The Roll of Human Nature in Philosophy of Education

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The role of human nature in educational philosophy is apparent. The educator can not pursue his task at any great length until he is brought face to face with the problem of human nature. From the sources used for this paper the writer became increasingly aware of the educator's concern over the problem of human nature. It is evident that we need to know more about the human material of the classroom represented by the children and youth of our country. Where shall we go to secure this information? Some would respond by telling us to turn to the theological divines of both the past and present. Following their advice we quickly discover no united voice among these spokesmen for Christ and the Church. Different positions have not only divided them into separate schools of thought, but various and diverse opinions exist within each school. In the light of this we are instructed by others to look to educational philosophy. One does not pursue his study of this field far until he discovers a similar situation to that revealed by his study of theology. In the books read in preparation for writing this paper educational philosophy was divided into separate schools of thought and practice; each school is certain of the position held and is quick to criticize other schools. Much of the disagreement among both theologians and educators centers upon the question of human nature. Serious thought and careful study are indeed necessary in the light of this picture; this is the concern of Brubacher:

The educator and especially the educational philosopher must not only know the nature of the world in which we live and learn, but he must also know the generic traits of the human learner. 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him?' cried the ancient Hebrew prophet. This question is as urgent today as it ever has been. The teacher must have
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an answer to it as well as the prophet.\(^1\)

Shelton Smith, having concern over the position of the radical liberal, expresses a view quite similar to that of Brubacher.

Every period of acute social crises has had the effect, sooner or later, of centering attention upon the fundamental question of man's nature and destiny. The present is no exception to the rule. With the decay of liberal civilization, the rise of new political faiths, and the radical shift in values—all of which mark what Berdyaev has called the 'end of our time'—the irrepressible question re-emerges, What is man? The new political faiths that have arisen since the first World War have given answers to this question which essentially contradict the Christian understanding of man. In this there is raised a challenge which the Church cannot evade. Thus it is no surprise that the ecumenical forces at Oxford should have recognized the need for a restatement of the Christian doctrine of man.\(^2\)

Hocking approaches the problem by reminding us that we have always had authorities willing to save us the work of research, prepared to settle ex cathedra what human nature is and ought to become. He also makes reference to a party of revolt against all authority in the name of what is "natural"—a revolt which is usually as dogmatic as the authority itself. In Hocking's opinion the present revolt is more serious in nature. There is a general spiritual rebellion, a deliberate philosophic rejection of former belief. In his mind such a rebellion has some foundation.\(^3\)

These three men are all concerned with the problems centering around the nature of man. We dare not overlook a concern which finds such backing and support.

For our study of "The Role of Human Nature in Philosophy of Education" the following outline is given as a guide.

I. THE POSITIONS OF MEN

II. THE PROBLEMS OF MAGNITUDE
III. THE PROGRAM OF MEDIATION

I. THE POSITIONS OF MEN

In the selection of men who have shaped theological thought, past and present, the right of individual personal opinion should be respected. Some men might be considered in connection with theologians or with the educational philosophers, for their work has had a marked bearing in both fields. In the study of human nature there are some men who must be included in even a hurried survey.

The Apostle Paul no doubt heads the list of this world’s witnesses to the belief that man has fallen and human nature is depraved. His teaching relative to this is clearly given in the Epistle to the Romans.\(^4\) Reinhold Niebuhr makes reference to Romans in support of original sin. The influence of Paul's thought upon succeeding generations is very great.

Augustine's view of sin and grace was influenced by his early religious experiences and by his opposition to Pelagius, but his view was primarily determined by his careful study of the Epistle to the Romans. As a result of the entrance of sin into the world man is unable to do the true good; man sinks deeper and deeper into bondage. Man longs for God, but he can do little to change his status before God. Augustine did not look upon sin as something positive, but as a negation or privation. It is not something evil added to man; it is a privation of good.\(^5\)

What Did The Theologians Say?

The radical view of Augustine as it pertains to individual man and his descendants is set forth in the following quotation:

> Through the organic connection between Adam and his descendants, the former transmits his fallen nature, with the guilt and corruption attaching to it, to his posterity. Augustine conceives of the unity of the human race, not federally, but realistically.

\(^4\)Some of the principal references in Romans used to support the view that men are naturally depraved are e.g., 5:12, 14, 17: 6:12, and 7:17-24.

The whole human race was germinally present in the first man, and therefore also actually sinned in him... And therefore the sin of human nature was the sin of all its individualizations. As a result of sin man is totally depraved and unable to do any spiritual good. Augustine does not deny that the will still has a certain natural freedom. At the same time he maintains that man, separated from God, burdened with guilt, and under the dominion of evil, cannot will that which is good in the sight of God.6

The outstanding leaders of the Church have advocated the most practical part of Augustinian anthropology. We see his influence especially in the New England theology which we will consider briefly in the following pages. The great bearing of such a position and practice upon education is at once apparent.

Augustinianism had its opponent from the beginning in the person of Pelagius who advocated an a-moral view of human nature. He differed with Augustine regarding the questions of free will and original sin. According to Pelagius, Adam, as he came from the hand of God, was not endowed with positive holiness. His original condition was one of neutrality; he was neither holy nor sinful, but he had a capacity for both good and evil. He could choose either one of these alternatives. Adam chose sin, but his fall in sin harmed no one but himself. For Pelagius there was no hereditary transmission of a sinful nature or of guilt, and consequently no such doctrine as original sin. Man's nature is not possessed of evil tendencies and desires which inevitably cause him to sin. Man need not sin; sin is caused by wrong education and bad example.7

This is basically the teaching of the Socinians and Unitarians. Adam's sin affected only himself; man is created by God, and created as an innocent being. God imputes to men only those acts which they personally and consciously perform. Adam's sin was only a bad example.8 An additional word pertaining to Socinianism and its bearing upon educational theory is quoted from Berkhof.

6Ibid., p. 139.
7Ibid., pp. 136-137.
Men are even now by nature like Adam in that they have no proneness or tendency to sin, but are placed in somewhat more unfavorable circumstances because of the examples of sin which they see and of which they hear. While this increases their chances of falling into sin, they can avoid sin altogether, and some of them actually do. And even if they do fall in sin and are thus guilty of transgression, they do not therefore incur the divine wrath. They need no Saviour nor any extraordinary interposition of God to secure their salvation. No change in their moral nature is required, and no provision for effecting such a change was made. However, the teachings and example of Christ are helpful in leading them in the right direction.  

The import and bearing of such a theory on education is easily seen. Such a position causes the one believing it to have large confidence in man. If sin is caused by bad example, men will work to eliminate the evils of society. The social emphasis growing out of such a theory is apparent. 

The view of Rousseau is representative of the natural goodness of man. While he is not considered a theologian this view is the one advocated by many liberals. We will consider the views of Rousseau in greater detail in connection with the educational philosophers. The view of the natural goodness of man is mentioned here to complete the three main views relative to human nature. The belief that man is naturally good was a later development than the views of Augustine and Pelagius. The view which dominated education in America was the Augustinian, generally known as Calvinism. This view is referred to as "The New England Theology." 

The character and place of Calvinism in early America are summarized by Fleming in the book Children and Puritanism. During the period 1620-1847 there was a large measure of uniformity in theology. Though modifications of early Calvinism took place, the resulting theology was still Calvinism. Total depravity was included in the "Five Points of Calvinism" set forth at the Synod of Dort in 1618. The sovereignty of God, the divine decrees, and the inability of sinful man were important aspects of Calvinism. These views

caused many to lean toward fatalism. Such views were not merely in the background of men's thoughts, for such formed the overt basis for the preaching of the day.\(^{10}\)

The Calvinistic system was taught, improved and preached, for a century and a half. Its influence upon the religious and educational life of New England during this period was significant. Great stress was placed upon revivals and conversion. Man was held to be a sinful creature who stood in need of divine grace resulting in salvation.\(^{11}\)

In the opinion of the writer the Arminian system of theology does not fall entirely within any of the three views considered above. The Arminian theology teaches that man is sinful, but he is not thereby rendered a helpless creature. Man is able to make some response to God. The position of Arminianism is seen in the following quotation.

Arminius, a disciple of Beza, and at first a strict Calvinist, became a convert to the doctrine of universal grace and free will. He denied the decree of reprobation and toned down the doctrine of original sin. His successor at Leyden, Episcopius, and his other followers, such as Uytenbogaert, Grotius, Limborch, and others, departed still farther from the accepted doctrine of the Church, and finally embodied their views in a remonstrance, consisting of five articles.\(^{12}\)

The opponents of Arminianism, in the person of Calvinists, have viewed this position as semi-Pelagianism. The position held relative to guilt, original sin, and total depravity, is such that Calvinists believe the system is nearer Pelagianism than Calvinism.\(^{13}\) Dr. Thiessen reaches the same conclusion in his presentation of the Arminian theology.\(^{14}\)

The view of human nature held by Quakers is worthy of brief consideration. For early Quakers the Scriptures were subordinate to the inward light. Man was looked upon as sinful

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\(^{13}\) Ibid.

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and unclean by nature, however, the term "original sin" was rejected. Quakers, or Friends as they are called today, are divided into at least three distinct bodies. The orthodox group has adopted much of the theological terminology of other religious bodies. William P. Pinkham, an orthodox Friend, well received by his group, has written the following on the subject of "total depravity."

The Society of Friends, and some other evangelical Christians discard the term 'total depravity,' not because it does not properly express the hopeless, helpless state of the sinner, when considered apart from the blessings of redemption; for the term is no stronger than the statements of Scripture fully warrant; but because those who use the term apply (or seem to apply it) to persons in whom some of the influences of grace are yet efficient. Any such application is unjust toward God. It seems to the writer that the note of warning or admonition given in the above quotation is important in the view of human nature. Any view which casts reflection on the ability of man or the goodness of God has grave implications for both theology and education.

This review of the theological position held by different men or movements regarding human nature serves to remind us of the problems involved. It is imperative that a clearer and more general theory of human nature is necessary for the teacher. We now turn our attention to some educational philosophers to see what they have to offer us in the hope of an answer.

What Do Educational Philosophers Say?

The first man to claim our attention is Rousseau. He is listed with the educational philosophers in this paper because his view of human nature runs counter to the prevailing theological view considered above. Rousseau was at war with the society of his day. The education which he recommends for

Emile is intended to equip him against the distortion of his nature by society. It was Rousseau's objective to bring education into harmony with laws of nature governing the progress and life of the individual. As mentioned previously in this paper, Rousseau was opposed to the view that human nature is evil and must be changed or disciplined. He believed that it is good and that no hindrance should be placed upon the freedom of its development. It is necessary that the teacher recognize this and that she seek to understand child nature.  

The views of Horace Bushnell are very important since he did a great deal to shape theological thought and educational policy relative to human nature. Following graduation from divinity school he became pastor of the North Church in Hartford. His influence is seen in the following statement.

Dean Weigle states that his work marks the passing of extreme Calvinism in the New England Churches. Foster declares that he was the most important writer of the later New Haven theology. However, Bushnell was not chiefly a theologian; his main contributions were made as a preacher and a pastor. From the store of his own spiritual experience he endeavored to guide the churches into better ways of thinking and improved methods of presenting the Christian faith.

Bushnell's work may be divided in two aspects though they are not opposed to each other. The first is his view of the revival method. In a sense he rebelled against revivals as the only or the dominant method. In 1838 his article entitled "Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion" appeared in the Quarterly Christian Spectator. In it he does not condemn revivals totally. He recognizes the value of such spiritual quickenings, but feels the abuses associated with them should be corrected. Revivals have a place in God's plan; God may act periodically in renewing men. God need not act uniformly all the time, nor need He be limited to the revival method.

Bushnell believed there was a negative side to revivals. Not all influences coming from revival are good; errors and extravagances frequently accompany them. The following quotation expresses his view relative to the negative side of

revivals:

Four errors are discussed: first, the supposition that the revival mood should be constant; secondly, the feeling that to accomplish anything in religion something unusual must be employed; thirdly, the overemphasis upon conversion; and fourthly, the failure to recognize the advantages to be gained by the Church in times of non-revival, particularly with respect to Christian nurture.\textsuperscript{19}

Though he was not opposed to the revival method as such; he was opposed to the extravagances connected with it and the doctrinal views of many supporting revivals. His discussion of revivals was the point of departure for his stressing of Christian nurture. This brings us to the second aspect of his work, namely, his developing within the churches a proper place for children. He viewed the non-revival period as a good time for Christian nurture. He clearly expressed himself relative to the principle of development underlying Christian nurture.

What was the position of Bushnell relative to the doctrine of depravity? The following statement speaks to this question:

Stress is laid upon the fact that the doctrine of growth is not an infringement upon the doctrine of depravity. 'It only declares that depravity is best rectified when it is weakest, and before it is stiffened into habit.' The criticism that such a view rules out the divine agency is emphatically denied. 'Whatsoever the parent does for his child, is to have its effect by a divine influence. And it is the pledge of this, which lies at the basis of the household covenant, and constitutes its power.'\textsuperscript{20}

However, Bushnell's view of the home, Christian nurture, and Christian education was such that little stress was placed upon the sin of man. In fact his thesis was "that the child is to grow up a Christian." The child is not to grow up in sin, as was commonly believed, and in later years be converted. The child may love the good from his earliest years. The parents and life in the home are vitally important in the formation of proper habits.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 197.
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 198.
Bushnell's position was a definite departure from the thought and practices of his time. There was great stress upon revival in New England, and it was commonly believed that the child must grow up in sin. The Church gave only a small place to the importance of children. Bushnell reacted against this. It is generally accepted that Bushnell's *Christian Nature* was an epoch-making book. It dealt a hard blow to the old Puritan theology of America. It marked not only a turning point in the importance of the child in the churches; it also marked a new epoch in the history of religious education.

The view of George Albert Coe was a powerful force in the shaping of educational thought and practice relative to a theory of human nature. Coe was a follower of John Dewey's doctrine of the "New Education." Coe's view of divine immanence was such that he believed spiritual values are inherent in every aspect of the common life. He made a complete break with the idea of total depravity. He believed in a progress-making God. In his book *A Social Theory of Religious Education* he considers the following subjects: the instincts, sin, human nature, and depravity. He reminds us that it is necessary to consider the nature of the human material that religious education seeks to modify. Is there any reason to believe that children will make favorable response to the principles taught? Does human nature include any obstacle to such a response? We must discover what capacities people have for being interested in higher ideals and better living. Coe believes that a child's religious progress evidences the continuous achievement of intelligent good will in his growing social relationships.

The use of the term "instincts" is used freely by Coe in this book; his view is briefly presented. Some of the instincts, for example rivalry, anger and pugnacity, may be misused and abused. However, they are not basically sinful or carnal; there are numerous good uses to which these instincts may be put. Some instincts must be suppressed or controlled. Rivalry and greed oftentimes get out of hand. Likewise, instinctive

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mastery and submission appear to be at least needless, and many times a hindrance to the growth of society toward democracy. The need of society is cooperation. The individuals composing society stand in need of training.\textsuperscript{24} Greater clarity is needed between what is instinctive and what is acquired. Coe expresses himself in the following words:

How often do we hear it said of one child that he is 'naturally' amiable, and of another that he is 'naturally' self-willed, the implication of 'naturally' being that the quality in question is a matter of original endowment, and therefore unchangeable.... Children's dispositions are complexes of what is nature and what is acquired. The acquired part is the habits whereby certain impulses, specialized by experience, are given a permanent and specific direction, while other native impulses, unused or repressed, remain in the background, or decrease toward complete atrophy.\textsuperscript{25}

What is meant by the term "human nature"? It is insufficient to merely recognize that the instincts are hereditary, permanent, and fundamental to character. Each instinct has many possible modes of expression that vary through a large scale. Habit forming is also human nature, and that it makes possible the fixing in human life of either better or worse instinctive ways. It is necessary to become a self-criticising self, and to form self-criticising societies. Such is a means of improvement and advancement. Coe believes, as did Bushnell, that the child may grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise. If this is to happen the home and society must function on the Christian plane. It is a recognized fact that antisocial instincts are active in the early years as well as socially constructive ones. Both types of instincts are functioning in early childhood. There is a great difference between childhood and maturity, but the difference does not constitute a moral break. In order for a child to attain Christian maturity he should intelligently exercise certain impulses of childhood itself. Some maintain that childhood is egoistic, and that it is necessary to postpone certain endeavor until adolescence. If this position be accepted, we would need

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 122-133.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 133.
to delay religious education until the period of adolescence. Motives would continue to grow which must later be counteracted.  

Not only must habit forming still go on; the whole of it will be affected by preadolescent social experience. Nothing occurs that can at a stroke wipe old selfish habits off the slate.  

Coe states his position relative to sin in the following quotation. The view expressed is far removed from the New England Theology.  

'Sin' is a social conception. When I was a boy I was taught that sin is a relation, not between me and my neighbor, but between me and God. Subsequent reflection has led me to regard the distinction here made as not valid. The intimacy of the two Great Commandments to each other is too close. The dwelling place of the Highest is not apart from, but within, the brotherhood, which is the family of God and the kingdom of God. I find neither psychological, nor ethical, nor metaphysical footing for the idea that I can have relations with God in which he and I are isolated from all society. My very being as a conscious individual is bound up with that of my fellows; a divine judgment upon what I am and upon what I will to be is per se a judgment upon my reciprocal human relationships. Nor can I judge God otherwise. The only meaning that I can give to his supreme goodness, the only ground that I can assign for bowing my will to his, is that he enters into the human social process more fully, more constructively, than I do. The need for any such term as sin lies in the fact that we men, in addition to constructing the human society in which God and men are both sharers, also obstruct it and in some measure destroy. We must now as educators face the fact that we do, individually and collectively, oppose, resist, and undo our own work of social upbuilding.  

26Ibid., pp. 135-148.  
27Ibid., p. 161.  
28Ibid., p. 164.
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The transmission of sin brings to life the old controversy relative to total depravity. The position taken by most religious educators and the interpretation given by them is far different from that of the early New England theologian. In early America total depravity was a dogmatic belief; the authority for such a conviction was based upon divine revelation. The conduct of children was not studied, but the method consisted in contrasting children's conduct with a fixed standard of adult or even divine perfection, and then taking all deviation from the standard as defects of child nature. It was *apriori* procedure; a conclusion being first accepted, and facts were then used to illustrate and confirm it. The entire picture is held to be changed when we approach the facts in the spirit of science. There are many reactions in children which are social in a similar manner that some of our maturest Christian conduct is social. Other reactions may be noted that are anti-social in the same sense that some of our mature badness is anti-social. We observe and must keep in mind that children are not adults. The actions of children are not simple, as the theory of depravity makes them out to be. Children are not "good" or "bad," but they have complex personalities because of the influence of preceding experiences as well as the numerous instincts that are always at work. If these complex personalities are to be understood, conduct must be analyzed into its various elements. The relation of these elements one to the other must be noted, and the particular stimulus which awakens each of them on each occasion should be determined, if possible. We may discover that much of the faulty conduct is an imitation of the conduct of others. Poor conduct may be the result of habit.29

Even though the cause of a child's misconduct may be traced to his elders, the misconduct is his own and he needs to be freed from it. The task of the teacher is to see that childish faults, whatever their cause, are dealt with in a manner which will leave a socially constructive deposit. The position that a child is not "really bad" does not mean that he should be let alone. In some instances the wisest plan is to overlook the child's misconduct. But in most instances the child should realize that something is wrong, and that it should be corrected. The educator should work for continuous moral growth rather
than relying upon any breaks provided by original nature. Moral growth does not occur at the same rate at all times. Moral growth may be characterized by crises at times. Such experiences are not uncommon during adolescence. However, it is a mistake to postpone the beginning of personal religion until adolescence, hoping for a conversion experience that will produce new character. Elementary religious education should make a conversion experience unnecessary.

Hocking's view, as set forth in *Human Nature and its Remaking*, is typified in the following quotation:

For all agencies which are now engaged in re-making mankind, three questions have become vital. What is original human nature? What do we wish to make of it? How far is it possible to make of it what we wish?30

All social enterprises recognize that human nature is a problem. However, human nature is plastic, and heredity by no means determines man's destiny. Human nature is capable of modifying itself. Naturalism and liberalism have endeavored to set human nature free. An attempt has been made to set up a thorough and literal inventory of all the ingredients of human nature, and all the instincts that are to be satisfied. It has been discovered that certain propensities can hardly be appeased without being allowed to assume control of the other propensities. It appears that some elements of human nature can only be liberated by discipline. It is no longer a question between discipline and liberation, it is a question as to what kind of discipline a free man will have. There are many things which we do not want to do relative to human nature. We do not want to suppress or do away with our primitive passions; they are to continue with us. We do not want to engage in a persistent struggle against them, or follow any course which results in moral tension. If human nature is to change at all, it should be in ways that will leave it more completely satisfied.31

We can never draw a line between what is natural and what is artificial in man. No example of the unaffected natural state can be found, for with the first social exchange the original self is overlaid. The concept of our original nature is always

30Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
an abstraction.

Many people today reject the argument: if a man sins, he is a sinner. The man having committed sin may have been under severe strain or depression. We discover that the distribution of blame is a difficult problem. If a man does wrong today, we often conclude that he is in the wrong place. If such a man is located in the right place and given the proper type of work, he is likely to do the right. However, Hocking feels that we cannot follow Augustine in his dark picture of sin, but the modern attitude which omits sin altogether is not the correct view either. But there is nothing in original human nature which taken by itself can be called evil. The following quotation from Hocking casts a ray of light upon this statement.

Admitting, then, that no crude impulse is sinful taken by itself, it does not in the least follow that crude impulses as we find them in human nature are therefore good. It does not so much as follow (as is often stated) that they are devoid of moral quality. For as we find them in human nature, no impulse is by itself. The moral quality of any impulse is due somehow to its mental environment, not to its own intrinsic quality; but every impulse (after the hypothetical first) has an environment. Nothing can be condemned because it is crude; but a moral question may arise at once if an impulse has an opportunity to be something else than crude. Sin lies, we judge, in the relation of an impulse to its mental environment.

It appears that no behavior can be defined as sinful by its descriptive character alone. We may analyze sin and in a measure describe it, but it is impossible to explain it. If sin could be explained it would be found to be the invariable consequence of certain conditions; and whatever is necessary is not sin. Sin implies that kind of freedom in which the fate and character of every conscious act comes for a moment under the control of "self." Moral mistakes appear to be similar to the mistakes which accompany the learning of any new art. The following explanation is given by Dr. Hocking. One may

\[32 \text{Ibid., pp. 126-127.}\]
\[33 \text{Ibid., pp. 138-139.}\]
safely predict that the beginner at target practice will miss the mark. The beginner is free to hit the mark and there is no reason why he must miss it. As time progresses he will hit the mark more often, and a curve of his progress in learning can be drawn. Is sin a missing of the mark, and therefore a phenomenon of the curve of learning? In the matter of target practice the full will of the individual is on the side of hitting the mark, and it is the physical obstacles of imperfect organization and control which cause defeat. However, in moral effort there is no difficulty of this kind, for the nature of right is to be always within reach, otherwise there would be no obligation. The real point is that the man's complete will is not on the side of hitting the mark. Hence the analogy breaks down; and there is no law of learning for morality. Morally speaking the mark might have been hit. Sin so considered leaves place for original sin; every man is his own Adam. Sin to be sure has its consequences, both social and psychological.

The view of H. Shelton Smith relative to sin and human nature will now be considered from his book Faith and Nurture. While Smith's view is far removed from the position coming from Augustine, he takes strong exception to the naturalistic position of Coe and Dewey. He feels that the thought-patterns of liberal Protestant nurture need revision; he also recognizes that the newer trends in theological thought are defective in certain respects. Both modes of thought are in need of restudy and criticism. The liberal church lacks a realistic understanding of man. This is caused in part by the fact that the liberal theory of religious nurture has been controlled by the sciences of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Man must also be studied from the Christian point of view, for man can be understood only from the divine perspective. The sciences mentioned above are helpful but inadequate by themselves. According to Smith man is a creature of God, therefore the naturalistic view held by Dewey and his followers is a hopeless attempt to understand man in the light of the empirical perspective alone. Religious orthodoxy has failed to see man in his empirical perspective; however, human value is enhanced when it is connected with a transcendent source in God. Secular humanists take exception to such a view.

Ibid., pp. 150-161.
Smith holds that the educational theory of the liberal Church is still controlled by a romantic doctrine of man. The nature of human nature is a problem which the modern religious educator must concern himself.\textsuperscript{35}

Time and space make it impossible to consider the views of such educators as William C. Bower, John Dewey, J. Donald Butler, Paul H. Vieth and Ernest J. Chave. However, those considered leave us with a sense of disappointment similar to the disappointment with many of the theologians. It is hoped that the concern represented by both groups may result in a better understanding of human nature.

II. THE PROBLEMS OF MAGNITUDE

It seems to the writer that both theologians and philosophers fail to consider and appreciate the religious background, cultural situation, and economic condition of men disagreeing with them. This ought to be noted in connection with Augustine. His view of sin and grace was molded to a certain degree by his deep religious experiences, in which he went through great spiritual struggles and eventually came to his view of the Gospel. In his \textit{Confessions} we read of his immorality and lack of interest in religion, and how he sought escape in Manichaeism and almost fell into its snares, but at last turned to Christ. Some believe there are traces of a Manichaean influence in his gloomy view of human nature as fundamentally evil, and in his denial of the freedom of the will. It is more likely that this resulted from his own sense of inherent evil and spiritual bondage.\textsuperscript{36}

Three important points claim our attention relative to Bushnell's religious development. He was not reared under the influence of the hyper-Calvinism of his day. His parents were religious people, but his father was a Methodist and his mother an Episcopalian. His escape from New England Calvinism is not to be overlooked in the development of his thought. Obviously his early religious experiences were different from those of many youth in the New England churches. Calvinism never gained the deep hold upon him which was characteristic of the day. The atmosphere of the home counteracted the prevailing Calvinistic thought of the day.

\textsuperscript{35}Shelton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 67-99.
\textsuperscript{36}Berkhof, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 135.
It is also important to note that Bushnell was "a child of Christian nurture." His parents were fair, unselfish, thoughtful, characterized by love and devotion, and conscientiousness. In later years Bushnell recognized the bearing of his early training upon his own thought and life. The nurture which he advocated and presented to the church was a nurture which he had experienced.

Mention should be made of his deeper religious experience coming to him through a revival. What was the influence of revival in the theology of Bushnell? He had previously passed through a period of skepticism resulting in a spiritual decline. He always considered this revival experience as a very important crisis in his life. It is often referred to as his conversion.37

No doubt similar evidence could be found to show how past experiences made and molded other men considered earlier in this paper. It is worthy of notice that liberalism came into being in full force in America at a time of prosperity, while neo-orthodoxy took root in Europe at a time when men suffered hardship. The neo-orthodox movement gained a hearing in America at a time when the idea of "natural goodness" was severely tested by World War I. This all proves, at least to many, that men have never been quite as objective as one could desire.

Another problem of magnitude centers around the rules of interpretation often used when interpreting the Bible or the findings of science. A few scholars are presently coming to realize this in their approach to the Bible. Bernard Ramm is a good representative of this group. He believes in the creative work of God and the sinfulness of man. However, he feels that those presenting the orthodox faith have often been guilty of overstating their case. They have said too much about the "when" and the "how" of creation. Ussher's chronology can no longer be accepted. Man is much older and the antiquity of the human race is of little real concern to the Christian view. He confesses that science has proven the human race to be very old. Science is sometimes guilty of discrediting the conclusions of the theologians too quickly. Because certain mistakes have been made it does not logically follow that truth is never discovered and stated. Scientists need to make a dis-

tinction between their findings and their interpretations of the findings. Presuppositions, in so far as possible, should be laid aside. 38

There is some reason to believe that there is greater recognition of these problems today than formerly. Some theologians and educators are endeavoring to understand each other, and some men are making themselves heard in each field.

III. THE PROBLEM OF MEDIATION

Brevity must also characterize our consideration of this point of mediation. In the book Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century, Shelton Smith, in the chapter "Christian Education," states that progressives have three courses of action open to them. The first course is to continue to reaffirm their already established theological convictions. Smith says this was the choice of George A. Coe, William C. Bower, and the late Harrison S. Elliott. Such an emphasis will continue to serve as a counterweight against the extreme types of Protestant orthodoxy as Barthianism. Such service is important, because ultra-orthodoxy imperils a vital doctrine of Christian nurture. A second alternative for progressive educators would be to align themselves with metaphysical naturalism and abandon the Christian tradition entirely. This course has been implicit in much of the thought of the left-wing educational liberals who have adopted an extreme functionalistic view of religion. Such a trend is presented by Ernest S. Chave in his book, A Functional Approach to Religious Education. If religious educators built their philosophy around this there would be no conflict between religious education and progressive secular education. Religious education could make very little contribution if this course were followed. The third course open to educational progressives is to reconstruct their theological foundations in the light of the more realistic insights of current Christian faith. Smith believes this is the course to be followed. Many Christian educators are coming to realize that left-wing Protestant liberalism is no longer the powerful influence of the past. Religious educators are coming to hold a

less optimistic view of human nature. Man "is a child of God" and "is also a fallen creature." "The nature and special content of the Christian revelation, including the centrality of Christ and his Church" has received a new recognition.  

William Hordern in his recent book *A Laymen's Guide to Protestant Theology* presents a view worthy of notice. He rejects the idea that theologically speaking, a man has to be a fundamentalist, liberal, or neo-orthodox. He states that many theologians are seeking a way between the extremes. He refers to this as the mediating school, or a movement known as "modern orthodoxy." The heart of this movement expresses loyalty to the faith of historic orthodoxy. The other groups represent deviations to the right or left of orthodoxy. It seems unnecessary to discuss Hordern's view in this paper, for it is not the purpose of the writer to approve or condemn his view. Reference is only made to it in an endeavor to show that some men are looking for a theological structure in which more men may live together. Whether Hordern is laying the foundation for such a theological house remains to be seen. Once he, or someone else, builds such a house we hope and believe that many theologians and educators will pay him a visit.

The problem of human nature presents great and grave problems for both the theologian and philosopher. The naturalist laboring in either field fails by advocating that man can save himself. The supernaturalist, at least of the extreme Calvinistic type, fails by leaving the plan of salvation entirely up to God. While the Apostle Paul has raised many problems for us, and hyper-orthodoxy has always claimed to find support in his writings, it may be that Paul answers the problem relative to human nature and man's salvation in Philippians 2:12-13.

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling [Man's part]. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure [God's part].

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