

Hartshorne argues that American philosophy has arrived at "a metaphysics in which human freedom and human consciousness are given a congenial setting, unfavorable both to collectivism and to anarchic individualism, but favorable to reason in religion and religion in reason, and furnishing an ethical principle (not, of course, an ethical code) that is valid for all rational beings, independently of factual circumstances" (CIAP: 12). But what is the "ethical principle" to which he refers here?

One passage bearing on an answer to this question is this:

". . . the eternal principle of good is God's eternal essence and is in no sense arbitrary or contingent. It is what God could not choose not to will and what we can fail to approve only by failing to understand it or ourselves. It is the beauty of holiness, of incorruptible all-embracing love" (203).

Perhaps another such passage:

"My ethics . . . tells me that, despite these actual dangers [sc. threats of nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare], we are obligated to do the best we can with a situation one would not have chosen to be in, but which has been brought about by freedom, the source of both good and evil" (263).