

Western Philosophers on Civil Religion and Its Significance in Modern Age

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ABSTRACT

Faith is “a united system of beliefs, feelings and practices comparative to faithful things, which is to say the ideas are organized and prohibited-principles and performances which unite into a single moral community called a Church, and all the individuals who submit to them.” As per definition, faith is a system for building connotation in the world. Spiritual views in a sociological manner, then, are not solely accepted by the church, but, are further widely endorsed by social groups and collectively by society in totality, as society is the place where individual can reside, hold faith, rituals and other social patterns.” The viewpoint about founding views regarding an ideal as well as genuine world went on inspire Durkheim to ask: “In fact, what mandatory variance lies in an assembly occupied by the Christians who rejoice the life of holy Christ, or the Jewish community recalling their mass exodus from the land of Egypt and a reunion of citizens celebrating the proclamation of a new moral or legal system” His reply was driven from a socio-cultural perspective; as all were certainly extremely spiritual. Therefore, the civil religion is nothing but a collection of common symbols for initial self-understandings about a community: “To me, civil religion is a specific case of a spiritual figurative system, envisioned to achieve a varied task that is the chief element but not emerged from state or the church, but it is a collection of symbolic patterns, norms, rituals, and acts which develop relationship between man and the society.” Conclusion: In short, we can divide western philosophers into two categories: Some philosophers want to secularize traditional religions to support nationalism or democratic ideas like Tocqueville and Bellah. Some want to reject traditional religion and develop a concocted religion for the above purposes. Auguste Comte, Durkheim, and Dewey developed Religion of Humanity and Common Faith.

In his research paper “Civil Religion in the USA” a sociologist and theologian of the USA Dr. Robert Bellah unlocked a huge debate in 1967 among researchers in the field of sociology, faith, the politics and the theology on the influence of faith to make society better in modern era. When we view Civil Religion in historical perspective the names of Durkheim and Auguste Comte flash in our mind but Rousseau discussed it more clearly. He presented this idea in his book “Social Contract,” which contained a whole chapter on this topic. Rousseau at one hand realized the significance of religion in human life, while at the other hand in ideal state which he propounded Christianity had in significant position. That is why he gave the idea of Civil Religion. The idea of Civil Religion after passing through its evolutionary phases was renamed in 20th century as “Common Religion” by John Dewey. Other Western thinkers named it “Public Religion” and “Religion of Nation.” Civil Religion is not only confined to few rites and rituals performed in modern nation state, but it has its own theology and beliefs. In this context Robert Nisbet Writes:

It is no exaggeration to say, in all, that Civil Religion had its widely recognized theology, one complete with creed, catechism and dogmas. A complex ritual surrounded the American flag and other symbols of national civil unity.¹

Rousseau on Civil Religion

Rousseau, who is believed to be the most significant thinker of the last 3 centuries, as per his 4th book from: *The Social Contract*, noted in Chapter 8, was among the enlightenment advocates of civil religion.

Rousseau Says:

There is a morally civil vocation of religion through which the autonomous state chalked out the rules not on religious principles rather based on social patterns so that a man could be groomed on cultural patterns. The State on religious grounds can banish any citizen, however, when citizens would be groomed on cultural patterns, they would enjoy their freedom. The State can however banish the citizens while declaring them as ‘anti-social’ being, who is unable to respect laws of land, thus having no value of his life to discharge his duty. However, religiously if someone does not believe in laws of religious origin he can be sentenced to death to bow others before the law.²

He further says about Civil Religion: “The philosophy of Civil Religion can be considered as simple without any logical explanation. However, the actuality of a strong, vigorous, and humane theology, impressed by the forethought and wisdom, in future, the desire of justice, and punishment for wrongdoers, maintenance of social justice and law: these are widely

believed as positive aspects. However, its negative aspects restricted an individual to intolerance, which has been strongly rejected.”³ According to Rousseau, there is not a single state ever established on earth without any religion being its base, but there is no compulsion that there would be only Christianity as the sole religion. Paganism is not a sole choice. Monotheistic theocracy is also not an option. So, what is left behind? By a process of elimination, we are left with an Enlightenment faith of broad-mindedness and shared self-control. The Social Contract accomplishes with a striking inconsistency. His main statement is that: “There is no State emerged on earth without a faith [but] but it always contained law of Christianity damaging rather fading than empowering the constitution and the laws of the land devised by the State.”⁴

Kinds of Traditional Religions:

It may necessary to explain Rousseau’s ideas on religion. He pointed out 4 sorts of faiths. As per Rousseau, first kind of the religion of the man is “Deprived of the temples, rituals or rites”. It is also “restricted to the pure inner cult of the ultimate God and to the everlasting obligations of ethics—is the unadulterated and the simple religion of the Gospel, the true piety, and what can be labelled as the natural heavenly law.”⁵ In addition to it, he narrates the “religion of the man” as Christianity. However, it is also tough than today’s Christianity, which stresses upon the Gospels and “through this blessed, inspirational, factual religion, men, in being the offspring of the same God, and the society, which combined them is not melted even in the death.”⁶ Rousseau believes this sort of religion contains liability. Factually speaking such sort of Christianity may require each individual to act a reasonable Christian for restoration of reconciliation and congruence. Rousseau further believes it can be uncertain for each individual to act as nervous with heavenly things. He further expected “a ruthless man, a fraudulent, or a thief can have undeniably superiority on his virtuous nationals.”⁷ The 2nd type ‘citizens’ religion’. He explains, “The other provides them gods in a country, and further provides them with their own ostensible customers. It has its own creeds, rituals and customs devised by the laws and whosoever shall not believe in such things would be considered as an infidel. It expands obligations and rights of a man conditionally if it changes.”⁸ He further believes this type of religion considering it as good because it hitches “the heavenly offbeat” to laws.

Besides that, this sort of the religion makes the men irrational and bigoted. When the borders between the Church and the state is grouped, the men may start to “believe they are performing a brave action in killing anyone who does not accept its gods.”⁹ Rousseau points out a 3rd kind of the religion which in his own arguments is “more curious.” He further calls this “religion of the pastor” and states “in providing men the two sets of legislation, two leaders, and also the two fatherlands, it conditioning them to inconsistent obligations and averts them from being concurrently sincere men and the individuals.”¹⁰ For instance, this kind of faith is often called as Catholicism with Roman origin. Furthermore, the Catholics of the Rome are under the lawful jurisdiction of the Church and even commandment of a country, with addition to supreme power of Pope and right/ strength of a leader of a country. They are further directed to the rule Vatican and motherland.

Flaws in Christianity:

According to Rousseau, Christianity is quite impotent, dualistic, indecisive, and rough faith. Rousseau says Christianity is purely a spiritual religion which is completely interlinked with heavenly things. A man performs his obligations, certainly, but he does so with thoughtful insignificance to the respectable, moral and failures of his cares. Rousseau believes a man has nothing to censure himself/or herself whatever occurs on this earth planet. Rousseau says “a man has nothing to do with the happenings on earth, as a man never shares if the state is wealthy or even the man has no fear of failure or even his desires for the glorious end of this country; and if the state is weakening day by day even then man believes God has planned to do so for His people. According to Rousseau, the citizens [Christians] proudly march towards the land where war breaks out, but without having desire to become victorious or losing the war rather they [men] perform mere their duty, and they have only one approach in their mind to become martyr [die] during the war in the name of God. According to the war, if the men win or lose the war, their conditions become good or bad, whatever happens to them, even then they have nothing to do with the end. According to their approach, they are least concerned about their impassiveness cause by the enemy during the war. Think about the generous people, who become passive Christians, as per the said type or religion, thrashed, infatuated and even devastated with the

hands of enemy notwithstanding they have no realization of their ultimate fate. The brave soldiers of Fabius took oath to die not conquer in the name of God and come back victorious to maintain their oath. In fact, Rousseau says the Christian people would never take such an oath but they would try to tempt God, because the religion of Christianity preaches for slavery and necessity. Accordingly, such approach is quite in favour of the tyrants and dictators because they would ultimately conquer such passive nations/people and would crush such nation. Rousseau says in fact, true Christians are believing to be born to work as 'slaves' and they have absolute realization of such concept for short span of life"¹¹.

The Idea of Civil Religion:

The main passages of the chapter are enthusiastic to present the project to amalgamate the Christianity with politics. Even one cannot express about "the Christian republic," rather "these 2 words are jointly high-class."¹² This might propose that Rousseau, as a democratic politics, would be compulsory to hold some class of theocracy, either of the mixed, pagan diversity, or of the imperialistic, monotheistic variation and announces that "Mohammed had very sound ideas,"¹³ this too is an choice that he eventually disclaims. When Rousseau says that "a State has never been established without the core religion serving as foundation of the state," I undertake that he contained in his mind a "true" religion, the religion which could factually outline the inspirations of the individuals, thus nurturing good citizenship and further helping to combine the base of the state.

In "Meaning in History," Karl Lowith writes:

"Undeniably, Rousseau believed, as envisaged in Geneva Manuscript, that [one day] the advantages of the religion or faith of the man will be jointed. The, the State will never be enemy of anyone else's."¹⁴

Articles of Civil Religion:

Rousseau says: "A virtuously considered as a civil occupation of faith, of which the self-governance should fix the articles, not precisely as sacred dogma, but as social feelings without which an individual cannot be a good citizen and realistic subject."¹⁵

He further stressed upon the idea of self-rule responsibility to necessitate a "pure civil career of the religion," & to set up the doctrines of religion as well. He explains it as: Creeds of CA must be simple, small in numbers,

and exactly composed deprived of description or explanations. Presence of a strong, brainy, and generous holiness which predicts and offers including the life after death, happiness driven from justice system, punishment for wrongdoers, and virtuous deeds of noble persons.¹⁶The negatively described doctrine can be restricted to one concept of bigotry.¹⁷ Furthermore, the self-rule can expel a person who disagrees with such superb beliefs. But one cannot be debarred on account of sinful, rather, on charge of adopting unfriendly social behavior. So, a person can accurately address the factors and causes for which Rousseau believed a CA is a mandatory need of the time.

Tocqueville and the CR

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) born in Paris in July 29, 1805 in a family of royalist origin having a father, who buttressed the kingship of Bourbon, whose great-grandfather was believed to a generous noble, and was murdered during French Revolution. Tocqueville mom was also deeply associated with Roman Catholic and she used to advocate to previous regime. In 1859, Tocqueville died and his memories were collected and printed in 1893. Tocqueville says as: The highest part of the British-USA inhabited by the individuals who, after having shaken off the authority of the Pope, recognized no other sacred sovereignty: they brought with them into the New World – a shape of the Christianity which I truly cannot better explain than by fashioning it a self-governing and republican religion.¹⁸ Tocqueville carried out a study about the civil religion - a major part of his lifelong work. He was also a spokesperson for a political party concerning to the civil religion. His main apprehension was the political affiliation between the Christianity and the liberal self-rule.

Materialism + Individualism:

Pose Threats to Self-Rule Governing State:

Tocqueville used the word “individualism” in order to explain the isolation of the individual citizens residing in the USA. According to him, “Individualism calms down the sentiments which differentiates each individual of any community from rest of the subjects besides segregating him from his family, relatives and friends and he established his own limited circle and leaves the huge society”¹⁹ Individualism, factually speaking, leads a person towards absolute isolation. This concept totally damages the entire fabric of collective public life. Ultimately, this concept

leads to individualistic private life, wherein a person feels himself/ herself standing alone in a society.”²⁰ On other side, spiritual linkages are especially important for the safeguarding of self-rule along-with all characteristics of the faith.²¹

Materialism and Democracy:

Capitalism, is another “hazardous sickness of a human mind” with a clandestine attraction for the self-governing men with an essence of acquisitiveness, a doctrine that advocates for everything, which matters. “The credence in greediness rises from the leaning of self-governing individuals to pursue instant apparent fulfilment at the expense of the both in the days to come and the souls.”²² He found out Americans were “devotedly attached to the ‘enjoyment’ of a physical life,” to whom they term as a “love for the well-being of all.”²³ This restless materialism, poses two specific issues for the welfare in a self-rule. First of all, it devours maximum time besides consuming energy therefore the individuals feel quite a little power for the problems of others.²⁴ Secondly, the migration from one point or place to any other point or place to obtain prosperous life further restricts the freedom and even the chances of his settlement at a single place and further he loses the linkages of social bonding and relationship with his other community members.²⁵

Compatibility of Religion with Democracy:

Tocqueville says about the compatibility of Christianity with democracy: “It is a greater blunder to support a self-rule state in a society which is antagonistic to the faith: regardless there is no such opposite spirit neither in Christianity, or even is Catholicism.”²⁶ Tocqueville established that the reality of the religion as a “political institute” was vigorous to the protection of the freedom in a self-rule society. He claimed: “Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is more needed in democratic republics than in any other.”²⁷ Tocqueville says that “nothing is mismatched with self-rule comparing with Christian faith rather self-rule environment is highly compatible to Christianity.”²⁸ Tocqueville observed the history of the western civilization as a heavenly fated revolt determined on setting up the equality as ‘weird and principal reality of today’s era.’²⁹ Mysticism never assured the self-governances of the modern era. The chief idea of fairness causes two contrasting tendencies: one which leads to chained slavery and the other leads to absolute freedom. Although political

activities were hence forth restricted within the ‘fatal circle’ of self-rule, it still endured within the power of the individuals to regulate whether self-rule would lead to liberty or slavery.³⁰ Tocqueville also believed in revolt being the essential element for liberal self-rule to safeguard freedom from the tyrannical leanings unchecked by the parity of the circumstances called as “Religious countries,” he says, “are generally powerful upon which democratic countries are quite feeble; which urges upon the individuals or the citizens to reserve their religion as their circumstances become more equal.”³¹ Self-governing individuals display an excessive apprehension for their well-being since there are no determined source of income in self-rule communities, rather all the individuals should work to fulfil needs of the life. Resultantly, the individuals are continuously panic-stricken owing to the danger of poverty. To evade “dipping into the life” which they perpetually make effort to enhance properties and add up amenities of their life. So, physical gratification is observed as an utmost good, greediness damages spirit and further weakens spiritual sizes.³²

Powerful desires for self-rule, if goes uncheck, may pave ways to a ‘gutless desire of existing joy and a ‘ruthless unimportance of future.’³³ Tocqueville’s empathetic approach towards significance of the Christianity to self-rule freedom have foundation of substantial choice. He further believed “the common concepts that the individuals are determined to God and the human flora forms the foundations of nearly each human action. Tocqueville further believed in the individuals may obtain a “clear, exact, comprehensible, and everlasting’ replies to the central queries through sacred religion. However, after adopting the sacred religion, community members obtain powers as the 1st moralities which permit them to behave in a rational way.”³⁴ The thoughts of equality and moral rights are considered as the initials concepts ever imparted by all the divine faiths – including the known religions of Christianity and Islam. The Christian teaches for having respect for all citizens with dignity and honor. However, in self-rule societies are always converted to political rights subject to certain visible conditions of loyalty and patriotism.”³⁵ The metaphysical method that became the “shared level of intelligence’ in self-rule societies leads the individuals to castoff all the modes of old-fashioned authority in an impressive manner and to solely depend on their own decision. They further believe in reason rather than divine revelation as the final source of

revealing truth and have slight taste for anything, which is unusual or supernatural.”³⁶ Tocqueville further believed in self-rule communities where old-fashioned authority is always substituted by the faith in wake of the decision or ruling of the majority of the people as a ‘common will or general will’ of the majority. He further believed that the citizens are governed by the will of the ‘public’ through their own ‘voting’ towards forming a democratic government and ultimately it will be considered their own religion. According to them, the foundations of the self-rule comprising of the majority of the people is the central code of parity. Since the self-rule says all are gifted with an opportunity of same bulk for arbitrating reality, it trails as that “the superior the reality should go along along-with a huge number of populations.”³⁷ Tocqueville further believed that if the strong measures were adopted to safeguard Christianity, non-belief, the oppression may be common fate of today’s self-ruling governments. Therefore, he accomplishes a fair level of his examination with sequence of endorsements that he observed may allow the Christianity to recollect its power in times of self-rule.³⁸ Tocqueville further believed this kind of Christian religion can be adapted in accordance as per the requirement of the self-rule. So, self-ruling individuals are with great zeal and zest to acquire unity & the effortlessness, inbred disliking, the Christian form of divinity must be projected as the “sole but all-out strong concept, while providing them laws for equality and equally implemented on all of the individuals.”³⁹ In addition to it, the Christianity should eradicate all those exterior adherences and the relics that are not completely mandatory to the continuation of the divine faith. In factual sense, the alteration of Tocqueville pertaining to old fashioned Christianity appears to eliminate more than the unnecessary externals. As per the Gospel, approaching to the empire of the god was the main and ultimate objective of earthly life and it could only be obtained through absolute submission to God with the approach of complete self-denial”⁴⁰ Basically, he further believed that for the men, there was no other choice but to submit to god. He feared that the Christianity was well-matched self-rule, because in self-rule the morality of the Christianity would ultimately lose. According to him, the freedom of the individuals would be abolished in the self-rule and no new religion would emerge in democratic societies.”⁴¹

Montesquieu and Civil Religion:

Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu born in 1689 in Bordeaux, France, was a son of a rich family. He acquired the knowledge of science and history, but adopted the profession of law. After the death of his uncle in 1716, he inherited his office as president of the Bordeaux Parliament, and later became member of the Bordeaux and French Academies of Science. Widely traveled and very well educated, Montesquieu was very influential as a writer against the absolutism of the French monarchy and greatly desired a more ordered form of government for France. Most affected by the British government and system of legislation, Montesquieu would greatly affect constitutional thinkers in America and in other countries in their systems of governance throughout the late 18th and the 19th century. Within the framework of his comparative works on law systems and governments, he dealt as well a lot with religion, especially in his *Lettres Persanes* (Persian Letters). But also in other works, as in his most famous book, *L'Esprit des Lois* and the *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence*, religion is treated as an integral component of society in a comprehensive sense. Considering this, it might be interesting to study Montesquieu's approach to religion in connection with a sociological notion that gained broad attention in the last two decades: the concept of Civil Religion. Montesquieu and Rousseau used reason to assess the human condition and religion's place in it. Montesquieu's chief complaint against traditional Christianity was that it diminished rather than enhanced the quality of civil life. Sincere Christians, in his view, considered themselves "travelers who should think only of another country," and who should, along the way, sacrifice physical pleasure and temporal well-being for the sake of salvation.⁴² Their otherworldly orientation depleted the economic and political strength of Christian nations and led to a general decline in Europe's population.⁴³ Christian governments also frequently used biblical teachings—such as submission and obedience to political authority—to maintain oppression. Finally, the Bible's emphasis on orthodoxy fostered a destructive "spirit of proselytism" which, when accompanied by intolerance and zeal, led to mindless disputes, bloody persecutions, and interminable religious warfare.⁴⁴ Despite his aversion to Christianity, Montesquieu thought that free societies require some form of religion to

maintain their freedom. Generally, the citizens are illogical in approach, as he shared, therefore, if such case there are chances of prevalence of anarchy and disorder.⁴⁵ Montesquieu would have liked to replace Christianity with a civil religion wholly compatible with mild republican government. This religion features a rational, freedom-oriented God, divine punishment for injustice, the sanctity of law, sexual equality, and a new understanding of happiness in which the passions are freed from the negative constraints of the Bible.⁴⁶

Montesquieu realized, however, that instituting such a religion among Christian nations would be immensely difficult and politically dangerous.⁴⁷ So, owing to this reason, his scripts contain doable endorsements for bringing reforms in Christianity religion. This latter policy, he hoped, would eventually force the Christian churches to soften the jealousy which historically divided them.⁴⁸ Although Rousseau's attack against traditional Christianity is more famous and more overt than Montesquieu's, it covers much the same ground. He too criticized the trans-political and otherworldly faith for being incompatible with free, democratic societies. The terms "Christian republic" are "mutually exclusive,"⁴⁹ he sarcastically remarked. As he describes it, traditional Christianity fails to promote good citizenship and breeds a general indifference to the public good.⁵⁰ "If the state is working properly," he noted, then "[a Christian] barely hardly enjoys civic happiness for fear of taking pride of his nation. So, if the nation decays, a citizen can enjoy the blessings of the hand of 'God' who shower blessings on his people."⁵¹ Rousseau also accused Christianity of destroying social unity.⁵² Despite its otherworldly orientation, this religion aimed at and succeeded in establishing a "spiritual kingdom"⁵³ on earth apart from and superior to civil government. God, the nominal ruler of this "kingdom," required strict obedience, even in cases where the law commanded otherwise. Thus the clerical interpreters of God's will became the true lawgivers in civil society, determining a citizen's secular obligations and the quality of his citizenship.⁵⁴ The clergy also determined the requirements of faith, and by stressing the need for orthodoxy, fostered the theological intolerance which Rousseau, like Montesquieu, abhorred. Rousseau notes that "It is terrible to spend a peaceful life along with the persons who are damned, and to further love them would be considered to hating god, who ultimately

penalizes them.”⁵⁵ Finally, and perhaps most important, Rousseau condemned Christians for their tendency both to abuse political power and to suffer political abuse. Christians have a secret desire for dominion, he believed, and will act despotically when given the opportunity.⁵⁶ From a biblical perspective, the very idea of civil religion is blasphemous because its God serves human beings rather than vice versa. Montesquieu rejected traditional Christian politics precisely because its theocentric orientation gave short shrift to freedom. Montesquieu recognized, however, that free societies need religion and fashioned civil religions to meet this need. These religions retained certain elements of Christian morality conducive to freedom while dropping others opposed to it, and featured toleration rather than orthodoxy as a central requirement of faith.

Auguste Comte and Civil Religion:

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), French positivist philosopher, who was a founder of sociology. Comte was born in Montpellier on January 1798. Very early he rejected his family's Roman Catholicism and royalist political views. For several years he was secretary to the noted socialist Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon, whose influence is reflected in much of Comte's work. His last years were marked by periods of mental illness. He died in Paris on September 1857. Comte argued that an empirical study of historical processes, particularly of the progress of the various interrelated sciences, reveals a law of three stages that govern human development. He analyzed these stages in his major work, the six-volume *The Cours de Philosophie* (Sequence of Positive Viewpoint) (1830-42). Since the nature of the individual approach, each division of knowledge passes through the main “03 various ideological states including a) the theological or made-up state; 2) the abstract or hypothetical state; and, 3) the scientific or positive state.” In first in the category, the incidents and events are childishly clarified by tempting to the will of the gods. At the metaphysical category, the phenomenon is enlightened by alluring to the abstract ethical categories. And in the final evolutionary stage of the state, each event is explained with the rule of cause-effect relationship. Attention is given to the reason that how phenomena are inter-related, with the main objective of arriving at the state of simplifications subject to visible authentication. The scholarly work of Comte is measured with the traditional appearance of the positivist

disrespect—that the observed sciences are sole adequate source of knowledge. Though Comte refuted the credence as an excellent being, he, however, recognized the significance of the religion in its vivid contribution to the social stability. His book “*la religion de l’Humanite*” was a project for “positivizing” religion. So he proposed his *Religion of Humanity* (Civil Religion) aimed at encouraging socially beneficial behavior. Andrew Wernick says about the religion of humanity:

“Grounded in an ‘obvious faith’, but otherwise homologous with the Catholic form of Christianity it was ‘destined’ to replace, the religion of Humanity was to be a triple foundation. Its full formation required a doctrine (dogma), a moral rule (regime) and a mechanism of adoration (culte), all organized and coordinated through a Positive Church..... Taken as whole, the Positivist System would provide the scientific-humanist comparable to what methodical divinity had been in the high middle Ages: it would serve as the knowledgeably uniting base of the new industrial order.”⁵⁷

These unusual adorations for the Great Being while providing the best possible examples of humanity, those “saints” from all over the world, who are considered contributing a lot to morality, the arts, and the sciences. As, Comte himself was a great pastor, so, he believed his positivist religion expanded mostly in the countries with Roman Catholic approaches. If we observe, the Brazilian flag, in today’s era, still carries the Comtean motto, “Order and Progress.”

Religion of Humanity and Reconstruction of Society:

As per the theory of social reconstruction, Comte like his philosophy of social organization and history, which had foundations in the threefold division of a personality of a human being including his/ her emotions, sentiments, and intellect. In earlier stage, one must examine the psychology of a social force, which include: ☆Material force, which has roots in actionable deeds and depicted in quantity and affluence. ☆Intellectual force, which has roots in rumor that is demonstrated in beginning and the appearance. ☆Moral force, which has roots in love and uttered in knowledge encouraged by the characters of compliance originating from heart. In such phase, fundamentally defined social classes are based on this universal principle: “In most of the smallest towns, which

are talented of having distinct being, we discover the classes: ☆The Priests, who direct our rumors ☆The Women, who stimulate our uppermost luv, ☆ The Leaders, who stimulate our political activity, especially during war or during industrial growth.”⁵⁸ The agency requires to harmonize these main classes with social origins to develop connection between all these three classes pertaining to social relationship of the people and sex, feelings, emotions and their domestic ties; ranging from their worship to general education and practical political leaders who guide them towards industrial growth or during the war”⁵⁹ Each of these social class believes woman should work in a proper order and perform their social function:

“Our final state shall display an organization of society, which is more dissimilar from all sides of social pattern. Starting from the supreme priest to the lowest follower, the social pattern shall divide ranks among all the individuals without any discriminations.”⁶⁰

Comte believed the social function of the state lied in the supreme military power occupied by the priests in past and who had also absolute control on material things, goods and services under the umbrella of moral surveillance.⁶¹ Accordingly, priesthood was considered as the most eminent class. It is generally believed, the concept of priest in Comte’s eyes fall under the paradigm of sociology not theology. As per Comte, priests were the motivating elements of the society, who were chosen based on their talent having deep understanding about social principles of love, order, respect, prosperity, end etc. Such priests were specially trained with social organization and other social patterns. High Priest of Humanity accompanied by 7 chief priests used to preside over all the 20000 priests in Western Europe having headquarters in Paris. The numbers of associate priests however increased from 7 to 49 when the thought was converted to positivism. A fixed salary was paid to these priests on account of serving and rendering their lives for good faith and general spiritual wellbeing of the devotees of the Church. Barnes says: “It cannot be said with certainty that Comte measured the central function of priesthood, as he explains at different places while saying about “highest obligations” of the class. It appears, yet, he respected their obligations, including their role for education, trial of wrongdoers, etc. Priests were supposed to interpret the relationship between man and the nature, educate men about their societal

obligations, moral and ethical duties, and punish the wrongdoers on account of violating the set principles of justice.”⁶² The priest of Positivist approach never aspired to own a jot of chronological control. It was the combination of mystical influence that was the huge flaw of ancient times, but the faith of Christianity divided the both. The controls of priesthood exercised their powers in teaching and preaching while providing a definite direction to public opinion. They also enjoyed absolute powers in managing and dealing all affairs of social life. They used to recommend punishment and necessary action to maintain social order. It seems Comte, like Jefferson, believed that the individuals of a society would respect the supreme powers of the priest due to their intellectual abilities to maintain social order in the society.⁶³ Similarly, the industrial power was also divided between various classes of the society including the ruling class and the proletariat class. The ruling class was with the obligation of ruling the society, giving orders of production and manufacturing whereas the workers were with the duty to produce maximum quantity. Accordingly, the employers had the powers to fix income of the working class in accordance with their needs and sometime in accordance with their desires.⁶⁴

In short, Comte recognized the innate value of sacred belief supplied to humanity and sought to “emancipate” the religion of humanity from old-fashioned religion. Comte left the ethereal holiness and instead grounded religiousness and the religion to this world, while dissociating it of any “alien” quality. For the concept of the positive religion to assist human development, it was necessary for Comte, to adopt religion and close off the sphere of human imagination to the metaphysics. More surely, the positive religion progressed to a “natural piety”—an idea that humbly permitted the human beings to endeavor to straight natural and social forces to human ends. Preserving his commitment to modern natural science, Comte believed, the ideal was an illustration of what scientifically could exist in nature. His positive religion was an effort to fill the gap once occupied by the traditional religion and the God. With Comte’s conversion of religion into positive religion, it was conceivable to shape up a self-rule civil religion, which guides all social institutes towards ultimate end—natural science and the self-rule.

John Dewey and Civil Religion

Bertrand Russell says that John Dewey, who born in 1859, is generally admitted to be the leading philosopher of America. He had a powerful effect, not only among social thinkers, but on academic students and the

people working with political theory. Dewey is the man of principle, character, liberal in appearance, kind in relations, and untiring in work. Along with opinions of several others, I am in almost total agreement.⁶⁵

Attack on Traditional Religions:

Dewey gives reasons against theism, which may be summarized under the following headings: ☆ He finds supernaturalism opposed to the scientific method. Dewey does recognize that some types of supernaturalism claim to be empirical and scientific in their approach. From the context, I judge that the only such claim with which Dewey is familiar comes from subjectivists who appeal merely to an inward religious experience.⁶⁶ ☆ The second reason why Dewey opposes supernaturalism is he believes supernaturalism to be a hindrance to the exertion of human energy and ingenuity for the solution of human problems. He says: “The opposition to supernaturalism is just because it stances for an actual comprehension of the arc and penetration of the insinuations of natural human kindred.”⁶⁷ ☆ Dewey’s third objection to supernaturalism is that supernaturalism fails, and has failed, to meet the problem of evil. He says: “We are complicated by this search [human improvement] in all the issues of the reality of the wicked that have spooky divinity in the past and that the most resourceful apologies have not confronted, so, much less met.”⁶⁸ And again: “The assumption [the need of supernatural salvation] does not follow, however, from the data [the disorders in the world].”⁶⁹ ☆ Dewey further objects to supernaturalism on the ground that it studies man as an end in himself introducing a dualism between human nature and nature as a whole. Curiously enough Dewey links atheism with supernaturalism in this argument, and is quite ready to carry along the word ‘God’ as a part of his baggage in order to avoid commitment to atheism as an organized movement. One wonders whether his retaining the word ‘God’ may have been induced partly the fact that he was delivering a course of lectures at the time on a foundation endowed hardly for the purpose of spreading atheism.⁷⁰

Religion and Religious Experience:

Dewey’s book “A Common Faith” is a small volume of lectures delivered at Yale University in 1934.⁷¹ In “A Common Faith,” at the very beginning Dewey takes strong anti-super naturalistic ground. He says: “The opposed group [that is the group to which Dewey belongs] consist of the people

who contemplate the advantage of the culture and even the science has absolutely disgraced the absolute powerful Being and all other related divine thoughts relating to.”⁷² If one asks how lectures on a religious foundation, claiming to be religious in their nature can be based on anti-super naturalistic assumptions, one must go back to Dewey’s definition of religion. Taking the etymology of the Latin word *religare*, to bind, or bind back, Dewey explains that religion came from the thought of the devotee being bound by vows or assumed obligations to the shrine of his god or gods. Dewey proceeds to appropriate the word religious by stating: “The sacred attitude indicates something, which is destined through the fancy to a wide-ranging attitude.”⁷³ Dewey is eager to press forward the elimination of all that is signified by the noun religion, whether used in the singular or the plural, and to substitute what he designates by the adjective religious. He says: “Were the realistic and manners of religion, the sacred element in life may arise from the streams of the calamity in the religion. Religion would then be found to have its usual stage in each facet of the human involvement, which is anxious with approximations of promises, with expressive stirring by chances as yet unrealized, and with all the deeds in behalf of their understanding”⁷⁴ Dewey further adds: “But if it is once acknowledged that human’s relations are stimulated with the norms, which are sacred in purpose, why not the rest their case on what is verifiable.”⁷⁵ And further: “I signaled out that religion—or religions—is always charged with viewpoints, practices and the manners of the organization that have ensued to and been laden upon the sacred [religious] element in experience by the circumstances of culture in which religions have progressed.”⁷⁶

CR, Modern Science and the Idea of Progress:

Religion advocates for moral limit, but for Dewey old fashioned religion delays the humanities from further development. Dewey’s silent hopefulness led him to believe in what was a high time to let loose and undo self-rule from its old-fashioned Christian ethics. Dewey’s turn from the “old canons of human nature”—natural privileges and the natural law—was not a thoughtless act; rather, identifying self-rule’s delicate nature, in its name Dewey required to frame an alternative faith. In this way, Dewey develops a civil religion where individuals draw upon a common sense of social hope—a sophisticated faith, which permits self-rule and the

democratic individuals to progress forward. Dewey's self-rule civil religion was meant to hoard humanity with the mandatory expectation to attain development, not to modest the self-love of democratic man. Dewey took up matters regarding the religion and the issue of supernaturalism through his scholarly work, but he did not give an absolute account of his thought of religion until 1934 in "A Common Faith." The main theme of his argument in "A Common Faith" was to safeguard the protection of the sacred experience. In the age of modernism, the natural science, old fashioned religion like Christianity becomes an irrational thought for many western academicians particularly the American intellectuals. Dewey believed in a redefinition of religion, which may save the imperative value established from the sacred experience. Old fashion religion became dubious in modern age. According to Dewey:

"The progress of the culture and the science has completely disgraced the supernatural being and all its related beliefs."⁷⁷

With the flagging of sacred authority, Dewey sought "to wipe the account clean" and reshape the meaning of faith and even the religious.⁷⁸ It was mandatory for Dewey to update faith and religious experience so "to set up the world we have in which a religion in self-rule was rational."⁷⁹ This attempt would safeguard the extension of an American civil religion. Dewey says about the traditional religion. "We all know that cultured man has a context of bestiality and fallacy that these rudiments are still with us. Indeed, we have not some faiths, including the most influential forms - Christianity, taught that the heart of man is totally corrupt? What else could be than what we find could be predictable, in the case of people having little knowledge and not protected method of the knowledge; with old institutes, and with so little rheostat of natural forces that they lived in constant state of fear?"⁸⁰ Dissimilar to his several colleagues of his age, Dewey was reluctant to dismiss the power of the experience obtained from faith. Instead, Dewey sought to sanitize sacred experience of its mystical elements so that it can endure to exist within the modern context.⁸¹ Dewey moves from traditional zealous Congregationalism, which stressed man's relationship with the superior God, to a generous Christianity that de-emphasized man's wicked nature, and trading left again to hold the elements of radical social gospel struggle, which identified self-rule as the proper avenue to achieve human contentment before departing fully from

supernaturalism. Both Hegel and Darwin gave Dewey the academic tools to build his philosophy of progress. For Dewey, the concept of a divided sinful man not only liberated humanity from understanding its full possibilities on earth, this thought was a huge barrier to progress.⁸² Dewey was reluctant to hold the old-fashioned Christian viewpoint that man was a sinful divided being—of body and the spirit— and was powerless to understand his ideal self within the restrictions of the material world. Dewey thought to end humanity’s motionless existence on earth, and eliminate the hope that man’s completest potential, his ideal, could only be obtained in the hereafter. As per Dewey, the chances of “other worldly blessing” were a just an illusion, which distracted human’s vigor from progressing in this world. So, Dewey refuted the faiths and logical vision of his youth as a just hallucination. The Hegelian idea of progress would remain an enduring element in his philosophy; but Dewey’s religion was earthly bound.⁸³ He defined faith and religious experiences according to a heading set by modern era sciences. He believed in conversions and reformations of faith must take place to restore its usefulness to American self-rule so that development was possible. Therefore, if religious views were to move further, and not constrain, the progression of humanity, an additional theological conversion was mandatory so that:

“A natural as well as rational faith should take the place of hypothetical revelation.”⁸⁴

Dewey’s view was that if faith has to endure in modernism, it must surrender to the authority of the modern natural science and self-rule. Modern science’s “discovery” called into enquiry the old-fashioned faith and more prominently supernaturalism. Dewey and his colleagues and friends of his age refuted the old-fashioned beginning of faith, which depended on “a supernatural being and an immortality, which is beyond the authority of the nature” as unbelievable.⁸⁵ However, the concept of “unseen powers” become “intellectually unbelievable” with the progress of dependable scientific modes.⁸⁶ For Dewey, the supernatural became a defective concept.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Dewey struggled that if faith was to live in modernism, it too must submit to the authority of modern natural science and antimonarchism. Dewey’s rebuilding of religious experience, ideology and the politics was an effort to obtain accord within the world so humanity could emphasis on striving toward the same end—development. A world

without sin or fault was a world without fences to human development. By eliminating such hesitant chunks, Dewey sought to free humanity from its cruel situation. In "A Common Faith," Dewey tried to supply spiritual liberals with a non-supernatural explanation for "natural piety." The means to obtain this end was by the application of modern scientific method to faith itself. For Dewey, the old-fashioned faith had absolute control on man's heart had passed. Notwithstanding his anti-supernaturalism, Dewey did not repudiate the chances of God. Unlike Friedrich Nietzsche, a statement of God's death was absent from Dewey's work. Instead, a challenging alternative was proposed—the concept of "God" endured and was explained as the amalgamation of the factual and the ideal.⁸⁸ God became a natural model which could be practiced in the world. Yet, his religion did not only refute supernaturalism, it also denied atheism.

Common Faith and Democracy:

The self-directed that progresses in wake of modernity makes individuals separated from their political life; a life which weakens self-rule itself for it endorses social injustice.⁸⁹ Dewey wanted to avoid this "sickness" by upholding the handiness of a sacred experience through his civil religion—self-rule. Dewey believed that a citizen, annulled of a spiritual experience of any sort, was left discounted and alone, without a link to his fellow citizens. It was his optimistic approach to "defend citizen from a sense of separation and from resulting misery or disobedience."⁹⁰ Without hope, development would remain elusive, even with the tools of modern science. The ultimate objective of Dewey's central way was to safeguard man against the isolation created by non-belief and the internal division nurtured by supernatural faith. Hope and faith in humanity are quite mandatory variables in Dewey's reckoning for development. His path assured the community of humanity would be occupied with the confidence essential to maintain growth. A central way is supplied from Dewey, where spiritual experience could exist without its old-fashioned supernatural accessories, but also without repudiating the concept of God. This is the point where Dewey's civil religion has the way. In this way, Dewey not only refuted supernaturalism, but he discusses countermeasure against "oppressive atheism."⁹¹ Rules are an interference to develop. Dewey understood his conversions is an effort to find a central ground between

the atheism and supernaturalism to ward off the dogmatism and totalitarianism - the both. Dewey wrote:

“To shun the search for absolute and unchallengeable reality and morals may seem like an expense. But this repudiation is the condition of entering upon a vocation of greater vitality.”⁹²

Dewey asserted: “The link of religion with supernatural being tends by its own nature to strain the dogmatic and divisive spirit.”⁹³ Then it becomes mandatory to liberate humanity from all forms of intransigence both spiritual and non-belief. Decoupling faith from spiritual experience enabled Dewey to content that all men can envisage the ideal within the real world. By redefining the strictures of faith within a rubric set by modernism, “a natural and lucid faith should take the place of hypothetical expose.”⁹⁴ The concept of God becomes a part of the real world to make it reliable with modernism. Therefore, man is neither quiet by old fashioned faith nor lead to misery by God’s death but in its place was given optimism in human development. What endured was a “natural and moral” civil religion which was explained by a combination between “the ideal and the real,” which was “functioning in thought and action.”⁹⁵ In “A Common Faith,” Dewey believed to expand the description of the spiritual feeling which could create the quality of experience to connect an individual to the process of living.⁹⁶ The idea of God “means the ideal end that at a specific time and stage in life which one can acknowledge as having control over his decision and feeling, the morals to which one was extremely enthusiastic, as far as these ends, through fancy world, take on unity.” So, God no longer was a supernatural being, discrete and ethereal. The ideal was an appearance of what the “actual” material world can be and was resulting from our own experience in the real world. It was the result of human’s experience within “usual conditions.” The link between the real and the ideal world was not reliant on prior condition, such as a “Supernatural Being.” Spiritual experience was only “ethics touched by feelings,” not compliance to a “God.”⁹⁷ Dewey is quite simple and clear in his understanding about spiritual experience so he says, as: “This is believed to be the working relations lying between the line of an ‘ideal’ and an ‘actual’ to whom I label as ‘God.’”⁹⁸

Faith in modern age:

Dewey’s “common faith” was one which placed sureness in man’s aptitude

to obtain his ideal self. Man was to be as a part of the natural world. Dewey experienced that a common faith was mandatory to sustain a system in society which would strive toward ideal community; the application of the empirical method was not sufficient to obtain such development. In this way, man's real inclination for spiritual belief could attend as a source to care the social ideal best matched to bring forth a community, which nurtured development—self-rule. Dewey keenly sought to replace old fashion faith with a faith in self-rule—Civil Religion. The charm of Dewey's religion was a self-rule oriented civil religion. Dewey common faith was built on a "credence in the size of every individual to lead his own life permitted from coercion and nuisance by others provided the right circumstances."⁹⁹ His sureness in shared action led Dewey to trust in "the idea of self-rule, the concepts of liberty, parity, and community, characterize a society in which the difference between the spiritual and the earthly life had ceased."¹⁰⁰ Self-rule was an ethical and spiritual community, and very much was Dewey's church. In short, with alteration of faith and spiritual experience, Dewey desires to build a self-rule civil religion, which could lead all social organizations toward the same end development.

Emile Durkheim and CR

The concept about civil religion has been emerged from Durkheim study of contravention, which discusses the fundamentals of a spiritual life.¹⁰¹ Durkheim revisited religion from both from theological as well as social reality of present-day era.¹⁰² According to him, religion a pure private, as well 'visibly social' phenomenon."¹⁰³ He found out "spiritual symbols were shared signs which express cooperative realities...that are deep rooted in social fabric."¹⁰⁴ Such symbols have 2 key elements: the revered and irreligious.¹⁰⁵ These revered realms are between 'good' and 'superior', but always different from irreligious perspective.¹⁰⁶ Faith, therefore, is "a united system of beliefs, feelings and practices comparative to faithful things, which is to say the ideas are organized and prohibited—principles and performances which unite into a single moral community called a Church, and all the individuals who submit to them."¹⁰⁷ As per definition, faith is a system for building connotation in the world.¹⁰⁸ Citizens are powerless to accept meaninglessness and are motivated to develop a wisdom and understanding of the social patterns in the world. Moreover,

the cultural patterns also synthesize the social norms, character, and the aesthetic sense of the members of the society¹⁰⁹. Faith, so, is not necessarily employed belief structure in society.¹¹⁰ Spiritual views in a sociological manner, then, are not solely accepted by the church, but, are further widely endorsed by social groups and collectively by society in totality, as society is the place where individual can reside, hold faith, rituals and other social patterns.”¹¹¹

The viewpoint about founding views regarding an ideal as well as genuine world went on inspire Durkheim to ask: “In fact, what mandatory variance lies in an assembly occupied by the Christians who rejoice the life of holy Christ, or the Jewish community recalling their mass exodus from the land of Egypt and a reunion of citizens celebrating the proclamation of a new moral or legal system?”¹¹² His reply was driven from a socio-cultural perspective; as all were certainly extremely spiritual. Therefore, the civil religion is nothing but a collection of common symbols for initial self-understandings about a community: “To me, civil religion is a specific case of a spiritual figurative system, envisioned to achieve a varied task that is the chief element but not emerged from state or the church, but it is a collection of symbolic patterns, norms, rituals, and acts which develop relationship between man and the society.”¹¹³

Conclusion:

In short, we can divide western philosophers into two categories: Some philosophers want to secularize traditional religions to support nationalism or democratic ideas like Tocqueville and Bellah. Some want to reject traditional religion and develop a concocted religion for the above purposes. Auguste Comte, Durkheim, and Dewey developed Religion of Humanity and Common Faith.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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some way these things in the midst of which we live, upon which we must pass judgment constantly, and which we must take into account in all our conduct. However, since these preconceived ideas are formed without any method, according to the circumstances and chances of life, they have no right to any credit whatsoever, and must be rigorously set aside.... It is not from our prejudices, passions or habits that we should demand the elements of the definition which we must have; it is from the reality itself which we are going to define," see *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 38.

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