

CHRISTIANITY AND FREEDOM

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INTRODUCTION

FREEDOM is everywhere in full retreat. In the majority of nations public liberties are trampled underfoot by States afflicted by the disease of totalitarianism. The very ideal of individual freedom, built up by centuries of slowly advancing civilisation, is today belittled, perverted or even repudiated by the new political ideologies.

Here is a grave danger for the future of civilisation and mankind. It is something against which the West must react. But it would be well for us to start by examining the conditions in which this ideal of freedom first came to birth and the philosophical origins of the idea of liberty. It will be necessary, also, to consider the concrete conditions in which freedom can actually be exercised at the present day.

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.

As Fustel de Coulanges remarked of Christianity: "This new principle was the source of individual freedom. Once the soul was set at liberty, the most difficult task was accomplished and freedom became possible in the social order also."

Thus the evangelical ideal, together with the doctrinal

principles it inspired, acted all through history as a leaven, constantly urging western man to instil the greatest possible freedom into his social, economic and political institutions.

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that never was man so well protected against arbitrary power, intolerance and injustice as he contrived to become during the last few centuries.

If all this is true, it is only by rediscovering the Christian message in all its dynamic purity that Westerners will find the necessary strength for a new and creative advance in civilisation. It can only be by respecting the great Catholic principles concerning the nature of man that a society can be established that is properly adapted to the technical conditions of the modern age, a society in which concern for social justice will permit freedom for all men, without any exceptions in law or in fact.

These are the fundamental problems that will be dealt with in the following pages. They are studied from a very definite angle: that of the historical and sociological relationship which in our opinion exists between the Church of Christ, Catholic and Roman, and the state of freedom in various societies.

History shows, as Gustave Thibon with his usual vigour reminds us, that free societies, those which have been best able to venture, to think, to create, in short *to live*, have coincided in time and space with the area of expansion of western and apostolic Christendom. This is no accidental coincidence but a relation of cause to effect: in our society the Church has been man's educator, it has taught him the meaning of true freedom.

The essays which immediately follow support this assertion *a contrario* (as it were), by showing how in areas other than those in which the Catholic and Roman Church has sown the seed, even where there exist spiritual principles of high value, man has never been able to develop the potentiality of freedom, which we regard as one of his highest prerogatives. India has devised a metaphysical system in many respects admirable, but she

has never been able to establish a freedom-giving humanism, with which, down to our own day, the régime of caste has inevitably conflicted. Islam, in the best of its children, has attained the loftiest heights of mysticism; it has a conspicuous sense of the uniqueness and transcendence of God; but the régime that rose out of the Koran has crystallised society in such rigid forms that it affords no means of free human development. Even in the ancient world of our own classical traditions, in that Greco-Roman world where so many of our roots lie, there were obstacles to freedom and human development; slavery for example, claimed by so many philosophers to be founded not on fact but on right, and also that contempt for labour and human dignity which Aristotle expressed when he said one could never make a citizen of a manual worker. Finally, within the bounds of Christendom itself, in the Orthodox world that derives from Byzantium, there seems to be a kind of vice always paralysing man, making institutions inevitably oppressive, namely the Cæsaro-Papalism imposed by the Basileis. This vice today has to be transposed into terms of the dictatorship of a single political truth which results in the utter mutilation of freedom.

Therefore, by and large, and with very rare exceptions, the equation holds good: the areas of Catholic Christianity equal the areas of creative human freedom.

But to conclude these studies there is surely need for an examination of conscience. Is the equation always valid? Is the world of baptised Christians really the world of freedom still? Is it enough, today, to live in one of these areas, where the seed of the Gospel was sown by the blood of the martyrs, the toil of missionaries and the heroism of saints, to be sure of enjoying the benefits of this freedom? This final examination of conscience is conducted by M. André Railliet, Daniel-Rops and His Eminence Cardinal Feltin.

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CHRISTIANITY AND FREEDOM

by GUSTAVE THIBON

THE DECLINE OF FREEDOMS

THERE is a well-known book—I have no wish to discuss its contents here; they are not much to my liking—the very title of which seems to me strangely significant of the malady of our age. It is *I Chose Freedom*. In normal times freedom is taken for granted as the grounds of all action: one chooses this or one chooses that. Today one has first to choose the faculty of choosing.

There lies the essence of the problem; what we are witnessing in every field is a general recession of freedoms, sometimes violent, sometimes insidious. Man chooses less and less; instead, his choosing is done for him by some anonymous centralised authority.

He is no longer bodily free. Restrictions imposed on his movements, compulsory vaccination and military conscription, retrospective laws and rational feeding, not to mention the police-state mentality, now becoming general, and the displacement of populations, an iniquity rampant in so many countries—all these things have turned the *habeas corpus* of the ancient jurists into an idea of increasingly restricted application.

He is no longer spiritually free. A unified education and all the slogans of importunate propaganda are continually hampering, and to an ever greater degree, the spontaneous development of his thoughts and sentiments.

He is no longer economically free. The State, already ponderously encroaching on the functions of the doctor, the educationalist and the director of conscience, is now turning industrialist, merchant and insurer. Voracious

taxation, combined with oppressive regimentation, threatens the freedom and the very existence of private enterprise. The proletarian condition—if by that we understand the absence of choice and the necessity of submitting to an external force—is reaching out to include every social class and every individual in it. A vast system of redistribution, as ill conceived as it is ill applied, has the effect too often of penalising work and favouring the parasite. The omnipotent State does away with all risks—and at the same time all the opportunities for freedom.

He is no longer politically free. He can no longer choose between *men*, to represent his concrete interests and aspirations, but only between so many abstract programmes, those of the monolithic political parties which carry in themselves the germ of the dictatorial State and impose on individuals an unconditional subscription and adherence.

The picture may be exaggerated; but granted it is, that universal slavery which we see constantly spreading within a few hundred miles of us exists here and now in a rudimentary but very menacing shape. The age of organisers and technocrats has begun. The human person, deprived of every living attachment, is no longer a member of an organism but a cog in a machine, a figure in a particular set of statistics. He has become an isolated slave amid a multitude of slaves.

But the worst danger of all is that in losing his external freedoms man is also losing the sense of freedom and even the taste for it. Slavery, it has been rightly said, is so degrading to men that it even brings them to like it. Indeed there is observable even now an increasing distaste for freedom. It is shown in the avoidance of risk, in the desire for an impersonal kind of security (the rush for pensionable jobs is its most striking symptom) and also in a dangerous receptivity to propaganda. Freedom, once an idol, is now becoming a burden; it is not only paralysed from without, it is abdicating from within. 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. It is a vicious circle: the progress of collectivism and rationalisation deters a man from using a too costly freedom (we are on the verge of a state of affairs where the man who is free is regarded as an "outsider", or even a pariah), while the relinquishment of freedom makes collective protection a necessity. To take just one example: the present-day collapse of the family patrimony, eaten away by taxation and devaluations, makes it often impossible for children to assist their ageing parents, and this very incapacity both calls for and legitimises State intervention. The same fatal sequence is visible, I think, in a remark I heard recently from a village tradesman: "Business is bad; I can't pay my rates and taxes; so what I have done is to apply for a Government job; then instead of me paying the Government, the Government will pay me." 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.

THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

A short examination of the idea of freedom will help us, perhaps, to penetrate to the hidden origins of this tragedy of slavery.

Human freedom is not a purely self-sufficient faculty, something suspended in thin air. It is dependent upon man's nature. "Born of woman," says the poet, "how should I escape humanity?" It rests upon a necessity which it transcends. When we say "to be free", the emphasis should be laid on *to be* rather than *free*. A man is free to the degree that he *is*. Before "free thought" and "free love" come *thought* and *love* without qualification. 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*.

The great mistake is to raise the problem of freedom in terms of independence. Man is a "relative" being, and to be related means to be *bound* to something or someone; it is therefore impossible for him ever to be independent. I am free to choose this or that food at will, whichever is more agreeable to my taste or my need; but I am not free to choose whether to be hungry or not. I am free to travel or to marry; but before I can exercise such freedom I must first be attracted to a particular country or a particular woman. So at the root of all freedom there is an attraction, a desire, and that is a *bond*. A man is free when among all the bonds that solicit his choice he can choose those which correspond to his deepest aspirations. And here the problem of freedom merges into the problem of love. Our choice lies not between dependence and independence, but between a living dependence that develops personality and a dead dependence which cramps and suppresses it. In other words we are free to the precise extent to which we can *love* the people and things on which we depend. Possible freedom is the same as possible communion. In the same surroundings, in the same calling or profession, one man will feel free while another will feel a slave. Marriage, for instance, will be deliverance or servitude according to the welcome we give to the bond of matrimony; the faithful wife, a life-giving presence to the husband who loves her, will be an intolerable "bind" to one who does not. A saint, who is capable of loving everything and everybody, feels free in any company, in all possible circumstances; those who are incapable of any attachment, the unresponsive and rebellious, find slavery wherever they go. As Saint-Exupéry said, you can tell the worth of a man by the things to which he is bound, their number and their quality. To be free is to adhere inwardly, to adhere spontaneously to the particular surroundings that include and transcend us; it is to retain, with these surroundings, analogous relations to those between a member and the organism it belongs to.

Freedom, therefore, means nothing by itself; its value

is that of the man himself, which is measured by what may be called the "density" of his being and by the depth of his love. But what are a man's being and love but a texture of relationships, the intimate presence of *the other* in the soul of the *I*? No freedom is possible without a certain reserve of attachment and communion. Material freedom must necessarily presuppose material reserves. The proletarian is simply one who has no reserves at all, who commands no margin of waiting in which he can choose his work or his employer. So too spiritual freedom requires spiritual reserves: one must have the wherewithal to be free; one must have at one's disposal a field of possibilities created by spiritual roots, by a certain culture, by a genuine experience of people and things. If we look at the loftiest manifestations of freedom we find always at their heart some living bond: an obedience, that is to say, which is inspired by love. A man is free in respect of his carnal passions in proportion as he is attached to spiritual values, and as Gabriel Marcel, following Plato, has pointed out, he is free in respect of opinions and superstitions to the extent to which he is bound by a faith. In just the same way a tree can resist the force of the wind to the extent to which it is held firm by its roots, its means of communing with the earth that nourishes it; its attachment to the soil is the guarantee of its freedom.

Our freedom, then, is both created and creative in relation to the bonds that attach us to the universe: it relies on the support of old bonds in order to forge itself new ones.

SLAVERY AND THE BREAKING OF BONDS

The tragedy of slavery is simply the tragedy of rupture. We have taken the tree for our example: "free" it from its roots, and its dead leaves become the sport of the winds. This is precisely the fate of so many people who are torn away from their natural surroundings, who are uprooted from their tradition and no longer obey the fundamental realities; they become a prey to superficial and sterile

conformities. Of all who believe themselves free, how many are really enslaved! What a prison awaits those who turn their back on the nest, what a yoke is in store for those who rebel against the great laws of nature! What rush-lights and will-o'-the-wisps, what mirages in the desert, haunt those who have succeeded in extinguishing the stars! Servitude and uprooting go hand in hand. It is the sap that nourishes: he who refuses it surrenders utterly to the wind and is promptly carried off by it.

The collapse of freedoms has its origin in the rupture of vital bonds, which in turn is due to the idolatry of freedom. Freedom has been confused with independence, which has led to the pursuit of a phantom freedom, abstract and all but absolute; in the mad career after it, real and concrete freedom has been lost. Divorced from its human context, blown up like a bladder, freedom has burst like a bladder. And every broken bond has produced a new chain. In many countries and for many human beings the word freedom is now no more than a mask, a flunkey's livery to clothe the bodies and souls of slaves.

Nothing is more enlightening than to observe in its various aspects this pseudo-liberation that results in slavery, this refusal of obedience that leads straight to servitude.

Man is tending more and more to throw off obedience to the cosmic rhythms only to become the docile slave of artificial cadences that are infinitely more rigid. He is no longer ruled by the cycle of the seasons and the course of the sun, but every moment he must be consulting his watch!

He has freed himself from every family constraint; he has smashed, in the name of liberty, the old natural communities, only to bow under a new yoke, that of anonymous politics and finance and ultimately that of the totalitarian State.

In the name of free thought or free love he has shaken off the "prejudices" of tradition and morality, but only to submit to the dull conformity of fashion and the influences of the utterly hollow and ephemeral.

He has cut the bonds of religion as being contrary to the dignity of an emancipated mind, and what is the consequence? On the grave of faith there blooms the flower of superstition. Never were men more sceptical of the eternal verities, so credulous of lies and the slogans of advertisement. Fortune-tellers and faith healers, film stars and the pundits of a degenerate literature and art, not to mention the false prophets of science and politics, it is these who have now taken the place of the priest, eliminated by the progress of modern enlightenment.

Solitude and concentration in the mass! Man has turned into a grain of sand, human society into a desert. There are no more bonds, therefore no more freedom. The grains of sand are *docile*, and the reason is simple: though they are heaped together, each of them is solitary. So the wind sweeps them up and carries them off at will. Ours is the age of the masses, the age of mass movements. But there is no greater "mass movement" than a sand-storm in the desert. The forces that move men are becoming more and more alien to what is deepest in human nature.

CHRISTIANITY AND FREEDOM

The dehumanised type that gradually takes shape in the crucible of our modern technocracies and totalitarianisms is at the very opposite pole to the Christian man. The decline of freedoms accompanies everywhere, like its shadow, the recoil from Christianity. The fact once observed is a sufficient indication that the true "road of freedom" is that to which Christ points the way.

And the proof is simple. If, as we have said, all freedom rests upon a living bond and upon love, then Christianity offers the supreme freedom of all because it brings us the supreme love. In it we find that absolute bond which gives perfect freedom. What was the element, unknown to this world before, which made Christianity so utterly original, if it was not the recognition of the intimate yet transcendent relationship that exists between the person of man and the

person of God? The ancients had conceived all kinds of means of effecting a return of the particular to the universal, of the multiple to the One, but they had never dreamed of this mystery of the marriage of the human soul with God. God created me, He knows me and loves me *electively*. To this unique Being, I too am unique; there is no equivalent to the mysterious bond that unites us. It was not for humanity that God became incarnate and died, it was for each single person. "I thought of thee in my agony", Pascal makes Him say; "*this* drop of blood I shed for thee." God loved us first, He came right down to us; this quest of the creature by the Creator, which confers on the human being his infinite worth, is the great liberating leaven introduced by Christianity. "A great price", St. Paul tells us, "was paid to ransom you, do not enslave yourselves to human masters." But here again, and here above all, this liberation is the result of a bond and exacts an obedience. "You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect", which means, attach yourselves to God, be filled with His plenitude, be simply one with Him; and by virtue of this attachment to the absolute and eternal Good, sovereign freedom will be yours in respect of all the relative and temporal goods. It is the great paradox, so it seems, of Christianity that it urges us to attain to completest self-development yet to endure the total loss of ourselves. But these two requirements are in reality one, for my deepest self lies in the God who created me; by losing myself to Him I have sovereign freedom, sovereign self-possession, because my will is thus wedded to the very springs of my being. And the equivalence is strict: He who called us "to share the glorious freedom of God's sons" is none other than He who "accepted an obedience which brought Him to death, death on a cross".

This living and personal bond between man and God is the foundation of the relationship between man and man, for the second commandment is like the first. To love one's neighbour as oneself is to respect above all that freedom he holds of God. Thus we reach the evangelical and Pauline

conception of the mystical Body of Christ, in which every cell is unique (salvation is personal: we die, as Pascal says, all alone) and each sustains, with all the other cells, those *virgin and intimate* elements of communion. As St. Paul tells us again: "None of us lives as his own master, and none of us dies as his own master." It is an inward interchange of *being*, not *having*; the development of solitude in the very heart of communion: the more we are bound, the more we are free; the more we mean to others, the more we are ourselves. The biological analogy is perfect: every member of a living organism develops the more freely as it is more intimately joined to the rest of the organism; a cancer, which is simply an anarchical proliferation, destroys the free functioning of the rebellious organ, and this is the organ that is destroyed by it *first*. The Christian idea of one's neighbour and the commandment to love him as oneself implies an absolute intimacy in the relationship: I love you, not because you are giving me this or that (as in any purely selfish or commercial transaction), but because I am you and you are I, in communion with our one common source which is God. This is the idea which is the common focus, the regulating centre, of all our individual freedoms.

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN FREEDOMS

This Christian liberation, someone may object, concerns only the eternal, the transcendent side of the human being: the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world . . .

But man is one. And it is an historical fact, which none can contest, that in spite of the resistance of matter and sin the Christian Revelation, metaphysical and religious, has penetrated deep into temporal life and renewed all manner of social institutions.

There is no room from here to argue the point fully, but one very general observation is inescapable. We have seen the idea of the old City-State—too often a Pharaonic and totalitarian idea, a pyramid where no stone had any meaning or purpose except in relation to the apex—

gradually replaced, under the influence of Christianity, by something wholly different, an organic conception, in which the cells live their individual lives, each in relation to the body as a whole.

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—thanks to which man has been able to master his own destiny, with all this implies of risk and taking chances, of inner enrichment and contact with reality—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 slave creates nothing; he shares the inertia of inanimate matter. The absence of creative power is common to all totalitarian régimes. The power they wield is vast; but it is essentially material power, like that of an avalanche or a tidal wave.

It constructs, but its very mode of construction is destructive: the instruments it employs are matter and death. An avalanche may carry off a forest, but it can never cause the growth of a living blade of grass. According to Camus, we must choose between the efficacy of a typhoon and that of sap. But man's sap comes from God. . . .

That this surge of energy on the part of the western world is primarily due to the Christian sap, and from no mere accidental coincidence, two global facts sufficiently establish.

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. It is possible to point to cases, always local and provisional, where a *rapprochement* has taken place between the Church and some more or less oppressive power; though, given the time and place, even such might be claimed to be the lesser of two evils. But apart from these instances tyrants of every description have never deceived themselves; since Caiphas and the Cæsars, 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. And at the present moment, against the totalitarianisms that murder freedom yet hypocritically assume its name—an alibi for the tyrants and a mirage for the slaves—the Church stands out as the final refuge of all threatened freedoms. Who else is fighting every inch of the ground to defend from the attacks of this anonymous monster the fundamental rights of the human person, the rights of the family and the rights of labour?

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FREEDOM

This contention provokes immediately a whole series of objections. History text-book in hand, someone will

remind us of the Church's dogmatic rigour, its age-long battles against freedom of thought. In the social and political order he will point to the innumerable alliances between ecclesiastical authority and various temporal powers that cared nothing at all for human freedom.

All this is true and yet false. True immediately and in detail, false on the long view and taken as a whole.

There are two essential elements that would seem to be characteristic of the action of Christianity in the culture and defence of freedom.

(1) *What the Church cultivates in the first place is interior freedom.* In the Church's view all exterior freedoms flow naturally from this liberation of soul; this liberation they must follow, not anticipate. The Church's primary mission is not to break social chains but to give mankind those spiritual riches, those moral *reserves*, reserves of love, which make possible and fruitful the outward exercise of freedom. In other words, instead of attacking directly the power of Cæsar, it first develops God's cause in ourselves.

The Christian conquest of freedom assumes in fact two distinct yet mutually dependent aspects:

(a) The impulse to freedom surging up from the depths of the soul upon contact with the Gospel revelation;

(b) The confirmation of this impulse by the Church as theological *magisterium* and social authority, the translation of this inspiration into what may be called institutional terms.

The second movement always lags behind the first. And it must. The spiritual climate of Christianity encourages the hidden germination of freedoms; but the Church, before gathering a freedom, before garnering it and giving it its official stamp, first patiently lets it ripen in the souls and behaviour of its children. If the fruit is plucked when it is too green it dries up and rots. And if, to change the metaphor, religious authority sometimes slows down the progress of the scouts far ahead, it is

to give sufficient time for the main body to catch up with them. For in the conquest of freedom it is not enough just to push on ahead, it is also necessary to protect the rear.

A good illustration is the attitude of the Christian Church towards slavery in the ancient world. In itself, nothing could have conflicted more directly with the Gospel ideal of equality and fraternity than the inhuman institution of slavery. Yet the new-born Church made no frontal attack upon it. It began by recommending slaves to be obedient to their masters, masters to be kind to their slaves; thus showing that in God's eyes none were masters and none slaves. But what does such counsel imply but this: obey and command in the freedom of love; in your relations one with another make an end of the servile submission of the slave, of the domineering brutality of the master; or in other words, make an end in your hearts of the invisible reality of slavery? It was only partially that this spiritual state took possession of men's souls; yet even so it was enough to modify behaviour, so that little by little the institution of slavery may be said to have peeled off like the decayed bark of a tree. And what is more, slavery was abolished for good. It is one of the rare instances of positive progress in history, in this unlike so many other revolutions, which have ended up, for want of inward preparation, in nothing better than a change of servitude. This was largely the case with the French Revolution, which replaced privilege of blood with privilege of wealth. And it is the case, most notably, with the Russian Revolution. Péguy, long ago, talked of "these returnings to the same thing, these revolutions more moribund than thrones, progress more outworn than ancient habit . . .". It is the monotonous rut followed by every revolt against outward oppression when it is not supported by any moral aspiration and inward deliverance. Slave-revolts, as history has repeatedly shown us, have never yet served the cause of freedom. Chained or unchained, a slave remains a slave. Christ could set us free by His death; but, victorious or

vanquished, Spartacus never succeeded in abolishing slavery; the utmost he could do was to shift its incidence. St. Peter in a text of paramount importance condenses the Christian distinction between a freedom that is false, a freedom no better than unchained slavery, and that true freedom founded on obedience to the divine law: "Free men, but the liberty you enjoy is not to be made a pretext for wrongdoing; it is to be used in God's service."

This function of educating for freedom, a function essential to the Christian Church, is here seen in its full significance. The prudence of the Church in regard to emancipating movements, whether social or intellectual, that *reserve* so exasperating to progressive minds, is due solely to its care to secure and increase these reserves of the interior life and moral discipline, and these, as we have seen, are both a pediment for freedom of action and its protective railing. The Church is opposed not to the use of freedom but to its squandering. After consuming all his unfledged freedom the prodigal son became a swineherd slave. The parable is strangely applicable to modern humanity, which has squandered its heritage of freedom in anarchical dissipations and has now nothing left but the choice between enduring absolute slavery and returning once more to the Father's house, where obedience and freedom are one and the same thing. The Church which is the guardian of our heritage is also the saviour of our freedom.

(2) *Christianity is like a crucible in which freedom, far from hardening in temporal moulds, remains always fusible, capable of assuming new forms.* It is this, perhaps, that distinguishes it most from other religious and social currents. Despite its hesitations, its intervals of slow development (which are themselves signs of life; a machine would be very much quicker and more regular), the Christian Church possesses an indefinite power of renewal and adaptation. Its fidelity to the eternal assures it a perpetual freedom in relation to

the temporal. Other religions and other civilisations have had periods of very remarkable expansion, but sooner or later they have all become fixed in hieratical forms or else degraded to tame conformities. Christianity alone, emanating as it does from that divine bond which ties together the sheaf of ages, has never been identified with any one limited and outworn civilisation. It has managed to assimilate some, others it has rejected; but it has retained, in regard to all, its own masterful freedom, the freedom of an organism to choose its own food and avoid what is poisonous. True, on its too human side at least (for the stream of invisible sanctity has never dried up entirely in the Church), it has known periods of eclipse and sclerosis; but it has always overcome them, revealing once more, in unforeseen circumstances and unforeseen exigencies, the same virginal freshness, the same maternal accessibility. It is Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, it is Benedict adapting eastern monachism to the needs of the western world, Francis of Assisi reviving evangelical poverty, the Fathers of the Church assimilating Plato, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Pascal sublimating in hope the scepticism of Montaigne, John of the Cross in the Spain of Philip II and the Inquisition—these are they who throw a bridge, enduring for ever, between Christian thought and universal mysticism; so too, in spite of its deviations and its dangers (but heresies too can be fruitful, and it is only the living who can be ill), does the prodigious vitality of modern Christianity, in every domain of thought and art and every branch of human activity. The proof and testimony was given twenty centuries ago, and it is now still before our eyes today; amid the desert of dull conformities and the wilds of anarchy it is Christianity that is opening out ever new paths of freedom. And they are paths that do lead somewhere. It imposes the least severe discipline possible, and that only to ensure us the greatest possible independence. It is no bridle upon freedom. It is rather a compass. To sail without a compass is not to sail freely; first the ship is at the mercy of winds and reefs, till at last the day

comes when it strikes a rock, or is submerged by the waves and lies for ever still in perpetual servitude.

THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM

The process is clear enough: the recession of freedom coincides with the recession of *lived* Christianity, with the obliteration of the concept of one's neighbour and of that human brotherhood founded on the fatherhood of God. The various types of humanity now overshadowed by slavery—the mulcted taxpayer, the proletarian whose labour is bought like merchandise, the "insured person" battenning on the national budget, the "economic man" under every aspect of production or consumption, the anonymous elector who is simply a digit in a sum of addition, the human puppet jerked by the strings of propaganda—all can be reduced to one single type: the human creature emptied of respect, of the love due to a person, the human person treated as a *thing*. The savage comment of Bernanos is very applicable here: "The day when all human relationships are governed by strict administrative justice, pauper's food will be cheap in the world's markets."

The very urgency of the evil reveals the way of salvation. Only the establishment of a Christian social structure can bring us the maximum of freedom, whether in our social, political or individual life, because it provides at the same time that counterweight of morals and charity which balances our freedoms and brings them into harmony. Just a century ago Donoso spoke these prophetic words: "Freedom is dead! It will not rise again in three days or three years; perhaps not in three centuries. You are alarmed by the tyranny you are suffering? It is little enough; there is far worse awaiting you. . . . The world is advancing with giant strides towards the greatest, the most destructive despotism in all history. . . . There are only two kinds of oppression: one inward, the other outward; one religious, the other political. They are so related that when the religious temperature rises, the thermometer

of oppression always tends to drop; when the religious temperature goes down, the political thermometer, political oppression and tyranny rise. . . . But if the religious thermometer continues to drop I cannot imagine where we shall end. . . ." There is no freedom without living bonds, and religion, as the word's etymology shows, is the living bond above all others. If we fail to rebuild this City of ours with the cement of creative spontaneity and love there will always be a tyranny to impose on us from without the unity we have allowed ourselves to lose from within. We have embarked, as Pascal would say, and the alternative before us is crystal clear: tomorrow we shall be either members of one crew, all animated by the same love, or else prisoners in chains, rowing the same galley and cringing under the same lash.

HINDUISM AND FREEDOM

I

by FATHER D'SOUZA, S.J.

THE great question, as I see it, in Europe today is how far individual freedom can withstand totalitarian ideologies and régimes. And in this connection all Europeans, at any rate all who are true democrats, are wondering to what extent they can count in this conflict on the support and sympathy of India, because they realise that it has always been India's part to act as spiritual leader to the rest of Asia. Hers has been somewhat the same rôle as Italy's in Europe, for it was Italy who originally gave Europe its *Pax Romana*, then the idea of the State, then that of nationality; finally it influenced Europe through the Church, through its philosophy, spirituality and system of government. It is the same with India in Asia. Thus it was India who first gave Asia Buddhism and has scattered her colonists, right down to the present day, in Indonesia, Indo-China and throughout the whole of the East.

Hence the importance of India at the present moment in the spiritual, intellectual and political fields. Is this new India, which has come into being since the British withdrawal, sufficiently conscious of her past and her future to be able to say she will go in this direction rather than in that? Is it possible to determine in advance which way she will go? I must say at once that I can give no precise and definite answer to this very grave question. All I can do is to express as clearly as I can my hopes and my fears.

There is one fact that is essential to the understanding of this question; it is that the social organisation of India is dominated by caste. It is the very corner-stone of Hinduism,

and it makes for a process of crystallisation that fixes the Hindu mind and Hindu activities within certain extremely rigid limitations.

What is caste? It is that very particular, very special system which governs the whole of Indian society. *Mutatis mutandis* it is in India what a national society is in the West. Europeans happen to have received their *civitas* from Greco-Roman civilisation; they perfected it with the idea of the equality of man, brought into the world by Christianity. But their idea of the State, of the nation, is inseparable from that of territorial organisation. The Italian nation coincides with the geographical space which is Italy; the Spanish nation with the geographical space which is Spain. It is true that, in the United States, Italians and Spaniards, Frenchmen, Poles and even Chinese have contrived to acquire, within a mere generation, one and the same patriotic consciousness, once they set foot in American space. But what could happen in the United States has never happened in India. With us there is consciousness of caste, that is of social grouping determined by this or that religion, trade, language or family, but no consciousness at all of any national patriotism. Within any territory the caste is a detached group, with its own habits, customs and traditions, its own ways of eating, drinking and the rest, all of which have remained wholly unaffected by the vicissitudes of two or three thousand years. And the origin of caste? It is probably racial. Later, diversity of religion and local peculiarities produced new castes, each with its own characteristics. The result is that all over India a kind of seventh sense has developed: that of another's caste.

I am going to speak now from personal experience. In the little village that was my home for about ten years and where I continued to spend my holidays when I was a student—an area, shall we say, of about three miles by three, with something like a hundred inhabitants—in this one village no less than five different languages were spoken and there were eleven or twelve castes. Marriages

were of course impossible between members of different castes. There were Christians, for instance, of Brahmin descent, others of non-Brahmin descent. They went to services in the same church, but intermarriage was out of the question. There were also Muslims who spoke Hindustani and other languages, Hindu Brahmins speaking different languages, and finally the Untouchables, themselves divided into three separate castes without any social relations between them. The result for me was that by the time I was ten I could speak six languages fluently.

It is true that friendly relations, even business relations, were not impossible between the different castes; but the essential activities of human life, eating and drinking and marriages in common, common religious ceremonies, all these were barred. And yet, you should note, there was no feeling of resentment among the members of any caste. Each accepted his place. There therefore existed a certain social harmony.

This division into castes has certainly been a source of many weaknesses for India. There being no idea of patriotism, no conception of national independence or territory, India was at the mercy of every invader. The process began in very remote ages: the Indo-Aryans were followed by the Mohammedans, and they by the Europeans. And there was complete indifference to the arrival of these newcomers. The one desire was to live in peace, to fulfil the obligations and duties of one's caste; others could do whatever they pleased. It was thus that invaders came to dominate the country with political systems which had nothing to do with the ancient castes and eventually begot new ones. The king of a Hindu State did not necessarily belong to the highest nobility, and he might have subjects, those of so-called "pure" birth, who would decline to come under his roof.

But the caste system has also been an element of strength. It has maintained a hierarchical order in the country. All of us contrived to live our own lives; Hindu society survived every penetration, resisted all assimilation.

Eventually it was to be European penetration, and with it the infiltration of an ideal of democracy and personal freedom; but we must not forget the excellent part that had been played by caste, whereby the forces of conservation and racial resistance were canalised. It was thanks to caste that India remained to this day very much what she had been two thousand years ago.

* * *

One might be justified in saying that the Hindu system is the very antithesis of the Christian system of the West; the very opposite to Europe in its rigid social organisation, though it possesses also a strange suppleness in its beliefs. It knows no dogmas, such as we find in Catholicism; in India it is permissible to believe what one likes: in atheism, nihilism, monism or pantheism. Any religious standpoint is allowed. Hence a remarkable faculty for welcoming new ideas: I am referring here to the different currents of thought it has assimilated, each giving birth to a synthesis of its own: Vedic Hinduism, the Indo-Mussulman synthesis, the revival of the Hindu *bhakti*, which stresses the divine personality and grace as against the stringent monotheism of Islam. All this right down to the coming of the British.

So far India had never encountered any idea that conflicted with its caste system. What would happen when India came in touch with ideas that were not merely religious and metaphysical but political and social and opposed to its own social order?

And this is what happened with her colonisation by the British. It was in the nineteenth century that India came fully into contact with Europe, when the educational system introduced by the British began to take effect—however little they anticipated the revolutionary consequences. It was perhaps the most important intellectual and spiritual event that had happened in Asia's history for a thousand years. These "shopkeepers", as Napoleon called them, played a unique and truly providential part as far as my country's history is concerned. Of course this

British education meant the Victorian civilisation, which the British themselves believed to be the best in the world and humanity's final culmination. In making this gesture of introducing it into India naturally most of them were interested only in training officials. Yet some were men of great nobility of character.

I am reminded of that famous passage in Macaulay, one of the finest in historical literature, in which he claims that if as a result of this education the love of country and independence were to come to "this great people", leading them to go their own way, then so far from this being a sad day for England he himself would consider it her finest hour. This was likewise the attitude of that great Catholic, Lord Ripon, and that great Anglican, Lord Halifax.

Thus there was imported into India a very different ideal of social and national organisation, an ideal that was based on attachment to the land. One could hear a perceptible echo of *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* in contemporary Hindu poets and thinkers, in Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru. All this has produced a social revolution, the fruits of which have not yet matured; it is quite comparable in importance with the earlier revolutions brought about by Buddhism or the Bhaktas.

But here we are confronted with a very important question. Can we remain true to this ideal of social and national independence and at the same time retain the liberal ideal of respect for the individual person? Or are we going to evolve towards a collective totalitarianism, which would be fully in harmony with the relics of our spirit of caste? There can be no true democracy without respect for its essential idea. But the essence of democracy lies in the Christian idea of the primacy of the personal conscience. Without that there can be no genuine democracy.

* * *

Which, then, are the elements of caste that are favourable to the preservation of individual freedom, and which are those that are inimical to it?

The dominant thought of India is still monist, denying an essential difference between the individual soul and the supreme soul. This monism, throughout all the ages till now, has remained a spiritual monism: that is, the unique Reality was regarded as something of the spiritual, not the material order. But since Hegel's time we have learnt that a spiritual monism could turn to materialism; Hegelianism has led to communism. Will not the same thing happen with Indian thought? Will its monism lend itself to a materialist totalitarianism, or will it evolve in such a way as to favour both spiritual and democratic values?

And there is a second danger: the primacy of caste and the power it exercises. The individual Hindu has grown accustomed to submit to the judgment of his caste; this gives him the idea of a social power against which there is no argument and nothing to be done, a power that can rule and control individuals. In a sense, therefore, it becomes easy to him to imagine a power, totalitarian and centralised, with the *right* to impose its own will upon him.

A third danger: the enormous respect which a Hindu feels for the leader, the master (the *guru*), and the desire which so many of my countrymen have to possess such a leader who will take and enforce all necessary decisions. Once the Hindus have got such a leader, sin no longer exists for them, good and evil are one. What he says goes. I ought to add that the leader has always so far had to be a holy man and not a Hitler. I personally should have no objection myself to the loving dictatorship over the world of a saint. . . . But that is by the way.

Finally I have to admit quite frankly that there is something in what Russia has managed to accomplish which possesses a certain attraction for my countrymen. Nor should we condemn an adversary without doing justice to the positive achievements that can be set to his credit. India, today, has some great problems to solve: illiteracy, lack of industries, modernisation; she is a great country with a very backward population and has relied

entirely so far on the industries of western Europe. Now in just a few decades Russia has made an end of similar problems. At a stroke, remember, thanks to a powerful central government, she has made up for her backwardness and brought her people undoubted material betterment. Illiteracy for instance, so we are told, has been completely liquidated throughout the U.S.S.R.

And think of India's terrible problem of overpopulation. If her people continue to increase at the present rate it will be impossible to find means of subsistence for all. What remedy does the West offer us? Artificial birth-control, Malthusianism.

But in international debates we hear Russia telling the West: "We, for our part, can sustain a population three times as great as that we have at present, simply by increasing our economic wealth and improving the means of distribution. We have ways of solving such problems without having recourse to unnatural means." It may seem surprising, but that is how it is. The solutions proposed by Russia are therefore very attractive. This too seems to favour strong central government, though there is no reason why this should necessarily be totalitarian.

On the contrary, it is urged, would not independence be reinforced by a strong central government? The democracies, with all their political and financial scandals, offer no opportunity of exploiting all India's resources effectively, whereas a central authority would. Such are the arguments for a suppressing of individual liberty. . . .

But on the other side—to sum up the factors briefly but as fairly as I can—there are other elements in my country that should not be overlooked, and these would tend to the safeguarding of freedom.

In the first place, whatever the hold of caste, there have always been exceptions to the rigour of its laws. It is not enough realised in the West that there are cases in which a man can escape its domination: namely when he becomes a God-fearing man who truly renounces all the goods of this world.

So it is that in India, in spite of the power of caste and even when that power was greatest, the holy man has always been able to take precedence of the most exalted member of the highest caste of all; we have seen even Untouchables become personages of great importance in the spiritual order.

There is a second important element. India has always believed in the need for an influential and powerful *élite* to regulate everyday life, but she has never denied to the individual some sort of theoretical and philosophical freedom and she has never denied his personal responsibility. Of course the very poor living conditions imposed on the Untouchables have obviously diminished their freedom of action, but even for them, owing to the belief they have in metempsychosis, a sense of freedom and responsibility is something of which they are very conscious indeed. The reason is that for Hindus every human act is followed by a certain result, its recompense or punishment, and from this there is no escape. So in India the inherited burden of previous lives counts ultimately little more than does heredity in Europe.

Finally there is that idea of individual freedom which has taken a powerful hold on the present generation. Modern education is responsible for this, that European education which has inspired Hindus with a lively affection for the democratic ideal. The founders of the Congress Party were liberals, and the leaders of our present political renaissance were all trained in the school of western democracy. It was Gandhi who once wrote that "the best government is that which governs least", and you may be sure that it is not only liberals who would agree. The great majority of Hindus hold the same opinion.

HINDUISM AND FREEDOM

II

by OLIVIER LACOMBE

INDIA has recently recovered her national independence. It is for her, now, to ensure that everyone enjoys effectively the civil and personal freedom which is required by the democratic constitution she has adopted.

How will her traditions allow her to face this problem—for her, such a new one? If the traditional Hindu *as a spiritual being* is wholly adventurous, if he aspires with all his being to independence and spiritual liberation, to win it he must needs deny the Universe; *as a human individual* he must never emerge completely from the social background which is part of him and supports him, nor must he emerge *as a human being* from nature as a whole, of which he forms a part. Is this a state of affairs which can adjust itself without serious shocks, and by a simple development of its latent possibilities, to the personalist requirements of the democratic ideal? Or does this ideal clash with the very principles of Indian humanism?

Let us go straight to the heart of the difficulty. All humanism, if it is to be the basis of a just and temporal development of the human person and his freedom, must concede a real unity to the *human being* as such. This requirement in itself takes nothing from the transcendent rights of God and the supernatural End to which we are destined by Him. There is no anthropocentric implication here. On what does our Christian humanism depend, if not on the creative act of God who gives man being, and on the saving act of the incarnate Word? So the question we set India has nothing to do with the supremacy

she rightly concedes to eternal freedom. It rather concerns a common feature in all the Indian philosophies: the conception of man as *a human being for ever menaced by dissolution*.

However, it is impossible to make our contention explicit without referring in precise terms to spiritual freedom, so perhaps we may be permitted to treat of this first, without losing sight of the question of temporal liberty.

The whole of Indian thought—not only the Hinduism of the majority but also Buddhism and Jainism—rests on two articles of faith, each involving the other. First, to the “awakened” spirit, life according to nature is something illusory, wretched and enslaving. This is not a question of the common experience of suffering and evil or of the *tedium vite* which that experience tends to beget: it is a considered view of the world. Natural existence is miserable because it imprisons each consciousness within a perpetual becoming, without beginning or end and measured only by births and deaths, by rebirths and redeaths, growth and decrepitude, in an incessant renewal of the ephemeral and precarious: it is *transmigration*.

This stream of frustration is not something senseless; it is reinforced from within by an intelligible doctrine that must be taken seriously; the existence, that is, of a law of immanent justice, the law of *karma*. Every act that can be attributed to a responsible agent is either conformable or otherwise with the rules which govern the universe. In either case it must inevitably ripen and sooner or later bear fruit, fruit appropriate in quality and proportionate in quantity; every act being finite, its fruit will be necessarily finite, perishable, metaphysically illusory, but either sweet or bitter. Thus everything that happens to us is just, being the result of our previous actions. At each moment we are children of our own works. Whatever our present status in the universe, whatever (if we happen to have been reborn as humans) our social station, our individual character and temperament, all these have no other author but ourselves. Everything, from the point

of view of justice, can be explained, everything is literally "justified". But it is a justice that imprisons us for ever in the cycle of rebirths, making us the slaves of time.

It is a servitude recognised as such, and the second article of faith is that we have the power to free ourselves from it by rising from the natural to the spiritual plane. Unanimous as to this, the various schools differ only on the meaning of spiritual freedom and the way to achieve it.

Ancient Buddhism declines to commit itself, in human words and concepts, as to whether nirvana, the "extinction" of our unhappy existence, implies any positive counterpart. The teaching of Buddha concerns only the servitude of natural life and its structure, together with the law of causality which involves its continuation; the deliberate interruption of this is the means of releasing us from our chains.

The Hindu doctrine oscillates between an impersonal and transcendent beatitude and a life of personal and everlasting communion with God as a Person, between the way of liberation by an intuitive and experienced knowledge of the Absolute and liberation through the arousing by divine grace of a response of love in the dependent soul.

Deliverance is possible to the soul whatever its state, because he who is enslaved has effected his own slavery, and having brought it about through acting in the darkness of ignorance he can always undo it in the light of truth.



Where does the human being stand in this economy of servitude and freedom? From the Indian's point of view, the real subject of spiritual freedom is not man as such, but only that in him which is strictly incommensurable with humanity, that in him which is properly eternal. The meaning, all the same, of the human situation is still something unique for one imprisoned in transmigration and desiring to escape from it. The world has modes of existence superior to our own in honours, understanding,

power and happiness; and others that are inferior and degraded, burdened with suffering. In the uncertain trajectory of each soul's destiny there are stages, as it were, of reward and punishment, of the tasting of those "sweet and bitter fruits" which are nothing but the product of its own past actions. The human situation is also the recompense of previous merits or demerits. But it is especially favourable to those great decisions which determine the lives to come, and above all to those that lead to salvation. By reason of its "middling" quality, it offers more opportunities for avoiding that kind of spiritual insensitiveness which too great happiness or sorrow may produce: it offers the least possible resistance to genuine conversion.

In this light our human condition acquires a peculiar distinction. This has come to be recognised in many assertions and beliefs to be found among the religions and philosophies of India, but it is impossible to give a detailed account of them here. However, though it was important to call attention to this aspect of Indian thought, it still remains generally true that "the human being as such is constantly threatened with extinction".

It is so decreed, at the outset, by the doctrine of transmigration. This practically excludes all essential connection between the human soul and the human body. Joined today, extrinsically and by accident, to a particular psycho-physiological organism human in structure, the spiritual part of my composite being will be joined tomorrow, just as extrinsically, to some other organism with features of a wholly different type. The union of soul and body is a condition of constraint; it is justified by the law of *karma* and amounts to a momentary proportioning between certain acts, ephemeral in themselves though they have involved my responsibility, and a physical realisation of the sanction rightly due to them. It is not something derived, as it is for Christians, from that unique appeal to being which springs from the depths of Godhead, constituting once for all a man of flesh and spirit, yet a

single person in one common nature and with a supernatural destiny awaiting him.

So we can speak here of a human situation or a human condition, but not of a human *nature*, with all the meaning that centuries of Christian thought have given to this term.

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It is in this context that we are to see the sociological process that gave birth to castes, and it was by this that the caste system itself was reinforced. For if the lot which falls to us is always our due, then there can be nothing unjust in the hierarchical inequality of traditional Hindu society, where burdens and privileges alike are determined inexorably by birth.

So here we have humanity, without the metaphysical dignity or stability of an essence, and broken up into a whole plurality of closed groups which share very unequally in the status of man. Nor is it a mere question of fact; it is a question of right. The Hindu social order is not regarded as due to fallible legislators, their more or less accidental invention; it is seen as the temporal realisation of uncreated and eternal norms. The "mingling of castes", the obliteration of their bounds, the confounding of their respective positions and functions, is so grave a disorder, involving and begetting so many evils, that nothing can repair it but a special intervention of Divinity itself, who becomes incarnate in order to re-establish the reign of Law.

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This cleavage of the human unity is not without its effect on Hindu ethics. These comprise in effect two great systems of moral principles.

The one is that of what are called general or common principles and is concerned with the duties of man as man. They overrun the bounds of our own proper domain into what are really cosmic considerations; "non-violence", which is respect for all forms of life, is perhaps the most typical virtue of this class, and it has its corollaries in

universal kindness and compassion. This morality, the foundation of a humanism which is characterised by impatience of human limitations, one in which man's sole aim is to seek his own liberation without coming into conflict with other realms of nature, this morality which tends always to transcend simple morality is something India may well be proud of and itself explains its own powerful attraction; all through the centuries it has shed over India and all over Asia its peace and graciousness and lofty nobility.

Yet we must not forget that other aspect of traditional Hindu ethics, the special morality of "duties to one's state", which largely coincides with the duties of caste.

If the general morality, noble and sublime as it is, runs the risk of getting lost in what is beyond humanity, this special morality, which certainly cannot be dispensed with, comes to share that cloistered rigidity of caste which tends inevitably to diminish all human solidarities and all the intimate relationships between men.

It would therefore seem that if she is to effect a basic adjustment of her enduring need for spiritual liberation to her democratic political aspirations, India must needs rethink her humanism. Her aim must be to give it greater power and protect it from the danger of relaxing those divinely instituted bonds which link man to his true nature and to all other men; she must rethink her conception of immanent justice so as to bring it into relation with social justice, and she must examine once more the internal equilibrium of her ethical system.

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Freedom in the India of former times was hardly ever conceived apart from a very high degree of spiritual maturity. The best illustration of this is the part traditionally played by the *guru*. It is for the disciple, in so far as he is merely a disciple, to show himself docile, amenable to being taught. But whoever has risen to the rank of a master, in the strongest sense of the word, acquires thereby

complete autonomy and the right to take initiatives. Himself identified with Divinity, all his thoughts, words and actions have the force of law, the value of a norm. If he deems fit to do so, and the times require it, he opens out new paths. Within the limits of an orthodoxy more exacting from force of custom than from any inflexibility of speculative principles, his originality is a source of renewal. His freedom, which all recognise, is a compensation for the immobility of tradition. No *magisterium* has the right to question him, even if none need adopt his innovations. Over his disciples, over Hindu society generally, the powers of the *guru* were immense. The contemporary example of Gandhi shows what spiritual power can do still even in the temporal field.

But from now on it is a question of the freedom of the citizen. No one could pretend that the bounds of an electoral majority are coterminous with those of the spiritual majority. It is very necessary, therefore, that the human personality—the human person as such—should possess at the outset a metaphysical significance, and that the temporal development of the person should be justified in advance, within its own proper order, without prejudice to his relationship to the eternal End. Far from us to suggest that India has ever belittled the values of civilisation; but it is something new for her now to have to link those values with the theme of civic freedom. The only question we raise here is whether the philosophy of man we have just been sketching—or at any rate some of its characteristics—whether such a philosophy, for all its nobility (which we are far from minimising), can completely safeguard this theme of civic freedom in view of the uncertain character (which we have deliberately stressed) of its very idea of human nature.

It is of sovereign importance that the spirit should *begin* to be free in its human condition and should *be so already* in that human condition; to this, India has never tired of bearing splendid testimony. It is also important that humanity as a whole, and the individual as well,

should develop freely in this world. It must be a very humble freedom; one which can never forget that condition of deep wretchedness in which we have been left by original sin, nor the fact that our life on earth is a pilgrimage to eternity; but it is a freedom that must be none the less real, with roots in man's dignity, his metaphysical dignity as a human being.

It is of great importance to the world that India should remain faithful, and arm herself doctrinally in order to remain faithful, to this earthly freedom, the worth of which she has so recently discovered.

FREEDOM ACCORDING TO ISLAM

by NADJM OUD-DINE BAMMATE

FREEDOM according to Islam; the very words give us pause, for they confront us, at the very outset of our inquiry, with a paradox. The Arabic word *islam* must be literally translated "submission"; so the expression "freedom according to Islam" means strictly "freedom according to consent" or "freedom by the ways of submission". There lies the paradox.

But there is more to it than this. That so many minds are concerned with freedom today must not be attributed to a sudden intellectual curiosity but to a very concrete drama, one experienced every day. The thing that fills us more and more with a daily dread of being stifled is not a general concept of freedom in the abstract but our personal and individual freedom as human beings, a particular liberty that belongs to each one of us, a freedom we actually *live*, something inhering in us, as personal as a tone of voice, a freedom for which we would take nothing in exchange, which is ultimately, perhaps, nothing else but our *selves*, all that is essential in us. If freedom appears to be the issue today it is really because all man's powers are at stake: his power over things, over events, over himself.

Now how does Islam define man? Here again there is no evading the difficulty: man, as defined by Islam, is a being who is essentially the slave of God—*abd' Allah* is the Arabic expression. So this is our starting-point: freedom is linked with submission, the human condition is definable as a servitude.

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But here we must be on our guard. It would be all too easy to conjure up once more those popular ideas so often refuted: those of the immobility of the doctor of law set fast in his formalism; the abandon of the dancing dervish, drunk with spiritual wine; the obstinate resignation of the horseman of Allah in fanatical gallop; the stupor of a beggar lying in the sun-dappled sand.

We have had more than enough of this motley imagery, from the seclusion of the craftsman squatting in his shop to the soft and scented seclusion of the harem. How easy, out of these thousand and one random glimpses, to make up a scrap-book with the title "Muslim Fatalism"! It is oversimplified picture-making, and it will be answered, of course, that the West has long ceased to shut up Islam within the fatalism of these over-romantic clichés.

But bared of its accessories the paradox remains, in its very nakedness all the more glaring: "freedom by the ways of acquiescence". It remains to be discovered whether this strange antithesis does not actually describe the paradox of freedom—or should we say its mystery?—for Islam, as for any other spiritual tradition. Indeed, in this *mystery*, is there not already perceptible a certain savour of Christianity?

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However, it is as well to pause before making any too hasty comparisons, especially when we are concerned with a philosophical term as subtle as that of freedom. But am I right? Is it a philosophical term? The fact is that very few words have such an attraction for sentiment, such a faculty for inflaming passion or for justifying violence. A rare power indeed, for a philosophical term—but a power how perilously apt to be abused—this of changing any moment to an order of the day or a cry of revolt! And how rightly to be mistrusted, an idea that is liable to serve any sophism, yet crude enough to be often a mere political expedient!

Think of the changes its meaning can undergo. What is

freedom? Obligation or the lack of it? Is it a ceaseless renewal of the power to choose, an always open alternative between two possible actions or thoughts or values? But what is the use of a freedom without an object, one that is expended to no purpose? The answer will be that freedom is not an indefinite suspension of choice but rather the power of using one's faculties to the utmost, making one's mark on reality. But if freedom means getting a grasp on the concrete, the power of fashioning things, such freedom is a contradiction; by its very exercise it is limited and therefore renounced. By cleaving to one form of reality it must needs reject every other possible form.

In the one case it is the freedom of indifference; in the other, freedom of creation or participation. The one degenerates into licence, the other ends in constraint. Freedom can be likened to an awkward horse: give it its head and it wastes its strength in an aimless gallop; try to keep it in hand, it promptly turns obstinate and declines to budge.

But suppose, for the sake of argument, that the enemy to freedom is to be taken as constraint, and try to define liberty by contrasting it with its opposite. Here again we are confronted with the most diverse ideas. What are we to call this constraint? Predestination, determinism, authority, discipline, servitude, destiny, causality, chance, fate? All these words are simply masks, derived haphazard from theology or politics, from the natural sciences or even from magic; they are allegories, all of them, basically unrelated.

In desperation one may well come to admit the rashness of attempting the definition of freedom as something which is a value in itself. It might be conceded that it is nothing but a quality of our behaviour. In that case its only content would be the value we endow it with when we actually experience it. At that rate the purity of our freedom would depend on the purity of our faith; all its warmth to inspire, on our own enthusiasm; and its nobility would be none other than the nobility of our sacrifice. But meanwhile

the very idea of freedom is beginning to melt as we touch it; so fluid is it that we can use it to coat our wildest fancies, write its name on the passing instant, on the wind. . . . And yet, when we come to lose it, we think its loss will be the death of us!

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In view of such deep ambiguity in the idea of freedom it is highly necessary to make clear at the outset the order of reality in which Islam considers the problem of its nature. Here we are safe in asserting that freedom is essentially for Islam the liberation of the spirit. As an object of theological and mystical knowledge, it is something that acts on the soul and derives from the divine. It is evident, therefore, that the subject of freedom occupies for Islam an intellectual terrain very different from that which it occupies for the modern West.

In the consciousness of the West today the idea of freedom may suggest all sorts of different things: the individual's protection against the State, the separation of powers, the right to vote, juridical guarantees, the domestication of the forces of nature, the right to property, the control of the means of production, national independence or world revolution. I mention at random a number of these associations of ideas, all more or less conscious, which coalesce (as it were) about an abstract notion like that of freedom. Such harmonics, which weave a counterpoint about the principal theme of an idea, are often characteristic of a style of thinking. Now for Islam the associations of ideas just mentioned are not the first to be suggested at the utterance of the word freedom. It is true that for the Muslim world today these ideas may be very important and even vital, they may be embraced with enthusiasm; but they are not native to it. In genuine Muslim thought meditation on freedom is associated primarily with subjects like the individual's responsibility to God or the salvation of his soul.

First and foremost it is in the Koran, and according to the Koran, that the problem comes to be raised; any other

meaning that freedom may have will be deduced from this by way of a corollary.

That being so, there is no way of getting at the heart of the subject more directly than by referring to the holy book of Islam. Now the Koran relates how God in the beginning offered free and loving faith to the mountains, towering up in the pride of their enormous mass. But with free faith goes a temptation to refuse, to rebel against God and risk perdition. The mountains began to tremble and draw back; in dread of such a burden, they parted asunder. It was then God entrusted free faith to man, reminding him at the same time that this state of freedom is also a state of eminent responsibility, a condition to inspire awe. It is just this condition which gives dignity to man, a dignity Lucifer refused to recognise, and through refusing met his downfall.

For having created man, and having endowed and hallowed him with this dignity, God ordered the angels to bow down before Adam. The angels, creatures of fire and therefore marked with the sign of spiritual nobility, must prostrate themselves before man, a being fashioned of clay and imprisoned in matter. For Adam could name the angels, whereas the angels were ignorant of the name of Adam; man endowed with freedom, capable of personal knowledge, can have sovereign vision of the nature of beings, but the state of the angels is only one of glorifying God; God's choristers pure and simple, they can never refuse their praise of His Glory. Adam alone, that being kneaded out of mud, that clot of congealed blood (as the Koran describes him), can make an offering to God of a love commensurate with his freedom. Lucifer refused to recognise this sovereignty. But the secrets of things are known to none but God. The angels bowed down before Adam. Fire humbled itself before mud. Lucifer fell headlong and will be known for ever as Satan Iblis, "the stoned".

These parables, drawn from passages in the Koran, reveal an aspect of Islam that is generally little suspected.

It would have been possible, I grant, to illustrate the same principles with plenty of ponderous scholastic texts, all with their scrupulously balanced classifications. Moreover Muslim apologetic today has a tendency, already to be found in the legalism of the traditionalists, to quote texts of the more reasonable and reassuring kind, especially when addressing a western audience. It attempts, in a liberal-rationalist spirit, to reveal a practical system of ethics or social regulations such as would render metaphysical symbolism superfluous. At the same time, even though Islam has also an austerer aspect, it was well to quote here that remarkable parable whence the mystics have drawn such breathless narratives of fire and sulphur, of earth and salt and light; in the first place because there is no reducing it to a practical system of ethics or to ritual principles, and secondly because it introduces us immediately to the three themes which are here to be discussed:

First, the problem of human freedom in Islam is presented in connection with a divine decree; Muslim philosophers comment on it in relation to the creative power of God: to what extent does God allow sovereign knowledge to man and the faculty of assuming responsibility for his actions?

Secondly, in Islam the idea of freedom is evidently connected with the doctrine of human responsibility to God, who gives the theme of freedom all its import and gravity.

Lastly, the subject of freedom is linked with that of divine love and therefore with the final ends of man.

* * *

The Muslim religion, as everyone knows, was never preached as a new faith. Islam professed to be a new revelation of one and the same monotheism. This, entrusted first to Abraham, found its expression in Judaism, in Christianity, and then in Islam. The distinctive note of the Muslim religion is its imperious and uncompromising affirmation of the unity and transcendence of God. Its

peculiar characteristic is to confront two solitudes one with the other in utter nakedness: the solitude of God and the solitude of man.

From the earliest times Muslim thought accentuated this exalted conception of God's supreme majesty. Its fierce aim was to remove any suspicion of compromise between the absolute and the relative, the transcendent and the sensible. The complicated philosophical systems associated with thinkers like Avicenna or Averroës, penetrated with Hellenism and more familiar to the West, have caused many to forget that the original Muslim thought was almost solely a theodicy, a description of the divine powers. That was why in Islam the problem of human freedom never arose in connection with man directly, but only reflexively, in relation to the creative power of God and the divine faculty of determining events, what in Arabic is called *qadr*: ultimately every being is what it is by the will of God, whether it be man or animal, a plant or the wind. Thus everything, by its very nature, can be said to be in a state of *islam*, submission to God. But the *islam* of an animal or stone is necessarily something inert, whereas the *islam* of man, as described in the parable related above, is an act of free will. It must be no passive conformity but a trustful adhesion in response to divine love.

So really the Koran—a fact too often passed over in silence—asserts most strongly that God loves the creature and the creature in return loves God (*yuhibbuhum wa yuhibbunahu*, runs the Koranic formula: "He loves them, and they Him"). But divine love precedes human love; it goes to meet it, arouses and stimulates it. "His clemency precedes His sternness," says the Koran, "for God is closer to man than is man's own jugular artery." Yet this divine love is something man can refuse. That is why the decisive act of man's all too weak will consists precisely in putting himself in a state of *islam*.

Man can choose to be in this condition, to be thus by God's means, but he is equally free to reject God's love.

He may deny himself this power to reject it, but he nevertheless possesses this power.

* * *

This naked confronting of man with his first Principle, this meeting so intense and utterly direct, without mediation, intercession or sacrament, gives to the believer's spiritual autonomy a uniquely impressive importance, one that to a Christian might well seem dangerous. The soul's whole destiny is to dedicate itself utterly to God.

In Christianity, on the other hand, through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, man finds himself (so to speak) "assumed" by God, drawn to Him personally, all but *inhaled* into divinity. In Islam, with constantly watchful effort, with unceasing care (*wara*), man has to combat indifference (*aflat*), the natural deadweight of inertia which threatens to draw him into forgetfulness of his Creator. His must be a state of vigilance, of being ever on guard; a critical state. Freedom is a burden and a responsibility, for to gauge whether or not his being is in a state of self-offering to God the believer has no light to guide him but his conscience.

Every believer has a liturgical function. He is his own priest. When he steps on to the prayer mat, he consecrates that particular area to God. Thus the mat has no other purpose but to separate man from the contingent, to set him in the required state, with his soul utterly stripped for a meeting with his God. All believers, at the moment of prayer, are in some sort withdrawn from the world, where in a place ideally consecrated they can communicate with the Absolute.

* * *

The sovereign act of adhesion to God, which is *par excellence* the assumption of a state of *islam*, is the supreme act of liberation for the Muslim. Which brings us back to the paradox, the mystery we noted at starting. Freedom is obtained by the ways of acquiescence. Man is essentially

abd' Allah, the slave of God. But it is precisely to the extent that he is completely God's slave that he ceases to be the slave of anything else, of creatures or circumstances, that he escapes servitude to the temporal, to his own whims and illusions, that he avoids the temptation of "idols", whether glory or riches or even ideals, in so far as these are only temporal. Unless he is God's slave alone, man is fated to be the slave of others or of himself. But by being God's slave he does not suffer the loss of creatures. These created things, when they cease to appear as ends in themselves, become all the more beautiful and all the more worthy to be loved as "signs"—*ayat* in the Arabic—of the splendour of God. Thus true freedom is seen to be spiritual liberation; all the rest is additional, something bestowed over and above.

In this connection it is interesting to note the meaning given to "freedom" in an ordinary Arabic dictionary, one that makes no claim to subtle distinctions. The first meaning and root of *hurriat* is given as freedom from the passions of the soul, consecration to God. Next comes liberation from external constraints; then thirdly independence. No confirmation could be simpler or more direct.

* * *

The freedom of the believer is not solely confined to his responsibility to God and the autonomy of his spiritual initiative. And it is significant that the idea of freedom is stressed still further by the manner in which this spiritual initiative is released. Indeed the word "release" best expresses the suddenness and spontaneity of the process which frees the creature by drawing him to the Creator.

This process is closely connected with the Muslim conception of time and causality, especially as expounded by the mystics of Islam.

Of all the ideas that Muslim philosophy received from Hellenism there is scarcely one it found harder to assimilate than the Aristotelian notions of time and causality. That exact mechanism whereby succeeding moments are linked

together and effects are necessarily connected with their causes makes a picture altogether too orderly for Islam; it is too like a blue-print; too exact. The original doctrine of Islam is that of "the renewal of creation at every instant". While insisting on God's unique creation *ex nihilo*, this doctrine holds that the act of divine creation was never extinguished, that it is something living, repeating itself at every moment of our existence. Thus every minute is pregnant with meaning. It reflects the divine creative act in all its spontaneity, and for each of us it can have an eternal value. It is always giving us signs of God's love, and it is for us to recognise these signs. They may take the humblest forms: an ant or a grain of sand; ordinary things perceptible by the senses. But they are not ordinary unless we perceive them solely by the senses. Only forgetfulness or indifference prevents our discerning what they really are, reminders of God. But any moment, the Koran says, the heart may soften; and it goes on to say that it is not really the eyes of the faithful that are blind, but their hearts. When their hearts soften and they are enabled to see, then all the arabesques of contradiction and fantasies and deceits, behind which God is offering His signs, are suddenly torn away. It is the soul's returning to itself. This idea, of fact or event as sign (*ayat*) or reminder (*dhikr*), occurs constantly both in the Koran and in tradition. One is naturally reminded of the saying of St. Bonaventure: "There are two ways of considering facts, as objects and as signs."

* * *

Thus truth, for Islam, is not something to be attained gradually, by discursive reasoning. Like God Himself, it is a unique whole, not a thing to be nibbled at piecemeal. Man achieves truth by turning his back on all dialectic, allowing his heart to open to the spiritual dimension and making himself (as it were) a fit place of revelation. In a word, the spontaneity of the divine act of creation, ever-renewed, has its necessary counterpart in a human freedom

constantly renewed, capable of grasping and accepting the proffered sign.

* * *

If we compare the oriental idea of freedom, which we have just been sketching, with the modern and western idea of freedom, we can see at once that this spiritual liberation is a point to be arrived at, a goal to be attained, only by ascetic renunciation.

For the modern man of the West, on the other hand, freedom will naturally appear as a starting-point, a touchstone, a means of appreciating the real, of choosing one particular act rather than another, one particular thought or value.

The Westerner's freedom is a weapon he uses for an individual conquest, a means of possessing himself of reality. The Muslim, the Oriental, proceeds as a rule in the opposite direction. He frees himself from the real by an effort to "interiorise" himself, to relinquish and forgo all created things. If the Westerner is offered the adventure of free choice, creative of forms and acts, the Oriental's destiny is to realise his free dedication to the Unique.

What is significant, in this connection, is the mistrust of Islam for the "great rebel" type, the man who by destroying an intellectual or social order brings into being, by revolt, a new design for construction. Hence Islam looks askance at the Western mythology of great rebels, whether they be rebels of action like Faust or Don Juan, rebels in thought like Don Quixote or Hamlet, a rebel against man-made order like Antigone, or against the divine order like Prometheus. It is significant, too, that Satan should be stigmatised by Islam as "the Rebel". His sin was that of rebellion against God. The epithets "Evil One" and "Tempter" are used much more in the West than in the East. They lay the accent on the devil's perversion of the creature; to the Arab, an anthropocentric idea.

Against Promethean revolt, the peak of heroic freedom according to the Western idea, Islam sets a freedom that could be described as "prophetic". Someone once asked

me whom I regarded as the greatest man Islam had produced. The Muslim world has known plenty of conquerors and thinkers, but what the question clearly implied was the hero, the Greek demi-god, the Promethean man. I could only reply that Islam had never known such "great men", or at any rate that it had never set them on a pinnacle of greatness. For the Muslim the great man is of the prophetic type. The prophet is one whose worth owes less to personal actions or merits than to the grace of being chosen to be the bearer of the divine Word; a vehicle, in fact. For a vehicle is all he is; he is not even an interpreter. Mohammed himself stressed his own condition of *nabi el ummi*, unlettered apostle, simple of heart, without personal understanding. And it was Moses, according to the Koranic tradition, who when addressed by God answered that his tongue was "tied", that he lacked the gift of speech.

It is true enough that this "prophetic" liberation could often reverse the course of events even more effectually than could the "heroic" form. Yet there remains that divergence between the eastern and western conceptions of freedom, and it may well seem to the West that this absolute idea of freedom, which makes it a purely spiritual freedom, must almost inevitably result, for all its nobility, in a weakening of concrete and temporal freedom, whether civic, social or economic. We mentioned at the beginning some of the meanings freedom can suggest in the modern western world: the safeguarding of the individual against the State, the right to vote, juridical guarantees or the taming of the forces of nature. All these today are being taken over by the East. Primarily, however, they are characteristic of the West, which gradually won them in the course of civil and social wars. They have been created by the peasant, fencing his field and defining his own property; by the constitutional lawyer, balancing institutions. Yet we are bound to recognise that these temporal freedoms, severed from the absolute, have become more and more relative. In the eighteenth century they were of natural right; today they are described as fundamental liberties. This

change of terminology is not without significance. Liberties of natural right had their origin and end and justification in themselves. External to the State and society, they owed nothing to either. Today these freedoms tend more and more to be regarded not as ends in themselves but as a foundation, a means to achieving something else, a rational structure of society or even the better enjoyment of economic goods. Liberties are no longer seen in the dignity of their origin but in the usefulness of their exercise. And this exercise itself is becoming steadily more collective. It is becoming socialised. The individual freedom of the worker is becoming the collective freedom of the trade union. As freedom of opinion and expression becomes more and more the freedom of the Press and major means of publicity, so it glides imperceptibly from the order of individual conscience to the order of mass psychology.

We shall be told, of course, that such an evolution is in the nature of things; perhaps, too, that it is not to be regretted. Have not relative freedoms, with a firm grip on the concrete, an efficaciousness quite other than that flight, however sublime, from sensible reality, which is what is implied by spiritual liberation?

Yet surely it is to the good that in every civilisation there should remain a belief that freedom too is an absolute, a metaphysical reality, witnessed to by the soul and not simply guaranteed by certain institutions.

Which of these two kinds of freedom are we to choose, or is there, perhaps, a chance of reconciling them? Both in the West and in the East there are those who believe in the possibility of a synthesis of the temporal liberties of the citizen and the spiritual liberty of the believer. Will the East, more especially, as it develops new freedoms, be able to preserve its traditional idea of freedom? This, perhaps, is the most serious question it now has to face.

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The parable of the creation of Adam and the revolt of Lucifer suggests three major themes: that of freedom in

relation to the divine decree, of freedom associated with human responsibility, and last, and most important, of freedom in conjunction with the mystery of divine love. This last we have touched on several times. Since it marks the solution of the problem of freedom, as conceived by the Muslim mystics, basing themselves on the texts of the Koran, we cannot do better than end on this note.

This act, whereby man no longer sees with the eyes of the flesh but in a sudden flash with the eyes of his heart—a convulsion of being that sends him back to his origin, that supreme act of *islam* which is the free cleaving to God—is an act of *love*. And this brings us back to the parable of the fall of Lucifer. It was not only for his pride and rebellion that he was struck down. Lucifer's argument, as the Muslim thinkers comment on it, becomes a debate on the meaning of love. He retorts to God that this puny vacillating human love, linked with freedom, must inevitably fade into mere indifference, or even turn to a blank rejection. The love he values is the unconditioned love of the angels, which is the fulness and totality of love. To this, God replies that even the totality of love is not all He requires; what He also asks is that this love should be free. The pure translucid love of the angels is less to Him than is that other love, bedded in mud and flesh, but able to be expressed in spontaneous freedom and so become an offering. It is then that Lucifer rebels and is punished. The angel of purest love, he who could not endure what was granted to Adam, that freedom of choice and refusal, was henceforth to become Satan, one bound as fast to revolt and denial as before he had been bound to love. And the irony goes farther: the sublimest singer of praise and thanksgiving was now to become the eternal Tempter.

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We speculated at the outset whether freedom was power to act or willingness to accept. Islam solves the problem only by prescinding from the alternative.

The visible and wholly external conflict between the

negative freedom of choice or indifference and the active freedom of creation or participation is resolved by Islam in the love of God.

By reconciling man's freedom with this divine love, Islam repudiates the freedom of indifference, that unlimited choice without purpose or aim, which certainly leaves man free and in a sense "delivered", but only as a freely falling body is "delivered" to its own gravity. Ultimately freedom should be seen as that necessary condition in which man can respond fully to the love of God. Unless this freedom is justified by a transcendent value, and even more by the supreme Transcendence, it is inevitably doomed to waver and go astray; instead of achieving fulfilment it will simply feed upon itself.

"A man cannot be or remain free", says Gabriel Marcel, "except in so far as he remains bound to the transcendent, whatever the form such a bond may take."

Freedom, for Islam, cannot be its own criterion. In the eyes of the Mohammedan, an act inspired by freedom, but related to no transcendent value, cannot be anything but a gamble or even the gesture of a sleeper, a somnambulist's attempt to recover his hazardous balance. Sacrifice itself, in circumstances such as these, has the appearance of subterfuge; without aim or direction it cannot be addressed to any being who is capable of accepting it. For sacrifice to become martyrdom what is needed is something more than choice and something more than duty; it must be a spontaneous offering, an offering of love to a *person*. It is one of the most devastating tragedies of our time that there is so much rallying to abstract doctrines and so few offerings to "Being"; so many victims but so few martyrs.

No; for the Mohammedan, as for all believers, freedom is not the freedom of indifference. Yet at the same time it implies no constraint or limitation. It is spontaneity in the act of cleaving to God. It is this act of adhesion which is the supreme act of liberation.

It is thus that the Mohammedan, by his act of *islam* or

acquiescence, sets himself at the very hub of that wheel of law which in the traditions of the Far East always symbolises the continual flux of becoming. Christianity, on the other hand, breaks the fatality of becoming by the event which is the Incarnation and Redemption. The Cross is a bar that stops the wheel running, displaces all its spokes. To the drama and mystery of the Passion and Grace, Islam offers a pendant in the order of spiritual awareness and adhesion. Himself at the hub of the wheel, man may attain to that vibrant peace which is beyond all action, beyond all thought, and so contain within himself all action and all thought. It is a peace which gives action the spontaneity of a song, the purity of thought, a peace where thought itself is more replete with life than can ever be the intensest of all forms of action.

One is naturally tempted to conclude with words of the Muslim mystics, for it is there we find, expressed most intensely and in the form most characteristic of Islam, the mystery of freedom grafted upon love. But Islam, in these passages, joins and becomes one with every authentic spiritual tradition. That is why I propose to borrow here, in order to apply it to freedom, an illustration we owe to a poet who is actually very remote from Islam. T. S. Eliot ends one of his *Four Quartets* with the image of fire and the rose. To the fire we might compare that active freedom of creation or participation; to the rose, the negative freedom of detachment and spontaneity.

Here we have the rose, that tender and fragile freedom, the freedom of dreaming inactivity; there, the fire, a freedom burning and imperious, the freedom of Antigone and Prometheus. But at the touch of divine fire the flame is transformed; it curls back upon itself, and what had been simply consuming matter is now pure light,

When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

This image might be the symbol of these two contrasting

ideas of freedom. The solution of the mystery is to be found in love, which is both the fullness of adhesion and the supreme example of spontaneous choice.

For beyond the drama of flesh and spirit, of the affirmation of the ego and its negation, of individual consciousness and its apparent extinction in death, there lies in the depths of man that centre which is his essence, the most intimate point of all which nevertheless puts him in harmony with the universal, the point which Muslim thinkers, fearing to name it, call *sirr*, the "secret", which is the faculty of freely giving love, of spontaneous adhesion to the Unique. It is there that *to be* and *to be free* are one.

THE FREE MAN IN THE MOHAMMEDAN STATE

by LOUIS GARDET

IT is, as we have seen, by his trustful acceptance of the inscrutable will of God that the Mohammedan is and feels himself to be free; he resigns himself into God's hands, which are always so present to him. The Christian, on the other hand, *wins* his freedom by making actual, at the level of secondary causes, the power of his own free judgment, by causing this freedom to enter into the very act of that filial welcome which he constantly gives to the approaches of divine grace.

The problem of free will is one we would have liked to see treated here ontologically; but this would mean opening one of the longest chapters in Muslim theology, and one of the most controversial. So I will simply observe that its prevailing note is first and foremost a jealous affirmation of the divine transcendence and its care to find some means of guarding the idea of that transcendence. Hence: God is sole Being and also sole Agent.

So starting from the psychological analysis we have had of the Muslim idea of freedom I shall confine myself here to its consequences and applications at the temporal level of the State. What is the Mohammedan idea of political freedom?

To avoid prolonging this inquiry unduly I shall have to refer continually to the Mohammedan State: not to its various historical realisations, nor yet to its closer or more remote approximations, but to that "concrete historical ideal"—if I may apply to our subject an expression of Jacques Maritain—which serves to inspire so many

believers. And here I must ask indulgence of the reader who is not an Arabic scholar, because a number of the ideas I shall have to deal with are far from tallying exactly with corresponding ideas in the West. It is therefore impossible to understand them properly without restoring them to their context in Muslim life and thought.

In Mohammedan law the idea of political freedom is primarily defined as a "state" (*hukm*); a juridical status, if you like. The terminology itself is significant. The problem argued by the theologians is firstly that of *qudra*, the power man has (or has not) over his actions; and free will is the *ikhtiyar*, the freedom of choice. As for the juridical status of freedom in the eyes of the law, this is *hurriyya*, and the man who is free, socially and politically, is *hurr*, which means that he is independent of his peers within the limits laid down by the Koran and Mohammedan traditions, not subject to any tutelage in the exercise of his rights and in the performance of his duties.

How is this law to be understood? Emphasis has been laid already on the discontinuous view of the world in Muslim tradition, the fundamental impermanence of all contingent being, which is unceasingly created and re-created by divine commandment. But by investing each being with a name (*ism*), by the "veil of the name" which both designates the creature and conceals it, God establishes each in a certain status, a *hukm*. This status is not determined by anything that constitutes its essence, for created being possesses no real ontological "density". It is simply a divine imputation; a juridical status, but one established directly by God, the supreme Lawgiver. "Actions in themselves are indifferent", says the prevailing tradition: "it is the divine Law that makes them good or bad." You may call it "legalism" if you will, but its aim is an enduring respect for the mystery of the divine will.

From this point of view, order in the temporal State will be simply a particularising of all created order. We must, I think, go quite as far as this if we are to catch any glimpse of the importance attached to this fusion of the

spiritual and temporal, an idea upheld so loftily by Mohammedan thought throughout the ages.

But God in pre-eternity freely made a pact, the great *mithaq*, with the race of Adam. Afterwards He made this pact more precise through every pronouncement of His prophet-lawgivers; finally He sealed it with the last revelation, that of the Koran. It was thus He formulated promises and imposed an obligation on the race of men. Necessarily, therefore, He had to impute to this race the capacity to assent, to be responsible for its fidelity or infidelity to the promises made. It is not directly in question, and it need not be, whether anything exists in the ontological order corresponding to such a capacity to assent. God in fact treats man as a being endowed with responsibility and thereby establishes him in a juridical state of freedom.

From this point of view, and in law, every Mohammedan is free (*hurr*). Just as every man, till he is proved otherwise, is presumed to be a Mohammedan—wholly faithful, that is, to the divine pact—so every Mohammedan, till he is proved to be otherwise, is presumed to be socially and politically free.

Islam admits, it is true, the possibility of slavery. But to be a slave is regarded as abnormal for a Mohammedan, and, by participation, for anyone else who has received a written Revelation and believes in God. It is always a praiseworthy act to free or redeem a slave, especially a Mohammedan slave.

It is only right to stress the very moderate idea of slavery held traditionally by Islam. The juridical status in which God has established one man, granting to another complete authority over him, is far from depriving the latter of all personal rights. These are guaranteed to him by the Community itself, whose function it is to protect those rights. It is one of the duties that devolve upon the *muhtasib*. In Islam, it may be said, the slave still retains a certain personality, though from the civic point of view it is a kind of continuation of the personality of his master.

This became something tangible in the treatment of a slave in a Muslim household, which was generally lenient, even for "unbelievers", and indeed fairly generous. There were abuses, of course, but they were always denounced as such.

In the Mohammedan State, the slave was never the *res* of Roman law. This was because like all other men—his master and even the head of the State—he was primarily the "slave and servant of God". It is true that the tradition of Islam allows slavery both in fact and in law, in the sense that God "has nothing to account for" to man in regard to the status in which He places him; but it does not allow it absolutely, as the bounden lot of certain classes of human beings naturally inferior in themselves. Beyond the diversity of legal enactments in the terrestrial City, Islam is a universalism. It is not, like Christianity, founded on the nature and dignity of the human person, but it is founded on that dignity assured to man by the pact God has made with him, provided he does not reject its terms. In the words of the Koran: "All believers are brothers."

Moreover, if the Mohammedan State recognises the condition of slavery as legitimate, slaves are not part of its necessary machinery. The idea of "juridical status" (*ahkam*), which settles every man's place in the State, does not require in itself the abolition of slavery; but such an abolition having been effected in modern times—by virtue, now, of the rights inherent in human nature—there is nothing to prevent Muslim legislation from recognising it.

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At the same time, I do not believe that in the ideal Mohammedan State the idea of authority and power was ever defined in terms of political freedom. The Muslim State is by rights (to quote the expression of M. Louis Massignon) "an egalitarian theocracy". It is a theocracy because ultimately all legislative power belongs to the Koran and the fundamental principles of power and government are for ever defined by the Koranic texts;

and it is egalitarian because the interpretation of these texts belongs to every believer who is competent to interpret them. The equality and fraternity of all believers, from the Khalif to the beggar, is something much more fundamental than any social differences involved by public duties or public office.

Through his inward acceptance of the will of God no believer would admit that such differences have any but a relative value. By his inward attitude to them he will readily *transcend* social injustice; it will be much more rarely that he takes political action to *free himself* from social injustice. This may well be the reason why economic and social problems weigh so heavily today on the development of modern Muslim States. There have been plenty of social and political rebellions in the past, but primarily they have taken place, at any rate where Sunnite orthodoxy has prevailed, in the name of the Koranic laws.

The title of the head of the State, whatever it may be, never clothes him with any authority of his own. It is simply an indication of the will of God. And what God has granted, God can withdraw. Islam has a lively sense of the gratuitous nature of all God's gifts; everything is a free gift from God. What is often described, too hastily and quite wrongly, as Mohammedan fatalism is primarily this: the feeling of the fundamental non-existence of every human quality, dignity and function. One may, out of frailty, seek such benefits for the sake of the enjoyment they confer; one may also despise them, if one knows how to practise detachment from the world; but the believer, in either case, knows what is involved. The Khalif of yesterday may be the beggar of today; such things are merely the outward show with which God is pleased to invest His servant.

Always the Mohammedan, in his heart, will see the man in charge as a Mohammedan like himself. He will honour him or make use of him, but whichever he does he will know how to judge him. In the same way a man will not be despised for falling into disgrace. Sudden changes

of fortune have been common in Islam, from generation to generation, and even in the course of a single generation. But what does it matter? "To God alone it belongs to command."

Not that this means to say that the typical Muslim State has no distinctive characteristics. Remember, in the first place, that there is no such thing as human spiritual authority as distinct from temporal authority. Strictly speaking, no believer can have spiritual authority over other believers. But he who has charge of the State must see that there prevail in it "the rights of God and man" as defined by the Koran. Such was the function of the Khalif, the executive agent of the Muslim theocracy.

Authority will be absolute in principle but tempered in its application. "Obey those among you who keep the commandment", the Koran enjoins; and: "He who obeys the Prophet, obeys God." But to obey the Khalif, so long as he commands nothing contrary to the Koran, is to obey the Prophet, whose vicar (*khalifa*) he is. For all obedience is to God, and can be given to none but God. He alone has the right to command on earth. As the reformist Rashid Ridha said: "All obedience and all submission is to God alone."

But the essential commandments have been formulated by God once and for all in the Koran. "Obey those among you who keep the commandment" is a precept always subject to the condition: if what they command is in conformity with the Law. From this point of view, justice (*'adl*), as observance of the Koranic precepts, is the foundation of all legitimate exercise of power. Apart from this, every believer should meditate in his heart, and live by, the law, and the prophetic traditions which are the law's continuation. Thus every believer shares the general responsibility of the Community as a whole. "Consult them in deciding", says a verse of the Koran when speaking of the Companions. The duty of obedience on the part of the faithful and the duty of consultation on the part of the head of the Community (together with mutual

consultation by believers) are the two aspects, so it seems to me, of the exercise of authority in the ideal Muslim State.

The duty of consultation is therefore itself an act of authority, and this authority is the *status* with which the head of the State is directly invested by God. *Omnis potestas a Deo* is the Christian tradition: all authority (and all power, which is the expression of authority) comes from God. Islam most certainly echoes this assertion, and it goes farther still: not only does all authority come from God, but strictly there is no other authority but God's.

For the Christian, God, the author of nature, has power over all things, and this power He has deliberately communicated to men: "Fill the earth, and make it yours." This power of His, of which He is the source, God can really communicate to His rational creatures because He has chosen to make them in His image and likeness; this, too, in such a way that man in certain circumstances may have to exercise power, one free man may have to command another, but without infringing his freedom or dignity.

The Islamic point of view is somewhat different, at any rate as it is expressed in a whole line of thinking that has long been traditional. Not only is it God alone who directly invests with authority every temporal head, but there is literally—and this cannot be repeated too often—no other true temporal authority but His: and this, too, in the very exact sense that (according to the same line of tradition) no secondary causes are really efficient. Here the difference between Christian and Muslim thought depends less on the idea of authority itself than on the dominant theological idea of divine government.

Another difference, no less conspicuous, arises out of their respective ideas of the spiritual and the temporal. All power comes from God, says the Christian tradition. But whereas in the spiritual order (which is the Church's concern) the conditions of exercising power and its hierarchical organisation will be those that have been positively revealed, temporal power (one might say)

has been delegated by God to man, to be exercised within the just limitations of natural law, and so has the just discharging of the revealed divine law. In Islam, on the other hand, there is a certain fusion of the temporal and the spiritual. Different forms of government can be accepted or tolerated, but only so far as they continue to be related to the fundamental norm of the typical Muslim State.

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These general considerations must be borne in mind, I think, if we are to understand the *plane* on which a sense of political freedom can be made effective. For the Christian, man's political freedom, like his interior freedom, is something he has to win, firstly by a victory over himself. It belongs to the dignity of man made in the image of God. It is not nearly enough to say that in the modern age its only limitation is the freedom of others. It is something actually required for the complete accomplishment of man's true destiny, and the end it sets itself is the realising of a State in which justice and love are as much respected as it is ever possible for them to be on this earth. For human nature, fallen and redeemed, this is doubtless inconceivable except with the aid of divine grace, which is withheld from no man. Yet even with divine grace it is a work of human reason, a difficult achievement, constantly challenged, something that has to be unremittingly pursued.

But the freedom of the Mohammedan, at the political level as at the spiritual and personal, will be primarily a freedom not of conquest but acceptance. The free Muslim citizen is one who without reservation can both perform all the duties and exercise all the rights prescribed by the Koran. The Christian must, so to speak, be always "discovering" his freedom, and this he does as his discovery of the natural law grows more perfect and as he becomes more aware of the assistance of the divine law in regulating the human. The political freedom of the Mohammedan remains something given, or rather the equivalent of something given: the basic politico-religious laws of the

Koran. The Christian wins the freedom of the State and the exercise of his personal freedom as a citizen. The Mohammedan is free through his faithful observance of the Koranic laws. It is human nature, intelligent and free, and its capacity freely to correspond to divine initiatives, that is the Christian foundation of the value of political freedom. It is in relation to his obedience to the divine commands, in so far as they organise man's political life, that the Mohammedan would define his very sense of freedom. Here we find once more, transferred to the political plane, the psychological analysis made in the previous essay.

And I am willing to admit that this is one of the reasons that have led the theologians of Islam, at any rate those of the *ash'arite* school, to proclaim God the creator of evil as well as good, and the true author of all acts that are simply "attributed" to each individual. Everything happens "as if" man were free and responsible for his acts, though these are really created by God; and to be free in practice all he has to do is to accept what the inscrutable will of God has in store for him, "for better and for worse, for sweet and for bitter", as the *hadith* has it. If he does not—and his non-acceptance will of course be included in the divine decree—nothing changes for him objectively, but the interior freedom he might have had will become, instead, the crushing of a slave or else a slave's unavailing revolt.

Yet there is one case in which the political will of the Muslim is expressed in terms of conquest and assertion: that is at the Community level of the State as such. For it is an abnormality for a Mohammedan State or country to be subject to civil and political rulers who are infidels. This irregular condition of affairs is one that must be ended as soon as possible. It must be the aim of a unanimous "effort" on the part of the people, one that may involve their taking up arms and if necessary the sacrifice of life itself. Patriotism? Yes; but a patriotism that goes beyond nation or State, in the modern sense, and extends to

the whole Muslim body, the *umma*, the terrestrial Community of believers. The present aspirations of the Muslim countries have been influenced, no doubt, and "orchestrated", shall we say, by modern nationalisms; but there must be no failure to recognise the overwhelming force that lies behind them, a force which is rooted in that peculiarly Islamic fusion of the spiritual and the temporal. The interior freedom of every Mohammedan is something created by acceptance and obedience. But the Community must be fully free in order to promote those politico-religious values established by the Koran, and to adapt those values to the needs of the age.

* * *

One final remark: for all their differences, the Christian and the Muslim ideas of freedom have one thing in common: they are equally opposed to an unconditional quest for a false and merely nominal freedom, a freedom which would be something purely arbitrary. The Christian, like the Mohammedan, has no sense of freedom unless he is in harmony with himself and with a higher order.

We may say, if we will, that in both cases freedom is impossible without justice. I might even say that the idea of justice in Islam is something primary in its conception of political freedom. But the Muslim view of the world, discontinuous as it is, based on positive laws considered as revealed, would define the virtue of justice less by its object than by a certain disposition of the soul, a right intention (*niya*) to be faithful to the ordinances. This is the foundation of *sidq*, the virtue of sincerity, which in turn can be defined as the fact, and habitual practice, of strict loyalty to a freely made contract.

The establishment of justice is required in principle by every Mohammedan with a duty to perform in the Community. More than that, it becomes the characteristic of the Community as such. *Dar al-Islam* and *dar al-adl* are synonymous: the "world of Islam" is also known as the "*world of justice*". To command the good and forbid

evil is its proper function. Numerous verses of the Koran insist on this. And "the good" means the "rights of God" and the "rights of man" defined by the Koran. To be free is to accept the divine pact whole-heartedly; to be just, to command the good and forbid evil, is simply to observe the pact. "Believers, be faithful to your engagements"—engagements, that is, both to God and to men; fidelity to the pact will be the perfection of justice.

Christian freedom is a filial freedom, therefore something more daring and also more dangerous. The Islamic conception of freedom is always something more limited, but also more secure; it depends on fidelity to that pact made freely and unilaterally by the divine mercy.

These differences would be mutually enlightening if we could follow their applications in the distinctive notes of Christian and Muslim humanism. Humanism: there, exactly as in the idea of freedom, we have a modern problem, one that was unknown to traditional Islam. Yet there are not wanting in the past certain elements that indicate the answer we seek.

All comes from God, all returns to Him, and "all perishes but His Face". But just because it is God who bestows on His servants the goods of this world, it is surely their duty to use them as best they can, though without becoming attached to them, giving thanks to God (*shukr*) in prosperity, submitting without murmur to His will (*sabr*) in times of trial. It is a calm and dignified attitude, but necessarily, perhaps, a little superficial; for nothing essential, after all, is involved in any created thing, whether pleasurable or the reverse.

Here, too, the interior disposition of the Christian is different. The behaviour of the Christian in the world, among men his brothers, may decide, by virtue of the degree of love involved, the destiny that will be his through all eternity. Christianity seeks to fulfil its mission in the world without itself belonging to it; therefore it tends to transform the world by causing to take root, even in temporal soil, that liberty of the child of God, those

virtues of justice and charity, without which the earthly City—and first of all on its temporal plane—could never be truly habitable.

Islam knows nothing of this condition of tension, that of a temporal Christianity faithful to its mission. For temporal Christianity must needs bear witness in the world to the Cross; and the full development of man, even on the temporal plane, is the basis of the renunciation that transfigures him. Islam stands for acceptance rather than renunciation.

For traditional Islam, the whole organisation of the State, together with the arts and the sciences, are all of prophetic origin. This implies that human nature is radically impotent; yes, but temporal salvation, simultaneously with eternal, is offered *en bloc* by the Mohammedan Law. The Christian, while he is in the world, can never "dig himself in" without completely compromising both the transcendence of himself in God alone (something assured him by correspondence to grace), and also his true function of acting in the world as a kind of divine leaven. The Mohammedan, for his part, without for a moment losing sight of its radical contingency, accepts in one sense the contingent and perishable.

Christianity remains always the religion of Incarnation, of communion between God and His rational creation. By the mysteries of the Incarnation, Redemption and grace, it endows man, even in this world and however frail and sinful he may be, with a value that belongs to the absolute order.

Islam, a monotheistic religion, also assigns each man a personal end which is his eternal destiny. It is true that man, human nature in general, is primarily conceived as pure impermanence, without any stability but that conferred every moment by God. But by the pact He imposes upon him, God establishes man in the status of a believer (*mu'min*). Nothing in men's nature requires this. God qualified them, none the less, to hear His Word and receive it. As human beings they were equal, but with an

equality that made them "brothers of the mud, brothers of clay"; *tin* is the Arabic word. As believers they will be equal with an equality that will make them "brothers in religion" (*din*), and therefore now with equal rights and obligations, both for this world and the other, in the eyes of the Law which their "clement and merciful" Lord has promulgated, and in virtue of the promises He has made to them.

So as a monotheistic religion, opening to every human person the prospect of an eternal destiny, Islam would also mark with its seal the terrestrial City and organise it for the service of man *qua* believer. It is therefore a guarantee of possible humanism. This is also confirmed by the actual history of Arabic-Muslim culture, especially the fruit it has borne in great achievements in religion and philosophy, in letters also, and in the arts and sciences; not least, too, in the daily life of the Mohammedan City, and I am thinking particularly of the social virtues which are most characteristic of it, the virtues of hospitality and mutual aid.

As in every culture, whether religious or profane, there have been periods of greatness and periods of stagnation. True Christian humanism is a hardly retained balance, something to be constantly won, and something to be won from within, as must be also the Christian freedom that inspires it. Muslim humanism is always dominated by the emptiness of this world, even though it knows how to esteem its attractions. It maintains that justice and mutual help and respect for the pledged word must lie at the root of all social relationships, but the exercise of these virtues is regarded as something that takes place within the Community, on the plane of positive law and morality. Hence the tendency to attain a certain level of humanism in a kind of gusty blaze, which lights up preferably only one layer of society.

From the beggar to the Khalif, all believers are brothers, all equally "free", provided they submit blindly and in all trust to the divine Omnipotence. But at the level of merely

humanistic values of the social and political order there has often been the danger of a rift appearing between the mass of the people and the *élite*. Muslim society, in the course of its history, has experienced various temptations to the esoteric.

But what does it matter, after all, since "God alone lives"? Perhaps the best symbol of this humanism is to be found in one of its purest achievements in art, those endless harmonious interlacings to be seen in Hispano-Moorish art, tracing so carefully patterns that vaguely merge into one another in that most fragile of all materials, plaster. Detail and splendour in the forms, fundamental imprecision, fragility in the chosen medium: there you find in concrete form all the evocative charm of Muslim culture, and all its lack of perfect achievement. All the temporal gifts are there, but each has merely the value of a reflection. And all the reflections fade and vanish at that one voice which proclaims the divine Name.

THE HELLENIC INHERITANCE

by ROBERT FLACELIÈRE

THE ancient Greeks themselves were the first to be aware of the astonishing superiority of their own civilisation, and they were very well pleased with themselves in consequence. They were fully conscious of what Renan was to describe as this "Greek miracle", and their philosophers even set out to explain it. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, wrote with visible satisfaction:

The peoples that inhabit the cold regions of the North and the various countries of Europe are for the most part well endowed with courage, but they are inferior in intelligence. Thanks to their courage they are very well able to preserve their freedom but they are incapable of organising a government. The peoples of Asia [it was primarily the Persian Empire that Aristotle had in mind] are intelligent but lack courage: hence they never emerge from their permanent state of subjection and servitude. But the Hellenic people, living in an area intermediate between Europe and Asia, combine both sets of characteristics: they are both brave and intelligent. Therefore they live in freedom and preserve the best kinds of government.

There is no doubt that when we think of civil and political freedom we have to acknowledge that it was born in Greece. It was the Greeks who invented it, and it was, perhaps, their most important invention.

But it was a laborious invention, or rather a progressive conquest. In the days of Homer and even of Hesiod, say in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., the only people who counted were the kings and chieftains, who were great

landed proprietors and also judges of the people. For good or ill, it was only these "lords" who were truly free. Hesiod complains bitterly of their "twisted" and unjust judgments. Both in war and peace, all other men were their slaves. Thersites, in the Achaian army before Troy, might indulge in a momentary grumble at Agamemnon, but he is swiftly punished by Ulysses and order is restored with that burst of "Homeric laughter" which greets the chastisement of the unhappy wretch. The small peasant of the iron age, which is what Hesiod was, groaned under a burden of labour and poverty which made his life exceedingly hard. The poor, threatened with death from starvation, had no alternative but to borrow from the rich; but these practised usury, so it was not very long before the insolvent debtor was sold as a slave, with his wife and children, and the little field he had owned went to swell the possessions of the rich.

But the oppressed poor, as Aristotle perceived, were more courageous in Greece than they were elsewhere. They realised, before long, the necessity to combine, and this is what they did, especially in the towns and their adjoining villages; little by little, and after many reverses, they dealt successfully with the rich and the powerful. This ascent of the people is a long story; in Athens it covers the period between Solon and Pericles, from about the year 600 to 450 B.C.; a century and a half of struggle and strife. It was Solon's achievement to secure for the Athenians civil liberty and make illegal the enslavement of insolvent debtors. He also freed the land. He proclaimed proudly in verse (for he was a poet as well as a legislator): "I have torn up the limits of the black earth, it is now free. Athenians sold or exiled, who had forgotten even their native tongue, and those who trembled at their master's whim—all these have I freed. This I have done by force of law. I have drafted just laws for the good and the wicked, fixing for each the recompense due to him."

After the comparatively mild tyranny of Peisistratus and his sons, the development thus begun was continued by the

revolutionary achievement of Cleisthenes, the true founder of Athenian democracy and political freedom. The work was completed by Pericles, when he inaugurated the payment of office-holders; thenceforward every official position in the State was open to even the poorest Athenian.

There is no need here to describe the working of Athenian democracy. It will be enough to give the essentials quite shortly. Athens was a *direct*, not a parliamentary democracy. The assembly of the people, in which every citizen had the right and duty to sit, was the source of all the powers of the State: the legislative, the executive (the assembly appointed and controlled all office-holders) and even the judiciary, since the *heliaia*, or tribunal, was virtually a committee of the assembly. No democracy was ever more complete, or more absolute either (if a democracy, like a monarchy, can be described as absolute). The historian Thucydides puts the following words in the mouth of Pericles:

Our constitution serves as a model to neighbouring cities. It is called a democracy because what it professes to seek is the interest of the whole people. Subject only to the laws, we all enjoy equality; consideration is given to merit alone; the honours awarded by the State are to be obtained by virtue, not privilege. Even the poorest and most obscure are called to take their share in all public business. We are all of us free to give our opinions on affairs of State.

Democratic institutions, in this present year of grace, and especially the name of democracy (a Greek name, of course), enjoy such a prestige that all peoples and all régimes, whatever their type, profess to be "democratic". We have "popular" democracies (a singularly redundant expression) and democracies pure and simple. The monarchies themselves, as in England, are also democratic, even when the Conservatives succeed the Labour Party in office. Our debt to the Greeks is therefore considerable, since our idea of political liberty, by way of the great memories of the Roman republic, goes back to the Athens

of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Moreover, present-day historians, even the most impartial of them, can hardly restrain their enthusiasm when speaking of the Athenian democracy—if they are convinced democrats themselves; and even if they are not, they never actually repudiate it. The tragic events of 1938-1945 gave to the struggles between Athens and Sparta, between Demosthenes and Philip, a new and lively actuality, reflected—to take one instance among many—in Junius's *Les Oligarques*, "an essay in partial history" written in 1942, where Hitlerite Germany is compared to Sparta, victorious over Athens in 404 B.C.

But what chiefly interests us here, of course, is not the actual institutions so much as the spirit which inspired them and which they in turn fostered. These Athenian institutions, and those of the other democracies in ancient Greece, reflect an ideal of dignity and pride that existed already in the Hellenic soul, and they in turn favoured the development of a certain type of man who shared this same ideal. It was a reciprocal influence, the mutual reactions of character and social structure.

The State, in antiquity, was proud and jealous of its independence and autonomy, of the fact that its citizens obeyed only laws which they had made for themselves, and magistrates they had chosen from among themselves to execute those laws. All liberty, it is true, if it is not to degenerate into licence and anarchy, needs obedience to maintain it; but how great is the difference between obedience to a monarch, one free man among a crowd of slaves, and the obedience of men, who are all free, to the laws to which they have freely consented!

Socrates was in prison, condemned to death. He could have gone on living, physically free, but that would have involved flight and therefore disobedience to the laws of the city which are the guarantee of freedom for all, and so of his own freedom. Strange paradox! Socrates, even though unjustly condemned, rather than disobey the laws, preferred to drink hemlock.

We read in Herodotus how King Xerxes expressed his astonishment to the Spartan Demaratus that the Greeks could seriously think of resistance; there were not many of them and they had no leader whom they would all obey; moreover they claimed to be free, and therefore at liberty to fight as they wished or even to run away to save their skins, since there was no master they had to fear. But Demaratus undeceived him. "The Lacedemonians", he said, "are certainly free, but not in everything. They have the law for their master, and this they fear more than the Persians fear Xerxes. They always do what the law commands. But in battle the law's commands are always the same: not to retire, however numerous the enemy, but to stand fast and either conquer or die."

This was the generation that proved victorious at Marathon and Salamis. Their ideal of freedom, but freedom governed by reason and a spirit of discipline, was surely the soul of their successful resistance to the Asiatic hordes by which they were invaded. In the *Perses* of Æschylus, Queen Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, asks the old men of the chorus, the Faithful: "Then who are these Athenians? What chieftain leads them to battle?" And the wise councillors reply: "They proclaim that they are slaves to no man, that they obey no man."

This ideal of a freedom actually *lived* was also, in Athens, the inspiration of a prodigious soaring of life and activity in every sphere of civilisation: literature and art, science and philosophy. It is impossible to imagine such intellectual and artistic development not based on this freedom of thought and expression, not able to question everything in order to be guided by reason alone. Only such freedom as this is creative, and it was this Greek freedom that made possible the creation of the moral, philosophical and artistic patrimony which after twenty-five centuries is still the heart of our western civilisation.

First the moral patrimony: the free Greek, he who was *eleutheros*, was conscious of a certain spiritual nobility which caused him to judge loftily, to despise all moral

ugliness and baseness. For him the beautiful and the good were one and the same thing: it was *kaloskagathos*. Similarly ugliness and evil were one and the same: the same word *aischros* meant both ugly and shameful. This nobility of the Greek soul is comparable to the pride that comes of inherited nobility and ancestral lustre, but this was a pride that extended to the whole people, who, knowing themselves free, felt and thought aristocratically. The adjective *eleutheros*, which differs from *eleutheros* only by the addition of an *iota*, sums up the whole of this ideal compounded of frankness (*parrhesia*), courage, loyalty and uprightness—something not far off from the idea of a "gentleman". Such was the spiritual foundation of those youths who people the dialogues of Plato; they are well endowed by nature (*euphuesis*), lovers of the beautiful and the good; sometimes they are mistaken about the right way to attain to the beautiful and the good, but Socrates is there to enlighten them on this, and to point to the right road. None was deliberately vicious, every moral fault was simply an error: this Socratic maxim is unintelligible and unjustifiable except in surroundings fundamentally healthy, and also, I would add, in a climate of dignity, pride and moral rectitude—therefore of freedom.

From civil and political liberty we have passed, almost insensibly, to the inward sentiment of freedom, the source of moral nobility, the foundation of the dignity of the human person; and so we have drawn very close to what is really essential in the subject under review. For this is not the place for an historical discussion of political freedom in Greece; what I am hastening to arrive at is the idea of freedom which we find in the great Greek philosophers.

But we must remember that it was this experience of freedom in the daily life of the city—its social as well as its political life—that was at the root of the speculations of all the ancient Greek philosophers, and that it was no accident that it was Athens, the most democratic of the cities of Hellas, that gave birth to the profoundest and most original thinkers, to Socrates and Plato, then gathered to itself

thinkers from every corner of Greece—Anaxagoras, Aristotle and afterwards so many others.

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It was Socrates who was the initiator of all reflection on the soul. But he wrote nothing; perhaps because he considered, as he says in the *Phædrus*, that writing cramps the freedom of the living word. His ideas are known to us partially through Xenophon but principally through Plato, who gave a rich orchestration to his master's simple melody, mingling with it many themes that were personal to himself or borrowed from the mysteries, the sects of the initiated, especially the Orphic and Pythagorean.

The human soul is immortal, and the essential business of man upon this earth should be to improve his soul, to purify and free it from all the soiling of evil and matter (for Plato the two things are one); the soul has to draw as close as it can to the divine Forms, the ideas of the Beautiful, the Good and the True, and so become worthy and capable of contemplating these forms in the world beyond. This contemplation (*theoria*) is the goal of all philosophy; it tends to assimilate the soul to God, and therefore to a true deification of man. This, in outline, is the central idea of the *Phædo*, of the *Symposium*, of the *Republic* and the *Phædrus*, the works of Plato's maturity which hold the essentials of his message, a message for every age.

The soul's motive power for its ascent, that which provides it with the wings to soar, is *love*, the philosophical *Eros*, which from perceiving the beautiful on earth in concrete form, especially in the glamorous beauty of youth, causes the soul to rise by degrees, by the stages of a true dialectic as set forth in the *Symposium*, to the contemplation of immaterial Beauty, the Beautiful in itself. But the soul has formidable obstacles to overcome, internal obstacles. Plato compares it in the *Phædrus* to a chariot drawn by a pair of horses. Reason is the charioteer. One of the horses draws it in an upward direction, that which personifies *thumos*, the noble aspirations, the will to good;

but the other, which represents *epithumia*, the appetites of the senses, draws the chariot downwards, and this dualism in his team is the source of no little trouble to the charioteer! Note, however, that this dualism is the very condition of the freedom of the soul, for the soul is not necessarily biased either upwards or downwards; it must choose, take one side or the other of these conflicting tendencies within itself. If the bad horse wins, the soul comes to grief, its resting-place is the body of a lower order of man, a slave or even an animal (for Plato admitted the possibility of metempsychosis); but if it is the good horse, well guided by the charioteer, that wins the day, then the soul mounts up in the scale of beings, drawing nearer to that "beatific vision" referred to in so many words in the *Phædrus*: *makaria opsis* or *thea*. It is by a free choice, therefore, that it decides its destiny. The law of *Adrasteia* or Necessity, and the lot-drawing of fates that occurs every thousand years, limits, it is true, the freedom of the soul, but within these bounds there is sovereign exercise of that freedom. In the myth of the Republic the hierophant who presides over the choice of destinies proclaims: "Even the last comer, if he chooses judiciously and imposes strict discipline on his way of living, may enjoy a good and a happy life. Let the first choose carefully, the last be in good heart!"

The soul's misfortune in this life is to be chained to the load of the flesh, which prevents it from using its wings. It is caught and held fast in the meshes of the body; it is nailed down to it. It is from the body that comes the *epithumia* of the bad horse. Using an Orphic play upon words, Plato likens the body (*soma*) to the soul's tomb (its *sema*). All philosophy is but a preparation for death that brings deliverance. This motif of the soul's liberation runs all through the *Phædo*, which has every right, it has been said, to be called the breviary of ancient piety. For we are always, with Plato, on the border-line between philosophy and religion. We should note, too, that Socrates, conversing in prison with his disciples a few hours before his death, held that man could not liberate his soul by suicide, for the

gods do not permit him thus to dispose of the soul he has received at their hands. But the philosopher must aspire with all his being to purify his soul of all contact with the body; his whole terrestrial existence is none too lengthy for this, for the task is long and arduous.

In Aristotle we observe a marked change of climate: from mystical intuition, sustained by dialectic, we pass to something colder, the abstract argumentation of the scientist and psychologist. But whatever may be said to the contrary, Aristotle contributed even more than Plato to the justification of free will, for he reduced Necessity (*Ananke* or *Heimarmene*) to the mere natural disposition of the human body formed by heredity. Each man, he says, creates his own character, and every sane and healthy adult is responsible for his own actions. Virtue and vice depend equally on ourselves. Of course man, by his actions, creates certain habits, and these, especially the bad ones, he finds it afterwards very difficult to overcome. Nevertheless he himself is the generating principle of his actions, just as he is of his children. By his actions he is the father of his own virtuous or vicious self.

But Socrates and Plato, much more than Aristotle, are astonishing pioneers. What is most surprising, to me at any rate, is that their thinking, at times, could so detach itself from the framework of the Hellenic city to which it refers so often (for instance in the *Republic* and the *Laws*), in order to consider in isolation the destiny of the individual, to concern themselves with the progress of a soul abstracted, in some sort, from its thousand temporal bonds, if not from its body. The collapse of the Greek city, at the period of Philip and Alexander, served to develop this type of thinking still further, to give an even greater sharpness and much more actuality to reflection on the human soul. For as long as the Greeks felt sustained on every hand by the city, the *polis*, it was given only to a few profound minds to concern themselves with individual happiness, something, as it seemed, so wholly bound up with the welfare of the city; the official religion itself was only a department of

State and asked little of the gods but collective protection. When, however, the social framework fell to pieces, after 338 B.C. (the date of the battle of Cheronea), individual conduct and happiness became a much more urgent question, and it was then that the Stoics and Epicureans, drawing on earlier philosophies and especially Platonism, set out to solve what had now become an essential and pressing problem.

It was when their armies were conquering Asia that the Greeks saw everything about them crumbling. In order to live at all, in those days of stress and moral confusion, they felt the need of some refuge, not to be discovered except in religion, in science and philosophy. All values had to be revised, for they all depended upon a State which was also a Church; this had now only a feeble and anæmic life, having lost its real independence and the freedom that had been its one vital principle. Such was the atmosphere in which (in 306 B.C.) Epicurus founded his *Garden School* and Zeno (in 301 B.C.) the *Stoa*. These two, and their numerous successors, set out to provide man with new principles for living.

Epicureanism counselled men to withdraw from public affairs, which in those days could bring them nothing but trouble, and to free themselves from superstition and fear by adopting a materialist view of the world, diametrically opposed to the idealism of Plato. The world, our bodies and even our souls, are all made of *atoms* coalescing by pure chance. The gods exist, but they are far removed from us and never intervene in our lives; such a theism was therefore essentially unencumbering. To be happy, we should restrict our desires to what is necessary; with a handful of beans to allay his hunger, a little water to quench his thirst and a good thick cloak to keep out the cold, the wise man may rival Zeus himself in happiness. By limiting our desires we attain true freedom, man's supreme good, because it is only immoderate desires that make us slaves, whether our condition be free or servile. The fear of death is a folly, since death is simply a dissolution of atoms. The

Epicurean has neither desire nor fear. He is free to lead a wise and peaceful life in a little circle of select friends who share his ideal.

The Stoic, on the other hand, aimed at transforming, not subduing, the desires that bring unhappiness. He believed in determinism, in the absolute necessity of linked causes and effects. The inexorable power of fate, Destiny (*Heimarmene*), governs nature and to a very large extent men also. To read some of the Stoics one might expect their conclusion to be the psychological fatalism of the East and the non-existence of free will. But not at all; and this is certainly the most serious contradiction in all their system, though it is nothing if not characteristic of the Greek spirit. Even granting the hypothesis of metaphysical determinism, such as that of the Stoics, a Greek found it impossible to resign himself to renouncing his psychological freedom. To maintain the wise man's freedom the Stoics argued thus: Our trouble is that we perceive only a part of reality; if we could take in all of it, we would understand that Order reigns in the universe (the word *cosmos* means both "universe" and "order") and all particular disorders are ultimately resolved in the universal order. What we have to do is once for all, and in spite of every appearance to the contrary, to judge the reality that surrounds us as good; we shall find ourselves, then, both happy and free. To live in harmony with universal nature, this is the major principle which leads to interior freedom, the freedom that is self-governing, making its own law, the freedom accessible to every human being, even to a slave like Epictetus himself. External objects, even our body, are in themselves completely indifferent; we must withdraw from these by an effort of the will, where wisdom resides, the will which has sovereign power to decide by itself what is good and what is bad. Things will be, for us, what we will them to be, because we are perfectly free to envisage them as we wish. So this Stoic outlook contains something more than a surly resignation to what is fated and inevitable: namely the noble acceptance of a hard and

pitiless law, an acceptance that calls forth from the human soul a freedom of higher worth than the universe which oppresses it, because it is capable of judging and therefore mastering Destiny.

Moreover, unlike the Epicureans, the Stoics were religiously, even mystically minded, believing as they did in a Providence controlling the *Cosmos*. Here they link up with the Platonists once more, and especially with Neo-Platonists like Plutarch. The philosopher of Cheronea, priest of the Pythian Apollo at Delphi, lived when the Christian era had already begun, but if he was acquainted with Judaism he would seem to have known nothing at all of Christianity. For him, as for Plato, the Divinity is good by definition, and also *philanthropos*, loving mankind, incapable of causing them harm, wishing and doing them only what is good. He states, for instance, in his *Dialogue on Love*: "We enjoy the divine bounty which extends to all men everywhere and is never lacking to them in any conditions of life." Later we shall have to return to this pagan belief in a benevolent and kindly Providence, which secures and guides our will for the good, when we come to compare pagan with Christian love—which we shall have to do, since the ideas of love and freedom are inseparable and complementary.

We know how vast was the influence, throughout the succeeding centuries, of Epicureanism, and still more Stoicism. At the time of the birth and propagation of Christianity, these two were the philosophies most in fashion. When St. Paul came to Athens, then a university city and the special seat of philosophy, it was the Stoics and Epicureans, so we are told in the *Acts*, who invited him to expound his doctrine in the Acropolis.

In what concerns interior freedom, the freedom of the soul, had St. Paul anything new to teach them? This is the whole question we now have to answer. So far all I have done is to recall very briefly the facts commonly known. This was necessary, I think, to throw into greater relief the subject we have to tackle: the question, that is,

whether the Christian idea of freedom is an inheritance from ancient Greece.

* * *

There is one strong temptation to which it is easy to succumb, particularly for a Hellenist, whose profession is the occasion of his reading and re-reading the works that have come down to us from ancient Greece, and whose taste leads him to admire so many of these works, especially the dialogues of Plato. It is a temptation to emphasise the agreement of so many passages in pagan writings with this or that of our Christian beliefs and to go into ecstasies at some wonderful encounter, at seeing reason tend in the direction of the true faith, or at the number and preciseness of so many "pre-Christian intuitions" in Greek antiquity; indeed *Pre-Christian Intuitions* was the title chosen by the editors of that volume of Simone Weil, a confused jumble of lecture-extracts and personal notes which adds very little to the author's reputation. Such *rapprochements* are very important; and intellectually they are exhilarating, but they are often only analogies, entirely superficial, and they rarely survive any intensive criticism.

So it will probably be more useful, in considering freedom, to devote ourselves first to the ungrateful but necessary task of making distinctions, criticising and defining.

The Greeks, it is true, invented civil and political freedom; it was thus they made possible the wonderful development of their civilisation and also their philosophising on the idea and the ideal of freedom. Yet we must not forget that every city of antiquity—and not only Sparta, that "mistress of dark errors"—was a totalitarian State. Fascist and Nazi theorists were not mistaken in looking to Sparta and Rome to find ancestors of a régime based on the principles of violence, race and blood. The Greeks described all non-Greeks as barbarians. It is odd to hear the Persians, in the tragedy of Æschylus, actually describing themselves as barbarians, and the messenger

from Salamis, for example, on making his entry, crying: "Persians, the whole barbarian army is in peril!" The word had no pejorative connotation originally, but patriotism and national sentiment, excited overmuch by the Medic wars, soon rendered it an anything but flattering term; besides, men in every age always tend to despise what they understand little or not at all, the foreigner and anything strange. . . . For the Greeks, anyone not of their race was of an inferior order, fit only to be a slave. It was the frame of mind of all peoples in antiquity, including the Jews, and it would be folly to make it a special grievance against the Greeks. Still, it is important to bear in mind that their notion of freedom was never regarded as an article for export, as it was to be for the French in 1789: it was only Greeks who were worthy to live freely. Not till after Alexander and his conquests—which caused such a shuffling of populations and therefore led to better mutual understanding—do we see a certain softening of national pride, coinciding with the decline of the City-State. Theoretically Greeks and Persians were now equal and the conqueror aimed at uniting them under his sceptre. We know the resistance he encountered from the Greeks, full of contempt for the Orientals they had vanquished. . . . But in the course of the following centuries the Greeks learnt eventually to regard all men as equals, even though barbarian by birth, provided they shared their own culture, the same *paideusis*; but they retained their contempt for the stranger who was unable to understand Greek, who spoke an indistinct language as meaningless as that of the birds, even though the Stoics were talking about "Cosmopolis" and proclaiming themselves citizens of the world. The Romans, for their part, despised the *Græculi*, though they admired and took pains to copy their civilisation; the Greeks, on the other hand, had only disdain for the crudity and brutality of the "western barbarians".

Moreover, the ancient City-State was totalitarian in another sense: the individual in it existed only in relation to the Community, which possessed all right over him;

the good of the human person weighed next to nothing in comparison with the interests of the State, the supreme law. This was most conspicuous in Sparta, ruled by laws attributed to Lycurgus. Plutarch, describing these Spartan institutions, uses more than once the simile of bees in a hive. Sparta was a kind of ant-hill: the individual in it counted for so little, was so completely dominated by the State, that he had barely any personal or family life. Life in Sparta followed a regular cycle under military regimentation; for the man under thirty there was scarcely any private life at all, and even after that it remained singularly stunted and precarious.

Athenian custom was milder; private life was more important, one could breathe an air of freedom. But here too, even in peacetime, the citizen was burdened with a thousand communal duties, of which the modern State's administrative vexations, importunate as they are, give hardly any notion. Above all, the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal was non-existent; State and Church were one. And this is precisely the reason why, once the city had lost its vitality and independence, men found themselves wholly without aim or purpose; in these circumstances Stoicism and Epicureanism played somewhat the same part as that of the Christian Church at the crumbling of the Roman Empire, but with an effectiveness and field of action that was infinitely more limited; the consolations of wisdom were not available to the first comer!

Finally, if there was freedom of speech (*parrhesia*) on a generous scale in Athens, it was restricted in several important respects: the State would never permit its own principles or its gods to be called in question. There was no such thing as freedom of conscience; it was not even imaginable. Several philosophers were persecuted for impiety and were treated with a severity very different from that which the eighteenth-century *philosophes* were to experience at the hands of the Most Christian King: Anaxagoras, in spite of the friendship of Pericles, his former

pupil, was banished for life from Athens and had to return to his native Ionia; Socrates himself, condemned for introducing new gods and for corrupting youth, was compelled to drink hemlock. And note that the régime under which he was condemned was not that of the Thirty Tyrants set up by Sparta, but the popular constitution which followed the restoration of democracy in 403 B.C. In the most liberal of the ancient cities, the man suspected of impiety or atheism was regarded, as he was in medieval Christendom, as a dissolvent of society: by refusing to believe in the gods of the city, he seemed to be shutting himself off from the Community, which was united and kept together by nothing else but the worship of its gods. Similarly, in the Roman Empire, Christians, by refusing to sacrifice to the goddess Rome and the deified Emperor, were regarded as self-excluded from the State and guilty of performing an act of anarchy. In the Middle Ages, St. Thomas was to hold as just the execution of a heretic who persisted in his error. It is only in a pluralist society that freedom of conscience becomes conceivable.

Again, when discussing freedom, it is impossible to pass over slavery in silence, or to ignore the fact that of every ten persons living in Attica there was scarcely one *citizen*, that is one free man; the other nine were either slaves or minors, the latter including women as well as children. Women, who in the Crete of Minos had enjoyed such consideration, had no more rights, political or even civil, than children. But above all, in Athens and in all the rest of Greece, there was that vast mass of slaves, far more numerous than the free. Their condition might be tolerable if they were owned by masters who were humane and *philanthropoi*, and at Athens this was not uncommonly the case. But they possessed no rights, no protection of any sort against arbitrary or violent treatment, and they owed absolute obedience till they either died or were freed. All the hardest manual labour was their lot. In a court of law their evidence was obtained by the use of torture. They were regarded, in fact, not so much as men as animals

endowed with speech, tools in human form that could be bought and sold like chattels.

Now Plato and Aristotle, who questioned the whole universe, never thought of protesting against slavery. It may perhaps have seemed to them that the free man, defined by contrast to the slave (the *doulos*), could never be what he was without the existence of these human robots, in the same way that the spectacle of the drunken helot was a profitable part of a young Spartan's education. And it is admittedly hard to see how, at the stage of civilisation reached by antiquity, it would have been possible, without slavery, for a minority of free men to find leisure to devote to their noble occupations, whether political, economic or intellectual.

Nevertheless it was a problem for conscience. Aristotle in his *Politics* speaks of those who maintain that "the law alone established the difference between free man and slave, that nature counts for nothing, and that therefore the difference is unjust, being brought about by violence and more especially by war". Aristotle is very far from sharing this view. "In the human race", he says, "there are individuals as inferior to others as the soul is to the body or the animal to man; there are those from whom one can expect nothing better than the use of their physical strength. These individuals are destined by nature itself to slavery, since for them there can be nothing better than to obey."

In view of a passage like this, and knowing the attitude of the Greeks to barbarians, who would venture to maintain that the Greeks of the classical age had reached a universal idea of the dignity of the human person?

It would be unfair, however, not to take some account of the progressive softening of custom in regard to the treatment of slaves, visible more especially during the last two centuries before the Christian era. The movement to enfranchise slaves, by means of a fictitious sale of them to the gods, became more and more common, and the Epicureans and Stoics particularly, without formally condemning the

institution of slavery, increasingly regarded slaves as the equals of other men; though more unfortunate than others, they were by no means necessarily inferior in worth. It is also pleasant to recall that line of Euripides—more humane than Aristotle, or less systematic—written well in the fifth century before Christ: "Many a slave, bearing a dishonourable name, has a soul more free than that of the free."

In the history of ideas, the problem of slavery is connected with the Greek contempt for manual labour. This same Euripides, in his lost tragedy, the *Antiope*, makes the twins, Amphion and Zethos, argue the comparative merits of the active and the contemplative life, the former incarnate in Zethos, the athlete and hunter, the latter in the musician Amphion. The advantage lay with Amphion, who became King of Thebes and built its walls with the magic strains of his lyre alone. Socrates himself, a man of the Athenian middle class, who talked all day with ordinary artisans—shoemakers and armourers and potters—does not seem to have shared this disdain for material tasks. But Plato and Aristotle were aristocrats, and for them *poiesis*, the making of any object, whether a house or a work of art in sculpture, poetry or music, was an activity of the second order, unworthy of the wise man, who should devote himself entirely to either *praxis* or *theoria*, to the conduct of affairs, economic or political, or to study and philosophy. In the myth of the *Phædrus*, Plato classes ways of life according to their value in nine degrees: that of the labourer and artisan is only the seventh; they come just above the demagogue and the tyrant, whom he regards as the worst of all menaces and quite the most contemptible!

This frame of mind, which was very general in Greece, prevented Hellenic science, so remarkable in the abstract domain of mathematics, from ever developing by experiment. Archimedes, in the second century B.C., with his talent for engineering was the exception that proves the rule. Our western civilisation also suffered for a long time, and perhaps still suffers, from this unfortunate prejudice

inherited from the Greeks, that of confusing human freedom with liberation from manual tasks. In this one point the classical "humanities" are somewhat inhuman. Centuries had to elapse before surgeons, "manual workers" *par excellence*, received the same consideration as physicians and the same university degrees. The primacy of the contemplative life, which may be nothing but a life of idleness disguised by a fair name, is one of the most contestable things we have inherited from ancient Greece. In so far as Christians have shared it, they have been incapable of understanding the needs and the dignity of the world of manual labour, the world of the workers. In this respect the Jewish tradition is totally different: St. Paul, as we know, was a tent-maker, and the time he spent in this trade never prevented his becoming quite an effective apostle, also a mystic and theologian fully equal to some who were pure contemplatives!

The freedom we find in Greek history had another shortcoming: it always tended very soon to decline into demagogy, even, or rather perhaps specially, in Athens. Pericles, in reality all but a monarch, was succeeded by Cleon. Aristophanes got plenty of fun, belabouring those mischievous flatterers of the people, and ten years later Demosthenes was never tired of repeating to the Athenians that demagogy would be their ruin.

Even in the time of Pericles, the Athenian democracy was not more pacific or moderate in its external ambitions than was the Spartan oligarchy. Imperialism today is associated primarily with authoritarian governments; but the Athenian democracy was always imperialistic, therefore a threat to the freedom of all the other Greek peoples. The Greeks never transferred their idea of freedom to the international sphere; they had no desire to create a confederation of States, all free and with equal rights. The Delphic Amphictyony, for all the claims that have been made for it, was never an organisation in any way comparable to the League of Nations or UNO. The Athenian empire was destroyed by Sparta, whose hegemony

Greece found harder to bear, and this in turn was merely replaced for a time by the hegemony of Thebes; then came Macedonia, and after that Rome. The dialogue between Athens and Melos in Thucydides is tragic indeed. The Athenians appealed with brutal cynicism to the letter of the law, and followed their words with deeds: all the adults of this little island (the home of the Venus of Milo) were massacred, its women and children were sold as slaves. And the Melians were far from being barbarians; they were of the same race as the Athenians themselves. This ever-reviving imperialism was the deep-seated evil which gnawed at Greek society, sapped its vital strength with incessant wars, and finally rendered it ripe for servitude. Such were the excesses of freedom, internal and external, which at last made an end of freedom for the Greeks.

The philosophers were well aware of it, especially Plato, whose persistent ambition was to reform Athens and get it to adopt a juster and healthier form of government. He strenuously denounced the excesses of political freedom, as well as the excesses of imperialism. Pericles himself, admired by the philosopher for his eloquence, did not escape his criticism as a statesman: he did not make the Athenians better men; so far from that, he inspired them with overweening ambitions and crammed the city with arsenals and armourers' shops.

Plato devoted much thought also to the building of the city of the future, that utopian city, ruled by philosophers, which he could never succeed in realising at Syracuse, in spite of the three perilous voyages he undertook to that end. In the *Republic* and the *Laws* we have the results of his political meditations; and very alarming results they are, for anyone who has at heart the dignity and freedom of the human person. It is not Athens that is his model, but Sparta; his mind is haunted by "the Spartan mirage". The two leading classes in the ideal commonwealth, the governors and the guardians (namely the policemen and the warriors), are to be subjected to a communal discipline not unlike the Lacedemonian; but Plato went very much

farther that Lycurgus and required a veritable *communism*, at any rate for the warriors; one that would abolish, together with individual freedom, all private and family life. His argument is briefly this: in order that the guardians may devote themselves entirely to their work, it is not enough that they should be relieved of the passions and cares of material life by forgoing the use of money and having community of goods; they must also be relieved of all the cares and passions that accompany family life. Had not Socrates been burdened with his wife Xanthippe, and with the children he had by her? For the guardians, therefore, not only private property but the family also must be abolished. But Plato's way of arriving at this end was not that of the monastic Orders in the Christian era; far from it, for the warriors must needs reproduce themselves! "The wives of our warriors", Plato made bold to write, "will all be held in common by all, none will live with one any more than with another; the children also will be in common: the father is not to know his own son, nor the son his father." The result will be unity in harmony, the condition of realising justice in the State.

So we see that as far as family legislation is concerned the Soviets, who simply wanted to legalise and legitimise free unions (and had to retreat very quickly before the disastrous consequences), were far out-distanced by Plato on the road to integral communism!

In my opinion these passages of Plato are no mere curiosities without significance. They show, I am convinced, the aberrations in ideological construction achievable by the human reason when it is unguided by Revelation and wholly unchecked by experience and life.

Similarly, in the matter of manual labour, it was Plato's opinion that the philosopher should be exempt from it, so that he could devote all his thought to the care of his soul and the quest of virtue; similarly the freedom of the guardians required that they should be liberated from all family bonds. It is here we should recall what M. Gustave Thibon has asserted so forcibly: true freedom is only

a choice between bonds, some of which will be disastrous to it, others favourable; so absolute independence—complete unattachment and total uprootedness—is perhaps not the best possible condition of all for man's having experience of freedom! Yet, of all the ancient Greeks, Plato is the one who approached most nearly to our present idea of man and his dignity. But was his idea of the soul and its freedom the same as our own?

The dualism which Plato perceived in man, whether between soul and body or, within the soul itself, between *thumos* and *epithumia*, is fundamentally that which inspired the Orphic doctrine and the Orphic myth of Dionysus-Zagreus. The myth was briefly this. The sacred union of Zeus and his daughter Persephone gave birth to a young god, Dionysus-Zagreus, who was promised the rule of the universe. The Titans, Zeus's enemies, got possession of the child, slew him and consumed his flesh. But Zeus gathered up the heart of Zagreus, which had miraculously escaped the Titans' voracity, and by means of this organ he resuscitated the young god, who thereafter would reign over the world. Now men are the descendants of the Titans. Therefore, in their souls, they have a mingling of good and evil tendencies; for though the Titanic nature is of an inferior order, the Titans had absorbed an element of the divine, which was the flesh of Dionysus-Zagreus. Thus the soul, divided between good and evil, virtue and vice, is inclosed within a body as in a prison or tomb (*soma* : *sema*), seeming to bear the burden of an ancient sin which it still has to expiate: and what is this but the murder of the young god by the Titans, the ancestors of man? The Orphic initiate could win freedom from this divided and unstable condition by a life of abstinence and renunciation. He was forbidden to use any animal food; the freeing of his soul would be hampered by absorbing what might strengthen the animal element, the source of all impurity.

Such is the dualism of human nature, such the *ascesis* of spiritual liberation, which Plato borrowed from the Orphic mysteries and reclothed, especially in the *Phædo*,

with all the magic of his thought and art. Is it, at first sight, much different from what we are taught by the Gospel, by St. Paul and the Fathers?

But first of all, what meaning has freedom or liberation for the Christian? Liberation is from evil, from sin. It is expressed in the Lord's Prayer almost in the form of an exorcism: "But deliver us from evil." "And now", writes St. John, "Jesus said to those among the Jews who believed in him: 'If you continue faithful to my word . . . you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' They answered him: 'We are of Abraham's breed, nobody ever enslaved us yet; what dost thou mean by saying: You shall become free?' And Jesus answered them: 'Believe me when I tell you this: everyone who acts sinfully is the slave of sin.' " It is the truth that will set us free from sin; there lies the essential freedom for every Christian in a state of grace.

St. Paul, too, in the Epistle to the Romans, writes this: "The spiritual principle of life has set me free [*eleutherosen*], in Jesus Christ, from the principle of sin and death. . . . If you live a life of nature, you are marked out for death; if you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the Spirit, you will have life . . . the spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out: 'Abba, Father! . . . Nature in its turn will be set free from the tyranny of corruption, to share in the glorious freedom of God's sons.'" And St. Paul, in his impatience for that freedom, a liberation at once spiritual and cosmic, cries at last: "Pitiable creature that I am, who is to set me free from a body thus doomed to death?"

These last words seem a close approximation to the Orphic and Platonic idea which assimilates the body to evil, the soul to life. But the identity is not complete. What St. Paul means exactly is: Who will deliver me from the law of sin which leads to spiritual death and is actually in our members? The idea of *physical* death is absent. However, St. Paul does aspire to a spiritual liberation

from the law of sin, to an enfranchisement from that wretched condition in which "it is not the good my will prefers, but the evil my will disapproves, that I find myself doing". There is therefore, you may say, a parallelism, but not an absolute identity. And how could St. Paul be consciously and directly inspired by the wisdom of the Greeks, he who says of them in this same Epistle: "They, who claimed to be wise, turned fools"?

We might note incidentally that, Jew as he was, St. Paul was born at Tarsus, a Hellenised city; he was therefore by birth both a citizen of Tarsus and a Roman citizen; this citizenship he proudly laid claim to in the presence of the Roman centurion who arrested him. He therefore knew by personal experience the dignity of human freedom and he could transpose this dignity into the spiritual life. But his antithesis to the slave is the legitimate or adopted son: he made more of the framework of the family than of the State; all the more naturally in that God is our Father and we the brothers of His Son.

St. Paul, in the Areopagus at Athens, did his best to make himself understood by his audience of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers. He told them of an altar he had seen in the city dedicated "to the unknown god", or rather "to the unknown gods". And he tells them: "It is this unknown object of your devotion that I am revealing to you." A splendid opening, this, which suggests at once that Christianity is "theocentric" and starts from God when defining the relationship between God and man; what Plato had done was to start from man, and by an ascending dialectic attain not the *person* but the *idea* of God. This has an importance of its own for the conception of freedom, which in Christianity is simply an image (as it were) of the divine freedom, and ultimately owes little to the experience of political and temporal freedom.

St. Paul goes on to tell the pagan philosophers: "It is in that God that we live, and move, and have our being", and he might have added: "have our freedom, the freedom of God's children, His adopted sons." He even quotes

from the *Hymn to Zeus* by the Stoic Cleanthus: "For indeed, we are his children", thus recognising in the pagan philosophers an authentic expectation of the true God, as he had in Greek religion (that dedication to the unknown gods). But, for all this condescension, as soon as he speaks of the predestined Man, raised by God from the dead, even before he could mention Jesus by name, the laughter broke out and the speaker was interrupted: "We must hear more about this another time."

This failure in the city of the philosophers taught St. Paul that "Jesus crucified and risen again", if a scandal to the Jews, was also "folly and madness" to the Greeks. Indeed, in the following century, the Platonist Celsus had nothing but derision for this God who became man only to die on the cross like a slave. Divinity, for Plato, had been a kind of projection, a magnified version of the free man made perfect by philosophy; he is wise, this God, without desires, enjoying his own perfection—if, that is, He is a person at all, which is by no means certain. What an absurdity, then, to have Him incarnate in a body, which is nothing else but a tomb! To safeguard the majesty and transcendence of Divinity, the Greek philosophers invented demonology: they attributed to Genii, intermediate beings between gods and men, those various incarnations to which primitive mythology had subjected the gods. How could they accept a divine freedom that took the shape of a slave in order to die on an ignominious gibbet?

But for St. Paul, as for St. John, God is first of all *Love*; it is this love that informs His own freedom and also that human freedom which is the reflection of His. In Platonism, the place of *Love* in Christianity is wholly occupied by *Justice*; for there was nothing divine in the philosophical *eros*; Love was not even a God, as he was popularly supposed to be; he was only a Genius. A freedom conditioned and defined by Justice is a very different freedom from that conditioned and defined by Love.

To the best of my knowledge, the Greek Fathers who

delved most deeply into the theological and philosophical idea of freedom were Origen in the third century and Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth; and it so happens that they were also the most assiduous students of Plato. Therefore, however briefly, we must see what they have to say.

Origen, so Father Daniélou tells us, reduced all his system to two initial data: "a beneficent Providence and creatures who are free. Everything in his teaching, without exception, can be deduced from these two principles. Spiritual persons, being free and changing, will be capable of falling and will in fact fall (which reminds us of the lapse of souls in the *Republic* and the *Phædrus*). The universe will be a consequence of this fall. . . . All human history will show how God, by respecting these freedoms—by never acting through constraint but only through persuasion (*paideusis*)—can in the course of the ages bring the whole of His spiritual creation, conceived from the beginning, back to its original unity, and in such a way as to restore it completely." For instance, "freedom", Origen wrote, "is the very condition of human action, it is that which makes it meritorious or the reverse. It is bound up with the very dignity of the spiritual being. . . . All spirits, in the beginning, were pure, serving God and carrying out His commandments. The devil, who was one of them, being possessed of free will, willed to rebel against God, and God rejected him. There fell with him all the other powers as well; some, whose sins were greatest, became demons; others, who had sinned less, became angels and archangels; thus each had the lot which accorded with his fault. But there still remained souls who had not sinned enough to warrant their becoming demons, yet were not sufficiently æthereal to become angels; therefore God made the present world and joined the soul, for its punishment, to the body." All this is full of Platonist echoes, though Origen, it is clear, attached much more importance to man's freedom than ever Plato did. It is a freedom unlimited by the law of *Adrastes* or by the Stoic *Heimarmene*; it is an absolute freedom.

Gregory of Nyssa, who has been canonised, is no doubt more orthodox than Origen, though he is not completely so. Father Graith demonstrates, in *The Conception of Freedom in Gregory of Nyssa*, the characteristic modernism of Gregory and how his idea of freedom has analogies to that of our existentialists today. Yet Gregory of Nyssa is a Platonist. "Independence", he wrote, "and autonomy are the essential attributes of divine beatitude: it is therefore in his freedom that man is the like and equal of God. Man created in God's image must have all the goods his model possesses; but among these goods is the fact of being free from all necessity. The proud and regal character of the human soul, a character far removed from all baseness, is shown in the fact that it is masterless and autonomous, having the sovereign power of determining its destiny by making its own decisions. Is not our soul made in the image of the Being that rules all?" This is even stronger and more formal than the passage we quoted from Origen. Human freedom is asserted by Gregory of Nyssa on the strength of what Christ says to His Apostles in St. John: "I do not speak of you any more as my servants [*doulous*], but as my friends [*philous*]", and following Origen he shows how all human history is the history of this royal freedom, which finds its own degradation and debasement by sinning, then its progressive liberation, till the final apocatastasis, which will be the complete re-establishment of man in the divine image, in his original state of a son of God, completely free as his Father is free. Therefore, by his theory of man as image of God, Gregory defines, I think, still more precisely than Origen, the divine and so absolute nature of human freedom. For the philosophers of antiquity, freedom could be only something man acquires, the result of long effort; it was not a grace bestowed at the beginning and end of history. That is the fundamental difference.

Gregory of Nyssa, like Origen, is fond of using the imagery of the Platonist myths, but this does not affect his essential originality. To quote Father Daniélou again,

in his essay on Gregory of Nyssa, *Platonism and Mystical Theology*: "Note the freedom with which Gregory uses the Platonist vocabulary. He is full of Platonic imagery, but he is never a slave to it. It is a cipher vocabulary, a system of symbols analogous to that provided for him by Scripture. By itself it is worth nothing. There is nothing in him at all of Platonic literalism. . . . Gregory's Plato is the Plato of the myths."

Indeed Christian authors, though it may not seem so at first reading, endow with a new sense, a new dimension, nearly all they borrow from ancient philosophy. We get an inkling of this already in the writings of St. Paul, in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. It remains to show why, in spite of formal resemblances, Christian freedom is necessarily something wholly different from freedom as it was understood by the thinkers of Greece.

* * *

The reason is that Christian freedom is the attribute, or rather it is the very foundation, of the nature of man, created by God in His own image, because God so loves His rational creation as to bestow on it, along with life, the gift of this supreme good. Here we have a "transvaluation" of the freedom conceived by antiquity, to use the famous expression of Nietzsche, who gives us the key to this, as to so many other problems: "Christianity is the transvaluation of all ancient values."

For the Greeks, political freedom was a conquest made by the citizen, philosophical and spiritual freedom was a conquest made by the wise man; freedom itself was never a divine gift. All the thinking of antiquity, even Plato's as I have said, was anthropocentric. Hence its difference from Christianity. Plato talks of love as the necessary motive power of the soul's ascent to the divine ideas; but Anders Nygren (among others), in his justly celebrated book, has shown very clearly what separates that *Eros*, the aspiration of man to God, from the Christian *Agapè*, the love that comes originally from God, His descending

(condescending) love for man, before being man's loving response to God. It is unnecessary, I think, to insist on this further.

Anders Nygren was surely right in saying: "The Greeks maintained that the gods did not love. Why should they? They needed nothing, they had no desire to satisfy; they had therefore no need to love"; for love, according to Plato, is always a desire aroused by a want. Yet Plutarch, and plenty of other Greek thinkers before him, believed in divine *philanthropy*; that is, some sort of love of the gods for man. But here again an analogous vocabulary is no indication of an identity of ideas. The "philanthropy" of Apollo towards his priest Plutarch, and towards all other Greeks who offered him sacrifice, is hardly comparable to that of the God who sent His Son to be our Saviour—that "incredible story", as Péguy calls it! Goodness is an attribute of God, thought Plato; hence to the gods we cannot attribute any mischief or malice; they are therefore benevolent, well disposed to human beings, to whom they wish well. But this is a chilly and remote kind of benevolence; one might almost call it an *administrative* benevolence. The gods were a species of enlightened despots; their government was doubtless both wise and benevolent. But the Christian *agapè* is surely something much stronger than this, more personal and more intimate.

The idea of Redemption, of restoring, by the effects of the sacrifice on the Cross, a human freedom gone astray, was something the philosophers of antiquity could never conceive. How, moreover, could they allow an Incarnation, when they did not even believe in a Creation *ex nihilo*, God's first and sovereign intervention? But the idea of Creation by God is bound up with the idea of God's freedom, for what is creation but the supreme manifestation of freedom?

In an eternal world like that of the Greeks, where the rôle of the Demiurge is simply that of ordering pre-existent matter and the flow of time is marked by nothing but

regular, cyclic, periodical returns of an identical state of the universe, a free act has obviously less importance and far less significance than in a universe created in all its parts by a primary, free and decisive act, the creative act of God.

"Modern theories of freedom", Etienne Berne has written, "show more and more clearly that decision and choice are also first beginnings. . . . Well, we Christians are in a world where everything began: matter, life, man; but also, within humanity, love and passion have beginning, so have folly and genius, sin and salvation. These first beginnings serve to open the mind to the mingled evidence and mystery of one first beginning, and that an absolute beginning. All that is original springs from an origin, and our universe is sufficiently original to enable us to verify, or rather to find, a foundation for this law."

And I might also add: how could anything truly new be produced, anything truly revolutionary, in a universe such as that conceived by antiquity, of which the ancients themselves declared: "Nothing new under the sun"; a universe which was felt to be always *beginning again*, like the sea in Paul Valéry's *Cimetière marin*? The idea of freedom, when you come to examine it, certainly requires the possibility of radical change, such as that of Creation—and Incarnation. For pagans it was a scandal, and even an absurdity, to admit (any otherwise than as fable or myth) an intervention by God at a particular point in the world's history; but for us it is just this which is the pledge that human freedom, a reflection of God's freedom, is *a priori* open to complete transformation, complete and profound renewal. "And thou shalt renew the face of the earth." It was not only death that Jesus overcame, but fatality as well, and that devastating belief that man is like a fly caught in the spider's web of existence from which there is no release. Plato and still more (as we have seen) the Stoics had a great deal of trouble in ridding themselves of the moral consequences of a metaphysical determinism, which was logically involved in their general idea of an

eternal and periodic universe. Moreover, by that astral fatalism which came from Chaldea, and was so widespread, in the time of Jesus, throughout the Greek world, each man's destiny was fixed at his birth and could be read in the heavens.

For Christians, everything is different: a human freedom is not merely a datum of experience, it is a direct consequence of their belief in the freedom of God and His love for men, a love which makes them a gift of this freedom.

That ultimately, in my view, is why Christian freedom completely transcends the freedom of antiquity, compared with which it is like the bursting of a rocket or a preternatural flowering. As it passed from paganism to Christianity, freedom somehow gained in depth; for surely the freedom of the saints and martyrs is more complete, less tinged with pride and self-esteem, than the freedom of the philosopher or the hero. But it has gained most of all in extension and universality. The Greeks never regarded political freedom as a proper subject for propaganda or proselytising; the philosopher's freedom was not a freedom that could be offered to the crowd. But Christian freedom is offered to all who are called by baptism to become God's children and brothers of Christ. Slavery, as a secular institution, disappeared from Christian countries not as a consequence of direct political action but because slavery was incompatible with the spirit of Christ and was bound to be extinguished automatically with the spreading of that doctrine of the freedom and brotherhood of the children of God. It was thus that political freedom became an ideal which the French Revolution sought to carry to all men, a good tidings of universal worth and a gospel for the new age. "Liberty, equality and fraternity" owe far more to Christianity than to the City-State of antiquity.

The fact that the Church, in certain of its representatives, was sometimes opposed to the development of this political freedom, often accompanied as it was by violence and crime, does nothing to alter the basic inspiration of the men of 1789. The words that were always on their lips

were Rome and Sparta, ancient liberty, hatred of tyrants, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, but their ideal was inspired far more by the Gospel than it was by Plato; for where would they have found *fraternity*, the third term of their motto, in that world of antiquity, with all its hardness, so very unbrotherly?

It is impossible not to observe a certain parallelism between the question of pagan and Christian freedom and that of the pagan and Christian mysteries. The conclusion of Loisy's book was a direct filiation between the Christian mystery and the mysteries of paganism. In view of what I said just now on the subject of Orphism and the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus, one can easily recognise Original Sin in the crime of the Titans, Communion with Jesus in the Titans' eating the young god's body, Christ's resurrection in the resurrection of Dionysus-Zagreus! But these are simply external analogies. They may be disturbing to some, but they are false analogies, because the differences are far deeper and more essential than the resemblances. The god, for instance, who was slain by the Titans, was a little child; he did not die voluntarily; on the contrary, he changed himself into a bull in an attempt to escape; and since the myth is set in an age before the appearance of man, he had certainly no thought of redeeming a humanity that was not yet in existence.

Yet in the catacombs the early Christians often depicted Orpheus, the Thracian singer, at no great distance from the tombs of the martyrs; and they may, perhaps, have thought of Orpheus as a remote precursor of Christ, a kind of prophet *in partibus infidelium*!

It would be a mistake to suggest that the Christian idea of freedom has no relation at all to that of the Greeks. One has only to re-read the *Phædrus*, the *Symposium*, and more especially the *Phædo*, to realise the truth of that sentence in the *Pensées* which Pascal left unfinished: "Plato, in order to prepare the way for Christianity . . .". Several Fathers of the Church held that slowly and gradually God prepared humanity to receive His Revelation, as a good

schoolmaster prepares his pupils; and that, not only in Israel but in the pagan world also. For Clement of Alexandria, many of the ideas of the Greek philosophers served as a kind of tothing for the building for which the keystone was to be supplied at last by the New Testament. Might not Plato have had from God Himself some of those "inspirations" he was fully aware of owing to what he described as a *theia moira*, or in other words to a divine grace?

Possibly; still, none of this justifies us—and this is my last word—in saying that the Christian idea of freedom is an inheritance from ancient Greece. I have shown, I think, that Christian freedom is fundamentally original, not reducible to any human conception, even though it happens to coincide at certain points with principles which the pagans reached, either by reason alone or else by heavenly inspiration. If we admit the existence of a certain continuity between Greek philosophy and Christian theology, when it comes to the subject of freedom we cannot avoid that word of Nietzsche's: "transvaluation"—or even *transfiguration*. A comparable transfiguration, shall we say, to that of Christ, whose divine form is not reducible to that of any human person, any sage of antiquity, even Socrates himself.

FREEDOM IN THE ORTHODOX WORLD

I

THE HUMAN PERSON AND FREEDOM IN EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGY

by YVES CONGAR

WHAT we have been trying to discover is the nature of the liberation which Christianity confers through the sense it begets, and afterwards fosters, of the dignity of the human person. The best means of this discovery seemed to be to compare Christianity with other religions and then try to distinguish, within Christendom itself, the respective contributions made first by antiquity and then by the East and the West. What we have now to examine—though it can only be in a very elementary fashion—are the positions taken up by the eastern Christian on the dignity of the human person, positions that were clear enough even in the age of the Fathers and have since been developed and refined in eastern Christian thought down to the Orthodox theology of the present day.

At the outset, however, an apology is called for. Those who actually live the eastern Christian tradition, and know it from within infinitely better than I, will be disappointed, I am afraid, in its treatment by one who is very conscious of being a Latin. In addition to this, having to explain difficult ideas that can hardly be handled without technical training, I am afraid that to some I shall seem far too abstract.

What we have to seek are the major assertions of the eastern tradition on the subject of man and the human

person: what their peculiar characteristics are, their philosophical and theological foundations, and lastly their applications, incidence and results, especially in regard to the world, the State and civilisation. This will allow us, by way of conclusion, to define the contributions of East and West respectively to the idea which is of such sovereign importance to us now, that of the dignity of the human person.

* * *

Whenever we approach the Christian thought of the East we are struck by the fact that its basic assertions are in agreement with our own, and yet in every detail there is a certain difference. It is evident, at the outset, that our own points of view do not satisfy the East. They are, in the questions we are dealing with now, strongly influenced by the thought of St. Augustine. Now Augustinian thought has always been somewhat foreign to the East.¹ What the East is inclined to criticise in particular is our idea of original justice as a *donum superadditum*, and the very idea of the "supernatural". This, it seems to the East, makes it impossible to predicate a true divinisation of man, which remains always in the "accidental" order, external to the creature's primal nature. Our Catholic assertions generally appear to the Orthodox to be essentially "exterior": the very word and category (the Russian *Vniechnost'*) sum up the essence of the complaints they make against us. Our statements seem to be lacking in ontological substance. It is the feeling they express so often when they accuse us of "legalism", defining purely

¹ The Greeks recognise and pay tribute to the authority of St. Augustine (cf. S. Salaville, *S. Augustin et l'Orient*, in *Angelicum*, 8, 1931, pp. 3-25, and in *L'Année théologique*, 1950, pp. 52-56); the 5th Ecumenical Council of 553 cites him among the Orthodox Fathers. The Slavonic East has been less generous (cf. A. Palmieri, *Theol. dogmat. orthodox.*, 1, p. 726). But though the contemporary Russian Orthodox go out of the way to be reticent, the earlier Slav theologians (Macarius for instance) are far more willing to quote him and develop lines of thought clearly much more sympathetic to western theology.

exterior situations and relationships. What but legalism, they ask, is our way of talking of the relations between nature and grace, reason and faith, of cosmic or temporal realities and the Church? And within the Church, legalism again in the way we regard the relationship between the faithful and the hierarchy, or in our conceiving the hierarchy as having "authority *over*" the body of the faithful! It seems that for us of the West, even within the Church itself, what bulks largest is the relationship of individuals to one another, whereas in the East they are concerned with the inward community, that famous *Sobornost*, which we are told is untranslatable, though the English "togetherness" has been suggested as the nearest equivalent: the fact of being a *self all together*, in and through communion with others. Not long ago Nicholas Berdyaev observed that the West has a *legal* notion of personality, as a subject to which is attributed what is mine as opposed to yours; whereas the East, especially the Russian Orthodox East, sees the person rather in its unity with all others.¹

This would clearly seem to show that East and West have different intellectual approaches to these problems. The aim of the West is to set everything in its own proper order of being, after which it proceeds to note its relationships: those, for instance, between nature and grace, the ordering of man in relation to God, his beatitude, the respective hierarchies of Church and State, and the relationships within the Church between its different members. The East proceeds otherwise, and it is this that gives to its anthropology a conspicuously different orientation.

There is one difference between the East and the West which—without suggesting historical derivation but simply to typify modes of thought—one might associate with that between Plato and Aristotle, those two great geniuses who gave us, at the opening of the Hellenistic era when Greek civilisation was to shed its rays over every existing culture, what seem to be the two eternal types of the intellectual

¹ N. Berdyaev, *Un nouveau moyen âge*, 14th ed., p. 208.

construction of reality. It is not necessarily, I repeat, a matter of direct historical derivation—certainly not for the West before Aristotelian scholasticism—but rather of intellectual temperament and pattern of thought.

Eastern thought, rather like Plato, expresses the relationship of man to God in terms of formal participation, of intrinsic dependence of the human upon the divine; much less in terms of efficient causality, giving reality to being by a kind of "free play", like that of the artist in creating a work of art. Such formal dependence is expressed by the verbs "participate", "derive", "emanate", and the corresponding substantives, which are the key to eastern anthropology: "image" and "similitude" (we shall discover later the shade of meaning that distinguishes these).

Human nature is made *essentially* in the image of God. For eastern thought the quality of image is not only something predicated by Holy Scripture, to be *found* in man only *after* having defined his nature itself as independent of this quality of image: it is that which actually constitutes human nature.

And this means that it can never be wholly lost. But it can be realised to a greater or lesser degree. *True* human nature, as God first founded it and afterwards restored it in Jesus Christ, is very different from human nature as it is in fact, as it really comes into existence. Through the fact of sin, the image of God is enfeebled, disfigured, imperfect; it is no longer a perfect *resemblance*. This is how the distinction between image and resemblance expresses the distance between what can still be described as an image (and must be), and what an image needs in order to become a resemblance.

The true, perfect and *resembling* image involves participating in conditions of existence that are properly divine: namely spirituality and incorruptibility-immortality (*ἀφθαρσία, ἀθανασία*). These are not gifts superadded to a human nature which could be perfect, as such, even without those gifts; they belong intrinsically to the perfect

image that reproduces its model and simply is human nature truly conforming to that model, to its idea and intrinsic truth. To put it briefly, divinisation (which is the communication of the qualities of God, His *dynamis* and His *doxa*) is not a gift superadded to a nature that is wholly defined without it; it is the very stuff of human nature, when that nature is perfect; when, that is, it realises its truth.

To these primary affirmations we must add others. God is not only immortal and glorious. He is also triple, and at the same time a unity; He is the multiple personalisation of a unique nature or substance. Nature in Him is perfectly personalised, in such a way that a nature of unique substance is possessed and lived by three Persons or Hypostases.

That is why, for man, to be a true and perfect image of God means transcending the mutual opposition and exteriority of persons in the possession of one and the same human nature. In so far as man perfectly realises human nature, which is unique, in so far as he personalises it completely in himself, he is no longer isolated and separated from others, his relations with them are no longer merely exterior; he is wholly one with them, though remaining wholly himself; he realises that "uniplurality" which it is the deep-seated longing of mankind to attain, the thing that Vladimir Soloviev made the central illumination of his philosophic thought. In their transfigured humanity, the saints are successful in making real this particular kind of reconciliation and communion, something more ontological than moral, the very summit, as it were, of human realisation.

It is easily understandable how eastern philosophy—especially when concerned with anthropology or humanism, but also sociology (which is really the same thing)—is essentially *religious* and even Christian. Since strictly speaking there is no human nature anterior or exterior to the quality of divine image, even to that of the image of the Triune God, there can be no true philosophical

anthropology that is not proportionately Christian and mystical. This is the explanation of the features we find so striking, and sometimes rather disturbing, when we read—as we often do with great profit—the writings of eastern thinkers and philosophers on anthropology, sociology or the philosophy of history.

Just as human nature has fallen by sin from the divine conditions of existence, incorruptibility, glory and immortality (ἀφθαρσία, δόξα, ἀθανασία) and is now in a state of corruption (φθορά), so from this communion, from this blessed possession at once common and personal, man has lapsed into selfishness and the concupiscence of possessions. Objectively he will free himself by means of the sacraments, the mysteries of the Church, whereby he will make his own the restoration of human nature and the resurrection acquired in Jesus Christ; subjectively he will free himself by asceticism, through those three main “works” so profoundly analysed by Soloviev in *The Spiritual Foundations of Life*: fasting, almsgiving and prayer.

These are the means by which human nature is restored to its truth. They constitute the economy of grace and salvation, and to these it is relevant to give brief consideration, for they will help us to understand more than one important feature of eastern humanism and the eastern idea of freedom.

The divine qualities, by which human nature is wholly made and perfected in the image and resemblance of God, are communicated by the Word and the Holy Spirit. That is why the eastern Fathers, in a number of well-known passages, attribute to the Word all that remains of truth after sin, and that, too, even in the pagan state of nature; that is why the eastern liturgy speaks of the “unfruitful pagan Church”,¹ thus recognising a continuity between all truth or goodness—even that which we call natural—and the order of grace and salvation. We know the patristic theme of the “preparations” for the Gospel

¹ In the Office of Matins, quoted by B. Zenkowsky, *Das Bild vom Menschen in der Ostkirche*, Stuttgart, 1951, p. 33, n.1.

and the visitations of the Word before the Incarnation. The East has certainly retained a marked historical continuity with the Roman Empire and with Greek pagan culture. It is partly to this, but quite as much to the theological position we are attempting to explain, that must be attributed that free and generous acceptance given by eastern Christendom to all "natural" creations. For the East, there is no clear-cut distinction between what is sound in "nature" and what is "supernatural" or Christian. That is why Orthodoxy has reacted so violently against all that is pessimist and negative in Barthism, its despairing of human nature even after the Incarnation.

It is the Incarnation that restored the perfection of human nature and with it the full quality of image-resemblance. This explains the immense importance of Paschaltide in the East, a theme made familiar to us by writers of the Russian emigration. The Easter experience is a direct experience of the image of God restored in its perfection. Christ, by His suffering, overcame death, the supreme seal of our own corruptibility. Risen, He now becomes fully the New Adam, human nature restored in its totality, in all its divine qualities. He was, says St. Peter, "anointed with the Holy Spirit and with Power" (*Acts* 10. 28); as St. Paul tells us, He became "a life-giving spirit" (*1 Cor.* 15. 45). Salvation and the restoring of our human nature will be our participating in this spirit and power of Christ and in a "physical" communion, in nature, with the perfect man.

All this is accomplished, as we have said, objectively by means of the sacraments, the presence and active contact of this power and this spirit which the sacraments have the effect of bringing down into our world. They resume the process—the process shattered and betrayed—of divinising nature. Hence an insistence on the Church's sacerdotal function, which consists in revealing, in making active and present in the sacred mysteries, the divinising power and spirit of Christ. Thus the Church is seen as a revelation of holiness, a *communication* of holiness, rather than

as a militant society. It is a hagiophany, a theurgy, rather than a means of organising human life for the conquest of heaven. It is mystagogue more than pedagogue.

Yet the eastern Christian must be active. Corresponding to the objective action of the sacraments, we have in us a force, which still remains, in the free will of nature. Here the image of God, though disfigured, is not destroyed, and it is restored to us by grace, especially that of the holy sacraments. Eastern tradition assigns great importance to human freedom, to its co-operation with God's grace, and to ascetic effort, even ascetic prowess (*podvig*). The Greek Fathers, in certain passages, are so insistent upon this that in the West they might almost have passed for Pelagians (indeed it has been said that Pelagius was strongly influenced by the East). Through grace man participates in the energy and creative causality of God. Hence certain expressions which to the western mind, more alert to relations of efficient causality, might suggest that once this initial gift is acquired there is no need for further action by God, and the whole spiritual life, from ascetic effort to final union, develops of its own accord through the natural play of divinised human freedom. As for asceticism, in its eastern aspect of the transforming and transfiguring of nature, it will not be so much the penitential satisfaction which it sometimes is in the West (legalism!), as a liberation of the spiritual nature. It is an ontological asceticism. The notions of penance and purgatory will obviously have corresponding shades of meaning.

Freedom itself seems to be visualised chiefly as spiritual freedom and universal communion. Novelists and poets are not Fathers of the Church, but our Orthodox friends are not averse from quoting them, so perhaps we may recall here the radiant figure and teaching of Father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. It will be seen later how the Russians have always been attracted by freedom: no contradiction is implied by noting how Christians of the East, and the Russians in particular, seem to be very little interested in exterior freedom, whether for the Church or

for individuals. Very significant, in Pushkin's *Dubrovski*, is the reply of the old coachman to his poor master's son, concerning a court decision to transfer the peasants of a whole village from the possession of Andrei Gabrielevitch to that of Cyril Petrovitch: "Cyril Petrovitch's affairs are his own; it's the same with Andrei Gabrielevitch and with all the rest of us: we all belong to God and the Tsar. But you can't sew a button on another man's mouth." In other words, we belong to the powerful and we can do nothing about it; but we can keep our freedom of judgment and our loyalties.

On the ecclesiastical plane we here come to the question of Church and State. The Orthodox Churches have known their periods of freedom and their periods of oppression and semi-servitude. During these latter, whether in Constantinople or in Tsarist or post-Tsarist Russia, they have cared but little for their juridical and exterior freedom. In the days of the all-powerful Holy Synod, Khomiakov wrote in reply to Father Gagarin: "Be faithful, and whatever happens we shall be independent in the things of the Church. As Christians, we are in the State but not of it. Moral slavery comes only from vice, and there is no guarantee against that either in Rome or Constantinople; the only guarantee is in the grace of God, whose gift to the Christian is mutual love."¹

* * *

Here, then, is the idea which dominates the themes in which we are just now interested: divinisation is the participating *by human nature* in qualities that belong to the divine order itself; by such participation, nature is simply realised according to its proper idea and in its proper order. This will become clearer, I think, in what we are concerned with now, if we examine certain incidences and applications of these ideas.

¹ *L'Eglise latin et le Protestantisme au point de vue de l'Eglise d'Orient*, Lausanne et Vevey, 1872, p. 211. It will be observed as we go on how the subject of freedom is always associated with the idea of community, never with a note of individualism.

1. *Relations between the Cosmos and the Church.* It is evident enough that the theology expounded above may well inspire a Christianity that glorifies Creation, a strongly cosmic Christianity, a Christianity of Easter. But such a transfiguring of Creation is conceived not so much as the aim of militant activity, working upwards from below, as the falling of a fruit, a manifestation of the heavenly upon earth by a descending action from above. That is why, with all this insistence on the cosmic aspect of Christianity, we find only a comparatively feeble development of active sanctity in the world. We must not exaggerate; absolute and exclusive statements here would be wholly mistaken. Nepluyev, for instance, with his working brotherhood, had very much in mind the sanctification of secular life. Yet sanctity, on the whole, is visualised rather in its monastic form, as flight from the world; and Christian humanism, too, takes rather the form of what we should describe today as monastic and eschatological. So much more is said of the theurgic and mystagogic function of the Church than of the demiurgic activity of man.

2. *Conception of knowledge.* The perfection of knowledge is not to be sought in analysis so much as in an increase of spiritual and ontological profundity. One has not to look far, at any rate in Russian authors, for a criticism of the Cartesian spirit, or what Dostoevski calls the Euclidean reason. It is by becoming deeper ourselves that we gain a better insight into the meaning of things, if not their external relations. The Slavophiles, we know, have formulated an ideal of a living, ontological and synthetic knowledge. But apart from the theories of any particular school, the Christian East, and especially the Slav Christian East, has undoubtedly the idea that integral knowledge requires the transformation of the human being, so that the true philosopher is necessarily a mystic. Hence Soloviev's "sophiology", prophetic philosophy, or the Christian theosophy of Berdyaev. The moral and ontological emphasis is naturally still more marked where

religious knowledge is concerned. Heresy is explained as primarily a corruption of life. When the Orthodox reject the Catholic doctrine of infallibility and denounce what they see once more as legalism, it is because in their view there can be no infallibility except through a charism of interior and ontological holiness; it cannot exist, as we claim it does, through a charism of function. It is from this point of view that we can explain the instinctive and highly empirical character of so many of their appreciations, which they arrive at in what seems to us Latins—so addicted as we are to analysis and proofs—an often bewildering fashion. Judgments are passed on the strength of a general impression sensed in all being: much in the manner of women, who proceed rather by instinct—often an extremely penetrating instinct—than by reason and analysis.¹ This is partly connected with the fact—also rather disturbing to us—that little distinction is made between dogma and discipline, between doctrine and rite; change of rite is the same as change of faith, because the symbols under which a religious body receives the communication and revelation of heavenly mysteries are all taken together as an organic and indissoluble whole.

3. *Relations between faith and reason: Church and State.* We combine these, because for all practical purposes they are bound up together, and because, as we see in the history of ideas, the position adopted on one issue corresponds exactly to that taken up on the other.

For the East, there is no fundamental difference between natural knowledge and faith, or at any rate between the conditions of each, which in both cases consist in direct perception based on an interior attitude. The Christian faith is seen as deepening; it is the full truth of knowledge,

¹ Typical of this is Tiuchev's appreciation of Lutheran worship (quoted in *Irenikon*, 1935, p. 161, n. 3). It was Tiuchev, too, who said: "There is no understanding Russia; one must believe in her." The truest and deepest knowledge is not that which can be communicated by proofs, but that which corresponds to an inward attitude, wholly without reservations and similar to faith.

in just the same way as the Church is the full truth of society. "Every nature, every group, provided it develops, is religious; so is every person; everything is virtually religious; everything aspires to become so, and is not fully itself until it does. The relationship of the State, of every organisation, to the Church is that of the imperfect to the perfect, of sin to sanctity."¹

These ideas have been translated into facts. The West distinguished sharply between the spheres of spiritual and political power, then proclaimed the subordination of the latter to the former: the Church of the West exerted its authority over princes. In the East, Christianity was the internal foundation of the State, its deepest reality, as it were; the continuity of the two domains has been conceived as something like the relation of a thing to its own deepest reality, its fullest truth. Where knowledge is concerned it is, as we have seen, the dream of a theosophy. From the social point of view it is the dream of a free theocracy in the manner of Soloviev: not a Church-State, a secularised, rationalised and legalised Church, but a State-Church, with a transfigured life and a transfigured society as outlined by Dostoevski in *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book II, Chapter V).

The East had no scholasticism, no Renaissance of the western sort, those two great events which were marked by a clear distinction between the natural and the supernatural and by a free use of reason. Scholasticism and the Renaissance were also moods of analysis and division. The eastern ideal insists on a far greater continuity between the two orders we hold separate in the West. To the East, the "supernatural"—the very word can hardly be said to exist in its vocabulary—is nothing but the full configuration of nature to the resemblance of God, and thereby also its transfiguration.

* * *

We have answered—all too imperfectly, I am afraid—the question as to the major assertions of the Christian

¹ Ch. Bourgeois in *Etudes*, 192 (August 5th, 1927), p. 277.

East concerning the nature of man, its philosophical and theological foundations, and its principal incidences and applications. I would like to answer, by way of conclusion, our second question: this was, what are the contributions of East and West respectively to the idea of the dignity of the human person? On this I have four observations to make:

1. The spiritual idea of the absolute dignity of man, or (more precisely) the human person, is a Christian idea. It is neither eastern nor western, but just Christian.

2. The West has conceived the human person rather as *sui juris* autonomous. The East, perhaps, has tended to speak less of the dignity of the human person than of the dignity of human nature in the Christian. The West, more attracted as it is by the ideal of autonomous individuality, with social relationships superadded to it, has been less alive to the communal aspect of the person, which accounts for its failure to resist individualism. What it has overlooked too much are the elements of communion and community. Hence the reactions, so unfortunately ill directed and totalitarian, against eighteenth- and nineteenth-century individualism.

The West has also specialised in the exterior means of freedom and personal autonomy. It is unjust to say that the East has proved helpless to combat the encroachments of Cæsar on the Church's freedom; but the fact must be recognised that such a combat has been waged with singularly good effect by the papacy, which has contrived to give the Church's freedom not a merely mystical but a juridical foundation; and for this it has earned high praise from many historians who are not Catholics. There can be no doubt that the West has known the way to create political forms of personal freedom and also to provide an education for such freedom. Where it has been less successful is in avoiding the danger of an individualist and rationalist democracy.

3. There is something magnificent in the eastern conception, and also, I think, something rather too ideal. It has

developed within a holy world which it has itself fashioned, educated and endowed with life. But will it hold? Will it be effective in a world which will have undergone, in a very few decades, the process of modernisation, of analytical and rational civilisation, which it has taken the West several centuries to develop? When at grips with a mentality that has become, very suddenly, hyper-Cartesian and hyper-Euclidean, will it have a really educational value alike for men as for nations? Will this Church, God-possessed and mystagogic, be also sufficiently pedagogic? Or will it perhaps at length, in its anthropology and ecclesiology, come to develop more actively militant values, such as those with which the West has been so much sooner and more anxiously concerned?

4. Yet the fact remains that the eastern tradition recalls us to consider certain profound ideas in the religious and mystical order. What may be called the *live* theological thought of contemporary Catholicism consists wholly, in one of its aspects, in a return to the active possession of these values; in rising above the somewhat naturalist rationalism of "baroque theology", and also the medieval beginnings of that rationalism and naturalism, that too analytical and dialectical thought which began to develop from the twelfth century onwards. Not all in this is worthless, but it is often inadequate to the completeness of Catholic tradition. It is not insignificant that from its earliest beginnings there has been an East and a West in the Christian world; it is an essential note of its providential pattern. Theology is fully "Catholic" only when like a healthy organism it can breathe deeply and draw the oxygen it needs through both its lungs.

FREEDOM IN THE ORTHODOX WORLD

II

RUSSIA AND FREEDOM

by PIERRE PASCAL

ONE might almost suspect that the raising of the question of Russia and Freedom was inspired by the fairly widespread prejudice that the Russians have never known what freedom is, with the consequent supposition that the so-called Orthodox Church has never created a climate favourable to its growth. It would certainly be highly unfortunate, and not a little disquieting for the cause of freedom, if so great a people and its great Christian Church attached such little importance to the idea of liberty.

A reply has already been given to the second part of this prejudice, that the Orthodox Church never educated for freedom. It has been shown that so far from this being the case the eastern Church, in its anthropology and its theology—and I would add in its discipline, which is, rather, an absence of discipline and rules—has attached great value to human freedom.

What I want to do now is to examine the first part of this prejudice: is it true that the Russians have never experienced the need for freedom, which for us is so fundamental? If so, it necessarily follows that the Russians must be wholly different from us, and the totalitarian régime, though we ourselves want none of it, may well be the right régime for them. From this it is only a step to treating this régime with a certain indulgence. . . .

However, this is a matter of fact, impossible to judge except historically.

* * *

In this respect, as in so many others, the history of Russia is full of paradox. The freedom that is undiscoverable in the last few centuries most certainly existed in times more remote.

A closer scrutiny makes this clear. First we have the Kiev period: here is a Russian State already in being, with classes differentiated, a social hierarchy with slaves as the base of it, mainly prisoners of war who could be bought and sold. But the overwhelming majority of the population was free: labourers, hunters, merchants, craftsmen. Politically the country was divided into principalities, corresponding broadly to the old Slavonic tribes. But the prince was primarily a war-chief, in principle elected or dismissed by the people, and with no direct authority but over his comrades in arms. The function of these was to defend the country against the ever-present menace of nomadic tribes, and the tribute they levied was simply their pay for this service. The princes all belonged to one family, the eldest being the arch-prince of Kiev. Younger brothers, uncles and nephews often squabbled among themselves; occasionally they met in congress. It was a very loose federation. Under it the country was administered liberally; in the rural districts there were the communes, each with its local assembly; in the towns, the *vietches* and subordinate officers. Down to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Novgorod, Pskov and Vietka all retained their municipal franchises: the régime, originally, of every city whatever its size. The Church all this time was still missionary in character: it was converting pagans, founding bishoprics and monasteries, creating a literature, influencing morals and law-making. It was the Church that maintained the unity of the Russian world. Morally, too, it exerted political influence.

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Then, in the thirteenth century, when the South was

invaded by the Mongols and the population receded north and north-eastwards, we see the creation of a more or less centralised State. A series of able princes grouped all the other principalities about Moscow. In imitation of the Mongol khans, and with their support, the arch-prince of Moscow adopted regal style. In the fifteenth century, after the fall of Constantinople, he regarded himself as the successor of the *Basileus*. It was a slow process, extending over three centuries. So we come to the sixteenth century and the absolute monarchy of Ivan the Terrible. By now the rural population had lost its freedom: there were hardly any slaves left, but even fewer workers who were wholly free. Many, through debt, had fallen into semi-servitude under the great landed proprietors. This was a close approach to serfdom. But the spirit of freedom was not dead: just as the boyars of the arch-prince had been able, till recently, to withdraw from his service without incurring reproach, and transfer their homage to some other prince, so the peasant could still, in the autumn of any year, leave the service of his lord and go where he would.

The great safeguard of freedom was space. Whoever was discontented with his lot, or thought he saw his independence endangered, simply packed up and went farther off. If he was of an adventurous disposition he would go south and turn cossack. If he was not afraid of hard work he went eastward to the Volga, or later to the Urals, where he would turn farmer, hewing trees to burn for the fertilising of the soil. The State would catch up with him, but not for some time. It was the great colonising age.

What was the part of the Church in all this? So far from the legend being true that it shut itself up in pure contemplation, it was always deeply involved in the politics and economics of everyday life. The monks were also great colonisers. Bishops and abbots were constantly at the prince's side. St. Sergius gave his blessing to the crusade against the Tartars (1380) which his own diplomacy had originally organised. Churchmen served as mediators

in disputes. Through their Canon Law they popularised the political ideas of Byzantium. The metropolitan himself, by transferring his seat to Moscow, contributed not a little to transforming a small market-town into a capital. There are four metropolitans who are regarded, quite as much as the arch-princes, as the founders of the Muscovite monarchy and are canonised on this account: Peter, Alexis, Cyprian and Jonas. It is generally admitted that if the arch-princes were the protectors, and therefore to some extent the guardians of the Church, the metropolitans had a moral right which they exercised over the arch-princes, that of intercession for the people. Even under Ivan the Terrible, the metropolitan Philip could die a martyr in his rôle of defender of liberties, a rôle which the heads of the Church never renounced.

The seventeenth century opens with the Time of the Troubles: the general revolt of all Russian liberties against the State. The boyars in rebellion against the tsars, the lesser nobles against the more privileged, the peasants against their lords, the cossacks against Moscow, the Finns against the Russian colonists, all seized this opportunity of a dynastic crisis and a foreign war in order to gain their emancipation. And the new dynasty was elected by the States General.

But the whole of the seventeenth century was a struggle between freedom and centralisation. The landowners were bound to military service and by way of compensation the peasants were attached to the landowner's demesne: the Code of 1649 legalised serfdom for the first time. The Tsar was now sovereign in the western manner. Bureaucracy became swollen to unheard-of proportions: every hearth in every hamlet was listed and assessed. But it was a century of revolts. From 1648 to 1650 there were risings in Pskov and Novgorod. A revolution was expected. Many governors of towns were hurled into the local river. In 1662 there was a disturbance in Moscow and the Tsar himself assaulted. The years 1669 to 1671 saw the great rising of Stenka Razin. The Old Believers were not afraid

to stand up for their faith against State and Church. And behind all this the municipal liberties continued to function, and the communal assemblies too, which even serfdom had not yet suppressed. Moreover the peasants still continued to seek freedom, southwards and eastwards, towards the Don and the Volga, and now in Siberia.

Not only did the Church remain independent of the State but its political activity became more pronounced. Throughout the Time of the Troubles it was in the forefront of the movement for political freedom. Afterwards the Patriarch Philaret, father of the first Romanov, reigned jointly with him and very effectually. Finally the Patriarch Nikon acted for several years as regent for the Tsar Alexis. Moreover all this time it was the dream of the higher clergy that the Church should exert some sort of dominion over the State.

Muscovy, in short, was a pluralist system, one of checks and balances between rival factors, and at all the stages of Russian history we have examined so far we see a longing for freedom, constitutionally expressed or else breaking out violently.

And throughout this history there are no signs that I can see of the influence of a specifically eastern Christianity. I can observe hardly any difference between the social and political attitude of the Russian Church and that of the Roman Church of the West. At different times, and according to our differing points of view, both Churches enjoy or are favourable to freedom, or else assist governments in the suppression of freedom. Both have fought out the same problems. It is wrong to say that the Russian Church has never been interested in temporal power: we have seen it playing its part in politics. Nor is it any truer that it has despised earthly goods: at the end of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth there was a memorable debate between those who favoured and those who opposed the possession by monasteries of landed estates. It is also untrue that it never persecuted heretics: there were *strigolnik* in the fifteenth century,

Judaisers in the sixteenth and Old Believers in the seventeenth who were condemned, imprisoned or burnt alive. All I can see is that till the end of the seventeenth century the Russian Church had the opportunity to exert a certain direct influence on the State and by no means disdained to profit by the opportunity.

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But with Peter the Great the change was complete. He abolished the Church as a society with divine right, just as he abolished the human being as an absolute value. He made the State a god. The Russian people were not mistaken in calling him Antichrist. Henceforth all were at the service of the State: not only the nobles, who served it, first at school, then in the army or civil service, from their earliest years till they were finally released by age or infirmity; but the poor also, who as peasants bound to their masters, given over to his will and pleasure, mobilised for life as soldiers or labourers, ultimately bore the whole weight of the State. As for the clergy, they became a body of religious officials, valued solely for their civic utility and made subject to the superintendence of a lay high-procurator, who might even be a soldier.

The characteristics of the new régime were exaggerated still further by Peter's successors. Anne inaugurated a veritable persecution, of the monasteries more especially. Catherine purloined the goods of the Church, closed two-thirds of the religious houses and imprisoned Matsievitch, the only bishop who dared uphold the rights of the Church. It was thus that the Church was reduced to silence, and it was to remain silent from then on.

The same empress-philosopher made over tens of thousands of the Crown's still free peasants to her favourites to make serfs of. The burden of serfdom grew steadily heavier and more widespread until the reign of Paul I. Communal, municipal and trade organisations were now used simply for fiscal purposes, to assess and levy taxes. It was now that the Russian people seemed farthest from

freedom. Yet in the revolt of Pugachev (1773-1775) tens of thousands came out, the oppressed of all classes throughout the eastern part of the Empire, and Catherine had reason to tremble on her throne.

Since the revolt was finally crushed, since aristocracy continued and serfdom came to be mitigated and at last abolished solely by the will of the tsars, the legend grew up during the nineteenth century of a people content with its servitude, worshipping the Tsar, its "little father", and with never an inkling of the meaning of the word freedom. Certain Russian theorists have themselves appeared to encourage this legend: the Slavophiles, I mean. But this is due to a misunderstanding of their doctrines. What they were really opposed to was the rationalist freedom of the modern West, a written and contractual freedom, whereas the freedom they sought to vindicate was the organic and Christian freedom of the people and the Church.

It would make this clearer, perhaps, if we said that the freedom dear to the Russians is not so much that of the isolated individual as a collective freedom, that of the family, village or corporation, the freedom of the small society, the parish, the religious house. This accounts for the fact that in Russia the individual is less developed than he is in the West. But there is no lack of respect for the soul and conscience of each human being. The free community might control the actions of all the individuals that composed it, but it could never touch the person's interior freedom. This, I believe, is the conception of freedom held by the Russian people—I am not talking about the State.

The Church, then, was silent all this time; but it was an enforced silence, not a silence of conviction, and it was certainly not due to any special "eastern" quality in its Christianity. Nor would it be right to suppose, in spite of all appearances, that the people had renounced their desire for freedom. The peasant still held that the land belonged rightfully to him who worked it, and until serfdom was abolished there were ceaseless revolts on the part of the

serfs, revolts to be reckoned in thousands. In practice, their various local assemblies, including the *zemstvos* and elected tribunals, made the Russian people of every class the most politically active of any in Europe. Nowhere else was there so much corporate activity; students and professors in their universities, the legal and medical professions, all had the keenest sense of their independence of the powers above them.

Therefore there was nothing surprising in the events of 1905, the formation of soviets and a general strike, not only of workers but of those belonging to the liberal professions. This was followed by the constitutional period, during which Russia succeeded in placing herself on the same level as the empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary. At the same time the Church emerged from its silence and demanded for the first time its own internal independence: the re-establishment of the patriarchate, a national council, the revival of the parish and the election of parish priests.



So I see nothing in Russian history to justify the opinion that the Russian people would never consider freedom as a good. Like any other, it has suffered oppression; like any other, it has protested. The peasant protested in his risings, the noble in his secret societies and constitutional parties, the intellectual in the Press, in books and liberal reviews, the philosopher in all the anthropology of Dostoevski, in all Berdyaev's teaching on metaphysics and politics, not to mention the anarchical Tolstoy. As for the Church, the only way to silence it was to place it under the discipline of colonels of the Guard, who treated bishops much as Napoleon had treated his prefects. Here, there is no denying, I see one peculiarity of the Russian Church: its enslavement by the civil power was facilitated by the fact of its being a national Church. It had no external centre upon which it could rely. It was all alone. But, as soon as it could, it recovered its freedom of action. Immediately after the 1917 Revolution it met in council, restored the patriarchate abolished by Peter the Great,

and took what decisions it thought fit to increase the efficiency of its apostolate and organisation.

There I might stop, for what I have just said is my considered conclusion. But I must answer one objection I foresee will be raised. How is it, I shall be asked, that today the Russian people are so indifferent to freedom? If the Bolshevik Government is what it is said to be, a wholly totalitarian régime, how comes it to be tolerated? And if the Russian people are really satisfied with it, can we suppose anything else but that their conception of freedom is not ours?

Well, the Russian people are not satisfied with it. It was not this they wanted in 1917. They suffer and groan; they have tried to rebel whenever they could: against the requisitions, against the demolition of churches, against collective farming. But the system by which they allowed themselves to be gripped at the outset has gradually become a machine too finished and perfect for any revolt to wreck. They have been crushed without mercy. And the Church, which gladly welcomed the Revolution, has not remained silent either: it has had its martyrs.

Taking it all together, if we admit that the eastern Church has a general tendency that makes for freedom, that tendency has by no means been belied in Russia. What we must do, I think, is to draw finer distinctions. We may say it has succeeded in being a factor of social and political organisation; that it has not been afraid to take a hand itself in the political game, and that in this it has not differed from the Roman Church. It has worked for freedom by exerting moral influence on the civil power, moderating and counterbalancing that power, as far as it has been permitted to do so. Moreover it has played this part as a Christian, not as an eastern Church. But the appetite for freedom existed all the time, and still exists, in the Russian people, and it has been fostered or suppressed at different times not so much by the Church as by all manner of circumstances, geographical and historical. It is impossible to suppose it has been stifled for good.

THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR A FREE SOCIETY

by ANDRÉ RAILLIET

THE OUTLINE OF A POSITION

THE subject we are to consider is extremely interesting and topical, but too complicated to permit even an attempt at a true analysis. All we offer here is an outline, a sketch, and one that cannot pretend to much precision in the drawing; but it may, perhaps, stimulate the reader's ideas and prompt him to further research and discussion. It is intended for the contemporary man, for "the man in the street" that each of us remains, whatever scientific education he has received.

At every moment of our daily lives we feel the weight of responsibility: responsibility for administrative decisions, for the cares of industry and labour—the cares of the "economic man" that each of us is—all the worries of a father or mother of a family, and these responsibilities lead to a kind of resentment. This experience of resentment we translate, when we are confronted with the contemporary world, by a gesture typical today of the younger literary generation, a gesture of refusal. There are a whole number of things we reject, and as a result of this rejection many of us rush into different "engagements" which, for those who do so, are primarily a liberation.

MEN AND SYSTEMS

What are these refusals? Why do we make them, and is it enough to make them?

Contemporary man, when he is sincere and of good will, eventually acknowledges these refusals, to himself and to

others. Such testimonies abound. His refusals, whether explicit or implicit, are the rejections of three systems, theoretical and doctrinaire, but with a very profound influence on present-day life.

First there is the rejection of liberal capitalism: it is accused of *laissez-faire* and *laissez-aller* and of eventually crushing the weak. Parallel to this is the rejection of socialism; this aims ostensibly at introducing the idea of the common interest, as against liberal capitalism which paid too little attention to the human person, but the reason for its rejection is that we see this same human person promptly strangled by the constraints which socialism introduces—in extreme cases, in a most terrifying manner.

A third solution seemed inevitable, one that was purely material and technical. Most people, today, reject this also. They call it technocracy, and since this is soon involved with political power, we can say the rejection of it takes the form of rejecting technocratic State-ism. Why? Because it mechanises the human being, crushing him under the double weight of the administrative office and the machine.

This triple refusal, apparently simple enough, leaves us somewhat at a loss, for the remedies proposed by those who would return to the various forms of traditional humanism are too often, it would seem, no better than palliatives.

But in the absence of any immediate remedy we might at least seek a starting-point from which to examine the problem afresh and examine it effectually.

The difficulty in finding remedies is due to the fact that we see truths in each of the systems we reject, so that we would, if we could, take a little from each of them; but the balance so achieved is sure to be unstable and the new system would be a bastard system, the offspring of a somewhat dubious eclecticism. And yet it is quite evident that there is some truth in each of these systems.

This leads us to ponder the very nature of a system. Ever since the French Revolution, a dating-point in this particular field, it is clear that we have found ourselves in what

might be called an era of "isms". First they were religious and philosophical "isms". Then there were those that came to birth with liberalism and socialism, and by laying the accent on economics have aimed at controlling all social and individual life.

But generally and fundamentally the characteristic of any ideology is a very lively awareness of one simple truth, hitherto overlooked; this is then made a standard of revolt, and presently—since life and thought quickly monopolise all else—there comes to be constructed on this one first principle, true but very particular, a complete and all-embracing vision of the world.

If this be admitted as an objective fact, perhaps we have here a key to the understanding of why such systems invariably become oppressive: it is because they start from a particular point of view, without taking account of the whole man at the outset. Thus they attempt to build an arbitrary order about one isolated element, which might have been valid as part of a whole but not as the centre of it. Hence they distort human nature. They have the feeling that nature itself is in rebellion against the vision they have formed of it. In their desire to perfect it, they clamp it down under the iron stays of their intellectual and political ideology, thus creating totalitarian systems by destroying the natural harmonies of men and things.

As against this, we have a simple and sensible reality to produce, one which we find in ourselves and discover when we look about us. I will call it the truth of "Both . . . and". Just think what each of us "is". He is both a citizen and a family man; now a man in uniform, at other times an ordinary member of society; he is both worker and consumer; he is a human being, with the feeling that he is fundamentally autonomous and also participates in the whole outside world and in the lives of other human beings as well.

If we grasp this idea of the real man as a whole—producer and consumer, with his own initiative but subject to rules, an individual but a member of communities, of collective

bodies of varying sizes, social but more especially economic—then we shall discover the source of each of these systems. But now, instead of being in opposition to each other or subsisting together in an unstable compromise, they will be ordered naturally by being linked to the great needs of man and human society.

We know that this society, if it is to remain a living society, is both “dynamised” by the contributions made by groups or individuals—those that are the more energetic—and also governed by institutions; we also know that this society, though ordered for the preservation of each individual, is constituted in relation to the common good, which is not the sum of particular interests but something that far transcends them all.

We are bound to recognise, apart from any reference to systems, that we must choose a certain number of *themes* on which the economic life of a country can be built and its social life bettered, and this if only because of the interdependence of the various elements of modern economic life which calls very often for elaborate co-ordination. We see, too, that we must take account of the deep-seated desire, so evident today, to share in the profits of economic and social life and even to co-operate in its management. Finally we must remember that the old desire for enterprise, which lies deep in man’s nature, is still the great force which stimulates individuals and sets collective groups to work.

Those three systems, which seem so crushing to contemporary man, conceal three virtues which have temporarily gone mad. If we go back to the origins of these systems we find there respectively the virtues of choice, of uniting or sharing, and of enterprise.

The systems we reject have parted these elements. It would be a sensible thing, surely, to try to reunite them.

I. THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FOR A FREE SOCIETY

In determining requirements and limitations, there are these three rules, the synthesis of which should make it

possible to construct a human economy truly "liberating" to men and societies alike, provided they are willing to respect certain disciplines for making their economy serviceable to their needs.

We can offer three aims, valid for all social and political life, and corresponding to the several concerns expressed at their best by State-ism, socialism and liberal capitalism: these are *choice*, *uniting or sharing*, and *enterprise*.

THE DETERMINATION OF COLLECTIVE TASKS

It is first necessary to choose: politically this implies ordered choice, the idea of *orientation*, not systematic but adapted very freely to the great communal necessities.

These can never be fulfilled by individual activities alone. We live in a technical world, one much too technical for general order to result automatically from the spontaneous adaptations of all the innumerable individual enterprises. Most of the essential aims of any modern society worthy of the name can be achieved only by a concerted effort of the whole, one which defines both the ends and the means of attaining them, by successive stages methodically controlled. It is true that life, which is always in movement, may require modifications of our route as we go, but all the same we must know where we are going.

Is it really something to be rejected, this zest for planning which has emerged so conspicuously in contemporary life? Or is it not rather a false attitude to the whole question, often enough induced by weariness to death of bureaucratic restrictions ridiculous in their operation, which has caused us to reject the whole idea of planning? The purpose of planning should be to canalise particular activities in the general interest, not to restrict the spirit of initiative and the energy behind ordinary daily activities, whether social or economic. Indeed its general function should be to open new vistas and offer supplementary means—by providing credit, for instance—for individual or co-operative creation. Without this creative spirit all planning is a dead letter, or can be realised only in servile conditions.

By giving priority to the "human factors", both as ends and means, the harmonising of common tasks, the working out and completing their programme, lay the proper foundation for free activities.

So we must realise the fact that planning, fundamental in contemporary economy whether Russian or American, has beneath it something that is both human and technical.

The technical element is due to the interdependence of the resources of contemporary countries and to their various interconnections. One has only to think of the interdependent elements of an electrical network spread over a whole country, its connection with the building of dams or the production of coal; or how trade and commerce depend on it, and domestic life as well; or the interdependence of foreign purchases, national production, home consumption and the balance of payments. Finally there is the strict connection between the situation of mines, the shifting of populations, the different outlook and tempo of life in the various elements of the nation. There is no ignoring the fact that any solution to these problems calls for co-ordination if the result is not to be permanent anarchy.

Hence the origin of all the ministries and public services, now become functions of government, which we have come to accept as natural: commerce, for instance (which for France dates as far back as Colbert), agriculture, labour and industry, and finally—that which touches a particularly delicate matter—population. These services, which we now regard as fundamental, did not arise out of the major traditional functions of government; they are strictly related to the structure of society and aim at directing those economic and social functions which are so basically essential that democracy itself must be entirely governed by them.

Possibly it is here we should strive to avert the danger that threatens to regulate the whole of social life on the lines of tiresome administrative routine. For these services have come to birth in the image of those which for centuries

have directed the functions of security at home and abroad. Naturally enough, when extending the sphere of their operations, their tendency has been to increase the number of those engaged in the public service and to treat every free man as a silent cog in the bureaucratic machine.

What we have to do is to invent a living type of planning, one that arises out of the country's real needs and is devised by those who know these needs, who have direct responsibility for it and are in a position to make it something living, and not a mere deadening control.

The fact is that technical necessity, the determination of society's major tasks, is also a human necessity. There is one reproach levelled at Soviet society that seems to me obviously mistaken: it is that in the Soviet régime everything is labelled "tomorrow". This is simply a plausible caricature. To me it seems admirable that not only those who are compelled to go forward, but countless "militants" also, devote themselves with complete unselfishness to a cause from which the benefits likely to accrue are very remote indeed. It is true that the pioneering spirit which presided over the creation of America, and presides over the creation of Russia today, has as its goal mere comfort; but what is the motive of all human energy but just this pioneering spirit? In liberal America it was this which animated individuals or small groups; under the Marxist system it has assumed a collective form, a gregarious and even an artificial form, but there endures in it something fundamentally authentic.

It is a spirit that appeals to personal interest, yet it somehow transforms it with a touch of that true generosity which lies deep in the heart of every man. It is this that enables a factory worker, turning a bolt without any idea of its ultimate purpose, to attain what the monk is seeking in his monastery as he fingers his beads in prayer for the rest of the world, namely the sense of universal communion. Why should we deprive ourselves of this?

In the working-out of these tasks the part of those who direct should be based on sound information and the interest

of the majority. And in this connection there is something else in Soviet methods worth noting: the function of their evening clubs, where workers meet to discuss the overall plan. It may not go very far and no doubt looks fictitious, yet here is a new kind of collective education. The men who attend these meetings feel they are sharing in the industrial effort, in the building of their country, and fighting for the civilisation they hope to achieve. Here problems find answers. A technician's democracy! But is that a bad thing?

Nor is there any reason why such a conception of the collective task should be stifling to individual effort. On the contrary, we have examples to show that when the individual comes to appreciate the harmonising function of collective bodies, each of his own acts becomes naturally ordered to this end. Within the local district, within the nation, within the continental group in process of being constructed as Europe, programmes of work draw attention to the common good, and not the theoretical but the concrete good. They serve to kindle a very clearly defined hope and spur on the individual by associating him with a common adventure.

PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PROFIT

The goal of socialism has been the participation by all in management and profit. Are these principles to be rejected?

Who would dare to refuse this participation in profit, not only to those who get the collective work done (for that is evidently simple justice), but even when profit derives from individual genius, for this is surely destined, implicitly, for the community?

Even when one man, a writer for instance, has created something by himself and as its creator holds proprietary rights in it, he can hardly withhold from all the enjoyment of his work. It is only on this condition, even though he may not be fully aware of it, that the creative effort takes birth in his mind: it has its very origin in this spirit of

generosity that offers the work to the admiration and edification of others.

In this extreme case of artistic or literary creation we can see more clearly how profit must necessarily be shared. Its whole character is that it should be so; it is something that derives from the very nature of "earthly heritage".

Even he who, reasonably enough, counts on direct advantage to himself or his family from the work he undertakes finds consolation for the limited results of his endeavours in the feeling that as time goes on they will gradually benefit an ever-increasing number. This feeling of solidarity, which Léon Bourgeois at the end of the last century made the basis of a practical system of ethics, assumes an even greater value in the economic circumstances of today. It is expressed, however, in somewhat colder terms than those associated with the life of the old-time craftsman: we call it lowering of profits, productivity, raising the standard of living.

The co-operation of all, according to their different capacities, in the production of goods and services brings with it a technical solidarity. It justifies inquiry into the practical means of sharing the profits of these associated efforts.

The demand by the masses to share in the national revenue—sometimes expressed with harshness and bitterness owing to the elements of strain in social relations—possesses a certain elementary justice and is also, in fact, a technical necessity.

America has perceived very clearly the economic mistake of regarding the mechanism of exchange from the purely individualistic angle—the consumer's or alternatively the worker's—as if each man were not himself both worker and consumer; consequently the more buying power he has, through drawing high wages, the more interesting he becomes in his capacity of consumer. This is all the more important in the case of the working masses, whose wants in the way of consumer goods and furnishing for their homes are very far from reaching saturation point.

It is no doubt true that when we confront this problem of redivision of revenue—all the more acute when the economic life of a people is more active—with that of necessary investment for new plant, of making resources available, getting the best out of the country and endowing social life, we meet with a contradiction that is not to be resolved by any but a constantly *dynamic* dialectic: namely by alternating phases, where problems of investment assume priority, with periods when the need for distribution takes first place. They are problems, it would seem, not peculiar to the so-called capitalist economy; they may occur just as much under socialism.

By not overstressing the strictly economic aspect of the consumer or the worker, we are enabled to reach something more fundamental, namely the participating in a work—such as a great modern industry or commercial undertaking—which calls for combined effort, impossible for any individual to supply. The old-time craftsman's joy in creation was necessarily individual. The worker in a motor industry, aware of his contribution to the dispatch of thousands of vehicles from the assembly lines, is inspired by a purely collective sentiment.

This is another reason why participation in management seems to me more of a moral than a technical question. If joy in creation is strengthened by the feeling of ownership of the goods produced, the intellectual contribution to the work and its preparation enlists to the greatest possible extent all the complementary qualities in the individual and in the team. Modern productivity has emphasised the importance of intelligent enterprise on the part of even the humblest collaborators. But the limits are soon reached in any such contribution to management: these limits are responsibility, competence and administrative capacity.

Even socialism, when we see it master of the destinies of a particular State, quickly recognises the primary importance in practice of a functional hierarchy in the tasks to be accomplished. An industrial undertaking,

like a military operation, has to be directed to the attainment of a material end.

Whatever the humanist requirements for relieving man of the constraints of industrial, administrative or military tasks, as the executive agent he remains subject to the discipline of labour or war, subject to disciplinary rules. The first of these rules is the submission of operations to a necessarily strict and responsible hierarchy. That is why enterprise is not a promising field for the development of social democracy. Moreover every extension of this field into other areas of life is bound to involve subordination and restraint, with all the consequent stresses and strains; just as in these particular fields of activity all excessive relaxation, illusions of "democratisation", cannot possibly fail to be harmful.

Participation in management is more easily effected in the more flexible circumstances of civic life, the township, the district or the nation as a whole, where these problems of management take the form of interpreting general plans for improvement.

THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE

This general claim to participate in the management of economic enterprise, which is like the old demand to share in the management of the State, calls attention to the fundamental *requirements* of enterprise. We can see these reappear in the very heart of the most collectivised political societies. In Russia, more than half of which is a still new country like Canada, this sense of enterprise has become purely collective. But it was not always so: the Siberian gold mines were first colonised by prospectors, who for the risks they ran were granted all the profits of individual enterprise.

The gift of enterprise is one that some people possess in a greater degree than others, and these become the leaders of collective groups. A country with the purest liberal traditions, once it lost this sense of enterprise, would be immediately paralysed and suffer the fate that socialism

has not always avoided in the West; the subjection of all social life to officialdom and red tape. Often enough what we may call *petit bourgeois* socialism consists solely in the regimentation of daily life; through dividing up what is there, without creating new wealth, it becomes what might be described, by analogy with the decadence of the Roman Empire, the sub-empire of liberalism: a period in which people are content with restraining instead of arousing and stimulating energies.

But we should be wrong to regard the spirit of enterprise as something purely individual; we have only to look at societies living under a capitalist economy, or to scholarly and scientific associations, to realise that it is not long before many people are needed to work on the same task, to combine for the founding of some new enterprise, if only to acquire the necessary capital. There is nothing morally wrong about such capital; it is a technical necessity to accumulate the potential means of working. In all such operations it is easy to recognise a *community* of enterprise.

Family businesses, grouping of interests, enterprises of the co-operative type and even public services, all provide proof, by the diversity of their legal constitution, that the principle of free enterprise is not necessarily bound up with the most individualistic forms of human society.

At the same time, if enterprise is to be possible and endure, certain conditions must exist, and they are those for which liberal legislation is often abused. All enterprise, for instance, presupposes the certainty and also the continuity both of the enjoyment of the means of production and also of a reasonable proportion of profit. That which outlasts an individual's lifetime is called the family patrimony; it becomes an estate, a legal person; and this, where communities or the public service are concerned, tends to perpetuate itself by creating its traditions. In the religious sphere, the monasteries are a good example; though the inheritance, here, is primarily one of a common ideal.

Whether for the individual or for the group, enterprise is

impossible without the following conditions: the possibility of accumulating capital, technical and administrative capacity, a willingness to take risks, the tenacious pursuit of an always hazardous course of action and respect for the necessary individual or collective discipline. No enterprise is possible without adaptation, self-interested or otherwise, to what is required by the common good; it is this that is recognised by commercial enterprise when it studies the market and seeks to discover its requirements. Whether it be by conforming to an existing situation or by anticipating one to come, enterprise must always adapt itself, submit to general necessities and harmonise its tasks with those of other enterprises.

On the other hand, no collective undertaking could ever survive long without a constant renewal of the pioneering spirit; this is the first condition of economic and social "dynamism". Behind what is apparently individual or group adventure there lies an eminently social function. Essentially creative, it throws off the deadweights that threaten to crush society. Its field of action certainly varies: at the colonising level, the "pioneer frontier" gradually eliminates the area of undeveloped hinterland; with the industrial revolution, history is constantly hustled on by the acceleration of movement and production; but the pioneering spirit can also turn to intellectual and spiritual adventure, concerning itself no longer with extent and quantity but rather with quality and the revealing of "values".

The completion of the conquest of the earth, and the subjection of its resources to human needs, still offers man an immediate field for expansion; afterwards, we may well suppose, he will discover the means to apply this faculty in a third dimension.

II. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS FOR A FREE SOCIETY

On the basis of these three conditions for a society free in the economic order, we are led to append a kind of after-plan, for a system no longer purely economic. For it

is impossible not to feel that the major weakness of the systems we have been discussing—capitalism, socialism and technocratic State-ism—is that they all start from a particular point of view: they envisage life through the distorting prism of economics.

For a civilisation to be truly "liberating" it should, we feel, provide a living *ambience*, a scale of values and the necessary conditions for living in peace.

THE LIVING BACKGROUND

"Man does not live by bread alone," it was said. In the first place, he "lives".

While he is at work, at his bench in a factory, he is not merely a producer; he lives in a certain atmosphere, he breathes an air, receives a light, has visible surroundings, pleasing or otherwise. There are firms that have sought to use music and colour to provide an "ambience" that is calculated to make for higher productivity or an increase in sales. In his office the intellectual worker likes a certain *décor*; why should the factory worker find himself frustrated in this respect?

A fair case has been made for something better than the improvement of working conditions, namely the building up of a *civilisation* of labour.

But we must be on our guard against reducing everything to a "labour" standpoint. Considerable portions of the day and year, all kinds of activities, hobbies and situations, are wholly extraneous to "labour", to the production, transport or distribution of goods. A man needs a home as well as a workshop.

This means that living conditions are as essential to the freedom of the spirit as is the betterment of conditions of work.

The study now given to the examination of these problems shows the direct relationship of freedom or servitude to forms of corporate living or the lack of them, to proximity or distance, to the actual siting of dwellings in relation to the place of occupation. A particular problem that

urgently calls for satisfactory solution, the increasing industrialisation of rural areas, presents us with this question: if the factory is the centre, must not the worker become the serf of his means of livelihood, while the employer, for his part, is tied to a fixed personnel? But freedom to change one's employment is admittedly one of the conditions of personal freedom—an implicit but a very practical condition.

By their very forms, the dwelling, or the collection of houses and services, imposes on the occupant, on the people who live there, a particular employment of their leisure time, even a particular mental outlook. A locality stamped with the marks of human presence inevitably affects the mind with ugliness or beauty.

The arrangement of dwelling-houses has also an effect on social relations; it is responsible for fusion or segregation, and can resolve or aggravate the social tensions arising from the necessary conditions of labour and political life.

There is no field that calls for more rethinking, in regard to social and psychological complications, than that of housing and town planning.

A CIVILISATION OF VALUE

With differing conclusions, though all issuing from one another, the systems we have rejected present us with similar viewpoints. All their ideas spring from a *statistical* view of humanity.

Capitalism adds up sums of money—like that dreadful business man in Claudel's *Échange*: with money it is possible to have this and then that. The other systems add up masses and human beings to obtain their economic and demographic statistics, even the political plebiscites on which collectivisms always feed; or else means of production, kilowatts and the rest. . . . In none of all this do we find the *real man*.

It is true that these societies permit of a practical civilisation, and even an efficient civilisation, because it is highly convenient to reduce everything to a unit, whether

that unit be the dollar, the ton of coal or just a registered number.

Surely, if we are to secure freedom, the civilisation we should aim at is not quantitative but qualitative: we want value, not number. For true freedom can be translated into particular concrete freedoms; these are begotten of quality, and they perish for ever when crushed by the sheer weight of quantity or mass. Freedom, if it is to develop, needs space—at any rate in some direction.

UNANIMITY AS A CONDITION OF FREEDOM

History shows that no society can prosper unless all its undertakings are inspired by one common sentiment. At first sight the contrary may seem to be the case, because our societies have grown accustomed to the disorder sown by too many spiritual families; we have even come to think such conflict is the sole guarantee of freedom. This pluralism of opposed doctrines, like that of particular interests, we have come to regard as our last refuge, our only hope of escaping oppression. Yet surely such anarchy, and the mean and ineffective compromises that result from it, are the breeding-ground of the worst disorders and tyrannies. Individual genius, disdained by a society of masses in conflict, breaks out in all kinds of illegitimate ways, and takes its revenge on an ill-formed society by afflicting it with either anarchy or dictatorship.

Our societies have lost the sense of a common soul; something we must distinguish carefully from the totalitarian spirit which is really its opposite extreme. Totalitarianism is due to the systematic spirit and the opportunity provided by spiritual discord to use collective restraint as a solution for all the most urgent problems. Unanimity, on the other hand, comes from the development of a long-assimilated culture, something inherent in men, which allows them formal diversities but ensures their common reaction to all essentials.

Totalitarian systems beget closed societies, whereas true culture constructs a scale of values of universal application. There is no free society which is not shot through with currents of generosity and charity, sound idealism and moral principles, and also strengthened by a civic sense, by respect for law and the feeling of a common destiny.

THE AUTONOMY OF SOCIAL LIFE

To an equal extent our modern societies have lost another instinct, that for an adequate separation of social life from political power. We should ask ourselves whether our loss of freedom is not ultimately due to the rupture that took place when the Church lost for good all the powers it had exercised in civil life—education, moral direction and above all charity—and found itself replaced in these functions by a single power, master already in every other field and in political life, the power of the State.

Till then, the medieval world had been constructed in the West (and it is here that it differed most of all from the East) much like the vault of a cathedral, depending for its support on the harmonious, yet somewhat hardly acquired, balance which was the tension between the temporal and the spiritual power. Beneath the shelter of this double vault there could flourish communities whose function incidentally was to protect the individual; and the individual, we may well think, as a member of such a society, found true, real and complete freedoms to an infinitely greater extent than he did afterwards, when civil society was subjected completely to the crushing weight of political power. Thereafter political life underwent a complete change: the oppression of society by Government and the continual struggle for power between rival classes, groups and factions.

What may have been regrettable, for the purity of the Church's spiritual mission as well as for the freedom of civil society, in this "clerical" society we knew as Christendom, and in the serious disorders and conflicts

it produced, should not blind us to society's fundamental interest, which is to safeguard its own structures and avoid the immediate tutelage of Government. This latter should be society's servant, fulfilling its specialised functions, and never its master by virtue of "reasons of State" and the will to power.

The establishment of a free society requires from political philosophy and public law some wholly new constitutional thinking; it also presupposes the re-creation of certain structures in order to maintain, within the social edifice, those autonomies and tensions which are the guarantees of any living order.

Those social structures, which by 1789 had ceased to be adapted to their functions, lost their right to survive. But the legislation which followed left the social body spineless and diseased. This lack of institutions made possible the dominion of money, first, then that of the mass; the consequence was that the reasonable interests of individuals, for want of being ordered to the common good, became cancered by the rivalry of group imperialisms, playing havoc with the health of the social organism.

Recourse to State arbitration led to direct State control; hence the tyranny of State-ism, and at the same time the impotence of political power, through being over-encumbered by the functions and responsibilities of the social bodies that had now passed away.

PEACE AS A CONDITION OF FREEDOM

The last aspect of a general policy embracing all the conditions for a free society is something of natural concern to us all, though we may not always perceive its immediate or remoter connections with freedom: it is the necessity for peace.

It is true enough that a society can remain free only by accepting the restraints required by a state of belligerent tension, and by maintaining respect for certain virtues—those of strength and prudence and energy—which would

certainly be relaxed by the false peace offered by a clever antagonist.

At the same time, the state of tension in which our part of the world has been living since 1900 or thereabouts has brought about an extremely burdensome State centralisation. More than the successes of socialist ideology or technical compulsions, it is the state of siege and wartime legislation that has led to the mobilising of society down to the minutest details. Moreover it is a mobilisation of energies for unproductive tasks, not for the building up of wealth; just as the general sharing of the nation's resources has been due not to plenty but to the constraints of poverty. This exhaustion of revenues and reserves is a constant threat to social progress, which should be achieved almost naturally by an industrial economy. It threatens the free functioning of institutions by governmental instability, itself due in part to the financial difficulties caused by a hypothetical national defence.

The material suffocation and nervous exhaustion experienced during the past half-century by the countries and peoples of Europe explain very largely the uncertainty of government and the immobility in which it seeks to take refuge. This immobility refuses the satisfaction required by social aspirations, neglects what is required by the enthusiasm of the people—and of the younger generation especially—and it also prevents the *élite* from playing the part that naturally belongs to it.

This marking time, which has checked the urge so typical of nineteenth-century Europe and threatens today Europe's social and economic stability, has undermined its supremacy and its hopes for the future. The belief in progress which characterised preceding generations was possibly somewhat artless, but it was a powerful lever for achievement and to some extent a social educator. One may criticise its presumption, but we should surely be wrong to rejoice at its disappearance.

This hope, indispensable to the spirit of enterprise, that the future will not necessarily be disastrous, might well be

re-established by patiently building up the conditions required for peace. Our societies, stricken by violent conflict, so unlike the century of peace that went before, have come to see war as a kind of tempest and curse; they have never clearly understood its cause, the slow accumulation of differences in potential between the powers and the tragic dilemmas arising out of history, or the fact that here, too, what is needed now is a redressing of institutions and a foreseeing of the right answers.

So far from doing this, they tend to yield to understandable but mischievous public opinion and so aggravate the causes of crisis, which are conflicting nationalisms and the closing of frontiers.

An international society needs pacts and institutions; but what it needs still more is a community of intention that is stronger than the oppositions it is called to surmount.

This is true in the political field, but it is also the first condition of a healthy balance of international trade. There should be created, in a different form, a great economic area, global in extent, similar to that which temporarily succeeded in giving such scope to the mercantile genius of liberal Europe.

THE ANSWER TO THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORY

To end this initial inquiry, let us take as our starting-point that "real man" which we feel to be each of us. This real man, set necessarily in society, can find freedom only to the extent to which he is conscious of sharing in the life of this society.

We have been taught, all too often, to define the conditions of freedom negatively; we should try to define them positively.

Freedom, it is true, requires a certain number of restrictions on power so as to safeguard both the autonomy of the individual and the development of living communities. But this is not enough. It requires that certain of the powers of society should at times be actually increased. That is why we speak of a "free society", because man

can find freedom only in a society that has an answer to what Toynbee calls the challenge of history.

A society that merely *submits* to history, without ever having the *sense* of it, is wholly at the mercy of geographical, historical and sociological determinism; it undergoes, without mastering, its own determinisms; these subject it to pre-ordained evolutions and lead it eventually, by way of cycles of decadence, to *catastrophe* in the exactest sense of the word: namely to a final downfall.

A society, on the other hand, which permits the development of individual or communal enterprise, which satisfies the real man's desire for unity, which chooses its own path and can supply its own answers to the questions of the age—such a society has the sense of history. With a firm hand it writes its own history. It fulfils its human mission.

The success of communism in the contemporary world is due to its offering to new *élites* a consistent vision of the world, an historic task and new solutions. It satisfies simultaneously what is required both by the worker and the intellectual.

Time was when Christianity offered this in the West; but today, perhaps, it appears in a guise too pure, too ætherealised, and at the same time too traditional, for the masses to be able to read in it what is really their own history.

It is by rediscovering the sense of history that we shall solve the problems of contemporary peoples. By creating the conditions for a free society we shall take up the challenge presented by history.

We must have solutions to offer that can be realised in practice; we must test them, too, and translate them into terms that can be understood by the worker, by the ordinary housewife, by all who in their daily life need to feel they are sharing in this common task.

That is why, in the social and political departments of the real man's philosophy, the present urge for federalism is the major hope of the contemporary world. According as our creative imagination and our personal efforts can give

body and soul to such a federal society, and make the people aware of this vision of a social order, so this hope will succeed in rebuilding the world—or else pass away.

What we have to propose to people today is a kind of peacetime mobilisation, with no remote and long-term Utopia for its object, but the creation, here and now, in this country and in Europe, of what, in a spiritual sense, we may call a "Land of Men".

TOWARDS A TRULY CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

by DANIEL-ROPS

THE ground has now been prepared by specialists for answering the question raised at the outset: whether there is not a crisis for freedom in this world we are living in. Are not even those regions which have been nourished by the sap of Christianity in danger at this moment of seeing this fragile growth wither and die on their own soil? They are questions prompted by a sense of deep uneasiness, and it is impossible, alas, to answer them optimistically. For anyone who knows what he is talking about, for anyone who has the least experience of history, it is all too clear that we are traversing now one of those ages in which freedom is in full retreat, that a whole combination of forces exists which seems intent on making for its ruin, and that unless humanity is on its guard it may find itself tomorrow in a state of servitude in comparison with which that known by antiquity was nothing.

I. THE CRISIS OF FREEDOM

When, at this mid-century, we Westerners give thought to the ruin of freedom, there immediately occur to the mind certain instances which it is hardly necessary to specify. There are social systems we can name, and political régimes, which being unable to stand the test of events have already foundered; others, more vigorous, more decisive in their methods than those which have perished, contrive to endure and appear to gain ground. In a word, we have the feeling—half anxious, half complacent—of belonging to the “free world” (to use an expression

much favoured by the Press); whereas on the other side of that curtain, with which we are all familiar, the domain of non-freedom may be said to begin.

I am rather disquieted, I confess, by this facile antithesis. I am convinced it is an over-simplification of the question. We may admit that under the so-called totalitarian régimes freedom is now dead; but even with us, in the world we call "free", is it so very much alive? We have only to look about us to be filled with doubt and something more than anxiety. The facts speak for themselves. Some of them have been mentioned already; others strike the eye of the least observant.

For instance, is a French citizen of the Fourth Republic free, who instead of choosing his representative for his own personal programme votes for a party man, named by committees he knows nothing about, to support ideas which are not so much his own as the expression of a collective doctrine, one he must accept or reject *en bloc*? Or the inhabitant of Western Europe, that promontory of Asia so diminished by modern means of communication, who cannot move any distance unprotected by passports, V-forms and countless other documents—is such a man free? Is the taxpayer free, from whom the State filches, by the most varied and effectual means and whether he likes it or not, at least 35 per cent. of all that he earns, whereas in 1914 it was content with 15 per cent. or rather less? Is the merchant or industrialist free, who wants to create wealth and have scope for enterprise but runs up against often insuperable barriers, cartels, trusts and monopolies, among which State monopolies are far from the least formidable? Is the breadwinner free, who, after working all his life to save, knows that the State, when he dies, will lay a greedy hand on much that he desired to leave to those he loves? Is the journalist free, struggling against all manner of financial difficulties and always subject to the pressure, more or less open and almost always irresistible, of a hidden power that calls itself Government or Capital or Party or Union? Or

what of the immigrant, obliged to leave his overpopulated country with nothing but his physical strength to rely on, who nearly everywhere in the world finds himself baulked by regulations designed to close every door to him; or, if a door is half opened, it is only that he shall be delivered, bound hand and foot, to the omnipotent powers of a handful of bureaucrats? Finally, to bring these heart-burning questions to an end, is the worker free, who has simply the alternatives of dying of hunger or accepting conditions of work one would hesitate to impose on an animal?

So the freedom on which our "free world" prides itself is after all something infinitely precarious, gravely threatened and very open to question. And because our neighbour seems to have a beam in his eye it is no reason why we should complacently retain the speck in our own. The worst of it is that we insensibly become accustomed to all these successive amputations of freedom, till we eventually admit that they happen of their own accord. That passport, which it seems so natural to produce at the frontier, our fathers, before 1914, would have regarded as little less than a monstrosity; and very understandably, since it was possible, then, to go all over Europe (except Tsarist Russia) with one's visiting card as a sufficient card of identity! In this respect a European of today is infinitely less free than a citizen of the Roman Empire at the time of Marcus Aurelius, when it was possible to travel from Cadiz to the Euphrates, from the Rhine to the Nile, without any passport at all, and without even changing one's money. He is even less free than his ancestor of the twelfth or thirteenth century, who could go on pilgrimage to Rome, if he wished, or to St. James of Compostella, without other passport than his pilgrim's staff.

The most disturbing feature of all is precisely this increase in the encroachments of *society*, an anonymous abstraction, on the domain of freedom. Even in that society which is held to be the freest in the world—the

American, I mean—shrewd observers can hardly conceal their anxiety at seeing the margin of personal freedom being steadily reduced. Of course, the process is entirely different from the totalitarian, but are the results so very different? The State's interference with enterprise by the control of credit is an often-denounced danger. A certain levelling brought about by the increase of death duties, a standardisation of opinion due to the various means of publicity, the Press or the cinema, are others no less evident. From our own point of view, which is the human point of view, between Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* and the citizen living under a totalitarian régime the difference is perhaps rather verbal than real.

The crisis of freedom . . . We may already have a presentiment of how the process may end, even if we decline to believe it is inevitable. Various writers have shown us the picture: some with horror, like Gheorghiu in *The 25th Hour* or Kuhnelt-Leddihn in his poignant novel *The Tears of God*; others with more humour, though with a despairing humour, like Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*. And if you want an idea of the kind of world it would be in which human freedom has been completely devoured by what Nietzsche called "the coldest of cold monsters", read that novel of Huxley's again. How beautiful, that brave new world! Everyone happy, exceedingly happy—materially of course. Sorrow, pain and anguish will be no more, all overcome and abolished for ever. But you will find yourself imprisoned in strict classes and categories, cased in perfect discipline, subject to millions of regulations all designed to save you the trouble of living. From the very day you are born you will be in the "Alpha" class, entitled to wear a lovely sky-blue uniform and exercise the various functions of ruling; unless, unfortunately, you are an unhappy "Epsilon", clad in khaki and performing lowlier tasks. You will be happy even so, but what will have become of your freedom? You will no longer be able to suffer, any more than you can love or think or die as you wish! To prevent your

being free, everything will have been anticipated, provided in advance: even children, who will no longer be born of the freely willed union of man and woman; they will be manufactured in test-tubes! A caricature? Yes. Still, one would like to be sure there is not an element of truth in it.

II. THE DRAMA THAT INVOLVES ALL

The crisis of freedom is therefore a dramatic crisis. For what is involved is nothing less than one of the very elements of man and his destiny, one of the essential prerogatives imparted to him by his Creator. But if freedom is so endangered today, is it solely owing to the hostile forces in league against it? Is it not due just as much, and even more, to the fact that our freedom has betrayed and mutilated itself?

It is customary, in the history text-books used in schools, to describe the French Revolution as the moment when modern man achieved liberty. It is irrelevant, here, to question this statement, or ask if the human person was not more free under a Christian king like St. Louis than he is today under State administration and the discipline of the trade union. But even admitting the truth of the theory, one fact is certain: the freedom asserted in 1789 was essentially a rebellious freedom, a freedom of refusal, a protest against those ancient institutions which were held responsible for all the abuses complained of; to a large extent it was an anarchical and undisciplined freedom. Moreover, as the facts prove, the result of this abrupt revolution was an individualist conception of freedom, that of the rights of man; it is a freedom that separates the human person from the communities natural to him, just as it alienates him from his duties and leaves him an abstract individual to face in isolation an abstract and anonymous State, between which and himself there is now left no intervening link. It is a mythical liberty; a freedom without object, conditions or substance, pretending to be self-sufficient, content with its dignity alone, but in fact

the absurdest defence anyone could have against all the menaces of persons and things.

The result has been what we commonly call liberalism: an ambiguous name because it covers such widely different things. There are many ways of conceiving and defining liberalism, or rather liberalisms, but they all have this in common, the demand for liberty and the use of it, with a refusal of all constraints, particularly those which should rightly impose on man some feeling or care for the "common good".

It is, of course, true—though this is also irrelevant at the moment—that liberalism can be credited with several happy results; by developing the spirit of initiative it contributed not a little to that praiseworthy advance in technical achievement which we always associate with the nineteenth century; undoubtedly, too, it has been the inspiration of many great men and great leaders. But it remains true none the less that it has eliminated from the general conduct of life the very principles of morality; that it has severed the connection—the connection that Christianity had so well established—between freedom and duty. A Christian feels wholly free within a certain spiritual and moral system, one in which he has to respect certain principles that offer an ultimate goal to his endeavours. The liberal, by refusing this submission, ends by recognising no law but that of profit and success; and what is this but selfishness pure and simple?

We have seen, in the course of the nineteenth century, where liberalism leads when given free play. The citizen, it is true, had his voting paper; but what good was that to him, when he was left defenceless against giant powers that grew every moment more vast and overwhelming? A voting paper is all very well—if one is not dying of hunger. We have only to refer to the famous inquiry into conditions of labour, conducted in 1849 by the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences: a régime that culminated in a sixteen-hour day, in the employment of women three days after childbirth and of children of eight in the spinning

mills! Such a régime might be one of freedom for the employers, but for no one else. It was a freedom that profited none but the rich and powerful.

Thus by falsifying true values this erroneous conception of freedom ended in the corruption of freedom itself. As Péguy proclaimed, it was "money made master in place of God". But it was not only to the small men, to the economically crushed, that the result was deplorable; it was no less so for the rich, who presently saw the world transformed into a jungle where each was in constant danger of perishing; and it was also deplorable for the State, now threatened by forces wholly beyond its control. All being worse off, it was freedom that was held responsible, though it was really only its caricature that was to blame. The inevitable consequence has been recourse to the very reverse of freedom, namely tyranny. Between ill-conceived freedom and dictatorship there is an automatic relation of cause to effect.

Therefore, to use Hegelian terminology, it is by an inevitable dialectical process that the twentieth century, to discover what it believed to be collective discipline, has plunged into that other, the totalitarian error. Human freedom has been invited to resign, to offer itself in sacrifice to the grandeur of the common task. Because the individual had claimed an anarchical freedom, he now finds himself pilloried by counteracting forces that grow more and more oppressive. Moreover the totalitarian régimes all assert quite boldly that the age of freedom is at an end. Mussolini declared that "in proportion as civilisation assumes more complex forms, the freedom of the individual becomes more and more restricted". Communism, it is true, still exalts a mythical and far distant freedom, but the collective will to power takes precedence of personal freedom, and subjects it to a wholly inhuman discipline: what counts is not personal, but class emancipation. "Freedom?" asked Lenin; "why?" Yes, from his point of view he might well ask why.

Thus caught in a vice by two opposing forces, man has

every reason to ask if he is not fated to be crushed. On the one side anarchical freedom, which destroys him with forces there is no resisting; on the other, itself a consequence of that anarchical freedom, submission to Nietzsche's "cold monster", or, in the words of Jacques Maritain, to "the ideal of a multitude of happy slaves all at the mercy of a Leviathan".

In this dreadful situation, all too evident to those who have eyes to see, we Christians find the proof of an essential betrayal. The reason why we are now where we are is because human freedom has been severed from its true principles, the principles that gave it its real meaning, its justification and its importance. Human freedom, without rules to guide it, is bound to follow the drift of animal instinct, of passion and vice. As old Karamazov exclaimed in Dostoevski's famous novel, "if God does not exist then everything is permissible". Yes, everything is permissible: hence the crushing of the weak by the strong, whether nations or individuals; hence the gas chamber and the concentration camp.

The mystery of freedom is so closely connected with the mystery of man that when freedom is robbed of its substance man himself is robbed of his life. Fundamentally it is the whole metaphysical question that is raised by the question of freedom. Man has thought to do without God. In those terrible words of Nietzsche's he has proclaimed: "God is dead"; now he is discovering that it is he himself who is the first victim of this negation. It is he who is cast helpless into that abyss of nothingness into which he designed to cast God; there his freedom perishes together with everything else. We must never forget those decisive words of Nicholas Berdyaev: "Where there is no God, there is no man."

III. REMAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Does this mean that freedom, as we Christians understand it, as we shall presently define it more exactly, is doomed to automatic and inevitable destruction, that we

are condemned to enter "the barrack age", as Bernard Shaw sarcastically called it? I think not. Or rather I think that the countries of the West—where, as Christopher Dawson shows us in his *Origins of Europe*, civilisation was born of the Catholic Faith and has been saved in the darkest ages by the Church—I think that we nations of the still free world are not fated inevitably to see our true freedom destroyed for ever.

There are hopeful and by no means negligible signs. To take France for example. Here the doctrine of abstract liberty, inhuman and individualistic, has met substantial opposition in a current of thought favouring a freedom that is constructive, human and brotherly. Socialists in the tradition of Proudhon and Saint-Simon—to some extent even those of every shade of thought from Jaurès to Péguy—are here in agreement with Christians; in fact French socialism could never have grown except in a soil that had been fertilised by Christianity; as a leading trade unionist observed very prettily, "it is a shoot grafted on the rose tree of Christ".

The results of what might be called a general socialist tendency, visible in politics for a number of years, may certainly be infected with a number of errors, but they represent, none the less, certain gains to the cause of freedom. Family allowances, for instance, bear witness to a desire to retain the family as an intermediary between the State and the individual, in spite of the fact that the family as a living community is very far still from occupying its proper place in the national organism. Similarly progress has been made in the protection of the workers; but their organisation, unhappily, has not been properly conceived in relation to human principles, namely the "common good": an error that results, all too often, in completely paralysing management and delivering up the worker himself to trade-union domination which practically destroys his liberty. It is impossible to deny the existence of very sound elements for the development of freedom, but they are somehow vitiated by an erroneous

point of departure. They do not start from a full conception of human freedom. Akin, in some respects, to Christian aspirations, they diverge fundamentally because they are mistaken on first principles.

But it is not only in the narrow field of a particular country or nation that we must consider what hopes lie ahead for freedom. The problem must be tackled at a much higher level, in the light of world history and the history of man, especially since now, on this greatly reduced planet, solidarity is inescapable and there is very small chance of freedom's surviving in one small area if everywhere else in the world it is annihilated.

From this higher standpoint the twentieth century offers a unique opportunity for the unfolding of humanity's temporal destiny. For what is our situation? We find ourselves confronted with a veritable revolution of which the evident aim is man's material liberation. It is the technical revolution. Ever since James Watt, some hundred and fifty years ago, made use of steam to drive the flywheel of his machine, the world has progressed technically in one and the same direction, that of eliminating all man's heaviest labour. Electricity, the internal combustion engine—tomorrow it will be atomic power—liberate vast numbers of men hitherto harnessed to thankless and exhausting toil. Where in ancient times it was necessary to harness slaves to turn a mill-stone, a motor of a few horse-power now serves the purpose. Human productivity, which is the quantity of energy employed by man, is constantly increasing. Where a miner, wielding a pick, once produced a ton of coal, the same miner now, with the use of a pneumatic hammer, produces fifty or a hundred tons. For anyone who knows what he is talking about, who understands the slavery of hard manual labour, the mechanical revolution cannot be regarded as anything but a veritable liberation.

Yet it is no less true that this mechanical revolution is very far from realising *hic et nunc* all the happy results foretold for it. Quite the contrary. It is evident enough that down to

the present day its consequences have been largely inimical to mankind, to true human values and particularly to freedom. There have been many reasons for this. By its enormous output the mechanical system has led to an over-production of consumer goods and at the same time a diminution of the number of workers employed. The consequence has been serious economic crises which have put the workless unemployed at the mercy of the power on which their livelihood depends. In a sense, and though the origin of modern wars cannot be held to be solely economic, it may be said that one of the fundamental reasons for the first two world conflicts was just this economic disorder, the fact that certain nations could not sell their products or feed their unemployed. What becomes of man's freedom under a system in which he has only two alternatives, the constant dread of unemployment or the constant liability to mobilisation?

But what is no less certain is that the terrible disorder from which our world has been suffering all these years is not the inevitable consequence of the mechanical revolution. It is due to the self-confessed incapacity of man to modify old social and economic institutions so as to integrate mechanical progress and make it serve his own interests. We readily despise those barbarous ages in the past when our ancestors blindly fought one another in their quest for a new equilibrium of civilisation; it is more than probable that our successors on this earth will regard our own as a sad age of barbarism, when humanity produced an excess of goods necessary to life while millions of Indians and Chinese starved, and millions of unemployed had no means of acquiring any part of the goods they saw at their very doors.

This disorder is significant. It is an admission that our society is lacking in the capacity to make new laws: just, human and brotherly laws such as would allow mankind to benefit from the machine-revolution as it should. Make no mistake: if man cannot freely bring order into this world he has brought into being, according to other principles

but those of pure selfishness and the rivalries of conflicting instincts and interests, then the future that awaits him is sombre indeed; he is already doomed to the worst forms of slavery. We were warned some years ago, when Bergson told us that what was needed by a universe so vastly enlarged by technical inventions was "a supplement of soul".

There is only one conclusion, and it is clear and simple: we find ourselves, thanks to the machine - revolution, presented with a hitherto undreamed-of opportunity, a chance unique in all human history. It is the opportunity to free man from all brutalising labour, from all his most painful material tasks. Shall we be able to seize it? Technical progress is not enough; something else is needed. Liberation by the machine must become a living freedom, organic and truly human; which simply means that this freedom must have a moral and spiritual basis.

History provides an example. Round about the eleventh century there occurred in the West an important social phenomenon, the end of slavery, which was transformed into serfdom. What is noteworthy is that there occurred at the same time a series of important technical inventions, all tending to free man from inhuman toil. One that we might mention is the attaching of harness to the shoulder instead of the collar, which by dragging on the horse's neck had prevented its drawing any very heavy loads; or again the invention of the rudder at the ship's stern, allowing the use of sailing vessels of much greater tonnage. Human productivity, in other words, took a considerable step forward. The two facts were simultaneous, technical progress and human liberation. Does this imply that for man to be liberated all that was needed was technical progress? No. What was also needed was the influence of Christianity, of the Catholic Church, to teach men to endow their brethren with freedom. And the proof of this need for a conjunction of moral effort with technical progress lies in the fact that it was on the lands of the Church that serfdom just at this time came to an end, whereas on

the other hand, in technically backward countries and those remote from the Catholic tradition like Russia, it lasted right down to the nineteenth century.

The example is instructive. Humanity at this moment has an exceptional opportunity to lay new foundations for a concrete, human and brotherly freedom. Will it take the opportunity? Will it, in other words, have that "supplement of soul" which Bergson spoke of?

IV. THE DOUBLE EFFORT NECESSARY

For us Christians, what does this requirement of Bergson's mean? We are the children of that Catholic Church which throughout the ages, as others have said before me, has been the notable teacher of freedom. We have been formed and educated by that *Ecclesia Mater*, who has taught us what freedom really is and how it can be defended and further increased. It is by being loyal to her, to her teaching and her methods, that we mean to work for freedom's salvation.

And in parenthesis we may observe here that if, among the freedoms now threatened by the modern world, we have made no mention of those of the Church, it is not because we have forgotten them or hold them of no account, but precisely because we regard them as something essential, to be required and presupposed by the very idea of freedom. Today, with us, these freedoms are not literally menaced; but they are unofficial, without any legal basis or guarantee, subject to the precarious conditions of political circumstances. Today suspicion and hostility have changed to respect and confidence, but may we not suggest, as Catholics, that if the Church were formally recognised as one of the foundations of human society, if it could really perform the part of a higher court of appeal, and be recognised, as it was in the past, as the basis of just hierarchies, it would be the surest safeguard of all other freedoms?

How, then, should we define our Catholic duty for the defence and safeguarding of freedom, as of all other human

values? It has, it seems to me, two different aspects. The first is an effort to think in terms of our time; to be, so to speak, "present to it". Catholics, it may be, have shut themselves up too long in a kind of sulky aloofness, watching the evolution of the modern world with a more or less churlish mistrust; rather like an older generation that secretly rejoices to see the young in difficulties through ignoring its own most excellent advice. This is not a truly Christian attitude. It has resulted in a kind of cleavage between Catholic thought and the conditions of the contemporary world. Dr. Alexis Carrel, a man who has thought with great clarity about the various dramatic happenings of our age, remarked to me one day: "The great misfortune of our age is that *Das Kapital* was written by Karl Marx and not by a Christian." When I repeated this to Father Gillet, then the Dominican Master General, he added: "Perfectly true; if St. Thomas had been alive today he would have included our Revolution in his *Summa*."

This effort of thought should be all the easier for Catholics, who have at their disposal, if not a critical synthesis like *Das Kapital*, at any rate an equally precise body of doctrine, one no less lucid and complete. This they have in the teaching of our Popes. I think there is no doubt that this whole series of papal pronouncements, branching out from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and extending to the latest documents on the problems of modern humanity published by His Holiness Pope Pius XII, will appear to the eyes of the future historian as one of the monuments of twentieth-century thought. There lies the solid, infallible basis on which Christian thinking should now be able to work for the remaking of the world. And, we may add, it is for Catholics today not to leave unutilised all this excellent matter, but to translate it into deeds. How many Catholics there are who know nothing of this papal teaching, who act as though it had no existence!

It stands to reason that my present intention is not to sketch, however briefly, a world in which human freedom would be safeguarded by the fact of being based on Christian

tradition. The utmost I can do is to indicate a few of the major principles which should serve, in my opinion, as the basis of such a system. Two of these I see particularly clearly. One of them is economic. Naturally I have no qualifications to treat the subject *ex cathedra*, but speaking simply as a son of the Church I think that Christian teaching presupposes here a very definite organisation which I might characterise thus: a régime that is wholly directed to the human. I feel very deeply that if the human person is to be truly free, the whole system of economy must be directed in the interest of man. Yes, the aim of an economic régime is not to increase production for production's sake, nor to increase capital; nor is it to give special advantages to this or that trade union. Its aim should be to make it possible for man to dwell on this earth at ease, in harmony and brotherhood; in the language of the economist, that means a *consumer's régime*.

Another necessary aspect, so it seems to me, of a society truly free and organically Christian would be its taking account of the immediate human realities, I mean those natural communities within the framework of which freedom is normally exercised. The family, the trade, the country, the nation, all might be bodies, legally constituted groups, with the function of serving, in this way or that, as intermediaries between the anonymous State and the human being. Christianity recognises these human realities. Man, for Christianity, is not an interchangeable entity, an abstract individual, a numerical cipher; he is a member of a family, with his own work, his own property. By respecting these natural realities, and by establishing regions of freedom at their level, one would certainly have a régime in which the encroachments of the omnipotent State were counteracted. Therefore a federal system seems highly desirable, one that would combine the advantages of the widest possible autonomies with the voluntary acceptance of a higher discipline. A Utopia, you think? But what is a Utopia but the name for a great idea before it is realised?

Whatever the régime we achieve at last, another effort

will be necessary, on a different plane, not one of creative thought but of inward meditation and conscience. It is here we must grasp more completely what we really mean by Christian freedom. If freedom is now withering and threatened with extinction, we know the reason. It is because it is impossible for it to live in a materialistic climate where there are no moral principles. Freedom, for us Christians, is not a dignity that man possesses passively and without effort, in selfishness and complacency. It is a creative power, potential energy, the opportunity to *live*. By giving him to others, it raises each individual above himself. It respects those principles from which it knows it draws its higher potentiality. It is a conquest: not of others, not even of the forces of nature, but rather of the self; it is a struggle, in fact, against all that degrades man's nature, all that imposes limitations on him. It is service because it is love; it willingly subordinates all to a human ideal, the ideal which is called the Common Good. This is the moral climate we aspire to, because our freedom is that of the sons of God, the freedom won for us by Christ through His Incarnation, His Death and Resurrection. This is the climate in which human institutions could really flourish, in which the machine-revolution might be harmlessly integrated into the world's evolution and the famous dilemma between anarchy and tyranny find a complete solution.

Ultimately it is in such an effort, to *feel* this veritable freedom within us and shed its influence abroad, that all our aims should culminate. There must be no acceptance of that truncated freedom to which all too many are resigned; no submission to the compromises of the world about us, to its suggestions and demands; no working to safeguard our personal freedom, at the expense of petty deceptions and petty betrayals, while our principles are openly flouted and mocked at; no paying ourselves off with empty words but, when uttering the word "freedom", having a lively consciousness of all it calls for. We must, in short, bear witness to freedom by really *living* a Christian freedom.

I will end with an example. Every day, in a certain section of the Press, we read eloquent appeals for the freedom of the working class, the emancipation of the proletariat, the birth of a society of free men. Some time ago, in April 1951, there was an accident on the docks at Bordeaux. A load of wood fell from a crane, and a man was crushed by it and died. This man was a priest, a young priest-worker, Michel Favreau. On leaving the seminary he had asked his superior's leave to enter the workers' mission and had chosen to adopt the hard trade of a docker. It was his day off on April 7th, but he had volunteered to go to the dockyard in place of a Spanish comrade, a man with a family, who was ill. In his death in these circumstances I seem to see a providential significance. The man I would regard as the true defender of the freedom of the working class is not the leader-writer of a demagogic newspaper, but this young priest, who for the dignity of man and his love for Christ actually laid down his life.

CONCLUSION

by HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL FELTIN

AFTER all that has been said above, there would seem to be nothing left to add to the theoretical side of the subject. I shall confine myself, therefore, to a few ideas suggested by the daily exercise of my pastoral duties.

Every day I encounter freedom, every day servitude. They are inseparably mingled. Our age desires to be free, it aspires to liberty, but without the freshness, the simple hope, so characteristic of the century before this.

Everyone talks of freedom, to defend or lay claim to it. All, from childhood, are taught the rights of the individual, the rights of peoples to determine their own destinies. This trend of thought, so conspicuous among educators, is equally so among sociologists and also among those who have the charge of souls.

The advancement of the workers, freedom of scientific research, the coming of the lay apostolate, zeal in witnessing to the faith, all these are signs of a craving for freedom which we should welcome with respect, but also with some degree of prudence and discernment.

In close conjunction with this, wherever I go I meet servitude. The enslavement of man to the machine, to the technical processes which should rightly give him freedom, is today a truism. It is something everyone can verify by experience. There is the servitude of labour, of means of transport, of fashion, of reading and leisure; the slavery imposed by class or party; servile obedience to pictured suggestions, to the slogans of the Press, of the cinema and radio.

Social pressure: spiritual emancipation. Which will win?
As a man I cannot tell; as a bishop I am bound to choose.

And my choice is freedom. The more technical my diocese becomes, the more urgent becomes the task of forming free men: men who make themselves free by utilising robots, not robots taking the place of human beings. At a higher level than the disputes of the schools and political ideologies, freedom assumes a pastoral dimension. The reason is not exterior and secondary, as if the Church were claiming freedom only to accommodate itself to the taste of the day. Freedom lies at the very heart of Christianity, which seen from without might look like a system, but thought and lived from within is a living bond between persons, a religion of the spirit. Faith is the encounter of a gift and an acceptance: a call on the part of God and a conscious and submissive response to God's voice.

As St. Paul reminds us, it is in Christ that the Christian has received his freedom. In Him, through Him, he becomes a son of God; he is no longer the slave of any created power; he is no longer in tutelage, but an adopted son and heir. The only dependence that binds him is a law of love and divine sonship: "Where the Lord's spirit is, there is freedom."¹

This explains why I often find servitude in those who at first appear free, but who lack that autonomy, that inner liveliness of a soul without attachments. On the other hand I often have the happiness of discovering freedom in those who seem most of all deprived of it; it is because they have been able to find, at the very heart of their poverty or distress, the secret of a loftier, sublimer independence.

Freedom is a pastoral work. It is one of the Church's tasks to promote it where it is lacking by bringing to the world that freedom of God's sons. It is also its mission to give a just idea of it and assure its rightful exercise.

A just idea will prevent its being parodied as anarchic individualism, something that frees no one and enslaves all. When exalting personal freedom, St. Paul reminds us that it is not self-sufficient; it must operate in a communal life by being incorporated into the Body of Christ, where

¹ 2 Cor. 3. 17.

all are one. The Christian's vocation is at once personal and collective, inner transformation and social obligation.

Christianity is constantly reminding us how we should justly use this freedom, one that lies mid-way between individualism and collectivism. Social laws and technical processes are indispensable, but they should not result in making man an anonymous cog in a smoothly running machine.

Yet no one has the right to isolate himself from society, thinking to find in solitude the necessary condition of his freedom. Concern for the common good is no obstacle to the free development of the human being; it is something that enlarges him.

* * *

It is also a pastoral task to encourage freedom within the Church. Such freedom, thank God, is not lacking these days. Initiatives are springing up everywhere, sometimes to the verge of rashness, often to redundancy; freedom of thought and self-expression is exercised daily. There is no dictatorship in our Church, which is accused by some of legalist rigorism; it is the Church of the Spirit, the advocate and protector of the rights of the soul against arbitrary powers and all overbearing social restrictions.

In practice this freedom is in danger of being compromised, both by the unjustified resentments of the free lance and by the rigour of the unauthorised redresser of wrongs.

I have spoken elsewhere of the duty incumbent on all of mutual respect in understanding and charity. All I am doing now is to put my finger on the immediately verifiable consequences of the conclusions reached in the foregoing pages.

To the immediate duty of inward purification, a duty imposed on the tyrannical spirit that lives in each of us, there should be added also an effort of the imagination, to guide social, economic and political technique in the direction of a way of life that will respect the transcendent

uniqueness of the individual soul. Freedoms for the sake of freedom, freedom for the sake of approaching nearer to God, such is the Christian order which it is ours to promote. There is a solidarity among freedoms: the neglect of some causes the perishing of others, till the whole edifice crumbles.

I offer these reflections to the reader's consideration. What I appeal for most is an enlightening of our contemporaries, by every means at our disposal, on the implications of the problem of freedom and the urgency that exists to find some solution to it. Thus by serving man we shall have also served the cause of Christianity and thereby helped to assure the reign of Christ, in whom we are called to the freedom of God's sons.

