

nor a good Protestant will despair of his life, only the bad Catholic, only the bad Protestant; but the bad Protestant despairs sooner than the bad Catholic because he finds himself much more readily in the midst of instability.¹⁶⁰

9. Since the sixteenth century, not only has Catholicism fought with Protestantism, but generally the believer has clashed with the unbeliever, *and it is this struggle which impresses its character on the modern development of the human spirit*. Because "the real, single and deepest theme of world and human history, to which all remaining themes are subordinate, remains the conflict of unbelief and belief."¹⁶¹

The Reformation generally furthered religious life: not only the Protestants, but also the Catholics achieved victories—because both parties sought not only to fight but also to excel. Nevertheless, the numbers of the unfaithful multiplied in all countries, and suicide became more and more frequent. The first period after the Reformation directed general attention to the religious struggle, and, especially during the religious wars, the suicide tendency could not develop. Many cases probably appeared, especially among the humanists, who also emulated their pagan models in this respect.¹⁶² Only since the middle of the eighteenth century has the suicide tendency developed into a social illness, reaching its greatest intensity in our day.¹⁶³

Since the Renaissance, lack of faith, skepticism, and religious indifference has increased in all Christian countries; the positive folk religion—Christianity—daily lost the beneficial influence which it had formerly exercised. Thousands and thousands might

¹⁶⁰ For a further exposition see chap. 5, pt. 2, no. 8.

¹⁶¹ Goethe.

¹⁶² Lecky, *Sittengesch. Europas*, II, p. 43.

¹⁶³ Naturally, it is not accidental that the question of the admissibility of suicide has been treated so frequently since the Renaissance. Not only did the philosophers draw non-Christian ideas from the opinion of the ancients and find themselves thus forced into discussion, but the frequent appearance of suicide also pushed the question into the foreground. Lecky gives a short historical presentation of the more recent views on suicide and an account of the sources, *loc. cit.*

ask with Strauss: Are we still Christians? and answer: No! Do we still have religion? Yes—and no!

This "we" refers to the educated, and those who, correctly or incorrectly, count themselves among them; the (rural) people are still positively faithful, although the educated, to whom their leadership, more than is good, is entrusted, serve them as a model. We wish to believe, and thus, with Strauss, differentiate positive religion from religion in general, but everything in the positive view that we cannot fit into our own views displeases us. Guizot characterizes this religious striving of our day as a negation of the supernatural in the destiny of man and of the universe, an abrogation of the supernatural element in the Christian, as in every religion in general.¹⁶⁴ And we add to this: the educated proclaim this with a zeal which does not fall short of the religious fanaticism of the Middle Ages.¹⁶⁵

The various ecclesiastical sects, irritated and challenged by the negation of religion which comes in part from the side of science, are now experiencing a great activity. Their effort seldom leads to a reconciliation but to a suppression of thought, just as science labors toward no true reconciliation. The most decisive but also the most unreasonable protest against human knowledge came from Rome, where the Pope in all seriousness declared himself infallible—it was thus that Augustus at one time introduced the cult of the Emperor, because the religious consciousness of the Romans had declined. In fact, science now dominates the mind of the masses, as can be seen in the influence of the press. The popularization of science, carried out in great style, and the corresponding zest for reading by the public show that the need exists which religion and the church are no longer able to fulfill. But science only satisfies

¹⁶⁴ *L'église et la société chrétienne en 1861*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁵ Such an "atheistic" fanaticism is found in du Bois-Reymond, for example: "Well-acquainted with the boundaries which thus fixed human understanding, he demands nothing more in addition. At this dizzy height of Pyrronism, he disdains the emptiness which yawns about him, filling it with images of his fantasy, and peers fearlessly into the pitiless, ceaseless driving of nature deprived of divinity. . . ." *Darwin versus Galvani*, p. 29.

the mind; it is an insufficient guide for life and death. It is therefore only partially satisfactory, and offers no moral support; it is not able to lead the masses.

We surrender our intellects to learning, our feelings to a religion and a church in which we no longer believe and which we no longer trust—that is the single, but atrocious failure of our civilization. *In all our schools, large and small, only the intellect is cultivated.* The school does not concern itself with ethical guidance, but surrenders this function to positive religion. Thus, modern society is led by two spiritual forces, learning and religion, but because these forces are engaged in a struggle with one another, the guidance is both insufficient and destructive. For lack of a unified world-view, no perfect character can be created, only an intellectual and moral chaos. Every war hurts the victor as well as the vanquished, and the *Kulturkampf* is no exception to this rule.¹⁶⁶

In such a time spiritual anarchy can produce no widespread, fundamental culture, only a half-education, a half-culture, and our civilization is characterized by an incompleteness, with all its terrible implications for head and heart, which is unable to attain unity and harmony. Fools and clever people, Goethe says, are harmless; only the half-fools and the half-wise are dangerous.¹⁶⁷

But intellectual and moral incompleteness increases with the increase in the extent and advancement of learning, for it is inconceivable that one could obtain fundamental knowledge with ease: knowledge is won and digested only with difficulty. "The dangers of half-education, the superficial sipping of each and all to the complete neglect of a basic and serious study of general knowledge, are greater today to an even greater extent than previously, as the greater and more extensive grow the demands made on every truly educated person, and as the more often such attempts to sip everything become fruitless. . . ." The moral influence of this intellec-

¹⁶⁶ Instructive in this respect is the book by J. V. v. Schweizer, *Zeitgeist und Christentum*, 1861.

¹⁶⁷ The *National* newspaper excellently characterized how pernicious is the present time with the words: "The cultivation of the upper ten thousand has once again sunk to the depths. That is all." June 9, 1878.

tual decline and dullness appears most often where individuals rise, in the worst cases, to a complete disdain for all knowledge and every high purpose in life, the result of which is almost always the wildest, most unbridled life and complete depravity.¹⁶⁸

Along with a deadening indifference, vexing skepticism and disgusting cynicism are spread; men are dissatisfied and unhappy, and, more and more loudly and menacingly raising their voices, they do not shrink back from a revolutionary reorganization of society.

¹⁶⁸ H. Beckers, *Über das Bedürfniss einer zeitgemässen Regelung der allgemeinen Studien an Deutschlands Hochschulen*, 1862.

It can easily be seen that where formal education is very good, in Germany for example (cf. p. 68), the dangers of half-education are very great. In England and America, men not only learn in school but in travels, on the railroads, in short, through practical life, while in Germany and here in Austria, life offers little in the way of education. Examine, for example, the graduates of our Hochschulen. In the Gymnasium they learn mathematics, Greek and Latin, the literature of their people, and some natural science; at the university they devote themselves to special studies, taking their exams in philosophy, jurisprudence, or some other special branch and then step into life—but they bring nothing for life with them, nothing at all! In "life" they must, above all, have character—but to this end they have been given nothing; they should be prepared to be citizens—but they know nothing of politics, except what the newspapers regurgitate for them; they become husbands and fathers—but they know nothing of bringing up children, the duties of a husband, what family life requires. The dreary picture is too tragic for me to paint it in more detail, and I leave it to those responsible for the education of our youth to reflect upon. However, even well-regulated schools, in which more attention is paid to the discipline of the instructors than of the students, are of no use if they do not satisfy the demands of life, and our schools absolutely do not answer to these demands.

But the disparity between our intellectual and moral education is even more glaring. Men spend twenty years in school learning more and more, but no one is concerned about their feelings and about their will. (Will someone not object that the Gymnasium student attends classes in religion twice a week? Granted that this instruction were as good as it is bad, it is still instruction, but the will needs instruction also. And who says anything ethical to our university students?) That is the incompleteness of which I speak.

Bacon has already said that a half-knowledge leads men away from God.¹⁶⁹ To the degree that incompleteness spreads, it produces atheism, or worse, observable irreligiosity. There are few true atheists, but there are many doubters and men who have rejected the old faith without replacing it with anything new. But irreligiosity among most men, if not among all, leads to dissatisfaction. As things are, man still needs moral support in life and death in addition to knowledge, but only religion can really offer him this. If he loses such support, if it is unscrupulously taken from him, his peace of soul vanishes with it.¹⁷⁰

When the faith which elevates and unites one to God disappears, then something horrible transpires. The soul, drawn by its own weight into the depths, so to speak, sinks and sinks without stopping, and drags down with it its intelligence which is now torn from its base, clinging now to everything which it meets in its way through the depths, now in painful anxiety, now with a desperation like the laughter of the insane. Constantly tortured by an insatiable compulsion and thirst for life, it soon snatches at anything, vainly seeking to animate it, to find in it inspiration, to deify it; soon empty abstractions persecute it, then flee, the formless shadows of its fantasy. . . . All high

¹⁶⁹ A little philosophy inclines man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy brings man's mind to religion. *De augm. scient.*, I, Col. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Speaking of the Stoic's unfulfilled peace of mind, Beneke says: ". . . the destinies and imperfections of other men protest against and sympathize with the unending misery under whose burden millions groan and perish every moment, and with the unending foolishness, pleasure seeking, hate and malice by which the divine image in man is disfigured . . . from this point of view reflection therefore points to religion as the sole means of protecting one's self from gloomy despair or intense exasperation; it forms the necessary complement, or rather the necessary apex and completion of the moral world view." *Grundlinien der Sittenlehre*, II, p. 391. Lichtenberg says: "Probably one of the most difficult arts of man is to provide one's self with courage. Those who lack it first find it under the protective arm of one who possesses it, and who can provide help for us when all is lost. Because there is so much suffering in the world to be faced with courage, no one human being can give enough strength to one who is weak; thus religion is excellent. It is really the art of providing oneself with confidence and courage in suffering with thoughts of God, plus the power to labor against it."

abilities and powers weaken and lie as in a deep sleep; all those mysterious powers of the soul which create a spiritual world order in and around us, a realm of morals which forms the nature of the true inward man, die little by little, and, with a pain which tears at his innermost being, man feels this gradual death of his better self. His soul hungers; he has no nourishment for it; where shall he begin? He kills his soul in order to hunger no more, to experience this inner torture no more . . . torn from his bearings he is like a leaking ship without pilot and rudder tossed here and there on the comfortless ocean of this universe.¹⁷¹

The social mass phenomenon of suicide is to be explained in the same way as a tragic result of the prevalent irreligiosity of the masses.

Today, there are two great classes of men: believers and non-believers, Christians and those who are no longer Christians. The faithful have a moral support, are happy, satisfied, and reconciled to life, but only a very few of the unbelievers are truly happy and satisfied, because only a few can find a support in life comparable to positive religion. "Moral anarchy" satisfies these few; the majority are destroyed by intellectual and moral anarchy.

Our great tensions and the progressively growing number of mentally ill are to be ascribed on the one hand to *this intellectual and moral anarchy*; on the other hand, it is fed by a *pessimistic world-view* which not only finds its eloquent expression in modern poetry and philosophy, but which also makes life really intolerable for thousands and thousands. Surveying the large number of pessimistic poets of recent times—Young, Byron, Shelley, Poe, Grabbe, Hölderlin, Heine, Kleist (who even played with suicide), Lenau, Senancour, Musset, Foscolo, Leopardi, Carducci, Giusti, Lermontov, Pushkin, Gogol—and comparing them with Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, a direct confirmation is thus seen of the tragedy which the data of suicide so tediously repeat: we are weary with life; we have no real joy in life. Our poets sing

¹⁷¹ Lamennais, *Discussions critiques et pensées diverses sur la religion et la philosophie*. Cf. the honest confession of Zöllner in his *Abhandlungen*, III, p. 36 ff.

lamentations of death to the multitudes of suicides; the funeral sermon is delivered in the Frankfurt manner.

10. We must now recapitulate the result of the previous investigation and, with as much precision as possible, trace the social mass phenomenon of suicide to a general principle.

Darwin considered suicide a means of growth; in the struggle for existence the mentally ill and degenerate are destroyed. But this explanation is not adequate for the historical phenomenon, because the problem is to show how and why so many now become mentally ill and commit suicide. The struggle for existence—assuming that it were a social principle—does not explain this because generally it explains nothing. For the same reason, Morselli's generalization also is not an explanation.¹⁷² He agrees with Darwin that suicide is an effect of the struggle for existence and of human selection, which proceeds according to the law of the evolution of civilized peoples.

Wagner generalizes in another way, but also incorrectly.¹⁷³ Irreligiosity is not the final reason for the tragic phenomenon, but this and all remaining reasons are functions of a certain inborn natural-mental constitution. The latter is perhaps to be traced back to the varieties of the material substratum of human mental activity, to varieties of brain formation and brain substance, which, although on the surface so trivial, are essential for mental processes. Wagner is correct that the final demonstrable processes are physical processes of the brain, but how do these transformations arise? Why do they appear among certain individuals and, at certain times, more readily than among others? There are mental processes which operate continually in the life of society and which frequently have a pathological and physiological influence; mental illness in most cases also develops from certain psychical processes which in time bring about changes in the organism, and a medical doctor, but not a sociologist, may examine these as the final causes of the disease. The tendency to suicide appears as an historical phenomenon and must therefore be traced back, as such, to a

mental process, not a physiological process. Wagner himself does this when he is of the opinion, in agreement with Lisle, that suicide does not appear where religious ideas are still inner objects of belief for the mass of followers, and where the modern tendency to indifference and the complete emancipation of thought has still made little progress.¹⁷⁴ In this respect, the proper cause of suicide is therefore not transformation of the brain substance, but the historical process cited.

The contemporary social mass phenomenon of suicide results from the collapse of a unified world-view that has consistently given Christianity its value among the masses in all civilized countries. The struggle of free thought with positive religion leads to the irreligiosity of the masses, signifying intellectual and moral anarchy and—death. The great achievements in learning of recent times forcibly obtrude themselves on men; most individuals become acquainted with higher culture without proper preparation, and it is a known sociological law that a sudden and unprepared acquaintance with a higher culture results in the decline of the less civilized.¹⁷⁵ As the lower races die out when they come in contact with the higher, that is, more civilized, races in civilized society, those strata of the population which higher culture suddenly invades die out. But it is especially in the large cities where this process operates, because the city with its more intellectual culture dominates the rural population as, for example, the white race in America dominates the Indians. *Suicides are the bloody sacrifices of the civilizing process, the sacrifices of the "Kulturkampf."*

Every people experiences such a struggle in his history, and so

¹⁷⁴ This confusion explains why we count Wagner, nevertheless, among those investigators who see the proper (social) basis of the malady in irreligiosity.

¹⁷⁵ Gerland, *Über das Aussterben der Naturvölker*, 1868, p. 84 ff. Anyone who has eyes to see can observe this process among us in Vienna, which absorbs so many uneducated elements, especially from the south of Europe, and "civilizes" them. Thus, in 1869–78, the members of the Greek-Oriental Church here in Vienna showed the relatively highest suicide frequency, in contrast to the general rule.

¹⁷² P. 478.

¹⁷³ Pp. 188, 189.

suicide appears periodically. Among all peoples the moment comes when religion has lost its power over the people, and then suicide always appears as a social mass phenomenon. All modern peoples are now at this stage of their development, and the same phenomenon has appeared among them.

It appears that the development of mankind passes through successive stages of belief and unbelief; its previous development at least evidences this law. Of course, the strength of the Christian folk religion has been disappearing for several centuries, and this disappearance provides the general dissatisfaction and weariness with life. Whether Christianity will disappear entirely and a new folk religion take its place, or whether a new form will appear again and perhaps satisfy the people, cannot be answered by our inquiry.

*Section 2. Verification of the General
Proposition Obtained. The Religious
Condition of Contemporary
Civilized Nations.*

1. Our investigation has shown that the morbid suicide tendency of the present is conditioned by the generally widespread irreligiosity. Although the previous materials make this sufficiently clear, I wish to verify or at least indicate in detail the general results of statistical investigations and of psychological and historical analysis.

Obviously only the primary individual and social causes of suicide deserve consideration, and the religious condition of civilized peoples especially must be investigated. If the result of this investigation agrees with the data of the suicide statistics presented in Chapter 2, the correctness of our generalization will then be assured beyond doubt.

2. *The urban population* is to a recognized degree not as religious as the rural population and also shows more suicides than the latter. That which we call civilization in general is especially found in the city. Thought and will are more intensive here and

generate that tension in the denser population which is favorable to the development and spread of psychosis and the suicide tendency. But the influx of the rural population and its sudden entrance into the life of the city especially tips the scale. The *Kulturkampf*, with all its tragic results, is at issue especially in the cities.

Suicides among women are significantly lower than among men. This comes from the fact that men must bear the sorrows of life more than women. Mental labor is the work of men, and they therefore fall more often into that state of discord which conquers joy and teaches the love of death. But the greater religiosity of women always protects them from the morbid suicide tendency.

Suicide is committed more frequently in maturity or when man is most in need of religious support, when the full responsibility of life is upon him. But the fact that contemporary youth have lost their joy in life is the most tragic sign of our instability and a serious accusation against the extant methods of education and child-rearing. In the tender years of life the sensitive heart is infected by the pestilential smell of modern negation and only a few achieve a harmonious education.

Immoral marital conditions and all generally immoral conditions eliminate religious sanction as such and facilitate the disposition to suicide: concubinage, separation, etc.

The great suicide tendency among military personnel is a clear demonstration of our interpretation. The philosophy of life, which at present is manifested by the military services, is wanting throughout in either true moral or religious content, and suicide therefore appears more frequently among soldiers than among civilians. It must be especially emphasized that the men in command, particularly the officers, suffer from the morbid tendency and that intellectual education—only this is promoted—without corresponding moral formation cannot solely suffice for sustaining life. The culture required by the military is generally the prototype which we have described as half-education, and we therefore have a direct confirmation of our view in the high suicide frequency among military personnel.

The statistics, especially on the half-education of the suicide,

tween knowledge and belief and prepared the way for the new order of society. Besides its negative, disintegrating elements and where in specific circumstances it lost its positive elements, Protestantism evoked a great suicide tendency, which we must comprehend as the surest index of a great and powerful time of transition.²⁵² The suicide tendency and state of tension, philosophical pessimism, the sentimental laments of our poets—all of these are the expression of the same fact: the yearning for peace. I must repeat the thought of an English clergyman from his Protestant standpoint in opposition to Rome at the end of my research on the causes of the modern suicide tendency: "We are tired of strife."

²⁵² One is not allowed to assert against our understanding of the Middle Ages that suicide also appeared during this time. The suicide tendency was not so generally widespread as it is today, and there certainly was no morbid suicide tendency. If anything distinguished the Middle Ages (cf. Lecky, II, p. 40) it was that suicide frequently appeared in the final and most corrupt era of the West Gothic Kingdoms in Spain, which was a stage of decline, and was confined to a small group of men—which, when compared to the rest of the Middle Ages, reveals its sinister characteristics.

TOWARD A REMEDY FOR THE MODERN SUICIDE TENDENCY

1. IN THE PRECEDING RESEARCH we have furnished a diagnosis of the social illness of our time; the therapeutic must obviously fit the diagnosis, and will consist of the removal of the causes which condition the evil.

The social therapeutic must proceed as does the medical: first attempt to alleviate the existing malady, but then—and this is more important—seek to prevent its genesis. Once any malady is firmly rooted, no therapy is usually of much avail. Sociologists, ethicists, and medical doctors are gradually coming to the conclusion that the true task of all practical disciplines consists in hygienic prophylaxis. The times have passed in which one expected, or could expect, the curing of all evils by decree; particularly ineffective would be laws regarding a social evil of the nature of the modern suicide tendency.²⁵³

2. Man must above all become healthy, physically and mor-

²⁵³ There are, with justice, no laws against suicide in most modern legal systems. But it cannot be said therefore that, in special cases, an indirect or direct prohibition could not be effective; thus, for example, one general order of Napoleon's, in which suicide by soldiers would be treated as cowardice, was effective; and a young woman in Marseille was dissuaded from suicide by the threat that her body would be displayed in public should she choose such a means of death. (Cf. Beccaria, *Traité des délits et des peines*, no. 32; von Wächter, *Revision der Lehre vom Selbstmord*, Neues Archivs, 1829; cf. Meyer, *Lehrbuch des deutschen Strafrechtes*, 1875, no. 82. Concerning the character of the ancient world, cf. Becker, *Charikles*, edited by Göll, III, p. 164).

ally; we must accustom ourselves to unqualified obedience to the established prophylactic rules of modern science.

Science gives us the means at hand to protect ourselves from the harmful effects of nature. It teaches us how we can shape to our advantage all the conditions we studied in the chapters on bodily organization, general societal conditions and psychoses. Why do we not so shape them? Because we do not want to.

3. Nearly all theoreticians and practitioners seek to alleviate the evils of modern society through economic and political reforms. General attention is certainly fastened on these efforts, and very much is generally expected of them, but I am not able to share these hopes. The political and economic conditions of a people are only the external manifestations of the inner spiritual life; they are conditioned by this spiritual life, upon which the physician must therefore focus his attention. Often the programs and quarrels of our parliament, our politicians, and our national economists appear to me remarkably petty and vain. In any event, political and economic concessions and major or minor reforms will not rescue society. A morsel of justice and money, more or less, will not put an end to the pessimistic weariness with life.

I can cite as my opinion on this, which will appear highly heretical to all practical politicians, a magnificent example from history: Christ. The Roman world in the time of Christ was pretty much in the same desperate frame of mind as contemporary society. Then, as now, a morbid suicide tendency ruled; men were dissatisfied and unhappy; yearning for a redeemer was widespread. Who redeemed mankind? No politician, no national economist, no socialist or demagogue. It is truly magnificent to see how Christ, in such politically and socially agitated times as those, abstained from all politics. How easy it would have been for Him to win converts by political and social incitements! But He insisted upon the ennobling of character; He insisted upon the intensification of religious feeling; He desired that men become good, for He knew that only then would they find peace for their souls.

We, too, shall find the desired peace for our souls when we have become good.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ It is to be understood that the enduring oppressive need and the depressive misery which exists must be removed. I do not flatter myself as

4. Since the modern suicide tendency is ultimately the product of increasing irreligiosity, the malady can only be completely healed if the irreligiosity and its accompanying "half-ness" are arrested. We must step outside ourselves. We must stop grubbing in our innards and cease to use our understanding as the executioner of our hearts. We must find interests in the external world and in society. We must learn to give of ourselves: we lack true and genuine love. Certainly we believe that we are able to love, that we are capable of the most delicate feelings, but that is not true. Morbid sentimentality is not identical with true, genuine, warm, vital, and original feeling. *If one wants to remove the morbid suicide tendency, he should develop in man the capacity for the harmonious and thorough cultivation of ideas and feelings, imbue them with power and energy, and give them a moral basis.*

Some investigators, Renan, Treitschke, and others, believe the people should be brought up to be religious, while the educated should be allowed to remain free. But that is to sanction the existing "half-ness," and is happening anyway. Should one perhaps create a strictly distinct aristocracy of education? Where does this education begin, and where does it leave off?

More consistent are those who, with their denial of positive religion, postulate only a unified scientific world-view. The question, however, is whether religion can and should be dismissed so quickly. I believe man needs religion to live as much as he needs air to breathe. Historical development also indicates that concurrent with the development of thought there is a corresponding development of religious-moral life and feeling. Comte commits a gross error in his positive philosophy when he allows progress in the religious sphere only to a certain point, and from there on simply casts aside all religious life.

capable of assuaging everyone who is hungry with a moral sermon: I speak on the definitive solution of social problems.

For example, charitable treatment of the poor will suppress the suicide tendency; as Casper points out: in a French Protestant colony of 6000 souls only three suicides occurred because of the excellent charitable organization for the needy. —One other example: Magendie once found himself in such great need that he no longer wished to live; then, at the critical moment, an officer of the court arrived with a report that Magendie had inherited 20,000 francs—and his excellent health was restored.

Many find in art, especially certain styles, a substitute for religion, and so believe art will rescue modern society. But this is equally false. A refined, esthetic enjoyment of art is as incapable of making the problems of life endurable as is an aristocracy of science. The creative artist, especially the great artist, is surely expressing the same thing as the founder of a religion, but the seeing or hearing of a work of art does not replace sympathy for or appreciation of its universal religious content. A shallow view of life is revealed by the belief that the riddle of the universe can be concertized away from mind and heart. Art may always enter the service of religion but is unable to replace it.

We need a religion; we need to be religious.

The thought comes to mind of regarding Christianity as the saving religion. But what form of Christianity? This is a difficult question to answer. If humanity could become strictly Catholic, the suicide tendency would certainly disappear. For Catholicism, by virtue of its Church organization, could most easily, quickly and effectively create universal acceptance for a unified world outlook. But the course of history cannot be ignored; the Reformation would again break out, just as it did before. Moreover, it is not only a matter of removing the suicide tendency, but removing it by the proper means. For us, however, Catholicism has become impossible. Should we then become Protestants? So far as we deny Catholicism, we are already Protestants; but the question remains, whether and in what form we can remain Christian.

"I believe from the depths of my soul, after the most mature reflection, that the teaching of Christ, cleansed of priestly adulteration and properly understood in its expression according to our own limitations, is the most perfect system I can think of for affording world peace and joy most quickly, most powerfully, most surely, and to the greatest number of people."²⁵⁵ I also believe that any one of the many Protestant sects could be the desired religion; but, to the extent that they should have to accommodate themselves to progressive times, these Christian sects would really bring about a new religion.

²⁵⁵ Lichtenberg.

It is as if our era were made for a new religion. Just as at the time of the Roman Empire, society has been shaken to its foundations: men feel unhappy; dissatisfaction and the wish for a savior is widespread. But especially favorable for the spread of the new teaching in the Roman Empire were the general nervousness and pathological agitations which are also characteristic of our society. Like all religions, the new teaching would take more a psychological than a logical path to its victorious end. Since religion, although in truly Protestant fashion a matter for the individual, must nevertheless at the same time be a popular religion through which the hearts of all men without exception would be united, this would not, then, permit its theoretical component to ascend the heights of intellectual accomplishment. I think rather that this religion, like the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, could inaugurate a new and better Middle Ages, after which a new period of free thought would begin again, until at last, through alternating periods of belief and disbelief, "one flock and one shepherd" would appear. Or it may happen quite differently. The historical development of man is, in proportion to the time which humanity has yet to live, so short that our conclusions as to the future can be made only with great caution and reserve. It is possible that a new upswing of religious feeling would take place without ecclesiastical unification. Perhaps the Congregational or some similar method and organization could even bring to a definitive conclusion and stabilize that religious individualism to which Protestantism has so far attained.

5. I am afraid that the conclusions at which we have arrived will not be satisfying to many of my readers. Perhaps some will see in me a fatalist: how shall the social therapeutic be possible if the organization of a new religion must be awaited? What can the individual do if, as was indicated, the morbid suicide tendency at certain times naturally and periodically develops?

I admit that I am definitely a determinist, but I reject even more definitely the reproach of fatalism; indeterminism would lead to fatalistic views, but no trace of this outlook is to be found in this book.

That we must die, that death is a physical necessity, a natural

law, is well known; but it is not a natural law that we must die perchance by poisoning. If someone commits suicide, he obeys no natural law, but chooses death as a consequence of secondary laws which, under other circumstances, prevent suicide; the good and the bad, the useful and the pernicious, men do according to the same laws, which obviously are no ultimate law but the interaction of many laws. One who has taken poison can save himself through an antidote; only for natural death does no cure exist.

Much of what happens to us certainly happens of necessity, without our cooperation. Man is linked to his immediate and more distant environment by thousands and thousands of threads, and to a certain extent is independent of it. But man is no blind product of the forces of nature; we do not depend completely and exclusively on the external world. Our consciousness faces the external world, a psychological whole which perceives the external world according to its own laws. It is a psychological totality endowed with memory and recall. Every simple and complex effect of the external world are equally independent; our relation to it is that of reciprocity, not simple dependence. Knowledge gives us the power to intervene in the causal relationship; we can set certain purposes as ideals, and we are able to choose the appropriate means. But because we always follow the strongest motive, we are not blind, because other motives also affect us. We reflect before our decision, choosing and seeking those means which best suit our purpose. The choice itself is the result of our character, but this we form ourselves for the most part. We are just as responsible for a malformed will as we are for inadequate logical operations of thought; like the intellect, the will must be trained and educated. And only because it is determined is it capable of training and education: we form our will through our appetites, tendencies, dislikes, habits, and guiding principles. One can certainly not develop will out of will alone; one cannot simply cast out of himself a malformed will. But we can modify our present will by education, by self-discipline, as it is modified by the education which comes to us from others. We can employ all dispositions, habits, and traits of character which we know from experience must lead to certain results under certain conditions.

The indeterminist cannot do this; rules and guides for action are for him completely unnecessary and superfluous, since he cannot know at all whether he will later be able to adhere to them: his will cannot be determined, so he uses no leading, determining principles. According to indeterminism, man is an idle spectator of that which happens in him; he is the inactive stage on which actions proceed in and with him. The connection between subject and action is broken, the chain that binds act and actor snapped. Thus, if the will is indeterminate, we are also entirely lacking in responsibility for our will and its corresponding actions; all training and education of the will is impossible, and no one can be led to virtue. The indeterminist does not need to avoid immorality, does not need to strengthen his will, since he has no assurance that future action will be thus improved, and since his will appears in him in any case without any causes. Today he acts in one way, tomorrow in another way; he has no control over such action precisely because his will is indeterminate. The indeterminist therefore does not punish, because he knows he has no right to punish; if punishment has the purpose of improving or discouraging behavior, what basis has the indeterminist for punishment? For him there are no purposes at all. How can the fear of punishment, the memory of unpleasant correction, act as motives to prevent the same or a similar act? If the will were indeterminate, then punishment is certainly unnecessary and superfluous, for a moral chaos, a blind fate, prevails. Humanity has nothing to strive for, since, according to the teaching of indeterminism, a foreknowledge of that which men aspire to is impossible. Since the law of causality has been abrogated, a prediction of things to come is impossible. Social reforms are not possible, because they are superfluous; there is no science of sociology, because no rules can be established for the indeterminate appearance of the will of man.

It is evident that an ethics, a sociology, or any science is possible only from a deterministic standpoint, and if the word "freedom" is to be employed at all, it can only be used by the determinist. Only the determinist can, by virtue of his teaching, attain the freedom of ethical perfection. He is capable of reaching a state in which he always prefers the better, when he has recognized it. Only

for the determinist is holiness a goal to be strived for, only for him is there a striving toward the freedom of perfection.²⁵⁶

In contrast to this true interpretation of determinism, various false and unclear views have been entertained, both about the teaching itself and its opposite. Typically, the determinists themselves have brought discredit to their teaching, in that they were not always in a position to refute the charges of fatalism and its attendant consequences brought against them. Indeed, the determinists were often practically fatalists.

The statisticians in particular have not realized that foreknowledge of many social phenomena not only does not lead to fatalism, but is rather the sole means to fight fatalism, for only through advance knowledge can we bring our activities into conformity with what is to come. If we learn that 3,000 men in a certain country have previously committed suicide in one year, we correctly infer that approximately as many will die the following year. This conclusion, however, assumes that the same circumstances will persist. But nothing forces society to remain in the same state. It can, if it so desires, alter its conditions in such a way that suicides are no longer committed. Statistics does not arrive at natural laws by the simple enumeration of suicides, murders, etc., but only at secondary—empirical and derived—laws. These and similar crimes do not have to occur, but they do occur as a result of conditions which at present exist, but which have not and will not always exist. Therefore the number of suicides fluctuates from year to year, and the statistical evidence, in accordance with the

²⁵⁶ The word "freedom" will probably be understood in the same sense as indeterminism, but with great injustice. We connect the idea of freedom with an idea of true strength; but indeterminism robs us of such strength and the outer world, on the whole, will appear contingent on the will. Where freedom exists, a true, complementary, responsibility also exists; but it exists only with determinism. We have power over our inner dispositions which the will determines; we are masters of our future; we may counsel ourselves to reflect upon the freedom of choice we possess. We have freedom; through the good becoming defined as good, the good can be cherished by us and we can attain the exalted state of freedom of moral perfection.

workings of secondary causes, does not show any terrible "constancy."²⁵⁷

Perhaps these very fluctuations might cause alarm to some, who would find in the statistical data a proof of indeterminism, and, in consequence, of fatalism. One could conclude from the uncertainty of prediction that there existed an objective chance and therefore an objective indeterminateness, the necessary consequence of which would have to be fatalism.

One may not consider subjective chance as objective, however, nor mistake subjective probability for the mathematical variety. At the moment there are still many barriers to our knowledge; we still know too little to be able to predict with certainty; *but the meagerness of man's knowledge may not be viewed as a universally valid objective law*. We are not yet able to survey the causal connections of social phenomena; thus it is our ignorance that alarms us, not our knowledge. It is our problem to pierce ever more deeply into the total mechanism of the universe, through unceasing labors, until we finally grasp how the whole affects man. Only through precise knowledge of the universe and its effects on man, and of the laws that govern the psychical phenomena of man, are we in a position to achieve freedom and perfection through active intervention in the course of mankind's development. The complex combination of agents affecting mankind is indeed great and almost incalculable. In spite of this, they are amenable to scientific analy-

²⁵⁷ Quetelet so often indicates, among other things, the constancy of the suicide index; but a look at the suicide reports over long periods suffices to show that no constancy can be found.

Quetelet emphatically says: "It is a budget which one pays with frightening regularity, it is that of prisons, of criminal convictions, and of social tensions. . . ."

In Germany, A. Wagner has made this outlook known in his excellent statistical work concerning the conformity to law of seemingly anarchic human affairs. But the public was alarmed by Buckle, who, on the basis of Quetelet's work and others, has spread unclear ideas of determinism.

Against these false definitions of problems, Drobisch has applied himself quite firmly and with great success in his publication: *Die moralische Statistik und die menschliche Willensfreiheit*, 1867.

sis, which shows that the actions of man do not occur without his cooperation; that while the will of man is determined, it is not for that reason unfree. So far as we are able to analyze the causes and motives of acts of will, we are able approximately to measure the effects of individual factors, and, on the basis of this measurement, we are able to direct our whole lives in such a way that we can happily and successfully accomplish the realization of ethical ideals. Like every disease, the modern suicide tendency can also be cured by insightful effort.

6. Perhaps the reader further expects a detailed guide for a therapeutic of the suicide tendency. It may be objected that our central rule is too general, that in practice one needs more particular statements appropriate to individual cases.

The complaint is justified, but the criticism of generality applies not only to this, but to every sociological work involving a therapy for social conditions. The theoretician cannot possibly consider all particular cases, especially in problems of such large scale, and must therefore leave it to the practitioner to apply the general rule to the special case. We have done what we could: we have tried to set forth the individual causes of suicide with all possible care, and we can therefore ask of a therapeutic that it remove these causes.

This lack of particular rules may actually be most noticeable in what is most important: the establishment of a unified world-view, the removal of "half-ness," and the ending of the terrible *Kulturkampf*. But even with the best intentions I am scarcely able to propose more than two prescriptions, which have long been stated by outstanding thinkers. "You who are more clever than the rest, who wait fretting and impatient on the final page of the primer [the Bible], take care!" Lessing warns in his *The Education of the Human Race*. "Take care that you do not let your less able classmates notice what you are beginning to sense, or even see! Until these less able fellows of yours have caught up with you, it is better that you should return again to this primer and examine whether that which you now consider only applications of methods, didactic devices, are not also something more." If men did not transgress against this rule, there would be no *Kultur-*

kampf, no suicide tendency. On their way from primitive barbarism to education and true enlightenment, mankind must pass through innumerable intermediate stages. If it were possible to guide the great masses systematically, logically, step by step from the simple to the complex, from the easy to the difficult, from error to truth, from naïve conviction to conscious insight, there would be no struggle between conflicting views, no "half-ness," and every new accomplishment would represent the consistent development of previous stages of culture.

But because this principle is so sharply ignored, the question arises of how to proceed in these cases. We cannot and will not go backwards; therefore we must press forward, if we do not wish to stand still. Alexis de Tocqueville says:

When the religious views of the people have once been shaken, there is no greater despair, but one must promote enlightenment at any cost, because, although an enlightened and skeptical people may indulge in a tragic view of life, there is nothing more terrible than a nation at the same time ignorant, coarse, and unfaithful.

I have nothing further to add, and I wish only that my book may move the reader to reflection, for it is the problem of the writer in the social sphere, if anywhere, not to offer the reader final answers, but rather to move him to thought and—to action.

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