that religion has failed. It can no longer surmount and transcend the individualism of the age. Thus, in a strange way, the outcome of secularity is to give to both sociology and theology a common purpose of restoration of a sense of what has been lost: society and God.

The vision of the study points to the need to find new resonances and new soundings of belief. With its ear habitually planted on the field of culture, sociology, with rightful religious dispositions is well fitted to hear these resonances uniquely in ways theologians high up on the walls of the city of God might not. But these new possibilities do not come easily to any, for as Taylor indicates sacrifices are required. Recognition of these leads him on, perhaps, unexpectedly to affirm asceticism and renunciation and these provide the basis of revolt against a world increasingly becoming homogenised.

At the end of the study, Taylor places much value on an insight of Robert Bellah, a slogan of his that 'nothing is ever lost' (772). The slogan implies that all can be recovered and so to that degree *A Secular Age* fittingly points to a promise and hope that '..*they that shall be* of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the new foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in' (Isaiah 58:12).

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Charles Taylor replies:

Kieran Flanagan treats *A Secular Age* as it should be treated, as a set of 'interlocking essays'; and that means he rightly treats it as radically incomplete and inadequate to its defined goal, which is to characterize modern Western secularity by tracing its rise. In other words, I am treating secularity as something which is path-dependent. But this path is immensely complex, more an interlocking skein of highways and byways than a single giant autobahn. My book treats only a small and idiosyncratic collection of byways. It leaves much relevant material quite untouched. This idiosyncratic feature emerges from my index, as characterized by Flanagan (page 707).

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Flanagan's paper offers a great series of new paths which deserve to be explored; so great that I literally have trouble knowing where to start. I'll try to make two points, one negative and short, the other longer and more positive.

The negative point concerns my use of the concept Reform, the long series of successive and cumulative movements of reformation in Latin Christendom, beginning arguably with Hildebrand. I give this a fateful importance in the development of the secular age; an epoch-making case of unintended consequences. But I don't see this as mainly the doing of Protestantism, and what we often call *the* Reformation (Flanagan seems to suggest that I do on page 707). The long series has important Catholic chapters as well, both before 1517 and after. One of the latter, the French Catholic Reformation of the 17th Century, is particularly familiar to me as a Québécois, and perhaps some of my negative judgment on the whole series comes from this experience. As I contemplate the French 17th Century, whatever my doubts about the behavior of Jesuits, and despite my almost unbounded admiration for Pascal, I find myself drawn to the anti-Jansenist side.

But to take up positively one of the themes that I discern in Flanagan's paper, I don't see myself as relating to the mediaeval past nostalgically. 'Nostalgia' is not quite the right word. There are passages of the long history of the Church, in its different branches, from which we can learn in our own spiritual lives today. A good example is the rediscovery of earlier liturgies as part of a project of liturgical renewal (see page 716). But there is the very widespread sense that we have unraveled what was a perfect package, and our best hope is to recover as many elements as we can. This kind of nostalgia goes along very often with a sympathy for the anti-modernism of the period before Vatican II, which was intensified during the Pontificate of Pius X.

I grew up under this regime, and I have understandably close to zero sympathy with it. Having read Congar and de Lubac as a young adult, I was a partisan of Vatican II before we even knew such a thing was possible. I recognize that there have been some negative consequences of Vatican II, most prominently some of the liturgical fall-out, but I am still very much in favour of what I see as the basic *demarché*. This consisted in demystifying the supposedly 'anti-modernist' crusade, by revealing its true nature as a congealing of an early modern reading (often arguably a misreading) of the theological and philosophical (i.e., Thomistic) tradition. This quite recent and 'modern' constellation was erected into the millennial tradition of Catholicism. The theologians who prepared Vatican II undermined this, not in the name of modernity, but in that of a more authentic *ressourcement* in the writings of the Fathers. In other words, they

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opened the way for the kind of return to sources which is such an important part of contemporary Catholic life.

Two other important consequences went along with this. The Council began to question a bad and distorted understanding of the Church's magisterium (which questioning the hierarchy has been attempting to roll back in recent decades). And closely linked with this, the Council cut the link between Church authoritarianism and the various political forms with which it was frequently complicit. Today we no longer hear that 'error has no rights', and that religious persecution is OK as long as it's directed against heretics and unbelievers.

Finally, we are now in a position to note and draw positive consequences from the end of 'Christendom'. We are in this sense in radical discontinuity with both the Middle Ages and the Tridentine era.

I am the very reverse of nostalgic about all this. I think we are well clear of that. It is not that there were not marvelous realizations which came out of Christendom(s). But times have irrevocably changed. Christendom is no longer compatible with diverse democracies. We look for new itineraries towards faith, ones that have no exact correspondents in earlier periods. This doesn't either make these periods superior to ours, or the reverse. The Church is ultimately a meeting place for peoples from all ages and cultures.

I am sympathetic to Lundin's idea in his recent study *Believing Again.*[1] There are people who 'believe still', that is, who have managed to recover much of the pathway to the faith which was available in previous centuries, and there are those who 'believe again', starting from a very different place, and by different paths. We have both kinds in our contemporary Church, and this is as it should be; we should above all avoid the stigmatization of which one sees a lot of in today's Catholic Church, especially when we look across the border to the United States. But I see myself as a 'believer again', and I think that these people will bulk larger and larger in the Church as time goes on.

That is what underlies my affinity for Hopkins and Péguy. Hopkins follows not only an untrodden path poetically, but his celebration of God's energy in the universe is utterly orthogonal to the apologetics of benevolent Design, and the counter-apologetics of Darwinian struggle. He's coming from a different place, in an age where so many Christians and atheists are stuck in the old ruts. This rigidity is understandable in those atheists (there are happily lots of others) who have deeply drunk of the reductive philosophy of mechanistic materialism; but Christians ought to know better.

[1] Roger Lundin, *Believing Again* (Grand Rapids: Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009).

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But I have just taken up one theme among the large number of very rich ideas that Kieran Flanagan opens up in his paper.

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