partially granting Salter's dissociation of Nietzsche from German Kultur and the war, but questioning the pre- and post-Nietzschean prophecy and its apparent ranking of Nietzsche with Kant as a philosopher.¹⁶⁹ Salter graciously replied to her review, denying any such estimate of Nietzsche, and defending the doctrine of eternal recurrence as consistent with moral transformation.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷Pp. v-xxiii.

¹⁶⁸First edition, p. v.

¹⁶⁹Grace Neal Dolson, review, International Journal of Ethics, XXVIII (July, 1918), pp. 554-58.

¹⁷⁰Salter, "Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence," Journal XXIX (Oct., 1918), pp. 98-99.

Professor Wilbur Urban was among the friendly reviewers.¹⁷¹ He congratulated Salter for counteracting "the Nietzsche horror which seems to have taken possession of [the English-speaking peoples] body and soul," and called his book "the nearest approach to an authoritative work on the subject in the English language." In terms grown ironic for their redefinition half a century later by a subjective, value-oriented existentialism, he wrote that "the whole problem is viewed from a new angle--one involving nothing less than the abandonment of the existential for the value point of view."

R. F. A. H[ornle] wrote in the New Republic that like Lichtenberger in France and Richter and Riehl in Germany, "Mr. W. K. [sic] Salter here in America has tamed Nietzsche so successfully that he has become fit for any enlightened living-room." He praised his objectivity, in detail, except for the extravagance of the prophecy.¹⁷²

But there were unfavorable reviews, too--the most polemical one, "Nietzsche's Religion," in the Outlook.¹⁷³ "The war of the Huns against civilization," wrote the anonymous reviewer, "is correctly characterized by the words of an unnamed American professor quoted and condemned by Mr. Salter: 'Nietzsche in action.'"

¹⁷¹Philosophical Review, XXVII (May, 1918), pp. 303-09.

¹⁷²XIV (March 23, 1918), pp. 241-43.

¹⁷³CXVIII (Jan. 23, 1918), p. 131.

Somewhere in between lay the appraisal of his own colleagues. Percival Chubb wrote the review for the Standard, which had succeeded the Ethical Record as the house organ of the American Ethical Union.¹⁷⁴ Felix Adler sent his support to Chubb privately, saying, "Your review of Salter's book, it seems to me, is written in your best vein. It is certainly fortiter in re, but sufficiently suaviter in modo, and the fortiter is due to the strength of your case."¹⁷⁵ These sentences in Chubb's review clearly represented the general views of the colleagues:

. . . [T]here is a piquant strangeness in the fact that our former colleague, ardent ethical propagandist, should have retired from the rostrum to devote laborious years to the minute interpretation of this arch-rebel. What does it mean that he should be drawn toward an iconoclast of whom he can say . . . that he was not in harmony with his time, was more medieval than modern, and that a more undemocratic thinker there never was? We are eager to find out, because there is a point beyond which disharmony with what is becomes a sure sign of madness.

. . . Mr. Salter, in the course of his attempt to portray Nietzsche, has warmed up to his sitter, and has--to some extent at least--been won over. . . .¹⁷⁶

It was this review which prompted Salter's previously quoted "Word of Explanation," and the confession of his "two bottom impulses." He defended Nietzsche as "an immensely complicated nature, . . . elusive, changing, . . . careless of consistency," lacking the "one idea, one articulated system of thought" of such "simple" philosophers as Schopenhauer, Spencer, and Kant. "I do not advise anybody to read my book--

¹⁷⁴"William K. Salter as Apologist for Nietzsche," V (Oct., 1918), pp. 11-15.

¹⁷⁵Letter of Oct. 19, 1918; St. Louis files.

¹⁷⁶Op. cit., p. 11.

it is out of the circle of our 'Ethical' literature," he said, "does not belong in the same class as my Ethical Religion."¹⁷⁷

Here too, Salter gave his intellectual autobiography:

. . . I had done a little philosophical work in summer vacations--in Aristotle, for instance (the Metaphysics), in Kant, in Lotze (my revered teacher in Göttingen), in Wundt (the System der Philosophie), in T. H. Green and Royce (whose reasonings on the bottom-point seemed to me sophisticated), in Edmund Montgomery (rare combination of biologist and thinker), in William James (whose "will to believe" could not, alas! make me believe)--but nothing thoroughly, and the first books I turned to in my new freedom were Bradley's Appearance and Reality and Royce's The World and the Individual, in, as it were, a last effort to see if I could not be established in the idealist view.¹⁷⁸

He was never to be so established, though he persisted in the quest, and he found the bold inconsistencies of Nietzsche a comfort.

The Salters lived in retirement at the Potomac Hotel in Washington, D. C., and their summer home at Silver Lake, New Hampshire--which was often their winter home, too, especially when Salter was reading and writing. Increasingly deaf, he communicated best in correspondence with his old colleagues, Weston and Chubb in particular, and continued to express the hope of writing a social and political philosophy of his own.

Salter died at Silver Lake on July 18, 1931, at eighty-three. His brother Sumner, a musician and teacher also shut off by deafness, wrote Chubb a few years later

¹⁷⁷Standard, V (March, 1919), p. 152.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 150-51.

about "your letters to my brother Will, who left large accumulations of them from various sources." (The final disposition of those letters remains a mystery.) Sumner Salter, while asking Chubb's own appraisal of his brother's life and work, added this perceptive comment as a philosophic layman:

It impresses me, as I try to study it from a detached standpoint, that it typifies in a rather marked degree the evolutionary approach that went on in religious and philosophical thought here in America in the period of his life.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹Letter from New York City, April 19, 1936.

CHAPTER III

S. BURNS WESTON: A LAMP FOR EMERSON

S. (for Samuel) Burns Weston was the least philosophical of the five founding leaders of the Ethical movement--at least in the academic and metaphysical sense--and the least productive of original essays and addresses. But in a career extending from his "heresy" trial as a fledgling Unitarian minister in 1880-81, through half a century of almost continuous leadership of the Philadelphia Society (1885-1934) and the managing editorship of the International Journal of Ethics (1890-1914), he upheld the Emersonian idea of the independence and supremacy of ethics as consistently and effectively as his more prolific colleagues.

In "Personal Reminiscences of Emerson" in an Emerson Centennial issue of the Ethical Record in 1903,¹ Weston recalled "every association" with the older Unitarian heretic as "precious" and every gathering as dominated by his "presence," particularly by his face and eyes, whether he spoke or not. As a divinity student at Harvard (1876-79), Weston saw him frequently as a guest on campus and at the annual Boston conferences of the Free Religious Association. He wrote with pride of occupying the dormitory room Emerson

¹Second Series, IV, 5 (July, 1903), pp. 182-83.

had occupied half a century earlier, and of dashing to that room for his own lamp when the light in the chapel proved inadequate for Emerson's reading of the address requested by the class of 1879. Weston prized that lamp, which he kept along with a Sidney Morse bust of Emerson in his rustic summer home in the Adirondacks, calling the lamp "the one thing in the camp I should most wish to be saved from destruction."²

In those same "Reminiscences," Weston referred to his Harvard philosophy teacher, Francis Ellingwood Abbot, as "the great stimulator of clear thought and clear conscience," and to Felix Adler, whom he first met at the FRA conference of 1878, as "the prophet of a new way--the builder of a new type of ethical and spiritual church of the future."³ But Emerson remained "by far the most important influence," because he "clearly foresaw and prophesied such a movement as began when Felix Adler organized . . . the first Society for Ethical Culture."⁴

Weston liked to quote Emerson's prophecies, as did colleagues of his own and subsequent generations of Ethical leaders. The key sentences, excerpted from the essays on "The Sovereignty of Ethics" and "Worship," are these:

"The progress of religion is steadily to its identity with morals. . . . It accuses us that pure

²Ibid., p. 183.

³Ibid.

⁴Weston, "The Beginnings and Development of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Record (Second Series) II, 4 (April-May, 1901), pp. 177-78.

ethics is not now formulated and concreted into a cultus, a fraternity with assemblings and holy-days, with song and book, with brick and stone. Why have not those who believe in it and love it left all for this, and dedicated themselves to write out its scientific scriptures to become its Vulgate for millions? . . .

"America shall introduce a pure religion. . . . There will be a new church founded on moral science; at first cold and naked, a babe in the manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawms, or psaltery, or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry. Was never stoicism so stern and exigent as this shall be."⁵

With slight variation of expression, usually in a more rationalistic and scientific vein, these principles were to suffice for Weston until his death in 1936. He had not adopted them, however, until his college and graduate school years, when they painlessly superseded his earlier training.

Samuel Burns Weston and his twin brother Stephen Francis were born March 10, 1855, to Reuel and Esther Burns Weston on a farm near Madison, Maine. They were reared by parents and grandparents in "the Christian church, a church without any formulated creed other than the Bible itself. It is one of the most liberal of the orthodox sects."⁶

According to Burns Weston's children,⁷ his mother died when he was twelve, and on her deathbed exacted his

⁵"Emerson's Prophecy," with editorial comments by Percival Chubb, Ethical Record (Second Series) IV, 5, p. 193.

⁶S. Burns Weston, Biographical sketch in Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ethical Movement, pp. 53-55.

⁷Interviews with Charles H. Weston, Washington, D. C., Harold F. Weston, New York, and Esther B. Weston King, Philadelphia, 1967 to 1973.

promise to enter the ministry. So young 'Sam' went on at thirteen to the preparatory school of Antioch College in Ohio, where his father's brother, John Burns Weston, professor of classics, had been acting president after Horace Mann in the Civil War years. He was also a minister, denominational editor, and officer for "Christians--not Disciples," as he specified in Who's Who in America, Vol. I (1899-1900), and subsequent editions. Both nephews were also listed in Who's Who from the start.

'Sam' acquired the name Burns, which he preferred, from both sides of the house. Family legend has it that they were descended, on his mother's side at least, from an illegitimate son of Scottish poet Robert Burns.⁸

S. Burns Weston found "liberal religious thought" predominant at Antioch, particularly under such teachers as G. Stanley Hall in philosophy and E. C. Claypole, "a noted scientist."⁹ The eminent Unitarian divine from Boston, Edward Everett Hale, as chairman of the college board handed Weston his diploma in 1876.¹⁰ Such liberal and Unitarian influence steered him toward Harvard Divinity School.

His brother Stephen graduated from Antioch in 1879, and went on to study and to teach political science and

⁸Interview with Harold F. Weston, April 7, 1967.

⁹Biographical sketch, Fiftieth Anniversary, p. 53.

¹⁰Address, April 5, 1925, "The Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia: Its Beginnings and Now," p. 1 of 9.

philosophy at leading colleges and universities, closing his career as professor of political science and dean at Antioch.

In a long letter to 'Sam' in response to his of July 28, 1876, 'Uncle J. B.' Weston commiserated with him on his inability to find a teaching position in "the closeness of the times," urged him to put teaching and the ministry above the law among his career alternatives, and approved the prospect of his going to Harvard if he did not see "the work of the ministry . . . merely as a place." In an extended comparison of "head" and "heart," in which "a devout and consecrated heart" won out as "the sine qua non of true success," the uncle offered this summary bit of quasi-liberal and antinomian advice: "Forms and formulae of belief are of less importance than a faith in God and man and immortality."¹¹

A Harvard Divinity School prospectus among the S. Burns Weston papers¹² bears a note in longhand addressed simply to "Mr. Weston," indicating that "as a graduate" he could "enter without examination," and promising "about \$300" to meet estimated expenses for the year--rent and care of room, tuition, board, and fuel for a total cost of \$277.50. It was signed by O. Stearns, listed among the faculty as Oliver Stearns, D. D., Dean, and Parkman Professor of Theology. The prospectus listed five other teachers

¹¹From S. Burns Weston papers lent by Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Weston of Washington, D. C., 1973.

¹²Ibid.

under Charles W. Eliot, L. L. D., President, and a three-year Course of Instruction in such broad areas as Hebrew Language, Principles of Criticism and Interpretation, Old and New Testament, Natural Religion and Evidences of Revealed Religion, Philosophy of Religion, Ecclesiastical History, Ethnic Religions and the Creeds of Christendom, Philosophical and Christian Ethics, and Church Polity and Administration. The libraries and courses of Harvard College were also available to him, along with elocution.

Weston retained the recommended faith in man through all this, but rather soon sloughed off any remaining faith in God and immortality, despite the Emersonian variations of these doctrines readily available for apologetic use. Nor did he resort to the pragmatic apologetics of William James, though he referred in passing to "Prof. James's course in Psychology," as "most inspiring," in his "Personal Reminiscences of Emerson." In that course he sat beside an Emerson detractor, Rev. George A. Gordon, whose recent centennial article in the Atlantic Monthly he found less than inspiring.¹³ In the latter article, Gordon called Emerson at best a "poet," not a "philosopher," of benign and appropriately saving modesty and "doctrinal uncertainty," and "like Carlyle" no serious student of Christianity.¹⁴

¹³Weston, op. cit., p. 183.

¹⁴"Emerson as a Religious Influence," Vol. XCI, No. 547 (May, 1903), pp. 577-87.

Though Weston was not yet a Unitarian, much less an ordained minister, he spoke for the Second Congregational Society (Unitarian) of Leicester, Massachusetts, after graduation from Harvard with the S. T. B. degree in June, 1879. The Society invited him to speak again in June and July, as a candidate for the long-vacant post of resident minister. A letter from the congregational meeting of August 11, signed by Samuel May as chairman of the standing committee, reported their unanimous invitation for him to start on the first Sunday in September at a salary of \$900 per year.¹⁵

In his "Journal of my first Experience as a Minister beginning Sept., 1879,"¹⁶ Weston wrote daily entries of his first month of happy mutual acceptance in Leicester. There were frankly "radical" sermons and pleasant meals and tea parties, whist and croquet, calls and conversations, and travels to meetings and conferences with such key members as the Mays. Only two of the entries suggested minor difficulties: on September 16, "Miss Pope says the [Name illegible] think I am entirely too radical to preach," and on September 22, "Made a few calls in the eve to talk up my Ethical Sunday School. The people have not much enthusiasm for their Society . . . but my hope is good yet."

A new journal or diary began on May 1, 1880,¹⁷ as if in preparation for its key entry on May 23: "Discourse on 'Free Religion'--I defined my own views as clearly as I

¹⁵Weston papers.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

could and also offered my resignation to the Society as I knew there were a few who were dissatisfied with my views. My resignation took most of the people by surprise, and so I have heard there is a general wish to retain me." On May 25, "Mr. May talked with me about our little Society trouble--and told me he thought the Society could not keep the fund and retain me. There seems to be some condition about it which I had not known before. . . ."

Weston was already four discourses into a series on his objections to "Unitarian Christianity" and his commitment to "Free Religion." But the Trustees under the will of Isaac Southgate, dated 1859 and admitted to probate in 1861, were convinced that its terms did not permit retention of a minister holding such views. The bequest paid most of Weston's salary and certain other costs. The Society voted nevertheless on June 10 not to accept his resignation, by a vote of seventeen to eight. The Southgate Trustees--Abraham Firth, Dwight Bisco, and Samuel May, chairman--repeated their unanimous demurrer. In the inconclusive but friendly discussions which followed, the Society and the Trustees agreed, on October 3 and 11 respectively, to refer the matter to the Council of the National Unitarian Conference.¹⁸

Six of Weston's most relevant discourses were printed, along with an extract (Item 18) from the Will of Isaac Southgate, which dealt in its entirety with the residual

¹⁸All dates and facts are from Weston's diary unless otherwise noted.

bequest in trust to the Second Congregational Society.¹⁹ Weston "brought home" sixteen bound copies on November 16, for the principals and the Council chaired by the Rev. Edward Everett Hale. In a "Note" dated December 14, 1880, and bound in later copies, Chairman H. O. Smith of the special mediating Committee of the Leicester Society reported a reply from the Council's new chairman, the Rev. Grindall Reynolds, "saying that 'the Council decline to serve as a Committee of Reference'" for reasons both of "precedent" and "wise . . . decision in such a matter." Several members of the Council did offer, however, to serve "in their private capacity" on an ad hoc Committee of Reference, on condition that the Society and the Southgate Trustees would each choose an additional member, and that both parties would accept the decision of the Committee as final.

The Society chose Professor C. C. Everett of Harvard Divinity School, and the Trustees, Judge Ebenezer R. Hoar of Concord. They joined the ministers Grindall Reynolds, Rush R. Shippen, George A. Thayer, and Edward Everett Hale, and lay members of the Council, Elizabeth P. Channing, Carroll D. Wright, and William B. Weeden, in a series of meetings leading to their decision in Boston, January 27, 1881. In a letter to the Society Committee and the Southgate Trustees, they unanimously rendered "the opinion that the views preached by Mr. Weston do not meet the requirements of said

¹⁹Six Discourses Before the Second Congregational Society of Leicester, Mass. (Worcester: Tyler & Seagrave, 1880, pp. 66.

Will so as to entitle said Society to receive the income of the aforesaid fund for his support."²⁰

Despite wide publicity and debate on this "heresy trial," and the emotional involvement of Weston and members of the Leicester Society, the decision of the prestigious and doctrinally diverse Committee of Reference--all Unitarians, and mostly conservative--was a foregone conclusion. The Will of Isaac Southgate was explicit in terminology, if not in intent, as he gave the income from "the rest and residue of my estate" in trust (after other, specific bequests) for "a settled minister" who "shall faithfully preach those broad and generous views of God, which are known by the name Unitarian." The three trustees he chose, and successors to be chosen by them, were to be "well known as Unitarian," and were to forfeit all funds to the American Unitarian Association for its Book Fund and "the good cause of liberal Christianity" after six months of service by "a man who is not identified with the faith herein mentioned." Further, in the midst of several technicalities and provisoes, Southgate added that "they [the Society] must not permit the existing isms of the day to be introduced into their house of worship to be discussed or agitated in any form." He mentioned the controversy over "Negro Slavery" in particular as a "sad experience in our own Society."²¹

²⁰Diary, February 2; letter added to Six Discourses.

²¹Appendix, Six Discourses, pp. 63-65.

Even so, Weston might have been sustained in his post, as well within the spirit and intent of the Southgate Will, had he not specifically and repeatedly rejected the exact terminology of its restrictions. Edward Everett Hale wrote him from his home in Roxbury on February 25: "Your misfortune (if it is one--I do not think it is) is that you happened on a church with a creed, which is an anomaly in our affairs." And again on March 2 on his stationery as minister of South Church, Boston, where Weston had been a valued Sunday School teacher as a student: "If the will had only said the minister must preach those views of God which Unitarians believe, . . . you come fully and clearly into the description. When it says the minister must belong to a body which is trying to maintain the Liberal Christian faith, it seems to me clear you do not come in."²²

The incompatibility of Weston's terms with those of the will and of the still dominant "Unitarian Christianity" is readily apparent. In a note below the table of contents of his Six Discourses he pointed out that he "was not aware of the conditions of the Southgate Will until after the first four Discourses had been written and delivered." He had spoken on "The Divinity and Character of Jesus" (April 4, 1880), holding that Jesus was a natural man of his time, errors and all, perhaps "unsurpassed" or even "unequaled" as a leader and teacher, but neither the cause nor the result of "miracles."²³

²²Weston papers.

²³Pp. 3-11.

In Discourse II, "The Bible," he spoke (May 9) of the internal contradictions of the Hebrew-Christian books, their growth as a humanly selected and edited collection, and their place in "the Bible of Humanity, the Bible of the future, . . . the best thoughts and the best aspirations of all men and all times."²⁴

In Discourse III, "Unitarianism" (May 16), Weston praised "the idea of unity" in Nature, man, and the individual organism as presented by "the philosophy of evolution." But in Unitarianism, despite the name suggesting "unity and organization," he found "just the opposite principle, the principle of individualism, the principle of every man for himself." Recalling Unitarian history for his Leicester listeners (and incidentally for all the unexpected later readers), he outlined the "Unitarian Christianity" of William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), in whose Federal Street Church in Boston the American Unitarian Association was organized in 1825. Though Channing expressed no doubts about the One God, or the messiahship and miracles of Jesus as described in the New Testament, properly understood, he also demanded free and rational inquiry and the demonstration of "pure Christianity" in ethical conduct. A sizeable minority of Unitarians, especially in the Western Conference and in Michigan in particular, Weston said, had dropped or at least de-emphasized biblical authority and Christianity in favor of "Free Religion." So it was that in 1865, in a second

²⁴Six Discourses, pp. 13-20.

attempt at clarification and organization of American Unitarianism, the "National Council of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches" was formed, endorsing the 'Christian Confession' of 'Jesus as Lord and Master.' Dissenters were urged simply to abstain from any doctrinal statement they could not endorse, and to continue with their work as ministers or laymen, in fellowship with the majority. Instead, they created an organizational counterforce, the "Free Religious Association," which held its first of many successful annual meetings in Boston in May, 1867.²⁵

(According to Weston's diary on December 4, 1879, and a letter to Adler on December 8, he responded to the latter's appeal as president in the Index and sent in his membership fee to the Free Religious Association. "It is the first religious organization I have ever joined," he wrote in both documents.)²⁶

After his discourse on "Unitarianism" on May 16, Weston tells us, he heard the first public protest against his views, from Samuel May. Thus challenged, and still oblivious to the restrictions of the Southgate will, he prepared Discourse IV, on "Free Religion" (May 23), and offered his resignation repeatedly in case the Society was not in sympathy with his position. Citing Max Muller and other great students of religion, he disavowed Unitarianism for himself unless it chose to include within its fellowship the Buddhist, Mohammedan, Jew, or Atheist, as well as the

²⁵Ibid., pp. 21-29.

²⁶Weston papers.

Christian. "Science," he said, "is the new Messiah that is slowly building up the religion of the future, a religion based, not upon the supernatural, but upon the natural, moral and spiritual laws of man and the universe."²⁷

Discourse V, on "Christianity and the New Religion" (June 6), and Discourse VI, on "The Christian and Free Religious Positions" (September 12), were painstaking repetitions of the distinctions Weston had been making publicly in Leicester from the start of his four candidating discourses in June and July, 1879. He distinguished "religion" from Christianity, Christianity from Unitarianism, and Unitarianism from Free Religion, identifying himself only with the Free Religious position. He denounced "mere nominal Christianity" in particular, for "putting new wine into old bottles contrary to the teachings of Jesus." He insisted "that Jesus was right in this respect; that new wine should be put into new bottles; that things should be called by their right names."²⁸

Occasionally in these discourses, he offered general statements of metaphysics, leading to his method in ethics:

. . . The great fundamental truth of any sound philosophy of life, is, that there is an Infinite Power, an Eternal Life, permeating and animating, the wide universe of suns, and stars, and living worlds. We who are finite are awed by the Infinite. . . . The Eternal Reality is something that human speech fails to describe, or human thought to conceive. . . .²⁹
 . . . My simple faith has been therefore, a faith in the unity and integrity of the power and laws of the Universe, or in other words a faith, that the Life

²⁷Six Discourses, pp. 31-42. ²⁸Pp. 43-51, 53-62.

²⁹P. 5.

and Laws of Nature were one, unfolding, organic whole. And as to man, my faith has been in reason, in righteousness, and in liberty, for these alone can give us true religion, civilization, and progress.³⁰

The inevitably adverse decision of the Committee of Reference reached Leicester in the mail of February 2, 1881, delayed by the necessity of getting the signature of an absent member. Weston took the letter and related documents immediately to the Worcester Evening Gazette, which carried a long and accurate summary the next day. The story concluded, "Mr. Weston has preached for the society about a year and a half, and more than six months since the protest was made by one of the Trustees, . . . but it is intimated that no attention will be paid to that clause of the will."³¹

So the Society kept the Southgate fund, and Weston read a letter of resignation the following Sunday, February 6. This time it was of course accepted. He gave a "Farewell Discourse" on February 13, from a pulpit "decorated with cut flowers," to a record audience of "about a hundred," including "a Worcester 'Spy' reporter."³²

The Daily Spy devoted nearly two columns to "A Pastor's Farewell" the next day, quoting Weston copiously in his criticism of Unitarianism for "dropping from its official list of ministers the name of William J. Potter, because he took a non-Christian position," and for "repeated acts

³⁰Ibid., p. 55.

³¹"A Religious Controversy: A Definition of Unitarianism."

³²Diary.

of this kind," which "can not be regarded as standing for freedom and rationalism. . . . Now this is just what the Free Religious Association does stand for. . . . Either absolute reliance upon authority or absolute reliance upon reason. There is no middle ground logically." The Spy reporter made it clear that the seven members (out of ten) of the Council of the National Unitarian Conference who agreed to act as a committee (with two others) saw their task more narrowly as determining the limits and intent of a will.³³

Weston's diary had erupted in recent weeks with career alternatives and speaking engagements, and with references to letters of encouragement and disbelief. He often saw G. Stanley Hall as a visiting lecturer at Harvard, as well as his former teachers William James and C. C. Everett. He also saw the struggling Free Religionist, Francis E. Abbot, and the prospering and newly wed Adler from New York.

As Weston started packing on February 17, 1881, he received a poignant letter from Abbot, working in New York to support his family back in Boston. He told of having to give up his Harvard teaching (the "professors rejected" his Free Religious essay as a doctoral dissertation), his Unitarian ministry ("unless I sacrifice the truth"), and his unremunerative work with the Index. But he congratulated Weston again on his Six Discourses, and on his "Farewell Discourse," just received, and urged him to persevere.³⁴

³³Daily Spy, Worcester, Massachusetts, February 14, 1881.

³⁴Letter of February 15, Weston papers; mentioned in Diary.

Weston moved back to Boston, and enrolled in March as a special student at Harvard for the last third of the school year. He spoke again for Salter at Wayland (March 27), and in a hall in Florence, Massachusetts (May 15). The latter engagement kept him from accepting Adler's invitation to "make a 15 minute address at the 5th anniversary of his Society for Ethical Culture" on May 14, 1881. He had spoken to Jenkin Lloyd Jones in Boston (January 20) about "taking his Free Religious Society at Janesville, Wis." and to D. H. Clark of Malden "about going to Kansas to start a Free Religious Society. My plans," he wrote, "are wholly unformed."

Adler's influence prevailed, though delayed as in Salter's case. Adler and Weston talked far into the night of May 26, after Free Religious Association meetings. Weston wrote in his diary: "He thinks I had better not go to Germany until another year. He wishes me to spend next year in New York. . . . His discourse tomorrow on Teachers of Ethics was prepared largely on my account."

Though diary entries for July included the vague "11th to 18th in Boston & Gloucester with Prof. Adler and Mr. Salter," this was the last entry for many months: "30th, sail with the girls for Germany." It was Salter who went with Adler to New York, while Weston was off for his Wanderjahre, two years of intermittent study and travel, in and around the universities of Berlin (1881-82), and Leipzig and Geneva (1882-83).

Years later, his son Harold Weston, the artist, said that Adler had advised Burns Weston to borrow \$500 on an insurance policy, to finance two years of study abroad. By living frugally, and walking through England, Germany, and parts of Italy during the summers, he came back to America with \$200 of the loan.³⁵

In a letter from Berlin to "Professor Adler," dated May 27, 1882, Weston reported briefly on his studies at the university, and on meeting "an American student in whom you will be interested." It was Walter Sheldon, whom he had "only lately" met, though both had been studying philosophy (and other subjects) throughout the school year. Sheldon "had given up the theological ideas in which he had been brought up," and with them the hope of becoming a minister. He knew nothing about the Ethical movement, and little about Free Religion beyond its identification by the orthodox with "American Liberalism" or "Ingersollism," both of which he rejected. Weston recommended Sheldon highly to Adler, as the two students prepared for separate summer travels and separate university experiences the next year.³⁶

Weston listed his "chief courses" in the second semester: "Ethik mit Einschluss der Principien der Staats- und Gesellschaftslehre" by Professor Paulsen, and "Allgemeine

³⁵Interview, New York City, May 6, 1967; story repeated in his book, Freedom in the Wilds (St. Huberts, New York: Adirondack Trail Improvement Society, 1971), p. 59.

³⁶Letter lent by Horace Friess.

oder theoretische Nationalökonomie" by Professor Schmoller, formerly of Strassburg. Paulsen was predicting a revival of ethics in German universities after fifty years of neglect, and discussing the shortcomings of pessimism and Utilitarianism, while accepting the "modern" and the pre-Christian Greek principle of the independence of ethics from theology. For Weston at least, Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics was basic reading in that course.³⁷

Other courses he attended included "Philosophische Uebungen im Anschluss an die Lektüre von Kant's 'Kritik der praktischen Vernunft,'" and "Ueber die Englische Ethik der Gegenwart," both by Georg von Gizycki, and "a course" on "Logik und Erkenntnistheorie." Also "heard" were Professor Oldenburg on "Religion und Mythologie des redischen Indien," and Professor Grimm's course on German art.³⁸

(It was Hermann Grimm whom Weston recalled, in his "Personal Reminiscences" for the Emerson Centennial of 1903, as having "referred most feelingly to the news which had just come of Emerson's death"--thus informing his class, including Weston, of his esteem for his American friend and correspondent before proceeding with his lecture.)³⁹

In that same long letter to Adler, Weston told of Sheldon's "speaking about my letter to the Nation on Agnostic Societies in Germany--not knowing that I had written it."

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Op. cit., p. 182.

Weston's letter of March 21, 1882, from Berlin--identified by initials only--referred to the Nation's unsigned article of February 23, on "Agnostic Worship."⁴⁰ The Rev. George C. Miln, on his conversion to agnosticism, had made a statement to his Unitarian congregation in Chicago, which agreed at first to go along with his new position, but then refused. Mr. Miln withdrew, with the thought of setting up an independent organization similar to Dr. Adler's Society for Ethical Culture.

The Nation was skeptical. Despite rare exceptions such as Adler in New York, John Chadwick in Brooklyn, and Moncure Conway in London, agnostics would have trouble even in hiring a hall in Germany, France, or Italy. Calling Miln's "prayer" a "parody" on "the litany" and "nothing more than a series of bald statements of facts, or else ejaculations," the writer continued:

. . . [W]hile on the one hand the number of agnostics in the world is constantly increasing, on the other all attempts to build up an agnostic church are futile. . . . [T]his is not generally admitted by thinking men.⁴¹

Weston's letter was given the heading, "Agnostic Churches in Germany." It cited the organization of the non-Christian and non-theological Freireligiöser Gemeinden Deutschlands in June, 1859, and the existence by 1880 of one-hundred-thirty-six free religious societies and clubs,

⁴⁰Vol. XXIV, No. 869, pp. 161-62.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 162.

served by twenty-five professional speakers (Sprechers). The society in Berlin alone, he wrote, had eight-hundred members, with Herr Schafer as speaker, and one-hundred-forty-eight children in its school for four hours each week. Weston must have visited the Berlin society, though he made no direct reference to such a visit.⁴²

His next available diary begins in Mainz, August 9, 1883, with descriptions of "two months and a half in Geneva," living en pension and studying French. On his way back, he saw Mont Blanc, Strassburg, Heidelberg, and Worms, where he enthusiastically copied Luther's "Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mich. Amen."

By August 13, Weston was in Paris visiting the cultural shrines and noting in particular the "tombs in the Pantheon created to Voltaire and Rousseau in the days of the great revolution." The next night he went with Sheldon to the Théâtre Français of Molière fame. They saw the city together until Sheldon's departure for London on August 15.

Weston followed to London a few days later, staying near Russell Square and the British Museum, and hearing the noted evangelist Spurgeon in "densely crowded" Essex Hall on Sunday morning, August 26. That evening, in Science Hall, he heard an "able lecture" by Dr. Aveling on "God in Modern Literature." The next day he called on George Jacob Holyoake, the British pioneer in social cooperatives and Secularist Societies, whom he had met in Boston and guided

⁴²Nation, XXIV, 876 (April 13, 1882), p. 313.

to the Abbots for dinner in the fall of 1879. This time, Holyoake gave him an autographed copy of his book, Among the Americans.⁴³

Weston returned to New York in September. Soon he and Sheldon were meeting regularly with Adler, enrolled in the Political Science program of John W. Burgess at Columbia, and otherwise following in the footsteps of Salter, who had been in Chicago for a year. A young man named Robinson had been dropped, in disappointment, and one named Vredenberg taken on for training. Among their typical discussions was "suicide from the Utilitarian standpoint" (October 23), upon which subject "Prof. Adler occupied most of the evening and gave a full analysis." A week later, three students spent a morning at the Adlers during which Weston led off on Herbert Spencer, and wound up defending the universalistic hedonism of Henry Sidgwick as "not subjective feeling, but a rational weighing of consequences in relation to an objective ideal."

A later evening at the Adlers (November 14) included Edwin R. A. Seligman, son of the chief benefactor of the Ethical movement, the late Joseph Seligman. The subject was cooperation. Weston reported that "he [Adler] thought that cooperation was the final goal . . . but that it could only be made successful by educating children to become intelligent laborers . . . willing to fill the position which

⁴³Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1881. Holyoake made reference to Adler, pp. 130-31, but none to Weston.

their talents best fit them for and to submit to the authority of superior talent."

Weston and Sheldon made many intellectual and cultural visits together: "to hear the celebrated presentation of the Brahmo Samaj, . . . the union of Eastern and Western thought" (October 24), to "a social gathering at the Workingman's School" (November 28), and to Brooklyn to hear John W. Chadwick, an older Unitarian friend of Weston's from the Free Religious Association, speaking on "Margaret Fuller" (January 6, 1884).

It was in Chadwick's society that Felix Adler had spoken in 1879, thus meeting his future wife, Helen Goldmark, and her sister Christine.⁴⁴

Adler and Salter exchanged platforms in December, 1883, and Salter was back in New York in January, helping Weston with his youth classes in ethics and attending one of Adler's weekly seminars. This time (January 29 in the diary) there were essays by Sheldon and Vredenberg on "Time and Space," and in Adler's neo-Kantian context of time and space as products of 'the reality-producing functions of the mind,' Weston reports, "The discussion between Prof. Adler and Mr. Sheldon was quite warm."

Weston had made his speaking debut, with Sheldon, at a meeting of the Young Men's Union of the Society for Ethical Culture on Sunday evening, January 16. The New York Herald, reporting on the meeting, combined their talks on

⁴⁴Interviews with Horace Friess; repeated in his Felix Adler and Ethical Culture, p. 78.

recent European experiences with one on "Circuit of the Continent" by the famous Dr. Henry Ward Beecher at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Beecher foresaw a "renaissance" for the American South and a booming future for Canada, Mexico, and even California--given Chinese labor for unfinished railroads and other construction. By contrast, the reporter quoted S. B. Weston: "Europe is rotten to the core, and cannot help us in our search after a new religion." His illustrations of military despotism, cultural torpor, and the isolation of "idealists" in speculative philosophy in Germany were supplemented by those of W. Sheldon on the similar stupor and even greater "mental and physical degradation" in Spain. America remained the world's best hope.⁴⁵

Weston reported Adler "very much pleased" (January 29) with the "matter and writing" of his Young Men's Union lecture, "so much so" that he invited him to repeat it for the whole society and public on a Sunday morning at Chickering Hall. But "my delivery he said was bad, and he wants me to begin elocution lessons at once with a good teacher." Salter read the lecture, and invited him to give it soon in Chicago.

After some rehearsals and coaching by Adler, Weston gave his "eventful first discourse" (February 24, 1884) to the intermittent applause of a "well filled" Chickering Hall. Adler and "prominent members of the Society" came

⁴⁵"Two Continents Contrasted," New York Herald, January 17, 1884.

to congratulate him afterward. But he noted (February 25) that there were no newspaper stories.

Adler and Weston became embroiled in the presidential election of 1884, protesting against the private morality of Cleveland and the political morality of Blaine, and endorsing the Prohibition Party candidate, Governor St. John of Kansas. Weston agreed (October 11) to one of many assignments as a corresponding and organizing secretary for Adler. He listed and mailed at least forty-two printed letters (October 18), asking endorsements from friends and colleagues and public figures. The appeal was for "the man as such" rather than "the platform of the Convention which nominated him."

Among the more than thirty collected responses, few agreed completely. Several expressed general sympathy with the protest but would not endorse St. John. Others saw a third party vote as a vote for Cleveland. Some preferred the Anti-Monopoly (Greenback) candidate, Governor Butler of Massachusetts. A few staunchly defended Cleveland, or announced their support for Blaine.⁴⁶

Salter wrote sadly from Chicago, "Private morality is no substitute for cranky political notions." Sheldon openly sided with Blaine. Several prominent Ethical members were disaffected. John Wanamaker, the Philadelphia merchant, announced for Blaine. Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler of

⁴⁶Letters among Weston papers.

New York saw "no proof of Mr. Cleveland's immorality" and no value in "Utopian theories." B. F. Underwood of the Index refused to sign, citing St. John's orthodox Christianity and "Puritanism." His FRA associate, William J. Potter, did sign; but another, Minot Savage, refused: "I am a Republican. . . . A vote for St. John is a vote for the Democrats." John W. Chadwick went for Cleveland, "with as little and as strong conviction as I have ever had." Several college administrators, including President Seelye of Amherst, declined to commit themselves or their faculties. "Uncle J. B." Weston wrote "Sam" sternly on "the necessity of defeating Cleveland," and Southgate Trustee Samuel B. May of Leicester sent a long letter of sympathy, concluding only that "voting for the democratic party, even with a good candidate, is abhorrent to me."⁴⁷

Adler sent Weston to Philadelphia (October 11 in the diary), to ask the cooperation of the editors of the Christian Union--Dr. Leonard W. Bacon, Dr. Lyman Abbot, and Mr. Mabie--who stayed with their previous decision to protest, but to back no particular candidate. Inquiries had also come to Adler from Philadelphia, from Simon A. Stern and Miss May Lewis, about "the proposed Ethical Society." He wanted Weston to get acquainted with them, and with the city.

Thus trained and tested, Weston was sent to Philadelphia, "with two or three letters of introduction," to

⁴⁷Weston papers.

start the third Ethical Society in the spring of 1885. He addressed about sixty people on "The Need of an Ethical Religion" on Easter Sunday, April 5, in "the little hall of the City Institute" at 18th and Chestnut Streets. He spoke on the following three Sundays, too, on "Why Christianity Does Not Satisfy Us," "The Success and Failure of Liberalism," and "The Meaning of a Society for Ethical Culture."⁴⁸

To the published text of these addresses, Weston added a Statement of Principles, to emphasize 1) "that morality is independent of theology," 2) "that moral problems have arisen in this industrial, democratic, scientific age, which require new and larger formulations of duty," 3) "works of philanthropy . . . to raise our fellow-men to a higher plane of life and to awaken within them a deeper moral purpose," 4) "self-reform," 5) "organization," and 6) "moral instruction of the young."⁴⁹

Salter came on May 3 to add his address on "The Basis of the Ethical Movement," and Adler on May 20, "The Meaning of the Ethical Culture Movement." An organizational meeting on June 1 recognized a charter membership of twenty-six, which had grown to sixty in the fall as the society settled down in Natatorium Hall.⁵⁰

⁴⁸"Work of the Past Ten Years in Philadelphia," Cause, I, 6 (June, 1895), pp. 29-30, and 7 (July), pp. 34-36.

⁴⁹Ethical Culture: Four Lectures Delivered at Institute Hall (Philadelphia: Edward Stern & Co., 1885), pp. 70.

⁵⁰"Work of the Past Ten Years," p. 29.

Weston broke no new philosophic ground in these addresses, which were little noticed by the press. But they were noticed, unfavorably, by the religious establishment. The new organization "met with public opposition on the part of many churches, especially on the part of the liberal ones, who asserted and proclaimed that there could be no real moral culture without a theological basis." Hence "perhaps, too many controversial discourses upon purely theological subjects--too many utterances of a negative and iconoclastic kind."⁵¹

By December 27, 1886, the Philadelphia Press could report his day-after-Christmas address on "The Life and Ethics of Jesus" with the sub-heading: "A Meek-Looking Young Man Who Argues Against the Divinity of Christ." The Press noted that among his nine classmates from Harvard Divinity School, none was a Christian minister.

Weston soon added the controversy of "the labor problem . . . the struggle of the workingman to better his condition." In this the Public Ledger at least gave him regular coverage and support. On January 25, 1886, the Ledger had summarized his "Ethics of the Labor Question" as favoring the "lend-a-hand" principle instead of the "now ruling" principle of laissez-faire. On February 1, Weston was reported as favoring an eight-hour day, restriction of child labor, compulsory education, and taxation according to ability to pay. And on February 22, as supporting the

⁵¹Ibid.

Knights of Labor and "The Principles and Aims of Cooperation" in all of life--not just in economics. The German-language Sonntags-Journal joined the Ledger in frequent coverage and support.

Weston spoke of "No Menace to Manufacturers" on a visit to the New York Society, but the Star in that city (February 15) found him not so keen for "cooperation" on the part of labor. The Pall Mall Gazette in London (February 19) reported that address under the heading "'Of Socialist Tendencies' in the States."

He also took up "The Woman Suffrage Question," urging voting rights for women at least as early as April 17, 1887, and many times thereafter. A long subsequent correspondence with Anna Garlin Spencer on the coolness of Adler toward this subject, and toward the subject of a more popular and ecumenical Ethical movement, indicates that she and Weston had been friends since 1881, in the Free Religious Association. She and her husband, for years an invalid, were Free Religious Society leaders in Providence, Rhode Island. She became an associate Ethical leader with Adler in 1903, but was shunted into a variety of specialized roles until her resignation as secretary of the American Ethical Union in 1913.⁵²

Like Salter in Chicago, and perhaps more so, Weston struggled to overcome the dual handicap of a message which

⁵²Weston papers; also Spencer papers (1905-30), New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis.

seemed radical or "negative," and a gentle, diffident manner of reading it aloud. He tried to stress his positive actions and achievements, in response to mounting criticisms of his platform appearances.

There was, for instance, his early meeting in Philadelphia with Horace Traubel, the Rev. John H. Clifford of Germantown (Unitarian), a Rev. Mr. Haskell, and George M. Gould (November 3, 1885, in the diary) to plan a series of monthly meetings "for informal discussion of some subject." A month later (December 7) these five were joined by fifteen others, both men and women, including Professors Paul Shorey of Bryn Mawr and Morris Jastrow of Pennsylvania and other professionals of distinction. Weston was named chairman of the first nominating committee of the Contemporary Club--a club which was to include Philadelphia's civic and cultural leaders for many decades, and in which Weston was to hold all the offices. Among his own approximate "contemporaries" in the club were the writers Agnes Repplier and Charles Dana, historians Daniel G. Brinton and Edward V. Cheyney, social worker and labor leader Jacob Billikopf, Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts, scholar-teacher Francis Gummere, President Frank Aydelotte of Swarthmore, Attorney General Francis Biddle, and medical professor Albert P. Brubaker, who was also president of the Ethical Society for many years.⁵³

⁵³"The Contemporary Club: A History of the Years 1886-1932," printed flyer in Philadelphia Society files.

In the fall of 1886 a Central School, planned by Weston and his society throughout the first season, was set up with the New York Workingman's School as its model. It never became self-supporting, though educationally successful, and was reluctantly given up after three years. But a West Philadelphia branch was financially successful, and was soon turned over completely to its "able principal," a society member.⁵⁴

(A note in the Ethical Record tells us that the principals of the schools were Stephen Weston and L. Gertrude Bardwell, respectively. Stephen Weston graduated from Antioch in 1879, three years later than his twin brother, and then spent two years "in philosophy, economics, and pedagogy at Ann Arbor University." Miss Bardwell had studied kindergarten methods in Berlin with Frau Henrietta Schrader, and in Dresden with Baroness Marenholz-Bülow. "The system of marks and rewards is not adopted, and there is no sectarian teaching.")⁵⁵

With the formation of the Fraternity of Ethical Teachers in the fall of 1885 (Adler, Salter, and Weston, with Sheldon and Coit as active but debated prospects), Weston became increasingly busy as secretary and publisher for the colleagues and the Ethical movement. Both the "Provisional draft for organization" of August 6 and the minutes of the meeting of August 10 were handwritten by

⁵⁴"Work of the Past Ten Years," Cause, I, 6, p. 30.

⁵⁵Vol. I, 3 (October, 1888), p. 110.

him. With Adler's firm guidance as chairman, and perhaps his dictation, Weston drafted plans for the first Convention at the Workingman's School on May 15 and 17, 1886, and the Constitution for the Union of Societies for Ethical Culture adopted at the second Convention in Chicago, November 19, 1887. The first Convention was of course combined with the "Tenth Anniversary Exercises" of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and the second with the new Constitution, in a printed report which was separately bound.⁵⁶

One of the actions of the Chicago Convention was the appointment of a committee, with Weston as chairman, "to consider the advisability of issuing a quarterly publication and to report a plan therefor if they deemed such a publication desirable."⁵⁷ The resultant publication was the Ethical Record, issued quarterly in what later turned out to be its First Series, from April, 1888, until July, 1890, after which it yielded to the International Journal of Ethics. Though never plainly so designated in its pages, Weston was obviously managing editor and publisher, from his Philadelphia Society address.

There was also the group work, the social work with working men and women and their children which grew into the first Neighborhood Guild, and later Southwark House, and other practical projects which took Weston's time and partly

⁵⁶Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1888. Pp. 49.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 32.

compensated for his decreasing attention to theoretical and philosophical interests. A letter from Adler in the Philadelphia files, dated March 22, 1889, took note of factionalism and school troubles in the society, and another dated May 10 urged Weston to try to retain his platform role.

Nevertheless, he addressed a letter of resignation to the president, Dr. C. N. Peirce, on May 24, "in order not to stand in the way of any plans for the coming year . . . in regard to the lectureship." The society had no such plans, and asked him to remain in charge of platform planning for the coming year at least.⁵⁸

Adler continued to encourage him, and to advise him to "memorize" or at least to prepare so as to be less tied to his manuscript. He quoted the comment of Samuel Fels, the soap manufacturer, to the effect that "you do not do yourself justice as a lecturer."⁵⁹

This time Weston resigned unconditionally as lecturer, while agreeing to continue his many other duties, including those of resident headworker at the Neighborhood Guild. Adler accepted the decision, and went on to project an expanded role for the Ethical Record under a committee to be chaired by Josiah Royce and to include John Dewey.⁶⁰

Royce's own thoughts on the matter showed up in a letter from Salter to Weston:

I saw Royce that morning in Cambridge and talked up the Record project. He presented some rather grave

⁵⁸Philadelphia files. ⁵⁹Ibid., February 12, 1890.

⁶⁰Ibid., May 5, 1890.

difficulties that I urged him to communicate at once with you, e. g., he does not wish to affiliate himself with the Ethical any more than with the Unitarian movement. Must not the Record then cease to be our organ? I would suppose Schurman feels similarly. Again, there can be but one editor. . . . He suggested Schurman; perhaps he himself would undertake it. I wd. suppose Adler would be unwilling, with all his other responsibilities, to assume this. Royce even spoke of changing the name of the Record since the latter is identified with the movement.⁶¹ Still on this, I think, he would not insist. . . .

Weston bore much of the tension and questioning as another member of the distinguished international committee, Stanton Coit--by this time in the Fraternity and leading the South Place Ethical Society in London--challenged the last-minute change of the name to International Journal of Ethics, and of the publisher from Macmillan to S. Burns Weston, without consultation or even notification of the English committee members. (They had advertised the new Ethical Record extensively.) "Muirhead and I wish Adler to understand that he is to treat us as equals in this business," Coit wrote Weston. "It seems to me better and simpler that we should do all business directly, through him, in as much as he and not you seems to have all the authority."⁶²

Neither Dewey nor Schurman was on the final Editorial Committee, which began alphabetically with Adler and Coit and continued with Fouillée, Gizycki, Jodl, Mackenzie,

⁶¹From Tamsworth Iron Works, New Hampshire, July 20, 1890; Weston papers. Jacob G. Schurman was Sage Professor of Philosophy, later President, of Cornell.

⁶²London, October 6, 1890; Weston papers.

Muirhead, and Royce as previously listed. Weston himself was not listed on the masthead as Managing Editor until the start of Volume II in October, 1891, when the name of Giacomo Barzelotte of Naples was added to the Editorial Committee. Harald Höffding of Copenhagen was added to Volume III. The lists remained the same thereafter, except for a few changes in academic locations of committee members and the occasional listing of Weston's more active but unsung editorial readers--Percival Chubb of the Ethical Culture Schools, Frank Thilly of Cornell, and James H. Tufts of Chicago.

Upon Adler's final implementation of the decision that "it does not sufficiently count for the movement,"⁶³ the Journal was taken from Weston and Philadelphia after Volume XXIV in July, 1914, and transferred to the editorship of Tufts and a new committee more concerned with sociology and the administration of justice. If Weston wrote the brief "Announcement" which appeared in his next-to-last issue, he betrayed none of the regret he must have felt at relinquishing his managing editorship. All details of personnel were deferred, and these philosophic reasons given:

. . . The quarter century nearly covered since the Journal began publication has been as extraordinary in the development of ethical problems as in the industrial and commercial changes out of which these problems have arisen. The Journal has aimed to represent this development and to contribute to the advancement not only of ethical knowledge, but of ethical practice.

⁶³Letter to Weston from Berlin, March 9, 1909; Weston papers.

A new set of problems is now coming to the fore which calls for greater recognition. Justice is more definitely the focus of present ethical thinking, and law, as the great agency of organized society for securing justice, is undergoing criticism. . . . The ideas, the principles of justice need reexamination and restatement in the light of present conditions. The time is ripe for constructive thinking.⁶⁴

Recent editors of the Journal (since 1938, simply Ethics) at the University of Chicago have no knowledge of correspondence from the Weston period.⁶⁵ Even among the James H. Tufts papers⁶⁶ there are few bearing on his later Journal editorship (1914-30), and only one earlier letter fragment, obviously from Frank Thilly, on stationery of the "Editorial Office, International Journal of Ethics, Ithaca, New York," asking Tufts to "cut" an article by H. B. Reed of Chicago, which appeared in the issue of January, 1913.

So we learn little of Weston's philosophic influence on either the Record or the Journal, beyond his administrative trustworthiness and patience, and scattered pieces of mail from Coit, Salter, Sheldon, and James dealing with deadlines, details of publication, and ongoing repartee. None of his own articles or addresses ever appeared in the Journal, and only one in the Record, but that one was basic for him: "The Final Aim of Life."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Vol. XXIV, 3 (April, 1914), p. 378.

⁶⁵Letters from Charner Marquis Perry, Warner A. Wick, and Brian Barry.

⁶⁶Archives, Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

⁶⁷Vol. I, 3 (October, 1888), pp. 73-87.

Disclaiming any revealed or intuitive knowledge of "the mysteries of the infinite," Weston compared at length "the ancient Greek, the Christian, and the modern rationalistic view." He found his own "modern rationalistic view" closer to "the ancient Greek," and to the Aristotelian view of happiness in particular--not shortrange, but ultimate and universal.

Also disclaiming knowledge of "the world-purpose," he added this conventional sense of agnostic moral certainty:

. . . But this, at least, is certain: if there is a purpose in the universe, and if that purpose is moral, righteous, good, then moral living among men cannot be out of harmony with it. For we are not aliens in the world. We are a part of it. We are a part of that infinite world-life, of that vast natural order of things in which we, as it were, live and move and have our being. . . . We need, therefore, no divine mediators, no supernatural messengers, and no speculations about the infinite, to teach us how to live and how to harmonize ourselves with the great cosmic order. All we need is to know ourselves, and to live true to our best knowledge.⁶⁸

Among the scattered pieces of mail available to us, this note from Salter in Chicago on January 26, 1890, is typical of the friendly scoldings from Weston's colleagues: "The card alas! came too late--& the Records are not here either. We are not going to get into the ways of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, are we?"⁶⁹

The letters and postal cards from William James are more relevant to his own philosophic development and style, but they show the kind of philosophic company Weston kept.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 85.

⁶⁹New York Society archives.

In a letter from Cambridge on February 14, 1890, for instance, James wrote,⁷⁰

My dear Weston,

Thanks for your very flattering request, which I should gladly accede to were it possible--but it isn't. I'm working for dear life to get my psychology MSS into publishable shape for the summer, and every moment is precious. Why don't you ask Palmer for any ethical article or lecture which he may have ready, on Spencer if possible. I have a big fundamental article on Ethics in my brain--I don't know whether it worth anything or not--but I can't touch it until my book is out, and probably not immediately then.

I don't know why the Ethical Record has stopped being sent to me. I thought I was a subscriber. If that be the reason, let me know. . . .

Long life to you!

Yours most truly
Wm. James

Later, when the Ethical Record had turned suddenly into the International Journal of Ethics, he wrote again (October 6, 1890):⁷¹

My dear Weston,

I shall be proud to be advertized amongst your contributors, and have at least one ethical thunderbolt to launch provided I can ever get the time to write it down.--I fear 'twill not be before next summer. Meanwhile I shall be very glad to write a notice of the periodical. It will have to be a "Note" in the Nation, and I suppose could not be over a column long.

I wish you would yourself suggest me to Mr. Garrison the literary editor.

The contents of No. 1 are splendid. Can you keep it up?

Always yours,
Wm. James

The resultant "Note" appeared unsigned among the other "Notes" in the Nation for October 30, but in this

⁷⁰ Weston papers.

⁷¹ New York archives.

context, and running somewhat less than a full column, it was clearly the work promised by William James:⁷²

Another proof, if proof be needed, of the rapid way in which our country is coming to the front in intellectual matters, is the International Journal of Ethics, of which the first number has just been published in Philadelphia. The Ethical Record, of which it is a development, was published by the Societies for Ethical Culture, and suffered consequently from the appearance of being a sectarian organ. The present periodical is to be a review of the most catholic sort, . . . as indispensable to students of morals everywhere as Mind, for example, is to philosophy. . . . Taking this first number as a good exposition of the contemporary spirit in ethics, what strikes one most in it is the extraordinary absence from it of the old-fashioned rigidity and formalism. The intuitionist of today, when it comes to saying what should be done in the concrete, becomes as pliant as a utilitarian, and refers as much as he to experiment.

James illustrated this last comment with references to the articles by Bosanquet as an intuitionist, by Höffding as not an intuitionist, and by Adler himself as a pliant intuitionist. Only Salter, he noted, insisted on an "irreducible distinction" between the worlds of science and of ethics, of fact and value. "The chaotic vagueness of this," James added, "would make an old-fashioned moral philosopher rub his eyes." He commended Weston for the "first rate quality" of the initial issue, and expressed the hope it would continue.

To meet the felt need for a house organ, Weston began publishing Ethical Addresses in 1895, issuing selected individual addresses, reports, pamphlets, or collections of

⁷²Vol. LI, No. 1322, p. 345.

instructional materials to every member of the Ethical movement, and binding them annually through Volume XXI in 1914. The Ethical Record was revived as a bi-monthly, in a new series edited by Percival Chubb in New York and starting with Volume I in December, 1899. The Record merged irregularly back into Ethical Addresses, and both were absorbed by the Standard, edited by the American historian, David S. Muzzey, as Weston's quarter-century as editor and publisher ended in May, 1914.

Another source of administrative busyness and responsibility on the fringes of ethical philosophy was Weston's involvement as secretary, treasurer, registrar, and business manager of the Summer School of Ethics, held in Plymouth, Massachusetts, from 1891 to 1895, excepting 1893. He had played host and editor to the long discussions of Adler's proposed "School of Philosophy and Applied Ethics" at the Philadelphia Convention of Ethical Societies in 1899. He continued to take longhand minutes of meetings for planning committees, including a daylong meeting on March 2, 1891, at the Workingman's School in New York. It was attended by Adler, Henry C. Adams of Michigan and Washington, D. C. (as statistician for the Interstate Commerce Commission), Crawford H. Toy of Harvard, President Elisha B. Andrews of Brown University, Weston himself, and "the undersigned" (Morris Jastrow, Jr., of Pennsylvania, for whom Weston obviously served as scribe).⁷³

⁷³Philadelphia files.

Adler's basic plan for the Summer Schools lasted through the second series (1908-11) at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, though as Radest has indicated in his general history of the Ethical movement, Adler's absence from the first year's sessions in person (delivering the Roosevelt Lectures in Berlin) and from the others in spirit (even when speaking) contributed to their tentative programming and decline.⁷⁴ Weston, though still on the Advisory Council as secretary, was relieved as resident director by Anna Garlin Spencer, as treasurer by Edwin S. Fechheimer of the Chicago Society, and as "local secretary" by William H. Lighty of University Extension, formerly of the St. Louis Society.⁷⁵

After such long immersion in the details, policies, and philosophy of the Ethical movement, Weston was a life-long repository of knowledge and advice, of uncomplaining loyalty and dependability. Yet he was never listed as a lecturer at any of the Summer Schools, at which his colleagues all spoke, even several of the next generation. Nor was he listed as a contributor in the International Journal of Ethics, except for occasionally initialed notes and one response on "The Stand-Point of an Ethical Society" (in discussion of British and Positivist challenges) in which Weston deferred to Adler, and quoted the Constitution of the

⁷⁴Op. cit., p. 106.

⁷⁵Announcements and programs, St. Louis files.

American Ethical Union and an address by Salter, in defense of the openness or neutrality of the American societies on "theological or philosophical opinions."⁷⁶

A member of that next generation of Ethical leaders, Horace Bridges of Chicago, whose almost exclusive attention to public speech and writing contrasted sharply with Weston's custodial style, spoke of him as "always training for a race, or racing for a train," or even "stamping and posting his own letters."⁷⁷

But not all was drudgery and deadlines. The early settling of the Adler family for summers at St. Hubert's, above Keene Valley in the Adirondacks west of Lake Champlain, helped to establish the vacation habits and family lifestyles of Weston and the other Ethical trainees. As the artist son, Harold Weston, recalled it,⁷⁸ his father, Salter, and later Sheldon and Chubb, used to come to Keene Valley to meet with Adler and the other intellectuals who spent their long vacations there. The more staid or affluent were summer boarders of the Beede family, who built a three-story Beede's Heights Hotel in 1876 and steadily outgrew it. The Adlers bought land from the Beedes in 1882, and soon built a summer home on it. Young Weston and his colleagues camped in tents, or built huts, or rented

⁷⁶Vol. IV, No. 3 (April, 1894), pp. 387-88.

⁷⁷Interview, Greenport, Long Island, October 3, 1950.

⁷⁸Interview, New York City, May 6, 1967; repeated in book, Freedom in the Wilds, pp. 54-59.

cabins nearby. They were the hippies of their day, clean and pure, and showing their radical ideas openly by wearing the red fez with black tassel made popular by refugees from the Revolution of 1848 in Europe. Harold Weston published a photograph of his father in a fez, and claimed that even the austere Adler permitted himself that outward sign of rebellion in the Adirondacks.⁷⁹

From Philadelphia, rail and coal executive Charles Hartshorne brought his wife and children to the rustic austerity of Beede's in 1886, and again in 1887, before building a summer home. A birthright Quaker and conservative in matters social and economic, he looked with suspicion on the young radicals. But his daughter Mary met Burns Weston at a benefit bonfire organized by Felix Adler to raise money for a community library, and soon they were engaged. It was not until they were married on October 8, 1891, in Merion, Pennsylvania, on the Philadelphia Main Line, that Mr. Hartshorne invited Weston to join them for a meal.⁸⁰

Within a year, the younger daughter Anna was married to Walter Sheldon, leader of the Ethical Society of St. Louis. And the Weston children grew up with their parents and grandparents happily together, in Merion.⁸¹

Weston soon became a pillar of the Adirondacks summer colony, as he did in Greater Philadelphia. A sturdy

⁷⁹Freedom in the Wilds, p. 14.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁸¹Interview with Esther B. Weston King, Philadelphia, March 26, 1967.

hiker and mountain climber, he blazed many trails as a founding member of the Adirondack Trail and Improvement Society. He and his family were active in the elite Ausable Club, which added athletic fields, a golf course, and a clubhouse on the site of the old Beede's Heights Hotel. For years, the Adlers were honored but rare "Jewish" members of the club, in a community sometimes accused of anti-semitism.⁸²

Adler brought in his Ethical colleagues of all backgrounds, and held some of their annual conferences in the facilities of Thomas Davidson's Summer School of the Culture Sciences in Glenmore, ten miles to the north. William James and a Boston group came often to the nearby Putnam Camp. He and Adler often lectured at Davidson's school, as did John Dewey, Nathaniel Schmidt of Cornell (and the Ethical leadership), Charles Bakewell of Bryn Mawr and then Yale, and Stephen Weston of Antioch College, who appeared on the programs as registrar for several years after Davidson's death in 1900.⁸³

At the Philadelphia Ethical Society, Burns Weston resumed his role as "Director" and as host for the Sunday platform, among his many other duties, after Salter's stint as "Lecturer" (1892-97) and his return to Chicago. Weston sometimes gave the address, especially on deeply felt public issues such as "The Ethics of Our War With Spain."⁸⁴ Like

⁸²Harold Weston, interview and book, p. 57.

⁸³Glenmore programs, St. Louis files.

⁸⁴Philadelphia: S. Burns Weston, 1898. Pp. 19.

Salter, he mistrusted the jingoism of the American belligerents, the interest of our sugar and tobacco "trusts," and the hasty retaliation for "the destruction of the 'Maine'" while Spain was calling for arbitration in the matter. He too hoped that President Cleveland might counteract Congress by making the war one of liberation for the Spanish colonies rather than one of continuing oppression and colonialism in Cuba and the Philippines. Typically, he closed with an appeal to Tennyson's 'Federation of the World' and to Emerson's prediction of "sixty years ago: 'War is on its last legs, and a universal peace is as sure as is the persistence of civilization over barbarism, of liberal governments over feudal forms. The question for us is only, how soon.'"

For all the Weston years up to 1932, the Philadelphia Society held its platform meetings in a succession of rented halls, while maintaining its headquarters offices with group meeting rooms, its schools and neighborhood guilds in separate houses according to need and financial ability. In 1889, platform meetings were moved from Natatorium Hall to St. George's Hall, and on to the New Century Drawing Room in 1904, the Broad Street Theater in 1911, and the society's own new rooms and small auditorium at 1324 Spruce Street in 1914. In 1921, the Sunday platform meetings were again made more public at the Academy of Music. In 1929, as the thriving meetings stayed on, the society moved into two artfully combined houses on Rittenhouse Square. But by 1932, declining Sunday meetings had

to follow, taking refuge in the smaller auditorium on Rittenhouse Square.⁸⁵

Statistics from Weston's address on the fortieth anniversary, on April 5, 1925, show a record membership of six-hundred in that year, and an average Sunday attendance of twelve-hundred at the Academy of Music.⁸⁶ These figures were undoubtedly inflated by the easy public availability of a varied lecture program in a popular hall, and by the assumption of some of the audience that in applying for membership in the Ethical Society they were only subscribing to a Chautauqua-style cultural series. Subscriptions dwindled during the Great Depression. On July 24, 1932, Weston wrote Schmidt at Cornell, inviting him to speak as usual, but warning, "We have had to give up meeting at the Academy of music, on account of our very bad financial condition."⁸⁷

Weston rounded out his career with courage, dignity, and honors--an elder statesman in an important city. In the summer of 1910, he took his sons Harold and Carl (later Charles, the lawyer) through Egypt, Palestine, and Southern Europe, and was interviewed by the Continental Times in Berlin (August 7) on "Berlin Thirty Years Ago: Changes Observed by an American." Philadelphia papers were pleased to copy. Among the many trivial changes he noted "one conspicuous

⁸⁵"Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia," article in pamphlet, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1935, pp. 1-3.

⁸⁶"Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia: Its Beginnings and Now, 1885-1925," p. 7 of 9.

⁸⁷Letter, New York archives.

difference. . . . The German military spirit is less strikingly in evidence." He noted, too, "fewer University students parading the streets with slashed and bandaged heads, . . . a distinct decline in the national duelling practice." The interviewer discounted his impression of "growth in the residential section . . . both in regard to beauty and extent" as "somewhat deceptive to the passing tourist. Berlin contains at present no fewer than 40,000 untenanted dwellings."

Though he sympathized with the wearing out of Wilson's patience with "German militarism," Weston also supported the right of pacifists to protest the World War when it came, and arranged for their use of the Broad Street Theater for a meeting on April 1, 1917. Police prohibited the meeting, "to prevent a riot disastrous to the pacifists," they said, but Weston, Professor James Leuba of Bryn Mawr, Samuel Fels, and others called the police action "ruthless and intolerable and against the rights of a democracy."⁸⁸

Throughout these later years, old friends and guest speakers of distinction kept coming, to see Weston and to enrich his platform program. Conspicuous among them was J. Ramsay MacDonald, who first spoke for the Philadelphia Society as a young member of the Ethical Society and the London County Council, on October 31 and November 7, 1897.⁸⁹

⁸⁸North American, Philadelphia, April 2, 1917.

⁸⁹Cause, III, 6 (October, 1897), p. 52.

MacDonald was a member of Cbit's "Society of Ethical Propagandists," a group of bright young men (and later a woman) brought together on April 26, 1898, for "lecturing, writing, publishing, organizing" on behalf of the Ethical movement.⁹⁰ He spoke several times more, in New York as well as Philadelphia, visiting with the Westons in Merion, as his career progressed as a Labor Member of Parliament. Weston wrote MacDonald in the House of Commons in 1925, between his two periods as Prime Minister, inviting him to speak again for the Ethical Society at the Academy of Music, and for the Philadelphia Forum at a fee of \$1500 to \$3000. As a trustee of the Jayne Memorial Lectures, he expressed regret that MacDonald had been unable to give the lectures "this year," and the hope that he might do so "some other year."⁹¹

(A Jayne Lectures flyer in the Philadelphia files shows Ethical colleague Horace Bridges as the lecturer for 1927, on "Life and Conduct"--four evening lectures at the Academy of Music in March and April.)

In 1927, MacDonald stopped off to visit Weston at home, though ill with pharyngitis, and spent the next three weeks in Jefferson Hospital, as the bill in the Philadelphia files indicates, from April 23 through May 12. Two years later he came again, as Prime Minister, this time to thank his doctors, nurses, Weston, and other friends at a luncheon

⁹⁰ Editorial, Ethical World, I, 22 (May 28, 1898), pp. 345-46.

⁹¹ Letter from St. Huberts, August 2, 1925; copy in Philadelphia files.

under auspices of the English Speaking Union. All these events were extensively covered by the popular press.

On the fifty-fifth anniversary of his graduation from Antioch College, June 27, 1931, Weston was awarded the honorary degree of L. H. D., Doctor of Humane Letters, by President Arthur E. Morgan. The neighboring Springfield News (Ohio) reported the degree as L. L. D. the next day, but got the key citation right: "for twenty-five years as editor of the International Journal of Ethics." The kinship of S. Burns Weston and Professor Emeritus Stephen F. Weston was also noted.

The aging Weston at last received relief in Philadelphia in the fall of 1933, with the appointment of an assistant, W. Frank Swift. Swift, a young British Canadian, had spent one year with Chubb in St. Louis and two as the Leader in Boston. But the relief was short, as Swift was killed in a good Samaritan role on icy streets on December 9, 1933.⁹² Within a year, W. Edwin Collier, a young but experienced professional recruited from the Church of England and trained by Coit, was installed as "Director" in Philadelphia. Weston was named "Director Emeritus."

At the banquet of the American Ethical Union Assembly in Philadelphia, November 30, 1935, Weston was again honored. It was the fiftieth anniversary of his leadership, and of organizations he had at least shared in founding--

⁹²Swift correspondence to Chubb, St. Louis files; and conversations with Emily Swift Curtis, St. Louis and Chicago.

the Philadelphia Society, the Contemporary Club, and Southwark Neighborhood House.⁹³

He died July 15, 1936, at St. Huberts in the Adirondacks, where his oldest colleague in America, Percival Chubb, conducted his funeral for family and neighbors two days later. (Coit was still living and working, in England.) Reviewing Weston's half-century of service to "the sovereignty of ethics, . . . the phrase of his first master, Emerson," Chubb chose the words "consistency and steadfastness," elaborating with "generous self-bestowal" and "his quality of self-effacement" in the roles of "secretary, editor, publisher, and manager."

And then Chubb added, surprisingly for one so close but all the more revealing of Weston's own priorities, "I do not know with any definiteness what ultimate meanings our friend and co-worker read in this august cosmic drama of life and death. . . . But in any case and whatever his views on these first and last things may have been, his thought was centered on living, and on fostering fullness and fineness of life for the common good."⁹⁴

⁹³Fiftieth Anniversary pamphlet; also Philadelphia Inquirer, story and photograph, Sunday, December 1, 1935.

⁹⁴"In Memoriam S. Burns Weston," 5 typed pages, St. Louis files.

CHAPTER IV

THE "ABOU BEN ADHEM" OF THE ETHICAL MOVEMENT:

WALTER L. SHELDON

Walter Lorenzo Sheldon of St. Louis (1858-1907) was the youngest of the first generation of Ethical founders, and the first to die. It was Weston, his discoverer, brother-in-law, and closest friend, who likened him to the hero of the Leigh Hunt poem, Abou Ben Adhem, who could not "love the Lord" but asked the recording angel to "write me as one who loves his fellow men." Speaking at the dedication of Sheldon Memorial Meeting House in St. Louis on October 6, 1912, Weston described Sheldon's agnostic zeal:

From the day we first met as fellow-students in a German University [Berlin] thirty-one years ago, I felt that Walter Sheldon was capable of holding aloft the torch of ethical idealism. . . .

As soon as he was convinced that there could be an Ethical movement that was not based on the dogmatic formulas of an ecclesiastical body; that one could strive to reach a higher moral level one's self and help to elevate the life of one's fellow men without subscribing to a theological creed; that one could work for humanity and ethical ideals without joining either Church or Synagogue; as soon, I say, as he came to take this point of view--so different from that in which he had in early youth been trained--the soul of this Abou Ben Adhem burned with the desire to join such a movement and to become a leader and teacher of Ethical Religion.¹

¹S. Burns Weston, "Address Preliminary to the Unveiling of the Memorial Tablet to Walter L. Sheldon," Ethical Addresses, XX (Oct., 1912), 41.

Sheldon was born September 5, 1858, in West Rutland, Vermont, the oldest of three sons of Preston and Cornelia Hatch Sheldon. The biographical essay published by the Ethical movement nearly two decades after his death says only that "from his infancy to his college years, he lived in Vermont."² And a carbon copy in St. Louis, slightly longer than the published version, states clearly that he "was born in Brooklyn."³ But all other records, including the biographical dictionaries, list the Vermont birthplace, which was indeed his mother's home town and summer retreat.

Irving Dilliard, the St. Louis editor who wrote the Sheldon article for the Dictionary of American Biography, confirmed the Vermont birthplace as earlier biographers did. He added the information that Preston Sheldon was a lumber dealer and a descendant of Isaac Sheldon, a seventeenth century settler of Windsor, Connecticut.⁴

The question of Walter Sheldon's childhood home may involve more than regional pride or a pedantic quibble. A newspaper clipping from Jacksonville, Florida, for April 7, 1866, reports in detail the death by drowning of "Mr. Sheldon, of Long Island, N. Y.," along with Dr. C. C. Ambler and

²Henry J. Golding (ed.), Fiftieth Anniversary volume, p. 63.

³Prepared for the above volume during the leadership of Percival Chubb (1860-1960), who succeeded Sheldon in St. Louis in 1911, shortly after marrying his widow, Anna Harts-horne Sheldon.

⁴DAB, XVII, 66. Dilliard (b. 1904) learned of Sheldon and the Society as a young reporter, and later editor of the editorial page, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

one of two "colored men . . . returning to the city in a sail boat. . . . He [Mr. Sheldon] leaves a stricken wife and child in this city. . . ." ⁵ Cornelia Sheldon and the unnamed child must have rejoined the others and returned to her old home in Vermont.

No direct reference is made to this tragedy, or to the father, in any of Walter Sheldon's personal papers, which include two pages of New Year's jottings and resolutions "commenced in 1875 and ended in 1876," and an undated diary marked "Private" and "my confessional," from about 1887 to 1891. ⁶

In the diary, in an entry headed "Things which stick in my memory," the first of eight numbered items is "the handful of sand when 7 years old." This might have been in Jacksonville in April, 1866. The fifth item, among others of a picturesque or seemingly trivial character, is "the feeling at my mother's death." ⁷

In his New Year's notes, at seventeen, Sheldon upbraids himself for selfishness and sensuality, and for lack of feeling for his mother and a brother, while welcoming "a love of Nature which I never had before" and resolving "that I more fully and more completely love and adore and

⁵"A Sad Event," The Florida Union, Jacksonville, April 7, 1866 (clipping among Sheldon papers, Ethical Society of St. Louis).

⁶Sheldon papers, St. Louis.

⁷Ibid.

worship my God,--love and trust my Savior and the Holy Ghost--love the Bible."⁸

Despite the evangelical ring of his theology, Sheldon reported growing doubts:

In this year the whole course of my life has been changed by my resolve to go through college. There is growing within me a respect for all creeds and religions and I have grown much more liberal in my views respecting religions & creeds, but I fear that I have gone too far so that now in many respects my mind is puzzled and it is only by a slow process that I must feel my way forward or backward as must needs be best.⁹

His first college was Middlebury, where he must have distinguished himself for piety and conscientiousness. After he had gone on to Princeton for his third year, the Middlebury College humor magazine reported his death in a column of mock obituaries, from "excessive swelling of self esteem" and "a too rigid observance of the rules of the Orthodox church. He absent mindedly ate a warm biscuit on Sunday. . . . Remains buried at Princeton."¹⁰

Sheldon registered for the Arts program at Princeton, listing his denomination as Congregational and his politics as Republican. He lived in Nassau Hall, and joined a dining club but no fraternity.¹¹

⁸New Year's notes, Sheldon papers, St. Louis.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰The Illuminator, Middlebury, Vermont, March 25, 1879, p. 11.

¹¹Class list in Nassau Herald, XVI (1879).

At the end of the first semester, in December, 1878, his grades for Logic, English, Psychology, History, Science and Religion, Modern Language, and Greek averaged 94.1, with the lowest (90) in English, History, and Science and Religion, and the highest (99.3) in Modern Language.¹² At the end of the year he gave one of the "Honorary Junior Orations," speaking on "Isolation of the Soul."¹³

At commencement in 1880 Sheldon was one of twenty-two graduates listed from a class of sixty-eight, for "Honorary Orations and Theses, with special excellence in particular departments." His was the Oration for Belles-Lettres, on "The Time-Element in the Future of Humanity," delivered soon after the three salutatory orations and long before the valedictory.¹⁴ According to a newspaper report, which included the remarks of President McCosh, "Only the orations were delivered."¹⁵

In the fall of 1886 Sheldon was to write back from St. Louis, where he had just settled as lecturer of the new Society for Ethical Culture:

Now that I have taken a stand so wide from the religious attitude of Princeton, I have felt that the college would not own me. Princeton taught me a great deal in many things, but while I was there . . . I was

¹²Grade card, Sheldon papers.

¹³Program, June 17, 1879, ibid.

¹⁴Program, 133rd Annual Commencement of the College of New Jersey, June 23, 1880.

¹⁵New York Tribune, June 24, 1880.

taking an attitude that, by the time of my graduation, put me far outside the pale of its theology. . . . The report I have to give of myself is a simple one. It has been six years of pretty constant student life interspersed with travel. . . .¹⁶

Having intended to study for the ministry, Sheldon traveled instead for the first year in Egypt, Palestine, and Europe with his classmate Julius W. Atwood, who was to become Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Arizona.¹⁷ On later trips and summers spent in his cabin at Beedes, Keene Valley, New York, in the Adirondacks, he sent long, revealing letters to Julius' mother, Mrs. F. C. Atwood, of Salisbury, Vermont.¹⁸

In October, 1881, he registered at the University of Berlin, where he met Burns Weston and learned of the possibility of a new type of ministry with the Ethical movement. The next year, 1882-83, he studied at the University of Leipzig, taking such courses as the History of Modern Philosophy under Professor Wundt, Psychology under Professor Meintze, and Ethics under Professor Wolff.¹⁹

When Felix Adler wrote to Weston in July, 1883, urging him to come back to New York, he asked him to write his friend Sheldon "in reference to his letter," and then

¹⁶Sexennial Record of the Class of 1880 (Princeton, 1881), pp. 62-63.

¹⁷Biographical essay, Fiftieth Anniversary volume, p. 63.

¹⁸Originals returned, among Sheldon papers.

¹⁹Registration forms in Latin and German, Sheldon papers.

promised to send word himself "in a few days. . . . [E]verything depends upon the man."²⁰

Adler wrote encouragingly of a new Society for Ethical Culture in St. Louis:

. . . The field there is most promising, in some respects better than in Chicago. Excellent men of all classes have identified themselves with the movement and under proper direction it is sure to succeed. The question of leadership is still undecided. As in St. Louis so in other places prospects for the extension of the Ethical movement are most cheering. . . .²¹

But after the false start described in Chapter I, he left St. Louis unorganized, pending the training of an adequate leader.

Sheldon came back with Weston in the fall of 1883, to work with Dr. Adler in the New York Society and to take up the popular course of studies in Political and Social Science at Columbia University. He took responsibility for the Young Men's Union of the society and edited the only issue of a Monthly Record under their auspices in June, 1885. Its thirty-six pages included an address by Adler on "The Meaning of the Ethical Movement," news of New York and Chicago, and a report of the organization of the Philadelphia Society under the leadership of Weston.²²

Sheldon's vocation was still in doubt. From the start he found Adler's approach to ethics too metaphysical,

²⁰ Preliminary copy, letter from Rockaway, Long Island, now in Dr. Friess's files.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Biographical essay, carbon copy, St. Louis.

much as he admired his practical achievements, and considered his own approach more scientific and direct. Adler, on the other hand, mistrusted Sheldon's conception of "the larger ethical movement" as separable from the quest for "the origin of ethical law. I have come to the point," Adler told him, "of regarding the improvement of social conditions, not as the main object, but instead, the obedience to an unconditional obligation, irrespective of results."²³

But Sheldon had concerned himself with the origin of ethical law. He reported his troubled search in "An Ethical Constitution," a typed paper of thirty-one pages signed "W. L. Sheldon, N. Y. City, March '84."²⁴ In the first part of this orderly but troubled essay, called the "Philosophical Basis," he tells of his loss of faith in theism and of the transfer of that faith to science and a reductionist physics:

1. It was reading the Mental Physiology of Dr. Carpenter²⁵ almost six years ago, that first shook my faith in Theism as a philosophy. The old notion of a self existent and unconditioned consciousness was a chimera. Psychical action was but a link in the chain of physical action. The realm of spirit was lost to me. . . . [T]he old theology with its theory of supreme dualism was not scientific. . . .

2. But what then was it all? I was plunged in the study of Physics. It was the science of all sciences

²³Notes on a "Conversation with Mr. Sheldon" (n. d.), Adler papers, New York Society.

²⁴Sheldon papers, St. Louis.

²⁵William B. Carpenter, Principles of Mental Physiology (4th ed.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1878), pp. lxxv, 737. Sheldon's copy was signed and dated "'78 Oct. 1, N. Y. x" and liberally marked with x's.

that seemed to be touching at the bottom of things. Not Metaphysics but Physics, then, was to answer the last great question of Philosophy--what was the one ultimate thing of the Universe. . . . Step by step she had been reducing everything back. . . .²⁶

Consciousness was reduced to sensation, and sensation to motion. "I could never think of mental action," he said, "without always thinking of a peculiar wig-wag vibration of elongated atoms going on in the brain at the same time. . . . The same conception pursued me long after I had abandoned the study of Physics. . . . It destroyed the beauty of poetry, it took all the meaning out of art, it annihilated all possibility of religion. . . ."²⁷

It was John Stuart Mill who gave him temporary relief, after futile readings in "the pure idealism of Plato, the dualism of Descartes, the monism of Berkeley, the realism of Hobbes, the pantheism of Hegel. . . . I put aside the speculation. I took up Mill's magnificent Analysis of the process of thought as given in his Logic. His explanation of the Composition of Causes gave me my clue. An effect is not the sum of its causes, but is a new and real thing of itself. . . . All the sensations, then, had their own reality. . . . [M]y beautiful sunset and the beautiful picture were saved to me."²⁸

But science set up another stumbling block: "the doctrine of Conservation and Energy." Sheldon read "the

²⁶"An Ethical Constitution," p. 1.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²⁸Ibid.

celebrated lecture of du Bois-Reymond 'Ueber die Grenzen des Erkennens,'"²⁹ in which "he claimed to be able to explain all the manifestations of consciousness without taking consciousness into account at all. . . . [B]ut he could not explain consciousness. And why not, I ask. Because there would be no consciousness to explain. . . ." ³⁰

"The same anomalous statement" turned up in Sheldon's reading of Herbert Spencer. "A unit of feeling cannot be the same thing as a unit of motion, he says, but it is probable that they are rather the subjective and objective sides of the same thing. . . . Such wild statements go to show how unscientific scientists become, when they get up into philosophy."³¹

But Sheldon was convinced, in spite of himself:

. . . [T]here was no such thing as consciousness. All existence was made up of bundles of sensation strung together in all manner of ways. Sensation was the only reality. I disliked and distrusted any such conviction. But I could get no farther. I wrote out a paper with the aim of detecting an assumed realism in all the great agnostics from Locke down to Lotze.³² Then I practically dropped the subject and turned to literature for relief. I still enjoyed philosophy because

²⁹Emil du Bois-Reymond's lecture "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkenntens" was given at the 45th Congress of German Scientists and Physicians in Leipzig, August 14, 1872. Sheldon owned the revised and enlarged 5th edition of this lecture (pp. 7-57) combined with "Die Sieben Weltraethsel" (pp. 59-111) as given before the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin, July 8, 1880--Zwei Vortraege (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Comp., 1882).

³⁰"An Ethical Constitution," p. 4. ³¹Ibid., p. 5.

³²Apparently published later as "Agnostic Realism," Journal of Speculative Philosophy, XX (July, 1886), 270-83.

of the atmosphere it appeared to move in, not because of any truth it might discover.³³

This discouragement lasted nearly a year, until he decided to go back at the problem "from a metaphysical point of view." He noted that in all the "explanations which the scientist gave of the universe as a whole, he always posited his own consciousness outside the universe. Is he as a consciousness made up of sensations? Even in raising the question, there is something which was not in the sensations. He cannot conceive of nature without the notion of a consciousness thinking about it."³⁴

Having reinstated his own consciousness, Sheldon was still haunted by the problem of knowing the consciousnesses of others, or of knowing that they had them. He believed that other people had consciousnesses, but he knew theirs only as "sensations," as "phenomena of physical energy." His own consciousness "manifesting itself through physical action" convinced him that there was something added to the action of others by their consciousnesses. "It was just this simple process of reasoning that I had been seeking in vain for years. Almost within an hour my whole line of thought threw itself into half a dozen steps."³⁵

Although Sheldon was to falter on some of these steps in later years, especially on the step to "freedom,"

³³"An Ethical Constitution," p. 5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 6.

³⁵Ibid., p. 7.

the "Philosophical Basis" of this early essay leads to its "Ethical Basis"³⁶ and to the sanctions of his later life and writings. Each pair of steps brought a major conclusion and surge of confidence, as follows:

Step number 1. I am,--that is,--there is a series of thought activities about the sensation, which activities constitute the I, and which must be just as original as the sensations upon which they act.

Step number 2. Other men are--that is, many consciousnesses exist. . . . They also think, and that activity must also be original.

(A) Conclusion from these two steps: there is also a sphere of spirit as well as a sphere of sensation, and that sphere constitutes the personality.

Step number 3.--I am free--that is to say, the sphere of spirit can act upon the sphere of sensation. . . . Whatever necessarily & always precedes an effect in time, must be the cause. . . . Then in the language of science, . . . thought also determines sensation. Then I am free--that is--if I can think so and so, I can act so and so. Freedom is not the necessarily not having an origin in causation, but the being able to be a cause, to produce an effect. . . . I am a cause.

Step number 4.--Other men are also free. . . . I cannot think of them as thinking, without thinking of them as manifesting themselves. Then they too must be free.

(B) Conclusion from these two steps: there is a possibility for spiritual freedom. Spirit can act as a cause.

Step number 5.--I ought and I ought not. It is just this little statement which has been confusing me for months. I have been ransacking all philosophy from one end to the other, to discover what it meant. I found myself unable to make any such statement logically for myself, much less for others. . . . But a curious fact all at once struck me. This confusion of mind had not appeared to affect my conduct at all. I had adhered just as faithfully, perhaps even more faithfully, to my sense of duty, than when I had a religious faith. . . . I really do recognize the sense of duty on the most ultimate testimony of my consciousness.

Step number 6.--Every other man must also acknowledge a sense of duty. I believe every man has a conscience and consciousness with the same general laws

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-31.

as my own. I can then with perfect consistency address another man and say--you ought and you ought not. . . .

(C) Conclusion from these two steps: there is a law of duty which is binding on every consciousness.

And as a result of the whole process (A) Spirit, (B) Freedom, and (C) Duty are saved to me. . . .³⁷

Going on to the "Ethical Basis" of his "Ethical Constitution," Sheldon was quick to admit the need for a new rationale, a new sanction, despite his salvaging of the sense of Duty in the "Philosophical Basis." He hesitated to criticize the new theologians for using the old, familiar phrases of supernaturalism, so long as ethical thinking might still be "borrowed from that belief. The science of Ethics must re-arrange its theories, and put itself upon a new and settled basis. . . . We would like to put the law within, but to retain the same force and the same extent of usage which it had acquired from without." He admitted that he still found it hard to think of the moral imperative without hearing "a great voice from an unknown nowhere called the region of the personality, the reason, the noumenal will," even though "that has no reality to me. I am not conscious of such a voice."³⁸

Nor did the traditional philosophers provide him with a satisfactory relationship "between the law and the end, between duty and motive." He tried the English first: Hobbes, Locke, and Hume; Bentham, Mill, and Spencer. "They all had a great deal to say about the end of morality. But none of them gave me a law, a command to seek that end."

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 7-10.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Then "back to antiquity": Plato and Aristotle, and the Stoics--Zeno, Cleanthes, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. "They talked grandly about the good, the summum bonum, but none of them had any criterion to decide what it really was. . . ." And so "down to Germany": Kant, Schiller, and Fichte. "They on the contrary had a good deal to say about the law and the command, but they appeared to give no end and no reason." Herbart followed. Sheldon already knew Spinoza well. Then he read "the French and Scottish schools, Cousin and McCosh, but that was all reminiscences of religion."³⁹

It was Janet and Sidgwick⁴⁰ who had anticipated Sheldon's questions and suggested a new method. "It was not in the Schools that I was to look for my solution, but rather in my own processes of thought." In examining his own thought processes he found that he expected every cause to have its "natural effect, the effect which it ought to have. . . ." For example, a weight attached to a wall by a string ought to fall when the string is cut. It does not fall in this case, because there is a magnet above it. To let it fall, I ought to remove the magnet. One ought to go

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁰ He probably had read Paul Janet, La Morale (Paris, 1873), and Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics (London, 1874). Sheldon later listed and quoted both in his critical bibliography, "A Bird's-Eye View of the Literature of Ethical Science Since the Time of Charles Darwin," Transactions of the Academy of Science of St. Louis, XIII (August, 1903), 87-142.

a certain way to a given destination, or act a certain way to avoid catching cold.⁴¹

From these simple applications of "the law of causality," he passed on to "the case of pure morality":

. . . I ask myself, what has been my chief, my only aim during all these years of study and travel and waiting. It was to be faithful, always faithful to my moral ideal. And what was that ideal which I had conceived and set before myself? It was truth to my whole nature, and growth. . . . I ought to take all the means to fulfill my aim and to attain to my moral ideal. And why ought I to have chosen this ideal? As soon ask me why a cause ought to choose its own effect. . . . It is the ultimate testimony of my consciousness; it is the universal law of experience.⁴²

Here, Sheldon's examples were a growing crystal endowed with reason, which "ought to try and construct a true crystal," and a man "whose whole nature appears to us dwarfed and stunted and awry," of whom we say that "he has mal-apprehended his own nature, and not used the gift of reason as he ought to have done."⁴³

From the human examples it is easy to derive the rest of Sheldon's "Ethical Constitution." Man has four aspects in his total nature. He is, first, a physical being or structure, which is but a piece of nature following its laws without choice or duty. Second, he is a sentient organism, no longer just an effect but a vital cause, with the duty to maintain life through the satisfaction of the appetites, procreation, and struggle, while avoiding the giving or the suffering of unnecessary pain. Third, he is

⁴¹"An Ethical Constitution," p. 14.

⁴²Ibid., p. 15.

⁴³Ibid.

a man among men, a brother, who sees himself as an end in himself and ought to see and treat other men in the same way. Fourth and finally, he is a self, with special and even unique capacities, an individual striving for his highest possible effect and realization in the universe, in progressive equilibrium with the strivings of others.⁴⁴

Out of struggles, conflicts, and antagonisms among the aspiring consciousnesses rise the sense of duty and the "four great duties of men to one another, Truth, Benevolence, Justice and Cooperation."⁴⁵ Even in the higher development of the self as unique, these basic duties apply, for there is always interrelation and struggle with an imperfect self, and with the environment. But if the whole universe had a single consciousness, or "an ideal to work out," according to Sheldon, ". . . a sense of duty would not exist, for there would be no struggle against the environment. The end would come of itself."⁴⁶

Thus did Walter Sheldon arrive at an ethic of self-realization, in a multiplicity of consciousnesses to whom the earthly end is clear, though the means are cloudy approximations aimed at the greatest possible progressive equilibrium. There are no absolutes in ethics, whatever there may be in the great unknown and unknowable area formerly bound to ethics by religion. "And yet," he wrote,

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 16 ff.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 22.

near the end of his "Ethical Constitution," ". . . we may even detect at least one general law. We may say that an undue cultivation of the animal appetites tends to weaken if not to destroy the activity of the purely man nature-- the soul--much more than a cultivation of the soul nature tends to check the activity of the animal appetites. . . . It would seem as though the evolution from the animal up to the man had not been quite completed. It remains for us then to step in and assist nature in the process, to aid in establishing the normal balance of functions."⁴⁷

To Sheldon, Adler still seemed too little aware of the biological basis of human value, and of the evolution of consciousness and conscience. By October 28, 1885, he was back in Berlin, this time in the School of Medicine. He registered not only for lectures and laboratories in Anatomy and Organic Chemistry, but also for lectures in Physics by Helmholtz, Physical Anthropology by du Bois-Reymond, European Political State Systems by Treitschke, and Introduction to Philosophy by Paulsen. His record indicates completion of these courses in mid-February, but no registration for the second semester.⁴⁸

The call of ethical teaching and reform was still strong, and the call of Adler and Weston most specific. We next hear of Sheldon on May 16, 1886, at closing exercises

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁸ Anmeldungs-Buch, Sheldon papers, St. Louis.

of the tenth anniversary of the New York Society in Chickering Hall. He sat on the platform with Adler, Salter, and Weston; with Stanton Coit, "since appointed lecturer to the Society in New York," and Moncure Conway of South Place Religious Society, London; with delegates from Philadelphia and Chicago, and "other friends."⁴⁹ Adler introduced him as having returned from abroad the previous day, "to resume his work in the Ethical Societies" and "to deliver a course of lectures in St. Louis as a preliminary to the foundation of an Ethical Society."⁵⁰

Weston had been to St. Louis in April, to meet with a group of interested men in the office of Charles Nagel.⁵¹ They agreed to invite Sheldon for a series of lectures at Memorial Hall in the Museum of Fine Arts on May 21, 26, and 30. He spoke to audiences of about fifty on "The Possibilities of a New Religious Movement in America," "The Old and the New Prophecy," and "A New Basis for Religious Organization." Adler was called to open the first season of a permanent society on November 13, and in the organizational meeting which followed, Sheldon was chosen as "lecturer."⁵²

⁴⁹Tenth Anniversary Exercises and Reports of First and Second Conventions (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1888), p. 4. The second convention was in Chicago in 1887.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 19.

⁵¹Prominent attorney, later president of the society (1889-91) and Secretary of Commerce and Labor (1909-13) under President Taft. See his Speeches and Writings, ed. Otto Heller (2 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931).

⁵²Robert Moore, "A Historical Sketch" (Report read at Annual Meeting, St. Louis Society, May 5, 1906), pp. 2-3.

The new board of trustees included several of the men who had organized the society which Adler disavowed in the summer of 1883. Conspicuously absent was the chairman of the earlier meetings, the German editor, Emil Prætorius, and again there was no mention of his fiery young writer, Adolphe de Castro. The board chose Manning Tredway as its first president.⁵³

Thus began Sheldon's twenty-one years as lecturer and leader of the St. Louis Society. He accepted the traditional role of the clergy more willingly than Salter and Weston, but the public and the press continued to testify to the ambiguity of the new profession by dubbing him "Professor." Like the other societies, St. Louis followed the pattern of the academic season, with public meetings, classes, and projects from mid-October until mid-May. Sheldon spent his summers in Vermont, in travel, or in his cabin in the Adirondacks, with books chosen for the coming season of addresses and writings.

In training in New York he had joined the Free Religious Association, and two of his addresses before the New York Society were published in the FRA journal. In the first of these⁵⁴ he indicated his respect for Auguste Comte and for the glorification of man in the nineteenth century, but objected to the deification of man just as he did to

⁵³St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Dec. 16, 1886.

⁵⁴"The Apotheosis of Humanity," Index, Vol. V, N. S. (Feb. 19, 1885), pp. 402-05.

the old belief in a personal God. In the second address,⁵⁵ he showed his faith in progressive evolution as a natural process in which men share as conscious creators. A third article, on "the pure message of nature,"⁵⁶ grew out of his last months of travel as a student in Europe.

But his first and perhaps finest philosophic article, the earlier one on "Agnostic Realism," appeared in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy soon after his introductory visit to St. Louis and shortly before he started to work there. In it he contended that "we may not assume that as unknowable which we use as real and knowable. Such an agnostic realism contains a logical contradiction."⁵⁷

In that essay Sheldon also developed a sort of emergent evolutionism. "Why," he asked, ". . . must a cause resemble an effect . . . ? We have no evidence to that effect." A reflection on water, for instance, though "it appeared and it vanished. . . was just as actual as the material causes that produced it. And may not a combination of physical causes unite to produce a consciousness, and will not that consciousness have an actual existence distinct from its physical basis, although it be as evanescent as the composition of causes from which it sprang?"⁵⁸

⁵⁵ "The True Conqueror of Death," Index, VI, N. S. (Oct. 1, 1885), 162-65.

⁵⁶ "The Banks of the Wye, and the Ethics of Wordsworthianism," ibid. (Feb. 11, 1886), 391-93.

⁵⁷ Op. cit., XX (July, 1886), 273. ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 281.

It was considerations such as these which caused Salter, in his memorial references to Sheldon at Glenmore in the Adirondacks, to praise this "thorough-going piece of critical writing," which "coincides in some striking particulars with what I suspect to be one of the most important constructive books in philosophy this year, Montgomery's 'Philosophical Problems in the Light of Vital Organization.'"⁵⁹ If Sheldon himself ever saw such a resemblance, or even knew of Montgomery's writings, we have no record of it. He might have met him, however, as Salter did, through active membership in the Free Religious Association.

The writers whom Sheldon did know, and explicitly criticized for their "agnostic realism," included Spencer and Spinoza, Lotze and Fichte, Helmholtz and DuBois-Reymond. He traced the problem of primary qualities knowable only through the relations of secondary qualities, back through Kant and the German metaphysicians to Locke and the British psychologists. "No wonder," he wrote, "that, in the face of such a contradiction, Berkeley should have fallen back upon pure idealism."⁶⁰

From this early essay in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, one might expect to find a continuing and a growing relationship between Sheldon and the St. Louis

⁵⁹ "Walter L. Sheldon Memorial Addresses," Ethical Addresses, XV (October, 1907), p. 39.

⁶⁰ Sheldon, "Agnostic Realism," op. cit., p. 274.

School of German Hegelians. But the record of such relationship is sparse, as apparently the relationship itself was. The difficulty was probably more temperamental and cultural than intellectual and metaphysical. Sheldon's early diary abounds with references to his problems of adjustment to the Germans in his new society in St. Louis, especially to those of Jewish background. Shortly before and after notes made at "Thirty Years Old" (May 18, 1888), he wrote:

Rem[ark]. The three different elements to be met in my Society (1) the radical German (2) the conservative American & (3) the Hebrew--how to blend them.

Ex[clamation]. Baffled, baffled by this Hebrew question! cramped by it and never can get away from it.

Now I am a stranger among H's & G's.

Allein, Allein. Ach Gott im einzig Wesen
 Um dieses Haupt an seine Brust zu legen!

And finally, a strictly personal reference to the prodigious written output of one of the leading St. Louis Hegelians:

Res[olution]. Never offer my publications to any one unless they are asked for. See the mistake of Denton J. Snider.⁶¹

Even after we discount the purely personal and neurasthenic laments of the thirty-year-old Sheldon, there

⁶¹Diary, Sheldon papers, St. Louis. Denton Jacques Snider (1841-1925) had already published at least a dozen of his fifty-odd books, most of them printed privately, without dates, and at the author's own expense.

remains an objective understanding of the differences in national psychologies. To the outside world and to the proprietary Anglo-Saxon natives of the United States, Sheldon was defensive for his new German friends. In "A Plea for the German Element in America,"⁶² he appealed to easterners in general, and New Englanders in particular, to be more patient and appreciative of cultural differences.

Sheldon was himself tempted by "the melancholy view" that "this race is peculiarly foreign," with its insistence on preserving the language and customs of Europe, often to the exclusion of "our common speech and political institutions." Already, he noted, one-eighth of the American people traced their ancestry to Germany. He predicted the total would rise to one-fourth in half a century.⁶³

"Worse still," he wrote, after listing the common complaints against materialism, love of comfort, indifference to religion, and "almost aggressive" sociability, "we have had it intimated that they are bringing socialism and the revolutionary spirit to our shores."⁶⁴ But Sheldon had little sympathy for the prevalent fear of continuing German radicalism. "On the contrary, . . . the German people will be here on this soil conspicuously a conservative element. . . . They are by nature anything but revolutionary."⁶⁵

⁶²New England Magazine, VII, N. S. (Sept., 1892), pp. 106-12.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 106-07.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 107.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 108.

To the materialism and irreligion he attributed to Lasalle and Marx, Buechner, Feuerbach, and Strauss, Sheldon counterposed the philosophic idealism and religious enthusiasm of Luther, Fichte, Schleiermacher, and Kant, Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe, and Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner. To the Germans' camaraderie and social radicalism, he counterposed their industry, frugality (already vanishing among native Americans, he noted), and stolid endurance.⁶⁶

The "German Element" predominated in the early decades of Ethical Culture in St. Louis, despite Adler's rejection of their most radical leaders in the abortive effort of 1883, and Sheldon's wistful attempts to attract more of his own austere Anglo-Saxon kind after the official founding in 1886. The Germans who joined him, and stayed with him and the society, were nevertheless comparatively radical--freethinking, socialist, emancipationist, and of course Republican.

There were several who had 'fit mit Sigel'--to use an old St. Louis slogan of German-American pride. Franz Sigel (1824-1902) had reached New York in 1852 and St. Louis in 1857 as a revolutionary refugee and teacher. In 1861 he organized an infantry regiment of Union volunteers, and rose quickly from colonel to brigadier to major general before resigning his commission in 1865 and returning to New York, where he edited the Deutsches Volksblatt. General

⁶⁶Ibid., passim.

Sigel's brother's family stayed in St. Louis, where the nieces were active in the Sunday school, social services, and youth groups of Walter Sheldon's Ethical Society.⁶⁷

Despite his own German university experience--or perhaps in part because of it--Sheldon saw little of the St. Louis Movement in philosophy. He saw more of the rationalists of the Freie Gemeinde and of the mental and physical gymnasts of the Turnverein, especially when they left their German setting to visit or join the Ethical Society. Sheldon was invited to speak, however, on such occasions as the three-day observance--May 7 to 9, 1905--of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Friedrich Schiller. In his address to this congress of German associations at the Odeon Theater, he apologized for being the "one voice in the tongue of the Anglo-Saxon," but went quickly on to show his familiarity with Schiller's poetry and philosophy, and his plays as seen in Leipzig and Berlin, and to express his appreciation for the cultural contribution of the "two-hundred-thousand souls in this one community [who] trace their ancestry to old Germany."⁶⁸

Sheldon's early loneliness and "accursed subjectivism," so agonizingly recorded in his diary through the fifth year in St. Louis, showed up less and less as crippling inhibitions after the acceptance of his proposal of

⁶⁷Interview with Miss Emma Sigel, June 27, 1963, and mementos given by her and Miss Lena Sigel.

⁶⁸Program and text, St. Louis.

marriage by Anna Hartshorne of Philadelphia, younger sister of Weston's wife Mary. They were married on May 18, 1892. Mrs. Sheldon (later Mrs. Chubb) is widely remembered as a woman of great charm and competence, whose wealth relieved her leader-husbands and the St. Louis Society of financial worry and responsibility for many years. After Sheldon's death in 1907 she encouraged the society to build its own meeting house, by giving half the cost of Sheldon Memorial.

Financial independence seems to have tempted Sheldon into a betrayal of his earlier admonition to himself--not to make "the mistake of Denton J. Snider" in offering too much for publication. Though some of his writings and addresses were genuinely sought, and worthy of preserving, many occasional pieces and didactic volumes were privately printed or subsidized in the years from 1892 to 1908. All, of course, had a devoted following of collectors and readers, and some drew compliments and critical approval from his colleagues and scholarly reviewers.

Though given to pious phrases and conventional moralizing, Sheldon was not without a sense of the irony of his position:

Ex[clamation]. It is so pathetic that a man can help the world more with his second-best than with his first best.

.....

Ref[erence]. It is curious. Effrontery and the commonplace do succeed in this country. Barnum and Talmage [the popular clergyman] are a sample.

Emerson sells 500 copies of his great work in twelve years.

.....

Remark]. A democracy makes it impossible for the leader to be more than a little way ahead of the people.

.....

After all the hardest thing is to keep up one's faith in the divine in human nature. I am more impressed by the slow cattle-like sluggishness.⁶⁹

Sheldon's best book, by far, was his first one-- the volume of lectures published as An Ethical Movement⁷⁰ at the end of his tenth season in St. Louis, and dedicated to Felix Adler. In it, he elaborated his earlier philosophic preferences and sanctions, and applied them in such areas as marriage and the family, law and government, private property, happiness and self-improvement ("self-culture," he called it), and the cultures and beliefs of others. While disavowing metaphysical considerations, he brought them in freely through appeals to consensus and to the testimony of his own consciousness or of conscience.

His sanctions remained those of a highly intuitive ethic of self-realization, which he persisted in calling scientific. In calling this ethic at the same time religious--and deserving of the traditional religious attitudes of reverence, awe, and zealous practice--he often spoke of its grounding in "the great Central Fact." For example:

..... One always has a greater respect for certain facts as well as for certain persons than one does for others. The fact of all facts, the belief of all beliefs, for the child to respect, is Conscience. He should think of it as resting on itself for authority.

⁶⁹Diary, about 1891 or 1892.

⁷⁰New York and London: Macmillan & Co., 1896. Pp. xvi, 349.

We must educate it, but always as "guided by the sense of awe." In the dissolution of old institutions now going on, it will be called into requisition, perhaps, as never before.⁷¹

Sheldon's acceptance of the voice of conscience was not as absolute and uncritical as such paeans might indicate. In each of the practical areas he appealed to the consequences of particular actions or principles of action, and to the evolution of social consciousness in the individual and his culture. The family, the state, society, private property--all these he regarded as "natural institutions" justified by the experience of the race in mutual aid and stewardship of values, and preceding the recent vogue for individualism.

"I can see no point," he said, "to the theory which is more or less prevalent nowadays, that the 'impersonal coercion of nature' is freedom, while the coercion of men and society is slavery. . . . [I]n both these spheres there is freedom and coercion."⁷² So he tended to accept the rule of law and custom, and of 'nature' itself, as subject to amendment within rather narrow limits. He had little respect for those who urged violence or disrespect for law.

"Self-realization" he viewed as necessary for a State, just as it is for an individual. Admitting to a kind of passionate "mysticism" in this regard, he rejected

⁷¹Op. cit., p. 13.

⁷²Ibid., p. 269.

the idea of a State which stands as an obstacle to the development of universal brotherhood. But like Adler and Coit, he was intrigued by the differences in national psychologies and their contribution to the ideally diversified society.⁷³

"The mystery of Conscience" remained with Sheldon throughout his life as "the greatest and most solemn of all"--above the "mystery of being" (the oneness of things, or the central reality), the "mystery of self" (consciousness and self-consciousness), and the "mystery of suffering" (why?). He found "the Sense of Duty" not something learned or abstracted from reflection, but "already there," as in Jesus, Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics. Obviously, to him, the Utilitarians distorted what was original in consciousness. Kant and Fichte appealed to him, with their distinct rigorisms, as did Carlyle and Amiel. Yet it is only the general "Sense of Duty," or Conscience, which is absolute and unquestionable. There is no infallible guide to particular duties, Sheldon admitted, though most of us know what we should do in any given situation and need only the will to do it.⁷⁴

His disavowal of metaphysics was best justified by his contrast between materialism and idealism in the moral sense, and in the metaphysical sense, and the lack of the

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 263-83.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 41-64.

popularly claimed correlations between the two forms of materialism and idealism. But in disavowal he was wistful:

. . . It is not a question of theory, but an attitude of one's nature; for one may be a materialist in character and an idealist in philosophy. When a man feels himself perfectly at home in the world, is content to live from hour to hour, letting one day be like the next, and one year like the next year, without any care for growth or advance, . . . that man is a materialist, though he may have the most fixed and positive beliefs in another world and in an overruling God. . . .

But when one is conscious of this difference between himself and external physical nature; when there is an actual impression on his mind that he belongs to another order of existence, and that he would like to rise to the full scope and height of that order, . . . though he be wavering in his philosophy, perplexed with doubts, or unable to construe the universe except in terms of "matter" or "force," yet in the true sense of the term that man is an Idealist.⁷⁵

An Ethical Movement was widely reviewed and generally approved, though often with faint praise. Macmillan had accepted full responsibility for the book on the strength of readers' reports, and paid ten per cent royalty on all sales in England and America.⁷⁶ Advertisements and book lists quoted eighteen favorable reviews from newspapers and journals as varied as the Pall Mall Gazette and Westminster Review, Newcastle Daily Leader and Edinburgh Scotsman, Milwaukee Sentinel and San Francisco Chronicle, and the Evangelist, Christian Register, and Jewish Messenger.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁷⁶Letter to Sheldon, Dec. 23, 1895.

⁷⁷Most of the eighteen and as many more, including long reviews from the Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale and the Revue Philosophique, are in Sheldon's scrapbooks, but without dates, page numbers, or other references.

Several reviewers agreed, sometimes caustically, with Sheldon's frank statements in an introductory note:

. . . I am not presuming to offer a new or important contribution to ethical literature. . . . The attitude taken in the volume is neither that purely of the scholar nor that of the man wholly immersed in practical life. A teacher in ethics or religion occupies a position between these two classes. He will read extensively and think a great deal; but his deepest convictions or beliefs will be shaped while he is seeking to apply his reading or thinking to the questions of life as they come up from day to day.⁷⁸

A typical review characterized him as "distinctly a preacher, after the order of Channing and Martineau," and noted that "while the conclusions are conservative, the method is radical."⁷⁹ Others noting the same discrepancy suggested that the order of conclusions and method had been reversed.

It was in a separate essay published several years after the tenth anniversary volume that Sheldon developed his full theory of "The Evolution of Conscience" and gave his reasons for holding onto an element of "mystery," even after granting that much of conscience could be explained through natural science and evolution.⁸⁰

Accepting the popular view that evolution meant the survival of the physically fit, or at best in the moral sense the survival of the ambitious and the shrewd, he asked how the theory of evolution could possibly account

⁷⁸An Ethical Movement, p. vii.

⁷⁹Samuel M. Crothers, in International Journal of Ethics, VII (Jan., 1897), p. 337.

⁸⁰American Journal of Sociology, VIII (Dec., 1902), 360-81.

for the rise of Buddhism, or Cardinal Wolsey's penitential warning against ambition, or Jean Valjean's remorse over the jailing of a miserable innocent in his place, or Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, or a white man's stopping to aid a stricken Chinaman in the street. Sheldon was willing to grant that evolution might account for a vague sense of regret over the results of violent or careless acts among the primitives, and then a scruple checking the impulse before the next such act. He even granted the growth of a moral sense, much as sense organs for light and sight have grown. But he projected the evolutionary principle into the philosophy we now call social Darwinism, and denounced those who practiced it, while defending as a "mystery" the growing concern for all men as ends in themselves and for the higher egoism--beyond social ethics, and at times even against it--of being true to one's own nature.⁸¹

Sheldon had given a Sunday morning lecture on "The Evolution of Conscience" during the fourteenth season of the St. Louis Society (1899-1900), a season which included Professors John Dewey and Warner Fite of the University of Chicago as guest speakers on "The Ethical Element in Education" and "The Sense of Duty," respectively. Dewey stayed on to give a series of three lectures on "Child Education" at the Odeon Theater, and Fite to lecture to the newly organized Men's Philosophical Club on "Experimental and

⁸¹Ibid.

Comparative Psychology." Frank Thilly, professor of philosophy at the University of Missouri in Columbia, also came to St. Louis, to give three lectures on the Greek philosophers to Men's Club audiences averaging forty or fifty.⁸²

Thilly was one of Sheldon's most frequent guest speakers and advisers until his move to Princeton in 1904 and on to Cornell in 1906. In a notebook of reminders for the summer of 1900 Sheldon wrote:

Submit my article on Conscience to Thilly, ask to read & explain why the New World would not take it, talk over the various forms with him, get more to him.⁸³

There is no record of Thilly's advice, though it may have been heeded in the published article of 1902. Thilly was back on the platform at Memorial Hall on June 8, 1907, as one of the pallbearers at Sheldon's funeral. At Sheldon's request there were no addresses--only music and readings, chosen from his own writings and favorite quotations for similar occasions by his colleague John Elliott from New York.⁸⁴ Thilly's own delayed tribute was read for him at a memorial meeting of the Young People's Association on May

⁸²Programs and announcements, St. Louis.

⁸³Papers, St. Louis. The New World was a quarterly review of religion, ethics, and theology published in Boston from March, 1892, to December, 1900, superseding the Unitarian Review. A. W. Jackson of Concord reviewed An Ethical Movement (Vol. VI, March, 1907, pp. 150-52), commending Sheldon's "noble spirit" but calling him "a moralizer instead of a moral philosopher" and "a . . . mind . . . ruled by no one definite ethical idea."

⁸⁴"Service at the Funeral of Walter L. Sheldon," Ethical Addresses, XV (September, 1907), pp. 1-10.

⁸⁵"Memorial Addresses," Ethical Addresses, XV (September, 1907), p. 38.

5, 1909. He praised Sheldon's integrity and diligence, while adding tributes to his "philosopher's yearning to see things whole," his "titanic" will power, and his mastery over shyness and "the Anglo-Saxon's reserve."⁸⁵

Similar appraisals had been given in memorial addresses by the other Ethical leaders at their societies, in professional meetings in September, 1907, at Glenmore in the Adirondacks, and at the memorial service in St. Louis the night before Adler's opening of the Sunday platform season in October. Salter, always more aware of Sheldon's sanctimonious evasions of philosophic issues than of his own, and with some justification, had this to say along with praise of his philosophic aptitude and occasional achievement:

. . . I recall his insistence on the religiousness of the Ethical Movement, not because of transcendental views connected with ethics, but because ethics itself was to him a sacred subject, because it excited sacred feelings--he saw perhaps more clearly than any of the rest of us that the specific sense of the sacred was what made religion--not a set of cosmical views; he spoke in an early lecture of an "Ethical Church," and later of "we the clergy"--an expression that I remember grated on me at the time.⁸⁶

Adler, the only Ethical leader among several speakers at the St. Louis memorial meeting, added his testimony on Sheldon's zeal and good works, and this on his philosophy:

. . . It has been said, mistakenly by some, that moral knowledge is easy, that the moral will alone is difficult

⁸⁵Frank Thilly, Walter L. Sheldon: An Appreciation, with "Selected Sentiments from Mr. Sheldon's Writings," privately printed, 1909, pp. 7.

⁸⁶"Memorial Addresses," Ethical Addresses, XV (October, 1907), p. 38.

to create. But in truth moral knowledge itself is often lacking. . . . That there is an ultimate right we know, but what the right in particular instances is, is often doubtful. More light we need as well as more power, and Mr. Sheldon was an assiduous and painstaking searcher for the light.⁸⁷

In his "confessional," Sheldon had already recorded frank appraisals of his colleagues:

Rem. I can see the strength of A[dler] now. It is not in intellect, but in will. His heart never sinks. He always appears as tho he felt strong.

Res. Stop letting Salter, Adler, and the rest treat me as a youth and an apprentice. . . .

I have not the worldly tact of Professor A[dler], nor the personal sweetness of W[eston], nor the objective personality of C[oit].

Ref. Salter is too much in the air, Adler too much in himself, Weston too much with ladies, Mangasarian too much in Constantinople, Sheldon too much in his cabin, Gizycki too much in the Utilitarianism, Black is too much and too long at one station, Coit is alone amenable to experience.⁸⁸

And in a long letter to a friend, Sheldon wrote that

. . . Prof. Adler will be known fifty years hence by such works as "The Moral Instruction of the Young" and his "Workingman's School." His transcendentalism is an incidental feature of his own nature which must come out, and I do not think much about it.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

⁸⁸ Diary, undated, from about 1888 to 1892. The Black referred to must have been George Ashton Black, a Ph. D. in political science at Columbia University in 1889, and thereafter a faculty member. He was elected secretary of the first Convention of Societies for Ethical Culture in 1886 (Tenth Anniversary Exercises, p. 23) and a "lay member" of the Fraternity of Ethical Lecturers organized at the 1890 Convention (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 9, 1890). G. A. Black was unrelated to the mid-twentieth century New York leader, Algernon D. Black.

⁸⁹ First page missing, with date and salutation.

Remembering the pain of his own loss of the Christian faith--or perhaps still feeling it--Sheldon never pressed his skepticism or disbelief upon others, not even from the platform or in the Sunday School of the Ethical Society. Mrs. Sheldon herself remained an Episcopalian, while supporting her husband in his work, as did Mrs. Weston in Philadelphia.⁹⁰ To this scrupulous neutrality in theology was added strict political neutrality in all the auxiliary functions of the society--the Wage-Earners' Self-Culture Clubs, which began in 1888 as free reading rooms in working-class neighborhoods and grew into the diversified settlement houses of the Self-Culture Hall Association (now merged in the north-side Neighborhood Association, a United Fund agency); the Sunday afternoon Popular Science Lectures, which began in 1892 and prospered briefly in the sale of tickets and booking of speakers; the Political Science Club, organized for young men in 1892 after Sheldon had failed to interest them in philosophy; and the Greek Ethics Club, which succeeded from the start in "Ethics in Greek Literature" in 1891-92, through whole years of Roman literature, the Renaissance, Eighteenth Century, Modern Poets, George Eliot, and periods of Shakespeare. In a brochure for the fall of 1893 describing the Ethical Society and all these activities, Sheldon offered this typical challenge: "When people observe that at any of the clubs or schools any effort is

⁹⁰ Confirmed in interview with Mrs. Esther B. Weston King, Philadelphia, April 27, 1967.

made to influence the religious views of the persons there, they are especially asked to make complaint."⁹¹

Most present-day readers find it hard to imagine the educational and even inspirational efficacy attributed to Sheldon's long series of piously didactic books. "The Plan of an Ethical Sunday School," which Weston introduced serially in 1898,⁹² appeared as a book in J. H. Muirhead's "Ethical Library," following volumes by Bernard Bosanquet, Leslie Stephen, Henry Sidgwick, and Sophie Bryant. It proceeded from a long 'catechism,' to be read responsively, to an elaboration of all the virtues, capitalized, in readings and songs, stories and class discussions. "It is our desire," said Sheldon, "to associate the sentiments belonging to the Eternal, the Infinite, the Absolute, with the distinctions between Right and Wrong, with the thought of the Moral Law--but not to use these words so that they shall become hackneyed, before the child-mind has begun to have any conception at all as to what these words stand for."⁹³

Sheldon contrasted the aim and method of the Ethical Sunday School with that of the conventional Sunday school and day school: "to influence the character of the

⁹¹Ethical Society of St. Louis, privately printed brochure, p. 24.

⁹²Ethical Addresses, V (September, October), pp. 115-50, 151-52.

⁹³Walter L. Sheldon, An Ethical Sunday School, ("Ethical Library," ed. J. H. Muirhead; London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1900), pp. 10-11.

young rather than to give them more knowledge." He admitted his difficulties, after ten or twelve years of classes:

. . . We tried and we tried. The young people would come but they would not stay. The fathers and mothers could not see much value in it. The teachers to whom I gave the notes . . . would tell me that their notes were of no avail. . . . The literature on the subject with a few rare exceptions was arid in the extreme.

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. . . As one set of notes or lessons went into my wastebasket, we would try another. The most that can be said is that we have by this means gradually developed a system which at least has been found to work.⁹⁴

His thousands of pages of notes found their way into a graded series of "Ethics for the Young,"⁹⁵ arranged "so that it should in no way interfere with the special religious standpoint of the schools or families where the Lessons are introduced."⁹⁶ On receiving the first of the four volumes, Adler wrote that "I look forward with some trepidation to the reading. To write Bible stories in a way adequate for young children is a task so extremely, so exquisitely difficult that if I were to attempt it myself I know I should fear failure, and I fear it in the same way for my co-worker."⁹⁷ There is no evidence that his fears

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁹⁵Old Testament Bible Stories for the Young (Chicago: W. M. Welch & Co., 1902), pp. 326.

Lessons in the Study of Habits (Chicago: W. M. Welch & Co., 1903), pp. 270.

Duties in the Home and the Family (St. Louis: Ethical Society, 1904), pp. 411.

Citizenship and the Duties of a Citizen (Philadelphia: American Ethical Union, 1904), pp. 466.

Other books were projected--on "Justice," "Duties Pertaining to One's Self," and "Man in Society" (Study of Habits, p. 3)--but not completed for publication.

⁹⁶Study of Habits, p. 3.

⁹⁷Letter to Sheldon from New York, December 15, 1902.

were allayed by the reading, though letters of thanks and congratulations from many clergymen and teachers were received and filed, for the Bible stories and for the whole series. F. Louis Soldan of the St. Louis Hegelians omitted the Bible stories but listed the other three volumes of "Ethics for the Young," in writing a letter as superintendent of schools in St. Louis, commending Sheldon's texts for the "necessarily non-sectarian" ethical instruction in the public schools.⁹⁸

Among those who sent friendly acknowledgements of receipt of Citizenship and the Duties of a Citizen were Presidents Woodrow Wilson of Princeton (November 24, 1904), Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia (November 28, 1904), and Andrew D. White of Cornell (October 17, 1906). Wilson, however, seems never to have relieved Sheldon of the disappointment over his declining to speak on Sunday morning at the Ethical Society on "The Ethical Ideal of the State." In a persistently chiding letter to Wilson as a professor at Princeton (April 22, 1895), Sheldon referred to an emissary's report "that you feel by doing this you might compromise both yourself and the college." After deploring the popular separation of sacred and secular, and the reversal of Jesus' emphasis on ethics over dogma by the clergy, Sheldon wrote:

. . . The fact that men like Prof. J. Lawrence Laughlin and Prof. Paul Shorey of the Chicago University,

⁹⁸An open letter to W. M. Welch Co., Chicago, March 24, 1905.

and Prof. Frank Taussig and Prof. Josiah Royce of Harvard University, had been willing to come and speak for me this way on the ethical aspects of their respective subjects on Sunday morning, led me to assume that you would be quite willing to do the same. . . .⁹⁹

Sheldon often spoke of Jesus, and for him, and finally added his version of the Jesus story to his children's series.¹⁰⁰ In reviewing the book, Salter found polite but devastating fault with what Sheldon probably considered its greatest virtue: "There is nothing in it to offend the susceptibilities of the most conservative. . . . In our judgment it is better to tell the story of the life of Jesus, not 'from an Ethical standpoint' (in Mr. Sheldon's use of the phrase) but in harmony with the results of the best modern critical study of the gospels. . . . [H]e has made Jesus too much like an idealistic (and rather one-sided) ethical teacher of our own time."¹⁰¹

Sheldon had of course studied and taught the Bible from the standpoint of the higher criticism. His series of lectures for business and professional men was published in 1899 and reissued ten years later by Mrs. Sheldon with an approving introduction and minimal revision by Morris Jastrow, Jr.¹⁰² The first edition was accompanied by

⁹⁹ All letters among Sheldon papers, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁰ Story of the Life of Jesus for the Young (Philadelphia: S. Burns Weston, 1895).

¹⁰¹ William M. Salter in The Cause, I (September, 1895), p. 44.

¹⁰² Story of the Bible (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: S. Burns Weston, 1909), pp. 187.

A Sc[h]eme for Class Study and Readings in the Bible.¹⁰³

But as Salter and other more forthright critics noted, Sheldon's handling of biblical and theological themes was always deferential if not completely devotional.

The deference and devotion applied almost equally to all the traditional wisdom of the West, and to some from the East. For more than thirty years, from high school days in Vermont, he collected inspirational readings and memorized them. Many were printed as "Thoughts for the Day" and distributed one at a time for years in the Ethical Sunday School. Others appeared on "Ethical Leaflets," long lists of typical sayings from the same author or tradition--Emerson, Carlyle, Huxley, Spencer, Goethe, Schiller, Mohammed, Judaism, Confucius and Mencius, the Stoics--usually bearing the strange demurrer, "The views in these leaflets represent only the personal views of the lecturer." Two "Ethical Year Books" appeared,¹⁰⁴ and to the obvious criticism that no one could possibly believe all these things, much less act upon them, Sheldon responded simply, "We all have feelings which seem to go further than our thinking will carry us. . . . The language of religion in poetry expresses feeling and not philosophy. . . ." ¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Chicago: Unity Publishing Co., 1901.

¹⁰⁴ A Morning and Evening Wisdom Gem for Every Day of the Year (St. Louis: Ethical Society, 1905?).
A Sentiment in Verse for Every Day in the Year
 ("Ethical Year Book" No. 2; Philadelphia: S. Burns Weston, 1906).

¹⁰⁵ A Sentiment in Verse, p. iv.

Another favorite of Sheldon's was Dante's Divine Comedy, on which he gave a series of Sunday lectures in 1905. The young, enthusiastic audiences they drew encouraged him to prepare for publication, "Four lectures especially for those who have never read the poem but would like to know something about it." He added immediately that he wrote "as a teacher in ethics and not as a 'Dante scholar.'"¹⁰⁶ The distinction was politely noted in reviews.

Late in his career of eclectic and literary moralizing, Sheldon made two more substantial contributions to ethical philosophy. The first was the critical bibliography previously mentioned ("A Bird's-Eye View of the Literature of Ethical Science Since the Time of Charles Darwin"), which he presented orally to the Academy of Science of St. Louis in January, 1903.¹⁰⁷ The second contribution was his chairmanship of the Social Science Section of the Congress of Arts and Sciences at the World's Fair in 1904.

Addressing physical scientists primarily, in his "bird's-eye view," Sheldon put in a word for "the science of ethics":

Although ethics has a large subjective element in it, most of the leading workers in this direction would regard it strictly as a science. . . . These men are undertaking to investigate a body of facts, to analyze them, to correlate them, to interpret them, and reduce them if possible to a system.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ A Study of the Divine Comedy of Dante (Philadelphia: S. Burns Weston, 1905), pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Transactions, XIII (August, 1903), pp. 87-142.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

Each listener had received a chronological list of the books in Sheldon's own library dealing most directly with the science, or at least the 'philosophy,' of ethics--more than sixty of them, from Darwin's Descent of Man (1871) to George Trumbull Ladd's Philosophy of Conduct (1902), with such diverse authors in between as Calderwood, Janet, Sidgwick, Edith Simcox, Lotze, Spencer, Clifford, Stephen, Green, Martineau, Guyau, Wundt, Hoffding, Nietzsche, Paulsen, Brentano, Salter, Dewey, S. Alexander, Father Rickaby, Muirhead, Bowne, Huxley, Bosanquet, Fouille, Thilly, Palmer, and A. E. Taylor, all identified according to their last known professional positions. His own book was on the list, and he added references to Muirhead's "Ethical Library" series, the journals edited by Weston, Coit, Foerster, and Chubb, and "the publications of the Brooklyn Ethical Association."¹⁰⁹ He estimated all these at "probably three-quarters of the whole literature and practically all of its leading works."¹¹⁰

Sheldon acknowledged, too, the many "ethical theories . . . more or less worked out" by such writers as Royce, Bradley, and Lange, and pointed to the related areas of

¹⁰⁹Fifteen authoritative public lectures and discussions on evolution, under auspices of the Association, were printed as fortnightly issues of Modern Science Essayist, first series, and reprinted as Evolution (Boston: James H. West, 1889), pp. 400. A second series of fifteen on "Sociological Evolution" appeared fortnightly in 1890.

¹¹⁰Sheldon, "Bird's-Eye View," Transactions, p. 92.

psychology, biology (including "such a shocking piece of superficiality as the recent treatise on 'World Riddles' by Ernst Haeckel"), and even the physical sciences; political science, anthropology, sociology, economics; religion, theology, biblical criticism; and "the closest" to ethics in interest and greatest in influence, art and literature. Here the names of George Eliot, Ibsen, Carlyle, Browning, and Ruskin came first to his mind.¹¹¹

Sheldon analyzed the list to show the early lead taken by England in the production of major ethical works, and the shift to Germany about the time of Wundt's Ethik (1886), when the pace quickened and major works started coming from America as well. He noted the trend toward specialization and the first-rate work in ethics being done by men like Wundt and Lotze, with medical training, and by Stephen and Spencer, of scientific inclination. At the same time and for the same reason, he expressed his disappointment in recent histories of philosophy.¹¹²

But what were the chief effects of evolutionary theory on ethics? At first it appeared that Sheldon might be yielding more of his sense of the mystery of conscience:

. . . [A]n immense result has been accomplished by doing away with one mistaken theory which has been a stumbling block to ethical science or ethical philosophy for hundreds of years:--the theory which treated conscience as if it were a kind of an organ of the mind, just as the heart or the stomach may be an organ of the

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 93-94.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 94-96.

body. This belonged to the old psychology and held on most tenaciously from the religious side. . . .¹¹³ The general doctrine of evolution did the work.

After observing the excesses of the evolutionists in undercutting morality, and of the anthropologists in treating all moralities as local or transient phases, he said:

. . . [T]here has been the appallingly careless disposition to assume that in describing the processes of the development of conscience, the stages of its growth, one has also accounted for its origin. . . .

. . . What is more, it is perfectly clear to my mind that while, perhaps, the bridge may yet be covered between the organic and the inorganic, the bridge from the conscienceless to the conscience-possessing creature will never be constructed.¹¹⁴

Thus did Sheldon keep himself in the company of the Idealists, as he called them, who reserved an element of the original and mysterious for conscience. He granted that many of the arch evolutionists and utilitarians had some idealism about them--from John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer to his own Ethical friends abroad, Henry Sidgwick and Georg von Gizycki. But he saved for his clinching argument the view expressed by Thomas Henry Huxley in his Romanes Lecture, "Evolution and Ethics," that the ethical process and the cosmic process run counter to each other. "It was an assertion," said Sheldon, "not that conscience had not been evolved, but that it had not come through the 'struggle for existence.' . . . This meant calling a wholesome halt; the effect of that lecture has been tremendous, and may last for the whole of the twentieth century."¹¹⁵

¹¹³Ibid., p. 97.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 100.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 108-09.

Sheldon devoted most of the remaining pages of his lecture to a series of questions or topics to be dealt with, by any adequate ethical theory, and to the classification of several philosophers according to their answers.¹¹⁶ He supplied a further list of quotations for the published version.¹¹⁷ The crucial questions or topics were these:

1) the theory of "the ethical ideal or the highest good," as related to the 'schools' (especially to English Utilitarianism), 2) the conscience, "original or derived," as "sanction" or "seat of authority," 3) additions to "the story of evolution or development of the ethical ideal and of conscience," 4) attitude on freedom of the will (involving "the problem of moral responsibility"), and 5) "the relation between ethics and religion"--"the God-problem." Sheldon apologized for stopping short of "applied ethics," and indicated¹¹⁸ that any adequate theory or treatise must give a classification of virtues or duties and an illustration and justification of its application to problems of Individual and Society, Marriage and the Family, Property and the Industrial problem, and Church and State.

He closed with "a prophecy," and an emotional report of "personal convictions":

. . . I cannot help thinking that ere long a reaction is to set in. The doctrine of evolution has been pushed too far, or tried as a key to solve too many problems. . . .

.
For a time it has seemed to unsettle every point in ethical science. There has been too much biology

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp. 94-118.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 121-42.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 101-02.

mixed in with the discussions in this department of research. I look for a still greater reaction in favor of the school of Idealists. . . .

. . . In spite of the array of scholars against me and in spite of the tendency of the age,--with all due respect and reverence for the minds of the men of science before me, with the consciousness that one must be modest in saying it, and that it should be said softly and in a whisper--nevertheless, gentlemen, I still believe in the freedom of the will.¹¹⁹

Among the letters of appreciation for copies of "A Bird's-Eye View of the Literature of Ethical Science" were those of Professors George A. Coe of Northwestern, Franklin H. Giddings of Columbia, C. Nakamura, a visiting scholar at Yale, John Dewey of Chicago, who asked for more copies for possible use in classes, and James Seth of Edinburgh, who thanked Sheldon for his kindness and accuracy and sent him a revised edition of his book (A Study of Ethical Principles).¹²⁰

As chairman of Department XXII, Social Science, in Division F, Social Regulation, of the giant Congress of Arts and Sciences at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, Sheldon obviously had nothing to do with the wide separation of Social Science from Sociology (XVI, under D, Mental Science), Anthropology (XIV, under C, Physical Science), or Philosophy (I, under A, Normative Science). Many speakers complained of their classifications by congress planners, an Administrative Board under chairmanship of Nicholas Murray Butler, but every department was full

¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 120-21.

¹²⁰Letters in St. Louis files.

of famous names. Sheldon's list of speakers included Felix Adler, Graham Taylor of Chicago Theological Seminary, Max Weber (on "Rural Community"), Joseph Jastrow ("Urban Community"), Werner Sombart, Richard Ely, Charles Henderson, and Emil Munsterberg. He opened the week's sessions on September 20 with a brief talk on the "luminous" suggestion by Comte nearly seventy-five years earlier, of "a science of sociology," later brought into harmony with the theory of evolution by such writers as Albert Schaeffle and "the great" Herbert Spencer. Sheldon could not resist adding, "But still further. The conviction is growing, after three quarters of a century of research, that we are dealing here with spiritual problems far more than problems of biology. . . . At this point the man of science must also become the reformer."¹²¹

Sheldon spoke frequently about the World's Fair, both before and after. He had spoken about the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and its Parliament of Religions.¹²² Both fairs he saw as leaps forward for America and the world, toward universal culture and ethics. He invited several of the planners and guests, especially those from other nations, to speak before the St. Louis Society and its auxiliary groups. Among them were N. Kanazaki, Commissioner from Japan, in a symposium, "A Solemn Good-Bye

¹²¹Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904, Congress of Arts and Science, ed. Howard J. Rogers, Vol. VII (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1906), pp. 661-62.

¹²²Programs and notes for October 15 and 22, 1893.

to the Exposition," and Wong Kai Kah, Imperial Commissioner from China, speaking on "The Teachings of the Chinese Sages, Confucius and Mencius."¹²³

Sheldon's growing interest in the Far East, and the surprise gift of a vacation longer than usual and money to pay for it in the spring of 1906, the society's twentieth anniversary, led him to a tour of Japan. The trip was his undoing, much as he enjoyed it. It is adequately summarized in a single letter he sent to Weston, which began,

My seven weeks in Japan are over and I am sailing home, travel stained and weary, but with a great deal of valuable experience stored away, though with less eagerness now to give lectures on Japan than formerly.

The letter went on to tell of the welcome given him by Mr. Yokoi, a member of parliament and newspaper editor who had visited America a few years before and organized an Ethical Society of about forty scholarly men in Tokyo, and by Miss Anna C. Hartshorne, a cousin of Mrs. Sheldon's and a Tokyo resident. It told of doors opened to him at the highest levels of government, education, and religion, and of invitations to speak under auspices of the Ethical Society, the Imperial University, and other schools and social institutions. Weston added his own notes about the severe cold and incapacitating illness which followed the trip and kept Sheldon from lecturing for a while.¹²⁴

¹²³Programs for November 27 and December 4, 1904.

¹²⁴Ethical Society News Letter, Philadelphia, XXII (October-November, 1906), pp. 3-4.

Though Sheldon lived on for nearly a year, and arranged the society's public program from his sickroom, he made only one appearance on the platform--to sit through Adler's address on the closing Sunday morning, May 5, 1907, and to read for closing words a poem on patience and natural recurrence by William James Linton.¹²⁵ He died on June 5, of heart disease, after uttering these often quoted words: "Goodbye. All is well! My love to you all. Auf Wiedersehen."

Mrs. Sheldon published his detailed letters from Japan posthumously, from the first aboard the Empress of India on May 26, 1906, to the last on July 16-18 from Nikko, shortly before his sailing for home.¹²⁶ And Miss Cecelia Boette, an early assistant in the Sunday School, made a collection of his sayings, chiefly inspirational and hortatory rather than philosophic.¹²⁷

As a philosopher, Sheldon was clearly a popularizer and an eclectic, despite his ability to rise on occasion to competent scholarship and criticism. His sources were even more varied than the preceding illustrations, and many which he accepted with apparent enthusiasm were mutually exclusive. His sanctions were deeply felt rather than

¹²⁵ Reprints and notes on annual memorial programs.

¹²⁶ Walter L. Sheldon, Summer Greetings from Japan (Privately printed, St. Louis, 1908), pp. 128.

¹²⁷ Thoughts from the Writings and Addresses of Walter L. Sheldon, selected by Cecelia Boette (St. Louis: Ethical Society, 1919), pp. 140.

closely reasoned, and they drove him to a kind of romantic idealist deontology which he persisted in calling scientific after painstaking attempts at scientific axiology had failed to satisfy him.

The guilt or disappointment he felt over the loss of a boyhood Christian faith could be satisfied with nothing less than a heroic demonstration of goodness and love for man, and the repeated assertion that such goodness and love justified his existence. Sheldon was truly, as Weston put it at the dedication of Sheldon Memorial Meeting House, "this Abou Ben Adhem" of the Ethical movement.

graduate assistant in English since 1879 and a proponent of Emerson's "fraternity" or "pure religion," urged him "to hear John Miller, the Methodist. He is doing the very thing of which you are dreaming!"

Miller was six years older, and the established leader and worker in his "new profession." He and Miller were so different in nature and disposition, and so much alike in strength of will and characteristic leadership, that he waited for the younger man to prove himself in other settings before accepting him at last in the Fraternity of Ethical Teachers along with Sheldon in the spring of 1886. In Sheldon went on immediately to St. Louis, Mo.; stayed as a "lecturer" in New York. So he was the last of the five "founders" of that society of his own, in London's

¹ Autobiographical sketch, *English Autobiography* volume, pp. 191-94. "Ethical" was the popular term for Emerson and his followers, more properly known as Transcendentalists.

CHAPTER V

STANTON COIT AND NATIONAL IDEALISM

IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

Stanton Coit was one of the first to press his services as an Ethical lecturer upon Felix Adler, in 1881, on an unannounced visit to the New York Society and Adler's home. A friend at Amherst College, where Coit had been a graduate assistant in English since 1879 and a proponent of Emerson's "fraternity" of "Pure Ethics," urged him "to hear Felix Adler, the Radical! He is doing the very thing of which you are dreaming!"¹

Adler was six years older, and the established leader and trainer in his "new profession." He and Coit were so different in manner and metaphysics, and so much alike in strength of will and charismatic leadership, that he waited for the younger man to prove himself in other settings before accepting him at last in the Fraternity of Ethical Teachers along with Sheldon in the spring of 1886. As Sheldon went on immediately to St. Louis, Coit stayed as a "lecturer" in New York. So he was the last of the five "founders" to find a society of his own, in London's

¹Autobiographical sketch, Fiftieth Anniversary volume, pp. 193-94. 'Radical' was the popular term for Emerson and his followers, more properly known as Transcendentalists.

South Place Religious Society, which began as the 'Philadelphians' in 1793, went through 'Universalist,' 'Dissenter,' 'Unitarian,' and 'Free Religious' phases, and then reluctantly agreed to change its name once more--to 'Ethical Society'--as it called Coit to its leadership in 1888.²

Coit had already been a founder of sorts. In January, 1886, at the start of his few months of residence at Toynbee Hall, the world's first settlement house, he called a meeting of young university philosophers who had expressed an interest in organizing an Ethical Society. By the following November, they had gathered members through a statement of purpose drawn up by Dr. James Bonar and the newly graduated J. H. Muirhead; elected officers for 1886-87, including the self-taught civil servant, Percival Chubb; and announced an evening lecture series for Toynbee Hall, at first monthly and then fortnightly. Among the speakers were Muirhead, twice, on "Evolution" and "Freedom," J. S. Mackenzie on "Society as Organic," Sophie Bryant, D. Sc., on "The Unity of Social and Individual Aims," S. Alexander on "Conscience," Bernard Bosanquet on "The Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth," J. E. Carpenter on "Religion Without God," and the Rev. S. A. Barnett on "Woman." By 1887-88, Edward Caird was president, and the society boasted such other pioneers in British ethics as Henry Sidgwick and Leslie Stephen.³

²Gustav Spiller, The Ethical Movement in Great Britain (London: Farleigh Press, 1934), pp. 24-28.

³Ibid., pp. 1-11.

Coit did not enjoy the status of founder at South Place, which had had several liberal American leaders before him, including his predecessor, sponsor, and immediate successor--Moncure Conway, the noted abolitionist and biographer of Thomas Paine. Coit resigned in December, 1891, taking his personal followers with him for a brief merger with the philosophers of the London Ethical Society. But the two groups did not mix well, and soon came to a friendly agreement to go their separate ways. The London Ethical Society continued its evening lectures at Toynbee Hall in East London, and then in Essex Hall on the Strand, until their dissolution in 1897. Coit kept his Sunday meetings going at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, where the West London Ethical Society was organized in June, 1892. He was a true founder at last, with a society of his own in a variety of settings for the rest of his long life.⁴

It was in the library of the West London Society's "Ethical Church," on Queens Road, Bayswater, that Coit left fragments of an unpublished autobiography, which gives deep insight into his childhood and youth, and an authorized view of his philosophic sources and sanctions. Writing in 1937, he claimed: "I am at eighty to a monotonous degree exactly the same person I was at eight."⁵ Others will see

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-40, 61-92. See also pp. 55-56 in S. K. Ratcliffe's Story of South Place (London: Watts & Co., 1955).

⁵"My Ventures on the Highway of Truth," p. 7 of 78 handwritten and typed legal sheets, now in the library of the West London Ethical Society, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace.

a marked progression, not always direct or orderly, from the respectful son of a spiritualist mother and strong but cooperative father in Columbus, Ohio, to the still quixotic octogenarian--the leader for half a century of a naively American attempt to capture for ethical humanism the rites and political prerogatives of the Church of England.

Also in the extensive library which Coit left at the West London Ethical Society are books which he marked and underlined, and dated at each reading, often with a distinctive pen or pencil. Two of the books marked with enthusiastic approval were by his friend and contemporary, John Dewey: Experience and Nature,⁶ which Coit had "finished" late in 1927 and again in 1928, and "begun" again in both 1937 and 1939; and A Common Faith,⁷ the Terry Lectures on religion, which he read and marked six times, from 1935 to 1939. For the flyleaf of his projected autobiography, he chose this passage from Experience and Nature:

. . . Even the dumb pang of an ache achieves a significant existence when it can be designated and descanted up; it ceases to be oppressive and becomes important; it gains importance, because it becomes representative; it has the dignity of an office.⁸

With this brief and poetic insight into the nature of the "truth" to come, Coit launched into the short Chapters I and II, on "The Title of This Book" (why "Ventures," and why "Truth" is a "Highway") and "My One Parlor Trick"

⁶Chicago: Open Court, 1925. Pp. xi, 443.

⁷New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934. Pp. 87.

⁸P. 167.

(psychometry, particularly in character reading), before settling down to a more or less chronological account of philosophic influences in his childhood and youth in Chapter III, "My Early Acquaintance with Modern Spiritualism."⁹

Stanton Coit was born August 11, 1857, to Harvey and Elizabeth Greer Coit, who had an older son and two daughters, one of whom died when Stanton was fifteen. His mother--a "freethinker," "rationalist," and "rebel"--had left the Episcopal Church years earlier, to the dismay of her sister Isabella. Elizabeth contracted dropsy, and was given up by her doctors in 1854. In desperation, she tried spiritualism, and was cured in three days. Thus confirmed in her new "heresy," she forbade Stanton's baptism in 1857, but Aunt Isabella had it done in Gambier, Ohio.

Stanton was a sensitive and exuberant child, given to great joys and sufferings, and to such embarrassing and dangerous aberrations as sleepwalking, which he outgrew at eleven, when "some wise and kindly person" advised him not to eat after 6 P. M. Though he grew up in the midst of alleged psychic incidents--of bedclothes snatched, lights doused, tables tipped, and objects mysteriously lost and found--he respected his mother for refusing to debase her spiritualism in such ways. His father remained skeptical, but always patient and loving, and the aged Stanton Coit, looking backward, insisted that he loved both parents, and gave them equal credit for his happy and healthy growth.

⁹"My Ventures," pp. 26-48.

By the age of fifteen he had discovered Emerson, and considered himself a practitioner of his "ethical mysticism"--more spiritual than spiritualistic. But it was not until his second year at college, at nineteen, that he lost his "belief in spirit communication," thus achieving "the one revolution which my mind has undergone in eighty years." Even so, he continued to practice palmistry and finger-tip readings of character, as a sort of "parlour trick" and a lifelong aid to casual conversation, friendship, and creative counseling. His old friends the mediums were greatly disappointed. They had predicted a magnificently successful career for him, in their profession. His mother, however, showed no distress at his leaving spiritualism, though she kept the faith until her death at eighty-two.

Coit illustrated these themes further in his chapter on "The Sufferings of an Imaginative Child,"¹⁰ carrying them into his first two years at Amherst. He had early doubts about the love of his older sister and brother for him, because of their embarrassment and teasing over his sleepwalking. He suffered doubts about his parents' love, or even their actual parenthood, after a rough schoolmate told him the Coits got him at "the Workhouse." He watched for discriminatory hints. His parents seemed to report the 'cute' and witty things the others said, but never his. His mother's laughing and affectionate response, when he

¹⁰"My Ventures," pp. 49-60.

confronted her, was hardly reassuring: "My dear boy, you never said or did anything that was witty or amusing." Similar doubts recurred when he took his entrance examinations for Amherst at seventeen, and did well on all subjects but Latin prosody. His mother again assured him that their love was not conditioned by such externals.

Another incident at Amherst, in the spring of his second year, was of more specifically philosophical consequence. Coit was feverishly ill, in his room, with a quinsy throat. A classmate, meaning to divert him, brought a copy of Alice in Wonderland. "But, alas," Coit wrote years later, "the madly fantastic thought and experience which Alice undergoes only heightened the semi-delirium caused by my fever. How did I know that I was really I and not a thought in someone else's mind?"

After a brief description of the hallucinatory effects of this "clever portrayal of a mind disintegrating into the chaos of lunacy," he went on to settle a number of old philosophic and political scores:

. . . [A]lready the nineteenth century was beginning to be permeated with, and relaxed in fibre by, the subjectivism, the individualism, and even the solipsism which began to afflict the philosophers of the West either with the scepticism of David Hume or with the teaching of Emmanuel Kant that time, space, the laws of cause and effect and all the orderliness of the outward universe were but emanations from our consciousness itself?

. . . . If not the cause, "Alice" is a symptom of that upper class degeneracy which in its later stages made America incapable of enduring economic depression with manly serenity, and still prevents England from coping effectively with Nazism, Fascism and communistic dictatorship. . . . Fortunately, in the

last year or two the philosophers of the world--or rather of those few remaining countries where philosophical thinking is still permitted--are turning wholesale away from nineteenth century subjectivism to realism in psychology, ethics and metaphysics and are teaching not only that the objects of sense-perception but of ethical and aesthetic valuation have an existence independent of anyone's perceiving or appreciating them. . . . Fortunately also, sophisticated theories as to how knowledge is possible are today being thrown overboard. We are returning to the pre-Kantian theory that consciousness stands face to face with a universe not of its construction.¹¹

Coit contrasted the "morbid self-doubt of the nineteenth century," as exemplified by Lewis Carroll in the "Alice" books, with the "wholesome objectivity of the eighteenth century," as in Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe." He attributed his own childhood "doubts and scepticisms" not to "lack of common-sense," but to "precocious speculative imagination," "lack of experience," and "perhaps to an added touch of something not common."

The last, long chapter of his unfinished autobiography brought "A Document in Evidence" to his introductory claim that he--like most people--changed little in basic thought patterns and character, between youth and old age. Citing "the authority of a number of profound thinkers," he named two: William James, on the difficulty of assimilating ideas contrary to our basic thought patterns after the age of twenty-eight, and Schopenhauer, on the need "to die to self" in order to be born into "spiritual life." For his own "Document in Evidence," he retrieved from the registrar

¹¹Ibid., pp. 56-57.

of Amherst College the class poem he had written, by request and by default he readily admitted, for the graduation ceremony of 1879. The chapter consists of the eight sections of the poem, "Spirit Is Supreme"--about twenty to fifty lines each, in blank verse, iambic pentameter--interspersed with commentary and sometimes unrelated reminiscences.¹²

Coit was not considered "religious" at Amherst, because he abstained from the college prayers and communion, and limited his use of the word 'God' to a strictly impersonal and ideal sense, even in his poem. But he passed the required course in Paley's "Evidences" with distinction, and was allowed to start tutoring in English in his senior year, and to continue for two more years as the first non-communicant ever to be so trusted. He quoted President Julius Seelye as saying, "Coit, we believe you have seen the real Christ, and that is all we care for."

He was also the only student invited to a professor's house when Emerson visited there, for a whole afternoon, because it was known that he spent an hour daily in meditation, with blinds drawn, and rumored that he knew Emerson's writings by heart. "That was the red letter day of my life," Coit could still say at eighty. Emerson, too, remembered their meeting at least two years later, when he asked about Coit on the unnamed professor's visit to Concord.

¹²Ibid., pp. 61-78.

Before quoting and explicating his poem, Coit repeated the story of his pilgrimage to Adler in 1881, to ask "for the privilege of becoming his volunteer assistant." He noted his own use of "the term God continually, whereas Felix Adler practically never found any occasion to employ it." This went on "throughout the sixty years of my association with the Ethical Movement . . . , but never without [my] explaining clearly that I meant by it the moral ideal and not a personal creator of the universe."

Part One of the class poem asserted at some length

. . . how God has intertwined
Our lives and made a wreath of them to lay
Upon the tomb of college days

In the commentary, Coit resumed his apologia for use of the word 'God,' which had been a matter of contention between him and Adler for half a century, until the latter's death in 1933. "I have always taken the liberty--if liberty it be--" he said, "of applying this word (meaning 'Whatever is worthy of supreme reverence') to the inherent principles of truth, beauty and righteousness." Adler had made the Kantian point of the antinomies in the classical "proofs" of the existence of God, and of the irrelevance to ethics of such existence, at least from the standpoint of "pure reason." Kant's "practical reason" brought God back as a felt need, as did Adler's in his pluralistic godhead or "republic of souls." Coit's pragmatic retention of the word 'God' for the ethical ideal itself was comparably contrasted with his disavowal of traditional theism as a source or sanction

for ethics. "[E]ven if such a Being exists," he said again, "although he might have created finite minds and a material universe, he could never by fiat of his will have made them good, beautiful or true."

In Part Two, Coit disassociated his realistic ethics from Nature, as well as from theism:

I love not Nature, for herself. I know
'Tis heresy, since Wordsworth came and saw
Divinity in every leaf and stone,
In cloud and lake
.
. . . But men
Reflections only of themselves can see.
.
. . . Nature pictures paths to hell
No less than altar-stairs. . . .
.
In Nature, Cain kills Abel. . . .
.
. . . To love
Full well the starry sky above, you first
Must love the moral law within. . . .

"If I mistake not," Coit wrote at eighty, "I had at the age of twenty-one grasped, as firmly as I have ever held since, the fact, which all psychologists and metaphysicians accept as elemental truth, that it is illegitimate logically ever to jump from what is to what ought-to-be. . . . We never derive standards of perfection from events or things as they actually are. . . . Nature as a whole is at best a footstool, never the crown, of Being." Despite his enthusiastic endorsement of Dewey in their later years, Coit stayed with the conventional wisdom of modern philosophy--from Hume and Kant to G. E. Moore and Logical Positivism--that fact and value, science and ethics, must be kept strictly separate.

"But," he continued, "I have never been a worshiper of Man any more than of Nature." Part Three began:

My fellow-men I cherish not for their
Own sake. Myself I hate together with
The rest. . . .

The youthful Coit enlarged upon the point with lines such as these:

I've known men live together--well, we'll say,
Four years, so long I'm sure--with thoughts
the same
And self-same work and prayers alike perhaps--
And yet 'twould need a thunder-bolt from God
To batter down the barriers of sense
Dividing them and marking out the me
From thee. When life looks best, can one be
sure
That all is right?

In these lines, and many more, written in 1879, Coit overtly "repudiated the notion of inevitable human progress although at that time belief in progressive evolution was wellnigh universal."

Here he digressed at length, to illustrate his own sensitivity to "the injustice of economic class against class and of nation against nation," even before and certainly after the more obvious horrors of "the European War." Before he took his degree (the Ph. D.) in 1885 at the University of Berlin, he had become "professedly a socialist, in resentment against the teachings of von Treitschke and Adolf Wagner"

His earliest childhood memories were of the American Civil War, and of his parents helping slaves escape from Kentucky, through Ohio, into Canada. "Vivid" was his "remembrance of the evening of April 14th 1865," when he

burned his hand while throwing a hot stone from the edge of a community bonfire toward a huge effigy of Jefferson Davis. The next morning he bore the news of Lincoln's death to his mother, whose grief both surprised and moved him. Two weeks later, his father lifted him to see Lincoln in his open coffin, as thousands of mourners stood in line under the dome of the Capitol in Columbus.

As other early influences on his attitudes toward war and peace, Coit quoted Tacitus ('They make a desolation and call it peace. '), Elizabeth Barrett Browning ('I love no Peace which is not fellowship'), and Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic." These he contrasted with "the pacifist crusade now carried on in England." (It was 1937, the year before Chamberlain's signing of the Munich pact, for "peace in our time.")

Part Four of Coit's class poem of 1879 continued his defense of what he called in the commentary "my belief in the ideal despite its failure to dominate nature and man." After many lines of ambiguously traditional terms, the section ended with these:

. . . [W]e shall miss more keenly than
 All else, . . .
 . . . a certain something pure
 And wholesome which pervades our college air.
 Although I know not what it is, I like
 To call it by the name of--God; and who
 Shall say me nay?

There were many who said him nay in the sixty years which followed, including even his handpicked successors in the leadership of the West London Ethical Society, who saw

the language and rites of his "Ethical Church" experiment as psychologically ill advised, and the metaphysics of his insistent "ethical realism" as mistaken. But Coit covered none of this in his incomplete autobiography, unless we read those details into his generalizations: "We transcend not only the past and present but the future of man. There is a life which is above hope as well as above fear; and it intensifies instead of relaxing the impulse to make the world better."

Part Five of the poem was devoted to the built-in inadequacy of an hour of value-free science, made complete by the spirituality of Professor Root, who had studied physics under Helmholtz and philosophy under Lotze. These were crucial lines:

. . . This universe, we found, was one
Vast mechanism. Its matter, motion, force
Acknowledge "law" as god, while "law" in turn
Had none. I say this "Modern Physics" is
A science without soul; and hearts will starve
That beg before her palace door. . . .

And yet that course of study, like a day
Of gloom . . .

. . . had its consummation
In an hour immortal in my soul.
For he, who spoke then, bade us leave awhile
The point of view which science takes,
 and stand
That hour with God. (Since finite minds
 may see
Each view in turn, though not both views
 at once;
And men of science, being more than science,
May declare that Spirit is supreme!)

The aged Coit apologized for the inadequacy of his tributes to friends and teachers, and announced his intent

to deal "in later pages of this book" with "guides of my maturer years, beginning with Dr. Felix Adler, . . . and closing with Nicolai Hartmann, whom I first met in 1930 and whose great book on Ethics I translated into English and published in three volumes."¹³ In passages much more personal and revealing than the Translator's Preface to the Hartmann volumes, which will be considered later in the context of philosophic reception and criticism, Coit gave his reasons for undertaking such a major and self-effacing service in his mid-seventies:

. . . Almost all thinkers have cast discredit upon emotion, as if it were incapable of giving us any trustworthy clue to the meaning of existence. . . .

Our initial acquaintance with the influences which Plato called Ideas is made through the vibrations of joy which they awaken in the heart. . . .

Pascal is not the only thinker who has held that there is an order of being which the heart primarily discloses to us. Of all the champions and defenders of emotion as a gateway opening upon spiritual reality, the greatest is in my judgment Nicolai Hartmann. It was his recognition of the knowledge-giving function of emotion, as distinct from Emmanuel Kant's cold and barren intellectualism, which more than anything else made it seem to me well worth while to spend a full year and a half in translating his Ethik into English. . . .¹⁴

Part Six of the Amherst class poem praised the late President Stearns, who had received and influenced Coit's freshman class.¹⁵ Parts Seven and Eight combined, to close the regrets at parting with a deeper and more lasting regret;

What, think you we are soon to part? Why make
You then no haste to meet? . . .

.

¹³Ethics. 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932).

¹⁴"My Ventures," pp. 74-75.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 76.

We have not met! We shall not separate,
 I say, excepting as the flock of sheep
 That stroll apart upon the hills

 Full often when
 As classmates you have gathered for your hour
 Of prayer, I've heard you ask of God what I
 Had not the faith to hope--that we may meet
 Again in Heaven, an unbroken band.
 Then thought I that such prayers were vain;
 I ask that even now the miracle
 Of love be wrought

 Why do we wait
 Until we pass thro' death, before we let
 Our spirit live its life? With it is not
 Eternity both here and now? . . .16

With these questions, and brief commentary rephrased at eighty, Coit rounded out his autobiography, or at least those fragments of it which survived him. "Not only was I continually putting them to myself," he wrote, "but I always replied that eternity is here and now. . . . Insofar as any one cares more for moral than for worldly values he ceases to be subject to accidents of time. He has entered the realm where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."¹⁷

After that graduation poem, Coit said, he limited his public utterances to prose and turned directly toward development of his ethical philosophy. Adler challenged him to prove himself worthy of Ethical leadership, and to prepare himself with travels and studies in Europe. By September of 1882, Coit had followed Weston and Sheldon to Berlin, where he wrote Weston his thanks for a pleasant introduction to the city and university, and promised not to

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 78.

bother him further unless he had "something of importance to say about our future work."¹⁸

A few months later, Salter wrote Weston from the New York Society:

Coit is here & reports seeing you. How did he impress you? He seems almost over modest in regard to himself, & to have a positive aversion to metaphysics. . . . He will teach in the Ethical School this year, & as he goes to Germany next, I do not see why the way shd. not be open for you to come here.

He went on to recommend the Burgess program in political science at Columbia, which Coit was taking as all of Adler's early assistants had, before or after their German university training.¹⁹

So Coit was back in Berlin in the fall of 1883, to work for his doctorate. The antipathy he expressed in his autobiography for the nationalistic teachings of Treitschke and Adolph Wagner contrasted sharply with keen appreciation for "my revered teacher and friend," Georg von Gizycki, who had nevertheless registered "his infinite disgust" at "my dabbling in psychometry."²⁰ According to an obituary article by Gizycki's first American Ethical student and collaborator, Salter (Weston was the second), Coit "followed sympathetically his expositions of Utilitarian Ethics and yet manifested a practical spirit that reacted powerfully

¹⁸Letter from Hannover, September 28, 1882; Weston papers.

¹⁹Letter of November 4, 1882.

²⁰"My Ventures," p. 10.

on his teacher. Professor von Gizycki, indeed, acknowledged intellectual obligations to Dr. Coit in his Moralphilosophie." Gizycki, an aristocratic socialist who died at forty-four, translated and edited Die Philosophie Shaftesbury's and Die Ethik David Hume's, and did his own doctoral dissertation in 1876 on "Die Philosophischen Konsequenzen der Lamarck-Darwin-schen Entwicklungslehre." He translated Coit's early addresses on the Ethical movement, Die Ethische Bewegung in der Religion, as he had Salter's, and later, Adler's Moral Instruction of Children as Der Moralunterricht der Kinder.²¹

Coit reciprocated by translating an introductory textbook of Gizycki's into English,²² and circulating it among his American colleagues.

Coit's own dissertation, "Die innere Sanktion als der Endzweck des moralischen Handelns," was defended on December 12, 1885,²³ and published in translation as "The Final Aim in Moral Action" in Mind for July, 1886.²⁴ The order of writing and translation may well have been reversed. But the brief "Vita" in Latin and "Thesen" in German appear only at the close of the version defended at the University of Berlin.

²¹"Georg von Gizycki," The Cause, I (April, 1895), and I (May, 1895), pp. 22-23.

²²A Student's Manual of Philosophy (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1889), pp. 304.

²³Berlin: Gustav Schade (Otto Francke), 1885. Pp. 45.

²⁴Vol. XL, No. 43, pp. 324-52.

In the "Vita," Coit lists his teachers as Curtius, Dilthey, Gizycki, Paulsen, Wagner, Zeller and Zupitza, and repeats the names of Gizycki and Zeller for special thanks.

The "Thesen," here translated, are as follows:

I. The anthropological theory of evolution is of no consequence (indifferent) to morality.

II. Moral decisions are intuitive.

III. Kant's assertion that morality must have a transcendental basis is unwarranted.

IV. Punishment can be shown to be (lässt sich) ethical only through the theory of deterrence.

Otherwise, Coit's English version followed (or preceded) his German version literally, almost word for word. In his quest for "the inner sanction as the final aim of moral conduct," he professed to make "but one presupposition, namely, that right and wrong are not merely fictitious qualities of conduct." For this "simple assumption" of "moral experience," he adduced the support of Sidgwick and Hume.²⁵

In an adroit but curious combination of classic intuitionism and utilitarianism, Coit proceeded to outline his method:

. . . [T]o find out the universal, distinguishing characteristic of right action, and, using this characteristic as the standard of value, to determine the relative worth of the various objects that may be proposed as the final aim of conduct.

Whoever will group together all the actions and dispositions of the will which in various ages and societies have received moral approbation, will find a vast majority of them to have as their essential characteristic the tendency to promote the permanent happiness of society. . . . Indeed, if any induction

²⁵Ibid., p. 325.

can lay claim to scientific certainty, this can-- that under any given circumstances that action is right which tends to increase most the general sum of happiness. . . . We have not searched for what men have thought to be the essential characteristic of right action, but for the essential characteristic of actions which men thought to be right.²⁶

Here again, Coit cited Sidgwick, and added Aristotle to the list of those who use the "inductive generalization" of 'Universal Hedonism' without ruling out the possibility of its ultimate sanction as an intuition or an a priori form.²⁷ This standard for recognizing or defining moral actions, he readily admitted not to be the "final aim" or "sanction" of moral actions. For "universal happiness" is an abstract, long-range, and unattainable state, particularly when sought egotistically or ignorantly, but even when sought with apparent universality and enlightenment by people whose judgments remain in conflict. "[N]ot universal happiness," Coit said, "but the tendency to bring it about is the truly ethical conception."²⁸

Frustrated by the apparent inadequacy of externally verifiable consequences, and by conflicting judgments as to right and wrong, he turned inward for his sanction:

. . . Whoever examines all the states of consciousness which the conviction that one is doing right or doing wrong awakens will find that those which the thought of doing wrong awakens form a group by themselves,--they are all unhappy states of mind; while the contrary is true of those which the thought of doing right awakens. . . . Inward peace attends that way of living which makes for universal happiness. But at least to the inner sanction which

²⁶Ibid., p. 326.

²⁷P. 327.

²⁸P. 330.

attends a life in devotion to moral conviction men have always testified. Every philosopher from Socrates to Plotinus and from Spinoza to Schopenhauer has affirmed its actuality and universality, however differently they may have explained it. . . . It is therefore unconditionally attainable, since any sane man may know whether he thinks he is doing right or not. . . . If any one should affirm the contrary, he would unwittingly remove the very foundation of morals. . . . In some men, according to this view, there may be no approval of conscience, no pleasure attending the belief that they are doing right, and no self-condemnation at the thought that they are doing wrong. But if there are such men, they simply drop out of our consideration entirely; they lack the proper moral faculties, and to propose to them any other final moral aim of conduct would betray as much lack of judgment as to propose the inner moral sanction.²⁹

So the young Coit retreated from the utilitarianism of external results or success, but held onto the inner result of clear conscience, satisfaction, or peace of mind. He rejected the Kantian (and Adlerian) concept of "absolute worth" and the accompanying transcendental significance of "right action," with their scorn for both external results and inner satisfactions. "[I]f such theories must enter into ethics," he said, "ethics ceases to be a science, a door is opened to skepticism."³⁰

Coit's "inner sanction as the final aim of the moral life" came closer than he seemed willing to admit, to the Kantian sanction of the ultimate good will. And his naive attribution of the inner sanction to "any sane man," or to one with "proper moral faculties," seemed to beg the question of ethics as "a science." When his outer empiricism

²⁹Ibid., pp. 335-37.

³⁰P. 339.

faltered or failed him, he turned to the radical empiricism of the inner "moral sense."

To the obvious charge that such reliance on peace of mind and self-satisfaction could "indicate an abnormal and monstrous state of mind," Coit of course declared that any act seen as "doing right" must include the motive of benevolence and the social ideal of "universal happiness."³¹ His thought and writing up to this point showed no trace of the "national idealism" which was to dominate the rest of his life, as he became acquainted with British institutions, tried them out briefly in America, and then settled in England to make them central in his long career.

Walter Sheldon, tired of trying to be a medical student in Berlin, wrote Weston a bit about Coit in his long letter of December 20, 1885:

. . . Coit is gone. . . . He was so busy with his examinations and left so soon after taking his degree that we met but seldom. Of course to my regret. He takes "cum laude," the next highest degree which is given here. His essay will be published in July in the London "Mind." He spends one month in Paris and two months in London. . . . He has a very ardent nature but a pretty sound head.³²

Then Sheldon, having shifted back to ethics the next semester and started his reconciliation with Adler ("the leader") about the right of each disciple to an "ethical basis" of

³¹Ibid., pp. 346 ff.

³²Letter lent by Horace Friess. The reference to "the London 'Mind'" was no doubt meant to contrast it with the more popular and psychological journal by the same name in America.

his own, wrote Weston again, characterizing the sanctions of the five colleagues:

. . . [F]or instance, the leader should proceed on his idea of a "law of unity,"--Salter with his "absolute law of right,"--Coit with his "universal happiness and peace theory,"--you with your conviction of the "good,"--I with my thought of a "striving after totality."³³

Coit's projected "two months in London" were those spent early in 1886 at Toynbee Hall, the first "settlement" of university people among the urban poor. Toynbee Hall had been started in 1884, to fulfill the social ideals of Arnold Toynbee, the precocious Oxford economist and sociologist who had just died at thirty.

When Coit and Sheldon returned to America for the tenth anniversary of the New York Society on May 16, 1886, and for presentation on the platform for the first time as fellow members of the Fraternity of Ethical Teachers along with Adler, Salter, and Weston, Coit was slated to be a "lecturer" with Adler in New York, and Sheldon the first resident "lecturer" in St. Louis. (The title of Leader had been used at that time only in deferential references to Adler.) Moncure Conway, the American minister of London's century-old South Place Religious Society, was an honored guest.³⁴

Coit lost little time in putting his British experience into practice in America. He took lodgings on the second floor of a five-story tenement at 146 Forsyth Street

³³Letter from Berlin, February 28, 1886.

³⁴Tenth Anniversary Exercises, p. 4.

in New York's Lower East Side. By midsummer he had organized six neighborhood boys as the Lily Pleasure Club, which met in the basement of the building for its business and cultural activities and went as far afield as Staten Island for its outings. This club evolved quickly into Neighborhood Guild, occupying a whole building, and then into University Settlement, the first settlement house in America and the second in the world.³⁵

As he crisscrossed the Atlantic in the next few years, Coit started such clubs and neighborhood guilds in the London area, and encouraged his American colleagues to start them in their cities. He tried always to develop organic communities for people of all ages and classes, as families, neighborhoods, and whole industrial cities, according to the ideal plan of Toynbee Hall. He published his version of the plan in 1891 in a bumptiously moral little book called Neighbourhood Guilds: An Instrument of Social Reform,³⁶ accepting the challenge of General Booth and the Salvation Army to any who might try to create a better scheme than theirs for raising the downtrodden. Coit's scheme, like the acknowledged prior suggestions of Arnold Toynbee and Bernard Bosanquet, called for the total social organization of the poor, on a secular or nonsectarian

³⁵Fern Marya Eckman, "80 Years of Serving the Lower East Side: The Story of University Settlement," New York Post Magazine, January 16, 1966, p. 4.

³⁶London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Pp. x, 150.

basis, and with minimal aid from the educated and privileged class who sought to integrate them into the larger city or culture. Despite his announced "realism" for ethical ideals, Coit called only for democratic, pluralistic sanctions in this activist side of his life, and remained much less class-conscious than the British. His practical sense of community still stopped short of the "national idealism" which was to characterize his later, more deliberately philosophic writings.

Coit had written Weston on arrival at the New York Society in April, 1886, thanking him for honorary membership in the Philadelphia Society, and adding, "The Professor and I get along very pleasantly thus far together & I like him much better than I expected to. . . . I should rather have worked with Salter. . . ." ³⁷

Moncure Conway had retired to his native America to write and lecture. In the spring of 1887, he recommended Coit to the committee in search of his successor at South Place Religious Society, which invited him to speak there, four Sundays in September. His lectures on "The Death of Socrates," "The Ethics of Shakespeare," and "Ethical Culture as a Religion for the People" (twice) were so well received that the Society called him to be their minister. Coit accepted, on one condition: that their name be changed from "Religious" to "Ethical." There were many who resisted the

³⁷Letter of April 24, 1886; Weston papers.

change, while he returned to his work in America to await their decision. Conway wrote a long and persuasive letter to South Place in November, insisting that the change would be in name only, as they had already accepted his own transition from theism to autonomous ethics, as well as his praise for the Ethical movement in America. The members of South Place heeded his advice, on both Coit and the name, and voted strongly in favor on December 21, 1887.³⁸

Though he gave no public hints of misgivings, Coit wrote Salter on January 27, 1888, that "I am dreadfully cast down at the thought of London. . . . It depresses me awfully to have morbid minds about me."³⁹ And further, on March 26, "Can you come here for the second Sunday in May when Prof. Adler is to give me a 'send-off' in public on the stage?"⁴⁰

The "send-off" was auspicious. On May 13, the last Sunday of the season and the twelfth anniversary of the New York Society, Coit gave his "Farewell Address." He paid tribute to Adler as his teacher and counselor, reviewed the long history of South Place, in particular its last sixty years under Conway and W. J. Fox, and looked forward to his continuing association with British secularists (including workingmen), Positivists, and broad-churchmen, whom he saw

³⁸Spiller, op. cit., pp. 24-29.

³⁹Letter from 146 Forsyth Street, used by Salter for lecture notes on "Matthew Arnold's Defense of Christianity," New York Archives.

⁴⁰Loc. cit.

as lacking only in "intellectual honesty" in pretending to believe what they did not believe.⁴¹

He addressed himself immediately to the problem and the challenge of the Church of England, with the brashness of an American accustomed to the free competition and proselytizing of the religious sects:

. . . The problem there is difficult and complicated; it is partly political, partly moral, and in great part sentimental. . . . The Church now does not include half the nation, it does not embrace the religious life of the people, and yet assumes such pretensions. Our Ethical Society, I verily believe, offers a solution of the difficulty. . . . I find on every side many who still hold to the old doctrines and forms, but never think of rating them as essential. . . . Already they are co-operating in practical philanthropy; let them now join hands on the fundamental principles of ethics, and, behold! . . . they have become one vast Society for Ethical Culture, a body well worthy, if any might be, of the state protection and support.⁴²

Coit started to work at South Place on September 1, 1888, and soon allayed any doubts about his philosophy or competence. Membership and activity increased for all ages, as he did most of the speaking and organizing and conducted classes--as Conway had--with such texts as Spencer's Data of Ethics and Gizycki's Ethical Philosophy. But his bid for further changes and control at the start of the fourth year, 1891-92, fell short of the two-thirds vote required for his membership ex officio on all committees of the society. Coit resigned immediately after the special meeting on December 15, and left South Place on January 1,

⁴¹Ethical Record, I, 2 (July, 1888), pp. 53-59.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 56-57.

1892. The society called Conway back from his American retirement in the fall, for a temporary leadership which was to last five years.⁴³

Though Coit parted from South Place without rancor, and made no appeal for secession, he and some fifty or sixty men and women who shared his hopes for ethics and organization met on January 31, in Leighton Hall, Kentish Town, the Neighborhood Guild he had founded. They decided to try to start a new Ethical Society in Central London. The South Place Society was still somewhat to the north and east, at Finsbury Park, and the intellectuals of the London Society were still holding their evening lectures in Essex Hall, just off the Strand. Interest and subscriptions grew, along with a shift toward the West End.⁴⁴

Coit opened his new series of Sunday morning lectures at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, with Felix Adler as guest speaker on June 12 and 19, 1892, on "The Functions of an Ethical Society." On June 26, the West London Ethical Society was formally organized, with Coit proposed as its lecturer "for three or four months each year," and the possibility of "amalgamation" with the London Ethical Society raised again by the secretary of the latter group, Coit's philosopher friend, J. H. Muirhead. Both proposals were approved, and the amalgamation agreed to by the old London Ethical Society in the fall, under its more general name.

⁴³Spiller, op. cit., pp. 30-33. ⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 61-62.

But despite complete unity on stated aims and program, and apparent amity, the two groups differed so much in style and personnel that they continued their dual schedules, except for one mid-season membership meeting, and parted again officially on June 26, 1893. Bernard Bosanquet of the old London Society made the motion for separation, in the conspicuous absence of Coit, whose leadership was clearly seen as the issue dividing the two groups.⁴⁵

Coit was retained as organizing lecturer for the West London Ethical Society, as reconstituted on July 9, 1893, to resume his varied duties "on his return from America in April, 1894." The title of one of the last of his lectures, on November 20, 1892, in the year and a half of the Prince's Hall series, was "Can the Church of England be Converted into an Ethical Society?" Other lecturers followed, throughout 1893--including Bosanquet, Muirhead, and Leslie Stephen several times each; Prince Kropotkin, R. B. Haldane, and Frederic Harrison of the Positivists; Coit himself again in May and June, and Salter from America in October and November.⁴⁶

So Coit was indeed back sooner than the projected April, 1894, but only for a few months. Stephen was his devoted president, leading an executive committee of able if not quite famous men and women. Prince's Hall was converted into a restaurant, and its dependable audience did not make the transition to Westminster Town Hall, or from

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 64-66.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 66-67.

Westminster to Kensington.⁴⁷ The Board of Trustees of the New York Society for Ethical Culture reported on May 8, 1893, that Coit had been "engaged as Lecturer for another year," for "his earnestness . . . , his sterling worth, his noble qualities, and his eloquence," and for his work at University Settlement. The small audiences at Chickering Hall on the Sundays when Coit spoke, as compared with Adler's, were seen as justifying the "reproach of 'A One Man's Society.'"⁴⁸

An item by the kindly Salter in his first Philadelphia newsletter, for January, 1895, summarized some of Coit's turmoil in that period of frequent Atlantic crossings: "Dr. Coit has been setting bravely to work to gather together the scattered forces of the West London Society, which he founded two or three years ago, only to leave for what seemed more imperative duty in New York."⁴⁹ In October, 1897, Salter further reported, "Dr. Coit has declined the call extended to him by the Philadelphia Society."⁵⁰

By the end of the nineteenth century, the turbulent Coit had somewhat settled down. In December, 1898, he married Adela Wetzlar, a German widow who had come with her young children to live in London. Frederic Harrison gave the "address" at the ceremony in Kensington Town Hall.⁵¹

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 67, 78. ⁴⁸Annual Report, New York.

⁴⁹The Cause, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 4-5. ⁵⁰III, 6, p. 50.

⁵¹See Harrison's Autobiographical Memoirs (London: Macmillan, 1911), Vol. II, p. 286.

Years later, the Coits' long life together, highly fictionalized in plot yet strikingly recognizable in the philosophy, temperament, and profession of John Hewpoth and the stoic loyalty of his wife Susan, was the subject of a sensitive novel by R. O. Prowse, The Prophet's Wife.⁵² In the novel only, the philosopher-prophet died first and young, in a quixotic attempt to rescue his little daughter from a fall. The daughter survived, along with the prophet's wife.

Adela and Stanton Coit themselves were to have three daughters: Adela, Virginia (later Lady Flemming, wife of Sir Gilbert Flemming, Minister of Education), and Gwendolyn. Adela and Virginia followed their father into Ethical leadership, though Adela, the first and most active, was to die a year before him, in 1943. Virginia Flemming, as her own children grew up after her father's death, took an increasingly active role in the West London Society and the Ethical Union, supporting Coit's handpicked successor, H. J. Blackham, in a purely secular conception of ethics.⁵³

But back to Coit's own most creative years in the philosophic development of the West London Society (and Ethical Church), as an American's audacious attempt to substitute "ethical humanism" for the Church of England. In 1900 he edited Ethical Democracy: Essays in Social Dynamics,⁵⁴

⁵²Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929. Pp. 320.

⁵³Conversations with the Flemmings and Mr. Blackham, London and elsewhere, 1951-78.

⁵⁴London: Grant Richards. Pp. 361.

a series of essays, including his own, by the Society of Ethical Propagandists. Professor D. G. Ritchie of St. Andrews, for instance, wrote on "Evolution and Democracy"; Muirhead, by then teaching at Birmingham, on "The Family"; J. R. Macdonald, the rising "socialist" politician, on "The People in Power," a questioning of the principle, Vox Populi, Vox Dei; Miss Zona Vallance, on "Women as Citizens"; and Miss Margaret MacMillan, on "The Ethical End of Education." The inclusion of two women among the eleven contributors was typical of Coit's planning, as contrasted with that of Adler in New York.

Coit's own essay on "The Dynamics of Democracy"⁵⁵ proceeded from a judgment by Walter Bagehot in his work on "The English Constitution," to the effect that England fosters more genuine democracy than America, with its checks and balances and anti-democratic machinery. Coit went on to say that the proliferation of private and sacrosanct religious sects in America, and of private and sacrosanct "free enterprises" in business, prevented the genuine exchange of ideas and of material goods needed for a democracy.

"The conception of democracy in general," he wrote, "has not yet outgrown the individualistic psychology and sociology of the eighteenth century. . . . [D]emocracy can never be realized by the private enterprise of isolated groups. . . . No Church organization ever receives any new

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 303-48.

revelation, because the Eternal Revealer--the living conscience and reason of the continuous community--is never appealed to and never allowed to utter its message to our times."⁵⁶

While hammering away at the nonconformist sects in both England and America as "private enterprises," however democratic they might claim to be internally, he reserved both his harshest judgment and his greatest hope for the Established Church:

The Church of England, not having been born of the democratic spirit, is more consistently and completely opposed to democracy, in doctrine, form, tradition, and government than the sects. . . .

The democratization of religion will mean, as regards the sects, that they shall be endowed and established by the State, on condition that they drop theological tests both for ministers and members. . . . As regards the Established Church, democratization would likewise mean the abolition of theological conformity for clergy and laity alike. But this change would really amount to the Disestablishment of the present Church, and the fresh establishment of a non-theological, democratic, and ethical communion. In such a communion . . . the head office . . . would consist simply in membership in the Cabinet Committee of the House of Commons, and the incumbent would, with the rest of the ministry, go out of office. The subordinate officers of the Church, as the teachers and preachers of the nation, would fall into class with other secular civil servants. . . . In this way the democratization of the Church would prove to be its nationalization. It would create a living and growing religion expressing the soul of the nation and purifying it continually. . . .⁵⁷

Coit went at the "democratization" of education, art and culture, politics, and business with the same rigor. But the democratization and institutionalization of ethics

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 315-19.

⁵⁷Pp. 322-23.

was his chief aim and chosen profession. Despite his increasing ritualization of the meetings of the West London Society, in rented halls in Kensington until 1909 and after that in a rented church, Coit continued to identify his society with the three basic "principles" which all the British societies--by then some twenty or thirty in number--had used since the founding of the first London society in 1886:

- 1.--The good life has supreme claim upon us, and this claim rests on no external authority, and on no system of supernatural rewards or punishments, but has its origin in the nature of man as a social and rational being.
- 2.--In practice the good life is to be realized by performing such duties as are commonly recognized and are morally acceptable, and, further, by fulfilling obligations not yet enjoined by the general social conscience.
- 3.--Since the claim of the good life upon us is supreme, the moral ideal must be set up as the object of religious devotion--religion being allegiance to an object to which supreme devotion is regarded as due.⁵⁸

In 1907, the first of Coit's two books on "national idealism" appeared: National Idealism and a State Church.⁵⁹ Explicitly rejecting William James's claim to the primacy of the private and the mystical in Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), Coit asserted the need and the normalcy of fellowship and organizational discipline. "A lamentable effect of Professor James's position," he said, "is that, by commending spiritual isolation, it unwittingly panders

⁵⁸Repeated in brochures, newsletters, and readings.

⁵⁹London: Williams and Norgate. Pp. ix, 386.

to vanity, egotism and the fantastic vapourings of incipient insanity."⁶⁰

Again, he identified his position with that of the Broad Church party in the Church of England, and in particular with that of Maurice and the Christian socialists, divested of any doctrinal dishonesty. He traced the ideal of the nation as the church of its people back to Coleridge early in the nineteenth century, and to John Stuart Mill soon after. Both Thomas and Matthew Arnold were cited in support, as was Sir John Seeley, to whose memory Coit dedicated his book.

Granting that a national church or ethical society need not be a state church, and that a state church may be limited to supernaturalists, or Christians, or Jews, or some other doctrinal "party," and hence not genuinely democratic or national, Coit recommended humanism as the only solution:

. . . [H]ere I wish chiefly to call attention to the error of attributing to the State Church evil effects which are due not to the fact that the Church is established but to the fact that it is still supernaturalistic. . . .

Now supernaturalism has always been the enemy of free thought, free speech and free voting; and free thought, free speech and free voting have always been enemies of supernaturalism. . . . The free expression and decision of the people would not be limited merely to matters of ecclesiastical administration and legislation. The fundamental questions of life would be continuously left open, and every moral agent in the nation would be invited to contribute his original experience, insight and judgment to their ever deeper solution.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶¹ Pp. 70-71.

In his look at revised creeds and liturgies which might adequately express a democratically universal ethical humanism, Coit regretted the time spent by England's best potential contributors--Israel Zangwill "astray" on the backward-looking cause of Zionism, Rudyard Kipling on "our imperialistic territory-grabbers," G. K. Chesterton on "the Middle Ages," G. B. Shaw on "humor" and "stage-craft," and Sir Edward Elgar on "setting to music that ghastly offspring of scholasticism . . . , Cardinal Newman's Dream of Gerontius."⁶² Noting some silly excesses of the Positivists, he projected a longer work for himself in democratic and scientific revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

Spontaneously vocal, but equally prompt in action, he brought out National Idealism and the Book of Common Prayer the very next year.⁶³ With careful translation of theistic and authoritarian terms into humanism, and simple omission of untranslatable "spiritism"--his frequent synonym for supernaturalism--he revised and explained the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Psalms and assorted prayers, baptism, communion, the marriage ceremony, and the burial service.

Architecture fell in stride with literature, music, and the graphic and plastic arts in 1909, when a church at 45 Queen's Road, Bayswater, became available for rent, and

⁶²Ibid., pp. 141 ff.

⁶³London: Williams and Norgate, 1908. Pp. xxv, 467.

years later for purchase. Coit recruited the organist and choirmaster of Westminster Cathedral (the Catholic Cathedral, not the Anglican Abbey), Charles Kennedy Scott, who was to be his collaborator for the rest of Coit's long life, and beyond, in the work of the Ethical Church.⁶⁴

According to the British movement's historian, Gustav Spiller, the services included a robed choir marching in with robed leader and speaker, the singing of canticles and responses, hymns and anthems, and many other aspects of a high-church worship service. Pictures of famous humanists, with characteristic quotations below them, adorned the vestibule: Thomas More, Milton, George Frederick Watts (of the Rationalist Press Association), Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, the Brownings, Ruskin, Felix Adler, William Salter, Leslie Stephen, Sir John Seeley, and Professor Henry Sidgwick. On either side of the paneled and richly draped pulpit were statues of Jesus and the Buddha. Not far away were busts of Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, and an ancient porcelain statue of the Goddess Kwan-Yin. Stained glass windows depicted Joan of Arc, Elizabeth Fry, and Florence Nightingale.⁶⁵ There was much, much more, carefully arranged for its color, texture, and symbolism.

As he gathered many incidental and featured readings, Coit issued The Message of Man: A Book of Ethical

⁶⁴Conversations with Mr. Scott, and tours of the Church, in which he lived, 1951; also at South Place, 1957.

⁶⁵Op. cit., pp. 79-83.

Scriptures (1895),⁶⁶ a book which appeared in many editions by several publishers. He and Scott then produced the massive and widely circulated Social Worship in two volumes,⁶⁷ the first of readings, meditations, and lessons with "The Compiler's Introduction" by Coit, and the second of words with music and the "Musical Editor's Introduction" by Scott. Each borrowed and arranged freely from the religious and secular literature of the world.

"To many," Scott wrote, echoing Coit's well known statements, "this will be a book of impieties. . . . It is obvious that music can have no bearing whatever upon dogmas as such. . . . Art is the handmaid of no particular religious system, but of universal experience."⁶⁸

To his American colleagues in particular, Coit seemed to be a simple Anglophile, and a captive of high-church humanism to say the least, if not of high-church dogma. Adler summed up the American attitude with restraint in a letter to Salter: "Coit is pushing the Ethical Church idea to the front, as we fear at the expense of the Ethical Society idea. . . . There are some people to whom ritual appeals, and others whom it affronts. The Ethical Society as such must not be committed to a new ceremonial."⁶⁹

⁶⁶London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Pp. xiv, 323.

⁶⁷London: West London Ethical Society, The Ethical Church, 1913. Vol. I, pp. lxxv, 654; Vol. II, pp. xxxv, 229.

⁶⁸Typed copy, pp. 4, December 18, 1913; New York files.

Adler also mentioned Coit's unsuccessful candidacy for Parliament in 1912, and other unfinished projects, as grounds for the charge of impulsiveness and instability. But Coit's several British recruits and trainees for Ethical leadership, whom he discovered, financed, and groomed as he did the fictional assistant Beale in the novel by Prowse, have all testified to the planfulness and rigor of his projects. The late Horace J. Bridges of Chicago, the first to come and then the first to stay in America in 1913, insisted that Coit was incurably American. No truly English gentleman, he said, would have bothered with a bright but humbly educated worker in the printing trades. In such matters, Adler was more European and elitist. Besides, said Bridges, "Coit spoke English so unnecessarily well, you knew in a moment he was American."⁶⁹

George E. O'Dell, a Coit trainee from the British stenographic union, also came to stay in 1913, as secretary of the American Ethical Union for thirty-five years. O'Dell wrote feelingly on "The Americanism of Stanton Coit" after his death, in The Standard for January, 1945.⁷⁰ "Coit was the last man on earth," he said, "to try making himself over into a dyed-in-the-wool Englishman. Rather, what could he do to help win England over for essential Americanism? Not that America itself was as yet near to being so won."

⁶⁹Conversations in Chicago, 1941-42; in retirement in Greenport, Long Island, October 4, 1950.

⁷⁰Vol. XXXI, No. 4, pp. 109-12.

H. J. Blackham, who had answered an advertisement in The Statesman and Nation in 1932 to become Coit's assistant and successor, recognized his essentially American misunderstanding of the place of the Church of England in the life of the nation, and of the place of Christianity in the mind of a true believer. Blackham was to lead the West London Society away from its Ethical Church experiment and building, but he admired the man for his gallant effort and his successful pilot project. He noted Bernard Shaw's advice to Coit after hearing him address a working-class audience: "'You should not speak to English working-men as if you thought they were your equals. You are the only man of your class in England who does so. It makes them suspect your sincerity; for they know that they are not your equals.'" Blackham continued, "This was a comment on a mere matter of tact perhaps, but it reflected a serious, persistent flaw in Fabian Socialism from which Coit, less sophisticated, was free."⁷¹

Coit himself spoke directly to the question in The Soul of America.⁷² Speaking not as a Protestant (his own long American background) but as a humanist, he urged people of all backgrounds toward one "national idealism" of many parties--excluding only those who excluded themselves by narrow or arrogant sectarianism. On the question of a world religion or idealism, as projected for instance

⁷¹P. 20 in Stanton Coit (1857-1944): Selections from His Writings, Edited, With a Prefatory Memoir (London: The Favil Press, 1948) pp. 92.

⁷²New York: Macmillan Co., 1914. Pp. x, 405.

by Thomas Paine's "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion," Coit declared it "not true," or at least premature, "for the whole world is unorganized, and it will never be unified except by a federation of nations."⁷³

Again, he urged all the different religious parties of the American nation to look forward, not backward to the nation or religion they came from:

. . . The separation of Church and State in America has been a political necessity. . . .

The American who thinks that the Methodist or Baptist society is the real organic being from which his soul derives its sustenance, is naturally as jealous of the new philosophy which holds the nation itself to be his living Church as are the sentimental cosmopolitan, the individualistic champion of peace, the Marxian Socialist, the old-fashioned Hebrew jingoist, and the anti-Modernist Roman Catholic.⁷⁴

By this same year, 1914, Coit had completed a new set of principles for his Ethical Church--now so named officially. The first three were essentially the same as before, and were the only ones binding on old members. But for new members, "The Word 'God'" was introduced for "the Ideal of truth, goodness, and beauty"; "Every Nation" defined as "the Church of its Citizens"; and "The Empire" recognized as "the Church of all British Subjects." All were declared "Co-Workers with Jesus Christ," through a number of other new principles and methods to "The Co-operative Commonwealth."⁷⁵

⁷³Ibid., p. 70.

⁷⁴Pp. 120, 134.

⁷⁵Spiller, pp. 73-75, and brochures through 1937.

Adler was of course indignant. In his notes on "Stanton Coit's 'Soul of America'"⁷⁶ he commented on the new terminology: "'Christianity, plus science and democracy' minus essentials of 2,000 years. . . . Coit, therefore, in speaking of himself as a Christian in religion, has left our fellowship. I emphasize the fact that he has left us, and that we have not expelled him. . . ."

Coit's new terms and liturgies seemed difficult to square with his own best principles. Nevertheless, he kept his Ethical Church active, and his intellectual interests alive. Many articles appeared, in his own and others' publications, and then in books.

His next book was Is Civilization a Disease?⁷⁷ In a strangely romantic mood, Coit contrasted "civilization" with "humanization" and made it appear to be a disease or at least a barrier to progress.

The irrepressible Coit was back in Adler's good graces, or at least theoretically should have been, with the lead essay on "Ethical Mysticism" in Aspects of Ethical Religion: Essays in Honor of Felix Adler by his colleagues on the Fiftieth Anniversary of his founding of the Ethical Movement in 1926.⁷⁸ Citing Plato and Plotinus by way of Porphyry, and then Rudolph Otto on "The Holy,"

⁷⁶New York Archives.

⁷⁷Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917. Pp. 136.

⁷⁸Edited by Horace J. Bridges (New York: American Ethical Union), pp. ii, 423. Coit's essay was pp. 1-32.

he showed his own devotion, like Adler's, to "deifying morality" rather than to "moralizing deity" in the manner of the ancient theistic religions. He also showed why he thought Bosanquet and even Muirhead were mistaken in drifting away, and Bradley wrong in disdaining the British Ethical Movement as not "religious" enough.

Good graces or not (the correspondence was strained in tone), Coit was back in New York by letter and in person in the summer and fall of 1927 with his "Preliminary Prospectus and Statement" on the Ethical Lecturers' Fund Committee.⁷⁹ His letter to Adler from London on May 12 spoke on behalf of Professor Mackenzie for the recruitment, financing, and placement of lecturers such as his daughter Adela and young Alex Dawn, for whom he solicited a supplement to his own grants. The prospectus, dated September, listed the committee in March as "consisting of" such professors as Adler at Columbia, William McDougall at Duke, J. S. Mackenzie, formerly of Cardiff, Muirhead of Birmingham, S. Radakrishnan of Calcutta, L. T. Hobhouse of London, Laird of Aberdeen, and Stout of St. Andrews. Mrs. Samuel Fels of Philadelphia was listed as a donor.

Though John Dewey of Columbia was added later, the fund drive was not successful. Coit nevertheless continued to be successful in recruiting, training, and placing young lecturers in the American Ethical Union. Adela and Dawn

⁷⁹Copies in New York Archives.

⁸⁰New York: Macmillan Co., 1922. Vol. I, pp. 423-424; Vol. II, pp. 476; Vol. III, pp. 368.

stayed in London, but in 1933 J. Hutton Hynd, a Coit trainee from the Church of Scotland relieved Chubb in St. Louis, and in 1934 W. Edwin Collier from the Church of England relieved Weston in Philadelphia.

In the meantime, Coit was performing another philosophical tour de force as a man in his seventies, with the "discovery" and translation of the massive Ethics of Professor Nicolai Hartmann of Berlin.⁸⁰ In the brief Translator's Preface, he attributes his discovery to "adverse criticism" of the German original by Sidney Hook in the International Journal of Ethics for January, 1930. Again, the "ethical realism" of a philosopher appealed to Coit--this time a painstakingly systematic phenomenologist who took greater pride in his Logic than in his Ethics. Virginia Coit and Alex Dawn were listed as helpers in the translation.

Coit divided the work, with the author's blessing, into three manageable English volumes, naming them "Moral Phenomena," "Moral Values," and "Moral Freedom." As Muirhead put it in his Editor's Introduction (the Library of Philosophy), Coit was able "to render a lasting service to the English-speaking public . . . ," putting "the fundamental principles of ethics in a form detached--without injury--from dead tradition, and protected--with untold gain--against the newfangled novelties of mechanistic behaviorism, of impulsivism, subjectivism and ethical relativism."

⁸⁰ New York: Macmillan Co., 1932. Vol. I, pp. 343; Vol. II, pp. 476; Vol. III, pp. 288.

Coit regretted Hartmann's refusal to identify his "ethical realism" with religion, which he (Hartmann) called "metaphysical personalism," or to use the term 'God,' which for him meant "cosmic animism."⁸¹ For Hartmann, the separate and objective existence of values was just as obvious, and as important morally, as the separate and objective existence of material things. "The settlement of the matter," he said, "depends upon demonstrating that there is a self-existent ideal sphere in which values are native, and that, as the contents of this sphere, values, self-subsistent and dependent upon no experience, are discerned a priori."⁸² He set out to free ethics from the "prejudice" of "transcendental subjectivism." So, "This is why ethics--precisely as a consequence of Kantian apriorism--must be a 'material ethics of values.'"⁸³

Among the many grateful and favorable reviews of the Hartmann translation, only Horace Bridges' in The Standard called attention to the lack of reference to the vast literature on similar ethical topics in English, and to the regret of Coit's friends that he had turned his talents to translation rather than an original treatise on ethics.⁸⁴

⁸¹Translator's Preface, p. 13.

⁸²Vol. II, p. 165.

⁸³Ibid., p. 180.

⁸⁴Vol. , No.

C. E. M. Joad's review was congratulatory, in The New Statesman and Nation.⁸⁵ That popular British philosopher, later to be the sage of the British Broadcasting Corporation's "Brains Trust," compared the new Fundamentals of Ethics by Wilbur M. Urban with the Hartmann work most unfavorably, as "slight and unoriginal." Joad, already a crusader against the "dropping of the object" as the cause of "decadence" in an overly subjective age, avoided confusing "the appraisement of a thing with the thing appraised; it is as if one were to argue from the fact that a number of people may each make a different guess at the temperature of a room, that, therefore, the room has no objective temperature which is independent of the guesses."

In the midst of this renewed interest in her husband's work, Mrs. Coit died on October 7, 1932. He and the children and grandchildren were greatly comforted by a memorial service of songs and readings conducted by Kennedy Scott. But the Ethical Church experiment was already on the wane, and Coit and his younger helpers knew that it had failed utterly to capture even the Broad Church modernists of the Church of England. He gave up their house in Hyde Park, and moved with daughter Adela to their country home overlooking the Channel.

⁸⁵Vol. ., No. (May, 1932), p. xx.

at Birling Gap. There they worked and waited stoically as Hitler took over Germany first, and then the Continent. It was there that Adela died of tuberculosis and fatigue, in 1943, leaving her father in the care of an aging servant, Lanchbery.⁸⁶

There, too, Coit himself died suddenly in the night of February 15, 1944. He was the last of his generation in the Ethical movement, in more ways than one. He had outlived Weston by slightly less than one decade; Adler and Salter by a little more than two decades; and Sheldon, by nearly half a century. But above all, as far as his own society and the Ethical movement were concerned, he had outlived the sense of ethics as metaphysically independent and untouchable in a realm "where moth and rust do not corrupt, and thieves do not break in and steal."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Blackham, "Prefatory Memoir," p. 19.

⁸⁷ "My Ventures," p. 77.

AFTERWORD:

PHILOSOPHIC SANCTIONS SINCE THE FOUNDERS

The second generation of Ethical leaders, who were chosen or at least approved by Felix Adler and the other four founders of societies, were men, and one woman, whose careers began near the turn of the century--John L. Elliott, David S. Muzzey, Alfred W. Martin, Percival Chubb, Horace J. Bridges, George E. C'Dell, Anna Garlin Spencer, Henry J. Golding, and Henry Neumann. Except for Martin, Golding, and Mrs. Spencer, who died before Adler's death in 1933, their careers all extended well into the 1940's and 1950's.

Martin, as previously noted, was the "naturalistic theist" whose belief in a god and personal immortality Adler, the Kantian, had treated as the predictable weakness of an empiricist (as in William James). Born in Germany in 1862 of mixed Jewish-gentile parentage, Martin turned his First Unitarian Church of Tacoma, Washington, into a "Free Church" in 1893 and founded another in Seattle. After initial misgivings over the "agnosticism" of the Ethical movement, he became convinced that it was positively ethical, and joined Adler in leadership in New York in 1908. He died in 1931.

Golding, a scholarly and successful businessman, active for more than twenty years in the British Ethical Union, came to America as an assistant to Adler in 1923. A skipper's son who went to sea with his father, he was largely self-taught until entering Civil Service in London at seventeen and taking a few courses at King's College. Reading led him to the Fabians and the Ethical movement, where he met Bosanquet, MacDonald, Stephen, Graham Wallas, and others. Coit and Snell added him to the list of lecturers for the Union of Ethical Societies, while he made his living with an insurance company. When Adler visited Oxford to give the Hibbert Lectures, Golding asked for full time work in America, and was added to the New York Society staff in the fall of 1923. Rumors persist that Adler sought him out, and groomed him as his probable successor. In any case, he became a trusted colleague in the Fraternity in 1925, and edited the richly informative Fiftieth Anniversary volume of 1926. In his own autobiographical entry,¹ he praised the "loftier vision," which "proclaimed that not sympathy, nor utility, but reverence, based on a profounder conception of man's nature and needs, could alone yield an adequate transformation of society." Unfortunately, he too died, early in that fateful year of 1931.

Anna Garlin Spencer, born like Adler in 1851, shared his impatience with the Free Religious Association, and put

¹Fr. 177-81.

that impatience into practice in the Unitarian ministry with her husband, whose health failed early in life. She went on to found the Bell Street Chapel in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1889, and to lead it as a Free Religious society until 1904, when Adler recognized her "unwomanly" strength and called her to Associate Leadership in New York. (She was petite and decidedly feminine in manner.) Adler's insistence on her special mission to women, however, soon drove her to seek career opportunities elsewhere. In 1913 she became assistant director of the New York School of Philanthropy, a school of social work she had attended in its summer version in 1898 and served intermittently as a teacher. By 1918 she was listed as a faculty member at the Meadville Unitarian Seminary, then in Pennsylvania. All her life, she kept up friendly contact with the Ethical movement, particularly in correspondence with Burns Weston of Philadelphia and Percival Chubb of St. Louis. When she died at eighty, in 1931, John L. Elliott spoke and introduced others at a memorial service at the New York Society. Mrs. Felix Adler wrote "A Memorial Tribute" for The Standard,²

Among the second generation who survived Adler, a somewhat unlikely candidate succeeded him as Senior Leader. It was John Lovejoy Elliott, who had first heeded the founder's call to the "new profession" as a student at Cornell and popular president of the class of 1892. John was the eldest son of an Illinois farmer, Isaac Elliott, a Colonel

²Vol. XVII, No. 7 (March, 1931), pp. 200-02.

(later a General) along with Colonel Robert Ingersoll in the Illinois National Guard, and Elizabeth Lovejoy, a member of the well known abolitionist and civil libertarian Lovejoy family. By 1894, the warmly personable and decidedly unscholarly John Elliott had returned from two years at the University of Halle with a doctorate in philosophy to show for his studies of German "Prisons as Reformatories." He too became an Adler trainee and assistant. Encouraged by Stanton Coit, Mary K. Simkhovitch, Jane Addams, and others in social work, he found a home and a place for boys clubs, mothers clubs, and eventually a settlement house called Hudson Guild in the West Side dock area of Manhattan called Hell's Kitchen.³ Elliott's sanctions were usually those which Adler (and Kant) had termed undependable and misleading, or more technically, "pathological"--such as love, sympathy, and the simple fulfillment of human needs and desires. Yet when pressed for more ultimate sanctions, "Doc El" could roar the most Adlerian versions of the Categorical Imperative. He died in the spring of 1942, after scribbling an almost illegible final note in his hospital bed: "The only things I have found worth living for, and working for, and dying for, are love and friendship."

The sanctions of the other second-generation American Ethical leaders have been previously characterized, as

³For the fullest treatment of Elliott's life and work, see A Ministry to Man: The Life of John Lovejoy Elliott by Tay Hohoff (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), pp. vii, 234.

they responded to the first generation. Muzzey,⁴ the professed disciple of Adler, whose work nevertheless bore the stamp of Yankee pragmatism; Chubb,⁵ the romantic mystic, whose most characteristic saying was "Out of the heart come the issues of life"; and O'Dell,⁶ the British empiricist staying true to his last--all these moved closer to the new and naturalistic "humanism" of the third generation in style and terminology. Only Horace Bridges, in such bristling works as Taking the Name of Science in Vain,⁷ renounced the early spell of Coit's empiricism and socialism, gave thanks for Adler's corrective influence, and returned to the Anglican theology of his youth through philosophical apologetics.

Henry Neumann of Brooklyn, the youngest of this second generation and the last to die (1966), made a gracious and productive peace in his later years with those in the third and fourth generation who were frankly naturalistic and humanistic, though he had long regarded himself as the last representative of Adler's moral rigorism and transcendentalism. A graduate of City College of New York in 1900, he completed a doctorate in English at New York University in 1906, and returned to City College to teach

⁴David S. Muzzey, Ethics as a Religion (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1951), pp. vii, 273. Reprinted, with an introduction by James F. Hornback (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967).

⁵Percival Chubb, On the Religious Frontier (New York: Macmillan, 1931), pp. viii, 148.

⁶George E. O'Dell, Some Human Contacts (New York: International Press, 1929), pp. viii, 211.

⁷New York: Macmillan, 1929. Pp. 273.

English and education. After assisting headworker Henry Moskowitz of the Down-Town Ethical Society (later Madison House), he succeeded a wavering Congregationalist minister, Leslie Willis Sprague, as leader of the new Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture in 1911. He founded an Ethical Culture day school with his wife, Julie Wurtzburger of the New York Society and School, wrote several books, and gave summer courses in literature, education, and ethics at colleges and universities from coast to coast. His last book, Spokesmen for Ethical Religion⁸ in 1951, aimed at the young rather than adult readers, is the best expression of his mellowing and eclectic vision of ethical growth.

In England, one name stands out among the many colleagues and recruits of Stanton Coit who stayed on for second generation leadership there. Harry Snell, a farm boy born in 1865, rose to lectureship with the Fabians, membership and chairmanship of the London County Council, election as a Labor Member of Parliament, and elevation to the House of Lords as Baron Snell of Plumstead. Coit retained him as an Ethical lecturer in 1898, and helped him to get bookings in England and America, as did Adler, while he continued his distinguished but largely unremunerative political career until his death in 1944. He served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India, for instance, and as a dissenting member of the British Palestine Commission whose partiality

⁸Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. xvii, 173.

toward the Zionist settlers (for their scientific farming, he said) made many of his colleagues think he was Jewish. His approach to ethics was simple and sociological, spurred on by an early anticlericalism and interest in comparative religions and cultures. His quest for the 'spiritual,' as "all that appertains to the intellectual, aesthetic, and moral health of the human soul," is fully described in his autobiography, Men, Movements, and Myself.⁹

The small but distinguished third generation in America, whose careers began in the 1920's or 1930's, included Algernon D. Black and Jerome Nathanson of New York and the Coit recruits, J. Hutton Hynd to succeed Chubb in St. Louis and W. Edwin Collier to succeed Weston in Philadelphia. Nathanson and Hynd were forthright scientific humanists, who would gladly have signed the first Humanist Manifesto of 1933 if they had been available. Nathanson, a Cornell graduate and later a student, friend, and authorized interpreter of John Dewey,¹⁰ lived to sign Humanist Manifesto II in 1974. He joined the staff of the New York Society in 1937, became a leader in 1940, and died in 1975. Hynd, a Scot who served in the Royal Air Force in World War I, graduated with honors from Glasgow University and studied for the ministry at Congregational College, Edinburgh,

⁹London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1938. (First edition, 1936.) Pp. ix, 284.

¹⁰John Dewey: The Reconstruction of the Democratic Life (New York: Scribner's 20th Century Series, 1951). Reprinted (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967), pp. ix, 129.

before training under Coit. During his leadership in St. Louis (1933-50) he served briefly as president of the American Humanist Association. A British subject, he returned to parttime work with the South Place Ethical Society, and died in 1969. Collier, trained in the ministry of the Church of England, remained an "ethical mystic," never identifying with "humanism" as an ethical sanction. An American citizen, he resigned from the Philadelphia Society in 1962 and is now Leader Emeritus.

Black, who started his work with Adler immediately after graduation with honors in economics from Harvard in 1923, was not invited to speak on the New York platform for nearly a decade. Elected to leadership in 1932, he has always accepted much of the new humanism while retaining a sympathy and respect for the more intuitive and mystical ethics of the first two generations. He and the late Horace Friess, Adler's son-in-law and literary executor, both declined to sign the second Humanist Manifesto in 1974, considering it inappropriate to identify themselves with any philosophic "creed." Among Black's varied writings, perhaps the best in conveying his philosophic sources and sanctions is the extensive collection of his humanistic ceremonies, with continuity and commentary, called Without Burnt Offerings.¹¹

¹¹Algernon D. Black (New York: Viking Press, 1974), pp. xxi, 231.

With the departure of Hynd and Collier for America, Coit retained Harold J. Blackham as his assistant and successor. Born in Birmingham of nonconformist Christian parents active in social reform, Blackham took his A. B. degree at the University of Birmingham and taught for two years at the Doncaster Grammar School in Yorkshire. He responded to Coit's advertisement for an assistant in the New Statesman and Nation, and went to work on the inevitable transition back from the Ethical Church to the more secular West London Ethical Society, from 1933 until Coit's death in 1944. After World War II, in which he served as liaison for the Fire Service of the Port of London, he was appointed secretary (that is, chief executive officer) of the Ethical Union. He founded the Plain View, a quarterly journal of ethical philosophy and social issues, with an editorial board including Bertrand Russell, Sir Richard Gregory, and Gilbert Murray at first, and equally renowned substitutions thereafter. Besides his many articles and pamphlets on "Living as a Humanist," he is a critic and consultant on religious and moral education in the schools, and a founder and officer, just retired, of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. His best philosophic book, though disavowing "advocacy," is Six Existentialist Thinkers,¹² a series of essays on Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Marcel, Heidegger, and Sartre.

¹²London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1952. Pp. vii, 173. (New York: Macmillan.)

The fourth generation of Ethical leaders, whose full careers began in the decades adjoining 1951, were without exception "humanists" in their ethical sanctions, despite varied temperaments and terminologies. James F. Hornback of the Westchester Society, New York (1947-51) and St. Louis (1951-) and the late Henry B. Herman of the New York Society (1946-65, with a brief departure to Westchester) entered leadership training together in New York in 1942. They were soon joined by such contemporaries as Matthew Ies Spetter from the Netherlands in Brooklyn (1953-55) and Riverdale-Yonkers (1955-); Sheldon Ackley, a college teacher of philosophy, in Long Island (1950-59) and much later in New York (1982-); Walter Lawton, a Baptist minister turned businessman, in Northern Westchester, Queens, Chicago, and Westchester (1958-); Douglas Frazier, a veteran Unitarian-Universalist minister, in Los Angeles (1958-64) and Bergen County, New Jersey (1964-68); and Harold J. Quigley, a Presbyterian dismissed for heresy, in Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Chicago (1962-81).

Younger men who joined the fourth generation were the humanistic Unitarians: Edward L. Ericson in Washington (1959-71) and New York (1971-); Khoren Arisian in Boston (1966-68) and New York (1968-79); and Howard Box in Brooklyn (1960-76). Their contemporary, Howard B. Radest, came directly from New York high school and Columbia College training into Ethical leadership training and military

service, after which he became leader in Bergen County, New Jersey in 1956, executive director of the American Ethical Union in 1964, and following a period of teaching philosophy at Ramapo College, New Jersey, the director of Ethical Culture Schools in 1979.

Barbara Raines, a teacher of science long active in the Philadelphia Society, moved west and became leader of the West Coast Council for Ethical Culture in 1960, and returned briefly to leadership in Northern Westchester a decade later. Keenly interested in humanistic psychology, in "people rather than particles," she anticipated and actively encouraged the spirit of the fifth generation or second century of Ethical leadership.

There have been inter-generational colleagues, in other professions or briefly in and out of Ethical leadership. Nathaniel Schmidt, of Swedish Lutheran background, occupied the full-time chair of Semitic Languages and Literature at Cornell, which Adler had so briefly initiated, from 1896 until his retirement in the 1930's. An openly humanistic archeologist and biblical scholar, he toured the Ethical societies as a speaker throughout those years, and joined the Fraternity while in residence at Chicago's Henry Booth Settlement House in the early 1900's.

Another early associate leader, briefly, was **James** Gutmann, a graduate student of philosophy who introduced Horace Friess to Adler's courses, taught ethics in the Ethical Culture Schools, and edited The Standard in the late

1920's. He turned to the teaching of philosophy at Columbia University, and has long been an active professor emeritus.

A. Eustace Haydon, a Canadian Baptist minister who became a Unitarian and humanist teacher of comparative religions at the University of Chicago (1929-45), was the improbable successor to the transcendentalist-theist Bridges in the leadership of the Chicago society for a decade (1945-55) after his own retirement from teaching. Retiring then to Los Angeles, he continued to lecture for societies from coast to coast for another decade at least. He died in 1975.

Haydon had signed and helped to compose, with such other signers as philosopher Roy Wood Sellars, the first Humanist Manifesto of 1933. Another signer, already identified with the Ethical movement at the time as director of Ethical Culture Schools, was V. T. Thayer, respected by Adler despite his well-known and widely published support of the philosophy and educational methods of John Dewey. (It was Thayer's signing of the manifesto, however, which was kept from Adler in his final illness, along with that of the young associate in Philadelphia, Frank Swift.) Dr. Thayer lived on, an active Ethical leader and educator even in retirement in Florida, to sign Humanist Manifesto II.

The youngest signer of the first Humanist Manifesto, Lester Mondale, came from the Unitarian ministry to succeed Collier in Philadelphia in 1952. He too, of course, lived to sign Manifesto II in 1974, and to cast an unmerited

"humanist" notoriety on the political career of his young half-brother, Walter Mondale, Vice-President of the United States in the Carter administration and a liberal Protestant.

George Beauchamp, a teacher and educational administrator active in the organization of the Washington Society in the latter years of World War II, was elected to the Fraternity of Leaders in 1947. On semi-retirement to Florida in 1957, he continued his Ethical leadership, and has served in recent years as Dean (a counselor and program aide to the President) of the renamed National Leaders Council. Dr. Beauchamp, of Quaker parentage, remains one of the more ambiguously mystical or theistic members of the strongly humanistic third and fourth generations.

Joseph I. Blau, a professor of philosophy and religion successively at Columbia University, and now emeritus, was elected to the Fraternity of Leaders in 1956. An avowed naturalist and humanist, he helped to organize the Long Island Society in the 1940's, and now serves as a leader-adviser in Riverdale-Yonkers and New York. He was among the first signers of Humanist Manifesto II.

K. Michael Grupp, a leader successively in Southern Connecticut, Queens, Westchester, and Brooklyn since 1965, and long a worker with youth, leadership training, and the teaching of ethics in the schools, might seem to belong to the fourth generation on its younger side. But his stated

objections to Humanist Manifesto II, having to do with its overly rationalistic or non-religious tone, put him more in step with the new and fifth generation, whose careers began near the start of the second century of Ethical Culture, in 1976.

Members of this fifth generation, who either refused to sign Humanist Manifesto II in 1974 or signed with marked reservations, tend to use the language of the early Ethical transcendentalists, intuitionists, or mystics, though more in the sense of existentialist subjectivism or the better known "humanistic psychology." This group includes Joseph Chuman, a classics graduate of City College continuing his studies in religion at Columbia, who came into leadership training in 1967, led the Essex County Society in New Jersey briefly, and then settled as leader of the Bergen Society; Arthur Dobrin, a history major in City College, who came into Ethical leadership training after service in the Peace Corps in Kenya in 1965-67, and continues his interest in psychology, human relations, and poetry as leader in Long Island since 1968; and Donald Montagna, a business trainee and member of the New York Society who, after brief extension work with Dobrin on Long Island, took his skills in organizational development and psychology into leadership of the Washington Society in 1972.

Michael Franch, a graduate student and teacher of history, leader in Baltimore since 1975, and Judith Espenschied, in Philadelphia since 1982 after lay membership,

leadership training, and philosophic studies in Washington, both seem to bridge the philosophic generation gap with the naturalistic fourth generation a bit better than their colleagues of the fifth generation.

A recent recruit for leadership in St. Louis, John Hoad, coming in 1980 by way of doctoral studies in pastoral counseling at Princeton Seminary after twenty-five years as a Methodist minister and seminary president in the West Indies, joins the fourth generation in age but the fifth generation in spirit and philosophic sanctions.

With new trainees tending to reenforce their colleagues and advisers of the fifth generation, it would appear that the wave of the immediate future for the Ethical movement will be the "new mysticism" or the more popularly understood "humanistic psychology." Despite the enthusiastic use of many of the "religious" terms of the founding leaders, the new sense of ethical sanctions or imperatives is far more lenient. Instead of "super-natural" or "super-sensible" (Adler's favorite term for the rational realm of ethics or the spiritual universe), the new term "sub-natural" might well be applied, to emphasize the lack of "cognitive" status for values and moral judgments.

But the gentler, less formal or dogmatic touch may be what is needed to win a generation which turned away, in disappointment and disillusionment, from all institutions and establishments to the only apparent certainty, of inner and immediate experience. Instead of growing with the

rejection and breakup of the old, main-line institutions, the Ethical movement has shared their difficulties. Though influential out of all proportion to its numbers--as most institutions are--the Ethical movement remains comparatively small, even tiny as religio-philosophic movements go. It offers none of the certainties or authoritarian disciplines of the new cults and the old fundamentalist denominations which are growing, in an age of the new failure of nerve.

More specifically, the membership of the Ethical movement has peaked barely over five-thousand members in some twenty-five societies of sharply contrasting size, in the prosperous years following World War II. With barely more than three-thousand in 1982, in a time of hardship and cutbacks for most tolerant and ecumenical groups, it is as strong as ever, but no stronger.

"The Ethical Problem" remains, as Felix Adler first put it, as one of reconciling the reality of the conceived ideal with the actuality of the human situation. Or as Paul Carus put it in his challenge to Salter in Chicago by the same title, "The Ethical Problem," in 1890, how can we derive from the human situation an imperative, or a science of imperatives, adequate to motivate the human race to its own survival and progress?

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The second generation of Ethical leaders, who were chosen or at least accepted by Felix Adler and the other four founders, were men, and one woman, whose careers began near the turn of the century--John L. Elliott, American historian David S. Muzzey, Alfred Martin, Percival Chubb, Horace Bridges, George O'Dell, Anna Garlin Spencer, and Henry Neumann. Except for Martin, who died before Adler's death in 1933, and Mrs. Spencer, who left Adler for greater career opportunities as a woman elsewhere, their careers all extended into the 1940's or 1950's.

Martin was a "naturalistic theist," whose belief in a god and in personal immortality Adler, the Kantian, insisted was the predictable weakness of an empiricist (as in William James). Elliott, Chubb, O'Dell, and Mrs. Spencer moved closer to the new "humanism" in style and temperament, if not in explicit terminology and sanctions. Henry Neumann of Brooklyn, the youngest of this second generation and the last to die (1966), made a gracious and productive

peace in his later years with those in the third and fourth generations who were frankly naturalistic and humanistic, though he had long regarded himself as the lone remaining representative of Adler's transcendentalism.

The small but distinguished third generation, whose careers began in the 1920's or 1930's, included Algernon D. Black and Jerome Nathanson of New York and the Coit recruits, J. Hutton Hynd for St. Louis and W. Edwin Collier for Philadelphia. Nathanson and Hynd were forthright scientific humanists, who would have signed the first Humanist Manifesto of 1933 if they had been available. Black, who started his work with Adler immediately after graduation from Harvard in 1923, but was not invited to speak on the New York platform for nearly a decade, has always accepted much of the new humanism while retaining a sympathy and respect for the more intuitive and mystical ethics of the first two generations. He and the late Horace Friess, Adler's son-in-law and literary executor, both declined to sign the second Humanist Manifesto of 1934, considering it inappropriate to identify themselves with any philosophic "creed." Collier remained an "ethical mystic," and never identified with "humanism" as an ethical sanction.

The fourth generation of Ethical leaders, whose full careers began in the decades adjoining 1951, were without significant exception "humanists" in their ethical sanctions. From J. F. Hornback (long in St. Louis) and the late Henry Herman, who entered leadership training together in New York in 1942, to such later contemporaries as Matthew Ies Spetter in Riverdale-Yonkers, Sheldon Ackley in Long Island, Walter Lawton in Westchester County, and Harold Quigley in Chicago, to such younger men as Edward Ericson in Washington and then New York, Howard Radest in Bergen County, New Jersey, and then the Ethical Culture Schools--all have been "humanists" in the naturalistic sense.

There have been inter-generational colleagues, such as the noted humanist teacher of comparative religions at the University of Chicago, A. Eustace Haydon, who succeeded the transcendentalist-theist Bridges in Chicago after retirement from teaching in 1945, for a decade. He had signed, and partially composed, the first Humanist Manifesto. And Lester Mondale, the youngest signer of that Manifesto in 1933, came from the Unitarian ministry to succeed Collier in Philadelphia, for a few years.

M. Michael Grupp, a leader successively in Queens, Westchester, and Brooklyn, might seem to belong to the fourth

generation on its younger side. But his declining to sign the second Humanist Manifesto of 1974, because of its overly rationalistic or non-religious tone, put him more in step with the new and fifth generation, whose careers began near the start of the fifth quarter-century, or second century, of Ethical Culture, in 1976.

Members of this fifth generation, who either declined to sign or signed with marked reservations, tend to endorse or to use the language of the early Ethical transcendentalists, intuitionists, or mystics, though more in the sense of existentialist subjectivism or "humanistic psychology." This group includes Joseph Chuman of Bergen County, Arthur Dobrin of Long Island, and Donald Montagna of Washington, D. C., with Michael Franch of Baltimore and Judith Espenschied of Philadelphia bridging the philosophic generation gap a bit more with the older fourth generation.

With new trainees tending to reenforce their colleagues of the fifth generation, it would appear that the wave of the immediate future for philosophic sanctions in the Ethical movement will be a predominance of the "new mysticism" or "psychological humanism." But their sense of sanction is far different from that of the five founding leaders of Ethical Culture.

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J.F. Hornback 1951-1980

Born: 1919

Education and Background:

The son of a Methodist minister, Hornback graduated from Central Methodist College in Fayette, Mo. and pursued post-graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Chicago and Columbia University. He graduated in 1944 from the American Ethical Union's then-experimental training program for Leaders and served as Leader of the Westchester Society starting in 1947. He was selected to lead the St. Louis Society in 1951. In 1983, Hornback submitted his dissertation, *The Philosophic Sources and Sanctions of the Founders of the Ethical Society*, to Columbia.



Significant Contributions to the Society:

Under Hornback's leadership, the Society built and moved to its [current building](#) on Clayton Road in 1964. The Society continued to use the [Sheldon Memorial building](#) for social outreach programs and chamber music concerts for the next 10 years. In 1975, James S. McDonald established the St. Louis Society's [Humanist of the Year Award](#), which is bestowed upon St. Louis community members each year in Hornback's honor.

Defining Quote:

"We should all be working toward a new faith in which family and vocation, religion and politics, art and culture, would all be bound together."