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12-25-2015

December 25, 2015: Merry Christmas 2015

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Title: Merry Christmas 2015

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12/25/2015—Readers of this blog know that hallowed secularism will have close connections to traditional, organized religion—especially what might be called the mythic life of our religions. Thus, hallowed secularism in India will be strongly influenced by Hinduism, in the Islamic world, by Islam. The Christian West bears already the strong marks of religion in its secularism. The whole idea of “good without God,” for example, is Christian to its core. At the heart of the mythic life of Christianity, its rhythm, is the movement from Advent/Christmas to Good Friday/Easter. From promise to event, from tragedy to resurrection. It is this rhythm that hallowed secularism in the West must learn from. The major thrust of the Christian myth is its inherent meaningfulness. And that meaningfulness is not negative but positive. The ultimate optimism of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* or Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* is absolutely true to Christian life and thought. The creative power of the Christian West historically can be placed here—at the point of meaning and optimism. It is at this point that the struggle of hallowed secularism with nihilism occurs. It is not clear how that struggle will go. Even Heidegger, the thinker of western post-Christianity, is not clear to me on this crucial point. On meaning, yes. But I have seen him read as a tragic thinker. I believe not. When Heidegger holds out for the West an other beginning, he seems to me to be doing just what hallowed secularism must do—adapting to the myths of its religious origins. Christmas is always an other beginning. The Christ child is always coming. Advent is Heidegger’s emphasis on preparation. That is enough for today. For Christmas Day. How Easter will go is another issue for another day.