



- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS



The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Foundations of Liberty By the Rev. A. G. Fellows, Th.L.	1
The Law Stands Supreme	3
The Will-To-Power	5
The Australian Flag	6

THE FOUNDATIONS OF LIBERTY By the Rev. A. G. Fellows, Th.L. - 1973 ALOR Seminar
Gustave Thibon, in his chapter “*The Decline of Freedom*” in the symposium “Christianity and Freedom”, says the following: “A glance at the map will show that the area of maximum material prosperity and the area of maximum spiritual development coincide exactly with that which has witnessed the diffusion of Christianity. A no less convincing proof of this fundamental will to freedom is the age-long clash between the Church of Christ and the powers we may rightly describe as totalitarian . . . tyrants of every description have never deceived themselves; since the Caiaphas and the Caesars, down to the masters of Germany yesterday and those of Russia today, a very sure instinct has taught them to see their deepest and most dangerous enemy in Christianity” (page 11).

“From Imperial Rome right down to our own day—and in spite of the obstacles constantly placed in the way by moribund members of the Church’s own body—the diffusion of Christianity has gradually resulted, directly or indirectly, in a development of the freedom of individuals and living groups (families and communities), whatever the resistance of tyrannical individuals or collective bodies. The Christian idea of the equality of human souls before God led little by little to the abolition of slavery; it mitigated all forms of man’s oppression by man (the liberation of women, for example, and the recognition of the rights of children; the local and professional communities of the Middle Ages; the defence of native populations against colonial invaders, of the proletariat against the abuses of capitalism); it broke down rigid class distinctions and the narrow seclusion of the old caste systems, and at every rung of the social ladder it facilitated the means of individual promotion. There is no human freedom (the right to possess and transmit property, to engage in enterprise and to think) which Christianity has not served to stimulate; and this vast **hatching** of freedoms... constitutes the very soul of that western civilisation, the decline of which today fills us with deep anxiety, tempered by hope. The human person, delivered by Christ, has been able to develop his loftiest potentialities; we see the results in culture, in the economic and juridical and the political order. This civilisation is infinitely creative because it is founded on freedom... The absence of creative power is common to all totalitarian regimes ...”

The Introduction to the same symposium contains these words:

“What is immediately apparent to an unbiased observer is that at the first awakening of the notion of freedom and human dignity what we find is Christianity. It is to Christianity that man owes, if not the awakening of the ideal, at any rate its consolidation and universal expansion. The fact is that the Gospel emphasised decisively the dignity of the human person. It preserved the natural bonds between the particular individual and the human groups that fashion him, but it clearly laid down the autonomy of the individual based ultimately on the nature of God, in whose image man was created... Thus the evangelical ideal, together with the doctrinal principles it inspired, acted through all history as a leaven, constantly urging western man to instil the greatest possible freedom into his social, economic and political institutions.”

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

What the New Testament speaks of is, of course, spiritual freedom, or, if you like, interior freedom. You and I have been set free by Christ, but this is a freedom from the bonds of sin, and the Baptismal service contrasts this freedom with the freedom from physical bondage which the Israelites had experienced in Egypt. Paul speaks of himself as the slave of Christ, but he is thereby free, and this is the very paradox of Christianity. Jesus Himself, although bound before Pilate, was the freest man in that whole gathering. He was Truth incarnate, and the living witness to His own words- “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free”. Pilate was in bondage to his own hates and fears, the chief priests and other leaders of the Jews in bondage to their preconceived idea of the Christ and to a desire to keep the peace at all costs. But Christ was free.

All exterior freedoms flow on from this interior freedom. The Church’s primary mission is to concentrate on the latter, not on the former. She is not in the world primarily to break social chains, but to give men spiritual riches, reserves of love, moral reserves, which will make possible the development of exterior freedom. As Thibon says- “in other words, instead of attacking directly the power of Caesar, it first develops God’s cause in ourselves”.

It is Christianity which insists on the uniqueness of each individual before God. All men are **not** created equal, but each man is created free, moral and responsible. The inequalities of life are compensated for by the words of Jesus, that

“unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required”. The worth and dignity of each individual, rich or poor, high or low, and of inestimable value in the sight of God, is fundamental to Christianity. The working out of this principle in life was a slow process. Look at slavery, for instance. It existed in New Testament times, and its institution conflicted with the Gospel ideal. But the Church made no frontal attack on it. Paul, in writing to the Christians at Ephesus, made no suggestion that slaves should demand their freedom; rather, he told them how to behave themselves as Christians. In writing to Philemon, he made no suggestion that the latter should set free his converted slave, Onesimus. Many slaves were among the early Christian communities, and it was possible to be a slave and to be free in Christ. Even today we can see the repetition of Christ’s freedom portrayed in the lives of present-day martyrs and confessors, like Richard Wurmbrand. But the Christian conscience came to see eventually that slavery was wrong in principle, and it was abolished.

The real foundations of liberty, then, are spiritual. True freedom is obedience, obedience to a moral law, obedience to a God “whose service is perfect freedom”.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEDOM

The development of the ideal of freedom under Western Christianity is fascinating and I am going to stick to what happened in England, the “mother of Parliaments”. It is common to start with Magna Carta in 1215, but we must go back much further. The conversion of the Angles began with the mission of Augustine in 597 A.D., and he made his headquarters at Canterbury and became the first Archbishop. Prior to this, Christianity had grown up amongst the British, but the invasion of the Angles had forced Christians to the west, to Wales and Cornwall. It was left to a new mission altogether to begin the conversion of those conquerors. What is remarkable is that within 100 years the Church in England became fully organised, and the genius behind this was Archbishop Theodore, a Greek monk, who succeeded to the See of Canterbury in 668. He became very much attached to the country. When he died in 690 he had laid the foundations of our present parochial system, had divided up huge dioceses into more workable ones, and had set up diocesan and national synods. It was the regular subordination of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate; in the administration of the Church, which supplied a mould on which the civil organisation of the State quickly shaped itself; and it was the Church synods which by their example led the way to the national parliament, just as it was the canons enacted in those synods which led the way to a national system of Law. So, as far back as the seventh century, it was the organisation and settlement of a united Anglo-Saxon Church that suggested to our ancestors the possibility of a single civil community. The Church was united before Theodore died in 690, but it took another 300 years before there was a united kingdom.

If we may jump now to Magna Carta, the first thing to note is that the Archbishop of Canterbury was one of the moving spirits of that tremendous document. He was Stephen Langton, an Englishman. Pope Innocent III had gone to some trouble to get him elected, refusing to accept the nominees of the king and of the monks of Christ Church.

When Stephen Langton got to England after some difficulty (he was then Chancellor of the University of Paris), he must have astonished the Pope and the king as well, by his very independent line. Langton supported the barons in demanding their ancient liberties. When King John had capitulated to Pope Innocent as a result of the interdict, Langton had extracted an oath from John by which the king promised to renew the laws of Edward the Confessor, but he knew the king’s character too well to be content with a verbal promise made under compulsion. No one quite knew what the ancient laws were, but Langton searched the archives and produced the charter of Henry I, which recited those laws, and stipulated what privileges the prelates and barons respectively might claim for their order. He called the nobles together privately at St. Paul’s, London, on August 25, 1213, and the barons declared themselves ready to die for these liberties. When Langton presented to the king the claim for traditional liberties, John, feeling himself strong again, repudiated his promise to ratify the ancient English laws. This was the last straw and John was threatened with defeat in the field. He agreed to sign a charter which he never meant to keep. The interesting thing is that it is based on ancient codes of Law— it did not spring up new. Just after the signing the barons stood firm against the king, and Langton stood firm against the Pope. Both suffered considerably, but the Charter had been signed, and when Henry III succeeded to the throne Langton’s Charter was accepted in the first official act of the realm. Langton had acted throughout as an English patriot, and he has been well described as one of the great nursing fathers to English liberty.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAGNA CARTA

The Reverend M. W. Patterson, in his book *A History of the Church of England*, asks the question— what importance can we attach to Magna Carta? He dismisses some of the more extravagant estimates of its importance, but makes the following three points:

1. First of all, the great danger then was royal absolutism and royal tyranny. It was all-important that the rights of others, the Church, the barons, freemen, the towns, should be put into writing. Vagueness was always in favour of absolutism, but here was a written document to which, in cases of dispute, an appeal could be made. Throughout the Middle Ages, Magna Carta was a definite rallying point for constitution opposition to the Crown. Before the close of these Middle Ages, the confirmation of Magna Carta had been demanded 38 times, and granted.

2. The Charter provided a type for future reform. In it there is no statement of abstract theories, such as in the French Declaration of the rights of man, or in the American Declaration of Independence. Magna Carta is a typical English document because it is so practical. It is a summary of actual abuses and a bargain for their abandonment. It claims nothing new, but the old customs. England, it is said, is a land “where freedom slowly broadens down, from precedent to precedent”. (One might add, too, that the restriction of freedom slowly narrows down, from precedent to precedent.)

3. In the Charter were embedded principles capable of progressive interpretation. The Charter laid down, for

example, that no arbitrary feudal taxes were to be taken without “common consent of the realm”. This principle could easily be extended, and was extended in later years, to the Customs and to taxes on personal property. Again, the Charter laid down the principle that there was to be no arbitrary imprisonment, but only imprisonment after a lawful trial— here was embedded the whole principle of personal liberty. So, what the barons gained today, the common people would gain tomorrow. Bishop Stubbs was right when he said that the whole of the constitutional history of England was a commentary on this Charter. When Edward I confirmed Magna Carta, according to Blackstone’s “Commentaries” of 1765, he did so by a statute “whereby the Great Charter is directed to be allowed as the Common Law; all judgments contrary to it are declared void; copies of it are ordered to be sent to all Cathedral Churches, and read twice a year to the people, and sentence of excommunication is directed to be as constantly denounced against all those that by work, deed or counsel act contrary thereto, or in any degree infringe it”.

THE FIRST COMMONS

The Great Charter came at the beginning of the 13th century, and another great milestone in our constitutional liberties came at the end of that century. In the time of Henry III, Earl Simon de Montford was the leader of the national party of clergy and laity against foreign courtiers and the Papacy. Matthew Paris likened the Englishmen of his day to sheep, for whose destruction the pope and king, as shepherd and wolf, were allied together. Langton’s Charter, though repeatedly acknowledged by Henry III, was as often ignored by him. It was almost as though there was a conspiracy to denationalise the English Church and realm. So the clergy and laity banded together to form a patriotic party. The Church champion this time was not Canterbury, but the Bishop of Lincoln. Robert, called “Grossetete”. This meant “Greathead”, on account of his great learning and scholarly attainments. He became Bishop of Lincoln in 1235 and died in 1253. Because of the introduction of foreign nobles into the councils of the realm, he combined with Simon de Montford and the national peers to demand a voice in the election of the king’s advisers. King Henry and his son, Edward, had sworn to accept the Provisions of Oxford, drawn up by the barons in 1258, and renewed the following year at Westminster, in order to reform the grievances under which the Church and realm were labouring. But he soon evaded his promise, and the barons took up arms against him in sheer despair of obtaining their liberties by more constitutional means. At first the king and prince were made prisoner after the Battle of Lewes. Earl Simon was appointed governor of the country, and he summoned representatives of the citizens and burgesses to assist the knights of the shires and nobles and prelates in their deliberations for the welfare of the country. This was in 1265, and is the first instance of the Commons being summoned to Parliament, which is the French term by which the Witan had for a long time been designated. In summoning this experimental assembly Earl Simon was guided by what he had seen successfully done in the annual Church Synods, which had continued without interruption from the times of Archbishop Theodore,

and held their sessions in the council chambers, or chapter houses, of the various cathedrals. These Church council chambers were placed at the disposal of the Witan, because, for one thing, the bishops had jurisdiction as legislators and judges. So Earl Simon’s representative assembly of Lords and Commons met in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, where succeeding Parliaments continued to meet in London, until a suitable building was erected for the sole use of legislators. It is well to remember the true origin and locality of the early Parliaments, because many ill-informed people trot out the well-worn phrase that the Church of England, at any rate, is the creation of the State. It is the opposite of this notion which is the truth.

Earl Simon was killed in the same year at Evesham, but Henry agreed to continue the representation of the Commons in the national Councils, although these Parliaments were chiefly summoned by him to grant funds for his terrific expenditures. Between 1265 and 1268 the clergy and laity combined to restrain any excesses on the part of the victorious Royalists, and so the cause for which the patriotic party had fought was not lost.

THE LAW STANDS SUPREME

W. R. Stephens, in his *History of the English Church 1066-1272*, says the following:

“The great principle is that law is above the ruler, and that the sovereign who does not rule in accordance with law and truth must be restrained.”

And he quotes a long Latin poem by a nameless author, composed after the battle of Lewes:

“Let him who reads know that he cannot reign who does not keep the law. If the prince loves his people he ought to be loved in return; if he rules righteously he ought to be honoured; if he goes astray he ought to be called back by those whom he has oppressed; if he will be corrected by them he ought to be uplifted and supported... Law rules the dignity of the king; for we believe that the law is light, without which the ruler will wander from the right path”.

He says also that the important part played by the Church in this struggle for constitutional rights cannot be better expressed than in the words of Sir Francis Palgrave:

“However powerful the nobles may have been, it is doubtful whether they would have been able to maintain themselves against the monarchy, if they had been deprived of the support of the abbots and bishops who were placed in the first rank as peers of the realm. The mitre has resisted many blows which would have broken the helmet ... It is to these prelates that we chiefly owe the maintenance of the form and spirit of free government secured to us not by force but by law; and the altar has thus been the cornerstone of our ancient constitution” (pages 246 and 247).

Stephens goes on: “Edward himself, the victor at Evesham, learned to respect the principles for which Earl Simon fought and died, and to rule in conformity with them. He learned the lesson which his father was never able to learn— that the king’s throne must be established in righteousness, by doing strict justice to all men, by giving to every class some voice in the great council of the nation, above all by scrupulous fidelity to promises, in accordance with the

motto inscribed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey- *'Pactum Serva— keep troth'*.

“We must gratefully recognise in the Church the most potent and beneficent agent in shaping the life and destiny of the English nation. Notwithstanding many obvious defects inseparable from the rudeness of the age, together with germs of corruption which developed only too rapidly in the hard, cold, selfish times which succeeded the 13th century, the Church was undoubtedly the chief source and centre of progress and civilisation”.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

In 1295 the first completely representative Parliament met, and comprised :

1. barons and prelates by virtue of their nobility;
2. one proctor to represent the clergy of each cathedral, and two proctors to represent the clergy of each diocese;
3. two knights from each shire;
4. two citizens from each city;
5. two burgesses from each borough.

In the next year there was further trouble between the king and the clergy, because of the demands made by Pope Boniface VIII. Eventually Edward agreed to the confirmation of the Charters, and this was carried through on October 10, 1297. This placed the control of the national purse in the hands of Parliament, and completed the foundation of English constitutional liberty. England, at this stage, was far ahead of any European country in the acquisition of national unity and national liberty. Wakefield, in his *History of the Church of England*, says:

“By the passing of the great Charter in the reign of John, the foundation of the liberties of the English nation was laid, but the fabric was not secured until the establishment of Parliament by Edward I. It was not enough that there should be a document to which to appeal when liberties had been grossly violated, it was necessary that there should be a living organisation at hand to prevent them from being violated at all”.

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

Such are the beginnings of liberty. The history of England in the years that followed is a history of the division of power and of the struggle for a true balance of power. The era of the Commonwealth in the 17th century shows the temporary ascendancy of the Parliament over the Monarch, and of Calvinism and Puritanism over the Church. But England got sick of it, and Charles II returned in 1661, to the great rejoicing of the people, and the bishops and clergy returned to their positions and parishes. From then on we see the development of freedom of worship, and so many of the freedoms we take for granted today—the principle of Habeas Corpus, freedom of speech, trial by jury, freedom of the press, the independence of the Courts, and so on. These have been embodied in various Bills of Rights in some countries. Man is considered to have rights that are his by nature, rights which no government can take away. The precursor of these Bills of Rights was the English Declaration of Right in 1689, a summing up of the illegal acts of James II, which were incorporated into a Statute called the Bill of Rights and presented by Parliament to King William III and Queen Mary. This stands with Magna Carta and subsequent charters as the legal guarantee

ON TARGET

of English liberty. It listed certain rights that were the “true, ancient, and indubitable rights and liberties of the people” of the English kingdom. It settled the succession to the throne, and limited the powers of the king in such matters as taxation and keeping up a standing army.

So we have the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 saying:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”.

Amendment No. 4 of the American Constitution refers to the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. It is noticeable that, although the philosopher John Locke influenced the American situation, his contention that man had a right to property was not expressly included then.

An Act establishing a Canadian Bill of Rights was assented to as late as August 10, 1960. It begins as follows:

“The Parliament of Canada, affirming that the Canadian nation is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity and worth of the human person and the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions; affirming also that men and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law...”

Clause 1 of the Bill of Rights reads as follows:

“It is hereby recognised and declared that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely, (a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law...”

It is noteworthy, however, that the Canadian Bill of Rights is **not** an amendment to a constitution. It could be repealed or changed by Parliament.

The “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen”, issued in 1789 and prefaced to the French Constitution of 1791, contains these words:

“... the National Assembly doth recognise and declare, in the presence of the Supreme Being, and with the hope of his blessing and favour, the following sacred rights of men and citizens-

1. Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights. Civil distinctions, therefore, can only be founded upon public utility.

2. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptable rights of man; and these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression.”

The “Basic Law” of the Federal German Republic, devotes a section to what it calls Basic Rights:

“The German people, therefore acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every community, of peace, and of justice in the world”.

THE REVERSION TO CENTRALISED POWER

But of course merely to state that these rights exist is no guarantee that they will be observed. The struggle will always go on to ensure that authority is subject to law, that there is a proper balance and division of power. Today, in the land of the Mother of Parliaments, we have a situation where the Monarch (1972 - Elizabeth II) is a figurehead, her powers latent but not used through convention, and the House of Lords shorn of a good deal of real power. It is the Commons which has the real power—and what does this really mean but the Executive, the Cabinet? So the wheel has turned almost full circle and power is once more concentrated into the hands of a few. Division of power in our own country is nothing like the older concept of the 3-tier division. In Australia we have a 2-tier House and the Queen's representative. This concept is the same in most of the States, remembering that the States existed prior to Federation.

The Senate in Australia was intended to represent the interests of the State in a genuine division of power. The whole concept has been bedevilled for a long time by Party politics, and liberty has been accordingly diminished. For on the whole it is no longer possible to vote for **men** and to choose **men** who will work in the best interests of the individual, but we must vote (here I emphasise the word "must") for policies, for platforms, for abstractions, and we do not have a genuine choice. The last Federal elections (1972-ed) is a good case in point. True freedom is the ability to choose or reject one thing at a time. How many voters, who marked first preference for the A.L.P. candidate on December 2 last, really wanted the whole bagful of election promises dangled before them? What a different story it might have been if all the items in the platform had been submitted to the vote of the electors separately.

THE WILL-TO-POWER

It must not be supposed, because we have no more royal tyranny, that we have disposed of the tyrant for ever. The will to power lurks in many breasts. I well remember that a very prominent Australian said in 1944 some words to the effect that people could not expect complete freedom after the War. It would be necessary for some individual to be given the right to say what was best for the community. Who was he? No less than Dr. Coombs, and now 30 years later he is one of the mentors of the present Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam. In 1942, the late Dr. H. V. Evatt, speaking in Federal Parliament on a proposed amendment to the Constitution (rejected at the polls in 1944) said:

"I desire to make it perfectly clear that the constitutional amendment I propose will give the decision to Parliament itself and no person will be able to challenge the validity of Parliament's decision".

Here we have the concept of an all-powerful Parliament with no checks on its decisions, no mention of recourse to law. At one time Parliament was a safeguard for the people against the demands of the sovereign. Fortunately that era is past, but the wheel is coming to a full circle and now we may have to look to the Sovereign as a guarantee of our personal liberties against the claims

ON TARGET

of Parliament. May we do so with confidence? I have my doubts. A very recent example will suffice. The United Kingdom Parliament passed a Bill to bring Great Britain into the Common Market, as a signatory to the Treaty of Rome. The term "Common Market" is misleading. The basic purposes of the Treaty of Rome are political, involving the abrogation of national sovereignty and the centralisation of power. And here we have the sad spectacle of British politicians themselves signing away British sovereignty when no outside power has been able to take it since 1066. Such trading advantages as may accrue from membership (and there is no real indication that they **are** advantages) are quite secondary. It was plain for at least one year prior to the vote in Parliament that a majority of the people of the U.K. were opposed to membership of the European Economic Community. Now a sovereign who was vitally concerned with the welfare of the people, let alone the continuance of the role of the throne in the U.K., might well have pondered the advisability of signing into law a Bill which proposed such far-reaching political and social changes. I suggest that had our Queen refused to sign this Bill, preferring to let the people decide by referendum or fresh elections (which would have meant her dissolving Parliament), she would have faced a great deal of vituperation from some sections of society, but would have struck a great blow for the common people and would, I believe, have been vindicated by their subsequent decision. She would also have set the throne more firmly in the lives of the people and in the constitutional history of the U.K. I think this was one of the watersheds of the history of England. By all means let the sovereign sign into law those things which are the will of the people. But we are fools and blind if we imagine that today every decision of Parliament is the will of the people. They are often the will of a very small number of men and women who are wedded to Party doctrines, and who imagine that to win an election is to be given carte blanche to do what they like. The late Sir Stafford Cripps, good Churchman though he was, a generation ago in England said in his book, *Where Stands Socialism Today?*:

"It is now possible for an individual to challenge in the Courts the use of any particular power exercised by a Minister as being outside the sphere determined by Parliament. This inconvenience must be removed".

I consider that this kind of language is treasonable. But he was a Fabian Socialist, and true to his ideals. In another book *Can Socialism Come by Constitutional Means?* he said:

"The Government's first step will be to call Parliament together and place before it an Emergency Powers Bill to be passed through all its stages on the first day. This will be wide enough in its terms to allow all that will be immediately necessary to be done by Ministerial orders".

Is this just a flight of fancy? There are many more Fabians in office today, especially in our Federal Government since December 2 last. Such Emergency Powers are all ready and waiting in the U.S.A., and not all Americans are aware of what is hanging over them.

THE MONARCHY

The Monarch is above and beyond Parliament. One succeeds another by birth, and there are always several people in direct line of succession to the throne. No one

is obliged to take the throne, but if the next in succession renounces it, it comes automatically to the second person. And so the highest office in the State is far removed from the area and strife of Party politics. The Coronation is the public crowning of one who has already acceded to the office of King, and this service is full of the religious significance of kingship. Indeed the anointing of the sovereign is perhaps the most significant action of the whole Coronation service. It goes back to the anointing of Solomon, 1000 years before Christ, and emphasises the sacred nature of the office. “Be thou anointed, blessed and consecrated . . .” says the Archbishop. Presidents of Republics are never consecrated. In the inauguration ceremony of a President there is never the close weaving with the spiritual and religious element which is seen in the Coronation. In some ancient Coronation ceremonies, the ruler was ordained as one of the lower ranks of the clergy. The Holy Roman Emperor became a Sub-deacon and Canon of St. Peter’s and St. John Lateran in Rome. Our Queen took the oath to govern, and to execute Law and Justice in Mercy. When she is presented with the Sword of State, the Archbishop says: “With this Sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God . . .” So the magistrates are the Queen’s magistrates, above and beyond the jurisdiction of Parliament, independent of the legislators, and you and I have recourse to them as an effective check on the octopus of Parliament.

Our Queen promised also to maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel, and the Archbishop delivered the Orb to her with these words: “Receive this Orb set under the Cross, and remember that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ our Redeemer”. The Ring was put on the Queen’s finger with the words: “Receive the Ring of kingly dignity and the seal of Catholic Faith...” This ring symbolises the marriage of the Queen and the Kingdom.

The Queen is **our** Queen. In the days when the Crown Commonwealth was much larger than it is now, the world could see a great fellowship of nations all united in a common allegiance to one Sovereign, and this Monarchy was one of the most unifying institutions the world has ever witnessed. Now in Australia we have the cry for a Republic, and it is said for one thing that a Republic would be much cheaper, that to maintain a President with his retinue would not be so costly as a monarchy. I doubt that it would be cheaper, but even if it is I am unmoved, because I believe that it is worth the cost to have a Constitutional Monarchy. It is well to remind ourselves that we do not live in a democracy, but rather under a Monarchy. The word “democratic” is bandied about so much these days that it’s not funny— for instance, the juxtaposition of the words “democratic socialism”. Yet this Monarchy, because of our history and traditions, can assure us those liberties and privileges so commonly thought to be synonymous with democracy.

The cry for a republic could come from the following:

1. those who have little regard for history and tradition;
2. those who appreciate the value of both but are trying to undermine them;

ON TARGET

3. those who hate the religious origins and significance of kingship and of our Coronation service;

4. those who see in the existence of our Constitutional Monarchy a barrier to the taking over of power.

OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

Our National Anthem is about 300 years old, yet the phrase “God Save the King” goes back 1000 years before Christ to the choice of Saul as the first King of the Hebrews. When Samuel presented him to the people, they all shouted “God Save the King”, and a similar ceremony takes place when our Sovereign is presented to the people in Westminster Abbey, and when she is crowned. The Anthem of course has more than one verse— indeed the whole anthem is a prayer— and it prays that the Queen will defend our Laws.

There is agitation again from a noisy minority for a new Anthem. It is said that Australia is a nation in its own right, that it’s high time we stopped being tied to mother’s apron strings, and that this anthem is an embarrassment when played on occasions like the Olympic Games, and so on. Now a good argument can be put up for a truly National Song, but when it comes to an Anthem I would ask— how better demonstrate our loyalty to and unity with the Crown, and our sense of continuity with the past, than by the use of the present Anthem? I suggest that every time we sing “God Save the Queen” we are renewing our Recognition of her which was given with acclamation on the four sides of the Theatre in the Abbey on the day of her Coronation 20 years ago. Will any new Anthem make any reference to God, and be in the nature of a prayer? The name of God has been left out of international treaties for a long time now. When it was proposed that his Name should appear in the Charter of the Declaration of Human Rights in the United Nations Assembly, a great argument arose, and a fair percentage of those present insisted that “we have no need of such an hypothesis”. Perhaps those who decry our Anthem share this view.

Apart from the question of any necessity for a change in our Anthem, one wonders at the spiritual and patriotic bankruptcy of these who seriously sponsor “Waltzing Matilda” as an alternative. If we allow a new Anthem which makes no reference to God or the Queen, we shall have been manipulated into a further detachment from our spiritual and historical roots. And this, I suspect, is the real motive behind the fair words of some who are playing on the chords of independent nationhood. We can be sure of this— if we change our Anthem, we will have a change in our flag. If God and the Queen go out of our Anthem, then the Union Jack with its three crosses will go out of our flag.

THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG

On looking at the flags of all nations or dependencies I discover that there are only 16 which contain any crosses at all; and eight of these have British origins, including our own and New Zealand’s.

The Union Jack in the corner of our flag is of course made up of three crosses. As far back as the 12th century the English flag had only one cross, red on a white background—the cross of St. George. Curiously enough he was an Eastern saint and became popular in England as a result of the Crusades. The Scottish flag with the cross of St. Andrew,

white diagonals on a blue background, was combined with the flag of St. George in 1606, three years after James VI of Scotland became James I of England. Almost 200 years later, in the reign of George III, the cross of St. Patrick, representing Ireland, red diagonals on a white background, was added to form our present union flag.

If this flag does nothing else it reminds us of our Christian heritage. I look at the new Canadian flag, and I see only a maple leaf on some colour. And yet there are some vandals who want to replace our present flag with a reproduction of fauna peculiar to Australia. Our flag is a symbol of our history and tradition, and the one cannot be attacked without the other. The Heritage Society is to be commended for the truths it states in its brochure— *Keep Our Flag Flying*— and I quote from one section of it:

“The individual members of a family inevitably do grow up physically. But a young person of 18 does not demonstrate that he or she has really matured by saying ‘Now that I am grown up I must show my independence by tearing up my birth certificate and changing my name’. Does one demonstrate one’s maturity by disowning and dishonouring one’s forbears? What is noble or elevating about this? It is a manifestation of the intellectual and spiritual sickness afflicting so many who have been cut off from the roots of their own history. Just as a family needs to cherish its antecedents and its history, so too does that larger family called the nation need to remember its origins”.

I would suggest again— scratch the advocates for a new flag and you will find that some, perhaps the most vocal, have an underlying hatred for the cross of Christ and for our traditions and history. And they can call on a number of self-sufficient people who imagine that history is really unimportant, that they are here and that that is all that matters. These are living examples of Cicero’s observation that not to know what happened before one was born was always to be a child.

It has been well said that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. In order to promote real liberty it is necessary to take risks. In the examples I have quoted from the 13th century those who valued liberty were prepared to risk their lives, their possessions and their own freedom. It is only by risking something that is of value to us that a greater good can be won. The refusal to take the risk, of whatever kind it may be, great or small, will not promote liberty. The risk may be only that of being thought “different” or “odd”. To be afraid to stick one’s neck out can sometimes mean that the pass is sold - [betray one's cause-ed]. The ultimate in this is, of course, the taking of arms for one’s country against those who threaten the peace and over-run other countries. In a nutshell then, one of the foundations of liberty is a spirit of sacrifice. This word is grossly misused. We hear of shopkeepers telling us that goods are being “sacrificed”. But such people are studying only their own interests, perhaps to make way on the shelves for other and new materials. Sacrifice should always imply a devotion to something outside our own selves which is strong enough to override our own interests. For the sake of this devotion we are willing to incur personal suffering and even loss. But this loss so accepted is really an offering to God, “made sacred”. which is the true meaning of “sacrifice”.

ON TARGET

Thibon in his book, mentioned before, says that there is observable even now (and that was written in 1954) an increasing distaste of freedom. “It is shown”, he says. “in the avoidance of risk (the rush for pensionable jobs is its most striking symptom) and also in a dangerous receptivity to propaganda ...” “Man is becoming afraid of his own responsibility; there is an insidious tendency to yield to that nameless and featureless force which will relieve him of thinking and acting for himself ... Too heavy a burden is an incitement to a man not only to throw it off, but to become a burden himself. When choosing freedom calls for heroic efforts, then the ‘rush for slavery’, noted in his own day by Tacitus develops into a general stampede”. I wonder if it was the promise of greater “social services” in the platform of the A.L.P. last December which was one of the prime reasons for its attaining control of the Treasury benches. If so it is an illustration of what I have been saying. We must never imagine that we can have more and more of these social “securities” without more and more governmental control. It is interesting to note that Mr. Hayden is now the Federal Minister for Social Security, not Social Services. If security is to be the goal of life, then those who are in our jails are the most secure of all. Everything is found for them. They have three meals a day and a roof over their heads-but it is still a prison. And it was Bismarck who remarked a long time ago, early in this century, that “social services were golden chains around the necks of the workers”. Golden chains, yet, but still chains.

John Stuart Mill, an agnostic of the last century, has summed it up so well on page 178 of his *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (Everyman Edition):

“A people may prefer a free government, but if, from indolence, or carelessness, or cowardice, or want of public spirit, they are unequal to the exertions necessary for preserving it; if they will not fight for it when it is directly attacked; if they can be deluded by the artifices used to cheat them out of it; if, by momentary discouragement, or temporary panic, or a fit of enthusiasm for an individual, they can be induced to lay their liberties at the feet of a great man, or trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions; in all these cases they are more or less unfit for liberty; and thought it may be for their good to have had it even for a short time, they are unlikely long to enjoy it”.

J. S. Mill may never have heard of the word “charisma”, but he would know what it means today. It relates directly, I believe, to that receptivity to propaganda mentioned by Thibon. We are told that some men have it and some don’t. No doubt the glare of television lights emphasises the defects in a man’s looks and the way he tries to “put things over”. Yet if we are not careful we shall place too much stress on this “charisma”, following such a one as the children once followed the Pied Piper to oblivion, or the German people Adolf Hitler. We ought to remember that when Jesus appeared before Pilate and the people had their traditional choice of the release of one prisoner at the Passover Festival, they chose Barabbas before Jesus, and the latter was the Truth Incarnate. But Barabbas to them had the “charisma”- yet he was a robber and a murderer.

We began with spiritual things and we must end with spiritual things. “To be free is to have the power to develop

one's nature, not in accordance with one's arbitrary will but in obedience to the eternal laws of that nature. So primarily freedom is spontaneous obedience, obedience accepted and inwardly lived". So speaks Thibon again. And he points out that it is a great mistake to equate freedom with independence. It is impossible for us ever to be independent. We are always bound to someone or something. I can choose this food or that food, whichever is agreeable to my taste or my need; but I can't choose whether to be hungry or not. I am free to travel or to marry; but before I can exercise that freedom I must first be attracted to a particular country or a particular woman. And so at the root of all freedom there is some attraction, some bond, which I mentioned early in this paper. We are free when from among all the bonds which solicit our choice we can choose those which correspond to our highest desires. And this is where freedom merges into love. We are free to the precise extent to which we can love the people and things on which we depend. In the same surroundings, in the same calling or profession, one man will feel free while another will feel a slave. Take marriage, for example. We speak of the **bonds** of matrimony. If there is real love, then marriage brings real freedom to both partners. If no real love, it is a real "**bind**", and what an illuminating word that is in such a context! A saint, who is capable of loving everything and everybody, feels free in any company and in any circumstances. But those who are incapable of any attachment, the unresponsive and rebellious, find slavery wherever they go. So you can tell the worth of a man by the things to which he is bound their number and their quality. If we are going to be spiritually free we must have spiritual reserves. We must have the wherewithal to be free: we must have at our disposal a field of possibilities created by spiritual roots, but a certain culture. by genuine experience of people and things. If we look at the highest manifestations of freedom we find at their heart some living bond: an obedience inspired by love. You and I are free in respect of our fleshly passions in proportion as we are attached to spiritual values, and we are free in respect of opinions and superstitions to the extent to which we are bound by a faith.

Look at a tree. It can resist the force of the wind to the extent to which it is held firm by its roots; its attachment to the soil is the guarantee of its freedom to become what it should be. But if you "free" it from its roots, its leaves die off and they become the sport of the winds. Is not this the fate of people who are torn away from their natural surroundings, or uprooted from their traditions and no longer obey the fundamental realities? They are, as Thibon says. "a prey to superficial and sterile conformities". Are not those who are always trying to "get with it" the most conformist of all? And a prey to the gods of fashion? It is true, in the words of the hymn of J. Russell Lewell, that:

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth",
but it is the sap of all that is best in the past which will nourish us for the future, and if we refuse that sap we surrender ourselves to the wind and are carried off by it.

So the collapse of freedom has its origin in the rupture of
ON TARGET

vital bonds. Freedom has been confused with independence. How many of the emerging new nations of Africa, rioting in new-found independence, have found themselves with real freedom gone when they woke up next morning? If we think to free ourselves from the old family constraints, from the so-called prejudices of tradition and morality, from the bonds of religion, then we will find that we have forged new chains which are much tighter.

Thibon says again that the decline of freedoms accompanies everywhere, like its shadow, the recoil from Christianity. After all, if freedom rests on living bonds and on love, then Christianity offers the supreme freedom because it brings us the supreme Love. Each one of us is unique. It was not for humanity that God took our human flesh and died; it was for each single person, and there is no equivalent to the mysterious bond which unites us and God. If we are obedient to God and attach ourselves to Him, then we are free in respect of our temporal possessions and even our lives. Knowing that kind of freedom we are equipped to speak of and to act for material freedom, physical freedom. Because religion is no bridle upon freedom. Rather it hatches real freedom. It is a compass for life. If we sail along without a compass we are not sailing freely; we are rather at the mercy of winds and tides, until we eventually experience shipwreck.

The real foundation of freedom is a spiritual reality. If the spiritual temperature of the world rises, the thermometer of oppression will drop. But if the spiritual temperature drops, then the political thermometer of oppression and tyranny will rise. And if the spiritual temperature continues to drop, what will the end be? Let us remember that the world "religion" has as its root the word for "binding"—it is essentially a binding back to God of all that he has created. I would like to conclude with the words of a poem by G. K. Chesterton:

<i>"O God of earth and altar,</i>	<i>From sale and profanation</i>
<i>Bow down and hear our cry,</i>	<i>Of honour and the sword.</i>
<i>Our earthly rulers falter;</i>	<i>From sleep and from damnation,</i>
<i>Our people drift and die;</i>	<i>Deliver us, good Lord!</i>
<i>The walls of gold entomb us,</i>	<i>Tie in a living tether</i>
<i>The swords of scorn divide,</i>	<i>The prince and priest and thrall,</i>
<i>Take not thy thunder from us,</i>	<i>Bind all our lives together,</i>
<i>But take away our pride.</i>	<i>Smite us and save us all;</i>
<i>From all that terror teaches.</i>	<i>In ire and exultation</i>
<i>From lies of tongue and pen,</i>	<i>Aflame with faith, and free,</i>
<i>From all the easy speeches</i>	<i>Lift up a living nation,</i>
<i>That comfort cruel men,</i>	<i>A single sword to thee."</i>

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