

# William Temple's Philosophy of History

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THE PHILOSOPHY of history is an issue of primary importance in William Temple's theological writing. Whenever his attention turned to social and political concerns, the issues of the philosophy of history were uppermost in his mind. To ask about history is to ask about its meaning, which is the crucial problem for any philosophy of history. This paper consists of three sections: first, a depiction of Temple's perspective as drawn from his various writings about history; second, an examination of the basic heritages of his perspective; and third, a critical evaluation of the perspective.

## 1. The Nature of Temple's Perspective

### *Methodology*

Temple's approach to history is that of a willingness to examine all kinds of systems in the search for a methodology. In this he acknowledged indebtedness to his teacher Edward Caird for a relentless scrutiny of other thought patterns and a willingness to appropriate elements of them into his own work. In setting about to construct a view of history, he examined three classical views and chose what he saw of value in each while using other materials to correct their deficiencies.<sup>1</sup>

The first of these perspectives is the Platonic in which time is seen as the moving image of eternity. The positive contribution of this view is that it attaches supreme importance to the Eternal, an insight which any Christian philosophy of history must affirm. But Temple was equally perceptive in concluding that the Platonic view ends with a meaningless idea of history.<sup>2</sup> While it is valid in emphasizing total transcendence, it does so in such a manner that there remains no ground for history's existence of reality.

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A second viewpoint is that which sees eternity as the sum total of the temporal order simultaneously apprehended. Here there is a sense of the ultimate importance of history and its moral choices which introduces the question of the significance of the eternal in the philosophy of history. The difficulty in this perspective is that the whole course of history readily becomes a mere extension of the divine nature,<sup>3</sup> which of course fails to allow for individual or social choice and decision. Further, if God is removed from the process then history is not ultimately important for eternity. While the viewpoint does impart a sense of the ultimate importance of history, it fails to offer a coherent pattern of interpretation.

The third viewpoint Temple examined was that which sees the eternal as initiating all temporal orders and processes which then return to their creator. The significant contribution of this perspective toward a Christian philosophy of history is that it focuses upon an expectation of an end or culmination of history. This culmination is then taken to be the ushering in of a new order. The view has considerable merit in that it sees the goal of history as a transformation into something new, rather than a mere prolongation of the present,<sup>4</sup> but Temple found that the greatest problem with this outlook is that there is no apparent reason why the eternal initiates the historical process.<sup>5</sup> And thus he set about to construct a different philosophy of history, utilizing the positive materials of these three classical viewpoints.

Temple's method for thinking about philosophy of history is not that of a system as that term is usually understood among philosophers of history. His work did not aim at a unitary system such as Hegel's or Marx's; rather his thinking was systematic in the sense that it proceeded by orders based upon the principle of coherence. His thought developed in terms of certain critical categories which were then applied to the discussion. At the same time Temple attempted to avoid the confines of a unitary or closed system, especially in the application of the categories to the problems of historical interpretation. In a letter to Emmet<sup>6</sup> he made it clear that he wished to avoid a static system and thus he worked to provide a perspective which left doors open for new developments and the configurations of process.

It is the process framework which best characterizes his methodology.

The metaphysical process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead was a primary foundation for Temple's work because he found it allowing for new developments as well as providing a coherent depiction of reality. In Temple's thought the process methodology is more one of cosmology than of ontology, which is to say that it is grounded in a macroscopic type of cosmology as contrasted to the ontological basis of Hegel's or other similar philosophies of history.

### *Categories*

In *Christus Veritas*, Temple sets forth four categories which were used throughout his work to interpret history.<sup>7</sup> These were, value, love, freedom, and eschatology. Value was the general category from which he approached the whole issue of philosophy of history. Value has meaning only as there is one who values and thus God is the source of value. Starting with this conviction, one of Temple's basic presuppositions was that the eternal is of more value than the temporal. He saw one of the primary contributions of Israel as its interpretation of God at work in human history, a perspective which is bound up with the idea of ethical monotheism.<sup>8</sup> In history there is a uniting of righteousness and divine power. History is seen as the working out or the appearance of the eternal. It is against this background that he undertook to consider love and justice.

For Temple, love represents certain virtues and responsibilities. The term allows for a liberty which observes the sacredness of personality, responsible membership in community, realization of the duty of service, and sacrifice for the needs of the neighbor and the community.<sup>9</sup> Temple saw the interaction of love and justice as part of the dynamics of history. Love transcends justice and in a sense also presupposes justice,<sup>10</sup> for in history there are political and social instances where love must first express itself in justice. Such expressions are a kind of preliminary achievement which must be realized prior to the development of love's reality.<sup>11</sup>

Closely related to love is the idea of freedom, a concept which any philosophy of history must analyze. Freedom has both individual and communal dimensions in history. There is the freedom of the whole person in which decisions and conduct are not so much dictated by outside forces

as by the nature of the whole person. Just as this kind of freedom can be observed in individuals, so it may be seen in communities as they act in history.<sup>12</sup>

The element of the accidental was seen by Temple within the context of freedom even as the power of accidental forces and happenings is always present in history. Temple was emphatic in contending that such forces are not the results of divine will because there is a kind of freedom in history which means that various lines of causation will converge. These convergences intersect and often interfere with human purposes and the results cannot be calculated in advance.<sup>13</sup> This interaction is a vital part of the fabric of history for just as there is freedom within the lives of individuals and communities, so there is a freedom in the activity of nature. The interaction of these forces and patterns is part of what we understand as history.

As Joseph Fletcher has made clear, Temple did not allow his category of freedom to end in chaos.<sup>14</sup> Utter freedom is chaos and this is not the sense in which Temple uses the category. His is not a view of history in which everything is the product of chance; the precondition for freedom is order and thus "freedom is not only from something but for something."<sup>15</sup>

The Kingdom of God was in many respects Temple's primary category for interpreting history, just as value was the underlying presupposition from which he worked. He never accepted the claim that the kingdom, because it was something to be actualized in the future, had no reality in the present. The kingdom is both immanent and transcendent;<sup>16</sup> it has a temporal dimension which directly involves mankind; and yet it has an end point which is "a society of free spirits, actuated by a love of God."<sup>17</sup> Temple said that the words kingdom and reign had to be used simultaneously in adequately describing the concept. There is a kingdom or "social commonwealth" and there is the reign of God's power over men.<sup>18</sup> In this expression he was striving to point to the full reality of the kingdom and in so doing to avoid any form of works-righteousness in which the kingdom is constructed by human effort.<sup>19</sup> But then what is the precise relationship of man in time to the kingdom? Men do not construct the kingdom but try to live as citizens of it which is the role given to them by Jesus Christ. And thus the work of the kingdom begins anew with

each generation. What is realized in the present is in its highest form, justice between individuals and communities<sup>20</sup> but this is not the kingdom of perfect love for the final consummation is not realized in the present because "it must be a fellowship of the servants of God in all generations."<sup>21</sup>

Fletcher has clearly demonstrated the manifold aspects of the kingdom. It can be viewed in five related dimensions:<sup>22</sup> (1) There is a preparation for its coming which is testified to in the Old Testament records and sagas. (2) It is founded with the events of crucifixion-resurrection. (3) The dimensions of the kingdom are total in that it involves both the personal and the communal, the present and the future. (4) The kingdom is best described as a process. It is not simply an event. Jesus Christ overcame the world and is still overcoming it. Both aspects are part of that historical process called the kingdom. (5) Finally, the church is intimately related to the kingdom almost in the pattern of means to end. That is, the church is the vehicle for pointing toward the kingdom.

In the philosophy of history the relationship of time and eternity and the questions concerning the end of history have been classical and continuing problems. For Temple the kingdom of God is the category by which these issues are explicated and as Fletcher has made clear, Temple saw in history both teleological dimensions and eschatology.<sup>23</sup> Thus the kingdom of God is defined to encompass both elements. History has goals and an end and yet "at every point the Eternal impinges on the Temporal and revolutionizes its values."<sup>24</sup> This leads to a more extensive consideration of the meaning of history, an issue in which the kingdom is a primary matter.

### *The Meaning of History*

For Temple the crucial question in all history is that of its meaning. At one point in *Nature, Man, and God*, he was moved to write that "If history is a mere succession of events, it must be quite meaningless."<sup>25</sup> History implies a search for its meaning, and thus Temple was interested in presenting a broad metaphysical interpretation of the whole course of human history. Such a pattern is then assumed to be applicable to individual events and problems in history. One of the most general patterns

he established was that of the struggle of good and evil, which he saw as a continuing conflict in history.<sup>26</sup> The steps involved in interpreting the course and outcome of this pattern constitute the special way in which he saw history.

History has certain goals which contribute to our understanding of its meaning. Fletcher has pointed out that Temple placed considerable emphasis upon personality and sociality as goals toward which history moved.<sup>27</sup> The drive and search for a unity and integration of the personality is the activity of history. In a similar manner this work goes on within communities and in the interaction of the person and a community. All of this is seen as preparatory for the major goal which Temple introduced by asking if it is within or beyond history. He seemed to suggest that it is both.<sup>28</sup> In the course of human events and activity, men are prepared for the eternal. And thus Temple established a plan or design to explain the relation of history to its goal of eternal life. Men are to work for the coming of the kingdom in this world but the kingdom which is realized in this world is not one of perfect love. It is a kingdom of justice between individuals and communities. However, the final goal is never in the present for "it must be a fellowship of the servants of God in all generations."<sup>29</sup> Therefore it is necessary to speak of man's goal as a hope that in his way of living he is prepared for the communion of the saints. For Temple a major way of responding to the issue of history's meaning consists in the implications of this hope.

Within this structure Temple believed there could be an idea of progress which was in agreement with the movement and scope of history. In order to avoid any naive views concerning the progressive betterment of humanity by the means of good works, he argued for a new definition of the idea of progress. "Progress may take the form of an ever wider application of a principle which sets no limit to its application, and then there is nothing selfcontradictory in the idea of infinite Progress."<sup>30</sup> Such a definition corresponds to the evidences of history for the Archbishop was convinced that part of the meaning of history was in the kinds of social and political progression that could be achieved and documented or identified as such. Above all else, the hope for progress is not one which is based in man or his activities. Only as human activity is a reflection of God's

love can this be the case. His hope for progress is finally a hope which is rooted in and has its substance made of God's love.<sup>31</sup>

Thus the source of all history is the eternal and the Christian doctrine of creation is central to identifying the meaning of history. There is purpose in history and it is the task of the historian to describe or point to this purpose.<sup>32</sup> Temple found an essential tie between history and the eternal. History is not a projection of the divine nature from some point or source wholly outside the historical process. If God is outside of and detached from history, then history is not important for eternity.<sup>33</sup> This relationship is a crucial one for all of Temple's thought because an end or destruction of history implies a change in the Eternal. And in this sense history is important for the Eternal. "The eternal is the ground of the historical, and not vice versa; but the relation is necessary, not contingent—essential, not incidental."<sup>34</sup> Thus the purposes and goals of history are in a real sense the purposes and goals of God which are most completely expressed in Jesus Christ.<sup>35</sup> In him history finds its understanding and answer to the conflict of good and evil.

Temple insisted that the kingdom of God was a crucial concept for interpreting history. Within history the kingdom is known in the Cross in a specific and directive way; "as sacrifice, not barren indeed, but also not securing the complete fulfillment of the hope for which it is made."<sup>36</sup> He was little concerned about whether the kingdom could fully come on earth. This was not a relevant question, for it was perfectly obvious that it could come more than it had. It will come "when men conduct their History as citizens of Eternity."<sup>37</sup> The crucial recognition is that in this peculiar phenomenon of the kingdom is lodged the meaning of history.

Therefore Temple concluded that the end of human history was the kingdom of God. In the kingdom men are responsive to God's love and obedient to his will.<sup>38</sup> On the one hand, the kingdom can be viewed as a culmination for it is the fulfilling of history's goal and its summation, but on the other hand it is a completely new creation of God. It is the breaking into the temporal of the new and the eternal.<sup>39</sup>

Temple's view of history is governed by his process methodology even as process is actually a part of the meaning of history. This makes clearer his constant effort to give a process description of the principal categories,

value, love, freedom, and the kingdom. "Every choice narrows the range of possibilities for the future; but there are still some open alternatives to the very end."<sup>40</sup> Thus history's meaning is not found in a determinism or a fixed system; it is open-ended and yet there is a sense in which its meaning is completed. But even this completion is of the process variety; for the meaning is completed "not only in a fuller apprehension of the facts of this world-order, but in resurrection to a new order of being and of experience. . . ."<sup>41</sup>

### *Summary*

William Temple's interpretation of history is based upon three presuppositions which give history its meaning;<sup>42</sup> (1) God creates and gives purpose to history. (2) Jesus Christ is the guide and point of reference for all history. In him is its redemption out of the conflict of good and evil. (3) The kingdom of God is the focus and goal of history. As a goal it involves man's hope to share in eternity. Eternity is the focal point in our understanding due to the peculiar nature of history which is to say that at least part of the meaning of history is in the process itself. Therefore meaning can only be known from some point above history; e.g., eternity. "As we must regard history in the light of eternity, so we must conceive eternity in the light of history. History and eternity must be so conceived as to interpret each other."<sup>43</sup>

## 2. The Heritage of Temple's Thought

Temple, by his own admission as well as numerous evidences throughout his writing, was much influenced by a number of philosophies. It is significant to examine some of these influences for they show the roots of his perspective, and when these roots have been traced, we are better able to understand his methodology as well as to discern why he described history in the manner outlined above.

As Emmet has shown, the influence of Plato's thought can be especially noted in viewing the world as having organized purpose behind it.<sup>44</sup> But Emmet is equally correct in making clear that Temple goes beyond Plato in developing his idea of the eternal. For Plato such considerations are in terms of the nature of the good while Temple insists that the eternal



embodies purposive will.

Temple's contemporary, Henry Scott Holland, influenced his thinking about God and the Christian faith. It was from this source that he was led to think of the Christian faith as a coherent pattern or whole rather than a set of propositions.

And T. H. Green's writing was of some influence for Temple's work, particularly as he assigned a central role to the idea of value. Beyond this general background, it is not so much Green as his successors Bernard Bosanquet and Edward Caird who exerted significant influences upon Temple's thought.

### *Bosanquet and Caird*

Temple was influenced by the work of Bernard Bosanquet particularly as it dealt with the problem of value. Indeed as Emmet has pointed out,<sup>45</sup> Temple's notion of the absolute as a "Commonwealth of Value" is constructed from Bosanquet's particular emphasis of this category. Like Bosanquet, Temple was eager to see the parts of history being given their purpose by some absolute. And thus the meaning of the parts is never fully apprehended by that which is involved with them for it is only from the perspective of the whole that the total pattern is seen. Emmet has, however, been careful to point out that beyond this, Temple did not follow Bosanquet's work. For Bosanquet, the absolute nature of value is as precise a definition and notion of God as can be given, but Temple refused to see this as the end of the matter. From the standpoint of his Christian faith, he was clear in not making the Commonwealth of Value the absolute of history.

Perhaps more than Bosanquet, Temple's old teacher Edward Caird exerted an influence upon his thought, an influence which Temple felt so clearly that he dedicated his Gifford Lectures to Caird's memory. In their preface he said that it was to Caird that he was indebted for his notion of dialectic. Perhaps the development is in part one of critical reconstruction from Caird's position for the notion of "dialectical realism," a kind of emergence of mind in nature, is at least slightly different than Caird's idealism. Emmet has in fact seen such a shift in Temple from an early appropriation of Caird's idealism to the later reconstruction of

it.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, toward the end of *Nature, Man, and God* Temple described the method as "a position which in its positive content is almost identical to that of Edward Caird or Bernard Bosanquet, apart from the method of arriving at it."<sup>47</sup>

Throughout Temple's writing there is a basic methodology which is best characterized as a continuing survey of all thought patterns to locate useful materials. Perhaps it is in this respect that Temple's work clearly demonstrates a consistent indebtedness to Caird. The issue is one of immense importance in reading Temple for one readily gets the feeling that there is an unending effort to search out all manner of diverse materials. The materials are then used in some manner in constructing a kind of synthesis or macrocosmic perspective and thus Temple is primarily concerned with the question of ultimate meaning when he considers history. To consider history is to search for the total framework which will give meaning to individual events.

### *Alfred North Whitehead*

Apart from Edward Caird, perhaps the force which is most consistently and powerfully felt in Temple's work is that of Alfred North Whitehead. It is consistent that Temple, finding great affinity and admiration for Plato, would feel a similar kinship to the great modern Platonist. While Temple's dialectical realism is a reconstruction of Caird, it illustrates affinities with the process work of both Whitehead and S. Alexander. Temple used the Whiteheadian framework with emphasis in *Nature, Man, and God*. Twice he quoted<sup>48</sup> with approval from Whitehead's *Process and Reality*: "the evolution of history is incapable of rationalisation because it exhibits a selected flux of participating forms." In a letter to Emmet, he made clear that the position he was moving toward was one of process philosophy. "...I don't think the total presentation in that book [*Nature, Man, and God*] or in *Christus Veritas* sufficiently gives this impression of a dynamic process and leaves too much that of a static system."<sup>49</sup>

But in his characteristic manner Temple was to take certain things from Whitehead without incorporating the whole of the system into his own thought. In several instances he departed from the Whiteheadian system, the first of these being with respect to the meaning and place of

value. Temple affirmed belief in the Commonwealth of Value as the final or most refined level of reality while in contrast, Whitehead's most refined level was that of a logical-aesthetic order. The two are in no sense to be identified for here as in so many places, Temple was working from the perspective of Christian thought and not from a strictly metaphysical stance.<sup>50</sup>

In the second place, Temple departed from Whitehead's thought in defining and describing God for he did not regard Whitehead's principle of concretion as a sufficient definition of the divine. The definition failed to explain the nature of the new in history. The relationship of novelty to God is exceedingly unclear. "To say that God is the ground of the possibility of this [novelty] is to say nothing unless God is something other than such ground of possibility."<sup>51</sup> And so Temple forcefully argued for an interpretation of history which allowed for the appearance of the new or unique and this he saw as the work of God. Of course the greatest instance of the new is that of Jesus Christ, an event which redirects and transforms all of history.

In the third place Temple simply felt that Whitehead had not clearly worked out the description of God and the world. He viewed Whitehead's way of correlating God and the world as leading to the necessity for a reality above that of God; namely, God plus world; and he could not accept any correlation theory which posited a form that stands over the divine realm.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Temple and the Philosophy of History

#### *Constructive Contributions*

An examination of Temple's view of history discloses noteworthy contributions which will be apparent in any survey of his thought. In the first place, his perspective is in its overall method, internally coherent without being unduly bound to a static system. For example, he saw the struggle of good and evil as central in history. The work then concludes that in Jesus Christ there is redemption of this struggle. Or, he set out to look for meanings, directions, and purposes in history. In the kingdom of God idea he sought to disclose the answers to these issues.

In the second place, Temple made a contribution to the understanding of history by an emphatic recognition of the importance of persons. For Temple, personality and sociality were goals of the historical process. The drive and flow of history is connected with the quest for integration, unity, and wholeness in persons and communities. The contribution is especially significant because much writing about history has tended to ignore this factor. By contrast, much writing about history tends to think in terms of sweeping movements and forces or in terms of the empirical nature of events. Temple's work suggestively points to a completion of these methodologies by attaching significance to psychological forces of both the individual and group varieties. A rather persuasive case can be argued for these factors as major influences in the growth and development of history and thus they must be considered in building a philosophy of history. Of course the role and relationship of these to a total methodology remains an ambiguous matter and thus it is difficult to discern precisely how they might be utilized.

In the third place, Temple contributed to the philosophy of history by suggesting that love presupposes justice if it is operative in history. Again Temple fuses theological and historical materials in his considerations. It may well be an authentic insight into social and political history to posit the dynamic interaction of love and justice and their mutual interdependence and thus it is regrettable that Temple did not devote further attention to this relationship. By comparison, the issue has been developed and illustrated in the work of the late Paul Tillich, where the additional factor of power is considered.<sup>58</sup> Temple's thought is suggestive if only in a preliminary manner.

In the fourth place, if one grants Temple's presuppositions concerning history's source in God, it can be seen that his handling of the relationship to the temporal and the eternal is well executed. His work avoids a number of pitfalls, the most notable of which is that of making history a mere projection of the divine mind and will. Such a projectionist view annihilates freedom, both individual and corporate. In Temple's work history is established as the arena of freedom and yet it has value due to its grounding in the eternal. By positing the terms of the relationship as he does, history is important both for the temporal and the eternal

which is to say it is authentic as contrasted to a predetermined drama in which the final resolution is actually already established at least implicitly.

### *Problematic Issues*

Difficulties can be swiftly and easily encountered in Temple's idea of history if one fails to relate all the materials which he produced. This is particularly the case because Temple did not always raise the various critical questions of opposition when he was developing specific items in his perspective. One such issue is that of the relationship of man and the coming of the kingdom or, more specifically we should say the work and activity of man in relation to his eternal life. It is clear that Temple used his process method in thinking about the relationship of temporal and eternal. There is a present reality of the kingdom just as there is a consummation in the future. What then is man's role in this pattern? Temple suggested a major role for man in realizing the kingdom<sup>54</sup> and yet he did not want to negate the kingdom's ultimate form and genesis as being in God. And so the relationship can easily become twisted if one does not see it in the context of his emphasis and use of freedom.

For Temple a paradoxical relationship is the only suitable analogy if man's freedom is to be real and history is to have any significance of its own. The activities of men can advance or at least momentarily block the realization of the kingdom and of course there is always the individual's option to renounce citizenship in the kingdom. Yet the ultimate form or victory of the kingdom is not of man for while it is to be granted that men share in the enterprise, its genesis and final establishment is the work of the Creator God. Perhaps Temple's argument, following the Whiteheadian form, would have been clearer had he stated that the ultimate form and power of the kingdom is not of the temporal and human but is present primordially in the nature of God. This leaves a large sector of the working out or advance of the kingdom to the temporal realm and the contingencies of history. And thus both the eternal thrust or direction of history and human freedom are preserved.

Because value is a central category for Temple's philosophy of history, one is led to ask on the most elementary level exactly why value can receive this assignment? Certainly there are philosophies of history which

reject this category.<sup>55</sup> The most straightforward answer is that Temple saw value as a primary category because he wanted to construct a Christian philosophy of history. One of the foundations of his ethics was the assertion that God imparts value to all life and this includes the realm of history. Value has meaning because it relates to personality. For Temple, history is concerned with human activity and personality and thus value is properly part of history. He simply considered as irrelevant any assertions that value could not be a part of the philosophy of history. A firm commitment in the Christian faith always governed his view of the universe and his judgments about relevant issues in interpreting its history.

In using value as a background for his philosophy of history, Temple once mentioned the power of ethical monotheism for understanding history.<sup>56</sup> However, it is regrettable that he never elaborated the implications of this issue for his idea of history. The lack is regrettable because the idea has elaborate potential and influence. The notion of a uniting of righteousness and divine power could supply a panoramic background for understanding history as well as correcting difficulties often apparent in theological and philosophical thinking about history. While it might be argued that Temple's concept of the kingdom does this, one looks for a more total examination of the ethical monotheism motif. In comparison, the work of the late H. Richard Niebuhr directed attention to this issue.<sup>57</sup>

The implications of the ethical monotheism motif are significant because they cut to the center of historical methodology by way of the issue of two histories, the sacred and profane. The problem for Christian philosophy of history has always been how on the one hand to avoid ignoring historical events or discounting their impact and on the other hand, how to avoid a dualism in dealing with events. The dilemma is seen in perspective when it is recognized that historical events are relational and contributory rather than *necessarily* contradictory to sacred history or the eternal meanings of history. The dilemma is always a dilemma for the philosophy of history precisely because its polarities can neither be overcome nor related in human categories. The central question which always remains is whether there is such a thing as sacred history, in terms of the evidence of world history, and what it means to claim sacred history as a reality.

Perhaps the most difficult matter in Temple's idea of history is that of the nature and implications of freedom. He clearly wanted to avoid the logical trap of chaos as the end result of freedom and attempted to do so by discovering in order, the precondition for freedom. But it is not altogether clear precisely what limits this sets on freedom. Are the limits purely of an ontological nature? How might they influence decision making by individuals or communities?

One of the limits is that of preventing chaos. It would appear that the dilemma is best understood by re-examining Temple's use of process philosophy for it is in the idea of process as the basic ontological structure that he worked to fuse order and freedom. In a process cosmology certain alternatives occur and with their existence certain potentialities are forever eliminated. In the same manner each occurrence occasions the opening up of certain new potentialities. In all of this there is a kind of implicit order and in Temple's case it is seen as that element which both insures freedom in history and yet ever acts to prevent the annihilation of history.

Apart from this it must be said that for Temple, freedom is freedom under God. History is thus supplied with certain moorings. One's real quarrel must then be with his major premise if there is to be any dispute in this instance. This is the point at which certain secular philosophies of history would raise strenuous objections so it should remain clear that this and not some more remote area is where the objections must be lodged.

### *Philosophy of History and Christian Philosophy of History*

In analyzing Temple's view of history one is confronted with the dual tasks implicit in examining the thought of any theologian who writes about history; that is, the relationship of the viewpoint to the philosophy of history and secondly, the relationship to a Christian philosophy of history. The first task proves fruitful both because it helps to see the work in a context and it may make clearer certain tools which can be used in evaluation. Examining the relationships of Temple's view to other philosophies of history may expose certain crucial comparisons and contrasts. These will then clearly demonstrate what of his work is and is not within the philosophy of history. The second task clearly shows how Temple

understood the Christian faith and its human significance and this thereby answers the why and what of a Christian philosophy of history.

Temple stood firmly within the camp of those who see philosophy of history as based in metaphysics. This has traditionally included seeing history from a universal perspective which grasps the whole of it macroscopically. Such a view has generally included a looking toward the future rather than an analyzing of the past. In terms of method, Temple is close to Karl Lowith's sentiments when Lowith described the philosophy of history as "a systematic interpretation of universal history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed toward an ultimate meaning."<sup>58</sup>

Temple's perspective can be contrasted to those ways of building a philosophy of history which have received considerable emphasis as a result of developments in linguistic and positivistic philosophy. Here the method is pluralistic rather than monistic and there is an emphasis upon analysis of many civilizations. Here the methods are critical rather than speculative and the major concern is to ascertain how one can know anything about the past whereas Temple displays a concern for the whole of the past and future. Finally, the concern of the "scientific" philosophers of history is to devise standards for evaluating history. In contrast, Temple is concerned with the future course of history.

Within the "scientific" philosophies of history there are a number of alternative positions and while the merits of such methods may be debated against Temple's it should suffice here to say that he was simply never inclined to this manner of thinking. Thus it is a bit specious to belabor the issue. Temple was a product of metaphysical, idealistic philosophy, particularly as developed by Caird, Bosanquet, and Whitehead. Within this tradition one simply does not make sense of the kinds of questions posed by the "scientific" philosophers. For example, Patrick Gardiner is fairly representative of this scientific tradition in how he poses the issues: Is history a science? How do we know historical facts? Are there historical laws? What kinds of evidence are used in establishing historical connections?<sup>59</sup> For Temple these are not the basic questions concerning the philosophy of history. Because they do not aim directly at discovering history's meaning and purposes, they are not profitable avenues of inquiry.



Within metaphysical traditions Temple's work illustrates certain characteristics. He clearly opposed any cyclical theory of history because it fails to allow for freedom or for a dynamic, personal idea of God. Similarly he saw little merit in any methodology which emphasizes methods and evidence to the exclusion of actions, purposes, and goals.

It is also important to consider how Temple understood the Christian faith in the context of the philosophy of history. This is the second and final task of analysis. We cannot merely talk about Temple's philosophy of history because he clearly saw the Christian dimension as the significant one in all discussions about history. The unique events in a Christian interpretation of history are God's revelation in Jesus Christ, his continuing activity in the world, his provision for man's freedom, and the promise of the kingdom.

A Christian view of history is one which is based upon value, the value of personality and God's activity to guide, help, and redeem persons. A Christian view of history is salvation history in which the divine purposes are being fulfilled just as their conclusion is anticipated with expectation and joy. For Temple all events are a part of salvation history even when men cannot or do not recognize them as such which is to say that ultimately this interpretation is a matter of belief.

In its outline Temple emphasized those things which have been central to theological interpretations of history. His process methodology, his affirmative use of the idea of progress, and his willingness to examine and use materials from other interpretations differentiates his idea of history from that of numerous other perspectives.

1. William Temple, 1934: *Nature, Man, and God*, London, Macmillan, pp. 434-441.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 434.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
6. F. A. Iremonger, 1948: *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, Oxford University Press, pp. 537-538.
7. William Temple, 1924: *Christus Veritas*, London, Macmillan, p. 189.
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