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DOWNFALL OF A WORLD CIVILISATION

We are living in troublous times. The great religions of the world which, for thousands of years, have formed a stable foundation, an ideal for people's morals and behaviour, no longer play the same exemplary role in building up our civilisation as they did in days of old. Through the medium of churches, temples, and possibly most of all, through an authorized priesthood in charge of ceremonial and sacramental services, humanity was suggestionized to believe in an existing Providence and to adopt the course of morals and behaviour prescribed by said religious institutions as an expression of the highest degree of ethical and human perfection.

The leading principle in this cultural doctrine was thus a belief in an existing Providence, and a belief that, behind all life's experiences, there existed a Divine plan, a meaning and a Purpose. As the people in whom this doctrine was inculcated consisted mainly of persons whose religious instinct forced them to accept the idea of the existence of a Divine Providence as an obvious matter of course the clergy met but little opposition. Truly the great religions controlled the world. It should be remembered, however, that the religious instinct - the inner function behind a religious person's ability - or tendency - to trust in the existence of a Providence is no mere human invention. It is an innate psychic-organic function which may be recognized already in the animal kingdom, where an animal's scream of mortal terror is in reality the first unconscious appeal for help to a Providence completely unknown to it. What other reason could be given for this cry of terror uttered as it is only when all said animal's natural resources are at an end? No one, not even the animal itself, expects its pursuer to be seized with sudden pity and mercifully release it. Beasts of prey know of no such pity, for such a feeling would mean nothing less than self extinction.

This instinct, this inherent awareness of the existence of a Providence is also to be observed among all primitive peoples. Indeed, in this respect the feeling is so strongly developed that, at these stages of life, we cannot find evidence of a single disbeliever. To every primitive man, Providence, or the spiritual world, is a foregone conclusion. This tendency, this religious instinct, then, is present in every living being, in exactly the same way as the tendency to become a plant is laid down in every seed-grain, or as the tendency to become an animal of this or that race or species is implanted in the spermatozoa of every animal. In this way it is, to every developed human being, an indubitable fact that the ability to believe in the existence of a spiritual Providence is not something invented by human beings themselves, but, on the contrary, is something psychically-organically present in every living being. But how earthly man conjures up the outward appearance of this Providence will, however, always remain a product of his own fantasy or imaginative ability. Normally he imagines this Providence as a "Being in his own image", though naturally in a far more perfect state than that in which he at present finds himself.

Indeed, just by reason of their inclination to imagine Providence, or the Godhead, as made in their own image, the various races down through the ages have been enabled to build up their own special conception to be worshipped and paid homage to; but, common to all of them has been the innate ability, or tendency, to believe that there must be a Providence of some kind - one or possibly several "Gods". This instinct, or tendency, has been guided, or led, by prophets or by the priesthood in such a way that even to-day there are still countless millions of human beings who are bound by, or strongly attached to the conception of the existence of a Divine Providence.

If however, we consider human beings of the present age we observe that, in the struggle for life, as well as in many other fields, they have been placed in a situation in which they are enabled to gain countless numbers of experiences that would not have been possible in former ages. The modern technical community of to-day affects human beings far more intensely than former social systems which followed quite another rhythm of life than that which characterized living conditions among average human beings to-day. As a result, modern human beings are slowly beginning to grow out of their former ability to live on abstractions. The forced rhythm of life opens up numberless new experiences which unavoidably entail a readjustment of their outlook on life from the abstract to the concrete. The never-ending development of experience means that earthly man's powers of intelligence are now developing so rapidly that he often unwittingly has reached a stage where he gradually releases himself from the fetters which even down to our time have held him bound to conceptions which his intelligence now rejects as untenable, and which are, indeed, often in direct opposition to the true logic that life itself reveals in every field. Ever-growing powers of intelligence are thus gradually replacing that instinct which formerly carried man's entire sensory experience. The provisional result of this process is the growing materialism of individual

human beings, their ever-growing demands for a larger share of the purely physical "good things of life". While the functions of the instinct in the old days released the ability to contact the psychic or abstract fields of life, we now see that intelligence constitutes, on the contrary, a power by the aid of which earthly human beings are enabled, to an ever greater degree, to dissect and unravel concrete facts.

Evolution has thus caused earthly human beings gradually to lose their instinctive contact with the psychic fields of life in favour of a more vividly sagacious awareness of everything on the physical plane - the purely material world. The result of this is revealed most clearly in the fact that at the same time as man's powers of intelligence improve, his capacity for blind faith becomes ever weaker. Modern man prefers to base his existence on experience founded on intelligence, rather than on nebulous, instinctively sensed conceptions. As man's most important empirical data, transilluminated by his intelligence, are connected with the material world, it follows that materialism must naturally everywhere be victorious at first. So it is not man, but life itself, that has led him into the culminating materialism that rules the world to-day.

To behold the world of to-day is to look out over a humanity, the majority of whose members recognize only what, purely physically, can be weighed and measured. And as only physical matter lends itself to physical apprehension - can be weighed and measured - we realize that physical matter alone is the main object of modern man's varied interests. In that he believes. But the living "Something" - which in reality exists as the organizer of this matter, as the power which transforms matter, making it serviceable, either as an organism for this Something, or as the various objects it can make use of - he cannot see, and consequently cannot believe in. As, however, this living Something is in reality identical with the Diety - with the Eternal behind the Temporal - and is thus virtually identical with God, modern man, by reason of his lack of interest in the vary real existence of this living Something, has become a religious nihilist!

To be religious nowadays is thus considered the same as to be simple-minded. As an intelligent being one cannot, of course, openly believe in, or even mildly agree with outdated conceptions of bygone days belonging to man's "mental nursery". Through his growing powers of intelligence man has become adjusted to the conception that the solution of the mystery of life is of a purely material nature - is to be found solely within the sphere of matter. It must be something that can be weighed and measured - it must be space - and time- dimensional. Science has sought in vain, and is still pertinaciously searching for a solution, without however being able to offer any other answer than to all appearances everything depends on the uncontrollable and quite fortuitous whirligig of chance! According to science, everything outside man's world, including all other living creatures, as well as the very universe itself with its countless solar systems and galaxies of stars in reality consists merely of accidental dead forces! Only tentatively does anyone venture to

hazard the suggestion that other globes than our own earth could be inhabited. The endless myriads of scintillating stars that night after night swing past our wondering gaze, these stupendous cosmic systems which, millenium after millenium, circle so exactly in their appointed courses, all alike are but the lifeless sport of accidental chance, are merely inanimate combinations of matter without any higher purpose! Only our Earth, this tiny, infinitesimal particle of a speck of dust in a macrocosmal world of giants has been vouchsafed the blessing of higher forms of life; only here alone in the boundless incalculable universe is there life - only here are there intelligent, thinking beings!

But isn't this about the same as worshipping death? If our world alone is the only inhabited heavenly body in the universe, and if life here is merely a product of "heritage and environment", of "genes" and "chromosomes", and if any talk of personal immortality is "indecent nonsense", our world must be the very "Kingdom of Death", and our globe must be the strangest "corpse" that has ever existed. The philosophy of life roughly outlined above forms the logical, ultimate conclusion of a purely materialistic or physical research within the field of space and time. This research yields up nothing but purely materialistic information, and gives not the smallest suggestion of spiritual guidance as to morals or behaviour. Within such lines of research, life is but a physical process, and within this field science culminates in a sum of knowledge which admittedly is prodigious. For, according to this knowledge, man has mastered the elements! Thanks to this knowledge numberless millions of horse-power are working to maintain the welfare of present-day humanity. Everywhere nowadays people are pressing buttons and machines are belching forth useful objects by their hundreds of thousands. Merely by pressing a button or by reversing a switch we can conjure up light and warmth for our dwellings, navigate ships beneath the oceans or hurtle through the atmosphere above them. In fact, in certain fields, man has become like unto God. Furnished with usable power such as was never before even dreamt of, man commands and matter obeys his will. But behind all this power, behind all these god-like powers and skills, hovers the gloomy spectre of unbelief, of godlessness. So that, in the midst of all this amazing intellectual ability, earthly man has become - a cosmically unconscious being!

Here in the West, we have all been brought up in the Christian faith, and have all heard about the two trees in the "Garden of Eden": the "Tree of Knowledge", and the "Tree of Life". And we have all learnt that: "In the day that thou eatest of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, that day shalt thou surely die!" This prophesy, so mysterious and enigmatical to many of us, has now in our time and in our world witnessed its culminating fulfilment.

Wherever we turn an observant eye we see that the most conspicuous result of man's contact with intelligence has been his amazing skill in annihilating life, and this in a measure not even the most vivid imagination can possibly visualize. The complete extirpation of all humanity by means of his own engines of destruction is to-day at least a theoretical possibility. But, is a

mode of life, the main object of which is the death or mutilation of countless millions of human beings and animals, the annihilation of all life over enormous stretches of land area, an expression of supreme intellectuality? Certainly not! It is only an expression of that cosmic death which the eating of the fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge" would entail.

That man destroys man can only mean that, in point of fact, the human race destroys itself. Such conditions do not exist among any other forms of life on earth. Lions do not murder lions, neither do tigers murder tigers. If an occasional murder occurs here, it is only the result of periodical rutting combats, and these murders will never endanger the survival of the race or species in question. But man does not murder with his hands alone. Unlike the animal he is not reduced to murder by means of his own physical organism. No, man alone has constructed machines of such murderous capacity that now, merely by pressing a button, he is able to extirpate millions of his own species. Verily, he has become the perfect killer - an animal of genius! What wonder then that the effect of this horrifying state of affairs is a world of Fear, a world where an "all against all" battle is now raging across every continent and ocean on our globe!

That things have come to such a pass, neither Christianity or any other world religion has been able to prevent, just as they are, apparently, even less able to bring such undesirable conditions to an end. The world civilisation of to-day is doomed to sink into oblivion. War and armaments will continue, as now, to be of first importance, and hence to swallow up all material values and all man's labour - without which a new and truly humane world civilisation cannot be built up. It is just the fear of new wars that keeps alive the "all against all" war of to-day. And in the wake of this fear follows Scarcity, Misery, Invalidity and constant Death-rattle, Demoralization, and Screwed-up-prices, in short, all that cries to Heaven of lack of cultural refinement, lack of that Genius, Art and Charity, which always breaks forth and flourishes where, in mental processes, truly supreme intellectuality is at the helm.

How can it be that neither the Asiatic nor the Christian religions are able to save or release humanity from this omnipresent "all against all" war? The answer is quite simply that these religions have never been intended or adjusted to give humanity clear, intelligent analyses of the mystery of life, but, on the contrary, solely a series of concentrated resulting totals, all culminating in exhortations to adopt charity, or humanism on the highest possible plane. These religions were not created for a humanity of studied university graduates, but, on the contrary, for a humanity of beings that possessed the ability to believe unconditionally. Thus we see that they are still able to give spiritual aid to all such as are able to live on an undefined emotional experience of life's most profound problems. It is to such people that religion distributes its resulting totals with such phrases as: "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap". "Put up thy sword in its place, for all they that take to the sword, shall perish by the sword". "Love thy

neighbours as thyself". "Thou shalt not kill"., etc. But religion offers no proffs of the scientific truth of its demands. It requires blind obedience and faith, and gives no valid reasons for its demands that can be investigated by means of intelligence. It blandly claims to be the highest authority on these questions, and rejects any intelligible explanation with the words: "How unsearchable are God's judgments, and his ways past finding out".

Intelligent people accept this state of things, but are unable to accept it for themselves. They claim the right to evaluate independently everything they come across in life. They wish to use the knowledge they have gained through physical science, and are no longer able to prostrate themselves before a spiritual dictatorship. When presented with an assertion they like to see it illuminated and substantiated not merely emotionally, but also intellectually, and it is in the face of this claim that the world religions fall short. For, just as they have proved excellent food for emotional feelings, so equally impossible do they prove as food for the intellect. The various religions have not been made for people who demand concrete facts. That this is so may be deduced from the fact which at once becomes apparent if we consider Christianity in the light of intelligence. What is the nucleus of this religion? Naturally it must be made up of the tenets given to man by Christ Himself. Have we not just learnt that, in a certain situation where one of his disciples drew his sword against one of the High Priest's soldiers, Christ said: "Put up thy sword in its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword". Have we not also learnt that: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also". When on the cross, He exclaimed: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do". And, finally, he adjures us to: "Love thy God in all things, and thy neighbour as thyself". Would anyone wish to dispute that these pure and simple words uttered by Christ constitute the inmost nucleus of Christianity? Hardly. But among all his sayings we cannot find even the smallest suggestion in defence of War. Yet nonetheless the Christian states are the most warlike of all! It is among these states that the "science of war" has reached its highest perfection, indeed, it is just among these states that to-day we find the most frightful, murderous weapons that have ever been devised, i. a. the hydrogen bomb, and very possibly in the near future, also the all-devastating cobalt bomb. Christian People have become the most efficient killers of all, and are at this moment able, in a matter of seconds, to completely annihilate huge cities as well as all life around them within a radius of hundreds of miles. Is not man's capacity for killing a thousand times greater than that of the tiger? Yet when nonetheless the ministers of the Christian Church bless the weapons of war, and beseech Heaven itself to help their armies to victory, their doing so must be founded on the fact that Christianity, as taught to-day in our schools and churches, has not yet been brought to the stage of perfection expressed in the above quoted tenets, such as they were practised by their originator. All tendencies towards blessings or glorification of violence that has been admixed with Christianity must necessarily be in opposition to Christ's unmistakably

lucid precepts. War, murder and oppression of humanity are all in diametrical opposition to the Christian teachings that Christ Himself bequeathed to us. But everything in opposition to true Christian precepts must necessarily be apostasy, or anti-Christ, or in other words pure paganism. In point of fact, the world is thus not ruled by true Christianity, but by a kind of Christianity which to a large extent is mixed up with paganism. That the Christian conception of God is not pure Christianity either, does not improve matters. In this kind of Christianity we learn of a God who can be angry, can punish and be revengeful. We learn that God favours some people, redeems them and allows them to enter His Heaven, while others are allotted a miserable existence in eternal torment. We are taught of an everlasting hell as the lot of all those who do not believe in this God, at the same time that we are informed that He is the Creator of all living beings. It is explained that He is all-powerful, all-wise and all-loving. But if this is so, He must know beforehand that this or that human being will certainly follow a road that leads to perdition - to an everlasting hell. Then why does He create such people at all? Why doesn't He create everybody in such a way that every living creature is heading for His beneficent Heaven? Indeed, it is further asserted that by far the greater number of human beings will be "doomed to perdition", while only a very small "chosen flock" will be saved. But if God does not know beforehand who is destined for Hell and who is to reach His Heaven He cannot be all-wise. And if He knows beforehand, but cannot prevent it, He cannot be all-powerful. And if He is able to save the unfortunates from the torments of Hell, and does not do so, He cannot be all-loving. And what is the use of this everlasting Hell anyway, if no one can escape from it. And when, in spite of this, God creates the greater part of humanity in such a way that they inescapably must end in hell, and there is thus no other object in creating such beings, it must be because it gives Him pleasure to see them being tortured. And if this is the case, He is not only not all-loving, He must be directly perverse, directly sadistic!

This then, is the consequence of the purely intellectual unravelling of the information given us by authoritative Christianity. No wonder that such a peculiar, indeed inhumanly sadistic picture of God cannot remain the spiritual foundation for man's morals and behaviour. No wonder either that a human being of flesh and blood had to be born, one, who could show humanity a mentality and mode of behaviour that far outshone the heathen image of God as regards lovingkindness. This human being was the World-Redeemer: Jesus Christ.

Naturally Christ's pure teachings could not pass unscathed for thousands of years through an all-pervading atmosphere of paganism without being infected by, and actually distorted, in favour of heathenism. And as already pointed out, His pure and loving precepts have been reduced to mere resulting totals, which are indeed being preached from hundreds of thousands of pulpits all the world over, but which are not at all understood, and certainly not conformed to. Though the picture Christ gave us of the Godhead far outshines the image

given us in the Old Testament, the result was not so much that people tried to accept His example, but rather that they apprehended Christ as a Being who should placate God's wrath with humanity by taking upon Himself the punishment for the sins they had committed.

But this can hardly be vary flattering for God. For if He is able to forgive humanity, it is very odd that he should let an innocent Being like Jesus be crucified on the Cross in order to release everyone else from eternal perdition? An attitude and course of action like this is far more suggestive of perversity than of infinite loving-kindness. No. All these conceptions show only too plainly illogical human ways of thought. Theirs is a Godhead created in the image of man with all man's human weaknesses and imperfections. The imperfections and paganism of the Old Testament have spread only too deeply into the accounts given in the New Testament, and thus into the fundamental Book of Christianity.

It may thus easily be understood, indeed it is only natural, that such a distorted image of the Godhead cannot form the foundation of humanity's spiritual life for all time, and that there must come a time when a change would take place. The first visible effect of this impending change is already observable in the great secession from the world religions that is now so conspicuous the world over. Everywhere where materialistic science is to the fore, in upbringing and school curriculums, faith in the old conceptions of God, and in religious worship generally, is unmistakably degenerating. Materialistic godlessness comes into being, and people are coming to believe even more firmly in the accidental play of circumstance and in the lifelessness of Nature. And this they do in spite of the inconceivably logical Creation which can hardly escape observation both within and outside of our own organism, as well as in the most closely adjacent or most distant ranges of our sensory horizon. To modern man, Life has been reduced to an immense sum of concrete knowledge of matter and its forces, while at the same time he has almost completely lost touch with the psychic aspects of life, or that aspect which in reality expresses Life, or is indeed Life itself. The emotional, religious world lives on a belief in a defective God, while the materialistic or physical-scientific world lives on a belief in godlessness, on accidental chance or chaos. In reality both conceptions reveal a quite fantastic surfeit of superstition. But nothing can endure on superstition, and the world civilisation of to-day which admittedly has produced so many amazing wonders, is in spite of all its marvels, a world in disruption. Modern man is a being without any true spiritual foundation for his life. He does not realize it, but he is a being half way between two mighty epochs. He believes to-day more in death than in life. He is experiencing and quite realistically, the disruption of an immense spiritual world. But those who really have "eyes to see and ears to hear" have long since "seen" the first vibrating beams from a new cosmic sunrise on this world, and have long since "heard" the throbbings of the music of the spheres which just in the deeps of the darkest gloom will always announce the birth of a new age. An age in which the only true God in Life will once again

become the central apex of all Thought, and where Charity, purified of every animalistic clinker, will radiate from pole to pole.

This lecture was given on September 17th, 1951 in the Festival Hall of the Danish Student Association. The present condensation made by E. Gerner Larsson has been approved by Martinus.

(Translated from Danish by C. Campbell-McCallum)

Twentieth century man would rather live without a religious or spiritual basis for his life than live on a faith and ideas which he does not understand at all and which he cannot find consistent with common sense and logic. The ceaseless demand nowadays is logic, logic and more logic.

We have thus reached the kernel in the motive for this book. Its task, as a supplement to my main work "Livets Bog", is to show the truth of the relationship between terrestrial man and true logic. The revelation of this truth has become a complete proof that terrestrial man is still a long way from showing logic in the way people live together, in their organization and management of the world's wealth, because this revelation has shown the fact that the way they live together and organize and manage things is indistinguishable from ... hell, the word that means the climax of discord, and the pain and suffering or the threatened "weeping and gnashing of teeth" that result from it.

Well, what is logic? Logic is following a plan whose revelation and realization result in perfect efficiency. Perfect efficiency is the same thing as a demonstration of satisfaction, which cannot exist or be preserved at all if it means discord or pain and suffering for any creature. But such a demonstration, perfect satisfaction that does not cause discord, pain or suffering for any creature, is indeed perfect love. Logic is thus the same thing as love. Anything that is not logical cannot be love either, as it is inefficient and consequently, in addition, a loss of strength, which means the same thing as the ruination or annihilation of values without the creation of any compensatory result in justification. It is certainly a negative value, which in this case is always mental or physical pain.

So lack of affection can never be identified with logic, and it is therefore the greatest sign of backwardness and an absolute one.

It may be said in protest against this that lack of affection may well be logical or according to plan. Watching animals hunt their victims or men act in revenge and conquest, one sees in these phenomena a high degree of planning, even an extreme amount of planning or rational cunning, the aim of which is in no way to bestow genuine endearments or other expressions of affection. These phenomena always have the opposite quality and bring death and destruction to the beings they are directed against. And this protest is indeed justified. The phenomena mentioned are to some extent based on logic and may achieve the result

aimed at. But this result can in no way be realized without the one who commits the act being led unconsciously onto a mental slope down which he glides into an abyss from which he can in no wise return without experiencing the same amount of pain and suffering as he has himself caused his victim, and this shows that in reality the act described has been directed against the very one who has committed the act. But can an act that causes injury, pain, suffering and death to the one who commits it be logical? Is it not a stupidity that increases in size and importance, the more "logically", rationally and cunningly it is manifested, and the more exactly it attains its aim?

That this is really so is shown to be a fact by experience of the essential cause of the suffering; but experience of the essential cause of the suffering is only possible through evolution and inquiry, and the result of this is spiritual science. Spiritual science is not a faith or fancies about the highest laws and principles of life; it is knowledge of life's creative methods and real eternal basis of preservation. This knowledge is a guiding line for the whole of existence and for an approach to experience of true life and the true happiness linked with it.

Quotation from Martinus' book "LOGIC"