

A SUMMARY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPENCER HEATH

SPENCER HEATH MACCALLUM AND ALVIN LOWI*

Introduction

THIS PAPER SURVEYS the life and work of a neglected libertarian philosopher, Spencer Heath (1876–1963). Heath is little known today because he worked independently, published little, and, having no formal academic connections, lacked students to work with his ideas. Yet he is notable for developing a comprehensive and wholly nonpolitical philosophy of capitalism based on a view of evolving society, and for showing strong optimism for the future. Heath was especially concerned to outline an authentic natural science of society, one that would be capable of generating dependable technologies. This enabled him in 1936 to self-publish a monograph, *Politics versus Proprietorship*, in which he forecast the continuing evolution of society leading in the foreseeable future to the private production, guided by normal profit motivation, of all public services. This was the first statement of the proprietary-community principle.

Libertarians finding that a hostile or defiant attitude toward government drains their creative energies will be inspired by Heath's wholly constructive outlook. Others, seeking to reconcile traditional Judeo-Christian teachings with the rapidly changing conditions of the modern world, will likewise find

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Heath's philosophy valuable. The thoughtful layperson may be intrigued by such diverse and seemingly strange questions as the following:

- How can Heath's *action* hypothesis make it possible to derive the speed of light, near-absolute-zero temperature, and atomic explosion instead of only postulating these?
- How is society distinguished functionally from mere population?
- Can the quality and the quantity of a population be distinguished numerically?
- How was the development of number concepts critical in the evolution of society?
- How can society qualify as a distinctively new life-form on the earth?
- Was the historical Jesus an intuitive poet with a vision of the future?
- Was it accidental or on purpose that Jesus, uniquely among the world's major religious figures, stated the golden rule in the positive form?
- Can it be shown by the *action* hypothesis that scientists and theologians are addressing the same reality?
- How is the emergence of society changing our psychology, specifically with respect to the emotions that move people to fight or flight on the one hand or to creation and discovery on the other?
- How is the cosmos unalterably set in the direction of progress?

Heath expressed his ideas much more in conversation than in his writing, and much of what he did write was lost. But on his death in 1963, a grandson and co-author of this paper, Spencer Heath MacCallum, collected his extant writings, notes, and correspondence, largely handwritten, and transcribed and numbered them, making up the Spencer Heath Archive. As computer and scanning technology developed, he began to digitize the archive, still a work in progress. When complete, it will be domiciled at the Universidad Francisco Marroquín, in Guatemala, where MacCallum has been a visiting professor.

The authors of this all-too-brief summary of Heath's philosophy have taken pains to present his ideas accurately and, so far as possible, in his own words as found in the archive and recalled from conversations. MacCallum worked closely with his grandfather for several years before his graduate

studies in anthropology, and Lowi, who has a background in physics, also had extensive contact and conversation with Heath. Now in their late eighties, MacCallum and Lowi were incentivized to prepare this primer on Heath's philosophy for the benefit and inspiration of those who will come after.

Biographical Brief

After earlier successful careers as a professional engineer and a practicing patent attorney, Spencer Heath became widely known as a pioneer in early aviation. In 1907, with his law client Emile Berliner, he successfully demonstrated the helicopter principle—that rotary blades can lift the weight of an engine from the earth. Later he developed the first machine mass production of airplane propellers and supplied most of the propellers used by the Allies in the First World War.¹ After the war, he developed and

¹ Spencer Heath Archive, Item 2742, article abridged from the *Baltimore Sun*, August 12, 1922, under the headline, "SAYS PLANES WILL HAVE GENERAL USE: Spencer Heath Predicts Big Demand for Flying Craft":

Baltimore has the largest and only exclusive manufacturing plant for the production of aeroplane propellers in the United States. During the late war the factory produced and supplied 75 percent of the propellers on flying machines used by the armies of the United States and allied governments, particularly for the war planes of England and Canada. England alone purchased some 10,000 of them.

The concern in question is the American Propeller and Manufacturing Company. Its product is the "Paragon" propeller and the president, general manager and founder of the business is Spencer Heath, who not only designed and perfected the various types of propellers in use, but designed and manufactured the special machinery utilized in the manufacture of "Paragon" propellers.

Recently, Mr. Heath devised a perfected gear propeller, the pitch of which can be changed at will. This enables aviators to instantly adjust their machines to all atmospheric conditions and to land and take off with greater safety. The device is also expected to assist in solving the question of aeroplanes landing on the decks of ships. On dirigibles it enables the engineer to reverse or go ahead as easily as a steamship entering her dock.

In 1910 the first hydro-aeroplane ever raised by its own power was taken off the water by a "Paragon" propeller. This propeller is still flying. In the same year G. H. Curtiss, using a "Paragon" propeller, at Los Angeles won the great speed contest, defeating Radley in a Bleriot, Ely in a Curtiss, Parmelee in a Wright and Lathan in an Autonette. The first United States Army dirigible was driven by a "Paragon" propeller, and since that time tens of thousands of them have been in use in the United States Government.

demonstrated the first successful engine-powered and engine-controlled variable and reversible pitch propeller, a technology requisite for large-scale commercial aviation. His forecasting of general aviation that year, as opposed to aviation merely for sports or military applications, made news.²

In the summer of 1929, Heath sold all of his patents and technical facilities and two years later retired from business to devote himself fully to the study of his long-time interest, the philosophy of science. He set out to discover what the successful sciences, those that had given rise to dependable technologies, had in common that could help in the development of an authentic natural science of society. In his major work, *Citadel, Market and Altar*,³ he outlined such a science.

Soon “Paragon” propellers were flying everywhere: on South American rivers driving boats, over the Andes, in Mexico for Carranza, in Alaska carrying the United States mail, in Canada on the first dreadnaughts, in the air fleets of China and Japan, on the military machines of Siam, with the Black Sea fleet in Russia, on training planes in England, with the Allies in France, with the United States Army and Navy at all their flying fields and in many other parts of the world. Even the first naval seaplane to cross the Atlantic Ocean, the NC4, was equipped with “Paragon” propellers. When the people learn more about aviation, Mr. Heath says, traveling by air will be as much a matter of course as by train or automobile.

² A detailed study of Heath’s role in early aviation is in preparation by Evan Davies of the Institute of Historical Survey Foundation.

³ Spencer Heath, *Citadel, Market and Altar* (Baltimore: Science of Society Foundation, 1957). Heath’s other publications, available from Spencer H. MacCallum:

Heath’s Parliamentary Table. Compiled by Spencer Heath. Washington, DC, 1906.

“Propeller Theories,” *Journal of Franklin Institute*, 1912.

“Aeronautical Propellers,” *Journal of the American Society of Naval Engineers*, 29 (3) (August 1917). Revised October 1917.

Articles on aeronautical engineering, various journals, 1912–1930.

Politics versus Proprietorship, self-published in mimeograph, 1936.

“Why Does Valuable Land Lie Idle?” *Appraisal Journal* 7 (3) (July 1939).

Progress and Poverty Reviewed and Its Fallacies Exposed (Baltimore: Science of Society Foundation, 1952).

“Solution for the Suez,” privately circulated October 1956.

Citadel, Market and Altar (Baltimore: Science of Society Foundation, 1957).

“The Capitalist System,” *Libertarian Papers* 7 (2015).

His examination of the fundamentals of physics suggested to Heath that the dimension known in its technical sense as *action* was a more fundamental quantity than the abstract concept *energy*, since action contains the element of time, or duration, making it a more realistic, observable quantity. It struck Heath that a reformulation (literally) of physics in terms of this more realistic property might lead to a new integration and simplification of the physical sciences. And indeed this hypothesis has been found to have merit in recognition of the universal principle of least action and Planck's discovery of the quantum of action as the foundation for quantum mechanics, operational calculus, and the theory of electromagnetic radiation emission.⁴ The principle of least action is now seen to be the most fundamental principle in physics, displacing the energy-conservation principle, which can be derived from it, while the converse has never been accomplished. The *action* concept led Heath directly to his idea of reality being experienced in terms of events rather than as a stream, or continuum, of consciousness, and this concept became the basis of his all-encompassing philosophy.

Heath materially helped found the Henry George School of Social Science in New York City in 1932, and for several years lectured there on population theory and land economics. He had been attracted to the Georgist movement since the 1890s for its championing of free trade in all but land.⁵ But now, examining private property in land from a functional standpoint as called for by his *socionomy* (the name he would later adopt for his scientific approach to society), he discovered that, far from being a pathology, the institution of private property in land is basic to social life. As it evolved and matured, Heath believed, it would make Henry George's Philosophy of Freedom, as it was called, self-consistent—that is, wholly nonpolitical and spontaneously self-enacting.⁶ From his functional understanding of land ownership, he was able to forecast, as once he had forecast commercial aviation, the spontaneous emergence of a major industry for producing and

"Society, Its Process and Prospect," *Libertarian Papers* 8 (2016).

"What Is Distribution in the Market Process?" *Libertarian Papers* 9 (2017).

"Malthus's Doctrine in Historical Perspective," *Libertarian Papers* 9 (2017).

⁴ See the Wikipedia article, "Principle of Least Action."

⁵ Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (Appleton, 1881).

⁶ Spencer Heath, *Progress and Poverty Reviewed and Its Fallacies Exposed* (Baltimore: Science of Society Foundation, 1952). The intention of this polemic was to draw attention to the by-then largely neglected Land Question and ultimately to provoke constructive thought on the part of Georgists.

administering all public community services contractually, for profit, in the competitive free market. His 1936 monograph, *Politics versus Proprietorship*,⁷ showed proprietorship to be the grand alternative to politics, and it was also the first statement of the proprietary-community principle.

Remarkably, Heath was not a social reformer. Rather, based on his wide reading, his experience in the market, his scientific and technical preparation and pursuit of authentic social science, and his keen observation of things around him, he was forecasting the direction in which he saw societal evolution moving.

In these same years, Heath perfected his unique view of the historical Jesus as an intuitive poet who anticipated a world without politics, a voluntaryist world in the perhaps distant future which is only now, two thousand years later, beginning to come about and which he called, poetically, the kingdom of God on earth. That was the vision. But he also had the method, the means, and the social technology to realize the kingdom. The method was the golden rule. It is significant that his rule is stated in the positive form because, when practiced, mutually and reciprocally, it is the sole ethic in capitalist, free-enterprise behavior. It is a command to engage in contracts: to go into business, doing for others in the manner we would have others do for us, which is to say, with regard for their wishes.⁸ It is incorrect to say that this rule is found in most major religions. The positive formulation is unique in that it is a command to *do*, not refrain from doing. It alone is a command that can be practiced.⁹

These investigations preceding World War II formed three legs of a philosophy of creative capitalism which Heath set out in his *Citadel, Market and Altar*, self-published in 1957. The mid-twentieth century being a time of

⁷ Reprint of *Politics versus Proprietorship*, privately published by Heath in mimeograph, 1936, is available free on request from Spencer MacCallum. For discussion of the social role of land ownership, see MacCallum, “Freedom’s Ugly Duckling: A Fresh Take on Private Property in Land,” *Libertarian Papers* 7 (2): 135–55.

⁸ For evidence that the historical Jesus had a thorough grounding in contracts, see Libertarian Christian Institute, “Economics and the Parables of Jesus with Jeffrey Tucker,” Podcast Episode 44, December 11, 2017.

⁹ A book compiled by MacCallum from Heath’s unpublished writings and correspondence, *Economics and the Spiritual Life of Free Men* (scheduled for publication in late 2018), fully develops this idea and its implications for the world now emerging.

ascendant statism, the book received only a limited circulation, mainly as a gift, but did inspire some significant responses.¹⁰

Summary of the Philosophy of Spencer Heath

The Scope of Heath's Inquiries

Spencer Heath seriously addressed three broad fields of inquiry and showed them to be interlocking: (1) the philosophy of natural science and the nature of knowing, (2) human social organization, and (3) the spiritual life. By *spiritual* he meant the aesthetic and creative—the non-necessitous part of life, the part that is pursued for its sake alone. Out of these three threads of

¹⁰ The following are some of the responses to Heath regarding gift copies of his *Citadel, Market and Altar*: John J. Grebe, Director, Nuclear and Basic Research, Dow Chemical: “Your analysis gets closer to a measure of our performance as a society than anything I have come in contact with so far.” Virgil Jordan, Chancellor, National Industrial Conference Board: “When I had the happy surprise of getting your book... I thought I would be able—as I have so often in my many years of book reviewing—to read it and write you about it much sooner than this. But I found it so stimulating, so fruitful of suggestion, so penetrating in its perception that I have not yet exhausted its content, and it will probably occupy my thoughts for the rest of the summer.” William Ernest Hocking, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Harvard University: “For two months I have been enjoying your letter and your book, and a sense of fellowship... because we have come through experience, not pure speculation, on some of the same ingredients of any durable civilization for the future.” Roscoe Pound, Dean Emeritus, Harvard Law School: “[The subject] is one in which I have a deep and abiding interest. Here is a book of the first importance... an outstanding contribution to a crucial problem of our times.” O. Glenn Saxon, Professor of Economics, Yale University: “It is not only a highly stimulating and exciting presentation of the fundamental philosophy and principles of a free society, but shows the positive, constructive, and flexible features of these principles that are essential to the survival of any society in the revolutionary changes through which the entire world is now rushing to an early climax..” Charles C. Gillispie, Professor of History of Science, Princeton University: “Your book is so original in its approach and so unconventional in the scope of the subjects embraced that I find it extremely interesting.” Rose Wilder Lane, libertarian author: “It is impossible to express my delight in your *Citadel, Market and Altar*. This is the book I have been wanting, waiting for, indeed weakly yelling in print for: an empirical, *scientific* approach to ‘social science.’ I am happier than larks ever were, now that it is written.” F. A. Harper, economist and founder, Institute for Humane Studies: “a breakthrough of scientific reasoning into the realm of human relationships.”

diverse character he wove a whole-cloth philosophy, a single, unified perspective on human life.

Science

To begin at the beginning, Heath found that a person's first consciousness is of *self* and *not-self*. For human beings live in two worlds, the subjective and the objective. Our subjective life is not limited to what we can experience of the objective world; in it we can entertain dreams and phantasmagoria without end. But the world outside of self, the objective world, is unyielding. We experience it incompletely and can speculate about it but never know it with certainty. Only so far as we learn about it, however, can we increase our likelihood of survival. As we learn how things work in the objective world, we are able to make predictions that enable us to live in it—to not get run over in the streets, for example. As we gain this knowledge of how things work, we build a congruence, a correspondence, between our inner and outer worlds; our mind takes on a measure of the rationale—the *mind*—of nature. The process by which we accomplish this, whether under controlled laboratory conditions or in the barn or on the street corner, is fundamentally the scientific method. To the extent that we attain this *at-one-ment* with the universal, we live rather than die, we achieve our aims, and we dream and objectify our dreams.¹¹

This knowledge of the not-self is at first empirical, cut-and-try. But at some point in the human experience, we obtain knowledge of numbers and systematize our observations. Formal scientific method arises. Now the knowledge that was intuitive and empirical begins to be rational (literally concerned with *ratios* of the numbers of things). As we develop rationality in our minds congruent with that found in nature, we begin to advance our at-one-ment with the world of nature around us.

¹¹ Heath occasionally hyphenated words to emphasize their etymological origin and clarify their meaning in context. The word *atonement* is more commonly found in the Hebrew ritual for Yom Kippur, in which it has come to stand for repentance for misdeeds. But the etymology favors Heath's usage, which is contemplation of nature for the purpose of harmonizing one's relationship with it. His usage is actually more in keeping with the original Hebrew sentiment, which referred to the story of Jacob in the Old Testament, in which Jacob was known as Israel, the one who grapples with God, or nature (for some). Thus, the Children of Israel celebrate Yom Kippur as the day of at-one-ment with nature. Intimations of a scientific inclination are unmistakable.

Heath makes two generalizations about the not-self that are borne out by observation in each field in which we have developed successful science, i.e. that yields dependable technologies. First, so far as we can apprehend, all nature consists of happenings, or events, which have three quantifiable aspects. In Heath's terminology, these are *mass*, *motion*, and *time*, measurable in grams, centimeters, and seconds, or their derivatives.¹² Even with the aid of instruments, there are upper and lower limits to our ability to experience, and measure, events. Second, within the range of human experience, all events are composed of discrete lesser events. At each level of integration, events organize into larger events, which in their turn become units for still greater events. To illustrate, electrons and other subatomic particles organize into atoms, atoms into molecules, molecules into living cells, cells into complex organisms, and these into societies, or superorganisms. At every level, the combining units must become fully individuated before organization is possible, for their very diversity is the basis of their functional integration, which presupposes freedom of each to manifest its individual nature. To the extent that the integrity of any unit is compromised, it cannot enter into the making of a higher-order (i.e., more complex) individual. Hence, at each level the constituent units are appropriately called *in-dividuals*.

The test of successful science is that it support rational projection, hence giving rise to practical technologies. Technology, in turn, consists in purposefully altering the ratios of the mass, motion, and time aspects of events to effect desired changes. To illustrate the concept, hypothetically varying the composition of an event whose quantity is maintained constant can yield such qualitatively distinct manifestations as near-absolute-zero

¹² For the derivation of Heath's terms consistent with the customary units of physics, see Alvin Lowi, "An Elementary Concept of Action from a Physics Viewpoint" (unpublished paper). Lowi believes Heath was on the track of a wholly new integration of the physical sciences starting with a reformulation of physical theory in terms of energy-in-action, or *action*, which can be experienced, not of energy, which is an abstraction. This accomplishment would fulfill a promising but neglected line of inquiry hinted at in the work of Lagrange, Hamilton, Maupertius, Euler, and Helmholtz, among others, at the turn of the twentieth century and before. (See Max Planck, *Treatise on Thermodynamics*, translated by A. Ogg [London: Longmans, Green, 1903].) The effect would be not only to simplify the sciences but to strengthen theory by more firmly grounding it in observational experience, since the fundamental quantities would be more directly observable. As Lowi points out, "That 'action' is more fundamental to physical theory than energy... is no longer a controversial idea. We not only have the quantum theory; we also know that the energy conservation principle can be derived from the principle of least action but not the reverse" ("A Call for Action," *Science News* 139 [1], May 11, 1991).

temperature (least motion that can be experienced even with instruments), atomic explosion (greatest motion), and speed of light (least time).

Human Society

Applying these generalizations to human population, Heath found the means for differentiating the quality of a population from its quantity. By quantifying population as a human event measurable in quantity of action, he found in the durational component of the action a quantification of the viability of that population in terms of the longevity of its individual members, thereby successfully bridging the gulf in meaning from its quantitative (purely numerical) aspect to its qualitative (aesthetic worthiness, durability, reliability, beauty, value, etc.) aspect. Comparing two populations as events that are quantitatively alike when measured in life-years,¹³ we find that the population manifesting the greater life span is the more viable of the two since more of its numbers live beyond the period of biological reproduction—replacement of its members—and into their productive and creative years. Though its numbers are fewer, by living beyond the period of procreative imperatives, the members have greatly expanded their opportunity to produce and create beyond their own biological needs. In contrast, a population suffering a short mean life span remains at a subsistence level, absorbed in day-to-day survival, regardless of the numbers involved or the territorial density of its communities, if any exist.

What accounts for the observed difference between two such populations? What is it that enables members of one to live longer on

¹³ The unit of measurement for the energy manifested in a population is not merely the highly variant individual life of the mean. It is the *life-year* of that hypothetical mean, which makes the measurement actually a quantity of action, not energy: hence, the action manifested in a population. One average person (energy) living one year (duration) constitutes the action (energy times time) of a single life-year. Ten average persons living an average span of ten years represents the action of a hundred life-years. A million with an average span of twenty-five years is a total action manifestation of twenty-five million life-years for that generation. A half-million with a span of fifty life-years represents the same number of life-years. It is clear, then, that while the quantity of human life as an event can be measured in terms of action, the quality of that life cannot be so measured merely by enumeration alone. The quantity of action per generation may remain the same while great changes occur in the constituent numbers, viz. the above example in which for a given amount of action, the generational event can have a small population with a long life-span or a populous one with a short span. (See Spencer Heath, *Citadel, Market and Altar*, p.11. Baltimore: Science of Society Foundation, 1957.)

average? With respect to developing a social technology, can we learn something from a comparison of the two? Heath's answer is that the difference between the two populations lies in the degree of individuation, or integrity, of the individual units and how that affects the possibility of functional interrelations among them. Recall that organization at all of the various levels in nature arises from the spontaneous interaction of units that are entire and uncompromised *in-dividuals*, each freely and fully expressing its own nature. In which of our hypothetical populations—the populous or the enduring—are the individual members more freely operating and congenial? In which are they more compromised and collisional?

Where individuals, through cooperation, evolve forms of spontaneous order, we see the development of society. In Heath's concept, population alone is not sufficient to constitute society; behavior is the key. Wherever in a population we observe individuals freely engaging in reciprocal relations, there and to that extent only are we observing society. The first human societies were severely limited to small, face-to-face populations and heavily dependent upon systems of kinship terminology for assigning roles and ordering customary relations within the group. But with the discovery of mathematics, and with it the possibility of accountancy and an entire complex of contractual market institutions, the reciprocal relations can become impersonal, and, being impersonal, universal, potentially including all people. Without knowing that I exist, the coffee grower in Brazil provides my morning cup of coffee. Commerce being blind to race or ethnicity, the whole earth becomes a web of reciprocal services, freeing men and women to cultivate their personal lives within their circles of familiars.

With the maturation of society, we have the emergence of a distinctly new life-form on the earth, a biological organism marked by a function not shared by any other, namely the potential to interact creatively with its environment so as not to exhaust and despoil it but to make it progressively more capable of supporting its own kind of life, and not necessarily at the expense of any other.

Examining this emerging life-form, Heath recognized three functional aspects, symbolically expressed in the title of his volume *Citadel, Market and Altar*. The first was the defensive, or protective, function, affording that security of persons and property upon which all else rests. This he might have called the *integrity function*, since it has to do with maintaining the integrity of the constituent units: individuals. While this can require the use of defensive force, the major part of this function is provided by voluntary or customary observance of the distinctively social institution of *property*. The second function he recognized, symbolized as *Market*, was that of exchange, whereby people attend to one another's biological needs with benefit to each

and sacrifice of none. It maintains the organism alive at any given level but is not, in and of itself, progressive. If Citadel and Market denote the immunity function and the metabolic function, respectively, then *Altar* symbolizes the psyche, for it includes all the non-necessitous activities people engage in for their own sake: the aesthetic and recreational arts, religion, philosophy, pure research in the sciences, and the like. If the Market maintains the society at a given level, the Altar, through its discoveries feeding back new technologies into the marketplace, advances society to new levels, ever enabling it to transcend itself. As the Citadel enables the Market with greater and greater efficiency to solve the problems of sustaining life, so the Market, by progressively freeing men and women from bondage to biological need and natural risk, grants them passage into the realm of the Altar—the realm of creative artistry, inspiration, and motivation to pursue higher goals.

In *Citadel, Market and Altar*, Heath outlined his rationale for a natural science of society and explored in some detail one proposed application of social technology, a means whereby he thought the marketplace, under normal profit motivation, could and ultimately would undertake to provide all public services, replacing the present tax-based and insolvent administration of our public communities. For the name of this new natural science of society, he suggested a little-used but already-existing word, *socionomy*, defined by *Webster's New International Dictionary* as “the theory or formulation of the organic laws exemplified in the organization and development of society.”

The Spiritual Life

Heath observed that all action requires motivation. Intellectualizing alone, the mere idea of a contemplated act, does not suffice for this purpose. For the primitive person, enslaved to the vagaries of environmental circumstance, the need for motive power is satisfied to a major degree by the emotions of fight or flight—namely, rage and fear. But what energizes the social-ized person,¹⁴ in whose situation the need to choose fight or flight no longer predominates? In a civilized situation, the emotions of rage or fear are largely counterproductive or irrelevant. What is the emotion that moves men and women to acts of creation and discovery? Heath found his answer to this question in the aesthetic response to beauty.

¹⁴ By inserting a hyphen, Heath reclaims for free-market use a word that otherwise signifies an advocate of political (i.e., coercive) action of some kind. Following Franz Oppenheimer's distinction between the *economic* and the *political*—between society and its contrary, political government—a social-ist is someone practicing voluntary exchange.

While in agreement with the voluntarist ideal of many of today's anarchists and libertarians, defiance of authority was conspicuously lacking in his philosophical position. No social reformer was he, no militant relying on anger or moral outrage. His ambition was to lay the foundation for an authentic natural science of society. In keeping with this goal, he strove to so inspire others with a sense of the still-hidden beauty in the evolving social order that, under aesthetic motivation, they would begin to make discoveries there like those in the established fields of the natural sciences.

For Heath, the office of religion, as of all the arts, was to lift individuals out of their mundane rounds and, through inspiration, assist them in discovering and utilizing their creative potential. In his view, aesthetic experience and religious experience were synonymous. It was entirely natural, therefore, that Heath should recognize in Judeo-Christian teachings important correspondences with the beauty he saw and, even more, intuited in the social field. In this tradition as in no other, and especially in the precepts of Jesus, he discovered a rich language of discourse for conveying the beauty he saw in evolving social relationships. By utilizing this language, he hoped to a significant degree to counteract the poor image that free-market capitalism has received at the hands of collectivists of all degrees over the past hundred years or more. In his interpretation of Judeo-Christian teachings, he was as sincere and devout as he was original.

Almost incidentally, in discussing Christianity, Heath noted a correspondence between the early church fathers' intuitions of the triune nature of the Ultimate Reality and the findings of modern science. Whereas the Christian theologian speaks of Substance, Power, and Eternity,¹⁵ or, in more personal and immediate terms, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the scientist speaks of gram, centimeter, and second and their derivatives to describe the mass, motion, and durational-time aspects of events. Both are treating of the same reality, the one in absolute terms, the other in relative, or finite, terms. One is dealing with conceptions only, the other with objective experience, which is necessarily finite since we are finite creatures. The one treats of the Infinite Whole, the other of its finite manifestations, or parts.

But Heath's most fundamental insight in the religious field had to do with the person and teachings of the historical Jesus, whom he saw as an intuitive poet who had a glimmering of the full potential of humanity that would be realized through the universal society, only now emerging two-

¹⁵ Robert Flint, "Theism," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th edition, vol. XXIII, p. 240: "One substance in three persons, of which the first eternally generates the second, and the third eternally proceeds from the first and second."

thousand years later, which he called the kingdom of heaven on earth. Jesus saw that the key to this kingdom, cast in more explicit terms Moses's injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself," was to *do* for others in the same manner you would have them do toward you—which is to say, with full regard for their wishes in the matter. This positive rule is the formula for free enterprise and everything it entails, whereas the negative statement, merely to refrain from harming anyone, makes no history. Except for a limited application in stressful circumstances, it is sterile.

By pointing out that service is the objective side of love, and building on this simple insight, Heath accomplishes a major integration of market economics with Judeo-Christian religious doctrine. The reward for obeying the will of God—his command of the golden rule—is life and life abundant. And indeed, life expectancy has increased spectacularly in the last two-hundred years with the worldwide spread of commercial enterprise. Jesus made it abundantly plain that it is not just good intentions but doing the will of God that counts. Many businesspeople believe their intentions are selfish or even bad, but that mindset belongs to the past and has still to catch up with their behavior. So long as they are practicing business and not cheating—which is not business but its contrary—they are serving their fellows as they would be served and thus are fulfilling the will of God.

Precisely because service in the marketplace is impersonal, it can become universal, which makes it divine love. As our practice of divine love lifts us progressively out of bondage to necessity and into the realm of the creative arts pursued for their own sake alone, we come increasingly under aesthetic motivation, which in Heath's poetic terms is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In this heavenly kingdom, made heavenly by the practice of divine love, we increasingly enjoy that promised perfect freedom which is obedience to God's will. That freedom comes about through men progressively discovering the rationale underlying the processes of nature, which is to say the mind of God as manifested in the works of God, and thereby achieving at-one-ment with God.¹⁶

¹⁶ This religious interpretation, which Heath developed in the 1930s or earlier, is entirely consonant with the biological and religious perspective developed by the biologist Edward McCrady. In evolutionary terms, McCrady, like Heath, describes the emerging human society as a superorganism, while in theological terms he describes it as the Mystical Body of Christ. As McCrady's guest, Heath spent the 1956 academic year in residence at the University of the South at Sewanee, auditing classes in advanced theology and developing further his understanding of the Christian doctrine of man. At the time, McCrady was completing his book, *Seen and Unseen: A Biologist Views the Universe*.

The Cosmic Polarity

The unifying concept of Spencer Heath's philosophy overall is his recognition that the cosmic process is unalterably set in the direction of progress. That is, the cosmos is continually reorganizing its constituent threefold events not randomly, but to maximize the third and qualitative aspect: durational time. Thus are events ever becoming more real in the Platonic or Pauline sense of those things being most real that most endure. The rationale underlying this is simple: those events that are better organized, in the sense of their constituents exhibiting more reciprocity in their relationships, will outlast those events whose parts are more collisional, resulting in a bias over time in favor of the former. Hence the earth is becoming greener, meaning more alive, every day, and the emergence of the human societal life-form, which is only just beginning, is the apex to date, so far as we know, of that process.

Spencer Heath did not name his philosophy, perhaps to avoid it seeming to be something complete and final. For he always considered his thinking to be a work in process and hoped it might inspire others to carry it further than he was able. But an earlier, unpublished paper by Heath, "The Ascendant Order in Nature: Toward a Philosophy of Knowledge," compiled, edited, and titled by Don Erik Franzen, combined with the fact that Heath had been greatly influenced by Emerson in his early years, suggested the name *ascendentalism*, a term not yet to be found in the dictionary. It is suggestive of Emerson's *transcendentalism*, but, unlike that term, which can suggest movement merely from one level to another, the new term implies movement indefinitely upward.

Epilogue

What is the relevance of Heath's philosophy for the world today, in which socialism so strongly appeals to the rising generation? Heath's own words provide some hints about the lasting value of his ideas:

Socialism is simply the ultimate of government taxation and control. It has a false but definitive philosophy, and likewise, a false religion with glowing promises of utopian freedom under political change. Capitalism, until of late, has been relatively inarticulate. It practices the golden rule of each serving others as he would be served, yet has little conscious knowledge of the sound philosophy and vital religion that it constantly puts into practical effect six days of the week.

Libertarian efforts seem to be addressed more to the necessity to escape than to the desire to attain, more to deploring what is evil than to glorifying what is good. The movement is handicapped for

want of emotional fire and enthusiasm as well as for want of a transcendent ideal. And economics, on the other hand, is almost drably utilitarian. It has no utopian dream, no ravishing goals.

Beyond the primarily materialistic aspect of economics, we need to comprehend the basic exchange technology of the social organization in its overall aspect as an evolving (or developing) high form of life. In the golden-rule relationship, and no other, its members rise from being pensioners pressing against a diminishing subsistence, into their spiritual nobility of building not mere subsistence and utility but ever more order and beauty in their world. As in the unborn child, the organs and parts of this high form of life, consisting of its specialized members and groups, are slowly taking form in the womb of time, all unseen and unrealized by the conscious minds of men. How can men be awakened with understanding, that it may sing in their hearts and minds and quickly speed the coming dawn?

Let us seek fuller understanding of our free-enterprise system as an ideology on the march toward a genuine utopian goal. Capitalism is not a finished product. Historically, free enterprise has only just begun—the beginning of a long-delayed fulfillment of the Palestinian vision of abundant life and length of days. When we catch the vision of what freedom has in store, then we will have our transcendent goal, a vision that will be realized because implemented by freedom and thus sanctioned in the divine.

Let us counter the socialist strategies with a positive dynamism, conscious of the divine organic process if not the final goal. For socialism appeals only to the animal instincts, whereas we have vast oceans of rational beauty and aesthetic appeal at our command.

A major objective of Heath's was to help birth an authentic natural science of society, meaning a science that could generate dependable social technology. Discovering what the existing successful sciences had in common, he published in *Citadel, Market and Altar* an initial outline of a wholly rational science of society, successfully bridging for the first time the gap between the quantitative and the qualitative.

Heath looked to others to fill in this outline. How were they to do this? As Heath stated in his will, it had been “a guiding motive, purpose and desire of my life to promote knowledge and understanding of the structure, functions and processes of the voluntary, non-political and mutually beneficial social organization in its correspondence with the harmonious structures and dominantly integrative processes of the material and physical world.” He believed that in science, as in any other field, the psychological prerequisite for discovery is aesthetic motivation under the inspiration of

beauty—pursuing for its own sake beauty dimly seen or intuited. He also believed that the most profound gift we can offer our fellow human beings, our most valued service, is inspiration. Consequently, it followed that his approach to the subject in speaking and writing should be in large part aesthetic, religious, and poetic.

