In the field of ‘Spirituality’ a lot has been written recently about taking into account the spirituality of people who do not go to church. At least to be included are people whose creed amounts to: “I believe in something,” in the spirit of ‘Here-Comes-Everybody’, that figure from Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* invoked by Thomas Altizer in his *Genesis and Apocalypse*. So the Spirit’s presence is not confined to that most modern(ist) of things, one’s consciousness of an object. Another, slightly less radical way is to look for that which is common to the spirituality of all and various religious people. In that case the study of spirituality works with the inter-subjectivity of phenomenology. Belief in something is good for you, belief in something definite is even better. Max Seckler makes the fair point that all theories of religion work with some amount of content, some norms, even if these are vaguely perceived. He thinks there must be theocentricity for there to be any real religion worth that name. There has to be in religion a conscious *ordo hominis ad Deum*. It is not enough that one is grasped by any all-consuming passion, whether for football or ‘life itself’. But to have God in view need not mean alienation or heteronomy, insists Seckler. The “whence?” and “whither?” questions are much more important; religion is not about unlimited engagement, but engagement in the Unlimited, engagement that has its reasons that can be expressed. The elementary experience of transcendence involves a knowing that there is ‘more’—and that this is received as a gift and deliverance from existential guilt. The modern turn to individual choice can serve this religious end, for self-awareness of one’s position in the whole of reality takes us out of ourselves.

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4. A. Halder, “Religion als Grundakt des menschlichen Daseins,” in *Handbuch der Fun-
Where Seckler uses the word ‘religion’, we might feel like employing ‘spirituality’, given what he says about it as something experienced more than practiced. Nevertheless, in trying to locate and describe human spirituality as something distinct from religion, we might want to say that it is something given in nature to each and is best viewed in an inchoate or pre-religious state. So it will be better not to attempt to piece a spiritual identikit from various congruent features taken from a number of religions, which is a trap Seckler barely avoids. Rather than focus on that which is primal and prehistoric, about which we have to speculate, it might be better to view that which is primary, in each of us. That is not to say that this primary spirituality is not carried into religious experience and practice when and where such is embraced and hence could be observed there, but it might be easier to look at it apart from these expressions, hence in the pre-religious life. Of course, no spirituality is purely one’s own: it will have absorbed much of the religious ideas and values of the culture in which it operates. However, prior to embracing one such religion, the reception of these will remain inchoate. Yet with the hindsight of later conversion and confession of a religious faith, one can say that ‘pre-conversion’ there was some process taking place. For written evidence of this it might be better to look at novelists writing about restless sinners than theologians writing about saints. One will need however, before attempting that, to give a theological account of spirituality.

1. The First Theme: Grace and Nature

Recently, there have been attempts to create a theology which allows for humanity in its pre-converted, pre-religious state to be considered as ‘spiritual’. One can call it ‘Romantic’ (John Milbank, for one, is happy to use this term) to speak of the ‘supra-natural’ (*surnaturel*) condition of humanity as something which is truly natural, and which takes the form of a desire for the utmost good, a universal Providence. Non-religious people want that too, and in some sense this kind of natural desire can form the basis or platform for some sort of elevation that is not wholly alien to their previous desires. One might wonder whether calling such a condition ‘surnaturel’ is to misname a desire for happiness which does not have much place in it for personal love for God. Yet it is only fair to give this approach a fuller account.