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THE PHILOSOPHY OF FELIX ADLER: AN EXPOSITION AND
EVALUATION

by

Raymond James Ramsden

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
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The Philosophy of Felix Adler: An Exposition and Evaluation

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Preface

The following dissertation is an attempt to depict Felix Adler's philosophy in its general outlines. On this account his two outstanding works, An Ethical Philosophy of Life and The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal have been consulted most frequently, as containing the crux of his mature thought. The task undertaken is greater than the exposition justifies, and it is hoped that omissions which have thereby necessarily occurred will be found to be omissions of elaboration and exposition of minor aspects of Adler's work which have been at least touched upon, and not omissions of interpretation--though an inadequate beginning acquaintance with Adler's work will be manifest in a lack of finesse in the matter of emphasis. No sins of interpretation have been wilfully committed.

In Part V, the depiction of Adler's relation to John Dewey is not to be construed as an attempt to interpret the former through the latter. Dr. Adler's ethical idealism and Dr. Dewey's social views, while they have many points in common, differ radically at other points. Their points of similarity and difference would constitute sufficient material for a detailed study in itself. This exposition,

in so far as it compares their views, is an attempt to bring into the light some of the common aspects with the aim of bringing about greater clarity of the subject-matter involved. No attempt is made to contrast their metaphysical views.

No attempt is made to trace the development of Adler's ethical theory in ethical history. The connection between the Aristotelian view of personality as exhibited in the Nichomachaen ethics, and Adler's perfectionism; his emphasis on the importance and value of frustration with the Stoic doctrines; his escape from Kant's extreme formalism and his union of formalistic and perfectionist elements of theory; the relationship of his "regulative principle" to the ethics of the rationalists of modern philosophy, all constitutes most interesting material, but lack of time has prevented any attempt at analysis of these aspects.

The bibliography contains many of Adler's published works; and most of those listed are available at the Library of the University of Wisconsin or the Wisconsin State Historical Library.

Part One

Dr. Felix Adler, "a German by descent, a Jew by blood¹ and a Rationalist by conviction,"² and an ethical idealist of the first order³ has left his mark in the annals of social work, education, and philosophy. He was no "leisure-class" philosopher. And though he may have been a Rationalist by conviction he was pragmatic in his insistence on applicability and workability of theory in practice. As a great ethical thinker Adler divorced ethics from its "tutelage to metaphysics and theology"³ and emphasized its ability to stand on its own feet, and developed the implications of this view for right conduct. Adler's marks are indelible and there is no doubt that he is to be considered one of the outstanding religious teachers, educators, and social workers of his age.

Separation from Hebraism

Felix Adler was the son of a German Rabbi who ministered

1 Chicago Times, May 31, 1879.

2 J. Ratner, one of Adler's most penetrating critics, writes, "Dr. Felix Adler is, unquestionably, one of the leading ethical and religious teachers in America." "The Foundations of Adler's Ethical Philosophy," Monist, 33: 570.

2
4

for many years at the temple of Emmanu-El in New York City. Trained from the start in Reform Judaism for the Rabbinate, he tells us in his own story that the cumulative effects of the reading and thinking of his youth caused him to make a last minute decision against accepting the position for which he had been trained. His first creative thinking was motivated in Church School by his skeptical attitude toward the orthodox explanation of the Creation. This experience was followed by a great deal of reading which further weakened his faith in current religious dogmas. As an adolescent, pursuing his theological studies in Columbia University he failed to find solace in apologetics. His experiences and studies in Europe while he was working for the Doctorate culminated his apprehensions and caused his separation on his return to New York in 1874:

"I had lately returned from abroad where I had had a fairly thorough course in Biblical Exegesis, and had become convinced that the Mosaic religion is so to speak a religious mosaic, and that there is hardly a single stone in it which can with certainty be traced to the authorship of Moses. There was especially one passage in the Sabbath service which brought me to the point of resolution. I mean the words spoken by the officiating minister as he holds up the Pentateuch scroll, 'And this is the Law which Moses set before the people of Israel.' Was I to repeat these words? It was impossible. I was certain that they would stick in my throat. On these grounds the separation was decided by me and became irremediable."

5

3 Current Opinion, Vol. 65, p. 112. Aug. 18,

4 Chicago Times, May 31, 1879.

5 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 26.

But his divorce from certain theological tenets and determination not to serve as their champion, growing as it did over a period of years, was not painful and violent as is often the case, and the division was made only after a cool and careful weighing of the evidence for and against his action. It was accompanied by the determination to separate the true from the false, to part with the mixture of errors, "survivals of primitive tabus and polytheistic mythological elements" in the Jewish religion and to keep at the same time the fund of truth which he felt it contained. That truth he found and expressed in a profound reverence for the Hebrew prophets, the "Old Masters," because they had been the first to emphasize and exalt what he felt to be supremely important, the concept of morality as divine in source and spiritual in its inmost essence; and the first to elevate to a position of supreme importance the moral power which they felt pervaded the world.⁶ He discarded as false the old Hebraic determinism and the monotheistic conception of the deity. Adler saw in Jesus a personage who is to be revered for two outstanding contributions to mankind: his unique solution of the problem of evil, especially in the guise of oppression under which the Jews of his time were suffering; and his doctrine of love, which taught him the true meaning of Jesus' doctrine of forgiveness. Jesus' solution of the problem of evil was to offer passive resistance--Adler calls it an ethic of non-violation. Tolera-

6 J. Bois writes, "The men of the two pictures in the Meeting House (of the Ethical Culture Society), Isaiah and Kant, dominated Adler." "New Religions of America: Ethical Culture," Forum, Vol. 75, p. 252.

tion in the face of oppression amounts in Jesus' explanation to spiritual triumph over one's enemies, because oppression is to be used as a means of self-purification: after an examination of the motives of the oppressor, let the oppressed examine himself and purge himself of those same motives which exist in his own being. When smitten, turn the other cheek. One's own emancipation from the control of such harmful motives constitutes the worth; while victory, the acquisition of a clearer, more pure personality. This solution Jesus offers for evil plays an important role in Adler's philosophy and as we shall see became an integral part of his theory for the development of one's ethical, spiritual personality. Jesus' conception of the spiritual nature of man, and his appeal for the expulsion from one's self of all the evil appetites and desires, are antecedent to communion with God and efficacious in establishing purity; and these considerations are also important in Adler's philosophy. As every man retains in himself a ray of light from God, the eternal luminary, in the form of absolute spiritual purity, and all men are one in so far as the rays converge at the focus of Godhead, to love men is to be conscious of one's spiritual unity with them in a central life, and to give effect to their consciousness.

Adler says that this conception of spirituality as purity is not as the Hebraic religion maintained, the sole aspect of morality: it was negative and "non-violational" in that it stressed retirement from worldly affairs and the importance

of an afterlife at the expense of the development of the "here and now:" it was connected with a doctrine of other-worldliness and failed to embrace the world with a view to penetrating it with the spiritual purpose Adler felt to be as inherent and real as life itself, and thus transforming it. Adler felt the necessity of discarding the apocalyptic vision, the Hebraic view that the world was soon to end, which accompanied Jesus' spiritual concept of morality and ethical fatalism. Instead he felt that ethics was somehow instrumental to the development of the individual in the here and now. He wanted to set up as the goal of activity the affirmation, or the expression of that ethical personality innate in each of us, of the holy thing without which man loses his worth, which required a more positive definition of the spiritual worth of the individual than Jesus gave:

"Christian ethics has promoted the moral development of mankind in a thousand ways. It has helped even by its mythological embodiment of a transcendental idea to place the individual more firmly on his feet. It has emphasized the inner springs of conduct; it has given prominence to certain principal virtues of the private life but, like every other product of the mind and aspirations of man, it exhibits the limitations of the time and of the social conditions under which it arose. The conditions have since changed. Society has become infinitely more complex, and in consequence new moral problems have forced themselves upon men's attention; and with the help of Christianity itself the human race has advanced beyond the point of view for which Christianity stands."

7

7 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 42

Adler's Debt to Kant

Adler studied in Vienna and at the University of Berlin. He received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg in 1873.⁸ He studied under Zeller, Duhring, Stenthal, Bonitz, and particularly Herman Cohen, from whom he received the systematic, thorough study of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which served as the foundation for his mature philosophy. This rabbinical training, and training in modern idealistic philosophy and rationalistic ethics was also reflected in his outlook on life by an attitude of temperance and qualification which is sometimes marked to a singular degree.

Adler's religious and intellectual development was concomitantly corroborated by a development of character. He tells us that his experiences as a student in Europe gave him an early and deep respect for women. He witnessed the low morality of some of his colleagues and would not allow himself to compromise his own high standards. He felt that women embodied reverential aspects, the nature of which he did not make clear until years later. This respect for the inviolability and moral worth of the individual, first gleaned from Biblical studies and supplemented by an innate respect for the inviolable character of women was further enhanced and found its theoretic validation in the rationalistic ethics of Kant.⁹

Kant's ethical philosophy was based on the belief in the supreme moral worth of the individual, and the belief in an in-

⁸ New York Times, April 16, 1933, Obituary notice. Adler's

herent sense of duty in everyone to recognize this worth and to bring it forth--a view common to the Hebraic religion in which Adler was being trained. Adler became a thorough-going Kantian idealist, and Kant's ethical suppositions were taken over in toto as a basis for the development of the new ethical philosophy which he had in mind.¹⁰ Though Adler challenged the theoretic validation of the ethical postulates, these assumptions are central in his philosophy. It was because Kant failed to validate, to establish on a sound theoretical basis his "Holiness" conception, the belief that every individual may be treated as an end in himself, that Adler eventually broke with Kant's ethical views, though he appears to have kept the Kantian metaphysics and theory of mind (with its "reality-producing" functions, which too will later be shown to be all-important for Adler) throughout his life.

It was, however, his studies in critical Biblical exegesis which were the most weighty factor in causing him to forsake his paternal religion on his return to New York.

Adler and Emerson

Adler was strongly attracted to R. W. Emerson when he made

death was widely publicised. Born in Alzey, Germany, August 13, 1851, he came to New York with his father in 1857. He died peacefully on April 24, 1933, at the age of eighty-one.

9 See Adler's discussion of Kant's ethics in An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 73-90.

10 How he gradually outgrew and revised the Kantian ethical doctrine (which was the phase of Kant's philosophy with which

his acquaintance in 1875,¹¹ and acknowledges a debt to him, especially for the encouragement he received from his doctrine of self-reliance.¹² He "read and reread" the Essays. He valued Emerson's exalted view of the self¹³ and his faith in self-reliance; and he had a deep sympathy for Emerson's belief in the existence of an Over-Soul. But Adler came gradually to see that Emerson's philosophy stressed, in a phrase of Aldous Huxley's, "beautifully being at the expense of profitably doing," profitably in the sense of recreating our environment. Emerson was hardly a philosopher of action: his philosophy consisted of a spiritual contemplation, a continued identification of one's self with the eternal One with which we are all identified in endless variety. Though Emerson expressed the Oneness of the unity, and the endless variety of which it was composed, he did not cherish variety for its own sake (which Adler stressed, and the implications of which will be presently shown), but cherished it because it taught that behind or above it the One with which we should continually seek to identify ourselves was there.

 he was particularly concerned) will be the subject of a detailed analysis in Part II.

11 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 27.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

William James also pays tribute to this aspect of Emerson's philosophy: "The matchless eloquence with which Emerson proclaimed the sovereignty of the living individual electrified and emancipated his generation, and this bugle-blast will doubtless be regarded by future critics as the soul of his message." "Address at the Emerson Centenary in Concord," printed in Memories and Studies, Longmans, Green, and Company, New York, 1911, pp. 25-26.

Introduction to Socialism

While Adler was studying in Europe his theories were given a further practical bent by his accidental introduction to Socialism and the problems of workingmen, when he happened upon Albert Lange's Die Arbeiterfrage (The Labor Question). Although he previously had been not unaware of the extent of economic poverty and its accompanying social evils, he had never before been so forcibly impressed with the necessity for immediate social reforms. He became sensitive to the misery and unhappiness caused by poverty, and economic slavery; and was impressed with the fact that economic poverty was accompanied by a still worse evil, cultural poverty. He began to realize that the capitalistic system emphasized wealth and economic success, and implicitly condemned the manhood of the poor.

Under the Capitalistic system the desire for personal emulation is best satisfied by an accumulation of material goods, or of buying power. Socially earned income is privately usurped and, according to Karl Marx, two social classes tend to arise--the exploiters and the exploited. The rights of the workingmen are trampled underfoot in the rush to reap the materialistic rewards of enterprise that rightfully belong, not to the comparatively few owners of production goods, but to the workers themselves who produce wealth. Such an economy cut at the very roots of Adler's philosophy by hindering the moral development of the individual, the full development of person-

ality and social consciousness. The economic policy of Marxian Socialism seemed to him more adequate in so far as it demanded a more equitable distribution of wealth on the basis of which much privation could be avoided, and more time for personal development would be available for the average worker. But Marxian Socialism neglected to strike at the root of the capitalistic evils when it emphasized the distribution of material goods as the supreme aim of activity. Adler felt that the supreme end of activity should be the moral development of the individual, that is, the development of his potentialities, to which all other activity should be subsidiary:

"(Marxian Socialism holds that) Man is worth while; and for the sake of the worth in him, the unfavorable circumstances which stifle the promise of his nature are to be changed. My objection in this case is that the higher spiritual nature of man, or the notion of personality, is left indefinite and remains vaguely in the background. It supplies indeed the initial motive for practical efforts; but the instrumental relation of the goods of life to the supreme good is not apprehended positively."

14

Nor did Adler advocate extensive social reform through the participation of the individual primarily in extensive public movements: the development of one's spiritual potentialities could best be accomplished in the home, in connection with the members of one's own family, where right habits could be established, from which the new attitude and social consciousness would tend to radiate of its own accord.

14 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 43.

The Establishing of the Ethical Culture Society

After his return from Europe, instead of entering the Rabbinate as expected, Adler accepted a Chair in Hebrew Literature and Oriental Languages at Cornell University, endowed especially for him by a group of wealthy sympathizers who were interested in Adler's personal development, and who were drawn together, with him, by their common unorthodox religious views. Among the supporters were Joseph Seligman, Max Landman, Jacob Streveheimer, Emil Salinger, Henry Friedman, Edward Lauterback, Joseph Seidenberg, Julius Rosenbaum, and Marcus Goldman.¹⁵ Adler's mind was active during these three years, and weekends found him lecturing in New York City before a group of liberal or reformed Jews who wished to form a nucleus for certain benevolent schemes, independent of any fixed creed, where his ideas were applauded. His lectures "bordered so closely on the unorthodox and heretical"¹⁶ that the conservative Cornell faculty showed its disinclination to accept him for a second three-year term by requesting a re-stipulation of the terms of the endowment of the Chair, which would then have permitted them to appoint a more conservative successor.¹⁷ The endowment was there-

¹⁵ Chicago Times, May 31, 1879.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ In 1933 the Cornell Alumni News denied the report that Adler was "banished" from the University; and claimed that such a report was due to the interference of sectarian bodies (the Ithaca Democrat): "When the three-year term for which Dr. Adler's services had been engaged came to a close in 1876, he left Ithaca, followed only by the regrets of the university community. ... President White ... wrote quite warmly about the great value of Dr. Adler's services as a lecturer." New York Times, May 21, 1933.

upon withdrawn, and the funds were used to establish a Society in New York City for the dissemination of Adler's views, where Adler was to act as lecturer. Harvard, being very liberal, would have been glad to accept the endowment for the Chair under the same stipulations as had been offered to Cornell, but the contributors to the fund felt that they could accomplish something more significant in the Society as contemplated, where Adler could devote his full time to the development of his philosophy. The Society, founded in 1876, was named the Society for Ethical Culture. The first meetings were held in Standard Hall, which seated about eight hundred persons. At the end of eight months the Society had become so firmly established, and grew so fast that in October, 1879, the Meeting House was changed to Chickerings Hall, Fifth Avenue and Eighteenth Street, which seated an additional thousand persons.

The Aims and Growth of the Ethical Culture Society

18

The primary aims of the Society were three:

1. "To teach the supremacy of the moral ends above all other human ends and interests
2. "To teach that the moral law has an immediate authority not contingent on the truths of religious beliefs or of philosophical theories

18 Felix Adler, "The Aims of the Ethical Society," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 3, 1889.

3. "To advance the science and art of right living--that is, to pave the way for new moral discoveries."

The supreme aim was to teach the uniqueness and immediate authority of the moral law, "not contingent on the truths of religious beliefs or of philosophical theories." The Society attempted to concentrate attention upon the duties of life, to illustrate the implications of these duties, and to enhance their influence on conduct. Duty was paramount, and sectarian beliefs were subordinated to duty. The Society directed itself to the development of personal ethics rather than to social reform¹⁹ because, though social reforms were imperative for the accomplishment of moral reforms, the function the Society set for itself was to clarify and define, to keep in the light the ethical ideals themselves. It was not to lose itself in the practical measures necessary to bring about the fruition of a moral ideal.

These aims were to be promoted through the improved education of the young by a more rational system of moral instruction to supercede the "crude methods" of the Sunday-school, and by an "impression of the ethical ideal on the daily school in all its branches through adequate supplementary intellectual and aesthetic culture."²⁰

The aims of the Society were restated by Adler in 1904²¹

19 Felix Adler, "The Aims of the Ethical Society," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 3, 1889.

20 Ibid.

21 Felix Adler, "A New Statement of the Aims of the Ethical Culture Society," Ethical Culture Pamphlets, No. 6, 1904.

when he wrote that the paramount aims were to secure in moral and religious life perfect intellectual liberty and at the same time concert in action. Less emphasis was placed on the moral law. Concerning the Moral Law as the source of righteousness, in 1913 Adler wrote,

"I thought ... of the Moral Law as that which answers to or should replace the individualistic God-idea. I believed in an unknown principle or power in things of which the Moral Law is the manifestation, and I found the evidence of the moral law in man's consciousness. ... I have since come to see that 'making for righteousness' is a conception inapplicable to the ultimate reality, and is properly applied only to human effort; since purpose implies that the end sought has not yet been realized, and non-realization and ultimate reality are contradictory ideas. The power that only makes for righteousness cannot be the ultimate truth in things. The utmost we can say is that the ultimate reality expresses itself in the human world as the power that inspires in men moral purpose."

22

The supreme end was practical righteousness to which all theories and creeds must be kept subservient. The paramount aim and end of life is progress in right living. Right thinking and right believing are important only as they lead to right living, and the thinking and believing must approve themselves to be right by the fruits they produce when translated into conduct. The Ethical Culture Society was a society dedicated to moral striving.

In 1878 the Society established the first kindergarten in New York City. In 1880 an elementary school was opened to

22 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 10.

all "irrespective of race and creed." Based on Froebelian pedagogy, much emphasis was placed on child study and the development of innate capacities. In 1878 a free system of trained nurses was inaugurated for the poor. The Society agitated for and was largely instrumental in bringing about the Tenement House Committee of 1884²³ which sought to mitigate shameful slum conditions. The Society advocated the establishment of small parks and public baths in congested districts. It agitated for greater justice and humanity in the relations between labor and capital, employer and employed. It established the Manhattan Trade School for Girls and a Young Mens Union which helped largely to support two "neighborhood houses," the Hudson Guild on the New York West Side, headed by Dr. Lovejoy Elliot and the Downtown Ethical Society on the lower East Side. The larger policies and relations of all the working bodies were shaped by a "Council of Fifty," which was composed of representatives from all the organizations.²⁴

-
- 23 "The study of the problem of poverty in its more general aspects has led to a movement for the reform of the tenement houses of our city, with the understanding that the capitalists engaged in the movement shall limit themselves to a return of three per cent on their investment, and that the remainder of the earnings shall be applied as an insurance fund for the benefit of the tenants themselves, to enable them to pay rent in hard times, or if a sufficient fund shall have accumulated in the meantime, to live rent-free in their old age." "The Ethical Culture Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4.
- 24 Percival Chubb, "The Origin and Growth of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4.

The Ethical Culture Movement

As the ethical movement gathered momentum branch societies were established in several cities and in foreign countries. The Chicago Society was founded in 1833 and was headed by William M. Salter; the Philadelphia Society in 1835 by S. Burns Weston, and the St. Louis Society in 1836, headed by Walter L. Sheldon.²⁵ The Philadelphia Ethical Union established the International Journal of Ethics as a disseminating organ,²⁶ and the New York Society published the Ethical Record bi-monthly. In 1836 the London Ethical Society was formed under the able leadership of such men as J. H. Muirhead, Bernard Bosanquet, Horace Bridges, and Stanton Coit. The influence of Thomas Hill Green of Oxford was strongly felt. A Society was established in Berlin, headed by Professors Gizycki and Foerster; and Societies were later established in Munich, Dresden, Danzig, Freyburg, Stuttgart, Breslau, and other German cities.²⁷

An international organization was established, largely through the work of Professor Foerster, at Zurich; and in

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- 25 Percival Chubb, "The Origin and Growth of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4.
 - 26 The International Journal of Ethics, "Devoted to the Advancement of Ethical Knowledge and Practice," first published in October, 1890, had such men as Alfred Fouillée, G. von Gizycki, J. H. Muirhead, and Josiah Royce on the original Editorial Committee.
 - 27 Percival Chubb, "The Origin and Growth of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4, p. 5.

1896 the International Congress adopted the following manifesto:
 23

1. It declared the pricelessness and indispensableness of the institution of pure monogamic marriage
2. It demanded opportunity for the fullest development of women
3. It advocated higher wages and better living conditions for female wage earners
4. It attempted to restore the lost unity in the educational system by setting up a common ethical purpose as the aim of all culture
5. It declared for universal peace and condemned militarism and nationalism
6. It frankly accepted the spirit and results of modern science
7. It repudiated the supernatural, miraculous, and priestly elements in religion
8. It voiced the deeper religious seriousness and spirituality of the movement.

The Ethical Culture Movement, essentially religious in character, recognized that morality and religion were not synonymous.
 29 The mission of the Ethical Movement was to "convert dogmatists into becoming ethical believers; to ful-

 23 Percival Chubb, "The Origin and Growth of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4, p. 6.

29 Felix Adler, "The Aims of the Ethical Culture Society," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 3, 1889.

fill the function of religion by raising up before the inward eye the ideal of fulfillment of the moral law through the fire of a new moral enthusiasm."³⁰ The movement assumed that sectarian religions can not be used as a basis for a world view because they differ so widely and become obsolete as our experience widens; and that the true religious view of life was based on recognition of the sacred obligation imposed by man's moral nature to live the good life and to follow without swerving the dictates of duty according to the best light that is in him. The only possible basis for a religious union, the Societies believed, was a moral aim by which any man should be ashamed not to be bound; and that aim was to live the good life by serving others. "Not by the Creed, but by the Deed" might well have been the slogan for the Ethical Culture Movement, said J. Bois.³¹ The Societies sought to "place specific emphasis both in purpose and activity on the reformatory, the progressive, and social elements of the moral nature,"³² and desired to do more than merely to isolate the ethical content and functioning of our spiritual life.

Anna Garlin Spenser summed up accurately the aims of the Societies when she wrote:

"The Ethical Culture Societies sought dynamic reforms in child labor, better housing,

30 Felix Adler, "The Aims of the Ethical Culture Society," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 3, 1839.

31 J. Bois, "New Religions of America: Ethical Culture" Forum, Vol. 75, pp. 252-263. February, 1926.

32 Anna Garlin Spenser, "Forty Years of Ethical Culture," Survey, Vol. 36, p. 199. May 20, 1916.

more effective moral protection and the curbing of commercialized vice, more refined recreation, higher organization of moral activity in civic concerns, more intelligent and ethical systems of education, more just relationships between employer and employed, a truer valuation of family relationships and the more intimate social groupings; and deeper than all, a conscious and determined effort to help their own members to lead the life of the future in the tangled and confused conditions of the present."

33

Adler's personal philosophy and its articulation by the Ethical Culture Societies was pliable and informal. No member of a Society was either asked or expected necessarily to acquiesce to the personal views of Adler himself, who felt that such views were only matters of personal conviction.³⁴ The requirement for membership in the Society was a matter of right action rather than of right belief. Such a respect for the views of others may be said to have been the outcome of Adler's religious training and his study of philosophy; and subtly reflected his own subordination to the principle of worth in all men which plays such an important role in his theory. Adler and his associates felt that disputes concerning the Author of the moral law had turned attention from the important thing, the commandment itself, and the duties arising therefrom. Questions of faith were kept in abeyance and the moral law, whose certainty rested in the universal experience of humanity was lauded. The aim of the Societies

 33 Anna Garlin Spenser, "Forty Years of Ethical Culture," Survey, Vol. 36, p. 200. May 20, 1916.

34 Felix Adler, Preface to An Ethical Philosophy of Life.

was to broaden and deepen the ethical element in their members regardless of race or creed, and to hold up to the realities the mirror of the ideal life. The ethical element in one's personality and its development was what constituted the "religious" for Adler, and the Societies under his guidance endeavored to improve our knowledge of it.

Reasons for the Ethical Culture Movement

While the Ethical Culture Movement was the product of the loyal effort and intellectual integrity of a number of people, it was Adler who was the supreme articulator and outstanding champion of the trend. All philosophies arise from experiences characteristic of the activities going on in their particular epochs. A brief examination of other trends and forces at work in the last quarter of the nineteenth century may be fruitful in understanding the movement and the reasons for its rapid growth.

In so far as the Ethical Culture Movement was an attempt to bring out our highest ethical and moral potentialities through emphasizing the reformatory, the progressive, and social elements of our moral nature, Anna Garlin Spenser was right when she wrote, "The Ethical Culture Movement is older than any Bible, since man's humanity itself is the outgrowth of the struggle upward of the beast;"³⁵ but the isolation of

³⁵ Anna Garlin Spenser, "Forty Years of Ethical Culture," Survey, Vol. 36, p. 199. May 20, 1916.

the moral aspect of personality had until Adler's time always been relative to a metaphysics or a theory of value which did not exalt it. Kant perhaps came closest to it, but his ethics was subordinated to his metaphysical theory. Adler placed it so it shone by its own light, separated it both from philosophy and religion.

Education was becoming universal. The success of the scientific method in all fields of endeavor was manifesting itself, a pragmatic attitude toward life was developing and doubt was being cast by the common man upon the authoritarian religious dogmas. New loyalties were being created. Scientific advances and the scientific method created feelings of self-confidence and independence of the supernatural, and the need for a new religious faith which would be in harmony with the new knowledge, and which would serve as a basis for moral guidance and faith in the worth-whileness of life. An ever larger group of people were substituting a vague exaltation of society and the individual and his potentialities in an emerging world for the more orthodox beliefs in his natural depravity and the futile, transitory character of the here and now. Emerson was expressing these libertarian tendencies in his Essays on "Worship" and "The Sovereignty of Ethics." William Ellery Channing had just written "Religion, a Social Principle" and "The Moral Argument Against Calvinism." Theodore Parker had written "Atheism and Popular Theology." Pestalozzi and Froebel were revolutionizing educa-

tional methods by re-stating educational aims, emphasizing the development of the individual in his own right. Channing and Parker were developing an advanced Unitarianism. Charles S. Pierce and William James formulated and were clarifying Pragmatism. Capitalism was creating, in an expanding economy, as Karl Marx predicted, two major economic classes; and the laborers, while they lagged, as they still do, in reaping the benefits of a mechanized era, lagged still further behind in acquiring the broad outlook on life that comes with an advanced education.³⁶ It was an age of individualism and moral skepticism:

"A wave of skeptical opinion is passing over the masses of the people in all civilized countries, so that the number is exceedingly large of those who neither have the idealism of science and art to support them (the great majority of so-called scientists and artists are mere craftsmen, devoid of all high idealism, and derive no religious equivalents from their daily work), nor are willing or able

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36 "The Ethical Societies have realized from the beginning that the elevation of the working class is the one great moral problem of our age, and have endeavored in various ways to contribute their mite towards its solution." Felix Adler, "Modern Skepticism and Ethical Culture," Forum, November, 1895. pp. 386-87.

37 William James writes, "The barrenness and ignobleness of the more usual laborer's life consist in the fact that it is moved by no ideal inner springs. The backache, the long hours, the danger, are patiently endured--for what? To gain a quid of tobacco, a glass of beer, a cup of coffee, a meal and a bed, and to begin again the next day and shirk as much as one can. ...If the poor and the rich could look at each other sub specie aeternitatis, how gentle would grow their disputes!" From his Essay, "On Some of Life's Ideals." The establishment and nurture of such an ideal was the avowed task of Adler and the Ethical Culture Societies.

to accept the current creeds, and who therefore are allowed simply to drift as best they may, wholly uncared for on the spiritual side of their natures. The question therefore arises ... whether some effort should not be made to build up the moral life of those whom the Church has ceased to influence, to develop the moral instincts of children, to fortify the character of the young against the temptations of intemperance and licentiousness, to cherish the love of justice and the capacity of self-sacrifice."

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The Ethical Culture Societies filled a logical place at that time by offering a religious faith based on new insights, just as technology was improving living standards to such an extent that one with a moderate income could live as richly and comfortably as a king of a century earlier. They fitted in with the individualistic trend by exalting the moral potentialities of the individual and his intrinsic worth. Not only did the Societies furnish new religious and ethical ideas, but they also supplied ideals for economic and social

38 Felix Adler, "Modern Skepticism and Ethical Culture," Forum, Vol. 16, p. 380. November, 1893.

39 William James writes (1884), "This is anything but a theological age, as we all know: and so far as it permits itself to be theological at all, it is growing more and more to distrust all systems that aim at abstract metaphysics in dogma, or pretend to rigor in their terms. The conventional and traditional acquiescence we find in the older dogmatic formularies is confined to those who are intellectually hardly vitalized enough either to apprehend or discuss a novel and rival creed; whilst those of us who have intellectual vitality are either apt to be full of bias against theism in any form, or if we are theistic at all, it is in such a tentative and supplicatory sort of way that the sight of a robust and dogmatizing theologian sends a shiver through our bones." Introduction to The Literary Remains of Henry James, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892, pp. 10-11.

reform movements. The Societies attempted to remedy the evils of Capitalism by both working among the poorer groups (first with the kindergarten and open platform lectures in the meeting-house, later with the Workingman's School, free social service, and agitation for slum clearance) and furnishing the stimulus and guidance for other reform groups.⁴⁰

Octavius B. Frothingham had established the National Free Religious Association in New York City prior to the creation of the first Ethical Culture Society, which may logically be considered the forerunner of the Ethical Societies. The Ethical Culture Societies, with Adler's untiring efforts, with their emphasis on the moral development of the individual independent of any sectarian belief, with their stress on right conduct, the intrinsic worth of all, their identification of the moral end and social development, brought the ethical tendency to its full flower.

The Union for the Higher Life and the Educational Organization

Shortly after his return from Europe in 1874, Adler and some of his colleagues established a "Union for the Higher Life" based on three tacit assumptions, which well illustrate the direction and extent of Adler's moral interests: (a)sex purity, (b)the principle of devoting the surplus of one's income beyond that required for one's own genuine needs to the

⁴⁰ Percival Chubb, "The Origin and Growth of the Ethical Movement," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 4.

elevation of the working class, and (c) continued intellectual development.

In 1880 the Society, in conjunction with the United Relief Workers, established a "Workingman's School," which aimed by lectures to explain to working men the laws of political economy, the common interest of labor and capital, the need of industry, sobriety, intelligence, and patience, and the dignity and honorableness of work. The school also aimed to train the children of workingmen, and as a primary school with two grades and fifty-one pupils was opened on the basis of a gift of \$1000 from Joseph Seligman.⁴¹ Adler's original intention had been to establish kindergartens throughout the city of New York but changed with the conviction that it would be more fruitful to establish a school in which the work done in the kindergarten would not be undone.⁴² In 1883 the school had expanded to such an extent that no difficulty was encountered in raising sixty thousand dollars for a new building. The educational procedure was an attempt to apply the rule of "learning through doing"⁴³ --an attempt John Dewey carried out in his experimental school at the University of Chicago ten years later:

"Dr. Adler seized upon the one greatest contribution of that day, to what we now call modern education--the new and revolutionary point of view that learning comes through the

41 Mabel R. Goodlander, "The First Sixty Years," p. 3.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., p. 6.

activities of the learner, in harmony with his natural interests."

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The kindergarten, originally based on Froebelian pedagogy, was one of the first to modify practices based on his ideas:

"Felix Adler, without accepting Froebel's philosophy of 'absolute idealism' had the insight to appropriate for his elementary school what was most valuable in the kindergarten--its emphasis upon doing, its social organization and its nurturing attitude toward children."

45

Before 1888 Adler had introduced manual training as handiwork in the Workingman's School in an attempt to encourage personal observation and reasoning by the pupils and to create a genuine "experience curriculum."⁴⁶ At that time "industrial education was found only in a few advanced high schools. The pioneer work of the school in manual training attracted wide attention and is the feature of the Workingman's School most emphasized by historians of modern education."⁴⁷ This attempt to establish "learning by doing" presupposed the im-

44 Mabel R. Goodlander, "The First Sixty Years," p. 6.

45 Ibid., p. 7.

46 "By manual training we cultivate the intellect in close connection with action. Manual training consists of a series of actions which are controlled by the mind, and which react on it." Felix Adler, "The Influence of Manual Training on Character," The Moral Instruction of Children, p. 263.

"The most colossal improvement which recent years have seen in secondary education lies in the introduction of manual training schools..." William James, Talks to Teachers on Psychology, p. 35.

47 Mabel R. Goodlander, "The First Sixty Years," p. 12.

portance of dealing with objects as well as ideas in acquiring an education; and this aspect of the learning process, the importance of objective material, was the main Herbartian contribution to educational pedagogy which received tardy recognition in the United States. The Workingman's School, however, had recognized the importance of this pedagogical method as early as 1835, when sewing, ironing, and clay modeling had been introduced into the curriculum.

In 1890 the School became more democratic by allowing the admission for the first time of tuition pupils. The constant increase in enrollment of transfers attested to the success and ability of the school. A branch school was established; and in 1895 Adler raised \$500,000 for another new building to house the organization, and the School became the Ethical Culture School under the sole direction of the Ethical Culture Society. A high school with one small class was established at the same time. Increased emphasis was placed on the importance of vocational training as well as training in arts and sciences. Adler felt that "The new education, in converting the ways of knowledge into ways of pleasantness is in danger of losing the advantage of that sturdy discipline of hard work and willingness to perform uninviting drudgery which was the salient feature of the older methods."⁴³

48 Mabel R. Goodlander, "The First Sixty Years," p. 29.

The Workingman's School was unique in another respect in being among the first to recognize the importance of the education of younger children. In later works both William James and John Dewey spoke significantly on this subject:

"In all pedagogy the great thing is to strike the iron while hot, and to seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come, so that knowledge may be got and habit of skill acquired... There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history..."

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"We must strike while the iron is hot. Especially precious are the first dawns of power. More than we imagine, the ways in which the tendencies of early childhood are treated fix fundamental dispositions and condition the turn taken by powers that show themselves later."

50

In still another respect the Ethical Culture Schools under Adler's leadership were unique and progressive. There was an early attempt to build up an environment promoting the kind of leadership which means the interplay of various types of people in a cooperative effort for the common good. The schools were open to all "irrespective of race or creed." Pupils were encouraged to mix in order to get a knowledge of each other's problems:

"Let the son of the rich man learn, side by side with the son of the poor man, to labor with his hands; let him thus practically

49 William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. 2, p. 401.
 50 John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 136.

learn to respect labor; let him learn to understand what the dignity of manual labor really means, and the two classes of society, united at the root, will never thereafter entirely grow asunder."

51

Such a philosophy is no less than an emphasis on the present educational and social desideratum of a sharing of common interests.

By 1925 the Ethical Culture Schools had expanded to such an extent that new housing again had become imperative. Almost two million dollars was raised for the Fieldstone School, which at the present time houses over a thousand pupils, and is progressive in all respects. ⁵² There is less narrow specialization of vocational training than in most high schools, and a wide field of activities is presented to capture and maintain the students' varied interests. The aim of the schools, as stated by Adler, was "to educate a generation of specialists who will estimate their success in their own line to the degree to which they advance the progressive movement ⁵³ of humanity in all related lines."

51 Felix Adler, "The Influence of Manual Training on Character," The Moral Instruction of Children, pp. 269-70.

52 "The efforts (of the Ethical Culture School) to ennance the meaning of vocations by emphasizing the moral ideas and issues embodied in them have been fruitful both as educational program and as principles for group organization. ...The Ethical Culture School ... is one of the most distinguished and educationally successful schools in the country." Herbert W. Schneider, Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 5, p. 601.

53 Mabel R. Goodlander, "The First Sixty Years," p. 60.

Adler's Solution of the Problem of Evil

Adler was the type of man who, as Professor J. T. Salter would say, "had the imagination and social sympathy to be interested in something beside his own skin and bones." One might say he shouldered not only his own burdens but also the "burdens of the world." He wanted to find some underlying reason, or value which made our struggle with an inhospitable and inclement environment worth while. He felt that the object of this yearning should be the supreme moral worth of the individual. How to establish this postulate in the face of facts, in view of the frustration of effort, the pain, the sorrow, the accidents, the misunderstandings, and the ultimate incomprehensibility of life's greatest problems we shall see constituted one of the chief problems of his life. It was the problem of how to explain the existence of evil. ⁵⁴

No synthesizer came to see the wide divergence between theory and practice better than Adler. Working with human relations, he never became a pure theorist: his philosophy is always of and in experience. As we shall see later, the attainment of the spiritual ideal was to be partially (never, because of its ideal and infinite nature completely) achieved through working in the here and now by recreating our

⁵⁴ John Dewey somewhere writes in his impassive but poignant style, "The pathos of unfulfilled expectation, the tragedy of defeated purposes and ideals, the catastrophies of accident are the commonplaces of all comment on the human scene." To Adler this problem was vital.

"empirical" selves. As he pondered the problem he came to see how difficult it may be to raise the spiritual "numen" in the sense of right and wrong, and social responsibility in personalities in which all morality or social consciousness apparently has been smothered out. He came to see how hard it is to understand and explain evil in its other various forms. He termed the problem of evil "the most incisive effect of my practical experience;"⁵⁵ and his solution, while based on the insight of an ethical leader who lived almost two thousand years ago, is refreshing and meaningful.

He termed evil "frustration." In its moral aspects Adler views frustration as existing in four outstanding forms: (a)intellectualistic frustration, (b)frustration in the social relations, (c)frustration through bereavement and (d) teleological frustration, or despair of ever succeeding in bringing to fruition our ultimate purpose.⁵⁶

By intellectualistic frustration Adler meant the irreconcilability of specialist efficiency with breadth and relatedness--the problem of specialization, specialization which is attained only at the expense of general insight. One man, try as hard as he may, can never acquire the breadth of knowledge necessary to make adequate, intelligent choices. Frustration in the social relations involves experiences wherein

55 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 62.

56 Ibid., pp. 60-70.

right intent produces evil consequences--as for example marital incompatibility or the birth of defective children. Nor could he easily reconcile himself to the fact that the good and the bad lives alike are occasionally snuffed out without notice and the product of years of work or happiness end on that account in futility. Teleological frustration arises when we face the fact that as ethical beings committed to the pursuit of an ideal end, "supersensible in character rather than supernatural,"⁵⁷ we are doomed to failure to attain that end completely.

Adler concluded that evil in its various forms, and the unattainableness of the end in life were to point to a life beyond this life, not in a supernatural but in a supersensible sense; an ethical life to which we can to a degree attain.⁵⁸ Frustration serves to make this supersensible world

57 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 123.

58 " 'Failures are ye all, in different ways, ye poor, ye sick, ye mourners, and ye guilty ones,' says the evolutionary theory. There is only one consolation to be offered you, namely, you are necessary failures. As it is necessary that millions of seeds should be scattered upon the ground in order that a few may take root and flourish, as it is necessary in a lottery that a whole series of unlucky numbers should be drawn in order that the lucky one may arrive--so is it necessary, the world being arranged as it is, that there should be a multitude of the unfit, in order that a few fit and efficient ones may be developed, that a multitude should dwell in poverty, in order that a comparative few may be prosperous, that a multitude should be sick, in order that a few may be sound, that a multitude should be unhappy, in order that a few may be glad, that a multitude should fall into moral error, in order that the laws may be discovered by obedience to which the few can save their souls alive. ...Poverty, sickness, sorrow, and the experience of sin, are the great instrumentalities for ethicising our natures. They are dark gateways through which we pass into the very temple of light--into the innermost sanctuary of a noble

more, real to us, to make us more conscious of the spiritual ideal, the "ideal of the whole" which our feeling of obligation to act rightly implies.

On what grounds to attribute moral worth to degraded personalities, how to alleviate and explain existing evils, social and physical, above all how to ascribe worth to man under existing and apparently hostile conditions became the fundamental theoretical problem for Adler. How he succeeded in explaining evil, and validly attributing moral worth to each and every individual, and how moral worth is to be developed in our own selves, and the implications of this moral worth for conduct forms the subject matter for the succeeding section.

life." Felix Adler, "The Four Types of Suffering," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 17, pp. 5 and 9.

Part Two

Theoretical Criticism of the Kantian Validation of the Ethical Postulates

Adler's philosophy, especially its theoretic vindication, was largely based on three important principles of the philosophy of Kant, (a) the concept of the Categorical Imperative, "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law,"¹ (b) the notion of "Ought," the existence in all men of a sense of duty to carry out those convictions of the categorical imperative,² and (c) the assertion that every human being is

1 Kant, Theory of Ethics, "The Nature of Morality," Part VI, "Formulae of the Categorical Imperative, and the Kingdom of Ends," p. 302.

2 "The moral law is in fact for the will of a perfect being a law of holiness, but for the will of every finite rational being a law of duty, of moral constraint, and of the determination of its actions by respect for this law and reverence for its duty." Ibid., p. 327.

"Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that ... requirest submission, and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but merely holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind, and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly counterwork it; what origin is there worthy of thee, and where is to be found the root of thy noble descent which proudly rejects all kindred with the inclinations; a root to be derived from which is the indispensable condition of

to be treated as an end per se, never as a means. Every human possesses intrinsic moral worth which all others are to respect and revere. It has been shown that the inviolability of the individual impressed Adler almost from the beginning of his education: that fact as emphasized by Jesus and the Hebrew religion stood out for him, and one of his most significant early experiences was a reverence for women. At the time of the establishment of the Ethical Culture kindergarten (1876) Adler was still under Kantian influence, though admittedly with "suppressed misgivings,"³ and the years following saw a gradual change in his attitude toward the logical vindication of the worth-whileness of the individual, and the gradual establishment of his own theory. Adler's theory is articulated in Book II of his magnum opus, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, and is here explained by referring rather closely to that text. Adler begins by explicating the moral aspects of the Kantian theory and offering his criticism of several important points. This is followed by a constructive dissertation on his theory proper.

Kant's most valuable contribution to ethics has in the past been considered the formulation of the Categorical Im-

the only worth which men can give themselves?" Ibid., pp. 330-31.

"For my part, I should suspect of quibbling and dishonest intention any boy or girl who would ask me, 'Why ought I not to lie?' I should hold up before such a child the Ought in all its awful majesty. The right to reason about these things cannot be conceded until after the mind has attained a certain maturity." Felix Adler, The Moral Instruction of Children, p. 13.

3 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 74.

perative and its distinction from hypothetical imperatives.

"By a categorical imperative Kant simply means a way of acting somehow felt by the individual to be obligatory upon him, whether he likes or dislikes it. It is a constraint to which he is bound to acquiesce, a public rule of some sort which over-rides his private propensities."⁴ According to Kant, whatever line of action is considered to be imperative from its very nature is moral. Adler denies the existence of any Categorical Imperative and maintains that there exist only many "hypothetical" imperatives, modes of action common to⁵ particular groups, and non-ethical because non-universal. While constraints and tendencies toward certain types of action are replete in every day life--for example tribal tabus, gang loyalty, humanitarian tendencies which struggle with our egoistic desires for supremacy--they are not in themselves moral, nor do they individually establish the existence in all men of the sense of duty on which Kant founded universal moral equality. Although a sense of constraint may be manifest, the constraint itself does not constitute the moral character. Kant recognized the distinction between the categorical and hypothetical imperatives and would call such examples as these of the latter type, rules of behavior that are optional and lacking the element of universality which

 4 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 76.

5 "Morality is either universal or nothing." Ibid., pp. 77-78.

characterizes the true Categorical Imperative. Adler's criticism is that the kind of constraints to which the generality of men submit are all of a hypothetical nature, and there is then neither an obligation to accept the notion of an absolute end, nor the moral equality of men, since the presence in all of a universal sense of duty expressed in specific actions disappears.⁶ Who is to determine what the Categorical Imperative really is?⁷ In 1914 the German nation "willed that it should be a universal law" that Germany should conquer the world, while at the same time the Allies willed that national inviolability should remain supreme. Which really expressed the Categorical Imperative? Adler would say that neither was moral on that account. For as Adler is soon to show, morality is either universal or nothing.

Though Kant claims that man is worth while on his own account, never to be used as a means, a tool, but always as

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- 6 "Kant's position is this: Would you know what is a moral act? Take any action whatsoever. Ideally universalize it. That is to say, imagine that all men acted in such a manner. Then if, under this hypothesis, the act is self-consistent, i.e., if it does not defeat its own purpose, it is a moral act. The reason why this deduction breaks down is because it is based on the error that the same rule of action, adopted by all men, would lead in each case to the same result. In consequence of the innumerable gradations of strength and intelligence that subsist among men, this is not the case. And hence the test of self-consistency fails." Felix Adler, "A Critique of Kant's Ethics," Mind, N. S., Vol. XI, No. 42, p. 139.
- 7 "It is the failure of Kant to point out, as underlying ethics, some specific, synthetic process capable of being apprehended by us as necessary and universal that makes his ethics sterile." Ibid., p. 133.

an end, an object towards whom we are bound to show absolute respect, Adler points out that his pessimistic view of human nature (as expressed in his Chapter on Radical Evil in his Religion Within the Limits of Pure Reason) would prompt one to conclude either that he was inconsistent or that he created a paradox; for how could he both hold that man was worth while on his own account while claiming on the other hand that no object in all the world, including man, deserves such respect? Kant did consider this as a paradox and solved it by claiming that it is in the acts of men which have as their sole motive respect for universal law, certain acts men perform, that we find the actual worth: the good intent of the act, independent of consequences, constitutes its moral worth. Man is characterized by worth per se, then, because he may have good intentions, and may deliberately attempt to live according to them.

Adler was unsatisfied with this precarious and tenuous justification which Kant gave to support his belief in human worth and equality. He sought to place these valuable ideas on a more secure foundation, and to do that made a new start, keeping Kant's theory in mind and accepting only its main assumptions. The first step he attempted was to find the flaw in Kant's doctrine of the Categorical Imperative, that formal principle, that abstract notion of universality and necessity applied to human actions which in his view imprints upon them the character of absolute rightness. That there is a univer-

sal and necessary principle operating in each of us which accounts in Kant's estimation for the intrinsic moral worth of every individual, Adler would readily admit. It was the theoretical validation of this assumption which made Adler's separation from Kant's theory necessary.

It is Adler's contention that Kant's theory of universality and necessity is illogically deduced and is insufficient as a moral principle governing human actions. Kant, Adler says, was fundamentally a scientist and interested in establishing as true the fundamental assumptions of science which Hume had shattered. As a scientist Kant derived his ethical system from his favorite study, physical science; and in so doing he made the mistake of changing the meaning of universality and necessity in such a way that no true ethical system such as Adler believed it is possible to construct could be established.⁸

Adler states that the physical sciences establish, or postulate universality by a process of induction. Once a connection between A and B is found to exist invariably the connection is assumed to be universal, at least until evidence arises to cast doubt upon the theory. Kant, in his ethics, also invariably couples the terms universal and necessary. But instead of letting the necessity affirm the universality in the moral field, he makes universality affirm the necessi-

8 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 84ff.

ty. Universality is for him the test for moral necessity.⁹ And the meaning of necessity is also changed when he substitutes a logical necessity for a physical necessity. Necessity for physical science means the relation of one thing to another thing, while logical science means by necessity the relationship of self-identity: A is A; or A cannot both be A and non-A at the same time. Kant means by necessity the relation of a thing to itself. The implication of these changes in meaning for Kant's ethical theory is that his belief that the individual is in himself an end per se, and worth while on his own account, is inconsistent with his notion of necessity. The notion of end is incompatible with self-consistency as the paramount principle of ethics. Necessity as Kant uses the term, as characteristic of a self-consistent rational being, implies that the being must be in harmony only with himself: he is complete in himself; and any act he commits is completely his own and can neither influence nor be influenced by any other human being. Now Adler says, when we consider man as an end, we must presuppose a means--the two are inseparable correlatives. We mean not what Kant's theory leads him to believe, that the entities comprising society are all ethically solipsistic or self-sufficing, complete in themselves, but that they are mutually dependent on each other,

 9 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 101.

and interact with one another to develop for better or for worse the personalities of each. For if Kant's ethical theory is to be logically harmonious with his definition of necessity, any being or ethical unit must be self-sufficient or ethically solipsistic.

Furthermore, Kant makes necessity the "touchstone of worth." Adler asks why the moral order should have any more intrinsic worth than the physical order which likewise is subject to necessary laws. "Necessity passed through human consciousness is not on that account a more eligible principle, rather less eligible since it interferes and causes contingent actions due to passions and appetites."¹⁰ The upshot of the technical criticism of Kant is that Adler feels that it is impossible to find actual worth in all men; and that, though Kant expounded a valuable theory he failed to validate it. Since the postulate of intrinsic worth cannot be validly established it must be assumed:

"Since the approach to the ethical problem manifestly fails, (we must) begin at the opposite end, and take the attribution of worth to men, however unworthy they may in actuality be, as our starting point."¹¹

¹⁰ Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 89.
¹¹ Ibid., p. 90.

The Necessity for, and Difficulties in, Attributing Equal
Worth to All Men

History reveals that the great past civilizations have been built on moral inequality. For example, the Greek and Roman states were constructed on the assumption that the individual existed for the sake of the state, and slavery was justified by the belief that the many labored in order that the few should be free to actualize their highest potentialities. Early Christianity had little regard for women.

That there has been a gradual but steady change toward recognition of equal rights is a sign of moral growth, for it is through equality of rights that recognition of worth is manifested. The abolition of slavery, the demand for emancipation from ignorance, which culminated in well-nigh universal education, the gradual extension of the franchise in democratic countries, the approach to economic equality of men and women, and the present economic equality offered Russian citizens today are steps in this direction. The trend is inevitable because no society can flower in which any element is exploited in the interest of any other: there must be free, spontaneous intercommunication of all participants. To oppress is to inhibit, to inhibit is to prevent growth; and uninhibited (though directed) growth is essential to the preservation of any society.

The effect of assumptions of unequal worth of individuals is only too often manifested in our own relations with others: we consciously or unconsciously withdraw from those whom we feel are treading lower walks of life than we. We must remember that derelicts and unfortunates are not seen to be such by themselves; and that there resides within them the capacities for better things which could have been actualized, were it not for a rank individualistic philosophy which has created a society of smug egoistic hedonists. Contrast with this a society in which a philosophy of universalistic humanitarianism, a doctrine of "enlightened selfishness" prevails: problems become reciprocal for all of us and the failure of others is our own failure. No empirical advantages enjoyed under the other system are lost, and through cooperation everything stands to be gained. If the spiritual attitude toward the personalities and rights of others were to be applied--if each individual were to be viewed sub specie aeternitatis--we should all be independent of the tricks of fortune by reason of our emphasis on the eternal and real: we should be emphasizing those values or "goods" which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." The assumption of equal worth becomes necessary both as a means of preservation of a society and as a true value standard.

Furthermore, the assumption of equal worth is of paramount importance for three other reasons: ¹² man must be

conceived of as a spiritual as well as an empirical being in order to overcome his feeling of insignificance in an apparently boundless physical universe; he must be considered worth while in order that there will be adequate motivation for the social work to be done in the line of the alleviation of suffering; and moral worth must be assumed in order to remedy the existence of a "divided conscience"--the tendency to view men as worthy only in groups which we may utilize to further our own selfish interests, and to view all others indifferently.

There are formidable difficulties in the way of attributing worth promiscuously to all men. Adler points out that it is difficult to see any worth in such pariahs as the "white-slaver," the hypocritical politician, the exploiter of child labor, criminals, or any other people who are either socially destructive or drags on society. Attributing worth to all becomes even more difficult when Adler warns us against ascribing it to those who happen to possess merely attractive traits, such as gentleness, compassion, kindness; for these are only "pleasing accidents of nature."¹³

The apparent commonplaceness of men, their cheapness, and inexhaustible supply are other deterrents. Yet in spite of all this there is one outstanding characteristic in all men which Adler believes suffices as a basis for attributing in-

 12 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, Chpt. 1, "De Profundis."

13 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 91.

trinsic worth to every individual, and that is a particular kind of energy, ethical energy, sui generis, underivative, unique, which when utilized by the individual results in his "unbounded expansion."¹⁴ Adler makes an important distinction between value and worth.¹⁵ All human beings, possessing this energy, possess intrinsic worth, though not necessarily value. Worth is incognizable in itself, yet the effect that it produces requires our recognition of its existence. Ethical energy is a substance¹⁶ of which we can know nothing except that it exists, and this by virtue of its effects; and its effects are manifested in right conduct.

The Ideal of the Whole

The question immediately arises what right conduct is. Adler says that if we are to distinguish right from wrong, if there is such a thing as right in the strict sense, we

14 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 92-93.

15 "The distinction between value and worth is capital. Value is subjective. The worth notion is the most objective conceivable. Value depends on the wants or needs of our empirical nature. That has value which satisfies our needs or wants. ...Value ceases when the want or need is gratified. ...The custom of speaking of ethics as a theory of values is regrettable. It evidences the despair into which many writers on ethics have fallen as to the possibility of discovering an objective basis for rightness." Ibid., p. 117.

16 "The category of substance, which is almost disappearing from science, is to be reinstalled in ethics. Ethics cannot dispense with it." Ibid., p. 93.

cannot be content with the partial, relative knowledge of the sciences; for right conduct is either wholly right or wholly wrong. It partakes in universality and necessity. But Kant failed to theoretically establish universality and necessity as ethical postulates. Adler does it by postulating an "ideal plan of the whole." An act takes its ethical quality from a rule of relations whereby the plan is itself progressively developed. Every ethical act must conform to the ideal of the whole from which it is deduced.

"There is no possibility of establishing a conception of worth unless we have some ideal of the whole in which and in relation to which the incomparable worthwhileness of a human belief can be made good. ... The ideal of the whole (which must be posited) is a plan or scheme in which the constructive principles of the mind are conceived as having untrammelled course and unhindered application, and the task of world-building, or rather universe-building, is in idea carried out to completion."

17

Such an ideal whole is not a priori nor is knowledge of it a priori. It is not temporally prior to our conception of it. It is in part created by our own minds by virtue of its "reality-producing functions" and its ability to afford us the conviction of certainty. It is the result of the activity of the constructive principles of human thought. Our rational nature, our mind as synthesizer is much more quickly (but no more truly) recognized and condoned as such in the realm of the sciences and everyday observation than in

the ethical field.

The data of experience are subject to two kinds of mental action: position in a "manifold" which the mind creates, and "retained individuality." We may simultaneously see any object in its relatedness and separateness from other objects. For example, the index finger of one's right hand is related to the other fingers in a certain spacial and temporal relationship, while at the same time it is separate from the others and in no way connected with them, depending on how we look at it. The same thing applies in ethics: the business of ethics is to define the particular kind of manifold with which it deals (its subject matter) and the kind of unity of which that manifold is susceptible. The manifold it sets up is the ideal of the whole. It is composed of "functional finalities," "irreducible principia"
 18
 of ethics, which prescribe rules for human intercourse; or better, which create a scheme of ideal intercourse whereby the conduct of men shall be measured and determined. These "functional finalities" are given. They are ultimate principles. Though such constitutive principles of the human mind (which include the ultimate truths of mathematics and physics and the other sciences) can neither be explained nor understood, their existence can at least be verified in practice; and Adler asks if, after all, that is not the only way in which we become convinced of the "truth" of any prop-

 18 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 106.

osition. The sciences attempt to explain phenomena by referring them ever further back to antecedents which explain nothing in an ultimate sense, unless it be an expression of our unwillingness to admit that we come face to face ultimately with the inexplicable. Why the mind should perform its two necessary functions of synthesization and discrimination is likewise inexplicable. But whether it is science or ethics that is under investigation, exemplification, conformation to prescribed criteria ultimately constitute the only verification we know. And in ethics, the ethical experience itself must lead to the certainty of the existence of the ideal of the whole.

The ideal of the whole, the ethical manifold is non-temporal and non-spacial. For by the implications of the terms themselves it is that in which the two reality-producing functions of the mind, synthesis and discrimination, find their fruition. Since juxtaposition and sequence lapse into indefiniteness and never attain totality or unitedness or explicability, the ethical manifold, non-temporal and non-spacial, is postulated to fulfill this unifying function. It satisfies our craving for comprehensibility. Its unity is given, not derived from the manifold character; and the manifold, the separability of the members is also given, not derived from the unity. Each member or ethical unit is inseparably connected or dependent upon every other member. Each member differs uniquely from all the rest and preserves

its irreducible singularity. In the manifold each member is indispensable, inasmuch as he is one of the totality of intrinsically unlike differentiae. A duplicate would be superfluous. To be included within the manifold is to be indispensable, and no one acquires a place in this manifold or ethical universe except as one of the possible modes of being that are required to complete the totality of manifoldness. Thus, while every member of the manifold is unique and singular, he is also part of a unity, and inseparably connected with each other member.

The unique differences of the ideal of the whole are not to be slurred over. What the uniqueness consists in we do not know, for the unique is incognizable. We recognize that the only possible way in which unique members of the manifold can be unified, the only way in which the unity can exist is by maintaining that the unique differences of each member must be such as to render possible the correlated unique differences of all the rest. We recognize and assume the existence of a relation of reciprocal universal dependence.

Man As an Ethical Unit and the Object of Worth

With the conception of the ideal of the whole, Adler believes we have the key to a new ethical system. Here we get our hands firmly on the notion of right, and by means of it we discover the object to which worth attaches, the

object which Kant failed to find, the object which is so indispensable to the ideal of the whole as to authenticate unconditional obligation or rightness in conduct with respect to it. It is as an ethical unit, as a member of the infinite ethical manifold, the ideal of the whole, that man has worth.

Adler expresses this first principle of ethics in the following formulas:

A. "Act as a member of the ethical manifold (the infinite spiritual universe)

B. "Act so as to achieve uniqueness (complete individualization--the most completely individualized act is the most ethical)

C. "Act so as to elicit in another the distinctive, unique quality characteristic of him as a fellow-member of the infinite whole."

"A and B are comprised in C. ...To act as a member according to A is to strive to achieve uniqueness as declared in B. To achieve uniqueness as declared in C is to seek to elicit the diverse uniqueness in others. The actual unique quality in myself is incognizable, and only appears, so far as it does appear, in the effect produced by myself upon my fellows. Hence, to advance towards uniqueness I must project dynamically my most distinctive mode of energy upon my fellow-members."

19

That man is a member of an ethical manifold is verified or exemplified as true not by recurrence of his ethical acts, as would be the case if scientific verification

19 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 113.

were in order, but by the persistence of effort after de-
²⁰feat, and the accompanying clearer and more explicit vision of the ethical relation as it ought to be, the increased feeling of the relation of reciprocal interdependence and of subjection to the urge or pressure derived from an inner consciousness. Frustration of effort only serves to renew the effort to one who has an aroused ethical character.

The final formulation of this first principle of ethics becomes,

"So act as to raise up in others the ideal of the relation of give and take, of universal interdependence in which they stand with an infinity of beings like themselves, members of the infinite universe, irreducible, like and unlike themselves in their respective uniqueness."

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May not the same objection be raised to this theory as was raised against Kant's, that the object of respect is not the man himself, but that ethical energy which is claimed to be a part of him which really dangles in the air, with no foundation in fact? No, for its existence as a substance has been verified by showing that our potential conduct at
²²least points to its existence, which constitutes worth, in
²³every individual. Though it is not found empirically in

²⁰ Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 13.

²¹ Ibid., p. 119.

²² See p. 45.

²³ "Because the energy is unique it points toward a unique, irreducible, hence substantive entity in men, from which it springs." Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 93.

every individual, it always exists potentially and is to be attributed to them. It requires great leniency of judgment to find value in socially destructive, uncooperative, and maliciously inclined people, but never is leniency required to find worth. Worth, though postulated, is universally present because of the "inherent necessity of our minds to complete that unity in manyness of which the ethical manifold is constituted," and of which we, as members of it, are all constituents: we have the desire to make him one with the rest of us. Our own natures as spiritual beings urge us to satisfy this function of the mind, to include him within the fold.

By seeking to elicit consciousness of this energy in others, the awareness of being ethical beings like ourselves, we become more ethically real. By seeking to make others aware of their potentialities we become conscious of, and develop our own. On many occasions we shall fail in this task. The response will not be forthcoming. The mere seeking to arouse this social consciousness, however, is what elicits our own moral character, and is verification enough of its existence. For the sense of our own imperfection, of our inability to attain that which is finitely never attained, that is, complete absorption in the ethical manifold, and our consciousness of the inextinguishable power of moral renewal will cause us to examine our own selves: and instead of despairing at the lack of the spiritual light in others

we will endeavor to make ourselves more fitting instruments of spiritual influence than we yet are.

The Transcendental Character of the Ideal of the Whole and Its Relation to God

What is the essential transcendental character of the ideal of the whole, the ethical manifold? We began with the affirmation that man is an end per se, worth while on his own account, and as such he is an ethical unit. Only as a member of the infinite spiritual universe does he possess the two-fold attributes implied in worth--inviolability with respect to outsiders and indefeasible, intrinsic preciousness. Around the individual as an ethical unit the spiritual universe has been built up as a necessary postulate. In so far as it is the product of the reality-producing functions of the mind in their ideal completion, and a postulate necessary if the idea of right is to have validity, it is no imaginative figment, but exists as surely and as truly as the physical universe, however that may be. Call the spiritual universe God if you will, but in doing so do not make the mistake of personalizing it; for we will recall that the manifold is not derived from unity. "There is no One."²⁴ God cannot be conceived of as the locus of unity, since the unity subsists in the relation of the units. "Strictly speak-

²⁴ Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 109.

ing," Adler says, "we have replaced the God-idea by that of a universe of spiritual beings interacting in infinite harmony."
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 25 "There 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. Creation is an attempt to show how the world, including man, proceeds out of the infinite. Immortality is an attempt to express how man returns to the infinite. (Man's dealings with the finite order have 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." Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 139, note 3. In passing it is interesting to note another affinity of thought of William James and Adler. James validates the formulation by mental functions of ideal ends--which for Adler become a spiritual universe or ideal of the whole--and acknowledges, as Adler does, that the recreation of the empirical with the ideal (for James the "translation of nature's materials into ethical forms") will never be ended. (Adler writes, "In general it may be said that the purpose of existence, both of the individual and of the race, is so to work in the finite world as to become possessed with ever greater distinctness of the conviction of the reality of the wholly real world, the infinite supersensible universe.") James writes,

"I mean by the 'reflex theory of mind' that the conceiving or theorizing faculty ... functions exclusively for the sake of ends that do not exist at all in the world of impressions we receive by way of our senses, but are set by our emotional and spiritual subjectivity altogether. It is a transformer of the world of our impressions into a totally different world,--the world of our conception; and the transformation is effected in the interests of our volitional nature, and for no other purpose whatsoever." Address delivered to the Unitarian Ministers' Institute at Princeton, May, 1881. Unitarian Review, Oct., 1881. Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 395.

"The world of aesthetics and ethics is an ideal world, a Utopia, a world which the outer relations persist in contradicting, but which we as stubbornly persist in striving to make actual. ...There are ideal and

Kant's treatment of the Ontological argument is supposed effectually to have destroyed the most compelling arguments for God's existence, but Adler says that Kant succeeded only in refuting it in its scholastic form.²⁶ Kant seeks to ascertain whether by going backward along the chain of effects and causes he can somewhere find God as either a first cause, or a being unconditioned. Proceeding in this manner he shows that the notion of a first cause is untenable. Kant does not look forward into the "ideals of the will," nor does he enter into the realm of ends where we have observed the necessity of determining action in obedience to some scheme of relations or universal plan. Will Kant's criticism of the ontological argument hold when by it

 inward relations amongst the objects of our thought which can in no intelligible sense whatever be interpreted as reproductions of the order of outer experience. In the aesthetic and ethical realms they conflict with its order--the early Christian with his kingdom of heaven, and the contemporary anarchist with his abstract dream of justice, will tell you that the existing order must perish, root and branch, ere the true order can come. Now the peculiarity of those relations among the objects of our thought which are dubbed 'scientific' is this, that although they no more are inward reproductions of the outer order than the ethical and aesthetic relations are, yet they do not conflict with that order, but, once having sprung up by the play of the inward forces, are found--some of them at least, namely the only ones which have survived long enough to be matters of record--to be congruent with the time- and space-relations which our impressions affect. In other words, though nature's materials lend themselves slowly and discouragingly to our translation of them into ethical forms, but more readily into aesthetic forms; to translation into scientific forms they lend themselves with relative ease and completeness. The translation, it is true, will probably never be ended." Principles of Psychology, Vol. II, pp. 639-40.

26 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 129.

we mean the existence of an ideal, of "functional finalities" which constitute the spiritual universe, which may be called God, which is not in a spacial and temporal manifold such as Kant's would have been? Adler thinks not.

Adler himself nowhere identifies God with the spiritual universe, which is the real world.

"I believe that the law of righteousness will triumph in the universe over all evil; I believe that in the law of righteousness is the sanctification of human life, and I believe that in furthering and fulfilling that law I also am hallowed in the service of the unknown God."

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The spiritual universe subsists: it is spaceless and timeless, logically prior to right action but psychologically a consequent of it. Our ideas of the spiritual universe which constitute the ultimate reality are only symbolic of it--they themselves do not constitute the reality:

"What in its ultimate constitution our spiritual being may be, remains unknown. Did we know, were we capable of comprehending the infinite order, and seeing things in that supersolar light, we might then be able to solve the insoluble riddle, the coexistence side by side of the finite and the infinite."

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- 27 Felix Adler, "Atheism," A Lecture before the Society for Ethical Culture, 1879, p. 15.
- 23 "We live not to realize the ideal but the reality of the ideal. ...It subsists in the world of true being, and we with it." Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 232.
- 29 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 153-59. Yet what makes life worth while is "the conviction, through the experience of the spiritual nature in myself, that the ultimate reality in things is spiritual,

The important thing for Adler is not knowledge about the intrinsic nature of the spiritual ideal, but conduct arising from the assumption of its existence and participation in it. Whether it exists or not we are to act as though it does. ³⁰ As we shall now see, a belief in, and a whole-hearted participation in the spiritual universe is merited, as we examine the consequences of this philosophy, which is not transcendently derived, but "fulgurated out of experience."

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- that there is an eternal order in which I, in the ultimate truth of my being, am inseparably included..." The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 193.
- 30 "The ethical ideal is produced by applying (the) 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. So act, not as if the rule of thy action were to become a universal law for all rational beings ... 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." Felix Adler, "A Critique of Kant's Ethics," Mind, N.S., Vol. XI, No. 42, p. 181.

Part Three

The Problem of Frustration

The "first principle" of ethics now having been grasped, "Live in the life of another, live so to enhance to the highest degree the possibilities of another,"¹ one is now ready to ascertain how it is to be applied. A thing one soon notices, however, to his dismay, is that he is more often than not unsuccessful in attaining his goal. He is unable to evoke that spiritual, reciprocal response in others. One finds himself frustrated. He finds that he is not free to produce those effects in the finite world which he desires, to produce consciousness of the interrelation of coexistent entities, solicitude for the welfare of others. In the infinite world each ethical unit is completely free--free to be at once "the producer and recipient of the totality of life;"² free to produce its dynamic energy coming unstinted and unborrowed out of itself and an unstinted plenitude and totality of effects. And the harder he as a finite being

1 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 163.

2 Ibid., p. 149.

tries to live as a spiritual being, following the ethical rule, the more he becomes impressed with his inability to succeed in this endeavor. The goal appears to recede instead of coming closer. He finds that he cannot even approximate this end in a practical way. When, however, recognizing and assenting to the fact of frustration he attains the insight--the second great insight Adler expresses--that "the moral end, for a finite nature, like that of man, is just to realize the unattainableness of the end,"³ he shall, however, have vindicated his course of action and come closer to the theoretical vindication of Adler's philosophy; for he shall see that his inability to succeed is the very condition for acquiring the conviction that there is an infinite world; and that because of our unflagging ability to renew our attempts to bring our goal into partial fruition at least, because of the ethical energy within us, we possess an infinite nature and thereby are included in it.

The problem of frustration is the problem of evil. Frustration exists to be utilized: we are to acknowledge the fact that evil exists that we may know the good; and as we shall see later, as a stimulus to good.⁴ As a spiritual

3 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 150.

4 Eight solutions have most often been given to the problem of evil:

- (a) Evil an illusion (Christian Science view)
- (b) Evil a prerequisite for good
- (c) Evil is good in disguise
- (d) Evil a trial and test before reward
- (e) Evil a stimulus to good
- (f) Evil a balancer of the good: to know good, know evil

experience it becomes a means of spiritual education. We see frustration in the physical world in the irreconcilability of the synthesizing and categorizing functions of the mind, and in the realm of values, or more correctly the moral world in "the deflecting forces of appetites and passions which hinder us in the attainment of the spiritual end."⁵ Both partial success and failure in our efforts appear to be necessary in Adler's view to the achievement of the task of mankind.

The "Three Great Shadows:" The Spiritual Attitude Toward Sickness

"In the great academies of the middle ages there were four faculties, from one of which a student must have graduated before he could claim the title of 'Learned One.' So, too, in the moral academy of life there are four faculties. The name of one professor is Poverty; of another, Sickness; of another, Sorrow; of the last, Sin. Into one of these classrooms we must enter, the searching examinations of one of these professors we must have passed, before we can obtain our degree as Learned in the Art of Life."

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- (g) Evil a necessary stage in evolution: the "green apple" theory
 - (h) Evil is necessary for natural selection
 - (i) Other less common solutions:
 - The problem of evil unsolvable
 - Deny its existence as a problem by denying the existence of a personal or benevolent or omnipotent God. This view may be in combination with any other.
- 5 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 152.
- 6 Felix Adler, "The Four Types of Suffering," Ethical Pamphlets, No. 17, p. 16.

Frustration manifests itself, Adler says, in "three great shadows:" sickness, sorrow, and sin. In each of these cases the suffering to be spiritually efficacious must pass over into action. In the case of a prolonged, painful illness, for example, one should not bear it with fortitude and pride, nor seek to hide the pain on the assumption that one must not interfere with the happiness of the greater number, nor submit passively to the inscrutable will of God. The stoical attitude with its emphasis on pride rather than on humility is an appeal to the empirical rather than the spiritual nature of man; and though indeed manly, is unwarranted, for there is no good to which such hidden suffering can be made instrumental. As for the submissive attitude, with no warrant for faith in the existence of an omni-benevolent, omnibotent God there remains no purpose in submission, and no object for loyalty. Attempts to explain the "Why" of the suffering are steps in the wrong direction, for it is an attempt to find the ultimate cause of effects, which Adler believes to be a fruitless undertaking. The real solution to the problem is not to explain the suffering, but to utilize it for a definite spiritual end, and this is to be accomplished by both stoically bearing, bravely hiding, and patiently submitting;⁷ and our attendants, observing our intense efforts to overcome our affliction, will suffer sympathetical-

 7 "The ethical temperament ... endeavors to create perfection, and is willing to suffer the pain of imperfection while engaged in the effort of creation." Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 97.

ly with us. In attempting to overcome the centralizing, egotizing effects of pain we make our companions realize their interrelatedness with us and our spiritual relation to them. Men draw closer together when they find themselves surrounded with difficulties. The attempt to overcome an evil, or positively, the effort to attain a common goal establishes in the participants a feeling of spiritual interconnectedness. It is this emotion or spiritual experience which is to be the looked-for result of suffering, which it appears to be the purpose of evil to create.⁸

The Spiritual Attitude Toward Sorrow

Bereavement, as for example the loss of a loved one, or the death of a young husband or wife, is the second great shadow. Should one "bow to the inevitable," bow to destiny and accept the subsequent heavy and hopeless tranquility, or meditate on the universality of sorrow and appease the passion of his own grief by compassion and the works to which it leads, or hope for retribution in a future world? All of these reactions are noble so far as they go, Adler says, but they do not go far enough: for there is business to be done, and that is to fashion and cultivate a symbolic image of the departed one which stands for his spiritual nature. This is

⁸ Someone has written, "The happiest associations often arise out of a fault and a forgiveness."

to be accomplished by reviewing and summarizing his whole existence, getting the total perspective of his life. One must meditate upon those commendable qualities which were most analogous to spiritual traits; "separate the wheat from the chaff" and clarify his image of the departed one in this perspective. In the activity of separating the laudable from the less laudable, what is seen to have been fallible in the deceased benefits the meditator in return by causing him to reform his own life. By so doing he becomes increasingly conscious of the spiritual bond between himself and the departed in spite of death. For death destroys only the empirical self, the sign of the significant, the spiritual element which was enshrined in it. It is the spiritual element in one's nature that we really love. Death thus becomes a boon in helping us to realize the supreme end, consciousness of "the realization of our interrelation with the infinite community of spirits."

The Spiritual Attitude Toward Sin

The third great shadow, sin, likewise is to be utilized to strengthen our sense of the real existence of the ideal spiritual world and to help us seize upon its reality through gaining an ever more explicit conception of it. Evil acts, unconsciously or consciously perpetrated become sin when we

9 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 170.

realize the implications of those acts and become temporarily prostrated with a feeling of guilt, and are later elevated to a strange emotional ecstasy by our repentance.¹⁰

Our evil acts are more numerous than any of us are aware of. We daily unknowingly commit evil in the form of "refined invasions on the personality of others" and by oppressing the development of the spiritual life. It is by our recognition and repentance of such acts that they become sins: and the more sensitive one becomes of the inviolability of the spiritual numen in others the more conscious he becomes of such personal, unpremeditated and irresponsible acts.

The feeling of having sinned, transgressed upon the inviolable personalities of others, is accompanied by a poignant feeling of responsibility, though it is usually characterized by vagueness as to whom, and why. Usually we feel obligated either to God the "Author of the Moral Law," or to the society against whom we have transgressed by violating the pursuit of a common interest; or to our own conscience which inflicts some penalty in the way of future action, which we voluntarily accept. None of these is adequate from the ethical standpoint. We must remember that the task of mankind is to "embody more and more the universal spirit-

 10 We have all wished that we might have acted differently in the past and have resolved to make amends. "Life is full of mistakes; and the wrongs we do to those we love and honor are more than we can endure." "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught; Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

ual law in human relationships, and thus to transform and transfigure human society." The object of loyalty or disloyalty is the spiritual ideal, and any one who commits an act which will hinder the progressive pursuit of this goal is irresponsible. In so far as one fails to promote the spiritual ideal he is an evil doer: in so far as one recognizes the misdemeanor and repents, the evil act may be termed a sin.

Sin, the recognition and repentance for having transgressed on the rights of others, contains a positive value when viewed in this light, for the recognition of responsibility and the resolve to mend one's ways is self-condemnatory, essentially a cleansing process, efficacious in bringing about a spiritual rebirth in the form of a more ethical, socially conscious individual. Through the recognition and repentance of our harmful acts we turn evil into good. No one can escape doing evil in subtle and complex forms. The more sensitive one becomes to the welfare of others, the more finely tuned his perceptions and feelings, the more readily he will become cognizant of his mistakes and seek to rectify them.

The problem of sin has been considered from the standpoint of the sinner: now let us consider it from the position of the one sinned against and see how, as ethical characters, we should act. What is the meaning of "forgiveness"? Obviously we want to forgive those who trespass against us.

We must remember that the attainment of the spiritual ideal comes both through partial success and failure. Sin is failure, and we must consider it as one of the instrumentalities by which the end of human existence is achieved. We must be tolerant of the frailties of others. When we are maliciously injured we should not be vindictive. Punishment is in order, but rightly understood is essentially reformatory rather than retributive; and its true function is to lead the unrepentant up to the point of repentance. "Enemies in the spiritual sense there are none."¹¹ We must have faith in the sinner's better nature and the good that persists in him, be it ever so hidden and ever so little. Adler takes the position that once a person knows the good, he will pursue it. When the transgressor becomes repentant we must forgive, and forgive completely, for magnanimity does not barter with its terms. In the spiritually minded person forgiveness comes almost automatically. The most searching test of one's ethical character is the ability to sincerely desire to bring about the reformation of the transgressor rather than to submit to the lex talionis.¹² The essence of wrong is the failure to realize that we have no enemies in the spiritual sense, failure to see the essentially divine nature in others and in one's self and to desire to expand his and our conception of it. The object of punishment is

11 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 205.

12 Ibid., p. 206.

to teach the guilty to realize this. The status of forgiver and forgiven, when complete, Adler observes, often results in a strangely tender spiritual friendship between them:

"The forgiveness of personal foes, when complete, establishes a strangely tender spiritual fellowship between the pardoner and the pardoned. Both have transgressed their normal empirical selves, both have become partners in a sublime transaction: the one delivered from the clinging of his baser desires, the other released from his first crude reaction against evil. They will never forget what they thus owe to one another. They will continue to walk hand in hand, the one still leaning, the other supporting and himself unspeakably strengthened by the support he gives."

13

As for our intellectual enemies, those who hold and promulgate views different from our own, we should exercise the same tolerance and seek to find in them "those elements of truth which we cannot afford to disregard, and serve to supplement and correct such truths as we possess."¹⁴ We shall never display our animus toward an evil-doer because we have no animus to display: the evil doer knows not what he does. "Love your enemies" is the prime ethical rule applicable here.

Respect for the Right to Life

Our ability to do evil and good implies that we know

13 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 205.

14 Ibid., p. 207.

what good and evil are. Right conduct, in as much as it affects others, implies obligations to the rights of others. We may class the rights of others under three aspects for purpose of discussion: the right of others to life, liberty, and property. How, in order to function as a member of the spiritual world, shall we act, and what are the criteria of good conduct in relation to the objects of this classification which covers broadly our duties with our fellow-men? What are the obligations to be recognized?

Although it is almost universally conceded that all have a right to life, our conception of "life," Adler says, is all too narrow. If one is to recognize the full implication of the affirmation of the "right to life," in the light of this ethical theory he will rephrase it so that it reads rather, "Thou shalt promote the development of the personalities of all in so far as it is in your power, and work for an ever richer life for all," which if carried out, would mean the end of social evils, such as child labor, inadequate health protection for employees, and subsistence wages. The "right to life" involves a militant attitude toward oppressors of the spiritual life. The "indirect" taking of life would be stopped. The direct or indirect inhibition of the right to develop one's personality amounts to death in life. To help to create the fullest, socially conscious life for all must be one goal and criterion of good conduct.

Does it follow from this view of the inviolability of

the individual and the right to life that the life of every man--for example, a potential murderer or a permanent criminal--is inviolate? No, Adler says, because through the death of such an individual humanity is saved from a moral disgrace in his person. The death penalty must not be inflicted, however, if there is any other possible way open to prevent such an action. The assumption that the taking of a physical life is an absolute wrong under all circumstances is incorrect. The problem of the attitude the spiritually conscious man should take toward those who insist on obtaining their rights by the use of forceful aggression was a momentous one for Adler, who was struggling with this problem at the time of the World War. The Germans were aggressors. Was the United States to enter the conflict, to resist the Prussian armies that threatened to over-run all Europe? The answer came in the book, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, and several pamphlets, in which he concluded that forcible retaliatory action was justifiable against an aggressor whose action threatened to smother the spiritual life which it is the duty of the physical, the empirical life to serve.

Respect for the Right to Property

Our inherent right to property, according to Blackstone's definition, is, "the sole and despotic dominion which one man

claims and exercises over the external things of the world in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe."¹⁵ Adler subscribes to this definition with certain modifications. An individual's right to property is to be confined quantitatively to an amount sufficient only for the full development of personality and the satisfaction of his wants. Included as property is the right to certain services of others, as well as material goods. Blackstone's definition may reflect the facts but not the right, ethically viewed. No one has the right to usurp the energies of another at the expense of the other's development--to use another as a tool, view another as a means rather than an end. Adler does and may well accuse the world powers and "vested interests" of appropriating unjustly the material and human resources of less advanced nations and the man in the street. The ethical rule in such cases should be, extend your personality over things, and utilize the services of your fellow beings only in so far as a mutual development of spiritual and social personality exists. No one has the right to receive without working, nor to accumulate more property than he can use, but is entitled to as much and as many of the necessities and conveniences of life as the group, struggling in an inhospitable and inclement environment, can acquire, so long as they contribute to the maintenance and development of a well rounded personality. "The solution of

 15 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 185.

the labor question, and the wage problem, must be along teleological, not genetic lines."¹⁶

Respect for the Right to Liberty

To respect the liberty of others means to respect their reputation, because approbation instills confidence and courage and serves as an ethical "prop"¹⁷ to one's personality as a thinker. Approbation is to take the form of appreciation, and not flattery, which is the "base counterfeit" of appreciation.¹⁸ A good moral reputation is efficacious in the development of personality, while its debasement by backbiting and innuendo is detrimental and in so far positively harmful to the development of the spiritual ideal. This is recognized in our libel laws, which permit sizable damages to be collected as "reimbursement" for a slandered character. Edmund Burke said, "The use of character is to be a shield against calumny."¹⁹ For Adler, character and the right to it are more than a shield: character is also the sword, and gives its wielder confidence in his ability to battle militantly against the evils he finds all about him. Adler would recommend that we "look for the mote in our own

16 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 146.

17 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 193.

18 Ibid., p. 202.

19 From the "Speech at Bristol Previous to the Election in That City, 1780," The Works of Burke, Vol. III.

eye" before we attempt to find it in others.

The Supreme Ethical Rule as Finally Formulated

We may now state the supreme ethical rule, "Live in the life of another, live so as to enhance to the highest degree the possibilities of another." We have examined the various modes of frustration which prevent the attainment of a spiritual response in others--the "three shadows, sickness, sorrow, and sin"--and we have clarified somewhat the distinction between the empirical self and the spiritual self, and have found that the empirical self is only a substratum for the spiritual or the real self. In view of the continuous frustration and the spiritual, ideal nature of the whole we have come to see that the moral end for finite man is just the realization of the unattainableness of the end. With the purpose in mind of determining in a practical way the meaning of good conduct we have examined our obligations to others which arise from an examination of the nature of sin; and defined in terms of their true ethical meaning the terms life, liberty, and property; and we have placed ourselves in the position of the sinner and the one sinned against and determined how we should act under those circumstances as true ethical characters. We are now ready to examine more critically Adler's meaning of the prime ethical rule, and to determine more accurately how it works in practice. For this expresses the crux of his theory, and on our ability or ina-

bility to successfully utilize the supreme ethical rule, his philosophy must stand or fall.

An extension of the meaning of the rule reveals the third and final step in the development of the theory, for the rule may now be stated thus: "Act so as to elicit the best in others ²⁰ and thereby in thyself." By acting upon other empirical selves in such a manner that the hidden personality, the consciousness of infinite spiritual interrelatedness, the sense of dependence upon and obligation to other selves will be drawn out, we shall by so doing convert our own empirical selves into spiritual personalities. We become spiritual beings by helping others to become spiritual beings.

The Spiritual Nature of Virtue

None of us, Adler says, are wholly good or wholly bad; and it appears that what may be called our virtuous or plus traits carry with them vicious or minus traits. The virtuous aspects of our character will be revealed in some of our activities, while other activities will reveal the vicious aspects. And too, many of our "bright qualities," kindness,

20 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 203. "Or more exactly act so as to elicit the sense of unique distinctive selfhood, as interconnected with all other distinctive spiritual beings in the infinite universe." "So act as to elicit the best in others, in the process eliciting the best that is potential in thyself." The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 104.

sympathy, gentleness, for example, are not to be considered virtues in a true sense: we must distinguish between "bright and dark qualities" and virtues and vices. "To confuse the bright with virtue and the dark with viciousness is the most prevalent of moral fallacies."²¹

What then is a virtue and what is a vice, what criteria do we have from a genuinely ethical point of view, since our plus character traits, applying to our natural or empirical character are ethically only virtues so-called? Adler's answer is that when we attempt to raise a plus quality to the "Nth degree" and cast out the minus quality accompanying it, the extent to which this goal is attained constitutes the real virtue. Self-sacrifice, and justice, for example, are virtues as commonly understood, but ethically they are only "plus traits" requiring to be subjected to the process of transformation: In the case of self-sacrifice the motive may be egotistical, as when the exaltation of self in the mind of the actor is the reward; or it may be altruistic, in which case one's own personality is sacrificed or made servile to the interest of another. In either case it is not a virtue. Self-sacrifice becomes a virtue only when the ends of self and the recipient are promoted jointly. The meaning of justice is usually too narrow: the mere fulfillment of a fixed agreement, for example the keeping of a contract is, Adler says, commonly considered a judicious act, but it fails to be such in the

21 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 211.

true ethical sense, for then justice means not the mere fulfillment of fixed and a priori conditions, but doing and giving so far as possible whatever will make for the development of the ethical personality of others. But any attempt at pure self-sacrifice, or pure justice, leads to failure; they can only be efforts in the direction of the finitely unattainable. The ethically valuable outcome is the effort itself. Let us then, if we would be ethical, act upon other empirical selves to evoke this spiritual personality, and in so doing we shall develop our own. Let us give ourselves to the welfare of others, as a mother does to her child, or a teacher does to his pupils, promoting the fine character qualities as much as possible, at the same time keeping in mind the fact that the aim is not empirical virtue but the result of empirical virtue, an ever increasing consciousness of our spiritual interdependence and relatedness; and that by so giving ourselves the aim is to be realized reciprocally in both ourselves and our beneficiaries.

The Instinctive Basis for the Ethical Rule and Illicit Goals as the Satisfaction for the Incentive to Right Conduct

Two impulses prompt us to pursue the ethical rule, to find and nourish the spiritual numen in others: our own desire for salvation or attempt to escape "death in life" which is manifest in ennui by people who live without purpose; and

the recognition of the dependence of others upon ourselves. These impulses at present are inadequately satisfied. Many suicides are the result of living without purpose and a sense of the futility of existence,²² and many spend their lives fruitlessly in the pursuit of an unattainable something, who yearn to attach themselves to something beyond this transitory life, and failing to do so for one reason or another go through life trembling and afraid. None of us can escape feeling at times that sense of spiritual interrelatedness and dependence of others on ourselves. Parents witness it in the dependence on them of their children; teacher and pupil both feel the relationship; husband and wife, employee and employer, producer and consumer, all who share intimately a common, significant experience.

These two incentives to action, the desire for an object for loyalty and the felt necessity of common relationships, have not commonly been satisfied through activity guided by the ethical rule. As regards the satisfaction of the first impulse, the ends in view, the objects to which men are commonly loyal in their attempt to escape "death in life," have usually been empirical ends, characterized by their transitoriness and possibilities of being indulged in to satiety; as for example, activity directed toward bringing about the happiness of children, or accumulating wealth, or acquiring fame. The temporal ends and interests of men

22 This fact has been immortalized by Edwin Arlington Robinson in his poem, "Richard Corey."

all prove ultimately to be unsatisfactory in giving us the sense of duty well done and time well spent. True and lasting satisfaction, found in accordance with Adler's ethical philosophy, is only attained by arousing the spiritual ideal in others, by helping our associates to think better of themselves and helping them to become aware of their spiritual potentialities, to be realized through the cultivation of their laudable qualities to the highest possible degree. Activity guided by the supreme ethical rule is the way to salvation.

"The power of ideally appreciating others, of seeing them in the light of their possible best, and the feeling of love consequent on this vision, is the mightiest lever for transforming evil into good, and for sweetening the embittered lives of men."

23

Likewise mankind has erred and strayed in finding adequate satisfaction for the second motive, in fulfilling our obligations to others arising from our sense of mutual dependence. Though recognizing our duty to serve (which was foreign in Emerson's philosophy) we have served the empirical wants and interests of men, which is in Adler's view "like serving the servants of a master." The master end (which, as we have seen, is the conviction of one's infinite interrelatedness, the consciousness of one's self as a member of the infinite spiritual universe by reason of the spiritual energy within us) is the end in everyone's life which

23 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 232.

should be paramount, to which all other ends should be subservient and subordinate. Adler calls this serving of our immediate empirical ends, such as health, education, gratification of desires of all kinds, which rightly are only themselves instrumental to the supreme end, the "fallacy of provisionalism."²⁴

We must guard against applying the rule only on a theoretical scale, by applying it only to casual acquaintances and "man in general." There shall be no discrimination between the personal and the impersonal, the "close" and the "distant." All people must be viewed in their spiritual capacity. Though mutual aid and comfort, sympathy in joy and sorrow are valuable elements in any relationship, they must always be viewed as instrumental and subsidiary to the higher good. If all friendships and all marriages were viewed in this spiritual light there would be no broken ties, because there would be infinitely less selfish conduct and infinitely more understanding. For then we should all be giving ourselves whole-heartedly to the service of others, and they in turn actually would reciprocate the effort and good intent by offering what is best in them.

24 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 229.

Part Four

The Method of Approach

We have now completed our examination of the theoretical basis of Adler's philosophy of ethical idealism and its general implications. There remains the problem of reconstruction: How are we to apply this philosophy in such a manner as to ethicize the social institutions which are at the present time only in part ethically organized? Since no clear-cut division between explication and application is practical, the present section will supplement the development of the theory as well as illustrate its possibilities for application. The reader will more clearly understand by a resort to a discussion of concrete instances how the ethical ideal is to be achieved through service.

Our duties as ethical beings may be expressed in relation to the social institutions in which we live and form a part, namely the family, the organs of education, the vocation, the political organization, and the organization of mankind which is the ideal religious society. Since ethical progress is always an advance toward the infinite, Adler expresses his philosophy in the form of a discussion of the na-

ture of these social institutions as ethically conceived, each being a step upward toward the fulfillment of the spiritual ideal. The family is considered first, since it is the most elemental and necessary social group and chronologically prior to the others in the life of the individual. As the individual matures chronologically his first intimation of his existence as a spiritual organism is found as a child in the family group, and as he progresses in his ethical development he passes successively through a consideration and understanding of the social institutions, each of which is more complex than those preceding in the amount and complexity of the relations involved. The family as a social group is considered first for another reason: Since our duty is to further the development of the spiritual ideal, realizing that the human race is still itself in its infancy so far as its complete fruition has been brought about, and that hence our chief concern must be with our posterity, the training of the child, being best done in the home, constitutes a most important activity.

The "Threefold Reverence"

This solicitude for the development of the unrealized possibilities of mankind constitutes part of what Adler calls "the threefold reverence" which should characterize our ethical attitude all through life. The first and prime rever-

ence is reverence for children as successors to ourselves in realizing more and more the spiritual ideal; and reverence for latent abilities and capacities of the backward individuals and primitive groups who exist as adults here and now. The second great reverence in the trinity is respect for our superiors past and present who have done valid work in ethicizing human relations, and for such work itself. The third reverence is directed towards our ethically minded contemporaries who are doing their best to carry on the task of furthering the spiritual ideal. When we have fully grasped the meaning of the triple reverence we shall see why the first reverence, reverence for the undeveloped, especially children, is supreme in Adler's opinion, and begin to appreciate the significance of the family as the first matrix in which the reverential attitudes are to be acquired.

The Marriage Relation and the Family

Current individualism has blighted the spiritual view¹ of the marriage function. The purpose of marriage and the

1 "The marriage institution and custom, as we have inherited it, is a casket that contains a priceless gem, namely, the idea of the unity of two lives, for the sake of achieving, through their inseparable union, the unity of the children's lives with their own. But this precious good enshrined in marriage must indeed be developed into a better. ...The development of the unity depends on the perfect recognition of an independent mind and will on either side, and on the respect paid to the potential spiritual independence of the child." Felix Adler, Incompatibility in Marriage, pp. 33-34.

family for most people is to promote the individual happiness of the members, and as a result the thinnest incompatibilities have been considered sufficient grounds for their dissolution.

"Incompatibilities ... are natural. They can and must be overcome. Once let it be understood that incompatibility is a cause for parting company and the evil will only be aggravated. ... Once let the social purpose of marriage be lost out of sight, let the institution be published as one that exists only or fundamentally for the 'self-expression' of the man and the woman, and the most powerful incentive for transcending differences and creating harmony will be absent."

2

Happiness is a thing naturally and universally desired, but in as much as it is subjective and dependent only on the self it must be subordinated to the objective end, which is the fulfillment of the public interest by the furtherance of the spiritual ideal through the begetting and ethical instruction of children.³ The true function of parents is to "bring to light the specific individuality of the child with an eye to the transmutation which it is to receive in the later terms of the social series."⁴ The thing to be cultivated is consciousness of the child's own spiritual interrelationship and

2 Felix Adler, Incompatibility in Marriage, p. 13.

3 "The presence of the child is the capital fact; the purpose of human marriage, as distinct from the joinings of the lower organisms, is to perpetuate the spiritual life upon earth in its human vehicles, and not only to perpetuate, but enhance it from generation to generation." Ibid., p. 30.

4 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 253.

dependence on others. The successful completion of this task will be not only the development of the parents' own character, but happiness indirectly, in the high gratitude and genuine reverence which will accrue from the child's own appreciation of the spiritual training he has received. As the child develops the reverential relationship will become mutual, for the parents will have established in the child a reverence for those who attempt to promote the spiritual ideal. Through wise training, if there are several children in the home, the child can be trained to reverence his equals by teaching him to respect fraternal rights. As the child⁵ is thus educated, he gradually becomes able to distinguish between those high ethical ideals and the empirical substratum in which they are embedded and will give those ideals their proper place of importance. In the main, Adler says, the private interests of the married pair have yielded preference to this end, though the end has been misunderstood: while it has generally been conceded that the supreme interest of the individual has been to be creative of the public interest, attention has been directed toward the development of the child's and the marriage partners' empirical natures rather than their spiritual natures. The empirical natures have been viewed as the end, whereas they are only instrumental to the development of the spiritual life. Incompatibil-

5 In the broad sense. "Every relation in life should be educative." Felix Adler, Incompatibility in Marriage, p. 37.

ity in marriage is only a fiction in the light of the real end of life, the elicitation of the best in others.

The fulfillment of this highest function presupposes the monogamic relationship, and a relationship that lasts till death; for only in the home can a child receive the paternal affection which implicitly respects his right to life and establishes in him the feeling that he is somehow valuable in himself, though outwardly he appears to be without any usefulness or merit; and such a feeling is, as we have seen, necessary in the spiritual development of personality.⁶ Unless the family remains united, the children, grown to adult-hood, are deprived the maternal and paternal advice and affection which should have been moulding their character through all the years of adolescence; and the parents, having never participated in this spiritual philosophy of life, lose the sense of fullness of the marriage which comes as they prepare to descend into the valley of death.

The marriage partner, then, reveres not the beauty, the utility of the other for his own ends, but the spiritual ideal inherent in him:

"Marriage ... is the earthly symbol of the infinite and universal union of spirits. And what furthermore I say is that the highest good which a man can receive from the woman he loves is that she shall enlighten his eyes to see the infinite relations of being, that she shall be to him the revealer of the eternal world, that she shall appear to him

6 "Personality is the essential fact in life, and growth into a more personalized, more distinct personality, is

not only as the particular star of his life,
but disclose to him the infinite galaxy that
envelops her."

7

Happiness comes indirectly in bringing to light his partner's potential ethical capacities, and in observing them to arise unbidden in himself; and happiness comes in reverencing the spiritual ideal by re-creating it and developing it in its physical guise in new life. By suffering and striving for better things we create the spiritual ideal, and make it more and more manifest in this empirical world. The spiritual life is created by us out of its material substratum by eulogizing and encouraging, sometimes painfully, those plus qualities of our characters.

The Vocations

Let us next consider the vocation as a social institution, and how it affects and is affected by the ethical development of the individual. Every vocation has an ethical side and an empirical side. It is not the empirical side with which we shall concern ourselves. We shall consider Adler's provisional and tentative ethical classification of the vocations and see how each contributes toward the ethical development of personality. They may be classed under five headings: (a) "Vocations of scientific theory"

the chief aim to be served by the personal relations."
Felix Adler, Incompatibility in Marriage, pp. 3-4.

7 Ibid., p. 105.

(the physical sciences as studied by research workers, inventors, etc.), (b)"Vocations utilizing their practical counterparts" (the engineer, the industrial chemist, the surveyor, etc.), (c)"Vocations involving the historical sciences" (the anthropologist, the archaeologist, the historian, etc.), (d)"the Vocation of the artist," and (e) "the Educational vocations of (1)the lawyer and judge, (2)the statesman, and (3)the religious teacher."

On the empirical side the scientist attempts to gain an ever deeper understanding of the mysterious functioning of physical forces; on the ethical side one of his functions is to utilize the rigid mental training in objectification, accuracy, concentration, the increased mental grasp he obtains in whatever form, by transferring them to the sphere of social relations in general, wherever the ethical principle can be applied. The result will be the greater illumination of obscurities in the ethical field. The scientist has a second ethical function, one which arises not through partial success (which characterizes the first) but through frustration; his inability to ever comprehend the totality of the phenomena he investigates. None can realize better than he that the universe can never be rounded out into a true infinity, that we can never completely and satisfactorily synthesize the physical phenomena in their diversity.

8 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 262.

He is the one who can best realize that the reality-producing functions of the mind, unity and plurality, are incompatible in a finite world. He can best destroy the illusion that the material world is a finality, and the belief that the truths of science are the only kind of truth. Through his frustrated purpose he should experience a new turn toward the spiritual, for it is only in the mind of the man who can apprehend the ideal of the whole, unity in complete individuality, that the true answer to the problem of the scientist is found. Because the scientist discovers that his efforts to understand phenomena in terms of their causes, and to grasp their total meaning are fruitless, he will, if striving to live as an ethical personality, gain a more respectful opinion of the ideal of the whole as created by his own mind, and thus establish more securely an empirical basis for self respect.

This does not mean that the theorist must shirk his empirical functions, stop his investigations into the forces of nature, for he must remember, as must all of us, that the finite ends are the means to the highest end, that the spiritual world is made explicit in this corporeal world through the manifestation of the "empirical substrata," through our activity directed toward a recreation of our environment. The spiritual world is built upon the finite world. Building the finite world is one of the great tasks of the human
 9
 life.

Every ideal, every goal that is worth while, Adler says, is intended to be a relief from some sort of spiritual pain. Ideals are "pang-born."¹⁰ They are the offspring of suffering, of our inability to achieve more than partial success in the finite world. Unless we are "cheerful world-builders,"¹¹ and take an active and whole-hearted interest in the improvement of material conditions and the embellishment of the earthly life, and face frustration courageously we shall never achieve knowledge of the spiritual ideal. Christianity in its original form dispaired at the task and advocated renunciation and withdrawal, and herein, Adler believes, lay one of its greatest defects.

"Science is instrumental in founding more securely the empirical basis of self-respect, inasmuch as it gives to man to a certain extent a sense of mastery over nature. With the help of science he feels himself no longer the helpless sport of nature's forces.

"The training in complex thinking afforded by science is favorable to the ethical reformer. Science also incidentally encourages the virtues of veracity, and the like.

"Knowledge for knowledge's sake cannot be the final end of the pursuit of science, since the world of space and time with which science deals is not only not as yet rationalized but is not ultimately rationalizable.

"While in the respects just mentioned

9 "The three great tasks that occupy human life are (a) to build our finite world (science and its adjuncts,) (b) to create in the finite the semblance of the infinite, or spiritual relation (art), and (c) to strive to realize the spiritual relation in human intercourse (ethics and religion)." Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 263.

10 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 6.

11 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 263.

the pursuit of science is indirectly instrumental to the spiritual end ... it is directly instrumental to it in so far as, at the hand of the supreme scientist, man is conducted through the finite as far as the gate of the infinite."

12

The Practical Counterparts of the Scientific Vocations

Those vocations which utilize the "practical counterparts of the sciences," pursued by the engineer, the inventor, the mechanic, the farmer, the doctor, etc., administer to our physical necessities. While engaged in the production of goods the producer should assert his spiritual personality. "He is to hammer out his personality on the anvil of his empirical necessities."¹³ Adler makes an important distinction between vocation and occupation, and the pursuit of a vocation, as he defines it, is the pursuit of one's chief interest in an ethical way. A vocation corresponds to a present-day avocation, ethically pursued. Most people hold "jobs," employment which is performed as inconspicuously and with as little effort as possible. The prime motive for the work done is the wage to be received. Such employment is occupational, for Adler. John Dewey calls such activity "labor." The ethical person aims to substitute for occupations vocations, whose characteristics are

12 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 269.

13 Ibid., p. 270.

service to others without the end in view of egoistic gain, potentialities for the worker's mental, aesthetic and volitional development. To pursue a vocation means to work at that which one finds interesting, and to see the work not only as a means for helping to sustain ourselves in the finite world but also as a means for developing one's latent mental and aesthetic abilities; and to see the connection between such work and the work of others, which means to participate in the spiritual ideal. Not only the men who ply trades which are the "practical counterparts" of the scientific vocations, but also all those who work at other vocations shall strive to realize the stimulating and detrimental effects of their own vocations on others, and continuously try to enhance the former effects and to smother¹⁴ the latter.

Implications of the Vocational Concept for Industrial Relationships

In short, the difference between a vocation and an occupation essentially involves a change in attitude toward work. Not only does the change affect the conduct of the individual as to his own personal interests but its ramifications extend implicitly into society at large. Pursuing the spiritual ideal means becoming socially conscious. The

14 "He is cultured who realizes the effect produced by his vocation on the other chief vocations..." Felix Adler,

vocational concept involves large scale changes in attitude toward employer and employee relationships. Less emphasis must be placed on the accumulation of buying power, and more emphasis must be placed on service. Wages and salaries should, as has previously been pointed out,¹⁵ be "teleological," and not causal--that is, allotted so as to sustain the worker in the best possible performance of his duties. Instead of cut-throat competition or modified competition and even Socialism (which sees ethical quality in uniformity rather than in "personalized individualization"),¹⁶ the true ethically industrialized organization would be an organ of the corpus sociale, a social body, the workers of whom would be treated as equals in determining its policies, in so far as mass participation in industrial legislation is compatible with specialized opinions of technicians; and the workers' ethical characters would thereby be developed. Production would be for the purpose of consumption; production would be for use rather than for profit. Executives would rule in a limited fashion as executive and administrative functionaries while the workers would exercise an equal share in the directive functions. Each industrial organization would be considered as a social sub-organism of the nation. As to the present prime problems of technologi-

The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, pp. 149-49, footnote.

15 See note 16, p. 71.

16 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 272.

cal unemployment and the deadening effect on the intellectual life of machine tending, they would be minimized by shorter working hours and a more equitable distribution of posts.

A national industrial council made up of all the functionaries of a particular industry would regulate monetary remuneration according to need, the pace of production, and the delegation of administrative power. This industrial council would try further to accomplish the ideal object of promoting "action and reaction" between the minds and wills of the different workers by sponsoring a program of adult education (early carried out by the Workingman's School and on the Platform of the Ethical Culture Society¹⁷), the main object being to show the relationship between their particular industry and industry as a whole to religion and government, and all the other main activities of mankind. It would inaugurate recreational activities whose nature is not only to amuse, but also to "renew the spontaneity, the zest, the capacity of the workers for vital working."¹⁸ It would present censored entertainment rather than that of the promiscuous sort which is now offered, open to all, regardless of the age of the spectators and the effects produced: it will try to solve the problem of "furnishing to the workers the beauty that is ennobling, the joy that is

 17 Chicago Times, May 31, 1879.

18 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 149.

rejuvenating."¹⁹ It would attempt to create in the workers a desire for those pleasures that become increasingly valued through the seeking of them, and an indifference toward those pleasures that require an ever greater stimulus on the return to the seeking of them.

The central aim of industrial social groups would be to see that the grand council of an industry does its best to represent the will of every worker, so that through rational contact and comparison with others each will be modified and enlightened into a resultant united will, the individual himself being ethicized in the process. The sketch of the social ideal as Adler presents it here is admittedly only a social principle, which can become actualized only in the course of several generations. Its value lies in the fact that it points to the direction action should take. The individual as an ethical being should promote this social principle in a more or less modified form and conform as much as possible to the ethical tenets which underlie his own personal conduct. Only through such conduct on our part, by means of partial success and frustration, can the corpus sociale be built, and can the individual arrive at a degree of knowledge of the spiritual ideal.

19 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 149.

Vocations Involving the Historical Sciences

The historian, the archaeologist, palaeontologist, philologist, and others whose vocations may be listed as a "study and interpretation of the historical sciences," likewise perform an empirical and ethical function. The gathering of data is the empirical function, and the viewing of the material with regard to the ideas which caused its presence, the motives and understanding behind the objects or events which is the only tangible relic of by-gone civilizations, as seen in regard to their consequences constitutes their function on the ethical side. The better this task is performed by them the better can we evaluate the facts for ourselves from the point of view of our present experience and insight. To profit by the mistakes and insights of others and to build "a dome more vast" is the true function of the vocationalists of the historical sciences.

The Vocation of the Artist

The vocation of the artist--the painter, the writer, the weaver, the sculptor, etc.--ethically speaking is "to create the semblance of the spiritual relation between the parts of an empirical object."²⁰ Adler means by creating the semblance expressing the totality which the spiritual

20 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 277.

relation involves. This is accomplished by the artist by depicting a certain relationship of objects with each other:

"The subject of the work of art must possess relative completeness and be capable of being contemplated as circumscribed and separated off."

21

"Each datum of the art object must be indispensable in its place and the connection with the rest inevitable."

22

This analysis amounts to an indictment of the present Realist tendency. In every day life ethics consists in spiritualizing the physical and psychical substratum: in art the physical or psychical substratum cannot be spiritualized, but can be made only to take on the semblance of spirituality; that is, the paint and the canvas produce the semblance of the ethical ideal only when they are utilized in such a way that "each color on the canvas, by its juxtaposition and its relation to the rest, is altered in tone and value, and all the rest are altered by it."²³ The semblance is of the "give and take" relationship which the spiritual relation embodies. The masterpiece never represents the "unity in variety" of its individual parts, but will, in spite of its totality-suggesting function, remain, equally apparently, invincibly individualized. "The more accentuated, the more distinct the members are (always provided that the reciprocal relation is maintained), the more artistically satisfy-

21 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 273.

22 Ibid., p. 286.

23 Ibid., p. 279.

ing will be the result."²⁴

The content of art, the idea or object depicted, must be something which is capable of aesthetic articulation, at the same time retaining a suggestion of its utility. For example, by giving an artistic form to the objects with which we come in bodily contact, we should be helping to "establish the appearance of the spiritual relation over these objects and thus in a fine sense make them congenial to ourselves as spiritual personalities."²⁵ All the arts--music, literature, poetry, drama, aesthetic contemplation--are efficacious in representing the spiritual ideal in symbolic form. A musical composition produces the semblance of the spiritual relationship when the crescendos and diminuendos, the repetitions, the staccatos and the other musical expressions, taken in their totality, produce the feeling of unity and oneness, and completeness, yet not permitting us to escape the impression that the composition is nevertheless constituted, like the spiritual ideal, of unique, individual units which are as real and essential and complete in themselves as the harmony which results from their proper juxtaposition. "Repetition, contrast, apparent triumph, defeat, and somehow triumph in defeat" are characteristic of all the forms of art. The function of art at different periods has always been to make more explicit the great ideals which represented the purpose for which man existed; and as

24 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 279-80.

25 Ibid., p. 280.

a medium for representing the spiritual ideal, it will, while at the present time be only tentatively grasped by the artist, be fulfilling the function art has always filled.

Beauty is not always a concomitant of an artistic piece of work. The great tragedies in literature are an example. In King Lear, Adler says, the subject matter may at some times be repulsive, yet the play is nevertheless a work of art; for it becomes art by the very contrast between the form and the subject-matter. Beauty, on the other hand, is produced "when both subject-matter and form are satisfying to our needs and aspirations."²⁶ In literature the adequate expression of an unfulfilled desire itself may afford relief and induce tranquility. The mind ceases to strive toward a beyond longed for and "rests tranquilized in the longing itself." Milton's "Lycidas," Keat's "Ode to the Nightingale," and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" are good examples.

The artist, like all other individuals, should be conscious of the three-fold reverence: he reverences the great masters, not by copying, but by utilizing the product of their best efforts; reverences his contemporaries in related fields who are intent on the problem of art, and looks to his and their present efforts as suggestive of a greater art that is to come. The artist also recognizes that his art is subordinate to the supreme concern in life, the relationship between individuals, and that his efforts to bring

26 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 282.

that goal nearer to fruition must remain his supreme concern.

In concluding Adler says of art,

"Substitute for line, color, sound, etc., a life--an ethical being--conceive the members to be not a few but in number infinite, and you have the spiritual ideal, which is the reality whereof art work is a semblance. This is the relation of art to ethics--the quality which we call in art 'convincing', in ethics we call 'worth.'"

27

The Lawyer and Judge as Teachers of Justice

The vocation of the lawyer is to be a teacher of justice in so far as it is already embodied in law, and an agitator for a broader view of justice which shall itself be written into law. The lawyer is not to consider himself as an expert substitute for a client engaged in the pursuit of his own egoistic interests. The true ethical function is to bring justice into play, and not the mere winning of a law case. A lawyer must be the assistant to a judge rather than an agent of his client; and his educational function is to instill in the mind of his client that same respect for justice which he himself as an ethical being holds. The judge, too, is a teacher. "The voice of the judge, when he pronounces sentence on a criminal, should reverberate throughout the whole of society, awakening all men to the fact that society as such shares the guilt."

23

27 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 286.

28 Ibid., p. 291.

The vocation of the statesman is not to serve passively and faithfully the mandate of the people, to be a "docile public servant." One who serves the public will, or pretends to, is not performing a statesman's true function. Such a one Adler calls the "fauning politician." Nor is his function to be an autocrat, domineering and coercive. The true ethical function of the statesman is to "evoke the spiritual conception of the State in the minds of his constituents, and in the process of doing so to become more²⁹ essentially a citizen himself."

The Function of the Religious Teacher

A discussion of the vocations has been made prior to a discussion of the organs of education in order that the reader might grasp the educational aim. In practice the maturing individual participates in school activities before participating in a vocation. The vocation of the educator and the organs of education are so closely connected that they may be dealt with simultaneously. What then is the purpose of the school? The clue may be found by again taking the three-fold reverence as our guide.

The school fills an important function in transmitting what is really valuable in racial experience so as to insure continuous progress. Our educators have the responsi-

29 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 291.

bility of winnowing the great mass of fact and fiction and preserving what is vital, true, and living, and discarding as chaff that which is no longer of vital importance. Reverence for the past is shown in this very sifting process. The educator also shows reverence toward the great masters of his own craft--"Pestalozzi, Froebel, Plato, Comenius, and others." Reverence of the second type is also found in the respect and cooperation of teachers for and with each other as a body, and respect for their common aim, that of "man-building."

The teachers revere their students, for their task is to develop their spiritual possibilities, the latent personalities of a coming generation. Respect for this aim constitutes the third and highest reverence; and the bringing to birth of this latent personality is the supreme spiritual end.³⁰ We show our reverence for the child in the effort to personalize him.³¹

Bearing in mind that spiritual development rests upon the subjection of an empirical substratum to ethical treatment, the educator must know what the nature of that substratum in the human personality is. It is unique individuality, which "manifests itself in a leading interest of some kind, a predominant bias which indicates the thing which the child is fit to be and do. Where no special interest appears in a child it is the task of the educator to

30 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 295.

31 Ibid.

create an interest. What nature has not done in such cases
 art must attempt."³²

When a predominant interest has once been found or created, the next task of the educator is to expand the interest so that it covers broader and broader fields. The comprehensive interest created in many branches of knowledge will enrich his ethical life by establishing in him eventually consciousness of his social dependence on others and others on him, will make him conscious of his place as a member of the spiritual universe. The same cultural idea predominates in the pre-vocational schools (consequent to the elementary schools): in each case the paramount interest should be the starting point, the center from which lines of interest are to be made to radiate out into the correlated branches. Pre-vocational schools in Adler's terminology constitute roughly what are now termed colleges. Adler's objection to the present day college is similar to that of Thorstein Veblen's, that it is "an institution designed for the education of gentlemen."³³ The pre-vocational schools train the students in the particular field of activity in which they have manifested a special interest. Following upon the pre-vocational school comes the univer-

 32 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 295.

33 Ibid., p. 249. Veblen writes, "It is in learning proper, and more particularly in the higher learning, that the influence of the leisure-class ideals is most potent..." Thorstein Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class, p. 364.

sity, whose function is that which its name implies--the organization and coordination of the several vocational schools or colleges of which it is constituted, not only merely under one administrative head but also organized and coordinated as to their subject-matter. In the university devoted to the student's ethical development there must be genuine³⁴ connection between the various branches of knowledge. The university will perform the function of developing the American ideal itself, the ideal of freedom. Unfortunately, Adler says, "the principal circumstance that retards our university development doubtless is that the ideal of American life itself, which the university is to express and to promote is as yet undefined in the minds of the American³⁵ people.

Adler conceives of education as growth. It is not a period of preparation for participation in life to be begun at a future date and it does not stop at the conclusion of the individual's formal training. He promoted adult ed-

34 John Dewey writes, "The mental poverty that comes from one-sided distortion of mind is culturally more significant than poverty in material goods." Individualism Old and New, p. 130.

35 John Dewey also laments the lack of a national ideal or goal: "The loyalties which once held individuals, which gave them support, direction, and unity of outlook on life have well-nigh disappeared. In consequence, individuals are confused and bewildered. It would be difficult to find in history an epoch as lacking in solid and assured objects of belief and approved ends of action as is the present." Individualism Old and New, p. 52.

ucation and saw in the growth of the University Extension movement a response to this concept. The pedagogy of the teacher of adults will, however, necessarily differ from that of the elementary teacher: adolescents are trained in ethical theory³⁶ but lack the fulness of content given in the school of experience; adults have the experience life itself gives, but lack the theoretical knowledge of the principles which reinforce and clarify the meaning of that experience. All of us are capable of grasping ever higher concepts of the spiritual relationship; and another function of the teacher of adult education will be to encourage the continuous development of the individual after his period of formal training has passed.

The ideal of freedom which it is our purpose to participate in is not an hypostatization, but a concept of the right to full personal development for all. To develop is to be free. To be free means the ability to express power: the greater the power one can express the more free he becomes. Freedom is a question of degree. The greatest or highest kind of power is that which is utilized in such a way as to elicit "unlike yet cognate power in others."³⁷

When all the social or vocational groups which form a larger social body spontaneously react on one another, and when in each group each member realizes some mental gift of his own,

36 That is, to become cognizant of the "body of moral truth upon which all good men, of whatever sect, are agreed." Felix Adler, The Moral Instruction of Children, p. 15. In The Moral Instruction of Children Adler outlines a pro-

the people who constitute such social groups are free.

"A free people is not one in which strong individuals are permitted to thrive parasitically at the expense of the weak. Nor yet one in which merely equal opportunity is afforded to all in the race for material well-being. A free people is one in which the essential energies of all effectuate themselves unhindered, the life of each swelling the surrounding tide of life, and being enriched in turn by the returning tide. This to my mind is liberty,--the liberation of what is best in each. This is freedom--the free flow of life into life."

38

It is to be the function of the American University to promote this ideal.

Interests and Attitudes at Different Stages in Life

Adler speaks of the pilgrimage of the human spirit³⁹ through time as a kind of progressus ad Parnassum, with an ever expanding outlook on the ethical field and with the finest ethical results to come at the end.

"In each of the successive periods the empirical facts are such as necessarily to give rise to specific ethical tasks. The ethical task cannot be the same for the immature child and the full grown man in the complete exercise of his mental faculties. It cannot be quite the same for the single and the married. It cannot be the same for those who follow different callings, each calling having its own moral perils, its own moral opportunities. It cannot be quite

gram of moral instruction to bring about this aim.

37 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 300.

38 Ibid., p. 301.

the same for one who is charged with the full responsibilities of active life and for one who is permitted to spend the remainder of his days as a spectator."

40

Maturation does not open up a hierarchy of values, but a hierarchy of problems with which the mind must cope.

As an adolescent, when the egoistic impulses become predominant a child should be introduced to a re-interpretation of the duties of the family in accord with his increased perception and ability to understand wider meanings, the specific office of friendship in the development of personality, the ideal sex relation, the ethics of the vocation, and a general preliminary account of the ethics of citizenship. In early middle life the man is ready to deploy his special gift or aptitude, his vocation; and in the right performance of his duties he will continue to grow mentally and morally. He becomes conscious of the "trinity of his relations to superiors, equals and inferiors; to master-minds, co-workers, and apprentices."⁴¹ In later middle life it is consciousness of the relationship of the different vocations to each other which probably will become of superior interest: he must avoid the pitfalls of specialism within one's vocation with loss of breadth of vision on one side, and dilettantism, or breadth of vision without depth, on

39 Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 214.

40 Ibid., p. 215.

41 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 225.

the other. He must strive to get as broad a world view as possible. In old age, or the "emeritus stage," the keynote is "right abdication." Even when senescence is well advanced there still remains work to be done. The main task then is to make the path as easy as possible for one's successors. One may then encourage and advise the young, who as ethical beings will revere their predecessors for their greater breadth of experience and depth of knowledge. And at the end of life, having finished the pilgrimage, when a last accounting of his successes and failures is made, he finds that he is as far from attaining to knowledge of the spiritual ideal, achieving personality, as ever. Though he has not realized the ideal he has realized the reality of the ideal; and "this is the conviction that brightens our eyes as we stand on the brink."⁴²

We have now considered the family, the vocations and the organs of education as social institutions. The two remaining to be discussed are the political organization (the state) and the organization of mankind (the ideal religious society). Each theoretically represents a more complicated social group than its institutional predecessor, and each is characterized by specific functions and attitudes. What these are from an ethical point of view will now be presented.

The Nature of the State: Its Functions as Balancer Between

42 Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 232.

the Vocational Groups, and the Political Expression of the National Character

In what, essentially, does the state consist: What is the state: For Adler it is no hypostatization. "The state has no separate domicile....It is one of the necessary stages on the road to personality."⁴³ Political life has as its object the enhancement of the citizens' conception of the state, which means placing oneself "ideally into reactive relations with the diverse groups embraced within one's nation."

"In the family the individual is in reactive relations with a few, in the vocation with a larger number. In the state or nation he may be one of a hundred million or more. Yet it is not the numerical extension as such that constitutes this enlargement. It is rather the diversity of the points of contact, and the complexity of the relations by which the spiritual ideal is more fully illustrated in the finite world as the circle widens."

44

An adequate conception of the state is difficult.

"Statesmanship is attained by one who brings to birth within himself the idea of the state, and in whom that idea becomes a controlling force."⁴⁵

The state has two principal functions, to act as a balance between the vocational groups included within

43 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 309.

44 Ibid., pp. 310-11.

45 Ibid., p. 311.

it, and to act as the political expression of the national character. To act as a balance means to champion the conditions under which reciprocal relationships between other groups can take place successfully, to see that each group receives its sovereign rights and stays within those rights. Every group possesses sovereignty of action within itself. For example, the state may not legislate on the intimacies of the marriage relations, nor limit the individual's freedom of conscience; nor can the individual dominate the state, that is, determine legislation favoring private good at the expense of the public good. Sovereignty is not absolute in any sphere, though it looms larger and more impressive when exercised by the state: it belongs to any group in so far as it is "requisite to the accomplishment of the ethical end to be therein attained."⁴⁶ The state fulfills its function as the political expression of the national character by its unique organization: it would be characterized by a system of vocational representation as against the present day system of representation by geographical districts.

"Representation by geographical districts is the logical outcome of the individualistic conception of democracy. Where this prevails, the state is supposed to take account only of the common interests, those in respect to which all individuals are alike, such as security of life and property, those interests being ignored in respect to which groups that constitute society, the farmers, the merchants, the industrial laborers,

46 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 309.

etc., differ. Hence any convenient number of citizens, pursuing their life purposes side by side within a certain geographical area, may serve as a constituency. The absence of regard for the real diversity, and often the clash of interests, between persons belonging to such constituencies, is due to the atomistic, individualistic notion of democracy. But sheer individualism is everywhere on the wane, and is bound to become less and less dominant in the degree that the industrial evolution of society proceeds, and the various groups stand out distinctly as different against one another in their functions and in the conditions subservient to those functions. Society is in fact not an aggregate of human atoms. It is already an imperfect organism, destined to become more and more adequately organized. And the system of representation has got to be remodeled and adjusted to this fact and this ideal."

47

Such vocational groups as the industrial, the scientific, the commercial, the agricultural will hold the franchise, as well as the group of home-makers, for "motherhood will be recognized as a vocation."

48

In such a system, Adler believes, one of the principle defects of our present-day individualistic democracy would be remedied, in that "the elected shall be the elect," rather than political connivers of mediocre or base abilities. The individual's desire for emulation within his group would be appeased through the appointment by his group to the status of representative of his constituency at the meetings of the national or state or city legislatures which are councils of all the groups. The members of each group, meeting first in a "primary assembly," would

47 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 310-11.

48 Ibid., p. 311.

discuss measures of importance to the interests of the group itself. When the members shall have decided what recommendations should be enacted into law, the measures will be brought before the next highest legislature by the leader. Now comes a "sifting out" process, in which measures desired by individual groups, found to be in conflict with those desired by another social group will be winnowed and cast aside. "The supposed interests of one group cannot be its true interests unless they are found to promote the interests of all the other vocational groups" ⁴⁹ --in other words, only common interests are true interests. Then the representative, returning to his constituency will give an account of the proceedings and render to them the wider vision which he himself gained in the discussions of the law-making body. In this way he will be the instructor, the political teacher of his constituents. The nature of the council of the groups is not a "Parliament" or "talking body," but a sifting body. It functions not only as the voice of the people, but it also acts as the national guardian, for it takes matters into its own hands and attempts to supply the conditions conducive to the development of personality in each of the constituent groups of the social body. The people's representatives will be statesmen rather than politicians, the latter being concerned only with their own welfare, while the former are genuinely concerned with the wel-

 49 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 317.

fare of others.

Vocational representation is not a mere political mechanical device, like the initiative and referendum. These devices, Adler says, leave the prevalent character of democracy unchanged. Vocational representation is the truest expression of the organic idea of the state. "The state is the soul. The soul must have a body. Vocational representation is that body."⁵⁰

The ideal state would forego many of the functions of the present-day state which more properly belong to the sub-organisms, the groups of which it is composed. At the same time it would take on new duties in imparting limitations on "capricious freedom in the interest of spiritual freedom." For example, Adler says, the state would forbid the marriage of the unsound, propound stricter laws against child labor, and reform divorce laws.

The state also acts as the stimulator and repressor of the various social groups in much the same manner as the ethical ideal imposes on the individual a strict self-discipline which is stimulating in helping to overcome inertia, and repressing in its subjection of wrong to right impulses. As an intermediary and protector of the social groups the state protects the freedom of its various members. The state stands guard over the right of the individual to develop his personality and to encourage the pursuit of common interests.

50 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 316.

The Legitimate Use of Force

The state may exercise its sovereignty by force, if necessary. Just as we may resort to forcible methods to control our own conduct, so may the state resort to force to achieve its legitimate ends. Force "becomes spiritualized" when employed to establish the conditions indispensable to spiritual life. Such conditions are protection of life, property and reputation, compulsory education, the maintenance of the monogamic family, protection against foreign invasion. Force is ethical discipline; and the extent to which it may be used is the extent to which it is favorable to spiritual freedom. "Those who prevent the release in each one of his essential self, that is, of his distinctive gift and capability, of that in him which is most unique or nearly so,"⁵¹ may rightfully be dislodged from power by the use of force. Social compulsion is only discipline in the interests of protective freedom. "It is only when force is abused by the state, when prejudices are mistaken for principles, torpor for conservatism, and superstitions for spirituality;"⁵² and a loss of the individualistic conception of liberty takes place, that dictatorships arise.

The Function of Law and the Judiciary

51 Felix Adler An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 370.

52 Ibid., p. 311.

Law may broadly be considered as the automatic machinery of freedom. "It is the system of stimulators and repressors which the experience of mankind at any given time has found to be conducive to the attainment of the superior ends of life."⁵³ It is the sum total of enforceable conditions which are necessary or favorable to the development of personality. Law serves to maintain the intellectual and ethical status quo and through the promotion of education to bring the backward up to the same level.

"Law is designed to render the conditions favorable to personality so explicit that their observance shall become automatic, so that mankind shall be at liberty to discover new and more significant conditions which in their turn are again to become automatic."

54

The Judiciary exists to study the conditions conducive to "the development of personality in each of the constituent groups of the social body."⁵⁵ It will be composed of members of each of the individual groups. It performs a radically new function in the ideal state, that of legislating the conditions necessary to consummate the public good, which grows out of those conditions. The attribution of the delegated legislation to the Judiciary amounts to a condemnation of present-day democratic election methods. Adler does not trust the common man to legislate in behalf of his own best interests and is aware of the widespread social and political legar-

53 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 370.

54 Ibid., pp. 357-58.

55 Ibid., p. 314.

thy that exists; and in this criticism he examines the heart of political democracy and finds it lacking:

"Public opinion is apt to be unripe, haphazard, impulsive rather than reflective. Besides, it is often contaminated at its very source, the facts on which the public depend for their opinions being deliberately falsified or placed in false perspective, while opinions furnished in newspaper editorials are almost inevitably biased. Only on great occasions, when simple moral issues are presented, can the common sense and moral sense of the people be wholly depended upon. ...To build a state on public opinion and public sentiment, as many of our writers on politics would have us do, is after all a good deal like building a house on sand. ...Because this is so, there is no state, no democracy, in which public opinion or public sentiment actually does rule, save by fits and starts. Government is usually in the hands of more or less selfish coteries, who operate behind the scenes, who know what they want, and who, like the Piper of Hamelin, are past masters in the art of leading the political children whence they will."

56

There will be no room for lobbying in the legislative process. The special interests of each group will be frankly admitted. Various groups may be called upon to make sac-

56 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 313-14. Walter Lippmann, in The Phantom Public, likewise concludes that the public is competent only to pass judgment as to whether its public servants are following the common interest or their own arbitrary desires; and suggests that the legislative function should be handled by experts elected by the people. Under Lippmann's system, however, as contrasted with Adler's, the representative function would not be changed, because the representatives would still be elected by and responsible to the public, the sovereign electorate, in the traditional constituencies.

rifices to another group in the interests of the other groups
 for the promotion of the general good.⁵⁷ In the long run the
 general good will be found to be none other than the best in-
 terests of every group. For example, the agricultural group
 may suffer temporarily because of the necessity of imposing
 a protective tariff in the interests of some industrial
 group. Just as the individual is sometimes required to make

 57 Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace writes, "The religious keynote, the economic keynote, the scientific keynote of the new age must be the overwhelming realization that mankind now has such mental and spiritual powers and such control over nature that the doctrine of the struggle for existence is definitely outmoded and replaced by the higher law of cooperation. When cooperation becomes a living reality in the spiritual sense of the term, when we have defined certain broad objectives which we all want to attain, when we can feel the significance of the forces at work not merely in our own lives, not merely in our own class, not merely in our own nation, but in the world as a whole--then the vision of Isaiah and the insight of Christ will be on the way toward realization." "America Must Choose," World Affairs Pamphlets, No. 3, 1934, p. 25.

Adler writes, "Compromise is the solution of ... clashes of interest within the political circumscription of each nation; compromise must be the solution in respect to the opposition of interests in the international domain." The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 104.

Secretary Wallace also writes, "There is a best place, and a second and third-best place in the world to mine coal or grow cotton, just as there are favored and less favored cotton and coal regions within the United States. We cramp the finest possibilities of a civilization when, blinded by local pride, either regional or national, we blink at plain facts. The same thing holds true of innate or inherited capacities. England makes better cloth than we do, and better hand-made shoes. France, I am told, makes better wine. Unquestionably, however, we raise apples more cheaply than France. Accordingly, one of our first approaches toward dealing with the world again, on a new basis, is as simple and sensible as a swap between two pioneer farm neighbors. We traded France some of our apples for some of its wine." "America Must Choose," World Affairs Pamphlets, No. 3, 1934, p. 13.

personal sacrifices for his family so will the agricultural group (and every other) be required to make sacrifices for others and the best interests of future generations. Any special protection, tariffs for example, will cease with the cessation of need. Reciprocal agreements between groups will not be of the "log-rolling" or "pork-barrel" variety because the dominating motive will be altruistic and humanitarian, and not egoistic and selfish.

The state exists to interlock the various social interests, and to fit them reciprocally into one another, ... "to cure each group as far as possible of its selfishness by so modifying its claims that the granting of them shall become beneficial to all the rest."⁵⁸ Compromise will be recognized⁵⁹ as a best, legitimate method for solving moral conflicts.

58 Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 104.

59 The following are the more common solutions to moral conflicts:

- (a) Domination (strong ideas win)
- (b) Irrelevancy (outside factor solves it)
- (c) Non-committal (with-holding decision: dropping the matter: letting nature "take its course")
- (d) Tolerance (each side holds its own opinion but agrees not to combat opponent)
- (e) Composition (opposing positions both put into practice: "pork-barrel legislation")
- (f) Compromise (good points of each position recognized; weak points of each position dropped)
- (g) Substitution (a third idea proposed)
- (h) Accommodation (one side alters its opinion and accepts actively the other side's position)
- (i) Integration (cooperation; organization of conflicting ideas; no organic unity; works on an extrinsic common purpose with three or more)
- (j) Conversion (one side not only accommodates the other but also surrenders on principle to the other: viz., the North and the South on the Slavery issue)

The Relationship of the State and the Individual

Since the state may be conceived as a larger self, the problem arises of where the dividing line between our duties to our own selves and families and our duties to others falls. May a man ethnically serve his own interests before those of others? Normally, Adler believes, the claims of self-interest are to be satisfied first, but in a case where the interests of the higher group in question are in danger of being sheared of their sovereignty, they must be first satisfied. The integrity of the state must be maintained in order that our personal interests in the long run may be fulfilled. Its existence and integrity must be maintained at the expense of all the subordinate groups, even if the sacrifice of the physical life of the individual himself is necessary. The highest good, the common good, must be maintained. On the other hand our personal interests, and those of the family for instance, when of an ethical character, are ordinarily and rightly preferred because they are "germinal," that is, because they are the units in which training in the ethn-

 (k) Absorption (integration plus common enthusiasm; the principle of common loyalty; integration plus emotionalism)

(l) Creativity (integration plus absorption to develop a new program or ideal)

The writer is indebted to Professor D. Luther Evans, Ohio State University, for the above list.

60 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 319.

61 Ibid., p. 313.

ical way of life is first acquired, which is essential to the later development of the spiritual attitude. The state exists for the individual and the individual exists for the state. The relationship is reciprocal, since one supplements the other and without the one the other cannot exist. The principle of the state as the champion of the good of the whole must always be maintained except in incompatible conflicts with more private interests, when the former may be temporarily surrendered. Adler's reasoning is sound. When one faces the problem of the public versus private good one senses again the problem of frustration, of incompatibility.

We may gain further insight into the relationship of the individual to the state by considering its history. Greek ethics, Adler points out, are interpreted by many modern writers as maintaining that "the individual existed for the sake of the state," while the modern democratic state is claimed to exist for the sake of the individual.⁶² Each view he believes is only partially true: In the Platonic state, although the individual was subject to government by the philosopher kings who were its representatives, he nevertheless had his separate existence, and though a member of an inferior class, performed a distinct function; and as such had existence apart from the state; in the modern democratic state, if it is truly said that the state exists for the individual there is an inconsistency between theory and practice, for

62 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 319.

the state, in crises, demands the life of the citizen to protect it. For modern writers and critics to say that the state exists for the good of all its citizens, even for those yet unborn, and to justify the sacrifice of the individual life on that ground is to reintroduce the metaphysical, ideal entities which dominated the Greek concept, and of which the modern concept is claimed to be the antithesis.

Thus Adler finds justification in history for his concept of relational reciprocity, and maintains that the relationship between the state and the individual, both past and present, has been misunderstood. The Greek concept was valid in so far as it conceived of the relationship as pseudo-organic--each member of the community, like the bodily organ, expressing its own function--and false in so far as it held that the state could legitimately usurp the rights of the members of which it was composed. The modern concept of the relationship, the "individualistic conception"⁶³ of the state, is valid in so far as it theoretically maintains that the state as an organism is responsible to and dependent upon its units or members for its existence while at the same time the members are dependent upon the state, and false in so far as it separates theory from practice, that is, implying in the reciprocal relation only the necessity of supplying empirical needs, and ignoring the "truly organic relationship," the individual and his fellow-beings which the spiritual con-

63 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 320.

cept implies.

"The way taken has been by reaction from pseudo-organization, to extreme individualism and concomitant materialism. The way out lies in the direction of genuine organization."

64

Genuine organization is contrasted to animal organization, with its limited number of members, apparently accidental combination of organs and hierarchical value relationship. Genuine organization is spiritual organization, characterized by an infinite number of members, of necessary relationship, and of equal worth. Our duties lie close to home except when circumstances call us to the defense of the state itself, which protects the very rights and privileges we are ordinarily concerned with.

The Indictment of Capitalism and Socialism

The chief criticism of these two opposing points of view is that they pay no attention to man's spiritual nature. There is a substitution of provisional ends for the spiritual end, the full development of the individual, and the provisional ends have usurped the place of the ultimate aim. In the Capitalistic system the emphasis is on the accumulation of material wealth, or the accumulation of buying power. It has as its underlying motive "individualistic self-affirmation and self-satisfaction," while the motive underlying So-

cialism is "universalized individualism, individualism carried to its extreme boundaries."⁶⁵ Under the competitive system every one hunts on his own account; under socialism the whole mass works for each member of it. In either scheme the individual is considered solely and simply as a product of nature. Adler has little sympathy for the capitalistic system. Marxist socialism is hostile to spiritual values while the attitude under a capitalistic competitive system is indifferentism.⁶⁶ Both systems define wealth exclusively⁶⁷ in terms of man's natural wants and their satisfaction. Both systems lay emphasis on the distribution of material wealth--capitalism favoring the few, and socialism favoring the many--and force rather than right counts in the minds of the leaders. Both systems as systems of distribution are satisfied with supplying the natural, empirical wants of society, and make no effort to satisfy the spiritual needs of man.

The Socialist emphasis on equality and fraternity is a desirable advance over capitalistic "rugged individualism," but it is mistaken in its assumption that fraternity, once established, will establish equality, and that it will remain unchanged, and be the basis for an ever loftier human nature.

65 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, pp. 120-21.

66 Ibid., p. 124.

67 Some ancient author condemned capitalism when he wrote, "Only the wise are rich, whose store of gold is such that none but the good may bear."

"Fraternalism is accomplished best through equality, but due to our inability to get more than superficial equalities among men, ethically brotherhood must be considered as a means for creating respect and love by the unlike for the unlike,"⁶⁸ which is a much more difficult task. In reality, Adler believes, any equality of men can be only superficial, since there will still remain the diversities of sex, of talent, of national character.⁶⁹ An overemphasis on fraternalism, such as that in Plato's Republic, which would banish the family as a social institution, or more recently in Communist Russia, "destroys those initial intimacies in which the strong ties between human beings are first formed, to be thereafter extended and multiplied."⁷⁰ For the first instances of fraternalism are found in the relationship of the members of the family. Such fraternalism will result in the dissipation of the better feelings and result in the eventual degradation rather than the ennoblement of the race.

Socialism has gone to an extreme in its emphasis on equality. Ethically, it is the development of the unique characters of others that one is to strive to attain, not the production of conformity and mediocrity. This over-emphasis on

68 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 130.

69 It will be remembered that Adler's emphasis on the worth of all men as the basis for his philosophy is founded on the attribution of worth: "...we must take the attribution of worth to men, however unworthy they may actually be, as our starting-point." An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 90.

70 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 133.

equality Adler feels is a formidable menace to the moral progress of society."⁷¹

Socialism does not receive any sanction from Jesus' teaching, though many people think so. "He who advocated gain for none could not be supposed to have sympathized with a social movement whose first object it is to secure wealth for all."⁷²

Furthermore, Marxist socialism leaves out the moral basis in the claim to equity.⁷³ It does try to banish poverty and the privations entailed by it, and to supply the material equipment which will restore to the common man the culture which has also been usurped by the capitalist class, but its chief defect is that it disregards the motives which are responsible for the present economic maladjustment. Moral ideas are considered as epiphenomena, or by-products of economic development, by the Marxian socialist. Such a belief is a challenge to Adler's entire philosophy.

"If there be such a thing as morality, or if morality be but an epiphenomenon of economic conditions, what warrant have the hungry or disadvantaged for complaining? Animals, too, hunger and sicken. If man be like them a mere chance product of nature, why should he not share their fate? Let the weak succumb! Surely the bald fact that the democratic masses today chafe under the yoke of their masters and demand a better state of things, is no more a ground of obligation for the former than the tendency toward an ultimate equilibrium in nature of which sci-

71 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 133.

72 Ibid., p. 37.

73 An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 47.

entists speak can be a ground of obligation. The tendency will effectuate itself or not as the acting forces determine."

74

Once established, the fraternal feeling will not main-
tain what equality it has been able to construct. "It is
more than likely, it seems inevitable, that all the differ-
ences of interest, of function, will reappear, and that the
system which in the main ignores these differences will not
live."⁷⁵ And in so far as socialism, in its attempt to es-
tablish equality through smothering the closer relations, to
establish it by substituting a vague sympathy for all in
place of a firm affection for a few, fails to establish and
maintain equality, it will fail as a motive for making human
nature more excellent.

Adler's national economy would place emphasis on the pro-
ducer rather than on the satisfaction of his needs, which is
the socialistic aim; though of course they would be satisfied
as far as possible, since they are instrumentalities to a
greater end, "the development of human nature, the evolution
of man toward a nobler type."⁷⁶ "We are concerned more with
the improvement of the producer than with the distribution of
of the product."⁷⁷ The aim is to direct activity to the spir-
itual nature itself and not to offend against it by ignoring

74 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, pp. 46-47.

75 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal,
p. 32.

76 Ibid., p. 123.

77 Ibid., p. 132.

it "temporarily."

The infinite ethical nature of the producer is improved by his working with the empirical substrata: "he is to discharge his animal functions in such a way as to testify to his spiritual character: more than that, to treat such functions as opportunities for the affirmation and confirmation of the loftier attributes."⁷³ The spiritual view of life must saturate every act. How is the spiritual view manifested: Our activities of eating, walking, fraternizing, reproducing, etc., all assimilate man to the lower creatures, yet the way in which we perform such activities are indicative of the distance which separates us from the animals and the degree to which we have become beings governed by the spiritual principle. We are not to confuse spirituality with asceticism:

"Not to walk through the world unspotted of the world, is the aim, holding up one's skirts as it were meticulously, so that they should not be soiled; on the contrary, we are to take hold confidently of the things that seem most soiling, and to dissoil them by the cleansing touch."

79

The emphasis by capitalists and socialists on the acquisition of material goods, the means by which the true end or aim (which is often lost altogether) is partially accomplished, is called the "fallacy of provisionalism;"⁸⁰ and this mistaken emphasis, along with their substitution of pow-

78 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 135.

79 Ibid., pp. 136-37.

80 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 53.

er for right, constitute the two fallacies that affect the social reform movements of today. Let us see how the licensing of such proximate ends by the individual who would attempt social reforms in the interest of promoting Adler's ethical view of life often brings defeat instead of success. The reformer gradually comes to consider himself as a savior of mankind and is likely to neglect the development of his own character, "and fall abruptly from high levels into the ditch." He becomes absorbed in the mechanical details of his work. "Moral idealism declines in proportion as this kind of efficiency increases." He becomes impatient when the desired social changes are not quickly effected, and he becomes dictatorial and domineering, thus offending against the very principle of democracy by over-riding the personality of others. Becoming ambitious of large results, he tends to emphasize quantity instead of quality, which is just as important. Absorption in one cause also tends to make the reformer neglectful of the minor duties--the duties to his family and other close relatives and friends. Such observations as these were made while Adler was still a young man. When he became conscious of the results of such opportunism, he became more and more enamoured with the ethical principle which must "run like a golden thread through the whole of a man's life."⁸¹ He realized that no one can really help others without at the same time morally benefitting himself. As

81 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 56.

a consequence there grew out of such observation a greater confidence and clarity of insight into what later developed into his supreme rule, "Act so as to elicit the best in others and thereby in thyself."

The National Character and the International Society

Every nation, developed or undeveloped, Adler says, has peculiar traits of its own. We may not be able to detect them at first sight, but nevertheless they exist. Each nation mirrors in its laws, its literature, in the acts and emotions which constitute its political history, its manners and customs, its religion, a certain type of imperfect civilization which already exists.³² We may, and often do speak of the English mind, the German mind, the American mind, or speak as though distinguishable, unique traits of a national character exist, though we are unaware of the "irreducible intellectual, aesthetical and volitional differences that mark them off."³³ Ordinarily each of these types has its excellences and faults, its qualities and defects; and represent some trait in which other nations are deficient. The Germans, Adler writes, are characterized by thoroughness and efficiency; the English with their nobility may be said to be characterized by a noblesse, an acquiescence and acceptance of the social predominance and political influence of master-

32 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 163.

ful men; ³⁴ the Americans may be said to be characterized by their democratic individualism, ³⁵ a respect for the potentialities of the common man.

The national trait or traits, or national character, is to be "spiritualized; and this is to be done by raising the plus traits to the Nth degree." ³⁶ The three-fold reverence is to be invoked here, as well as in the case of relationships between individuals; and as in other instances, the third reverence will prove most efficacious in accomplishing the spiritualization. "The advanced nations are to bring to light the spiritual life latent in the backward." ³⁷ They will sift out what is vital in the work of previous generations. They will as contemporaries form a union to jointly accomplish the third reverence, "the pedagogy of the less developed."

"Just as neither the father singly nor the mother alone can release spiritual life in the offspring, so the different civilized nations, each of which has its own gift, its own plus traits, are to interact for the purpose of jointly awakening the creative energies within the slumbering souls of the undeveloped peoples."

33

Since a nation cannot be considered as an ethical unit

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- 83 Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 167.
 84 Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning p. 71.
 85 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 329.
 86 Ibid., p. 324.
 87 Ibid., p. 324.
 33 Ibid., p. 325.

except as a member of an international society, some conception of such a body must be formed and carried out in practice. As a member of an international unity it would be a member of the corpus internationale of mankind.⁸⁹ On what is this relation between nations founded: on an ethical tie which is the spiritualized plus and minus qualities of each nation, which supplement each other. The minus qualities of each nation will be expunged by its attempt to impart to its neighbors its own plus qualities. The national character with its plus and minus traits is empirical, and the highest aim of each state is not the highest development of this character (though this is one of the minor and instrumental aims), but the spiritualization of that empirical character. The empirical character of a collective entity of a state is no more worthy of honor, no more fit to be a ground of obligation, than the empirical character of the individual. The motivating force for such an international society is "a sense of national sin, or of national guilt."⁹⁰ Our national defects must not be glossed over as they are today (for example, America's responsibility for the rise of Fascism because of her participation in the formulation of the egregiously unjust Versailles Treaty), and their detrimental influence on peoples of other nations should be openly avowed. The practical task is the arousal not only of positive traits but also of national self-consciousness of defects. There

89 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 326.
 90 Ibid., p. 329.

must be consciousness of a collective national character. In Germany it is "the narrowness of the conception of the effect"⁹¹ which is to be expurgated; in England "the discrepancy between political liberalism as applied to the inhabitants of the British Isles and self-governing dominions on the one hand, and the 'benevolent despotism' exercised over the subject millions of India on the other;"⁹² in America, "the effacement of true individualism under the crushing pressure of mass opinion, etc."⁹³ "The consciousness of a collective national character must be evoked."⁹⁴ All the nations of the world must forgive each other's trespasses just as the individual forgives those who sin against him.

The nations will also form a union to educate the less developed. Such a union, consecrated to such a noble object, "will be the means of leading the Western world out of the chaotic condition in which it is at present weltering."⁹⁵ The key to peace is a common, effectual resolve to win new varieties of spiritual expression from the child and adolescent peoples of the earth. Peace would come incidentally. Through such efforts humanity would be making progress toward spiritualizing the whole finite world, which after all is the task of humanity in general.

91 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 329.

92 Ibid., p. 329.

93 Ibid., p. 329.

94 Ibid., p. 329.

95 Ibid., p. 331.

Obstacles to the Establishment of the International Society

One most important obstacle is the absence of the international attitude, of international thinking.⁹⁶ Our thinking, Adler says, is reflected in our inadequate theories of international law which derives its basis mainly from the doctrines of Grotius and Vattel. Grotius's theory, an "empirical individualism with Christian individualism grafted upon it,"⁹⁷ admits the right of conquest: and the right of nations to punish each other is partially off-set or "subsequently modified by councils of perfection derived from Christian individualism."⁹⁸ Vattel's doctrine is Leibnitzian in origin, having come to him through Wolff. At best, individual nations without intrinsic ties, can only seek peaceful coexistence and egoistic development along their own lines of specialization at the expense of failing to share in the gifts of others. A more adequate body of international law is sorely needed.

Adler advocates the formation of an international law-making body, a "Parliament of Parliaments," to legislate on an international scale such laws as are necessary to further the international goal, the development of all peoples' total

96 One recent writer has remarked that the quickest and surest way to establish international peace would be to be forced to engage in a war with a people from Mars. Other writers have observed that patriotism does not necessarily imply a nationalist attitude.

97 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 332.

98 Ibid., p. 332.

personalities through recognition of themselves as members of the spiritual body of mankind. The Parliament of Parliaments would be similar in function to the League of Nations, but would attempt to arouse the ethical attitude as its supreme aim. Commissions composed of members of the Parliament of Parliaments and the enlightened leaders of backward peoples would also be formed to discover the ways and means for best bringing about a progressive evolution among the backward nations.

Another obstacle to the formation of the International Society is what Adler calls "false hopes." One false hope is that better facilities for communication will render more amicable relations between nations. With the world literally growing smaller, it has been hoped that the different nations would become more intimate. Alas, it appears more and more evident that the antithesis is the case. A common explanation for the continued political unrest in the European countries is just their proximity, combined with extreme national mindedness. "Special rapprochement," Adler says, "between East and West will not of itself guarantee moral rapproch-⁹⁹ment--far from it."

Another false hope is that science will create more friendly relationships between nations. Again to the contrary, for science is neutral. Scientists at the present time seem more absorbed in making implements of destruction

99 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 334.

than in making instruments to alleviate suffering among the various peoples. The World War created an animosity and war passion which invited the world's scientists and artists to rally each to their own nation's defense, and pent up emotions in the succeeding years, made articulate, "have even carried animosity to greater lengths; expressing it in language calculated to wound more deeply and to leave more permanent scars."¹⁰⁰

Still another false hope has been that an expanding international trade would bring more friendly relations. But trade, being like science, ethically neutral, has been, and continues to be unconsciously used for malevolent as well as benevolent purposes. Adler asks us to consider the fairly recent partition of Africa between England, France, the Congo Free State and Germany. No consideration for the rights of the native population was shown. "The European nations artfully employed the fictions of sovereignty in order to varnish their acts of plunder with a semblance of legality"¹⁰¹ --just as some of them today are artfully employing the term "confiscation" as a subterfuge for the same purpose: as witness the conquests of Ethiopia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Albania.

The "commercial mind" dominates the scene today and simply identifies the interests of trade and civilization. Un-

¹⁰⁰ Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 334.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 336.

der the pretext that the introduction of the "benefits of civilization" are sufficient to satisfy the moral conscience, the exploiters remain exploiters, and their real object is to achieve material benefit for their own selves. Commercialism assumes that any country which is backward in cultivating a product necessary for the more advanced civilizations, or which refuses to absorb the products of the Capitalistic system which can no longer be consumed at home, may be forcibly seized and the inhabitants subjugated; and it believes that such action is right and proper in the interests of humanity. "So long as this view obtains," Adler¹⁰² says, "there will be no peace on earth." The commercial mind commits the fallacy of "erecting the means into the paramount end" in preventing the development of the primitive peoples as prescribed by their intrinsic natures. In itself, like science and international trade, it is neither benevolent nor malevolent.

Certain conclusions may be drawn, Adler writes, from this series of reflections. "The main principle is respect for the total personality of peoples, recognition of them as potential members of the spiritual body of mankind."¹⁰³

A less developed people's territory is to be regarded as "the body of that people's soul,"¹⁰⁴ their independence is to be strictly respected, and "annexation is to be char-

102 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 337.

103 Ibid., p. 333.

104 Ibid., p. 333.

acterized as an outrage."¹⁰⁵ Only for educational purposes may any intrusions be made. The products of civilization are not to be shoved upon an unwilling body of ignorant, superstitious people who are in no way to utilize them.

As a summary Adler states a general rule: "Union in a common sublime object will overcome the antagonisms and discords that prevail among the civilized nations themselves."¹⁰⁶ Until the great nations of the earth come to view lesser nations as members of the corpus spirituale of mankind they can only harm themselves by exploiting the weak. And when the lesser are viewed spiritually by the more powerful, the liberation of the weaker's potentialities, and the good arising from the sense of guilt which will accompany any involuntary intrusions on their spiritual personalities will make for the richer and better life of the more powerful nations themselves.

"And the task of uplifting the lower peoples will never be successfully prosecuted until it is seen to be part of the task of humanity in general, which is to spread the web of spiritual relations over larger and ever larger provinces of the finite realm."

107

The Religious Society

The religious society is the last term in the series of so-

105 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 333.

106 Ibid., p. 339.

107 Ibid., p. 340.

cial institutions. "It is to be the laboratory in which the ideal of the spiritual universe is created and constantly recreated, the womb in which the spiritual life is conceived."¹⁰⁸ It generates the ideal of the infinite holy community, the spiritual universe which is conceived differently by different minds. It has a definite body of doctrine to be expounded by a group or guild of religious teachers, which the individual may or may not adhere to. It will "excell in the fertility with which it gives rise to new metaphysical constructions and original formulations of ethical faith."¹⁰⁹ This ethico-religious society will be divided into vocational groups each of which will formulate its own ethical ideal. Each member of the group will participate actively in the formulation and working out of his group's ideal, and each group will interact with the others. Here as elsewhere the Mothers will occupy a central place:

"Women henceforth will take a deeper interest in the ethical development of human society. A main factor, if not the only factor in the ethical development of human society, is the elevation of the vocational standards. The group of mothers will therefore be in close touch with the other vocational groups in order to gain a knowledge of the higher standards therein proposed, in order to appraise them, and to inspire the growing generation with the devoted purpose to carry these standards out in practice."

110

108 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 341.

109 Ibid., p. 343.

110 Ibid., p. 348.

There will be a place for worship in the religious society, worship not to a personal God, nor in the form of eulogies, prayers, adoration, genuflections, or any of the other adjuncts of the common religious service; but worship of the moral ideal, which we are to strive to imitate.¹¹¹ Worship will consist in

"public addresses by the teachers, having for their main object to arouse or intensify a certain kind of spiritual distress, and then as far as possible to appease it. Every religion in my judgment originates in a particular kind of anguish, and is an attempt to assuage it. The spiritual distress in which the ethico-religious society has its origin is the agonizing consciousness of tangled relations with one's fellow-beings, and the inexpressible longing to come into right relations with them. He is fit to be a public teacher of this religion who profoundly experiences this distress, who desires nothing so much as to cease to be, for his part, a thorn in his neighbor's side. We are that, each of us, inevitably. The more this feeling is strong in him the more will he arouse similar feelings in others, and thus awaken those who are spiritually asleep, the self-righteous, the self-satisfied, and he will then indicate to the utmost of his power, the way of relief."

112

Specific ideals are also to be promulgated at the religious meetings. Prayer, "an appeal to God in heaven," will undergo a transformation and become a concentration of attention upon the spiritual need of others which we are striving to fulfill.

The society will attempt to awaken and appease spirit-

111 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 350.

112 Ibid., p. 351.

113 Ibid., p. 352.

ual pain and present various modes of right living. It will be the symbol of the ethical faith of humanity. "We shall not have an external symbol like the cross: the fellowship itself will be our symbol."¹¹⁴

To the man at life's end Adler offers the following attitude as characteristic of the spiritual outlook on life. If the aged man can assent and ascribe to this view he may consider his duty done and his life well spent. Adler is here quoted at length, since the passage may well serve the follower as a summary of his whole ethical philosophy.

"Remember that as thou art linked to thy ancestry, so art thou linked to posterity. The future centuries of the human race are like the future years of an individual. Thou art keenly interested in what may happen hereafter to the race with which thou art interlinked. But the race, like the individual, will be cut off and become extinct before ever the ideal is reached. Remember, therefore, that the purpose for which humanity exists is achieved at every moment in everyone who appropriates the fruits of partial success and frustration. Whosoever standing on the earth as a foundation builds up for himself the spiritual universe attains the purpose of human existence. There is indeed progress in the explicitness with which the spiritual ideal is conceived, and we are immeasurably interested in the greater light to be attained by our posterity. But the essential frustration of the contact of the infinite that is in us with the finite world is achievable at every moment in every human being....

"Face the terrors of life before you leave life. Be resolute to the last not to cherish illusions. Face the terrors of life, the absence of observable design, the cruelties, the ferocities....

"The radical incompetence of man to grasp with his intellect the world as a 'universe,'

114 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 352.

is to be faced by him and accepted without qualification. It marks off this philosophy of life from those philosophies and theologies which have attempted to explain the universe, and which, while affecting humility, are the dupes of an unwarranted self-confidence. Unqualified admission of the incompetence of the human intellect to resolve the world riddle is the determining factor in the more profound humility which characterizes the religion of ethical experience. Agnosticism on the intellectual side is the very condition of the transcending ethical conviction subsequently attained. Without intellectual agnosticism there is no ethical certainty.

"Consider now frustration and its supreme outcome, or the various points at which man is crucified....

"...I look back on my life and its net results. I have seen spiritual ideals, and the more clearly I saw them, the wider appeared the distance between them and the empirical conditions, and the changes I could effect in those conditions. I have worked in social reform, and the impression I have been able to make now seems to me so utterly insignificant as to make my early sanguine aspirations appear pathetic. I have seen the vision of democracy in the air, and on the ground around me I have seen the sordid travesty of democracy--not only in practice but in idea. I have caught the far outlook upon the organization of mankind, the extension of the spiritual empire over the earth by the addition to it of new provinces, and I do not find even the faintest beginnings, or recognition of the task which the advanced nations should set themselves. I scrutinize closely my relations to those who have been closest to me,--and I find that I have been groping in the dark with respect to their most real needs, and that my faculty of divination has been feeble. I look lastly into my heart, my own character, and the effort I have made to fuse the discordant elements there, to achieve a genuine integrity there, and I find the disappointment in that respect the deepest of all.

"These are the various points of my life at which I have undergone the crucifixion....

"...In ethical experience is revealed the plan of the spiritual relations, but the entities or substances which are thus related are in-

cognizable, unknowable. Did I know them I should be able to solve the riddle of the universe. I should know how it is that the finite exists side by side with the infinite. But I cannot know. I cannot enter into the councils of the multiform godhead. There are the mighty powers that weave and interweave behind the veil, but the veil between them and myself is down, not to be lifted. Within the palace of light is the solemn and serene assembly of the gods: I, man, stand at the gate.

"The world as we know it is itself the veil, the screen, that shuts out the interplay, the weavings and the interweavings of the spiritual universe. But at least at one point, in the ethical experience of man, is the screen translucent. The plan of the spiritual relation is there traced in outline. It is this plan that conveys the certainty as to what verily exists beyond, within, beneath.

"As to my empirical self, I let go my hold on it. I see it perish with the same indifference which the materialist asserts, for whom man is but a compound of physical matter and physical force. It is the real self, of which the empirical was the substratum, upon which I tighten my hold. I do not assert immortality, since immortality, like creation, is a bridge between the phenomenal and the spiritual levels. Creation is the bridge at the beginning; immortality the bridge at the end. Were I able to build the bridge, I should know. I do not affirm immortality. I affirm the real and irreducible existence of the essential self. Or rather, as my last act, I affirm that the ideal of perfection which my mind inevitably conceives has its counterpart in the ultimate reality of things, is the truest reading of that reality whereof man is capable. I turn away from the thought of the self, even the essential self, as if that could be my chief concern, toward the vaster infinite whole in which the self is integrally preserved. I affirm that there verily is an eternal divine life, a best beyond the best I can think or imagine, in which all that is best in me, and best in those who are dear to me, is contained and continued. In this sense I bless the universe. And to be able to bless the universe in one's last moments is the supreme prize which man can wrest from life's struggles, life's experience." 115

Part Five

Adler a Philosopher of Action

If the true perspective is to be kept in making an evaluation of Felix Adler's life and work, emphasis must fall on his social work. His main business was not philosophizing, but living. He was the proponent of the outstanding moral virtue of his age--service. The majority of his articles are, contrary to the impression possibly given in this dissertation, largely concerned with practical problems--particularly the elimination of child labor, the establishment of more amicable relations between employer and employee, the education of children, right human relations, religious freedom, the economic emancipation of the poor. Problems of theory were rightly of less importance than practical problems for him; and the description of the spiritual ideal was not offered as an ultimate philosophy, but a philosophy which to him served best as an explanation and guide for right conduct:

"The convictions herein expounded are submitted to those who search, as the writer has searched, for light on the problems of life, in order that they may compare their experience with his, and their interpretation

of their experience with his interpretation."

It was, as he put it, a "fulguration out of experience." ¹ In ² so far as he was a true "living" philosopher, Adler may be classed with the group which now stresses the importance of activity versus abstract and speculative reasoning which characterized all philosophy of a century or more ago. Adler was progressive in the most profound sense of the word before the progressive reform movement had gained momentum. Not only did Adler establish and guide the Ethical Culture Society and the Ethical Culture Schools; other notable achievements were his services as Chairman of the National Child Labor Committee from 1904 to 1920, Professor of Political and Social Ethics at Columbia University from 1902 to 1906, agitator with Jacob Riis for tenement house reforms in the 1880's, Chairman of the Arbitration Committee established by Masters and Employers in 1911 (the first of such tribunals created by the clothing industry), Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Social Legislation in the Reconstruction Committee appointed by Governor Smith of New York in 1920, Roosevelt Exchange Professor to Berlin in 1903, and Hibbert Lecturer at Oxford in 1923.

Adler and Religion

1 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. v.

2 Ibid., p. 134.

The present-day stress on social and individual development is no less an aim than old religious aims, and has taken the place of those aims. Adler lived at a time when any departure from an established creed was an invitation to be opprobriously termed atheistic. Sixty years later, atheism has ceased to be a vital social issue--though it remains an issue of supreme importance for the individual. The fact that Adler was among the outstanding and most radical reformers of his day both in social work and religion, working with the present-day aim in mind, constitutes one of the chief reasons why he deserves to be considered a great man. Sixty years later the scene is in many respects one of great religious tolerance, which is to be accounted for in part at least, by an enlightened outlook on life due to a wide dissemination of education and consequent emancipation from superstition and dependence on the authority of organized bodies of prejudiced dogmatists desirous of maintaining the status quo. The common man need no longer necessarily resort to such groups for the answers to such philosophical questions as he may raise. Adler's superior education becomes less of a privilege as the years go by, and an ever larger number is, or has adopted his general view on supernaturalism. Present-day tolerance is to be explained partly by the success of man's conquest over nature with increased knowledge of the forces about him working to create attitudes; the extension of the historical sciences; new philo-

sophical insight and distinctions, such as Pragmatism and Instrumentalism; and the spread of a philosophy of materialism. Emphasis at the present time is on the here and now for practically all people, though the direction of that emphasis, toward the private acquisition of material wealth as an end, is, as Adler pointed out, misplaced. Emancipation from supernaturalism has restored man's confidence in his ability and the advisability of controlling the forces of nature, and his success has fed itself. Orthodox churchmen themselves are characterized by this attitude of tolerance toward dissenters, tolerance sought for and won by men such as Adler, who braved public disapproval and bitter denunciation on the strength of their own convictions. Organized religion has been retrenching itself since the beginning of the modern era, with the spread of science and the general dissemination of knowledge. Its attitude has been characterized by vacillation in credal interpretation, a grudging extension of liberalism, and gradual forced concessions to secularity.³ When Adler established the Ethical Culture Society in 1876 religious organizations were not particularly socially active: at the present time they have adopted such non-religious functions to such an extent that in some denominations and parishes they may be said to constitute the chief

3 "One of the most instructive things in all human history is the system of concessions, tolerances, mitigations and reprieves which the Catholic Church with its supernatural morality has devised for the multitude." John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, Introduction, p. 5.

function--childrens' leagues, smokers, suppers, charity work, dances, forums. Anna Garlin Spencer wrote in 1916 when discussing this topic, "All can grow the flowers now, for all have got the seed."⁴ John Dewey sums up the status of organized religion today when he writes,

"It is hardly possible to overstate the decline of religion as a vitally integrative and directive force in mens' thought and sentiments... The divorce of church and state has been followed by that of religion and society. Religion is now mostly a matter of private indulgence."

5

The writer's analysis of the decline of supernaturalistic religions, and Dewey's statements, though true, are not inferences that the majority of people are atheists. Many today who deny faith in supernaturalism insist that they are nevertheless religious. Only when atheism is defined as a disbelief in supernaturalism may Adler be said to have been an atheist.⁶ In his chrysalis years, when he believed in the existence of a moral law, and even toward the end of his life when he acknowledged only an indefinable force which makes for

4 Anna Garlin Spencer, "Forty Years of Ethical Culture," Survey, Vol. 36, p. 200.

5

6 In an interview Dr. Adler told the following story about what happened on his return to America: "The congregation ... asked me to deliver a sermon from my father's pulpit. I did so, and it created quite a lot of talk. Then some member brought up the fact that I had not mentioned God in what I had to say. The committee came to see me and asked me 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." New York Times, April 26, 1933.

good, which commands attention and exercises a beneficent influence on conduct, Adler was religious, though he was rightly accused of lacking ⁷ a religion. The distinction John Dewey makes between a religion and having a religious attitude throws light on Adler's status as a religious man. Dewey writes:

"A religion ... always signifies a special body of beliefs and practices having some kind of institutional organization, loose or tight. In contrast, the adjective 'religious' denotes nothing in the way of a specifiable entity, either institutional or as a system of beliefs. It does not denote anything to which one can specifically point as one can point to this and that historic religion or existing church. For it does not denote anything that can exist by itself or that can be organized into a particular and distinctive form of existence. It denotes attitudes that may be taken toward every object and every proposed end or ideal."

8

Adler, could he have read A Common Faith, would have had to have acquiesced in principle in this distinction, though he never would have assented to Dewey's disregard for the spiritual attitude as such; for his faith was one emancipated from a religion, at the same time one affirming the validity of the religious function. Dewey also writes:

"The imagination must idealize existence by laying hold of the possibilities offered to

7 David S. Muzzey wrote, "He was the most religious man I think I ever knew. He had a faith that was strong, hopeful, and constructive to the end." New York Times, April 23, 1933.

8 John Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 9-10.

thought and imagination."

9

"God is the active relation between the ideal and the actual."

10

"The religious man will be stirred emotionally by possibilities as yet unrealized ... There are values, goals, actually realized upon a natural basis--the goods of human association, of art, of knowledge. The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in the climacteric moments of experience and projects them. We need no external criterion and guarantee for their goodness. They are had, they exist as good, and out of them we frame our ideal ends."

11

Adler implicitly ascribes to this much of the religious attitude. We remember that we are to act as if the spiritual ideal exists;¹² the spiritual ideal is a fulguration out of experience; we are to work to spiritualize, that is, to develop human potentialities, of the empirical substratum; we are to develop personality. At the age of eighty-one Adler said,

"The ideal destiny of mankind is to develop a higher human type than exists at present. I mean by this to set free the gifts, the talents, the responsibilities that are latent in all men. I speak of an ideal goal. There, every faculty with which men are endowed would be brought out in such a manner that no one faculty would dominate the rest."

13

We are not to strive for or expect personal immortality, but to make a better world for our posterity.

9 John Dewey, A Common Faith, p. 9.

10 Ibid., p. 51.

11 Ibid., p. 57.

12 See footnote, p. 57. Also footnote 69, p. 122.

13 New York Times, April 26, 1933.

Adler reflected his religious training in his choice of terms. It was almost imperative that he should place at the apex of his hierarchy of social institutions "Religious Fellowship," that he should speak and think with such terms as "spiritual," "reverence," "sin," "frustration." William James might have called him one of the "tender-minded." The spiritual ideal was on this account particularly valuable to him, because it allowed him to exercise his and others' natural capacities for developing and sharing in common concerns and thereby contribute to human freedom, at the same time to retain a vestige of the spiritual way of life which had been his whole environment. Boyd H. Bode writes,

"All creeds and social organizations are means to an end, and this end lies inside the process of living together and working together; it is not located on a far-off mountain-top created by an iridescent dream. The kingdom of heaven is within us."

14

Such a creed, and such an end, embellished with a religious terminology, was the philosophy of the spiritual ideal.

The Ethical Culture Movement

The Ethical Culture Movement was an early manifestation of the desire to conquer man's relation to man; and deserves its greatest commendation from the fact that its ideals and attitudes have been and are being absorbed in a greater move-

14 Boyd H. Bode, Democracy As a Way of Life, p. 49.

ment which is destined to struggle many more years before it triumphs over the economic and social fetters created by man's own handiwork, in the type of society Adler sought so earnestly to abolish. That movement has Adler's aim as its aim, and seeks first to arouse the social consciousness and create the intellectual ability necessary to manage permanent reforms. It has become a greater movement precisely because of a wider recognition of the value of that aim, and because the frustration involved is so great as to necessitate a long struggle and involve the energy and loyalty of every individual. Boyd H. Bode expresses a note of hope for the success of this movement:

"The attainment of a broadly social point of view is not a spontaneous and natural result, but is, in large measure, an outcome that has behind it the sweat and agony of conflict, resulting in a series of compromises, which had the effect of paving the way for the fostering of a body of common interests and thus advancing the cause of democracy. Governments have learned to take a more active interest in the prosperity and contentment of the masses: the upper classes have cultivated a more democratic spirit of noblesse oblige; employers have developed a keener sense of responsibility for the welfare of their employees; and public service corporations are more disposed to regard themselves as servants of the public. In general the development has been in the direction of giving to all members of the community, singly and collectively, a higher sense of their dignity as human beings and of their duties and obligations as component parts of the social order."

15

15 Boyd H. Bode, Fundamentals of Education, p. 52.

Criticism of Adler's Epistemo-metaphysical Theory

Let us examine briefly the epistemological status of the spiritual ideal or the spiritual universe. What is the nature of the spiritual ideal? Where does it exist? How is it recognized? Is Adler a dualist? An examination may well begin with a good example of Adler's keen insight into the history of philosophy and scientific method:

"The history of philosophy might be written under two headings: 1, monistic systems that undertake, collapsing in their futile effort, to derive the world and its plurality from the One, as if there were such an One, out of whose bosom philosophy might evoke the many creational systems, pantheistic systems, emanation systems; 2, pluralistic systems that essay, with equal lack of success, to explain the unity as somehow the offspring of plurality."

16

He establishes his metaphysical theory on the basis of such futile systems. The spiritual ideal is not a priori but a

"functional finality"--"the necessary postulate required if the idea of right is to have validity, and the idea of right is required by man in so far as he is an agent and not merely a spectator of life. The ethical manifold, the spiritual universe, exists in so far as there is a right."

13

The spiritual ideal is then created by us by virtue of the reality-producing functions of the mind, the necessity

16 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 110.

17 Ibid., p. 105.

18 Ibid., p. 126.

of seeing everything both sub specie pluralitatis and sub specie unitatis. In so far as it is a necessary postulate for "understanding," that is, for a Weltanschauung on the basis of the mistakes revealed in the attempt to explain the universe by either pluralistic or monistic systems, it is not an imaginative figment. Though Adler accepts Kant's theory of mind (which theory may be seriously questioned), he could have used other arguments as a basis for the belief in the existence of such a spiritual ideal.

This spiritual ideal, or spiritual universe, since it somehow exists other than imaginatively, is said to subsist. That is to say, it is only logically prior to the effects it produces. The spiritual universe is the true universe, or is at least as true as the universe which we know empirically, in the sense that it is to be reckoned with. Adler speaks in several places of subsistents, though he does not define what we mean by them:

"We are able to apprehend, and do apprehend, a determinate relation as subsisting between the ethical units, and this relation supplies us with an ideal plan of the ethical universe and a first principle and rule of ethics."

19

"The principle of unity applied to conduct is only another name for what we call the good. All those actions are good which spring from the idea of a unity of relations subsisting between ourselves and our fellow-men."

20

19 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 116.

20 Felix Adler, "The Ethical Movement," Unitarian Review, Vol. 23, p. 392.

"...We have not, indeed, realized an ideal, but we have realized the reality of our ideal. It subsists in the world of true being, and we with it."

21

The spiritual ideal as a subsistent is verified in experience by reason of the effects it produces: it is as a member of this spiritual universe that the individual has worth, and it is by living as a member of that universe that desirable effects or changes are produced in the empirical substratum. It is only as a member of such a non-existent, yet logically subsistent universe that Adler was able to attribute worth to all men indiscriminately, which attribution plays such an important part in his ethical system. The spiritual universe subsists because it is a necessary postulate, since all individuals, possessing worth, must have a system other than the empirical system in which they can be shown to be worthy. Adler involves himself in a circular argument when he maintains that the infinite worth of the individual implies existence in the spiritual universe, since it is only by assuming a spiritual universe that we can be assured that the individual has infinite worth.

For Adler to distinguish between worth and value, as he appears to do when he attributes worth to those individuals with little or no value, is to involve himself in a logical difficulty by making a difference in kind where there is ground only for making a difference in quality. J. Ratner points out that the concept of the intrinsic spiritual worth

21 Felix Adler, The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 232.

of the individual is not necessarily something spiritual:

"It is dependent on what is, philosophically, an accident of function in a manifold, which function of flawless interrelatedness is not itself in any respect intrinsically spiritual."²²

Worth then becomes only magnified value, and Adler has failed to give a valid reason for postulating worth at all. It does not follow from this, however, that the individual may not be considered intrinsically worth while. Such a valuable assumption may be taken *prima facie* without any theoretical validation merely because of the good results accruing from action based on such an assumption. The "plus traits" of one's character cannot undergo a metamorphosis, but must always remain either empirical "plus" qualities, or spiritual virtues from the beginning. Adler's religious terminology stands in the way of the real value in his philosophy, in fact seems to stand in his own way at times; for example, in discussing value and worth, he writes:

"The rule supplied by the ethical principle is: Act upon ... empirical selves in such a manner as to draw from their empirical natures the hidden personality, or at least the consciousness of it. And the repercussion of the rule is: in the attempt to do so you will convert your own empirical self into a spiritual personality; or at least evoke in yourself the idea of yourself as a spiritual personality."

23

22 J. Ratner, "The Foundations of Adler's Ethical Philosophy," Monist, Vol. 38, p. 581.

23 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 222.

Whether or not a conversion of plus traits takes place or whether the plus traits take on a spiritual significance because we imagine them as such seemed to him an open question. Apparently worth differs from value in the attitude taken toward one's potentialities--thus far Adler would go; and to establish worth where no value exists he is forced, or thinks he is forced, to establish it theoretically by means of a spiritual universe which he can only logically construct, and not actually find.

The conception of intrinsic individual worth seems to constitute for Adler what Dewey calls in Experience and Nature a "consummatory good." It corresponds to what other ethicists term end or final value, except that for Adler end value is spiritualized. The empirical worth, or value for Adler, is to be used as a substratum on which the ethical worth of the individual is to be built. The ethical worth amounts to those unique character traits efficacious in producing a diversity of interests in harmony with a common social end, and are practically identical with the traits present-day progressive educators are attempting to establish in the socially-minded individual. In the practical aspects of the problem of worth we can confidently say that Adler was not a dualist, because none of the implications arising from a dualistic position are to be faced. We escape them by remembering that worth is posited, that we are to help to create worth, we are to be "cheerful world-builders," we are to spiritualize the empirical substratum by working in the here and now.

In its epistemo-metaphysical aspects Adler's ethical idealism is suggestive of the metaphysical theories of some present-day New Realists. All New Realists hold to the logical reality of subsistents; and as we have seen, Adler supported this opinion,²⁴ though he nowhere elaborated on his conception, for such was not his main interest. His ontological distinction between the empirical and the spiritual or supersensible, corresponds to the distinction made by the New Realists between existents and subsistents.

Adler appears also to hold to the New Realist principle of the "externality of relations," at least in so far as he maintains that the relations between the ethical units themselves subsist;²⁵ and J. Ratner states²⁶ that he is dubious about the epistemological status of Adler's spiritual ideal, since he (Adler) speaks at times as though it were external to the individual,²⁷ in which case the terms would be external to the individual as well as the relations between the terms being apart from the terms themselves, which would satis-

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- 24 "The principle of unity applied to conduct is only another name for what we call the good. All those relations are good which spring from the idea of a unity of relations subsisting between ourselves and our fellow men." "The Ethical Movement," Unitarian Review, Vol. 23, p. 392. "Our ideal subsists in the world of true being, and we with it." The World Crisis and Its Meaning, p. 232.
- 25 "We are able to apprehend, and do apprehend, a determinate relation as subsisting between the ethical units." An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 116.
- 26 J. Ratner, "The Foundations of Adler's Ethical Philosophy," Monist, Vol. 38, p.
- 27 See Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 229.

fy both the criteria for implied acceptance of this doctrine.

Adler's conception of progress toward the realization of the spiritual ideal appears to have an affinity with the New Realist doctrine of "creative synthesis." The spiritual ideal is to be actualized in an ever larger sphere of human relations. The theory of creative synthesis supercedes a belief in an explanation for causality for the New Realist. D. Luther Evans in discussing the cosmology of New Realism as expressed by C. Lloyd Morgan, writes, "Unlike the Platonic or Leibnitzian conception, the theory of emergent evolution has no place for entelechies, agencies, forces or powers that are spatially or temporally distinct from things moved or influenced."²⁸ For Adler the value of explaining the notion of causality is replaced by belief in the inexplicability of the cause and effect relationship; and both points of view hold to a belief in an emerging world, a world of values for the New Realist and a world of greater spiritual interrelationships for Adler.

Adler is in agreement with F. H. Bradley, S. Seth Pringle-Pattison and D. Luther Evans in affirming that "it is the nature of the infinite to express itself in the finite; and the living fact is just this unity--the realization of the infinite and the recognition by the finite of its groundedness in the infinite."²⁹

28 D. Luther Evans, New Realism and Old Reality, p. 106.

29 In A. S. Pringle-Pattison's The Idea of God in the Light

The God which the "universe of spiritual beings interacting in infinite harmony" has replaced as the locus of unity³⁰ appears to the writer to come close to what D. Luther Evans calls "the existent, finite God of New Realism:"

"The God of the new realist is not the nominalistic, humanistic working hypothesis of pragmatism; neither is He the object of faith and postulation, as in phenominalism; nor, finally, is He the absolute experience of idealism. To use the definition of T. G. Spaulding, 'God is the totality of values, both existent and subsistent, and of those agencies and efficiencies with which these values are identical.' He is, therefore, immanent and transcendent. He is immanent as love, affection, goodness, respect, and reverence prevail as existent values among and in men. He is transcendent as subsistent ideals, which act upon men as the stimulators of moral aspiration. 'In brief,' according to Spaulding, 'God is value, the active, 'living' principle of the conservation of values and of their efficiency.'" 31

Adler would not, however, subscribe to the new realist epistemological doctrine of "neutral monism," which asserts the independence of the existence and character of objects of their being known. The material, or empirical, or phenomenal world was for him the world as Kant conceived it, the product of the "reality-producing functions" of the mind. Nor could he on this account subscribe to one important aspect of the theory of creative synthesis, or emergence, namely its "desire to interpret reality as prior to and independent

of Recent Philosophy. See D. Luther Evans' New Realism and Old Reality, p. 198.

30 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 126.

31 D. Luther Evans, New Realism and Old Reality, p. 155.

dent of man."³²

The Purpose of Education. The Aim of the Ethical Culture Schools Under Their Contemporary Guidance

The evocation of the child's latent character or potentialities which is the supreme end of education in both its formal and informal varieties, can best be brought about through adequate preparation for a vocation and for citizenship.³³ The recognition of the necessity for preparation of its students for a practical vocation has been one of the chief contributions of the Ethical Culture Schools since their founding date; and in view of the necessity for relatedness of interests, has also stressed the importance of the social attitude. In 1925, when the two million dollar Fieldston buildings were being erected, Adler said regarding his ideal of education:

32 D. Luther Evans, New Realism and Old Reality, p. 111.

33 "To bring to birth (a child's) personality is the supreme educational end. We show our reverence for the child in our effort to personalize it... The empirical substratum of personality is individuality! Individuality manifests itself in a leading interest of some kind, a predominant bias which indicates the thing which the individual is fit to be and do. To discover this bent or bias is the first step. ...It is the task of the educator to discover the predominant interest where it exists, and to try to produce such an interest where it does not. ...Personality, on its mental as well as social side, depends on relatedness--depends not so much on what one does, as on the interrelation between what one does and what other people do." Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 296.

"The new principle which is here represented is to educate a generation of specialists who will estimate their success in their own line by the degree to which they advance the progressive movement of humanity in all related lines."

34

The present director of the Ethical Culture Schools, Dr. V. T. Thayer, carries on this aim:

"It is no longer sufficient to equip students for a vocation with an exclusively vocational training. ... Vocational security in its purely economic aspects requires the ability to transfer from one specific performance to another as occasion arises; and secondly ideals of vocational success must undergo modifications in the light of other values in life. ... A vocational and professional education designed to meet the needs of a new era must take on the characteristics of a revitalized and liberal education."

35

When we compare these conceptions of the purpose of education with the Deweyian concept, "Education is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience,"³⁶ it appears to the writer that they are in an important respect practically identical in aim. Both Dewey and Adler, as perfectionists in ethics, emphasize personal development, or the emancipation of unique social character traits,³⁷ though their conceptions of

34 In Mabel R. Goodlander's "The First Sixty Years," p. 60.

35 Ibid., p. 65.

36 John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 89.

37 Professor A. C. Garnett says, "Dewey speaks of 'intelligence' and the 'liberation of intelligence' as though there were a halo around them."

the nature of the personality to be developed, and the purpose for its existence, differ radically. They both emphasize the growth concept--the acknowledgment of the fact that the world is changing, that by a proper application of our faculties we can direct the change toward a better life, toward the realization of the spiritual ideal. On the occasion of laying the cornerstone for the Fieldston school Adler said:

"This place is an educational temple, designed not merely to train students for their careers, but to train them for life--the growing life of the world. We are erecting here an altar to the Unknown God--the unknown, unpredictable, inconceivable divine things that are as yet in the bosom of mankind."

38

This concept of educational growth has become of supreme importance. Adler is to be highly commended for his early devotion to the cause of bringing about a more widespread recognition of its importance, for such a principle is a tenet of all modern progressive education.

One may say that the greatest single line of development from Adler's philosophy has been in the field of education. The present Director of the Ethical Culture Schools, Dr. V. T. Thayer, is carrying out Adler's educational philosophy, and the "Fieldston Plan," as the present method of procedure on the secondary level is called, is worth noting because of its progressive characteristics, its union of uniqueness with practicality. The Fieldston Plan "aims to orient a student

38 In Mable R. Goodlander, *"The First Sixty Years,"* p. 59.

by means of his major interest with reference to the most significant of life's functions. ...It aims ... not to impose upon students a specific vocational training ... rather to help them to an appreciation of the vocational promise within their interests and thus give them that sense and security which comes from knowing that an interest and an ability possess economic significance."³⁹ For example, girl students are oriented "with reference to the twofold function of woman in the present-day society, as homemaker, and as a participant in business or professional work."⁴⁰

Not only is the student's major interest developed toward a vocation, but it is made socially as well as individually significant by serving in Dr. Adler's phrase, as a "bridge to culture;" that is, it is developed through a proper pedagogical procedure in such a way that it makes him internationally-, scientifically-, and ethically-minded. The student becomes "genuinely interested in appreciation of the people of countries who may be affected by his business activity;" he will "follow the clues of science as it enters and fertilizes the fields of industry;" and he will sense the idea "that business is a profession, a vocation, that the production and exchange of commodities, the proper function of commerce, is one of the great kinds of social service, and therefore that a man in business must think of himself as a

39 V. T. Thayer, "Guidance in the Fieldston Plan," pp. 4-5.

40 Ibid., p. 7.

social servant, as a vocational functionary."⁴¹

Such a program is entirely in harmony with Dr. Adler's educational goal, as expressed in An Ethical Philosophy of Life, and especially in "The Ideal of Culture for Business Men," which Dr. Thayer states Adler always referred to as "the most adequate statement of his ideas."⁴² The aim is to develop each student's individuality through a nurturing of his particular gift or capability; and to make that gift socially significant by developing it in such a way that it harmonizes with others.

Under its contemporary direction the Ethical Culture Schools are emphasizing the necessity for foresight in educating pupils for living in the conditions of tomorrow, and recognition of the transitory nature of educational principles themselves. Dr. Thayer writes,

"(The Fieldston Plan) assumes a definite responsibility for guiding the thought and the behavior of young people in socially desirable directions, but it attempts to exercise this influence in an educative manner. That is to say, it furthers intelligent appraisal and critical scrutiny of the principles it fosters in the process of their application so that eventually these self same principles may become at once subjects of study and objects of reconstruction, refinement, and revision. Education of this character prepares for change without dogmatism or rigidity. It conceives of the school in one of its functions as perpetrating in American life the open road and new opportunities for fulfilment which constitute our richest inheritance from the American frontier."⁴³

41 V. T. Thayer, "Guidance in the Fieldston Plan," p. 3.

42 V. T. Thayer, "The Evolution of an Educational Ideal," p. 10.

43 V. T. Thayer, "Guidance in the Fieldston Plan," p. 10.

Boyd H. Bode writes, "This concern about future changes may be taken as the characteristic and differentiating trait of a democracy."⁴⁴

The Implication of the Spiritual Ideal for the Concept of Democracy

Adler's conception of the spiritual universe may be considered as the formal and ethical equivalent of democracy, and as such should serve to merit him the title of truly democratic educator. J. Ratner says, "Dr. Adler has transformed the prosaic facts of social independence, and at least nominal (actually partial) individual autonomy, with the ideal of an absolute social interrelatedness of absolutely unique and independent members."⁴⁵ Regardless of the metaphysical status of the spiritual ideal, by recognizing its being as a subsistent, we can, in fact, actualize it to a degree: by willing that it shall be so we can make it so by transforming the empirical into the spiritual.⁴⁶ The spiritual ideal may well serve as the democratic ideal, and any individual who can adapt himself to its spirit will be a truly valuable member of society.

44 Boyd H. Bode, Modern Educational Theories, p. 236.

45 J. Ratner, Monist, Vol. 38, p.

46 "The ethical temperament "is willing to suffer the pain of imperfection while engaged in the effort of creation." Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 97.

The Core of the Spiritual Ideal: Its Practical Application in the Development of Socially Conscious Personalities

If Adler's philosophy must be unalterably termed spiritual, then spiritual we all should be; for it is his concept of man's interrelatedness as ethical beings and their supreme worth which constitutes the core of the spiritual ideal:

"What it is necessary to verify is that a universe exists; for 'universe' is an ethical ideal, it is the ethical manifold, or, if we distinguish ethical as concerning relations between man and man, then we may use the term 'spiritual' to designate that infinite system of interdependence in which men as ethical units have their place. We begin with the affirmation--Man is an end per se. This wonderful affirmation, which the democracies are darkly and confusedly trying to express in political and social arrangements, is the problem of all problems."

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If some groups object to the spiritual terminology, if they feel that the ideal of the ethical manifold becomes a metaphysical "crutch" when spiritualized, let them substitute a different terminology, a terminology of values, but by no means deny the concepts of intrinsic worth, and complete interrelatedness which the spiritual ideal or ethical manifold typifies. It is not the spiritual as spiritual,

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47 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 125.

48 Indeed, we cannot ever deny them for long; for though unrealized, "whatever the inconceivable relations between the perfect and the imperfect may be, this at least is borne in upon us,--that the infinite presses upon us to be expressed in our finite experience. Upon the human self there is this pressure from the transcendental world. The acquisition of a high ethical character is

as versus emphasis on the empirical for which Adler militates: he reveals the force of his whole religious terminology as only adjunctive to the "regulative" ethical principle when he writes:

"The chief object of this volume is to work out the general plan of the ethical relations, or the regulative principle in ethics, and this I am deeply convinced is super-sensible and non-empirical. Applied ethics, however, 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, and I am keenly desirous to ward off the possible misunderstanding that the ethical theory here proposed is intended to replace the empirical science of man, individual or social.

Without the way there is no going.
Without the truth there is no knowing;

says Thomas à Kempis. The way is the empirical knowledge, the truth is the regulative principle. The way itself, as we proceed along it, will shed additional light on the truth. Nevertheless, without the outlines of the truth, without a goal in view, we should be out wandering blindly."

49

John Dewey writes, "Conventional morality is a drab morality, in which the only fatal thing is to be conspicuous." 50 His emphasis on the development of individual potentialities corroborates Adler's affirmation of the importance of this ideal, which appeared at an earlier date. That stress on the development of unique personality is not, however, to be con-

not a matter of mere subjective choice... we are subject to the pressure of the eternal world." Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, pp. 208-09.
49 Felix Adler, An Ethical Philosophy of Life, p. 263.

lused with the development of individual differences:

"Difference in ethical meaning is not to be confused with mere idiosyncrasy, or originality, not to say eccentricity. It is the kind of difference which elicits correlated difference in all spiritual associates."

Here is another of Adler's most valuable assertions, in the form of a forceful affirmation of a true democratic desideratum: the right of the individual to exist as free; the condemnation of a threatening Fascistic Weltanschauung, with its regimentation, racial discrimination and economic slavery. We are no longer to be slaves in the Platonic sense, of accepting from another the purposes which control our conduct: our conduct is to be controlled by our own purposes, for the mutual welfare of ourselves and society.

Does Adler give us any practical advice as to how to go about developing the associative way of life? No modern advocate for democracy has committed himself on the nature of practical reforms more than Adler. In the first place Adler struck a fact of paramount importance, one which might receive more attention than it does at the present time, when he emphasized the importance of the minor social institutions,

50 John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 4.

51 I Ratner writes, "The fundamental objection to Dr. Adler's ethical rule is that there is no reason for believing that two or more acts that differ from one another are for that reason better than two or more other acts (equal in all other ethical respects) which are similar to each other." (Monist, Vol. 33, p. 586) It is the writer's belief that Dr. Ratner may have failed here to distinguish between the free development of personalities compatible with shared interests, and individual differences.

and the intimate social contacts consummated therein, in developing the "spiritual attitude," that is, in creating those habits and the frame of mind which form the base for the development of the more purely social thought and action patterns that will manifest themselves in the other institutions in the hierarchy; and the importance of "reverence" for children, that is, the value of recognizing their potentialities⁵² which may be used to create a better society. Adler recognized the fact that character reform began at one's doorstep, to be accomplished not by fiat, but by dealing with other personalities and objects, by recreating them, and thereby recreating oneself. That he may be criticized for being impractical at all, because he "failed to change habits,"⁵³ is due not to the technique he promulgated but to a factor beyond his control, the general lack of intelligence and moral inability to establish such habits in our present environment in the first place.

Secondly, apart from emphasizing the importance of the in-

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- 52 Dewey writes, "When we think of the docility of the young we first think of the stocks of information adults wish to impose and the ways of acting they want to reproduce. Then we think of the insolent coercions, the insinuating bribes, the pedagogic solemnities by which the freshness of youth can be faded and its vivid curiosities dulled. Education becomes the art of taking advantage of the helplessness of the young; the forming of habits becomes a guarantee for the maintenance of hedges of custom." Human Nature and Conduct, p. 64. Contrary to this, Adler early recognized that the plasticity of adolescence is to be judiciously used to change prevailing custom.
- 53 "Analyticus" writes, "What for Adler was an ethical emancipation (the Ethical Culture Movement) became for his followers a racial exodus that failed because it did not

intimate social relations, and the necessity of guiding one's conduct by the personal needs of one's intimates, in the fields of larger social relations he did not shirk the task of devoting that extra energy needed to expound concrete reforms rather than propounding broad generalizations. Let us for a moment examine a few of the actual reforms he advocated, definitely set up out of existing conditions, as efficacious in bringing about the sharing of common interests and the spiritual attitude: ⁵⁴ the abolition of child labor, adult education, reciprocal trade agreements, sex education, arbitration committees in industrial relations, an internationalistic attitude rather than nationalism, ⁵⁵ substitution of more altruistic motives for the profit motive, vocational rather than geographical political representation, international conferences, equality of opportunity and rights for women, uniform divorce laws. By advocating these and other reforms, many of which are admittedly impractical from the standpoint of immediately being put into effect, Adler proved

change habits--only ideals." Century Magazine, Vol 116, p.

54 "There are clearly limits to the application of the spiritual rule by any man throughout all the relations in which he stands..." But he can always (1)"give an impetus in the right direction and (2)kindle the fire that will by and by spread its living ardor throughout mankind." Felix Adler, The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal, p. 214, note 5.

55 Adler advocated what Professor A. C. Garnett calls "the supreme moral need of our time--the establishment of an international ethic."

himself to be a true philosopher of action. It was not for him to go through life "holding up his skirts meticulously." He "practised what he preached." He was pragmatic and empirical as contrasted with other-worldly and impractical by the fact that he judged the value of his credo by its consequences in affecting changes in the "empirical substratum" --his philosophy was not abstract, following the spiritual ideal by virtue of its own light.

Summary

Dr. Adler was one of the earliest American social and educational philosophers and persistent social workers who appeared toward the end of the last century. Science and technology were solving man's relation to nature; his problem was to solve man's relation to man. His activity is particularly unique because he combined high moral theory with action: though he kept his eyes on the stars he kept his feet on the ground. His goal was a universal reconstruction of experience based on a spiritual principle or practical rule of ethics, which might well serve today as the truly democratic concept of social interrelatedness.

In each of the three fields of endeavor in which Dr. Adler distinguished himself, one might say he stood chronologically at the juncture of two eras: an era of rugged individualism and decaying supernaturalism on the one hand, and a growing socialistic attitude or social consciousness with a gradual religious emancipation on the other. As an intermediary between the two orders his philosophy reflected elements from both, though he definitely belongs to the modern era. Precisely because he was part of an older order on the one hand--revealed in part by the use of a "religious"

terminology and outlook on life, which surrounded the fruit of his ethical theory, the concepts of infinite, universal worth, universalistic humanitarianism plus reverence for the irrepressible unique individuality as expressed in the uniformity or "regulative" principle of ethics;-and partly because his progressivism has now been generally adopted and his advocacy of many immediately practical reforms has been taken over by other groups, Adler may in one sense be "dated."

Adler's thoughts and ideas, however, will not, in another sense, be so easily "dated," for they are being promulgated, dressed in a different garb in a more materialistic terminology, by contemporary reformers. We nowadays hear and read of the liberation of "intelligence" rather than "personality," "inviolable rights" rather than "worth," the pursuit of values rather than the realization of the spiritual ideal. Perhaps time will prove Dr. Adler right in emphasizing the necessity for complete subordination of self to the welfare of others rather than the present emphasis on doctrines of "enlightened selfishness." Certainly the "supreme ethical rule" has in the past always proved supremely efficacious when applied to purely personal relationships. Time may likewise prove his wisdom in making an honest recognition of the reverential aspect of the mysterious driving force within us that can be so directed as to produce a better type of humanity, rather than attempting to discard his religious background altogether and adopting the cold, objective attitude which

characterizes the writings of many of the present-day social philosophers.

At any rate, time will be almost sure to justify our conclusion that Dr. Felix Adler, because of the quantity, quality, and variety of his work in ennobling human activity and suppressing and redressing human wrongs, deserves to be remembered as a truly great man.

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