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THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN

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I

In no other respect, perhaps, are the unity and kinship of the human race more apparent than in the development of the religious rites and beliefs of the various peoples. Even in the case of their myths, where interpretation is so difficult, where there appears to be so much chaos and so little law, and where we seem at times to have merely the product of imaginative spontaneity and of the play of fancy, there is nevertheless striking similarity. Just because of the contrasts and differences that often impress one at a surface reading, the identity of the spiritual life that shimmers through these diverse manifestations becomes the more significant. As a result, added significance is reflected back to the differences themselves. Not only are these seen from the point of view of their connection with those characteristics and temperamental peculiarities which have influenced particular interpretations of life and of the world, but this knowledge in turn sheds light on the principles that are universally operative in the minds and lives of all peoples. We are thus enabled to gain a clue for the interpretation of facts which, considered by themselves, might have remained quite unintelligible.

The practical bent of the Hebrew mind with its political interests and its concern in the affairs of the temporal world stands in strong contrast with the fanciful and imaginative life of the Hindoo, as well as with that aesthetic temper of the Greek which led him to humanize nature and to find there a world of gods whose lives and struggles he delighted to portray. In comparison with these mythologies, therefore, that of the Hebrews is neither extensive nor rich in its appeals to the imagination. But this is not altogether deplorable, for where there is no luxuriant growth there can be no overshadowing thicket to retard the development of the rational and ethical phases of the religious

consciousness. If we consider that the Hebrew has genuine poetical thought and feeling—a fact that is often overlooked—and that he combines strong objective interests with a tendency to reflect on the experiences of man rather than on the beauties of nature, we can readily understand why he should have left us a mythology of a nobility and virility and of an ethical and rational import that surpasses not only that of the Aryan peoples but also that which the cuneiform writings of his Semitic kindred or the hieroglyphics of Egypt reveal to us. The accounts of the creation of the world, of the dispersion of the peoples, and of the origin and development of religious and political institutions are all illustrative of this; and so in a remarkable degree is the description of the primeval age of humanity when suffering and hardship and pain and fear had not entered into the life of man. Accounts of such a golden age are indeed common to many tribes and peoples in all parts of the earth, but nowhere do we find one having such loftiness of tone, such artistic perfection of form, and such significance of content as in the story of paradise in Genesis.

In the story of paradise several mythical motives are skilfully and artistically woven into one sublime narrative. But that which gives life and significance to the whole is a strain that we find nowhere else so explicitly emphasized. The tree whose fruit is forbidden to man is called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for, the serpent says, “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.” And when they did eat, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked,” and “the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil.”

It is this characteristic of the story of paradise, its unique emphasis on moral distinctions and the consciousness of sin, that stands as a monument to the keen spiritual and introspective insight of the Hebrew mind, from whatever source the setting or the incidents may have been derived. The story does more, however, than bear witness to the clear vision of a particular people: it furnishes us with a clue to the underlying motive that has entered as an important factor into the formation of

all myths regarding a golden age. Its emphasis on the fact of the attainment of a knowledge of good and evil indicates that the consciousness of sin was essentially bound up in the mind of the writer with his reflections concerning the originally perfect state of man. But in that which was here focal to an intensely keen ethical and spiritual vision, and therefore present as an explicit motive, we may find, I think, the principle that has been operative more or less implicitly in the case of all similar myths. The principle present *to* the consciousness of the Hebrew writer is the principle operative *in* the consciousness of all peoples.

For while moral criteria and the extent and nature of the particular acts that are considered sinful naturally vary with differences in intellectual and spiritual development, the consciousness of sin itself, in some form or other and to some degree, is, anthropology seems to teach, universal to all peoples of whom we have definite knowledge. There is always a more or less explicit consciousness of a discrepancy between our actual life and conduct and those ideals and postulates which urge themselves upon us as objectively valid, or at least as the ultimate expression of our rational and moral nature. Indeed, the consciousness of sin, meaning by it the consciousness of such non-conformity or transgression, is inextricably bound up with the very nature of human experience. Man has imagination as well as mere perception, and thought as well as mere recognition. As a rational being, moreover, he necessarily transcends the immediate data of consciousness, for to know a limit is already to have passed beyond it, and to know an object is already to have made progress toward the knowledge of other objects. Just so man has ideals as well as sentiment for the actual; and every normal moral consciousness distinguishes the actual from the possible and realizes the discrepancy between attainment and the fullest capacity and potentiality of attainment. As a thinking and moral being, man can never resolve the ought-to-be into the is, the ideal into the real. It is this more or less explicit recognition that present existence does not correspond to man's real estate that has led early peoples to the thought of a golden age in the past history of mankind in which such a dualism did not exist.

This presents to us two important considerations. Imperfection, let us notice, is regarded as degeneration from a state of perfection,—an interpretation which seems almost inevitable on the early level of thinking with its meagre scientific background, yet a doctrine which invites criticism and to which we return below. And secondly, the doctrine is stated in terms of imagination rather than of reason, of picture rather than of concept. Indeed, in the first stages of mental development all attempts to interpret experience, or to give expression to what inner consciousness reveals, necessarily occur in terms of actual existence. Truth and meaning, to some degree always present wherever there is mind, are not as yet grasped in their universal significance but are given the only form which such a consciousness explicitly possesses, namely, that of sense perception. Thus it is that principles become incarnated into incidents and are given a place in the world of space and time. In spite of the clearer vision of the Hebrew writers, essential characteristics of the spiritual life and of human experience were reduced in their hands to the level of the facts of the objective, empirical world; the universal assumed the aspect of the particular and, as such, acquired an accidental nature, or at least became dependent for its existence on causes external to itself. It behooves us, therefore, to be on our guard lest we overlook the high value and significance of such religious myths. They do not, it is true, give us the truth of historical fact, yet they do give us a much higher and more universal truth,—the truth of principle and of the experience of self-conscious beings.

Unfortunately, however, this deeper significance of the story of paradise was long shrouded from the eyes of its readers, and it was regarded as giving expression to fact rather than to principle. It is strange that this distinction does not seem to have been entirely clear to one who had the penetrating insight into the historical development of the religion and culture of the human race and the keen discernment of the deeper implications of man's moral and spiritual experience that was characteristic of St. Paul, for it was he who freed Christianity from its exclusively Judaic expression and liberated its spirit from the historical trammels that might otherwise have confined it to spatial and temporal

bounds. In Origen and St. Ambrose, indeed, we find tendencies to allegorical interpretation, and Philo had assumed a much more extreme position. St. Augustine, however, ascribes to the story of paradise significance of historical fact, and in this many have followed him even to the present day, believing that its value would be lost if historicity were denied. The significance of this story, however, lies precisely in the fact that it is the statement of a universal principle, an eternal truth. If we commit the fallacy of *hysteron-proteron* and regard the action of our first parents as the cause of our characteristic form of experience and of our consciousness of sin, instead of our experience as the cause of the story of paradise, we become involved in all sorts of difficulties which have troubled theologians for ages. How, for example, could a single act and the sin of one man pollute the lives and affect the destinies of all generations in the sense that such a point of view must necessarily maintain? Such difficulties vanish of themselves if we give the story its higher significance of apprising us of a universal aspect of experience, for it is precisely the nature and function of the myth to portray some law of nature or regularly recurring phenomenon, such, to use a more familiar example, as the movement of the heavenly bodies or the succession of day and night, as incidents or actions performed once only at a certain definite time.

II

If we fail to understand the principle that was operative in the minds of those who have given us the story of paradise and similar myths, and interpret these as the statement of historical fact, as is so commonly done by the defenders of traditional notions, we implicitly reject the hypothesis of evolution and all views of the world-process which find in it development and progress. The story of man, we must then say, is a story of weakness, of failure, and of degeneration; it records a genuine and unmitigated physical, moral, and spiritual loss. In our age no doctrine can rest on mere authority, or on the statement of writings whose very date and authorship are under dispute. It has therefore

become necessary to attempt a formulation of the logical grounds for the view that runs so counter to the procedure of present-day science and to its results in the fields of biology and anthropology. Thus the attempt has been made to reach conclusions that may justify the traditional view of the golden age and of the fall of man by means of an argument based on a given and indisputable fact of consciousness. The conscience of all ages and of all peoples, it is pointed out, bears witness to the fact that man's relations to that which he regards as the highest reality of the universe are not what they ought to be; and it is this consciousness of sin which, properly understood, nullifies every attempt to trace an historical progress in man's views concerning God and in his relations with him.

The argument, in many cases at least, as, for example, in the clear exposition of it that Dr. Kellogg gives in his volume, *The Genesis and Growth of Religion*, is directed solely against the purely naturalistic, or so-called scientific, interpretation, without taking into consideration the point of view of an idealistic philosophy. Mankind, we are told, has universally testified that there is something in life and in experience that must be rectified, and it is just this rectification which has ever constituted one of the most essential functions of religion and which alone can explain many of its rites and ceremonies. To neglect or underestimate this factor of the consciousness of sin, as many of the "scientific" school have done, is therefore of necessity to invalidate the conclusions of the investigation. For the consciousness of sin is significant of the pathological character of man's spiritual life; it testifies that our relations to God are not of a normal but of an abnormal character. Those who do not take the consciousness of sin into their reckoning, therefore, are led to results as fallacious as those of the psychologist would be if he studied exclusively the inmates of an asylum and interpreted his results as a description of mind, or those of the morphologist who should examine diseased tissue without knowing that it was unsound. Now, if conscience reports to us a serious disorder in man's moral and spiritual constitution, must we not assume that the history of humanity shall be a record of degeneration, of moral corruption, and of a loss of intellectual power and discernment? It is

a characteristic of sin, wherever we find it, that it weakens the ability to draw fine moral distinctions, and tends to modify for the worse all religious feelings, beliefs, and conceptions. Sin is a factor, which, only too often unconsciously to ourselves, robs us of our power, just as, in the old story, through Delilah's agency Samson's "strength went from him" while even he at first "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." So, gradually the voice of conscience became hushed, and man's eyes blinded to the spiritual realities of the world, until he wandered far from the path of righteousness and truth upon which he had been set by his Creator and which he had trodden until the day when he allowed sin to enter into his life. Sin, moreover, inevitably begets fear and thus leads man to grasp at any anaesthetic which may suggest itself as able to relieve the mental anguish and pain. Thus the lofty conception of a righteous and all-wise God who holds man responsible for acts that he, as a free agent, performs, gradually became blurred, and man embraced instead the doctrines of determinism which seemed to relieve him from responsibility, of atheism or agnosticism which freed him from the haunting idea of moral retribution, or of pantheism which allowed him to believe that sin and evil have no reality but are mere *entia imaginationis*.

We thus find repeated in certain modern thinkers the same general movement of consciousness that originally gave rise to the story of paradise; conclusions, too, are unchanged except in so far as they are clothed in the forms of reflection and logical argumentation instead of in those of the poetic imagination. The consciousness of shortcoming, of imperfection, of the discrepancy between the actual and the potential in man's nature, leads to the postulation of a state in which all capacities are enjoying full and normal realization; and this state of perfection is represented as having prevailed for a longer or shorter period in the dim past of man's history. The consciousness of sin, once the principle giving birth to those theories of the golden age which are expressed in the myths of various peoples, becomes the explicit basis for a doctrine of degeneration and for the belief that man's relations to God were once pure and unstrained and his conceptions of God and of his purposes absolutely true, even though simple and elementary in character.

Thus to emphasize the consciousness of sin is, indeed, a very important corrective to those theories of religion which assume a purely naturalistic point of view and leave out of account all deeper psychological considerations. The awareness of short-coming, together with the frustration of purposes and the resistance met with in the realization of ideals, are, indeed, factors which have ever driven man to God, as well as sources of religious ritual and ceremony, and even, as we have seen, principles underlying myth and dogma; and the form which the conception of a deity takes and the way in which he is worshipped vary with the stage of development of peoples, that is to say, with the character of their ideals. But while we do well in our study of religion to take serious account of the consciousness of sin, its true significance is not revealed either in the myth or in the argument that we have reproduced above. The objection to the story of paradise regarded as statement of actual historical fact (aside from the purely scientific difficulties, with which we are not here concerned) is that, in violation of true philosophical method, it resorts to transcendent principles,—its explanations are in terms of external facts which break in *ab extra* to produce effects that have no logical warrant in, or rational connection with, the nature of the experience in question. The objection to the attempted logical formulation of the doctrine of degeneration is that, although it assumes as its basis an undeniable fact of experience, the consciousness of sin, it altogether neglects to develop the inner implications of this consciousness or to bring it into relation with other factors and principles of experience. While the consciousness of sin is not explained in terms of some wholly external and therefore accidental factor, as in the case of the myth, it is regarded as something abnormal that has interfered with the regular order of things, as something pathological, and therefore as itself accidental. Instead of considering carefully the significance of the consciousness of sin, it is merely assumed that this is foreign to man's true nature and his progress and that it can have no place in the regular course of spiritual development. Before, however, we can assert that this consciousness testifies that man's relations to God are in an abnormal state, must we not consider just what the normal relation of a rational being to

God is, and what it implies, as well as how it can become possible? The very thinkers who insist most strongly on a degeneration theory give in other connections an interpretation of the consciousness of sin that is quite different from that set forth above. The state of holiness and of closest spiritual communion with God, we are told, are reached by the way of repentance, and to this no one can enter save through the gateway of the consciousness of sin. In further objection to the general argument it may be urged that the consciousness of sin tells us only that man has failed in his endeavors to realize the highest ideals of which he knows, or that he has acted in a manner contrary to them; it cannot tell us that mankind is suffering from spiritual degeneracy and that history is the record of moral failure. This could be proved only if it were shown that the propagation and growth of sin had not been interfered with or its fruits destroyed by other agencies. And finally, we may ask, does not the very fact of the universality of the consciousness of sin, which the argument so strongly emphasizes, seem itself to indicate that there is at least one very important sense in which this cannot be regarded as abnormal? It is certainly bound up with every experience of which we have any knowledge, if we leave out of consideration, as we may for present purposes, the nature of Jesus' conscious experience.¹

III

No account of experience can be true that recognizes only pessimistic elements. The spiritual perception of the Hebrew writer was too acute not to realize that the story of paradise was not complete merely with an account of the coming of sin into the world. He recognized that in a sense sin was doomed from the moment of its conception, that its power was not to be forever

¹ The question of the nature of Jesus' will presents to orthodox theology an even more complicated problem than that with which philosophy has to cope regarding the relation of man's actual or empirical willing to his real will, that is, to his deepest nature brought to a self-consciousness of itself. We must not, however, overlook in our speculations such passages as Matt. 26 39, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

supreme over man but that one would arise who would bruise its head. Likewise those who give the story a factual interpretation or who find logical grounds for their theory of degeneration, nevertheless maintain that the true end of man is not death but life, not hopeless misery but everlasting happiness. Their argument, it is true, seeks explanations not in terms of principles immanent in human experience or in the history of man but in terms of external and transcendent factors. Salvation from sin is based, not on any principle that God had put into the soul of man when he fashioned it after his own image and breathed into it the breath of life, but on a power from without divinely appointed to redeem mankind. This power alone, we are told, can break the shackles that bind the individual and humanity, and elevate mankind to its former high estate. That Jesus is, as he seems at times to have referred to himself, the son of man, tends to be overlooked; he who led men to the consciousness of their true relation to God is called, in distinction from all others, Christ, the Son of God. As it was an accidental factor that brought about the fall of man, so it is a power equally foreign that achieves his salvation. Objectionable as such a formulation of the doctrine may be, this connection in story and argument between the fall of man and his redemption, between the consciousness of sin and the assurance of salvation, expresses a very significant truth. Latent in every experience there is a basis for optimism, and it is this that becomes the rallying-cry of every striving soul.

While it is true in a sense, as the story of paradise tells us, that before man attains to a knowledge of good and evil he lives a sinless existence, it is equally true that coincident with the consciousness of sin there is the consciousness of a power that may be turned against sin. For while the consciousness of sin rests on the antinomy between the real and the ideal in human experience, on the contradiction between that which man actually is and that which he recognizes as what he ought to be, it is important to notice that the ideal is not a mere figment of the imagination but is the ideal of the experiencing person; it is the expression of his deepest nature, that with which he identifies his real self and with which he feels himself in unity and accord. It is in these deeper recesses of his own heart that man not only finds

the revelation of the need for a better and a truer life, but it is here also that he receives the inspiration to strive for the highest that he knows, and the strength to follow after until he shall have attained.

It thus appears that the consciousness of sin is really the first step in the overcoming of sin, the guarantee that the better land of which we have a glimpse is not one from which we are forever excluded but one which we are already on the point of occupying. Though man is prone to contrast that which is actual in his experience with an ideal, he is in some sense and to some extent already in possession of this ideal. Unless, indeed, his real nature were already higher than the actual state which he deplores, he could not be conscious of the fact that he has not exercised his spiritual capacities to their fullest extent. The power of an object is limited by something to which this power merely extends, but the activity of consciousness, if a mechanical phraseology may be pardoned, has also a reflective movement or aspect. If the object shall be a limit *for* it and not merely *to* it, if, that is, it shall be conscious that there is a limit, its activity must extend not merely to the limit but beyond it, otherwise it could not know that it was limited but only that it had expended the full extent of its power. Thus it is not until man has taken self-conscious possession of himself and of his ideal that he can become aware of the fact that the moral power which constitutes him a rational being has not come to its full expression. From this point of view, the consciousness of sin does not mean that man has fallen from any height of development to which he had attained, but that he has risen ideally above his former level in such a way as to estimate and criticise it. It means that man has arrived at a stage when he has become conscious of ideals that he is striving by very nature of his being to realize. And this consciousness, indeed, is the first and the necessary step toward the realization of these ideals and of man's true nature as a self-conscious being.

If, then, we regard sin as the negation of that which ought to be, we may say that the consciousness of sin prepares the way for the negation of sin and thus for the higher affirmation of the moral and spiritual ideals that underlie our world of reality.

Suggestions of this interpretation may be found as early as in the writings of Augustine, even though his statements are often open to all the objections that may be urged against the factual interpretation of the story of paradise and of the life and mission of Jesus. While contending that sin came into the world only in the original act of disobedience of our first parents, Augustine nevertheless recognizes that this act must have been preceded by certain impulses and desires that were not what they ought to be. For, "if man had not already begun to please himself, the devil would not have been able to bring him to a fall." It would be impossible, moreover, in the absence of psychological motives, to impute disobedience to Adam or to consider his action sinful. Now all these impulses and desires of man that run counter to God's will and to the god-nature of man must necessarily be transformed before man can be a son of God or reach the perfection that represents his goal. From this point of view, then, the fall of man was not so much the time when man became bad or the means of his becoming so as it was the bringing to light of the latent evil that was hidden in his sensuous nature. In so far, therefore, Augustine tells us, the fall was not an unmitigated evil, for in no other way than by becoming aware of evil could man have rid himself of it. Therefore, instead of saying that the consciousness of sin confirms the pathological spiritual condition of man, one ought rather to say that the consciousness is evoked by the sting that is occasioned by convalescence from a disease which, though painless while it ran its course, was none the less death-bringing.

But why, one might ask, should it be the convalescence and not the disease that is fraught with so much pain and unrest? Indeed, the mental anguish bound up with the consciousness of sin, contrasting, as it does, so sharply with the contentment and peace of mind that precedes it, is itself one of the motives which has led many to the hypothesis of degeneration, or has at least been believed to confirm such a view. But again a consideration of the case must lead to opposite conclusions. That act by which a man comes to recognize the sinfulness of actions is the same as that by which he comes to a consciousness of himself and of his true nature and mission. It is the act by which man becomes an

object to himself and recognizes that as the subject of such knowledge he rises not only above his objective or actually realized self but above all other objects of the world as well. Thenceforth he can no longer view himself as a child of nature; in coming to a consciousness of self, he necessarily separates himself from the natural order and asserts himself as a member of a kingdom of ends. Such a one loses the fresh and joyous spontaneity and naïveté that characterized him when he lived a life of nature or, if we will, when he regarded all nature as living his life. Turned in upon itself, as it were, his mind not only loses that feeling of oneness and of unity with the world but even comes into conflict with itself. The price of self-consciousness is strife between the spiritual and the natural elements in man. This is the experience which St. Paul has portrayed in so masterly a way when he says, for example, "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Hence the cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the results are worth the cost. It is through such sincere questioning and through the moral endeavor to which it gives rise that St. Paul solves the riddle and is enabled to testify, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

True freedom and complete selfhood are not a heritage into possession of which man comes at birth, but they are, as Fichte and Carlyle attest, things that must be achieved. It is only in the throes of ceaseless striving that the soul is born into the kingdom of God; its birthright is gained only through a struggle, and this struggle means pain and unrest. To regard this struggle, therefore, as something pathological or as significant of degeneration is as utterly false as it is to assert that living in the state of, and on the plane of, nature is living the life that is "natural" to man. Man is sent into the world with a spiritual mission. He has an appointed goal, the development of his own nature as a rational being, and this goal he can reach only by way of the cross. Striving and unrest, it is true, are not ends in themselves: they are not themselves the final goal. When Fichte interprets ex-

perience as an infinite or never-ceasing striving, this expression of his titanic spirit and of his earnest moral nature needs the corrective that is found in the philosophy of his more intellectualistically-minded successor. For, while man cannot remain on the plane of existence which he occupies on entering the world, the end of his development must, nevertheless, be the restoration on a higher plane of the peace of mind, the harmony with all nature, and the unity with God that he there enjoys. Nevertheless, as Hegel points out in his suggestive remarks on the story of paradise, it is important to remember that, while Jesus said that we must become as children if we would enter the kingdom of God, this is very far from saying that we must always remain as children. We must have the trust in God and the harmony with him that is characteristic of childhood, yet the relation ought not to remain the merely immediate one of blind, naïve confidence. We must live not only in the light of God but also in the knowledge of God; if spiritual things are to have real significance for us, we must become truly conscious of God and of the intimate bond of relationship between God and self. To attain to this, however, we must first come to a consciousness of selfhood, and this involves that cleavage between the natural and spiritual which is the basis in our experience of the consciousness of sin. Viewed, then, in their concrete setting and in the light of the whole development of experience, mental anguish and unrest assume an entirely different complexion from that which they bear when we consider them abstractly, or merely contrast them with the preceding state of satisfaction and contentment.

As the consciousness of sin is involved in the attainment of the consciousness of self, so also it is a necessary step in the process by which we come to know God and the deeper significance of spiritual things. Again we find it profitable to turn to St. Augustine. Sin, he tells us, must be conceived through an antithesis without which it never could have been. God did not allow man to sin in order that he might punish but in order that he might have an opportunity to save and thus to manifest his deepest and most essential nature, that of love, to man. Christ did not come because of Adam, but Adam because of Christ. Sin came into the world only that grace might the more abound.

Only by understanding the sacrifice that God was willing to make in order that man's relations with him might not be cut off, could man come to see God as he really is or to sound the depths of his love; only when man learned to know the God who suffers with him and for him, could he come to know the true God. And, we might add, man must first have experienced that loneliness of heart which comes from feeling himself shut off from the objective world before he can appreciate in any measure the sweetness and delight of communion with God.

But there is also another important sense in which the knowledge of God is bound up with the consciousness of sin. A conception of the highest realities, Kant has helped us to see, can be gained only by one who rises above the causal nexus of the natural order and those desires, instincts, and impulses which drive him blindly on to action, and lives in the light of the freedom that characterizes him as a rational being. To acquire, then, any adequate conception of the nature either of man or of God, man must distinguish himself from all objects of nature and recognize and assert himself as a subject who wills and who knows. Thus to know one's self, to come to an explicit consciousness of freedom and of rationality, is essential for a knowledge of Him who is revealed in all that is but whose highest and truest revelation is in the human heart. The true God is found not by looking without but by looking within, for the true God is not an object of perception but is spirit and is truth. Elijah, therefore, could not find God in the strong wind that rent the mountains, or in the earthquake, or in the fire, but only in the still small voice of his own heart. To learn the nature of spirit, however, man's spirit must return from its objective interests back upon itself; by such a recoil alone can spirit differentiate itself from the external order of nature and come to see itself in its own true character. And it is this occupation with one's own inner life, this reflection on self, that occasions the realization of the contradiction between one's deepest and most essential nature of freedom and that causal bondage of sensuous being which prevents the complete attainment at any time of all one knows and really wills. It is through the consciousness of sin, then, that we are led to a truer knowledge of God because the

very conception of God as universal spirit, and not as merely a particular object among other objects, must be gained through a consciousness of our own essential nature. Only he who knows the self and its implications can conceive of a God who is not limited by external forces and the restraints of the space-time order but who is truly infinite and Lord over all. Confirmations of this may be found wherever we look in the history of religion. It was Jesus who revealed to mankind a universal God of love whose relations to man are expressible only in terms of the relations of spirit to spirit, of self to self. But the time for Jesus' coming was not fulfilled until Jahveh had passed beyond the stage of a naturalistic god who needed to be nourished and strengthened by food and drink, or a political god struggling for the supremacy of his people and for the extermination of rival gods and their worshippers, a god who delighted in the blood of goats and of calves and who could be appeased by sacrifice alone. Suffering and misfortune must have intervened to direct man's mind from the external world with its goods and pleasures back to the greater world within, to the realities of self and spirit. Israel needed first to know the God who requires righteousness and obedience, who delights in heartfelt praise and thanksgiving, and who delivers in times of spiritual trouble and distress, before it could understand the import of a spiritual kingdom and of a God whose throne is in the hearts of men, or before it was prepared for the fuller revelation of God in the life and teachings of Jesus.

But just as the consciousness of sin is inevitably bound up with the development by which man comes to the consciousness of self and to the knowledge of God's true nature, so also is it a necessary step in the progress by which self comes to know other selves, and man his fellow-man. And, furthermore, until man breaks the ties that confine him to the causal nexus of nature, and ceases to regard himself as a natural object, he cannot know of any other kinship between men but that of blood, or realize that any duties can be binding beyond the limits of such relationship. Man must rise above the level of nature, the state in which he is a mere part interacting with other parts, swayed hither and thither by the response of desire and impulse to the

forces of environment, before he can conceive of that spiritual bond which unites man to man and all to God. Whoever fails to distinguish between himself and the objects of his consciousness or the order of nature cannot enter the "City of God," but remains shut up in the seclusion of clan or tribe, together with a small body of related individuals and a finite, naturalistic God. It was only, for example, after the Greeks had lost their joyous, naturalistic temper, when misfortune had turned their thoughts to the inner life, that the Stoic, in shutting himself up in the seclusion, as he believed, of the self, first discovered that he was a citizen not of Greece but of the world. Similarly, the religion of India overcame caste distinctions and proclaimed a message of salvation for all men only in so far as it was successful in directing the attention from God as an existent object to be worshipped by elaborate ritual and sacrifice to the inner principle in the recesses of man's consciousness. And while the further development of Brahmanism and of Buddhism was checked by its too extreme subjectivistic emphasis, so that it never attained to the conception of a universal God who is the source and preserver of all that exists, yet the advance from the naturalistic to the subjectivistic level of thought, even though attended by intense mental anguish and unrest, was yet the stepping-stone to the conception of the kinship of all men and to a religion which was universal in its nature and in its appeal.

The consciousness of sin, then, is not a pathological state that signifies moral degeneration: it tells us rather that man is created not as part of nature but as lord over it. It means that man not merely has a place in a concatenated order of things but that he is the source of ideas and of ideals to which he attempts to give embodiment. Man does, it is true, start from the stage of innocence, and as long as, and in so far as, he lives on this plane and is devoid of ideals and of rational ends with which he identifies himself and which he aims to impress upon the world, he occupies a place within a mechanical system and may, in a sense, be said to be in harmony with the universe round about him. As a rational being, however, it is impossible that man should rest here. He must not only be in harmony with the universe but he must will to be, and know himself as being, in harmony with

the best that he knows. It is the nature of a thing to be part of a rigid causal order, but it is the nature of a self freely to determine itself to become and to be a member of a kingdom of ends. If, however, it is the mission of man not only to be part of a world which the Creator pronounced good but to determine himself to goodness and to grow in spiritual strength by the effort actively to impress his ideals upon the world, he must first of all take conscious possession of himself. It is true, of course, that when man arrives at this stage he may, and often does, betray his own interests and, in acting contrary to his ideals, fall out of harmony not only with the natural order but with the spiritual order as well. Nevertheless, the consciousness of sin is significant of progress in the spiritual life of man and of development in the history of religions, because it ushers in the birth of selfhood and the knowledge that God and man are spiritual and not natural beings; because it is bound up with the self-determination of the individual under the guidance of rational ideals; and because it affords the only basis for regarding man as a being who has ultimate value and significance in the eternal kingdom of God.